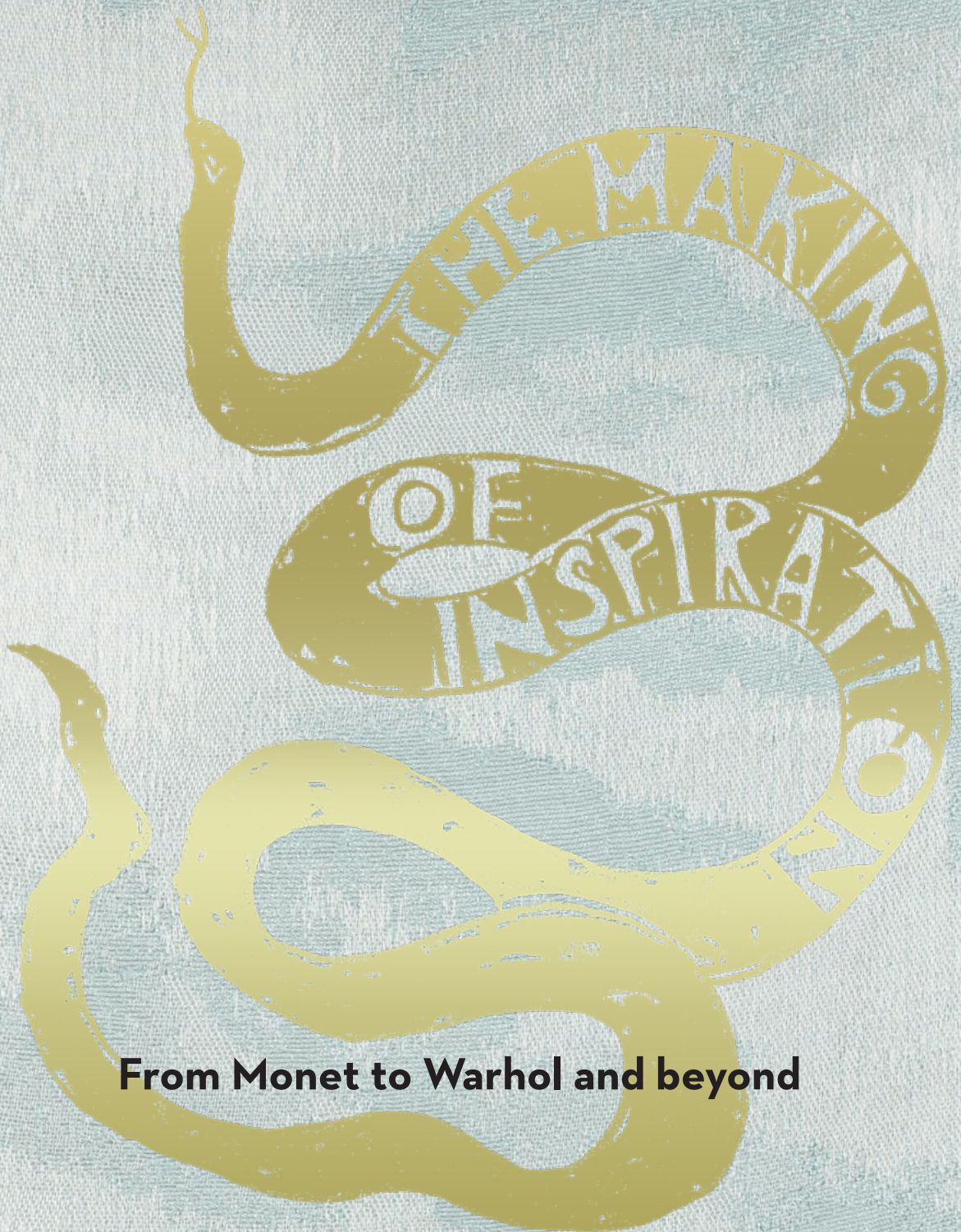


**HANNA-KAISA KOROLAINEN**



**From Monet to Warhol and beyond**







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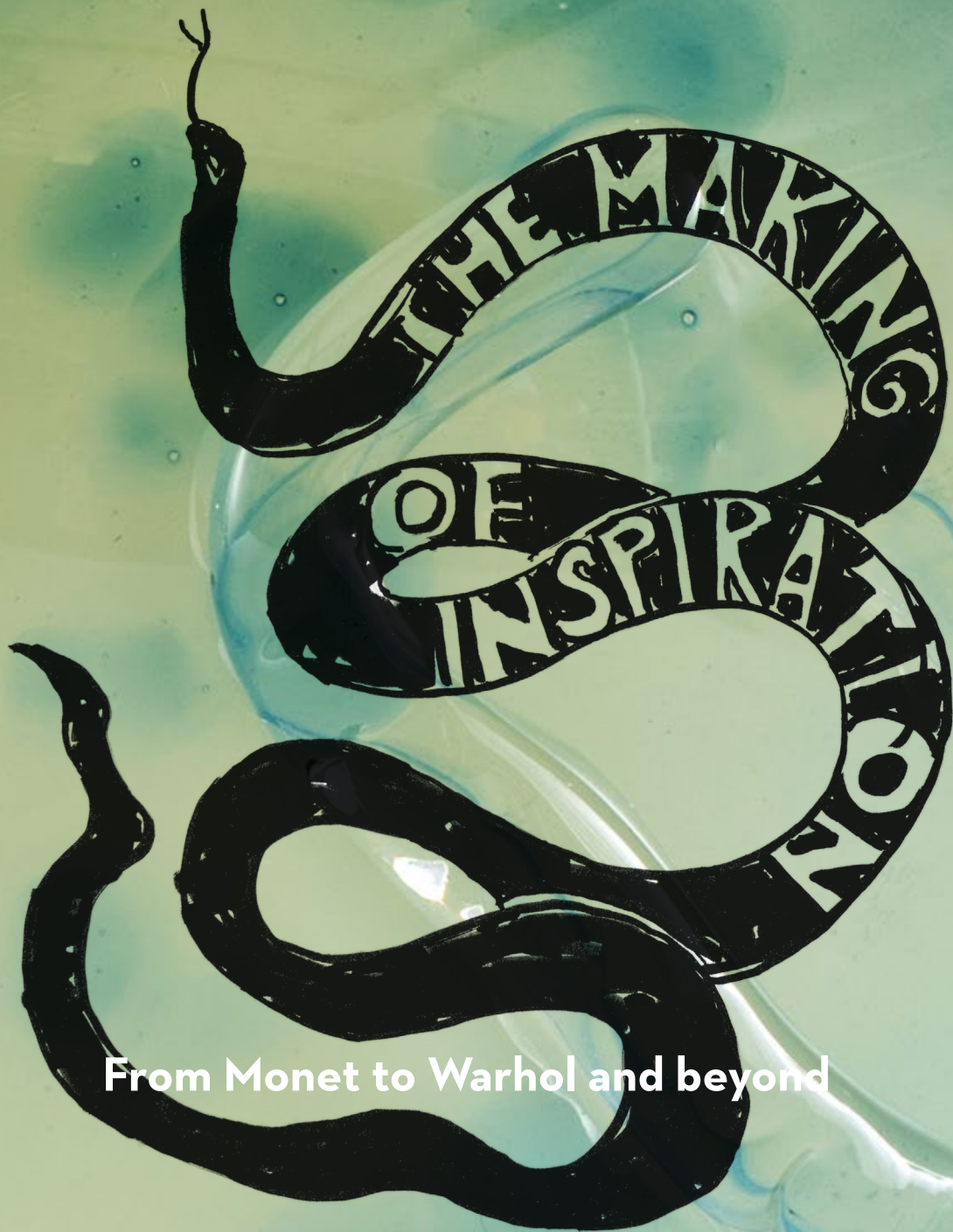
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HANNA-KAISA KOROLAINEN



From Monet to Warhol and beyond



# Abstract

Every practitioner yearns for inspiration. It fuels the creative process with desire and motivation. However, it seems unclear what inspiration exactly is and where it comes from. Practitioners can experience an obscure state of being inspired without knowing how and why it happened. Possibly they can remember something they saw or experienced beforehand that made them feel inspired. These inspiring ‘things’ or ‘happenings’ can be called sources of inspiration.

These sources of inspiration, from the practitioners’ point of view, have not been extensively researched within the fields of art and design. Designers and artists themselves do not often reveal their sources of inspiration, as if they ought to be protected or sourcing external inspiration was embarrassing. However, the surrounding world is so filled with visual and other kinds of stimulus that it would be nearly impossible not to be influenced or inspired by some of them. Even if a practitioner were to attempt to create something in an empty vacuum with nothing but her own mind, would that mind not be already filled with all kinds of impressions of the life lived, and a myriad of things seen, experienced, and learned? Memories of childhood entangled with stories read and heard, sunsets and sunrises seen in famous landscape paintings confused with real-life experiences.

Throughout this study, I try to trace how consciously selected sources of inspiration influence the creative process and its outcome. I investigate specifically: 1) the relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration, 2) the differences between inspiration and copying, and 3) the idea of shared authorship. I conduct this study as a practitioner who is simultaneously the artist and the researcher, opening up my own creative process to the investigation. In this way, new information can be sourced from the inside of the process, hoping to discover aspects that will interest other practitioners and the field of creative studies in general. I hope to

demonstrate the possible threads we weave between makers, eras and cultures and shed light upon the concept of inspiration.

As the artistic components of this study, I executed three exhibitions and numerous artefacts (in ceramics, glass, and textile) in which the influence of the sources of inspiration was materialized. These artefacts are presented as a catalogue at the end of this study. In addition, as part of the theoretical foundation, I try to outline the concept of inspiration, sources of inspiration and becoming/ being inspired. I do this by exploring neighbouring themes such as imitation, intertextuality and appropriation. I also draw from the history of inspiration and investigate how the general understanding of the topic has developed through time.

The centre of this study lies in a collaboration-like relationship between the practitioner and sources of inspiration. The word collaboration might seem unexpected in this context, but since sources of inspiration often greatly affect the creative process, I believe their role should be given the attention it deserves. Sources participate in initiating the process and accompanying the practitioner along the way, almost like physically absent family members or long-time friends. As a practitioner, I form an inner dialogue with them. Even without spoken words, sources can speak to a practitioner who has learned to listen to them. Often these relationships can endure for many years, or even a lifetime.



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# Foreword

As this study is concentrated on my personal practice and its outcome, I ought to explain how I became interested in the topic of sources of inspiration. I remember being inspired by specific things from an early age. At six years old, I started to go to an arts school for kids once a week in my hometown of Kotka in Finland. During the first year, our teacher presented some historical milestones, from cave painting to old masters. I remember that when we had to choose a painting to make a reproduction of it, I chose a portrait of a young woman in a turquoise satin-like dress. I found the image and the woman in it enchanting, and this attraction motivated my process. That was the beginning of a long series of falling-in-loves with things deriving from the past. What fascinated me in these nostalgic objects was that they had history, plenty of stories to tell for a careful listener.

Another inspiring visual memory from my childhood was a small porcelain statue of a horse standing on its hind legs next to a girl in the window of an antique store. Despite my wishes, my parents did not buy it. I sensed a desire to own the item, but even without having it in my possession, I am still able to remember the excitement of admiring it through the window. I no longer wish to own that statue, as it does not correspond to my current taste, yet, the memory of it and of my emotions at the time stayed in my mind as something inspiring. I still long to experience that kind of feeling again – one which does not include the need to own something and yet creates a profound desire.

I have collected these inspirational memories all my life; in general, I also remember where and in what state of mind I saw something. For example, when I was inter-railing in my early twenties in Berlin and saw the Madonna painting by Edward Munch, I was extremely hungry, but while I stood in front of the painting, the sensation of hunger seemed to be replaced by a deep feeling of being moved, in tears and nearly fainting.

Maybe my experience was even intensified by the hunger, but nevertheless it was unforgettable.

It feels worth mentioning here that from (the young) age of three, I had decided to become an (famous) artist, a painter to be more precise. However, things did not go smoothly, and by the age of 15 I had come to the conclusion that even though I had plenty of decent ideas, my artistic skills were lacking, and it was clear that my dream of becoming an artist was never going to happen. I had realized this while comparing myself to others as I studied at a special art-oriented college. In high school, I consequently chose to follow the maths and physics specialisation, which made me realize where my talent certainly did not lie. When I stopped taking physics classes, my teacher personally thanked me.

In the middle of high school, I spent one year in France, where my 'adopted' big sister was an artist-photographer. When back in Finland, I took an extra class in photography, and liked it so much that after high school I continued studying photography at an art school. Photography solved the problem of my (apparent) lack of talent for drawing and painting. It seemed to be a democratic art form, available to many. Later, I started to experiment with several other art fields, such as performance, video, and installations, and finally my current practices of textile, ceramics, and glass. One thing has lasted: my passion for visual things. I have the eye and mind of a photographer when I look at the world; these days, even without a camera, I am able to memorize many things.

I remember reading somewhere that there is a limited number of things that people can remember. The human mind functions like a hard drive, and once it is full, it starts to delete some seemingly unnecessary things. Certainly, the mind is a selective tool: every human hard drive is filled with different memories. Mine has decided to get rid of many things, such as the names and faces of my high school classmates in order to be able to retain the ever-growing number of visual memories that my mind judges more interesting. My mind seems to prioritize visual memories, such as pink plastic bags hanging from trees, specific petrol station logos or certain artworks, over people. Images keep me company and continue to inspire my artistic practice and everyday life.











**1**

**Welcome to the  
House of Inspiration:  
Introduction**

# 1 Welcome to the House of Inspiration: Introduction



*Once upon a time, in a distant land of imagination and dreams, there lived an artist in an extraordinary house. Before finding the house, the artist had been wondering lost in the woods for a long, long time. That house was like an amoeba; it was able to transform and renew, sometimes new rooms would appear, and others disappear. After some time in the house, the artist began to learn how to affect these changes; some wishes of the artist would then materialize even though*

*sometimes they happened before she even knew what she had been hoping for. Sometimes the house resembled a modest cottage, at another time it became more like a castle, with numerous rooms and towers. The outside of the castle would change too, from sea to forest or a garden filled with flowers, all in bloom even in the middle of the coldest, darkest winter.*

*In these mysterious ways, the house supported the artist in creating. Before making anything, she would sit down and close her eyes and imagine; the rooms of the house would start to change. A door would open in front of her eyes, and through it she was able to enter the place of her choice. She felt like Alice in Wonderland, except that she had the feeling of being able to take part in the transformation and be partly in control. The artist would walk in her house and surroundings and visit all the places she had imagined; the garden of Monet in Giverny, Warhol's Silver Factory in New York, any era or any place she had ever dreamed of.*



*The artist was never alone, other artists were also invited as guests to her house, and everybody came: from Akseli Gallen-Kallela to Emil Nolde or Niki de Saint Phalle. They were all dead, but it was not a problem. Every one of the guests changed the house; it was adjusting to them. The guests and the transformations that they induced became great sources of inspiration for the artist. There were wonderful exchanges and endless inspiration reigned inside the house. Some would claim that the house did not exist outside the artist's imagination, but for her it felt very real. And when the artist finally started to create, she never needed to fear a lack of ideas, instead she had found a bottomless well of inspiration.*

This study investigates inspiration as a part of the creative process and is heavily based on my creative practice as an artist-researcher. As part of the process, I have organized three exhibitions in the Greater Helsinki area (*The House of Play and Rain* at Lokal gallery 2017, *The House of Love* at Habitare 2018 and *The House of Love and Rebellion* 2020 at Hvitträsk). Both the artefacts produced and the exhibitions themselves have guided my research path and enabled me to find and materialize answers to my enquiries. This research is rather a direct continuation from my M.A. thesis *Archeology of Inspiration* (2015), and it follows the tradition of artistic research.

I attempt to offer a unique angle on the concept of inspiration, from 'inside' the creative process and with the eyes of the practitioner who works directly with the sources of inspiration. Previously, several studies have been conducted from the 'outside' (see, for example, Harding 1967; Kontturi 2018, Moffitt 2005; Laamanen 2016; Laamanen & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2008, 2014a, 2014b).

As part of the creative practice, I worked with ceramics, glass, and textiles. Selecting contrasting materialities offered me a variety of angles from which to observe how the sources of inspiration of my choice transformed and materialized in the artistic process. Research was conducted as a part of the Empirica research group at the Aalto University, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, in the department of Design.

As my own background is in both fields, art and design (I have been educated as an artist and as a designer), this study deals with art and design taken as a whole. My artworks are situated somewhere between the two fields. I stress that when I speak about 'practitioner', I mean the artist and designer, and when I mention 'process', it refers to art and design processes. Also, the same is true for the general theme of this dissertation, I combine elements from both artistic and design research.



## 1.1 Research questions and aims

My main research question is to understand the question, ‘What is the role of the sources of inspiration in the creative process?’ This study offers the point of view of the practitioner as I scrutinize the research question through my practice. Artefacts that I create as the production part of my research partly represent the essence of the original source of inspiration and partly my own interpretation and artistic expression.

Artefacts that have been created during artistic research can have various functions: in addition to their obvious artistic qualities, they can be regarded as reservoirs that collect and store information and understanding of the process itself (Mäkelä 2007, 158). In my research, artefacts function as a database. They preserve information on the sources of inspiration that have affected their making processes. After systematic reflection, these artefacts can confirm answers to inquiries into artistic research, they can ‘tell their story’ (ibid.). Instead of relying on interviews of the other makers and students or organizing, for example, strictly timetabled workshops, this research seeks to go directly inside the creative process and the mind of the practitioner. Through exhibition projects and related case studies, understanding of the role of the sources of inspiration will, I hope, broaden.

This study includes three case studies that will highlight three issues related to the use of sources of inspiration. In the first case, I try to grasp the kind of **relationship** that is formed between the practitioner and the source of inspiration. At the centre of my investigation is French painter Claude Monet,<sup>1</sup> his waterlilies paintings in the Parisian Orangerie museum and his garden in Giverny. I purposely selected Monet as the source of

---

1 Claude Monet (1840–1926)



01 **Flame rug sketch (1902) by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, watercolour and pencil on paper, 46 × 32.5 cm, The Friends of Finnish Handicraft collection.** Photo: Archives of Design Museum Helsinki/ Katja Ketola.

inspiration for this case, as Monet had a special relationship with his own source of inspiration, his garden.

In the second case, the purpose was to tackle the **differences between copying and inspiration**, and as a source of inspiration I chose American artist Andy Warhol.<sup>2</sup> Warhol seemed to have no competitors when I was thinking about who to choose for this case. Through his art, Warhol took a position in favour of reproduction, against the uniqueness of the work of art – going as far as filling the walls of his exhibitions with copies of his own artworks (Hautamäki 2003, 140). For him, the uniqueness of an artwork had lost meaning (ibid.). Consequently, Warhol and his art seemed to form a suitable key to discuss the complex issue of copying and the idea of an ‘original’.

The third case study is centred on the idea of **sharing and shared authorship**. With the help of three main sources of inspiration: the Finnish Art-Nouveau villa Hvitträsk, and two rya rugs,<sup>3</sup> the famous *Flame* (see image 01) and the probably less known *Seagull*, I investigated the possibility of a concept of ‘shared authorship’. The creative process is inevitably influenced by many factors, such as materials, contexts, and collaborators, and the idea of singular authorship hardly describes its true character.

In addition to these main angles concerning the sources of inspiration, there are a few additional underlying questions in this study: can artistic practice and an artefact create a bond between the past and present time and simultaneously increase understanding of how sources of inspiration travel through time?

Ultimately, this dissertation can be read as a love letter to my sources of inspiration. Taking the time to look at them, to learn from them and engage in a discussion with them is my attempt to show my admiration, gratitude, and love. Through my practice, I try to remember and conserve things from the past that have affected me and most probably many others. As part of my artistic practice, I feel the need to love and remember.

---

**2** Andy Warhol (1928–1987)

**3** ‘Ryijy’ in Finnish.

## 1.2 Sources of inspiration and artistic practice

*“Considered properly as an essentially invisible but wholly culture-specific artifact, ‘Inspiration’ is a made-up term, a buzz word, another shibboleth.” (Moffitt 2005, 3–4).*

‘Inspiration’ is a common word, yet its exact meaning seems abstract and unclear. Inspiration’s importance as a part of the creative process is considered decisive: it is the starting point of the process (Laamanen & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2008). Countless times, I have heard fellow practitioners or art students claim not to be able to find inspiration and being obliged to wait for it to come before being able to start their creative process. How should this abstract concept of inspiration, which artists are so eagerly waiting for, be understood? Could inspiration be some kind of representation of the unconscious, or a message from beyond the ‘real’ world? Without a doubt, there is no one right answer, but in an attempt to define the term (inspiration), I could describe it as ‘something’ that helps the artists to channel their creative endeavours. Inspiration can help artists to choose which (creative) path to follow, push their thinking into a totally new orbit by offering fresh points of view on old problematics or by giving birth to totally unexpected ideas. Inspiration enters into a dialogue with artists’ minds and stirs something in there in a fruitful manner.

Historically, inspiration has been thought of as something close to divine, an almost supernatural force that comes from some otherworldly place and launches the creative process (for example, see Moffitt 2005). Being ‘divine’, inspiration was considered to present the opposite of that which was ‘human’ (the earth-bound condition) (Moffitt 2005, 3, 5). The term ‘divine inspiration’ can be also found in Christianity, where a saint is passively receiving and recording ‘God’s words’ sent by the Holy Spirit. The message or ‘inspiration’ is just passing through the receiver (writer)

without giving her any other merit than the materialization of the text (Moffitt 2005, 98–99.) In the visual arts, ‘artistic genius’ or ‘being touched by divine inspiration’ was demonstrated by the artist’s skill in imitation, for example creating an image of nature that appeared more real than actual nature. Examples could be humans mistaking animals in a painting as real, or birds trying to peck painted berries (Kris & Kurtz 1979, 64–65).

For a long time in history, it seemed that an artist who had not been touched by divine inspiration could not achieve real excellence and genius. Inspiration happens when something such as feelings, emotions, impressions, or fantasies situated inside the artists mind or even in her unconsciousness is made visible to the audience. (Moffitt 2005, I, 100–101). This draws a picture of an artist who is like a shell, or an empty container suddenly filled with some mysterious force – similar to the Holy Spirit – arriving from an unknown source. It is hard to believe that this immaterial spirit-like force could create actual artworks. The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty noted in his essay *Eye and Mind* (2006) that the spirit alone cannot materialize ideas – as heavenly as those ideas might be – but needs a body. A real earth-bound body that combines vision and movement with a mind that is driven by a burning desire to create a painting from the surrounding world (ibid., 16–17)<sup>4</sup>.

Waiting for inspiration is not an option for me. As a practitioner, I do not like to see my role as one of a passive receiver or transmitter, but rather as an active partaker of the process. I am not looking for complete control over the process, but at least I need to be cast as ‘one of the main characters of the show’. I trust that this can be achieved by choosing consciously with the kind of sources of inspiration that I want to work with, but as inspiration is still regularly considered to be a mysterious force, the act of consciously selecting the sources of inspiration may seem questionable for some.

Even if the act of looking for sources of inspiration is premeditated, elements of the unconscious are never far away. Many potential sources of inspiration that the practitioner encounters might unconsciously affect the artistic process without her being aware of them – or even of the event happening. By actively seeking sources of inspiration and trying to understand their role, the practitioner also becomes more aware of unconscious

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<sup>4</sup> It is noteworthy that Merleau-Ponty has chosen to highlight the ‘surrounding world’ instead of the ‘spiritual world’.



inspiration. Conscious and unconscious<sup>5</sup> sources of inspiration are inherently entangled and therefore cannot be entirely understood or separated while the creative making processes constantly develop and transform.

To be able to better understand how I looked for and worked with sources of inspiration, I needed to better understand the different phases of my creative practice. However, I was not willing to make my creative process entirely transparent, as it inevitably holds parts that cannot be consciously understood, revealed, put into words, or made visible.<sup>6</sup> Artistic processes are frail and can break if an alien event or behaviour, such as performing in front of video camera or making notes frequently, is allowed to disturb them (see also Laamanen 2016, 61–62). By performing, I mean that if, for example, a camera is pointed at the practitioner 24/7, her ways of working will inevitably change. Instead of thinking and making, she will begin to act out ‘thinking’ and ‘making’. A video camera is also incapable of filming the happenings inside the practitioner’s mind, where a large part of the creative process takes place. I was heavily opposed to the idea of altering or subordinating my artistic practice to be a vehicle to the research (see also Scrivener 2000). Therefore, while incorporating research into artistic practice, I did not adopt methods that did not feel right to measure my artistic process. Instead, I created my own ways to do research based on my practice.

Australian academic and artist Barbara Bolt (2010, 185) also points out that practice has to be able to follow its own course, as over-thinking could cause the process to lose its capacity of transforming and fix too early. Bolt (ibid.) stresses that the “*logic of contemplation*” can interrupt “*the logic of practice*”. She borrows French philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s terms of ‘molecular and molar’ (as discussed in ibid., 157). Here, molecularity refers to vibrancy and the transfigurative character of the creative process, which can be replaced by “*molar mass*”, if “*consciousness*” and “*representational thinking*” enter the process too early (ibid., 185). The nature of the creative process is to become materialized in the immediate present, in

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- 5 By conscious and unconscious sources of inspiration, I refer to those that have been consciously chosen by the artist, and those that might have been unconsciously influencing the creative process, such as a song played on the radio, the colours of the lunch dish or some distant memory that affects how the artist unravels her ideas and processes.
- 6 Artist and researcher Maarit Mäkelä (1998) emphasised that these ‘holes’ in the ‘web’ of creation are an integral part of it - they are not something missing, the spider web functions as a metaphor to help in understanding that the holes can be part of the actual design.

the very moment of ‘creative happening’ with no fully premeditated plan. Anything, even a minor event can affect it and disturb its successful conduct.

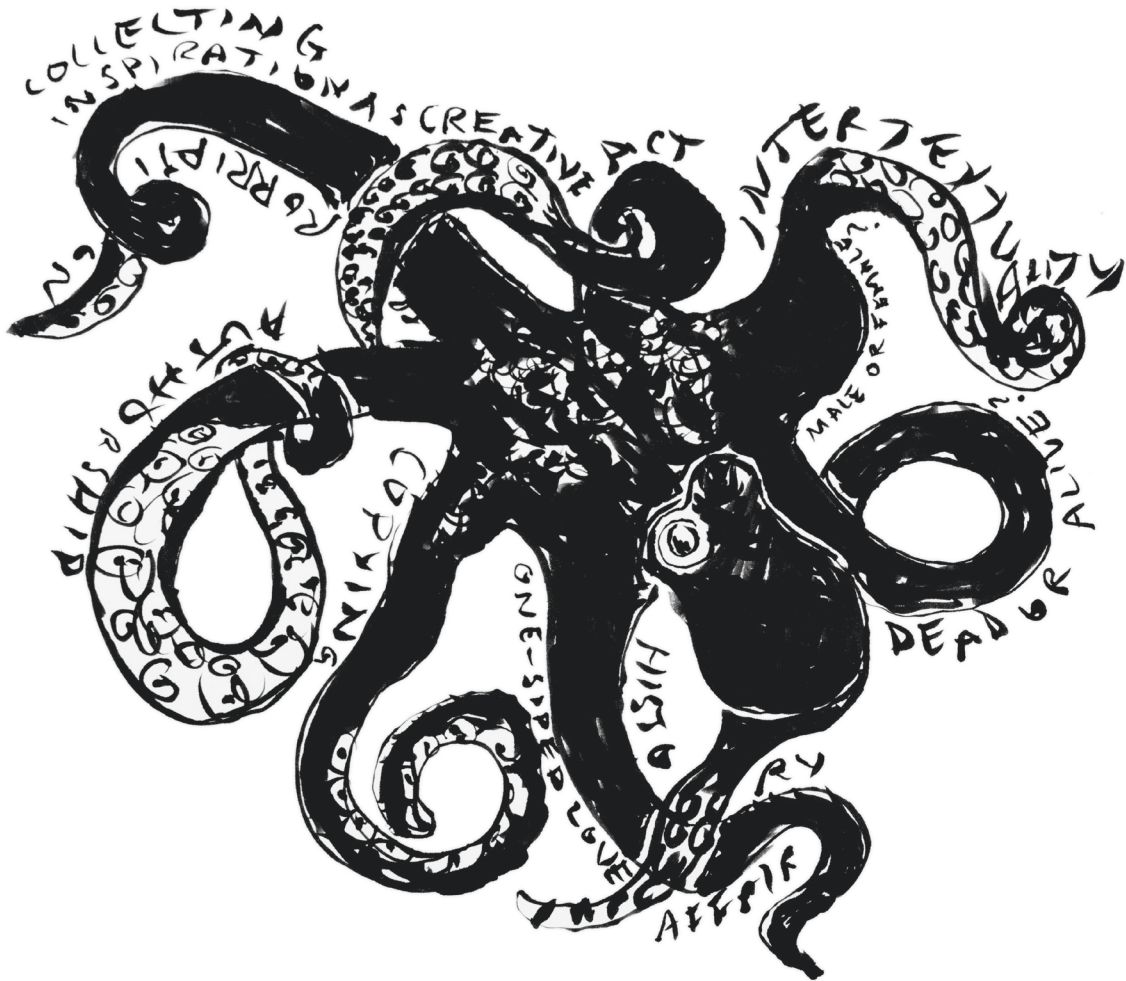
After some while, the roles of practitioner and researcher began to take place quite intuitively as part of my practice – sometimes they were even simultaneous. I would mostly follow my practice as normal, with some minor changes, such as ‘taking more photos’ and ‘notes’ during the making processes (see also Mäkelä & Nimkulrat 2018), but I could not even force myself to do that systematically. These new ways of working were incorporated little by little into my process, and I noticed nothing that suggested that writing my working diary and documenting my process consequently affected it. Slowly, while working, I began to broaden my knowledge of the role of sources of inspiration, and this new knowledge became a natural part of my thinking and making.

## 1.3 Dissertation structure

This dissertation is divided into 7 chapters. In the **first**, I introduce the topic and the research questions. I explain how the topic of sources of inspiration began to interest me and the kinds of questions that arose from my initial inquiry. I also stress that this research is based on my practice and therefore presents an artistic view of the topic.

In the **second** part, I present the theoretical foundation for this study, which includes some literature along with my own reflections based on literature and personal practice. When I was looking for information on my topic, the sources of inspiration, I found no single clear direction; instead, I ended up finding bits and pieces in different areas: art, art history, philosophy, and sociology of the arts (see image 02). The reader will soon notice that the literature is not directly talking about the sources of inspiration, but more often generally about ‘inspiration’ and neighbouring concepts such as imitation, intertextuality, authenticity or copying. I go through each of these concepts by relying on contemporary theorists and classic references such as *The Laws of Imitation* (2015) from French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, which was first published in 1890 in French, German philosopher Walter Benjamin’s concept of Aura (1936), along with French philosophers Roland Barthes’s (1968) and Michel Foucault’s (1969) inquiries into the shifting roles of the author during the 1960s.

The idea of inspiration dates all the way back to antiquity, which makes many older texts still relevant. Many of my theoretical findings are also based on French sociologist of the arts Nathalie Heinich’s (1955–) thinking. She has been deeply investigating the evolution of the artist’s role and the creation myth (see, for example, Heinich 1996a, 2016). My own theoretical thinking developed not only through literature but also through my own practice. Therefore, the theory of this thesis is mostly based on my practice that accompanied the four and half first years of



02 I could not find a clear direction; instead, I ended up investigating several neighbouring concepts such as imitation, intertextuality, authenticity or copying. At the end, the theory section resembled an octopus, with new arms constantly growing. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

the dissertation process, whereas writing this monography became full-time work only in the fifth and beginning of the sixth year. Without my intensive practice and the reflective process which it involved, I would have not been able to create the thinking and understanding that was vital in conducting this study.

In the **third** chapter, I explain how this research was designed and talk more about the methods. There, I elucidate my main method, which I have named 'exhibition making'. Therefore, the principal focus of this thesis lies in my artistic practice and artworks, as they enabled me to make sense of the topic and related literature. Three exhibitions organized between 2017 and 2020 were evaluated as the artistic part of this research. Each of three exhibition projects took 18–20 months to make, and sometimes these processes overlapped with each other. Naturally, these working periods were also filled with studying, writing and the duties of everyday life. Through my working diary notes and sketches, I try to elucidate what happened in the studio during those long months. The longer the study continued, the more valuable the working diaries became. Sketching proved to play a decisive role in this research, and later I realized that in order to facilitate my visual thinking, I needed to draw. Drawing brought me closer to my unconscious and thinking processes that I was not always aware of, and it presented a practical tool for artistic research (see also Mäkelä & al. 2014, 4). Through sharing some of my sketches in this chapter, I visualize how my thinking developed through the sketching practice.

The role of the exhibitions in some ways confirms the answers to my research questions, creates some distance and offers me a tool to reflect upon what I had done. Sometimes, various inquiries related to case studies became mixed in the exhibitions, as only when they were presented did I begin to grasp what the artworks were really about. While the creative process was ongoing, many of my decisions were made unconsciously and were therefore hard to understand before the exhibitions and finalized artworks materialized them.

In the **fourth** chapter, I concentrate on the main findings gained through practice, though often intertwined with theory and literature, which helped me to interpret my own processes and confirm some of my findings. I read and wrote alternately throughout the thesis process, and that greatly helped me to reflect upon my ongoing practice. This chapter has been divided into three case studies, each of which answers a specific research question. The case studies were based on my three doctoral exhibitions and albeit that these exhibitions did not directly and explicitly state



answers, they helped me to uncover the right directions which eventually led to defining the case studies and the main findings of this study.

The **fifth** part will present the general discussion, attempting to put this study in a wider context and proposing possible future implications. The **sixth** chapter is a summary, and the **seventh** chapter presents a catalogue of the artefacts that I made during this study. Not all the artefacts are included as not all of them made it to the exhibitions either. Nonetheless, I will share more artworks here than in the exhibitions. The artworks will be presented with the sources of inspiration noted next to the pieces. This gives the reader a realistic idea of the practice that was conducted while making this study. Artworks were like little stepping stones that brought me closer to the topic and helped me to realize what this was all about. Learning was not linear, and often I had to repeat the things that I was making, which ended in a vast collection of similar objects in different colours in glass and numerous pieces of ceramics with flowers, flames and animals.

Throughout this thesis, the voice will change from the passive to the singular first person. The passive is used mostly for theory sourced from the literature or more general observations. When using the singular first person, I highlight matters based on my personal inquiries. In addition, I am weaving my own voice into most theoretical findings as a thread to link it with my own thinking and even more importantly to my practice, which represents the foundation of this thesis.

Kindly note, that a version of chapter 5.1. *Monet and me – The story of an inspiration* was published in 2018 in *Synnyt/Origins* 3/2018, and a version of 5.2. *Warhol and me – Battle of the authors* was published in *Research in Arts & Education* 1/2021; parts of this latter paper are also included in the chapter 2.5 *Worrying about authenticity and ownership issues*.







# 2

## **A Bottomless Well of Inspiration: Theoretical Foundation**

## 2 A Bottomless Well of Inspiration: Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation opens a wide spectrum of themes related to inspiration. Through these various approaches, I try to better draw out the overall concept of inspiration.

Inspiration and the creative process as a whole seem to be increasingly interesting both researchers and general public. I have already studied inspiration through my own creative process in my M.A. thesis,<sup>7</sup> and the inspiration and the ideation<sup>8</sup> processes in textile design have been investigated, for example, by Finnish craft and design researchers Tarja-Kaarina Laamanen and Pirita Seitamaa-Hakkarainen (e.g. 2008, 2014a, 2014b). Accordingly, in Finland the ‘creative process’ has been at the centre of several artistic dissertations, amongst them being Teemu Mäki (2005) and Tarja Pitkänen-Walter (2006) from the Academy of Fine Arts, and Maarit Mäkelä (2003) and Outi Turpeinen (2005) from Aalto University. The concept of inspiration has also been incorporated into exhibitions such as Dutch fashion designer Dries Van Noten’s<sup>9</sup> *Inspirations*<sup>10</sup> or *Dior and Impressionism*,<sup>11</sup> both of which presented possible sources of inspiration and influences behind fashion design processes (Golbin 2014; Muller et al. 2013). More recently, the touring exhibition *Christian Dior, Designer of*

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7 *Archaeology of Inspiration* (Inspiraation arkeologia, 2015) presented eight different textile design cases, each of which had a different source of inspiration and working method. At the end, I felt that I had outlined the structure of the creative process well, but my main subject ‘inspiration’ remained in an abstract state. This gave me the idea of conducting further research.

8 The element ‘idea’ in this term ‘ideation’ can be thought of as “a prototype”, something that “is prior to our worldly experience” (Bolt 2010, 126-127).

9 Dries Van Noten (1985-)

10 Musée des Arts Décoratifs 1.3.-31.8.2014, Paris

11 Musée Christian Dior 5.5.-22.9.2013, Granville



*Dreams*<sup>12</sup> followed a similar path. Lately, in Finland, *Inspiration – Contemporary Art & Classics*<sup>13</sup> investigated the relations between iconic artworks and contemporary art.

While I was working on my M.A. thesis, I had already noticed that there was little literature available about the sources of inspiration or the creative process of artists, albeit there exist several carefully edited catalogues, within which certain artists' works are linked to previous artists' expression, style, or similar topic of interest. In these catalogues,<sup>14</sup> the already existing works are thus presented if not as an inspirational source, at least as works of reference. My main interest was above all to find information generated by other artists themselves, against which I could reflect my own experiences as a practitioner. Autobiographical texts often offer a more holistic view of an artist's life and interests but less practical information about what happened in the studio and inside the artist's mind while planning and creating the artworks. A common explanation for why artists have not been especially keen to write about their personal explorations could be that traditionally practitioners have been practising (being inside the process) and researchers researching these processes from the outside.

Many artists and designers see their practice in other forms than written words. For example, I see and remember the world mainly visually. I observe the world with endless curiosity, and if something catches my interest, I sometimes gaze at it so intensely that my eyes become sore. If I go to several exhibitions in a short period of time and encounter various stimulating things, I get the sensation of being overloaded with visual information. At that moment, I need to take break and rest my eyes and mind. This intense way of looking at some things helps me to comprehend and remember them, the more I pay attention to them, the more vivid the memory becomes. The words 'remember' and 'memory' seem to present the key concepts here, with their help I have been building a visual database. My knowledge develops by observing the relations between artefacts, eras, styles, and artists.

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**12** Musée des Arts Décoratifs 5.7.2017–7.1.2018, Paris and Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) 2.8.–1.9.2019, London

**13** Ateneum, Finnish National Gallery 18.6.–20.9.2020, Helsinki

**14** The examples include, for example, the catalogues of Edward Munch (Prelinger & Robinson 2010), Paul Gauguin (Ives & Stein 2002) and J.W. Waterhouse (Prettejohn et al. 2008).



In my experience, 'reading' seems to be appreciated over 'looking' (see also Dewey<sup>15</sup> 2005, 76–77). People rarely ask each other what they have seen lately, and even if they did, they would most probably refer to a recent movie or an art exhibition, not some specific visual finding. It could be related to the fact that a visual memory is harder to explain merely with words, without showing images. In addition, we do not perceive things in precisely the same manner: the blue of the sky may appear grey for someone else. Even today, when most of us have mobile phones, resulting in a multitude of images reduced to miniatures and admired on the screen, words seem to hold an incontestable power position in our world. American philosopher Susanne Langer<sup>16</sup> (1957, 22–23) explains that this might be related to the fact that if something seems formless, unknown and new, or is for some other reason, such as its abstractness or complexity, hard to put into words, it is hard to think about in a logical manner and also communicate it to others.

Even if it is hard to 'tell a picture' without showing it, there is no reason why we could not communicate with the help of images we either perceive or imagine. Consequently, I will challenge the reader to imagine various visual things, artefacts, artists, and eras that I am talking about in this study. Imagination requires time; sometimes, understanding a work of art can take a similar amount of time to reading an old and heavy classic. While others were reading and gaining literal information, I was looking at images: in art books, fashion magazines, exhibitions or observing visuals of every-day life and becoming fascinated by changes in the light. I was not just looking at the table, or a room or a building, but observing closely the gradations of the colour, the impression of space and so on. Langer (1957, 30–31) describes how when we see a red sofa in daylight, in general we do not look at the different shades that the light creates on its surface, we see in a way very little, only what we need in order to know that there is a red sofa in the room.

It takes effort to look at things with intensity, and that is what I did; I used all my concentration to look at a great number of things that interested me. Sometimes, I found myself also looking at things that interested me less; it was as if I had become obsessed with looking and trying to create and collect visual memories of things. It resembled an unconscious

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15 Philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey's *Art as Experience* was first published in 1934.

16 Langer's *Problems of Art: Ten Philosophical Lectures* was published in 1957.

hobby. Later, I found myself obsessively dreaming again and again about what I had seen. As a consequence, the knowledge in this study has been gathered not only by reading, but also by looking and dreaming of things. Words, discourse, and drawings are needed when we seek to captivate our abstract ideas and grasp concepts. When discussing with a person who does not share the same spoken language, drawing and images become a powerful tool of communication. Remembering images and increasing one's visual database might be just as important as learning 'languages'.

## 2.1 A short history of inspiration

Even though the principal focus of this study is the significance and use of sources of inspiration in my current practice, I began by looking into some historical characteristics of the inspiration concept. My main reference has been art historian John F. Moffitt's *Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth* (2005), which is centred on the creation of Michelangelo's statue Bacchus from 1497. Moffitt himself pointed out that a comprehensive view of the concept of inspiration in art history seems to be lacking (ibid., 11).

Having inspiration was (and still appears to be) obligatory for an artist in order to become successful and be recognized as someone who is in possession of real talent (Moffitt 2005, 1). Inspiration is a not a new concept, as it has been known since antiquity. It has transformed during different times from being divine or muse-derived (from divine sources or god himself) to a strictly internal emotion that does not need external input (ibid., 186–187, 189–190, 192; Fumaroli 1989, 41). The 'Muses',<sup>17</sup> that the Ancient Greeks worshipped, inspired arts such as poetry, even though it is notable that there were none for either painting or sculpture (Moffitt 2005, 60; Fumaroli 1989, 41). There were several ways to achieve the state of inspiration: for example, in the Graeco-Latin terminology, inspiration could only happen via the means of "*ecstasy, transport, enthusiasm, or even intoxication*" (Moffitt 2005, 1). Even as long ago as classical antiquity, inspiration was closely connected to the concept of 'genius'<sup>18</sup> ("*ingenium*

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17 The word 'muse' was the basis for the word 'museum', a place for the cult of muses (Fumaroli 1989, 41).

18 The concept of 'genius' was already known in antiquity, even though the word 'genius' entered the English language only around 1500 (Moffitt 2005, 187).

– *native talent or endowment*”), which meant that a person who had access to inspiration had to be an exceptional being (ibid., 187).

For a long time, the idea of an external inspiration that was ‘blown’ into the receptive artist was dominant. Moffitt (2005, 56–57) points out how senseless it seems to celebrate something that was compared to ‘intoxication’, whereby the artist touched by inspiration would lose her own mind and surrender to unconsciousness without the capability of controlling the outcome of the creative process. Descriptions of such artistic moments can be found as far back as the early texts by Plato or Socrates. The inspirational drunken state was granted by the god or gods and sobriety belonged to the world of ordinary mortals; it was “*merely human*” according to Socrates (ibid.). This kind of idea of inspiration influenced the concept until the 14th century. During Plato’s time, poets recited aloud and made movements in the space they were in, and even the muses were described as dancers. Renaissance culture was largely based on written texts and amplified the inner space. For example, poems were now read alone and in silence. The creator was seen as someone with a “*melancholic temperament*”, another feature that was added to the condition of having inspiration. (Ibid., 59–60.)

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the idea of a muse-derived inspiration was still very much alive but began slowly altering. In contrast to previous centuries, artists became known as individuals for what they were – extraordinary creatures with “*natural talent*” – and not for their skills, even though external inspiration<sup>19</sup> was still expected (Moffitt 2005, 183–184). The idea of inspiration gained even greater value than earlier, as the practitioner who had it and could also touch audiences’ feelings did not need to deliver perfect craft.

An innate talent could surpass expectations of traditional mechanical perfection and beauty (ibid., 184–186, 189.) In addition, the concept of ‘artistic genius’ was combined with the concept of originality: works of art had to be original enough to be considered to have been made by an artistic genius. Significantly, the 18th century saw the switch from external inspiration to a more subjective concept, internal inspiration, something an individual already had inside. “*Reason*” lost out in the face of emotionality and the capacity to create moving art (ibid., 189–190.) Artists were no longer in need of external inspiration as they were thought to possess their ideas for the creative work inside of them (ibid.). Inspiration was an

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19 External inspiration/force was described as a “*divine gift, divine instinct from heaven, divine intinction or celestial intinction*” (Moffitt 2005, 183–184).

innate characteristic that could neither be taught nor copied (ibid., 14–16). I wonder how the quantity or innateness of inspiration was ‘measured’ at the time? Today, it would probably be related to social media likes or search engine hits. Nevertheless, the 18th century made a significant difference to the concept of inspiration: it changed its origin from external to internal. Alongside industrialisation, wealth was redistributed from landowners to the bourgeoisie and a slow democratisation of art started. As a result, art became an interest for an ever-growing audience, who wanted author-creators with distinct personality (ibid., 190–191). Artistic genius was now recognized for 2 qualities: “*originality*” and “*subjectivity*” (ibid., 191).

By the end of the 19th century, the concept of genius had fused solidly with inspiration (now understood as one being born with innate talent and endowment) (Moffitt 2005, 186–187.) The artist had become something invincible, almost like a super-hero who was freed from the limitations of the common world. The main reading of this concept of inspiration began to resemble ‘self-expression’. The term self-expression is historically linked with the French Symbolist movement and the birth of the ‘Fauves’, which included, for example, the French painter Henri Matisse.<sup>20</sup> The German term ‘art of emotionalism’ turned into ‘Expressionism’ at the beginning of 20th century (ibid., 2005, 12–13). It seemed as if ‘self-expression’, ‘artistic expression’, ‘inspiration’ and ‘genius’ were all fusing together.

During the 20th century and the birth of a number of novel artistic movements such as Abstract expressionism, there was a notion that a skill could be achieved by anybody, but ‘inspiration’ was the characteristic which separated ‘real artists’ from ‘wrong artists’: “*In other words, Inspiration (not a college diploma) is what fundamentally separates the certifiably ‘real’ artists from the thronging masses of ordinary folk and/or would-be artists*” (Moffitt 2005, 15). An artist who was ‘inspired’ showed a specific sense or instinct in her practice: choice of colours, composition, technique and so on (ibid., 2005, 16). Inspiration had become something much more human-originated. Something that an artist either did or did not possess innately, but which did not come from an exterior (divine) source. Following this logic, my use of external sources of inspiration could then be considered to be ‘cheating’ and ‘pretending’ to be a ‘real artist’. As if my inner inspiration did not suffice to generate the essence of my artistic expression, but I needed to have recourse to extracorporeal sources of inspiration. Comfortingly, Moffitt (2005, 35) describes how Michelangelo was most probably influ-

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20 Henri Matisse (1869–1954)



enced by previous now-vanished statues dealing with “*Bacchic frenzy*” or Plato’s text *Phaedrus* (which mentions “*Poet’s Divine Inspiration*”) when he carved his *Bacchus*. These missing statues were described in text during the Renaissance based upon the descriptions of Greek and Roman authors (ibid.) So, as far back as the 15th century, Michelangelo was working with external sources of inspiration. This is the path that I follow.

The concept of inspiration of today travelled far from antiquity’s divine gift or later idea of internal inspiration, which was the sign of a quality artist. Today, the amount of external or internal inspiration is not measured in the art academy entrance exams. They have been replaced by other virtues such as the richness of ideas, passion for creative work



**03** *Slaughtered Ox* (1655) by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, oil on beech wood, 94 × 69 cm, Louvre Museum, Paris. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

and capacity for adaptation to various (artistic) situations. The concept of inspiration has in many respects transformed into the notion of 'sources of inspiration'. The artist herself selects which sources of inspiration enter into dialogue with her process and affect the outcome in some way. More conscious collaboration replaces the previously believed divine mystery – which does not mean there is no magic left in the creative process. These encounters between practitioners and their sources of inspiration can often lead to enchanting, close to other-worldly experiences.

I could not find this notion of 'sources of inspiration' in Moffitt's (2005) text; he talks solely about the concept of 'inspiration'. He might have considered that sources of inspiration do not properly exist outside the concept of inspiration or that these two concepts walk so closely hand in hand that they do not need to be discussed separately. It was probably no earlier than the 20th century that the concept of sources of inspiration became a topic of discussion, although it cannot be an entirely new discovery. Somehow, when I imagine a Renaissance painter planning the composition with alive and dead flowers and foodstuffs, maybe some heavy velvet and stuffed animals, I can imagine this artist being inspired by the subjects of his choice. At the same time, it seems probable that his fellow artists and their artworks functioned as fuel for the creative process. There were attractive models (also sometimes called muses) as well. Artists had some freedom in selecting their topics: think, for example, of Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* (1655) (see image 03), which seems still today to be ahead of its time. I can only imagine Rembrandt being obsessed and moved by the scene of this skinned animal, as I doubt it could have been a custom work ordered by a local butcher.

Today, it can be held that the originality and talent of the artists is also measured by their capacity to select and work with interesting sources of inspiration. These sources do not solely link artists to the past and to tradition but also to the present surrounding world.

## 2.2 From the fear of blank paper to the usefulness of sources of inspiration

Why would sources of inspiration be needed? It seems clear that what is often called the ‘fear of blank paper’, ‘writer’s block’<sup>21</sup> or ‘creative block’, something which has troubled creative practitioners over the centuries, could be overcome with the help of suitable sources of inspiration. Evidently, the same sources of inspiration do not work for everybody, but instead they are based on individual taste.

When I worked as a lecturer in the Aalto University’s Department of Design, I noticed several students struggling either to find ideas or to select suitable ones from among too many possibilities. I remember having similar experiences when I was younger – finding an idea interesting enough to overrule all the others and motivate the process until the end. Instead, I was constantly changing my mind and objects of interest: I could not help but become easily moved by all kinds of things, from old comics to the colour of pistachio ice-cream. I felt as if I was drowning in a sea of possible sources of inspiration. It was impossible to select ALL of them, the process would have been too messy and burdensome, and I would not have been able to advance. At the time, the whole affair of becoming inspired felt mostly chaotic. The hardest part was to learn how to choose the sources of inspiration that felt right and could function for my practice at that moment and consequently learn to let go of other possible sources of inspiration.

Merely the idea of starting a new artistic project can feel challenging, even before defining a starting point or selecting possible sources of

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**21** Writer’s block means that a writer faces a ‘blockage’ that obstructs her from writing, being able to imagine how a story develops, or even how it could start; it prevents the writer from engaging in creative work (Konnikova 2016). In general, it is thought that a similar blockage can be faced by practitioners of any field.

inspiration. The profound nature of the creative process, without a doubt, includes uncertainty (Kosonen 2018, 4). One cannot define everything beforehand, as creative processes are open-ended. Art theorist and writer Katve-Kaisa Kontturi (2018) stresses that “*making as process is open-ended; it is not about making some ‘thing’ (quotes added by author), but about letting the process of making do its own work*” (ibid., 17). As physicist, philosopher and feminist Karen Barad crystallized it: “*The future is radically open at every turn*” (Barad 2008, 143); each step of the creative process is a step towards the unknown. This openness can feel frightening; at the beginning, the practitioner might fear not selecting the best idea, not finding the ‘right’ sources of inspiration or even be afraid to consciously select any sources as it might endanger her own voice and artistic expression.

Most practitioners do not feel comfortable talking openly about their creative unfinished processes or their sources of inspiration. The first moments of the ideation processes are still invisible, happening in the imagination (Laamanen 2018, 2, 8). While the creative process is just slowly shaping in the practitioner’s mind, it can feel rather frail, like an array of abstract ideas that are slowly shaping and possibly on their way to becoming something more tangible. A creative process needs its time and a quiet place of its own to finally materialize. It is likely that majority of practitioners wish to conceal their unfinished processes due to their uncertain character or the fear of ‘losing’ the idea to somebody else. Only when some certainty is discovered do practitioners feel comfortable talking about it. I suggest that by unveiling their ideas practitioners might be able to better protect them, claiming that these [ideas] are ‘theirs’.

Exchanging ideas and experiences can be very inspiring. When interests are spoken about together, they can develop and become stronger. While studying, I remember sharing many struggles and impassioned moments, such as feeling inspired with and by fellow students. The inspiration I received from them influenced my interests, aesthetics, and the content of my artworks. For me, these seemed to be some of the most creative times I have experienced. When ideas are shared and inspiration flows freely, there is no such thing as fear of white paper.

It is noteworthy that the importance of inspiration is felt in both artistic practice and writing. Where looking at and learning about artworks makes me want to create some myself, reading gives me the motivation to write. Sometimes it is not even this linear, and artworks might give me the inspiration to write and, vice versa, reading inspire making of the artworks. **The process of inspiration is involved with all creative making.** I had not always been aware of this regarding my writing process, but after this

realization, I understood that often reading fuels my thinking. It makes me feel differently, it gives me a wider perspective, and suddenly I am equipped with options that I was not aware existed before. Sometimes this process seems to enable me to better discern my own thinking: reading gives me enthusiasm and the strength to go on with my own thinking and writing.

Sources of inspiration can be an important tool for all the kinds of communication that take place around artistic processes. They help explain one's ideas even though they might still be in an abstract state – only existing in thoughts. Sharing ideas can become necessary when working with collaborators, or, for example, presenting ideas to a possible client or a gallerist. Sources of inspiration help to describe not only the project's characteristics but also the professional identity and likings of the practitioner herself.

For me, sources of inspiration present an important motivation. They are not merely visual references but take part in shaping the experience of the artistic process. When I find something appealing, it often gives me the urge to create something myself. So, finding an interesting source shifts into my own process. These sources act primarily as a starting point – they can provide the motivation to start working. However, they also accompany gloomy moments of creation when I feel too tired to go on, when my 'own' ideas bore me to death. The relationship between the source of inspiration and my own work is often present in the outcome of my works, although often in a nearly invisible way, like a secret between me and the sources. They act as a good movie or a delicious cup of coffee. They make the imagination alive again. Sources of inspiration are the very opposite of the 'white paper'.

After I started to consciously work with sources of inspiration, it still took me several years and numerous projects to understand what their role in my personal practice was and how to make the collaboration the most fruitful. It was not only about love and admiration or receiving unconditional motivation. Working with sources of inspiration is not an automatic way towards easier processes: often, they challenge my thinking and instead of finding my way to be straightforward, I start to question myself. They offer me novel ideas and propose new ways of making. This is probably when sources of inspiration help me the most. I cannot recall a time when I experienced the fear of blank paper; instead, I started to learn how not to get distracted by an overflow of sources of inspiration and only concentrate on a few at the same time.

Even without selecting conscious sources of inspiration, I believe that my process is inevitably influenced by numerous things, ideas, and



other makers, which pushes me to uncover my processes. Most often these possible sources make my process feel more valuable as I feel a connection to the world and its past. Ergo, I do not feel alone, empty or abandoned in my practice.

Most individuals are influenced by what they see and experience through their life (see also Dewey 2005, 74). Understanding where ideas come from helps to understand one's personal thinking processes and plan artistic ones. It also changes the way one looks at other artworks and visuals of the world, as they all have roots and influences somewhere in the past.

## 2.3 Many kinds of sources of inspiration

*Playing with words: 'Inspire(----expire)', I say to myself before I take a deep inspiration, always followed by an expiration. Inspiration is taken in and expiration is given out.*

There exist various kinds of sources of inspiration, such as places, people, music, words, weather – from the smell of marsh tea (*Ledum palustre*) evoking childhood memories to unexpected encounters with new acquaintances. Sometimes, practitioners might not even name these events ‘sources of inspiration’ but perhaps something else, such as ‘visions’ or possibly ‘conceptions’; they are things that manage to touch something inside and create a trace in the memory. In my case, I have always felt that I could become inspired by a surprisingly wide array of things (see image 04). Most of the time, what seems to be required for me to become inspired is receiving enough information about some new topic. This might arouse my curiosity and motivate me to go and find out even more – until I become ‘impregnated’ by the essence of this new topic. Sometimes it is sufficient to meet someone who is obsessed about something and who manages to transfer her enthusiasm to me; such an encounter led, for example, to me developing an ardent passion for French football. Naturally, not everything that stirs my interest influences my artistic processes.

In the following, I present a few topics that have inspired several artists in the past. Most examples are (once again) based on my personal preferences; I wanted to discover what inspired the artists who inspire me. In addition, I point out some more critical aspects related to working with certain sources of inspiration.

**Travelling** has been one of the traditional ways of finding inspiration for artists and designers. Matisse travelled to Polynesia, where he was inspired by its extraordinary nature, light, sky, and the sea. These

travels influenced some of his most famous papercut artworks (Deparpe & al. 2013, 69–73) (see image 05). It is vitally important to point out that many of these travels during the late 19th and early 20th century, where European artists sourced inspiration from the otherness, followed colonialism. French painter Paul Gauguin,<sup>22</sup> for example, was looking for primitivism, love (young mistresses) and an inexpensive cost of living<sup>23</sup> (Solomon-Godeau 1992, 320, 326). In Gauguin's primitivism there was the paradoxical idea that by travelling far it was possible to truly find oneself (Solomon-Godeau 1992, 315). His travels influenced a number of peers such as German Expressionist Emil Nolde,<sup>24</sup> who got the spark from Gauguin to travel to the Far East, all the way to New Guinea (Schaeffner & Lambert 1972, 35–42, 183).

Artists of today still have the desire to discover new places and cultures, in order to find themselves or to find 'something else'. As a consequence, there is a growing number of international residency programmes.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to notice that even though several artists might travel to the same place, none of them create similar artworks based on their experience. Some are interested in the landscape, whereas others, for example, might focus upon the inhabitants.

**04** This sketch (2019) of a ceramic vase (see final version *Nudes and Flowers II* on p. 281) demonstrates my love of popular culture. *Friday I'm in Love* (1992) is a song by British rock band Cure and the intertwined snakes reflect my interest in traditional Japanese tattoo art. Yves Saint Laurent's 'LOVE posters' with their snake designs might have also influenced me. Dry pastel and marker on paper, 25,2 × 18,9 cm. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

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**22** Paul Gauguin (1848–1903)

**23** American art historian and educator Whitney Chadwick (2007, 290) described Gauguin as a white male painting "native women in a colonized society".

**24** Nolde's (1867–1956) and Gauguin's examples also demonstrate how artists can influence each other. It is probable that when Nolde saw the artistic impact of Gauguin's travels, it gave him an idea of what he himself could achieve via such excursions to faraway destinations.

**25** The colonialist shadow might not have been entirely eradicated, as Canadian artist-researcher Marnie Badham (2017) notes that there can still be concerns with some artists' residencies which involve working with vulnerable communities that artists are not properly familiar with.



31.8.-19.19  
~~19.11.19~~



05 **Oceania, the Sea (realized as silkscreen 1946) by Henri Matisse. Gouache in paper, cut and pasted, on paper, mounted on canvas (178,3 × 369,7 cm).** Credit: Private Collection © Succession H. Matisse/ DACS 2022/ Photo © Christie's Images/ Bridgeman images.

**Muses** can be considered another classic means to find inspiration. They were historically often thought to be women, repeatedly presented as “powerless and sexually subjugated”, objects of the male gaze (Chadwick 2007, 279). For example, Spanish artist Pablo Picasso<sup>26</sup> famously had a great number of muses – simultaneously models and lovers – such as Dora Maar<sup>27</sup> (Abdelouahab 2012, 132–133). Their relationship was so obsessive that Maar felt like a prisoner when Picasso repeatedly painted her (ibid., 134). Another Spanish artist, Salvador Dalí,<sup>28</sup> had as his muse his beloved wife, Gala<sup>29</sup>. She was described as representing multiple things for Dalí, such as “his life, his mother, sister, inspiration, wife, lover” (ibid., 119). Obviously, Gala held a central place in Dalí’s oeuvre while acting as his mentor (ibid., 120, 122).

26 Pablo Picasso (1881–1973)

27 Henriette Theodora Markovič, known as Dora Maar (1907–1997), was a French-Croatian photographer, poet and painter.

28 Salvador Dalí (1904–1989)

29 Russian-Spanish Elena Ivanovna Diakonov was known as Gala Dalí (1894–1982).



**Historical moments** such as the conquest of space, for instance, can inspire. Finnish Marimekko textile designer and artist Maija Isola<sup>30</sup> admired Astronaut Juri Gagarin and was troubled by the sad destiny of Laika,<sup>31</sup> the first dog in space. Isola created a textile series called *Space* in 1969, in which stylized moons and planets were shown in hues of blues and oranges (Aav & al. 2005, 66–67). The daily news about violence, death and catastrophes acted as inspiration for Warhol's art. He ended up copying newspaper images such as car crashes and electric chairs in his artworks (Honnef 1991, 50–53, 59–62). Warhol's example demonstrates how negative things can act as sources of inspiration – artists might have a 'message' that they wish to convey through their art and influence the thinking of their audience.

**Places** can also act as sources of inspiration. Monet had been living in his house in Giverny for a long time before he grasped the sublimity of his own garden (see image 06). As an ardent gardener, he had planted different colours of waterlilies in his pond without ever actually thinking of painting them. After realizing their beauty, Monet spent the last three decades of his life painting them and the rest of the garden. Many famous artworks such as the *Orangerie* museum's large waterlily paintings were created during that time (Denizeau 2012, 28–29.) Even though the garden was a familiar place for Monet, it took him time to begin to consider it as a source of inspiration, and when he finally did, he never grew tired of it.

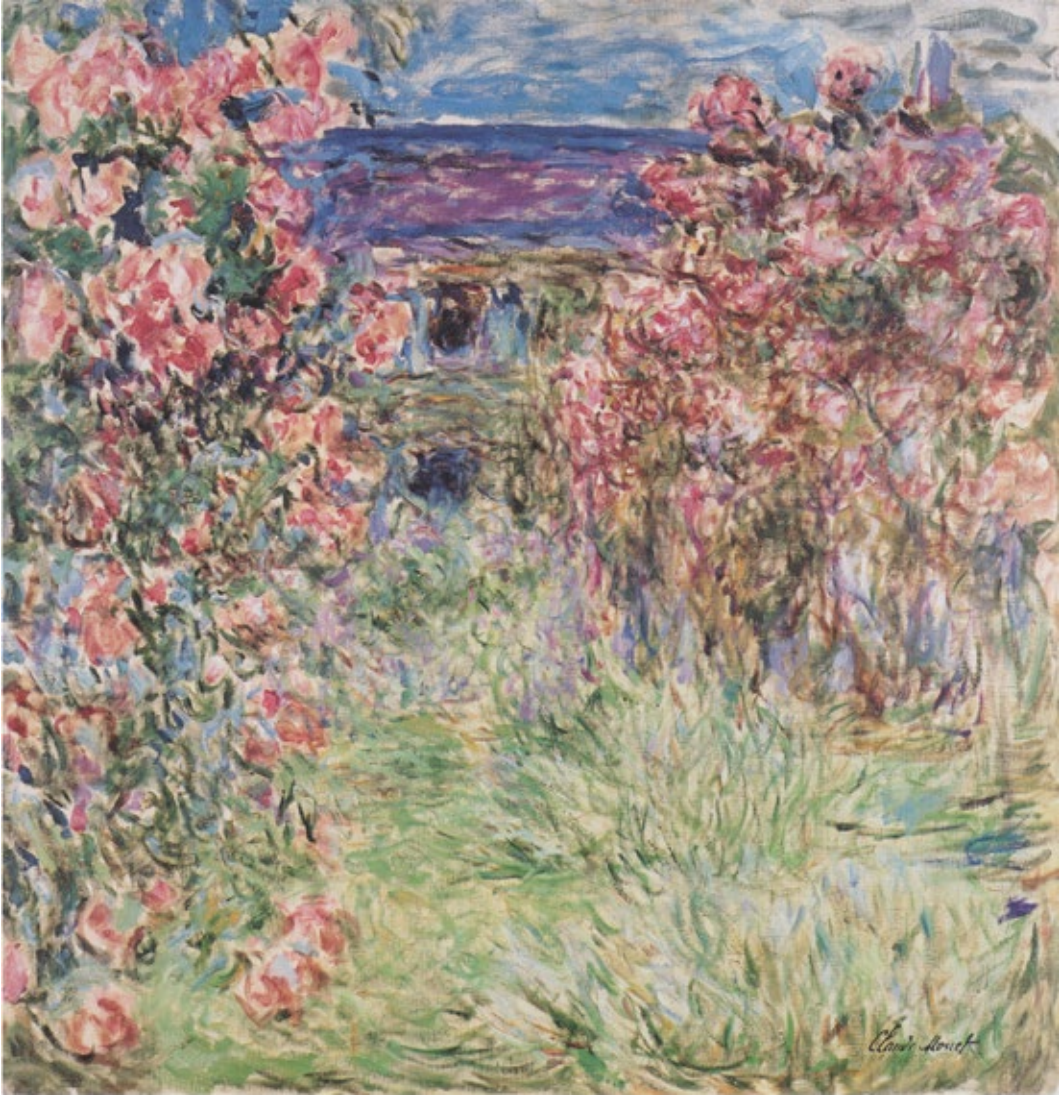
American artist Mike Kelley<sup>32</sup> (Kelley & Pontégnie 2009, 21) created an architectural model that showed all the schools where Kelley had ever studied, from kindergarten to graduate art school, called *Educational Complex*. From outside, the building looked quite accurate, as Kelley used photographs and floor plans as help, but the interiors were reconstructed from his memories, which caused around 80% of the space to be left blank as Kelley had forgotten what was there (ibid.). Kelley was inspired not only by the places (his previous schools) but also the fact that he could not remember how they looked like. The holes in his memory were part of the inspiration, which shows that in general even though some of the sources of inspiration can be named, the actual process is generally more complex, and artists are simultaneously inspired by various things or various aspects of the same thing.

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**30** Maija Isola (1927–2001)

**31** Laika was a Russian street dog, which died around three years old in 1957.

**32** Mike Kelley (1954–2012)



- 06 ***The House among the Roses*** (circa 1917-1919) by Claude Monet, oil on canvas, 100 × 200 cm, ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna. The painting presents the painter's garden and home in Giverny. I saw this painting during the autumn of 2021, and I was surprised how Monet had left the canvas visible; it had a very effortless and modern feeling. Image: Wikimedia Commons/ Monet: Catalogue Raisonné, (1956).

**Other artists** present a significant source of inspiration for many practitioners, whether it is an artist from the past or the present. Practitioners are influenced selectively by their time, and as professionals they most probably follow what happens in their respective fields and the surrounding art world. They will not be inspired by everything but mostly by things which reflect their own practice in an interesting way – artists who work with similar themes, techniques, or ways of presenting their art. Or it can be quite the opposite: artists can become very inspired by something they would have never thought of themselves. Getting to know about art outside of the practitioner’s own speciality and even entire field widens their perspective and can function as a means to grasp new things, as visual people will often learn just by looking at things. Some artists openly talk about artists which inspire them. For example, the Finnish photographer and artist Jan Kaila (2002, 52–54) listed aspects that inspired him in Christian Boltanski’s art. First the “*strategy of recycling*” – the way the artist used ready(-made) material and images taken by others – along with Boltanski’s inventory of historical objects (resembling a museum inventory) and the artist’s specific ways of presenting his artworks in exhibitions (ibid.).

On the wall of his studio, French–Hungarian artist Simon Hantai<sup>33</sup> had images of Paul Cézanne’s,<sup>34</sup> Jackson Pollock’s<sup>35</sup> and Matisse’s artworks, which mixed perfectly with his own sketches, even a French bread called “*fougasse*” hung on the wall (Fourcade et al. 2013, 294). This influence (or dialogue between artists) can be detected in Hantai’s works: for example, the influence of Pollock’s drip paintings seems visible in Hantai’s series called *Études et Blancs*, which he painted during the period 1969–1973 (ibid., 158–181).

Isola stated boldly that she was influenced by a number of artists, from Edward Munch<sup>36</sup> to Monet, from Paul Klée<sup>37</sup> to Matisse (Aav et al. 2005, 121); maybe as she was mostly known for her textile designs and not for her paintings, it was easier for her to reveal her influences. There may be the fear that if an artist reveals that she was inspired by another artist of the same field, her works might be considered to be lacking in originality. However, when inspiration sourced from a painting becomes

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- 33** Simon Hantai (1922–2008)  
**34** French painter Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)  
**35** American artist Jackson Pollock (1912–1956)  
**36** Norwegian artist Edward Munch (1863–1944)  
**37** German–Swiss painter Paul Klée (1879–1940)

a textile pattern, so much has altered in the change of the technique that the question of originality is rarely in focus.

**Artworks** inspire many.<sup>39</sup> Van Noten found inspiration for his autumn-winter 2009 collection from an exhibition of paintings by British painter Francis Bacon<sup>40</sup>. Van Noten picked Bacon's special colour pallet, which comprised unusual colours for fashion. Van Noten also adapted the way Bacon treated his subjects, by cutting them into pieces – Van Noten used similar technique for his floral patterns. His collection aroused strong emotions in spectators, who either loved or hated it (Golbin 2014, 14.) Picasso made versions of several iconic artworks, such as *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) after the painting by French artist Edouard Manet<sup>41</sup> (see images 07 and 08), or mousquetaires inspired by portraits of Spanish painter Diego Velasquez.<sup>42</sup> Typically, Picasso would paint multiple variations and repeatedly return to the same sources of inspiration (Ahtola-Moorhouse 2009, 207, 258–260). French fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent<sup>43</sup> was an ardent collector of art, and he decorated numerous houses with his companion Pierre Bergé.<sup>44</sup> In Château Gabriel in Deauville, Saint Laurent suggested that they paint the walls with Monet's trompe-l'oeil waterlilies (Murphy 2009, 156–157). It is unknown whether Saint Laurent was aware that Monet himself had a similar dream: the artist dreamed of living sur-

**07** *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) by Edouard Manet, oil on canvas, 208 × 264 cm, Orsay Museum, Paris. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

**08** *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1962) by Pablo Picasso in the grounds of Stockholm. Museum of Modern Art, natural concrete, sculpted by Norwegian sculptor and painter Carl Nesjar<sup>38</sup> from cutouts by Picasso 1965–1966. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

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**38** Carl Nesjar (1920–2015)

**39** It might be questionable whether 'artists' and 'artworks' need separate categories as sources of inspiration, but it is possible that certain works of arts by a certain artists feel more inspiring than others (instead of the artist's entire oeuvre). In that case, it makes more sense to concentrate on the inspirational value of the individual artworks and not the artist as a whole.

**40** Francis Bacon (1909–1992)

**41** Edouard Manet (1832–1883)

**42** Diego Velasquez (1599–1660)

**43** Yves Saint Laurent (1936–2008)

**44** French industrialist and patron Pierre Bergé (1930–2017)







rounded by his own waterlily paintings<sup>45</sup> (Monet 1945, 313). The idea and reality of 'being surrounded by waterlilies' is already suggested in the way Monet's toiles hang in the *Orangerie* museum.

**One's own practice and previous artworks** are major sources of inspiration for any practitioner (see also Laamanen & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2014b). Naturally, one creative finding leads to another and ideas continue to develop further. Often at the end of an intense period of working, I have the feeling of being left hungry, and it feels difficult to change the subject. Previous artworks can also become concrete material for future works. Kelley explained that some of his works made reference to his other works, while others or their 'leftovers' were recycled into new works. Sometimes Kelley continued and altered his previous works, which seemed to present an endless source of inspiration for him (Kelley & Pontégnie 2009, 110–111). Hantaï made new artworks out of old by cutting them into pieces, as some of the original paintings were too big for new exhibitions and when cut into parts generated new artworks, which Hantaï titled *Laissées* [Engl. *Left*] (Fourcade et al. 2013, 204–207). I frequently recycle my previous artworks in my installations, which allows these works to become perceived differently depending on the context – they form different dialogues next to new artworks, exhibition concepts and spaces. When the same exhibition pieces circulate from one museum to another, their atmosphere changes due to the change of the environment and often the form and shape of installations needs to be adjusted to fit the new space. Sometimes this gives me the feeling that even if the artworks are old I have managed to create something 'new' and possibly inspiring, something that provides ideas and enthusiasm for further explorations.

Whether it is 'creative practice', 'artists' or 'artworks' – **fine arts** function greatly as a source of inspiration because they belong to the imaginary world and instead of offering constraints to the creative mind, open it up for new thoughts (Dunne & Raby 2013, 71).

Furthermore, there are many different opportunities to find **unexpected inspiration**. Finnish artist Tarja Pitkänen-Walter describes how she

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**45** In 1909, in his letter to his friend Gustave Geffroy, Monet discussed the idea behind the *Orangerie* museum: "I was tempted to use the theme of the *Nymphéas* for the decoration of salon: carried along the walls, its unity enfolding all the panels, it was to produce the illusion of an endless whole, a wave without horizon and without shore; nerves strained by work would relax in its presence, following the reposing example of its stagnant waters, and for him who would live in it, this room would offer an asylum of peaceful meditation in the midst of a flowering aquarium." (Monet 1945, 313.)

can be moved, for example, by the specific way that somebody walks on the street. She says that the image of this walking person can stay in her mind for several weeks. It feels like a gift, one that fortifies her relationship with the world. The vision of that walking person can be translated into her practice by the choice of materials or colours. At the end of the process, she cannot exactly define how the vision affected the process; maybe it just opened her mind to a distant, forgotten memory and sourced the strength to motivate from there (Pitkänen-Walter 2006, 147.)

For this study, I have chosen to use famous artists and their artworks as my main inspiration. Personally, inspiration found from visual sources felt more explicit than, for example, music or literature. Therefore, it also seemed easier to investigate the similarities and differences between the original visual source of inspiration and the artwork it inspired me to make. It allowed me to compare visual aspects with visual aspects. As discussed earlier, I am most driven by visual things: they seem to engrave their existence in my memory, whereas heard or read things seem fuzzier, more easily forgotten and often leaving no distinct trace in my memory. I hardly forget things that I have looked at with attention and as a result have held a memory of numerous exhibitions I have visited in my life. Others recognize and remember music and suchlike; for me, it is visual information, which partly explains, why in this study I mainly deal with visual sources of inspiration. It could be anything visual, even though in this study my chosen sources are iconic staples from art history, ranging from Monet to Warhol. On some other occasion, these sources could include a childhood memory or an emotion that has taken visual form: the face of a person, or a place, or combination of the two.

## 2.4 DEAD OR ALIVE? MEN OR WOMEN?

**Dead or alive?** Most of my sources of inspiration are dead male artists. For example, during this study I have been inspired by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Claude Monet, Yves Klein, or Andy Warhol. I did not decide beforehand that most of my sources of inspiration would be long gone male artists, but I simply selected those that seemed to be the most suitable for my artistic explorations. Without a doubt these choices were guided by my personal preferences and nostalgia. From a young age, I have dreamt of living in another place and era. I have had some favourite periods, such as early 20th century France or New York during the 1960s, but these often changed when I encountered new artists or interesting phenomena belonging to another time and space. Somehow, the past appeared more appealing than the present time. Similarly, due to the distance created by time, I felt more comfortable working with artists who belonged to the past than those belonging to the present. Posthumously, there was more available information, and time put the artist in a more understandable context: the relations between the artworks, eras and makers became more visible when they were situated historically. I felt a connection with the artists who lived there before me; they had participated in shaping the world of art, such as it is today, and building a closer relationship with them somehow felt comforting. It gave a strange impression of not being alone, but accompanied in the process of creation, while I still had the impression of having some control over the whole.

And what is being dead anyway? Art comes into existence with an idea which in my case is reinforced by and created with the sources of inspiration. The idea itself cannot be classified as being dead or alive. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze argues that all art is an “*incarnation of an idea*” (Colebrook 2008, 77). The idea of an artwork precedes its actualisation. Something that has not lived comes into being. (Ibid.) Artists who

lived, incarnated ideas for their art and now their ideas mix with mine and become reincarnated. There is an on-going dialogue between me and my sources of inspiration, and as long as the interaction continues, any outcome is possible. During that time, all the participants of the process seem alive even though I might be the only active participant.

The fact that I choose to work with artists who are no longer alive seems to give me more creative freedom and space for our imaginary dialogue. Naturally 'being dead' is not the actual motivation which has caused me to choose these precise artists, but instead their art, career, era, and the art world they represent are the stimuli that evoke the kind of creative conversation that I am looking for in order to make my process alive. Working with living artists would raise more questions than the dead as living is actively changing all the time, I would need to adjust my approach according to that. Of course, this mode of working might reveal interesting dilemmas, but it would not feed my creative practice as effortlessly. Dead artists of a certain timeframe, as representatives of the past, are the most fascinating material for my inspiration, material that feels anything but dead. Instead of being 'merely' human beings who have lived, these sources of inspiration become ever-transforming material, something almost alive. Somehow, in the process, I feel as if I become a part of that same material and stop being separately 'human' for a while. I appreciate these moments of becoming a whole with the process and all the materials it involves.

Maybe the entire concept of being 'dead' or 'alive' as it relates to artists and their artworks is unnecessary. Not, of course, for the artists themselves, whose fame and works sadly often increase in value posthumously (Heinich 1996a, 28–29; Levanto 2005, 96–97), but unnecessary when thinking about how these artists and their artworks are 'experienced'. If something feels alive, it should not be defined as 'dead'. As long as I am interacting with my sources of inspiration, they remain in that state of living and transforming material and feel as if they are somehow part of me and my thinking. When considered as constantly mutating material, sources of inspiration can hardly be labelled as dead.

Cultural theorist Clare Colebrook (2008, 53) is interested in the specific idea of vitalism as developed by French philosopher Henri Bergson<sup>46</sup>. Bergson's central idea was that there is a vital force in all living things. Matter was seen as alive, not dead, but instead an inactive substance (ibid.).

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46 Henri Bergson (1859–1941)

Colebrook stresses that matter does not need to be made or given meaning by thought. She believes that the understanding of 'life force' itself should be criticised. Life should not be considered only as productive and intensively creative, but there should also be a passive and inert side (ibid., 56). Colebrook stresses that being productive and creative is considered to be something more valuable than remaining inert and passive, which refers to a state where something is NOT produced and made useful (ibid., 58). Accordingly, a material needs to be given a form and function in a world where everything seems to be related to dynamism. In contrast, Colebrook proposes that material could be regarded as something virtual, which could remain unproductive and have no relation whatsoever (ibid.). In Deleuze's thinking, the spirit encounters "*a passive vitalism*" where "*not fully alive*" systems such as language consciousness and points of perception are present (ibid., 56). I encounter my sources of inspiration in a similar way – they could be virtual, born in relation and existing mainly in my imagination as such, but still representatives of that 'passive vitalism', at least as long as I interact with them. Sources of inspiration occasionally seem to act unconsciously as part of my creative process. I go dynamically towards them and choose them, but what happens later in the process is not entirely under my control, instead the sources of inspiration alter and bring the process in different directions, direction which I sometimes only become aware of afterwards, when it already has happened.

Barad (2008, 145–147) sees that the separation of human and non-human, culture and nature, should come to an end, because we are all components of the same world: "because '*we are of the world*'" (ibid.). The same way all things (sometimes divided into human and non-human) that have preceded us are part of the same world, which for me is a living one. The entire world, as we know it, can be considered to be made from one material and in my thinking, so does 'time'. Romantically put, the past, present and future are all present in this very moment, as the past has participated in shaping it, the present is happening 'this very moment' and the future exists in our dreams and expectations. I have this peculiarly affectionate view towards the past, in particular the past from before I was born, and therefore seems distant and unknown, in some ways even unrealistic. The way this and that past is seen and interpreted is constantly transforming in relation to the ever-changing present and the different individuals who are looking at it; the past becomes re-understood and re-interpreted. After something is physically gone, it still lives as a different component of the world. These no longer physical or acting components, remnants of the past, are part of the 'current world', which I belong to (at least physically),



and they have dynamically taken part in shaping it into its contemporary actual form. They are a part of me as I am part of the future, as I am inevitably becoming a remnant of the past in my turn.



**Men or women?** The artists that I have chosen as my sources of inspiration in this study are mostly men. This was not a conscious choice but more of an intuitive one. Inequality between the sexes exists, and as a woman practising art and design, I should not participate in this discrimination in any way. For each of my three case studies that form basis of the main findings of this study I considered a number of artists, of which only few were women, but finally even those few were left out. When I was looking for possible sources, visiting museums and going through books, I encountered fewer women than men, much fewer.

Why there were so few women artists? Heinich (1996b, 103–104) suggests that one possible reason could be that in the past women were not practising many professions outside domestic chores; it was not only question of not being an artist, but there were also not more women doctors or lawyers, which was due to the unequal distribution of the world of working. Heinich (*ibid.*, 104) cites one female painter known from the Renaissance, Artemisia Gentileschi, who stayed in the history books apparently as much for her personal (love) life as her artistic genius. Women did not have equal access to education: when the art academies were founded, women were prohibited for a long time, and even when accepted, this was only in very small numbers (*ibid.*). Finally, the 19th century and Impressionism saw the arrival of more women artists, but they still represented only a small minority (*ibid.*, 105). By the 20th there was finally an ever-growing number of women artists, even though gaining fame remained difficult

since they were women (Heinich 1996b, 105). This lack of fame caused a lack of literature written about women artists and exhibitions including them. This resulted in less material for me to read and see. One thing led to another. And even though it would have been interesting to dive deeper into the female art history, I felt that it would better be a topic for another research project.

## 2.5 Worrying about authenticity and ownership issues

*Henry Moore stressed that somebody who wants to become a writer must read. Accordingly, an artist needs to experience artworks made by others and become familiar with art history. Imagine if an artist had to start from the 'beginning' – he could not advance that far, much as a writer does not need to invent a new alphabet either. (Moore & Hedgecoe 1999, 40).*

In this study, where I source inspiration directly from other artists and their artworks, I need to clarify some aspects related to authenticity and ownership. I started with many questions. For example, when I am working with sources of inspiration, does the outcome belong solely to me, or should there be some kind of shared authorship model. Should some kind of 'courtesy distance' be maintained between the two of us, or would I be able to go as close to the source as I personally feel comfortable with? Could it be 'accidentally' possible to violate intellectual and moral rights, or are there any actual limits in the manifestly free world of art? While this might mainly be an ethical question, one which will be tackled in greater detail during case study no. II (chapter 4.2 Warhol and me), some of the issues need to be discussed now, while I am defining the research context.

When I was pondering on whether the outcome belongs solely to me, I started to wonder how I can be assured that the artwork I employ as a source of inspiration is itself entirely 'authentic'. It is likely that its maker, too, also consciously sourced inspiration from somewhere else, was influenced by peers or other possibly even unconscious happenings. Cultural historian Egon Friedell (1932–1933, 614–615) suggests that all the images produced in a certain timeframe inevitably reflect the common cultural history and the image-filled everyday world. If everything is somehow connected, it might be impossible to measure the 'authenticity level' of an artwork or design. I quite like the idea of a thread of inspiration, one source travels through an artist and artworks and continues (eternally)

its passage. The artist would become just one of the elements of this continuation, whereas the source of inspiration would be close to immortal.

Inspiration is not only a positive phenomenon since it can be sourced with dishonest intentions. Probably in this case, it should no longer be called 'inspiration' but plagiarism,<sup>47</sup> which is an ever-growing phenomenon in our digital era, where visual information is easily available. Sometimes it is unclear where the difference between inspiration and copying lies. If working with the sources of inspiration is correctly understood, the risk of accidentally crossing borders is minimized. It is related to the personal learning process of the artists and designers, as copyright laws, at least in my native Finland, rarely provide direct answers defining what is copying and what is not (Larros 2014). As a practitioner who works with multiple sources, I need to figure out where I stand and make sense out of other inspiration-related concepts, such as imitation, authenticity or copying.

### 2.5.1 Imitation and intertextuality

According to Moffitt (2005, 37–38) imitation (*mimesis*) is a term that was considered pejorative in ancient Greece; a poet who 'imitated' something that had happened, or a painter who merely imitated the existing world, was not given the status of 'creator'. Roman culture added the idea of a model to the Hellenic concept of 'mimesis'. The Dutch composer Sam Dresden defined 'imitation' during the Renaissance as meaning paying homage to the model, which proved what the imitator was able to achieve (ibid.). This 'model' could be thought of as a source of inspiration creating a desire within the practitioner.

Tarde (2015, 52–53) states that influences can travel indefinitely far, like molecules of water in the sea that do not travel themselves but still send waves far away – by passing from person to another – all the way from China to the Roman Empire. Direct encounters between certain people or countries are not needed (ibid.). Historically, there are examples where similar ideas have appeared simultaneously in distant countries due to certain common restrictions and advantages that people might depend on, such as living in a narrow area limited by two rivers, which could lead to the invention of bridges or for example use of the water current as energy (ibid., 45).

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**47** Plagiarism means copying done for criminal purposes, for making a profit. (Charpigny et al. 2010, 29–30).

According to Tarde, most social encounters are based on imitation – individuals imitate the ideas and gestures of the people they meet, both consciously and unconsciously. This imitation happens either voluntarily or involuntarily, between the conscious and unconscious (ibid., vii–viii.) Tarde points out the existence of anti-imitation, where one acts against the given model. Society is formed by groups of people who present similarities by either imitation or anti-imitation (ibid., xii). Pro-movement inevitably provokes an anti-movement (ibid., xii–xiv). This logic can be found all around: think, for example, of trends in colours, suddenly everybody is wearing the same colour without quite realising why. The international marketing machines of trend forecasting saturate the world with new colours, changing every season. The individual consumer might not be aware of the system, but nonetheless experiences an inexplicable desire to wear this or that colour, even though decisions preceding the act of purchase may be unconscious. An anti-movement can manifest itself against some traditional dress standards or simply by a teenage daughter demonstrating with her striking outfit that she does not want to resemble her mother.

Tarde (2015, xiv–xv) points out that anti-imitation is not the same thing as systematic non-imitation. He describes non-imitation with the following example: If the looks or customs of some country, tribe or group of people are not imitated by their neighbours, it means that this group is not accepted. Non-imitation could also refer to a situation where a child does not follow in the footsteps of her parents, a nation follow its ancestors, a legacy is not imitated because the umbilical cord needs to be cut to create something new – some kind of civil revolution (ibid.). In art movements there are good examples of that happening, such as the Impressionist movement, which caused a scandal by breaking the common laws of art recognized at the time (Heinich 1996a. 31), not to mention cubism, postmodernism, or new realism. That said, most often troupes, people or animals follow their influential leaders (Tarde 2015, 4–5).

*“All the similarities from ‘social origin’, which are noticed in the society, are direct or indirect fruits of all kinds of imitation, imitation-custom, imitation-fashion, imitation-sympathy, imitation-obedience, imitation-instruction or imitation-education, imitation naïve or pre-thought imitation”<sup>48</sup> (Tarde 2015, 16).*

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**48** Freely translated from French by the author.



Tarde (2015, 9–11) remarks that the Roman Empire had a major influence on the many countries that they conquered. They implanted their culture, such as words from their language, architecture, crafts and laws and so on. This kind of behaviour has been continued by the most powerful nations, and in the worst cases it has led to the weakening or disappearance of minority cultures. Sometimes different cultures can also be mixed in ways that create interesting new relations and phenomena.

Tarde's theories demonstrate that inevitably we cannot prevent the influence of those things that surround or precede us. There is no way to avoiding that happening, just as flowers grow from the seeds of their predecessors (ibid., 11). Tarde claims that the imitation of history, such as circles continuing to form after a stone has been cast into water, might enable prediction of some parts of the future (ibid., 20–24). Geographic and timely attributes have their impact on the propagation of influences, and this is how, for example, several artistic movements or styles in certain eras and areas were born and developed into new movements and styles. Today, as the world has become smaller in distances and more rapid in exchange of information, movements and ideas are influencing each other with ever growing speed.

The concept of **intertextuality** might help in understanding the relations, connection and influences that various things can have to each other, it is normally related to written text, but can be understood also in other contexts. The term originates from philosopher and semiotician Julia Kristeva's essay (published in 1969) dealing with Russian philosopher, literary critic, and scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's idea that the "*written word*" is a meeting point of textual surfaces, a dialogue of many writings (Makkonen 2006, 18). From the end of the 1960s, intertextuality was offered as a general medicine for problematics that concerned the psychology of readers and writers, the explanation of the sources or question about the writer's originality or possible imitation (Thais Morgan in Makkonen 2006, 18).

According to researcher Anna Makkonen (2006, 24–25), an intertextual way of reading connects text with literary tradition, with the contemporary literature and on-going discussions around literature. When something is read through intertextuality it enables a wider perspective for interpreting the text. Kristeva (1993, 22–24) explains the concept of intertextuality through semiotics by defining three presences in the text: the 'author', the 'receiver' and 'all the other texts' written before and at the same time as the text itself. These 3 elements form a discussion, where the horizontal and vertical axes of 'writer-reader' and 'text-context' exist simultaneously. They reveal that every word (or text) is a crossing between other words

(and other texts), which enables new meanings to become readable and understood (ibid.). In this theory, texts do not exist alone but solely in relation to the receiver and the ever-changing context.

Images can be seen to follow the same logic of intertextuality. Is it not obvious that they are in relation to all images done before and during the time of their creation? Naturally this connection goes beyond literal, or art history, as texts and images are also inevitably related to general history and the surrounding world, where receivers and contexts continue changing.

Philosopher and social theorist Brian Massumi (2011, 40–42) highlights the fact that vision is something dynamic, and therefore a form that we look at is never fixed or stable. When we look at an object, we do not only perceive an object but also, for example, its weight and volume, which are incorporated features in the form of the object. We cannot choose ‘not to see’ them even though they are invisible (ibid.). “*Seeing an object is seeing through its qualities*” (ibid., 42). I suggest that this capacity to see invisible features is linked to the receiver’s (here, spectator’s) way of looking at things, her knowledge and previous experiences stored in the visual memories database. Everything she knows or has experienced, and which has marked her memory – consciously or unconsciously – affects the way any new visual information becomes understood. This vision can be affected by multiple features, such as the location of the object, the lighting, what is next to it, what she experienced earlier that day or how she feels at that very moment. Interfaces that influence the way we experience a text or an object are countless, but endlessly interesting. This fortifies my assumption that nothing exists unrelated, floating in the air; instead, everything – including my thinking and practice – is connected somehow to various sources.

### 2.5.2 Authentic or not?

Even though the concept of authenticity often appears to be rather vague, if there is doubt about something not being authentic (but a copy of some kind), there is often a need to make the distinction between the two. Heinich<sup>49</sup> (1996a, 25–27) suggests that the authenticity of an artist and her artworks

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<sup>49</sup> Heinich defined these properties in the middle of the nineties; today it could be argued that authenticity is not a value in itself.

requires three qualities: 1) **permanence**, to make sure that an interesting artwork is not a one-time chance 2) **universality**, which signifies the artwork's capacity to move different audiences and 3) "*interiority of creative inspiration*" which is linked to **originality** of the artwork, where not too many external influences should be visible.

This idea of individuality partly relates to Benjamin's (1936) concept of 'aura', whereby an authentic artwork was surrounded by a mysterious mist, which made it unique and special (ibid., 4). He noted that one cannot be sure of the authenticity of an artwork if the latter is not present (ibid., 3). When a spectator experienced this kind of artwork, according to Benjamin, it felt almost like slowly entering inside it, for example being able to imagine walking inside a landscape painting (ibid., 17). In contrast, mass-produced art was quickly devoured by the public. Benjamin (ibid., 4, 17.) stated that, when reproduced, an artwork lost its authenticity and aura. Benjamin developed his aura-theory in the 1930s, commenting on emerging art forms that included reproduction, such as photography and film. If written today, certainly Benjamin would have brought up something else, such as digital art, and his entire concept of aura would have needed to be updated to the present day (see also Matthieussent 1994, 94).

Concepts of authenticity and authorship have not always been present in the field of art. According to Heinich (1996b, 13–14), before proper art education developed in Europe, many art forms were considered merely to be anonymous crafts – working with one's hands was less appreciated than tasks requiring an intellectual mind. Therefore, the idea of individual authorship was feeble (ibid.). European art academies (for painting and sculpture) were launched during the 16th and 17th centuries, which generated a shift in the general opinion. Artworks were no longer openly exposed behind the glass windows of craftsmen's boutiques, but hidden inside the walls of the art academies, and suddenly the creative process began to be shrouded in mystery. Students who were accepted to study in universities were evaluated by their peers, and a certain group of elites was founded inside the profession. (Ibid., 20–23; Heinich 2016, 31.) The fact that only carefully selected individuals and buyers had access to the studios increased the secrecy; the common people would not see the process of making but only the finished artworks in exhibitions or their reproductions in the catalogues (Heinich 2016, 32). Due to this development, the creative process began to resemble a miracle which happened hidden behind the walls, resulting in the finished artworks emerging quasi-magically on the surface. This system went on for several hundred years, until

the Impressionists stepped out of the studios during 19th century (Joyes 1985, 146–147).

At the beginning of the 20th century, artistic movements such as Surrealism or Dadaism began to echo the industrial revolution and question the concept of authenticity, along with artists such as Marcel Duchamp and his 'readymades' (Heinich 1996b, 69). Much later, with the postmodernist art movement, the stardust which surrounded artistic process began to vanish. The direct use of everyday objects and commercial aesthetics did the trick. Postmodernism wanted to question the concept of authenticity, which had become the proof of good quality art. Subjects could be copied and repeated, as in Warhol's case, and sometimes final artworks were produced with the help of assistants, think, for example, of Warhol's 'Factory' (as his studio was called) (Honnef 1991, 22, 26). This was itself ultimately not a novelty since, for example, back during the Baroque period, an artist could employ an atelier filled with numerous assistants (Heinich 1996b, 101). While several 20th century artistic movements challenged the individual aspect of art, the idea of authenticity being strictly affiliated to originality and the identifiability of the artist's style were slowly losing their dominance. Today, readymades are no longer news, and artists use rather freely borrowed or copied components in their artworks. Yet, the value of the artworks appears to be still related to the identity of the artist.

During our 21st century, everybody seems to demand transparent processes: wanting to know how, where and by whom something is made. This might be related to the fuzzy systems of mass-produced goods, whereas unique or hand-crafted small serial goods need to justify their origin just as well as the big actors of the industry and illustrate the ethical and ecological patterns behind their making processes. Authenticity has become part of the marketing strategy and has a price tag. For example, if you buy an expensive brand handbag, you are most often also handed a certificate of authenticity, which affirms the value of the product.

### **2.5.3 Some thoughts on appropriation**

In the world of design, the differences between 'copying' and 'inspiration' are often discussed if the authenticity of a design is doubted. Inside the world of art, the correct term for 'copying' might be 'appropriation'. The way this term is employed often seems ambiguous and complicated to understand. To make it even more confusing, there is also the term 'cultural appropriation', which seems to suggest that something borrowed

or otherwise brought from outside one's own culture should not be used. On the other hand, the creative fields have long offered space for cultural exchange, which can be both fascinating and eye-opening. For example, if art made in one country were to only tackle their own native cultural heritage and issues, the result could be inbred and not able to open up to the 'world', and without ideas also coming from outside, a culture might begin to stagnate. Could it be that similarly to 'inspiration' and 'copying', where the latter can be practiced for illicit or compromising purposes, there is 'good' and 'bad' appropriation? What is certain is that these complex issues should also be discussed throughout the creative fields.

*“Seen across one of its longest horizons, the term ‘appropriation’ stands for the relocation, annexation or theft of cultural properties – whether objects, ideas or notations – associated with the rise of European colonialism and global capital.” (Welchman 2001, 1).*

Cultural appropriation has long colonialist roots and is therefore often related to different power positions (Welchman 2001, 1). We could imagine that the same rules of respect could be applied equally to the appropriation that occurs in the world of art, where the term has a slightly different meaning. I could think of two different situations where I would source rather direct inspiration from my student or from a well-known artist. Using my student's ideas seems utterly wrong, whereas there is very little possibility that my taking a famous artist such as Warhol as my source of inspiration would offend against his glory in any way. On the contrary, it would only add to his fame. A kind of 'steal from the rich and give to the poor' Robin-Hoodian principle could be applicable here as well. Certainly, one rule is not suitable for all cases, as so many kinds of appropriative practices are possible – think, for example Hannah Höch's newspaper-cut collages, or Meredith Oppenheim's *Fur-covered cup, saucer and spoon* (1936). Anything can be borrowed; what matters is the way and the motive for how and why it is done.

Why does art involve appropriation? Inherently, some ideas and thoughts cannot be presented with same efficacy if appropriation were not used. Think of Warhol's famous silkscreen series *Death and Disasters* – including newspaper images of a car crash or an electric chair – revealing the downside of the “*American Way of Life*” (Honnef 1991, 60–61). If Warhol were to have, for instance, drawn a picture of an electric chair, the impact would not have been the same; it would have been hard to link the artwork to an exact moment in history (published images have a date) or even to



justify that something like that was related to an actual event (a published photo has an apparent connection to reality). Or imagine if Warhol had asked for permission to go and take the original picture of the electric chair himself. The artwork in question might have been pretty much the same, but the connection to the news and the real-life event would have been missing. The artwork would have seemed staged, at least to its maker. Staging in itself is not always a bad option, but it needs to be done consciously, not simply due to a lack of options. All the decisions that have been taken in the process of making the artwork influence its reading and even more the practitioner's own experiences.

#### 2.5.4 Change of authorship

Via their famous essays written in the late 1960s, Barthes' (1968) *The Death of an Author* and Foucault's (1969) *What Is an Author?* questioned the role of the author in the field of literature. The main point of these texts was the shift of importance from the writer to the reader, as there are multiple ways to interpret written texts. Foucault (1969, 118–119) wondered not only about the role of the reader as the writer's creative partner but also about the extent of things that should be included under the authorship of the author. Was everything that an author created part of her oeuvre? In that case, should “*a laundry bill*” or “*a reminder of an appointment*” be included among an author's works (ibid.)? The time that Barthes and Foucault wrote their essays corresponds to the rise of artists such as Warhol and his peers, who challenged the limits of authorship in art and which later led to the birth of postmodernism. It seems evident that these new ideas generated an interesting exchange between various fields of art, and the artists came up with similar inquiries at similar times and were also influenced by each other (see also Tarde 2015, 45).

French artist and writer Marcel Duchamp inspired many. His early quests for authorship and the nature of art appeared in his *Fountain* signed *R. Mutt* in 1917 (see image 09), which in its own time generated a scandal (Honour & Fleming 1992, 676–677). At the time, Surrealists and Dadaists were readily using readymades as part of their art, yet *Fountain* was something else. Duchamp presented a ready-made object (a urinal) that was utterly unaltered except by the addition of a painted signature (*R. Mutt*) (ibid.). This made the case seem like double-cheating: he did not make the artwork nor sign the artwork with his own name (Honour & Fleming 1992, 676–677). An article of the time defended Duchamp: “*Mr Mutt's fountain is*

09 **Fountain (1917) by Marcel Duchamp, illustrated in the *Blind Man*, art and Dada journal (height 28 cm), which was edited by Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image: MET/ Wikimedia Commons.**



*not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' shop windows. Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.'* (Anon., 'The Richard Mutt Case', *Blind Man*, New York, no.2, May 1917, p.5)" (Howarth 2000). The choice of the object itself was provocative, it was something that would normally be hidden from the female gaze in a men's toilet.

Duchamp (1987, 5–6) believed that an artist has some kind of role as an intermediary between the work of art and the spectator. He highlighted the fact that the decisions the artist makes during the creative process are mostly unconscious, remaining in the world of intuition; the artist is not able to interpret them herself as written or spoken words, self-analysis or even thoughts. The spectator is the one who defines the value and the success of the artist. Spectators also allow immortality for certain artists,

who themselves are not able to define their own success and fame, not even if they were announcing their excellence “*from the roofs*” (ibid.). I share some of Duchamp’s thoughts; I believe that art is created to be shown and shared, and as such it will without a doubt create a dialogue to some extent with the spectators. The quality and length of these (dialogues) depends mostly on the spectator, and at that moment the artist loses the position of power which she had while creating the artwork. This change in dominance should be embraced, as without it the work of art would lose its ultimate significance and end up as a ‘soulless’ thing, stacked up somewhere, where its circle would end.

For me, the dialogue between the artwork and the spectator happens only secondarily, as the first phase takes place between myself and the selected sources of inspiration. This dialogue represents a veritable discussion tool for me, where I first take the role of the listener, later followed by the interaction of the creative process. When I find a source of inspiration or in some cases it finds me, the result is always uncertain, as the content of the dialogue between us cannot be determined in advance. It happens in action, and it is different every time, depending on my state, the sources, and the very moment.

In the frame of this study, the change in authorship could signify a passing from singular authorship (**author** → **artwork**) towards a shared authorship (**author + sources of inspiration** → **artwork**). To be honest, even that presents a rather simplified mode, as the creative process is made with the ‘world’, depending on a multitude of things from ever-changing time, surroundings, and collaborators. Nonetheless, in this study I am concentrating on this exchange between the practitioner and the sources of inspiration.

## 2.6 Collaboration or one-sided love affair?

For me, working with sources of inspiration is collaborative. I create a conversation or dialogue with my chosen source(s) of inspiration, yet it is questionable whether there is any actual exchange. Possibly I am merely romanticizing my practice and providing a justification for sourcing inspiration from whatever source it might be. When I become inspired by an artwork, does something happen in the artwork itself – during or after my process? Could there be a real exchange or am I just ‘using’ the inspiration to serve my personal purposes? Massumi (2011, 39) notes that the artwork does not change following the way it is looked at or depending on the reactions of the audience. It might trigger various feelings in the viewer, such as excitement or comfort or even physical pain (Langer 1957, 15), but according to Massumi (2011, 39) “*it’s one-way traffic; there’s no exchange.*” I do not entirely share his point of view, as following Duchamp’s (1987, 5–6) notions, without an exchange the artworks would cease to exist as such triggers of dialogue and thinking and end up diminished into a ‘thing’. Dialogue needs output from each of its actors; with this idea, the artwork takes part actively as it influences the quality and content of the ‘exchange-conversation’.

Many of us recognize world-famous artworks, even though a much smaller number has actually seen them. Let us take *Las Meninas* (1656) by Spanish painter Diego Velasquez<sup>50</sup> (see image 10). The actual painting hangs in *Prado* museum in Madrid, but even those who have not visited the museum are familiar with the artwork through the press, reproductions, TV or the internet. *Las Meninas* is so famous that many might pay a visit to Prado only to be able to experience it in real life, while others might

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50 Diego Velasquez (1599–1660)



10 ***Las Meninas* (1656–1657) by Diego Velázquez, oil on canvas, 318 × 276 cm, Prado Museum, Madrid.** Image: Galaría Online, Museo del Prado/Wikimedia Commons.



think that it is not necessary after repeatedly encountering the painting in other media. My experience with *Las Meninas* took place when I was still a teenager, and at the time I knew nothing about Velasquez; instead, I had been TOLD how important and famous the painting was. This pre-determined admiration influenced the way I perceived the artwork; the painting looked well executed, something easily classified as 'quality art'. After all this time, my memories of the painting are rather vague, and they have been replaced by the multiple reproductions of it that I have seen since. My obscure memories include more the 'experience' of seeing the painting than the way it actually looked. It is a rather large and dark painting hanging at the top of a staircase, and when I approached it from below the placement made it seem even more important. It made me feel like an outsider and at the time, the fame of the painting felt abstract.

Today, any experience of looking at *Las Meninas* would be saturated by all the various details that I have learned since, such as 'is the painter himself the actual subject?' (Honour & Fleming 1992, 512–513) or the reproductions made by Picasso (Ahtola-Moorhouse 2009, 258). My vision of *Las Meninas* has gone through a transformation, and it is no longer related to the *Las Meninas* from my teenage years, but rather another painting filled with art historical meanings and reflections. That time, long ago, I became just one of the countless tourists who ticked the box: 'seeing *Las Meninas*'.

Famous artworks are looked at countless times and despite all those gazes, they still apparently look the 'same'. If there are physical changes, they are probably due to the artworks' ageing process, which might depend on the quantity and quality of daylight or the amount of humidity. But is this something that alters the content of the artworks? All these countless viewers each hold a different memory of the artwork. They all have their own way of looking connected to their prior knowledge and the content of their visual database.

When reproductions made from the artworks are compared, they are not the same either; *Las Meninas* has been reproduced innumerable times in various media, and each image that represents it will vary, due to the distance of the photographer, the choice of camera lens or the height of the photographer (or photographing). Possibly the quality of the printing paper has caused a change in the original colours or has faded due to its own ageing process. In addition, while the actual painting is large, in general the reproductions are much smaller, and their scale might not follow any other logic than fitting on the pages of the chosen media.

The fame of the painting, the abstract value loaded into it, might also influence the way it is looked at and evaluated. A child would probably

see it differently, maybe not having a slightest interest towards this, one of the world's most famous paintings. And again, the same child would experience it differently later in life, like I did, even though that real-life experience were itself replaced by the reproductions.

Can an artwork plausibly be thought to represent just a passive actor in the process, despite all its linkages to the surrounding world? What about an artwork that has been forgotten and is not looked at, does it even exist as an artwork or is it reduced into some 'thing' taking up space in a storage room, possibly representing an investment, but lacking interaction and life.

An artwork's meaning and reading cannot, however, remain the same, as they are experienced differently at different times, when their context changes. A good example is the *Origin of the World* (1866), the painting by Gustave Courbet,<sup>51</sup> which has been censored on several occasions. For example, Facebook was brought to court for deactivating the account of one user in 2011 for posting an image of the painting – Facebook was not able to differentiate between a reproduction of a major artwork and pornography or simple nudity (Rodriguez 2018). The reading of an artwork depends on the time and the culture, which creates also changes in the content of the artwork. That said, not all changes can be perceived from the outside, an artwork undergoes context-related transformations and becomes loaded with new meanings and ultimately carries a lot more than its frame.

When Warhol copied *Mona Lisa*, he used a 'worthless' copy of the original as the basis of his silkscreen artwork series (Hautamäki 2003, 139). Maybe Warhol considered *Mona Lisa* a part of popular culture, as mass produced goods that spread all over the world as cheap copies of the original. Somehow Warhol's numerous *Mona Lisa* copies still seem to reflect his interest in the artwork itself, and as these 'reproductions' were brought back and shown in the context of art again, it seemed to add some value even to *Mona Lisa*, which posthumously entered the field of contemporary art.

Even a one-sided love affair has the characteristics of a dialogue. The discussion between the object of desire and the person in a one-sided love affair takes place inside the latter's imagination. Through this discussion, the one-sided-person projects her fantasies and fears on her object and tries to imagine in what ways the two of them would agree or disagree and how their affair would develop. Even though she is aware of the one-sidedness, their relationship might still seem a real part of her

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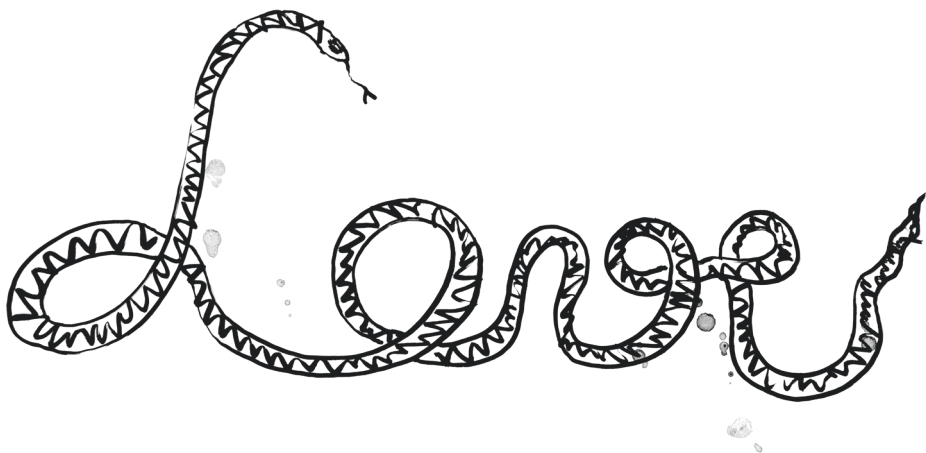
51 Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) was a French artist.

life, some kind of reflection of reality. When she imagines the reactions within the other, the dialogue becomes true to her.

Langer (1957, 21) stresses that we make sense of the world, investigate the relations between things, speculate, symbolize and predict with the help of language: *“This use of language is ‘discourse’; and the pattern of discourse is known as ‘discursive form’. It is a highly versatile, amazingly powerful pattern. It has impressed itself on our tacit thinking, so that we call all systematic reflection ‘discursive thought’”* (ibid., 21). For the person experiencing the one-sided affair, the discursive thinking inside her head might represent more of her reality than ‘outside happenings’, such as the news or incidents between other people. What is deeply processed inside becomes the most convincing reality, even if just for a brief moment.

When I work with sources of inspiration, it would seem false to adopt the position of ‘user’. Even though most of the time I initiate the process of looking for suitable sources of inspiration, sometimes it feels that they choose me. I might encounter something that arouses my interest, even something that I find irritating or that goes against my aesthetics, but something that does not leave me alone. It haunts my imagination and requires my attention. In interaction with these new thoughts something seems to change in me, and sometimes it sets me on the way towards a new creative process, which can be anything from art making to writing or a new way of cooking. The effect of becoming inspired can extend to several areas of life, and its unexpectedness and uncontrollability underlines its collaborative, dialogue-like character.

*Even in a one-sided love-affair, the presence of ‘love’ can be felt; a similar feeling to being cared for.*



As an example of 'collaboration', Kontturi (2018, 78–79) mentions the Spanish painter Susana Nevado, who cited another Spanish painter Antoni Tàpies as her source of inspiration. The connection between the two artists became visible in the way Nevado used the layering technique in her works, even though their subjects were totally different. According to Kontturi (*ibid.*), collaboration can take place even without a concrete exchange between humans and beyond – the idea of collaboration can be extended to include materials and processes of all sorts (*ibid.*). Considering something as 'collaboration' might be simply a question of an attitude towards artmaking and the surrounding world.

## 2.7 Selecting a source of inspiration as a creative act

In this study, I have been dealing with inspiration's neighbouring themes, such as imitation, copying and appropriation. In addition, I want to present the idea of selecting sources of inspiration as a creative act, which can be compared to curating or collecting. In this case, the practitioner seeks sources of inspiration actively and consciously. The artist who waits passively for inspiration to come – and take possession over body and mind – is not included in these assumptions. I would not be able to compare selecting sources to a creative act if they are not actively approached, attracted, or lured in some way.

Curators and collectors build relations between different things, not only objects but also concepts, individuals, and eras. When doing this, putting things together, they end up forming other concepts, meanings and wholes. For example, French fashion designer Jacques Doucet,<sup>52</sup> who was an ardent collector and known for his impeccable flair, collected older art as well as that of his contemporaries, from Watteau<sup>53</sup> to Van Gogh (Neutres et al. 2015, 37–39). His many apartments – which were one after another filled up with his art and design collections – resembled museums and were often decorated by the most outstanding designers of his time, such as Maison Lalique or Atelier Martine. Doucet had highly selective taste; he disliked, for example, Renoir and Gauguin, despite their fame, and started very early to collect Picasso (ibid., 38–39). Collecting is not comparable to hoarding, the keyword is 'selection', the exact same term that was employed when defending Duchamp's *Fountain* (Howarth 2000). Doucet based his choices on his aesthetic preferences, and new unexpected relations were

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**52** Jacques Doucet (1853–1929)

**53** Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) was a Flemish–French painter.



created between the objects, such as African masks and Picassos (Neutres et al. 2015, 14). The collections were presented with Doucet's extraordinary creativity in his private museum-like apartments, for example, Brancusi's *La Muse endormie II*<sup>54</sup> was directly laid on his couch (ibid., 17–18). Doucet was curator of this 'own exhibitions' as he meticulously chose the way he showed his collections, creating new meanings by juxtaposing different makers, eras and cultures.

When I am collecting and curating sources of inspiration, the working process takes place in my imagination, in non-visible, near mysterious ways. I am constructing an ever-growing 'inspirational data base' composed of possible sources of inspiration (see also 'mental imaging' in Laamanen 2016, 22–24). The more I collect, the more complex relations are created between the new and the previous sources. Later, even more relations come to light when these sources begin interacting with my own practice. When collecting these concrete impressions – which are later transferred into invisible memories – I focus not only on looking carefully but also trying to 'understand' them and their relations. Giving them more meaning helps me to remember.

In her *An Anatomy of Inspiration*, music historian Rosamund Harding (1967, 2–3) studied a number of artists and came to the conclusion that possessing a prodigious memory could be one common feature among artists. Memorizing is what makes it possible to find inspiration also inside one's own mind. Every time new visual data is entered and processed, it repositions the existing data. Sometimes the database might be full, and some (less interesting) memories will be removed. The most thrilling feature is that all new data will change the relations between and inside the old data. The order can be dramatically changed and reinterpreted from a different perspective. Endless changes between relations are possible – imagine an art museum filled with impressionist paintings and how they are perceived in the presence of American artists Jeff Koons's<sup>55</sup> Neo-Pop bunnies or Cy Twombly's<sup>56</sup> abstract oils? Such rearranging of the data can be partly conscious when the practitioner is reflecting and forming possible associations, yet much happens unconsciously. In my visual database even the most well-defined things become entangled with all kinds of hazy memories and ideas along the way, which adds to the possible range

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**54** *La Muse endormie II* (1917) was made by Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957).

**55** Jeff Koons (1955–)

**56** Cy Twombly (1928–2011)

of outcomes and makes them even more personalized. Harding (1967, 3) emphasizes that original ideas are generated from the knowledge that a human has, and the more various things she knows on her subject and other things outside of her scope, the newer and the more outstanding combinations are possible in her creative work.

## 2.8 Theory synthesis

In the history section, chapter 2.1., the ways in which the concept of inspiration has been regarded at different times were discussed. When the concept first appeared during antiquity, it was muse-derived and seen as intoxication and madness. The artist offered his existence like a shell that was then filled with an external and divine inspiration (Moffitt 2005, 56–57). Later, during the 18th century, following the wider public's request for more emotional and popular art, the idea of inspiration began to transform from external to internal. The new genius artist was equipped with his (artists of this time were almost exclusively male) talent at birth and was no longer considered to be a normal human being, but instead an exceptional being. Concepts of inspiration, genius and originality became tightly linked (ibid., 2005, 183–189, 189–191). During the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of inspiration began to resemble 'self-expressionism', related to the artist's capacity to evoke feelings (ibid., 2005, 12–13).

Sources of inspiration might reduce the distress that practitioners sometimes encounter at the beginning of new process, when struggling to find novel ideas. At the same time, they can help to visualize and communicate what are often abstract creative processes and work as a significant tool for the imagination.

In the theory section, I present various common types of sources of inspiration. Naturally, individuals do not become inspired by the exact same things or necessarily in similar ways, but there are some topics such as 'travelling', 'other artists' or 'places' that many artists mention as their sources of inspiration. Often, new experiences and encounters trigger emotions that might later transform into sources of inspiration.

Most of the sources of inspiration that I have selected to deal with in this study are art historical icons and dead male artists. I have been infatuated by certain artists, phenomena and eras, such as French Art

Nouveau or the New Yorker 1960s art scene. In the past, there were fewer female artists, due to the general role and lack of professional respect for women (Heinich 1996b, 103–104). In consequence, there were fewer exhibitions showing female artists works and less literature written about them, which resulted fewer opportunities for the research. Not choosing female artists was therefore not a conscious choice but happened naturally as I was selecting inspiring artists from the available information.

Questions related to authenticity and ownership issues arose as I was dealing with inspiration sourced from other makers. New linkages were constantly taking shape between my practice and them. The idea of inspiration travelling through different times and makers is a thrilling one (see also Friedell 1932–1933, 614–615). As a practitioner, I represent just one factor in the never-ending evolution of sources of inspiration. Wondering about the differences between copying and inspiration led me to question neighbouring themes such as ‘imitation’, ‘intertextuality’, ‘authenticity’, ‘appropriation’ and ‘change of authorship’. Tarde’s (2015) *Laws of Imitation*, published in the 19th century, offered me an interesting view on the topic, which illustrates how natural and ancient a phenomenon ‘imitation’ is. ‘Intertextuality’, another inspiration-related theme, is mostly linked to literature but helped me to understand relations also in the visual arts. It promotes the idea that when a single artwork is looked at and reflected upon, the artistic tradition that preceded its making and the discussion in the surrounding art field should also be taken into consideration, as they affect the reading and understanding of the artwork, which cannot be independent of them.

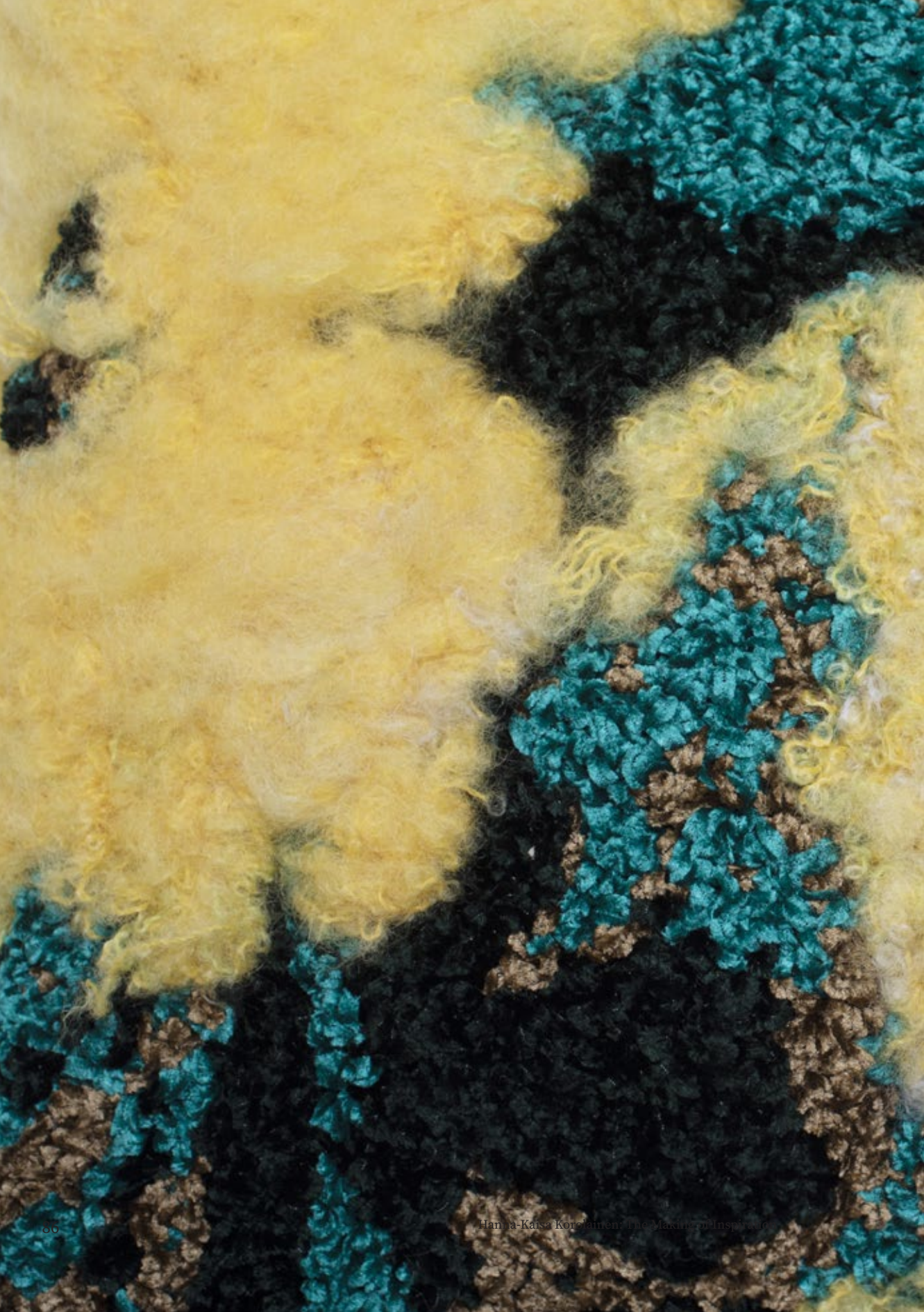
Appropriation is a term that is often used in the field of art, and it signifies ‘borrowing’ something already existing and incorporating it into new artworks, such as Warhol using photos taken by others as the basis of his own works (Honnef 1991, 60–61). Cultural appropriation, on the other hand, is related to colonialism and the inequality of power positions (Welchman 2001, 1). Using appropriation as a part of art making can be justified, and it can enable artists to comment on certain existing phenomenon more accurately. Barthes (1968) and Foucault (1969) questioned the importance of the author (in the field of literature) and emphasized the reader as an interpreter and therefore a creative counterpart. This is echoed in the art world by artists such as Duchamps and his readymades (Honour & Fleming 1992, 676–677), or later in the rise of postmodernism.

During the creative process, instead of ‘using’ sources of inspiration, I collaborate with them. The imaginary conversation between me and the sources directs the creative process. Langer (1957, 21) calls “*all systematic*

*reflection 'discursive thought,'* and – even though Langer emphasizes the meaning of the language as a basis of thinking, and for me thinking also sprouts from making – this idea of “*discursive thought*” seems to describe well what happens between me and the sources.

Selecting sources of inspiration consciously can be compared to a creative act, such as collecting and curating. New sources become entangled with previous ones, those that are conserved in my (visual) database, and this ultimately creates fresh combinations and new meanings.









# 3

## Inspiration in the Making: Research Design and Methods

# 3 Inspiration in the Making: Research Design and Methods

As a practitioner, I make sense of the world – and consequently gain more understanding – through practice. As a part of this study, I organized three peer reviewed exhibitions. Exhibitions provided me with the required distance from my own practice and its creations. This distance, along with the reviewers' reports, helped me to reflect upon what my practice was about and how it related to my research topic.

## 3.1 General orientation of the research

This research follows the example of artistic research settled by several Finnish artists (more precisely Kaila 2002; Pitkänen-Walter 2006; Mäkelä 2003; and Turpeinen 2005). They incorporated artistic practice into their dissertations, and exhibitions enabled them to present the artistic components of the research. As I am conducting my research at the Aalto University's Department of Design, I am combining aspects of art and design into my practice. Even though I have worked as an artist and designer and received education from both fields, it came as a surprise how different the dissertations from the two universities, Aalto University's Department of Design and the Fine Arts Academy, were. I understood that the design was more often related to material aspects, whereas the art aspect was related to the content of the artwork.

When I first read Jan Kaila's research *Photographicality and Representation in the Contemporary Art* (published in Finnish 2002), I realized how deeply artists can talk and analyse their own practice. The questions that Kaila (*ibid.*, 9) raises are simultaneously central to his own artistic production and the entire field of the photography art, even though the core lies in his own practice. This resembles my research approach: in addition to fathoming my own practice, I try to elucidate the concept of inspiration, which has long existed in a taboo-like mystified state. This could benefit the fields of art and design.

The core of this research lies in my own artistic practice and its outcome. Therefore, this research presents a subjective view of the topic, as I have not included, for example, interviews of other artists or researchers but relied solely on my personal explorations.

When I began this research, I had many questions related to the sources of inspiration and the concept of inspiration in general, but as the study advanced many of them changed or were left aside. Nonethe-

less, the main question concerning the role of sources of inspiration in the creative process never changed. In an attempt to uncover answers to this and several sub-questions, I conducted a number of artistic projects, the outcomes of which were presented in three exhibitions. Each exhibition was evaluated by specialists of the field and accepted as a part of the research. Therefore, in addition to written research, possible answers to research questions appear in visual form, in the shape of the artworks that I produced during this study.

Conducting this research has not always been a logical ride. Sometimes, it was only through practice and repetition that I discovered what the right question to ask was, and the process went back and forth between possible questions, hints of answers and shifting directions. I had to reconsider my process several times. For example, some pieces from the exhibition called *The House of Love* were later shown as part of another exhibition (*The House of Love and Rebellion*) because they made more sense that way – a new understanding was generated when certain artworks were juxtaposed in a new context.

My learning process was not linear either; sometimes I understood only later what some previously produced artworks were about. My overall research process resembled more of an amoeba, and when I reached the end, I had forgotten what the beginning looked like. It took time for the research to shape itself fruitfully. For this reason, projects that I presented in the first exhibition are not included in the main findings of this study. During the first exhibition project, I started to slowly understand what my research was about and what kind of knowledge and understanding I could achieve through my own mixed art and research practice. Nevertheless, making the first exhibition played a vital role in determining the path of this research – without those clumsy baby steps I would have been unable to get anywhere.

The making of the first exhibition was a messy process with new sources of inspiration coming from left and right. It left me feeling confused, and I felt that I was no closer to finding answers to my research questions. As a result, I started structuring my process more. I selected the possible source(s) of inspiration well in advance and tried to learn as much as possible about them. The most important alteration in my process was that I decided to work with far fewer options, ideally just one source of inspiration at the time. By setting boundaries to my creative process, I tried to create some kind of imaginary playground for my creative explorations. This playground, with its restrictions, offered a safe area for my creative explorations.



My creative practice included time-consuming labour by hand, and most artworks required days or even weeks of craft. The best result came when I let myself transform into a creature ‘all legs and all arms’, while not involving too much conscious thinking or strict guidelines. I had faith in my process. When I let it flow, the answers to my questions materialized somehow. Even if I let go of conscious models of thinking while I was in the middle of the artistic practice, the problem solving went on unconsciously. Sometimes after long studio sessions the answers to my inquiries seemed to generate themselves from nowhere, with remarkable ease. At the end of my research, even if I had not found direct answers to all the questions that had arisen through my five and half years of research, I had gained a broad understanding of what the role of sources of inspiration in my artistic practice were and what the role of creative practice in my research was, and vice versa.

Exhibitions provided me with much-needed deadlines in a fuzzy and long process of the doctoral studies, but more importantly they presented an apparatus that enabled me to analyse my own practice after it had already taken place, and its outcome – the artworks. Mäkelä (2003, 27) presents the idea of the retrospective gaze that enables the practitioner to analyse and understand her process and its outcome after the making phase is over. The practitioner can look back on her process and accumulate knowledge of it through these repeated gazes. Artworks carry memory in them and speak a specific language to their maker (ibid., 2007, 158). In addition of the story of their creation, my artworks reminded me about the sources of inspiration which influenced them. Presenting my artworks in the form of an exhibition made it possible to gain the required distance and examine the works in a more neutral manner. Outside my studio, they seemed to grow and build new meanings in relation to the place and context where they were shown.

In my art and research practice, the roles of researcher and creative practitioner did not co-exist all the time; instead, they took over alternatively. I did not oblige myself to wear two hats at the same time, but similarly I did not need to block myself. Instead, research became one component of my creative process and little by little it began to fertilize it. In turn, my practice helped me also to understand related literature; for example, at the beginning of my studies, when I first heard about the concept of ‘intertextuality’ I could not understand it at all – understanding came much later. My combined art and research practice helped me to understand that if **text** is connected to 1) the history of literature, 2) the contemporary field of literature, and 3) the surrounding discussion about

literature (Makkonen 2006, 24–25), then an **artwork** in its turn, is connected to 1) art history, 2) the contemporary field of art, and 3) the surrounding discussion about art. In addition, in my case, the artworks were related to their sources of inspiration, both conscious and unconscious. My own practical explorations and investigations had made a big difference to my overall understanding regarding inspiration and its various forms.

The seventh chapter of this book presents a catalogue of selected artefacts created during this study between the years 2016 and 2020. Not every artefact produced is included, as not everything was chosen for the exhibitions either. Nevertheless, most of the artworks are there, grouped by their making techniques, such as ‘rugs’ or ‘ceramics’, in more or less chronological order. For example, the glass series *Saaristo64* was first created in 2018, but production and development of the artworks went on until 2021.

In the catalogue, next to the artefacts, I will cite the consciously selected sources of inspiration, such as artworks by Monet or Warhol. Sometimes possible unconscious source(s) of inspiration are mentioned, as at times when the artworks were finished, I noticed relations to other sources. Examples of those are, for example, artworks by Niki De Saint Phalle<sup>57</sup> or Hilma Af Klint<sup>58</sup>. In addition to presenting my artistic production, this catalogue can be seen as a visual diary of my learning process.

### 3.1.1 Houses

I decided to name each of my dissertation-related exhibitions ‘houses’ (*House of Play and Rain*, *House of Love*, *House of Love and Rebellion*) (see image 11), and this was because the concept of a ‘house’ presents something special to me, it is like a key that helps me to grasp my own practice and put it into words. As I work with several materials, and most of my artworks seemingly having a function (vase, bed cover, carpet), I have concluded that my creative practice resembles ‘obsessive home-making practice’.

‘House’ has several meanings to me; I see it as a place that inhabits my inspiration process, a place that becomes different each time according to the kinds of sources of inspiration that I am working with. Each

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**57** French–American Niki de Saint Phalle (born Catherine-Marie-Agnès Fal de Saint Phalle) lived 1930–2002.

**58** Swedish artist Hilma Af Klint (1862–1944) was known for her early abstract works.





11 Detail from my exhibition *House of Love and Rebellion* in Hvitträsk in 2020. My rya rug cushions in mohair and Japanese silk (various sizes) are laid on the couches. Photo: author (2020).

exhibition-related house frame (or house concept) has a predefined theme and working methods, which lead me to execute various art, design, and research tasks. Each house forms a certain kind of creative playground, to where a select few guests (sources of inspiration) are invited. Every house hints to the next, as the houses develop from each other, step by step, each house informing what might still be lacking for me to understand the very nature of the inspiration.

Houses as a concept also raises a connection to fashion and design houses. Those houses are marked by a certain overall style and well-known specific features, such as the recognizable silhouette at the House of Dior (Giroud 2006, 11–12) or bold colourful prints in the case of Marimekko (Aav et al. 2005, 13). These houses try to answer various needs their clients might have, from fashion to the interior design of cosmetics. My ‘exhibition houses’ were like miniature art and design houses, trying to cover a vast number of features that make a place look like an inhabited space, a house that belongs to someone and has a specific style or character, becoming a place that has a story.

Deleuze and French philosopher and psychotherapist Pierre-Félix Guattari (1993, 184–185) state that (in art) there is no “*becoming*” without the ‘house’, that a house (or anything house-like), forms a home and meeting place for the “*non-organic life of things*”. Houses open to their surroundings by doors and windows, and even without these openings, houses are ‘open’. As an example, Monet’s house is taken over by his garden, becoming “*a cosmos of roses*” (ibid., 185).

Each artist has different house(s) (Deleuze & Guattari 1993, 187), which define(s) her artworks just like a design of the House of Dior is defined by its ‘label’. The basis of the house is the artist herself, and her “*becoming*” (ibid., 185). The house has the capacity to filter and select “*cosmic forces*” (ibid., 186), which I would identify as outside influences. For Deleuze and Guattari (ibid., 190–191) the role of the house is decisive; “*art does not start with the flesh but with house*”<sup>59</sup> (ibid., 190–191), a house–structure provides a frame for the creative process, a frame which stays open to any transformations and encounters of new outside forces.

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59 Freely translated by the author.

## 3.2 Artworks and exhibitions – An overview of the research setting

I started this study thinking that I would mainly work with textiles, which had been my main material for several years. My first exhibition in the series of three (related to doctoral studies and peer-reviewed as part of this study) therefore included woven, printed and hand-tufted textiles. It was an illogical mixture of unique artworks and product-like artefacts produced in a range of small series. In addition, I showed samples and sketches, thinking that this would create a pedagogical presentation of the creative process and its various phases, but the end result made no sense to me. I could not even see how all this would connect to my research topic, a pillowcase with a flower pattern was just ‘a pillowcase with a flower pattern’, nothing more. I decided to change the set up.

In my next two exhibitions, I abandoned the idea of showing unfinished phases of the creative process. Textiles were still included, but now shown with ceramics and glass works. The ultimate reason for using different materials was intuitive: textiles felt too soft, warm, and suffocating alone; ceramics and glass brought contrasting roughness, shine, and coldness. Simultaneously, glass offered an interesting opportunity for group work, as I do not have the skill of glass blowing. Several of the techniques I used in these exhibitions were relatively new to me, such as tufting rya rugs, making ceramics and glass. Somehow, the newness and uncertainty of these learning experiences helped me to understand my research topic better. I was able to examine my creative practice from fresh angles.

All three exhibitions were shown in the form of installations in such a way that they gave the impression of a space that could almost be somebody’s home. I added elements such as chairs, shelves, or beds. The exhibitions almost resembled interior decoration projects since many art-

works were shown in a functional way as wall coverings, curtains, cushions or on top of furniture. All ceramic and glass pieces were without exception shaped as vases and pots – sometimes adorned with dead and alive flowers and plants. I had no specific intention of creating functional pieces, but somehow it happened due to my double role as artist and designer.

Building up these home-like installations was no conscious decision on my part. Maybe it was an attempt to break the aesthetic of a white cube gallery space by bringing the artworks closer to everyday life instead of elusive luxury items elevated on pedestals. I wanted the artworks to seem more alive (as if they could be used, lived with, touched, and experienced) and to demonstrate the relations between objects, spaces, and eras. I had a need to build a connection to the past and produce another, fictional impression of it, following my imagination. By doing so, I felt strangely free – who could define exactly how things were like in the past? Photo evidence exists only of selected moments. To some extent, a part of the documentation dealing with the past is subjective, and therefore hardly anyone can be certain about ‘the absolute truth’. To this imaginative impression of the past, I added my vision of the present, all set side by side.

I produced the artefacts for room after room, one atmosphere after another as a compulsive need to leave my mark on the world and occupy a space and time of my own. Heavy textiles, heavy ceramics, large pieces of glass, as if demanding to be noticed – I was here, look at me, remember me!

While making the exhibitions, I wanted to stay as free as possible of financial limitations, and after the first exhibition, the remaining two were organized in rent-free spaces, and without the possibility of selling the works. ‘Selling’ creates an additional pressure since to be able to make profit (for myself and the gallery) I must consider certain aspects, such as creating works on different scales and in different price ranges to correspond to various needs. The absence of these restrictions created a sensation of artistic freedom, which was made possible by a three-year-grant that allowed me to concentrate fully on this study.

### **3.3 Exhibitions as a method for research – A description of the artistic components**

I have defined my research method as exhibition-making, which includes various aspects, such as a lot of hands-on work, learning new techniques, planning processes, choosing colours and materials, but also reading and writing about my sources of inspiration and discovering what this entire inspiration business is about.

There exist many kinds of artistic research dissertation processes, but rather regularly they include one or several exhibitions, the quantity possibly depending on their size and impact. I organized three exhibitions in four and half years. Each of them tackled chosen source(s) of inspiration and related research question(s). The exhibitions and their creation are the most central feature of this study.

In the exhibition process, the making of the artworks might feel the most meaningful part, but I am equally interested in the outcome, the artworks. When an artwork is 'ready' and presented in an exhibition, I 'let it go' and it feels like it gains a life of its own, independently of me as its creator. When I experience the artworks outside of my studio, separated from my body and touch, a healthy distance is created between the two of us. Via this distance, I begin to discover what the artwork could be about and what its story is. This is related to the characteristics of the creative process, and as long the artwork is in transformation, it is hard to understand what is 'really' happening. Notably, for these reasons, exhibitions became an important factor in understanding and structuring my research.

These were not the first exhibitions that I had organized in my life, so how could they suddenly become legitimized as research? What made them different? These were not easy questions to answer, but I could discern certain aspects, such as reflecting on my exhibitions after they were over or the increase in documentation. The making processes were photographed and noted down in the sketchbooks, which helped me to

further comprehend what had happened during the process (see also Mäkelä 2016, 2; Nimkulrat 2012, 5–7). The most curious thing is that now I can no longer imagine making an exhibition without including documenting and reflecting. Making research has fundamentally changed the way I think and make exhibitions, so in contrast to my initial ideas of sacralising the practice, research has affected my making processes.

I had never organized as many exhibitions in such a short time frame. Since I began my doctoral studies in early 2016, in addition to three evaluated solo exhibitions, I have organized another solo project in Milan and taken part in 17 group exhibitions. In all these events I presented artworks that dealt with my research. It was not a premeditated choice to embrace all these opportunities, nor the wisest one to devote as much time to exhibition making, considering the time that it takes to write the dissertation. Nevertheless, all these experiences gave me the confidence to claim that exhibitions and their making can be validated as my method for research.

While working on these exhibitions, I wrote two published conference papers *Monet and me – A story of an inspiration* (2018) and *Warhol and me – Battle of the authors: from copying to sharing* (2021). Writing these texts in between intense periods of making was helpful. They made the questions that the exhibitions dealt with clearer and gave words to my discourse. Even though I believe that not everything should be forged into words, it became a useful exercise which helped me in communicating my ideas. While writing the conference papers, there was a new dialogue which was born in between writing and making, and I began to realize that writing about my research could resemble a creative practice. After the last exhibition, I had time to fully concentrate myself on writing; at that point, I finally felt ready for this new form of creativity. My thinking was developed by my making, but it was not until I started seriously writing that I understood what kind of thinking had taken place in me.

### **3.3.1 Exhibition 1: *The House of Play and Rain***

*The House of Play and Rain* was shown in Lokal Gallery 24.2.–19.3.2017. It showed a vast collection of textile designs in various small series and unique artworks with colourful patterns. To support my installation, I had brought an old room divider and a bed that belonged to my great-great-grandfather, in addition to chair and stools upholstered with my patterned fabrics (in collaboration with the furniture brand *Nikari*) and various tables that already





- 12 View of my exhibition *House of Play and Rain* in the Lokal Gallery 2017. On the back wall there is a collection of watercolour paintings inspired by Emil Nolde and the rya rug *Amur* (2017, hand-tufted mohair, 140 × 110 cm) on the right-hand side on the wall is also inspired by him. The flowery rya rug *Ansa* (2016, hand-tufted mohair, 140 × 110 cm) on the staircase is inspired by Raoul Dufy as well as the textiles on the chair. Photo: Katja Hagelstam (2017).

were in the space. The main textile material of the exhibition was mohair, often brushed open and looking both hairy and warm (see image 12). The first exhibition lacked structure, as my ideas were too scattered and raw. Even if it did not offer any major eureka moments, it greatly guided my future research. It felt almost as if I first had to become lost in order to be able to find the right path later.

At the beginning of the research, I thought that I needed to make my creative process transparent to be able to understand what it was about. Therefore, next to the artworks, I presented material samples, tools, and sketches. Information on whether it was a 'ready' artwork or not was provided in a separate list. Unfortunately, the information did not reach all the spectators, who suddenly did not know what they were looking at. In a way, everything in an exhibition space becomes an artwork, it all depends on how they are looked at. My concern was that my initial idea – revealing the off-stage process – failed.

Another confusion was created by mixing unique artworks such as hand-woven wall coverings and hand-tufted rya rugs with various small series such as blouses and pillowcases produced from my patterns. Products and artworks were merrily mixed. Confusion itself can be a fruitful state, one that leads to unexpected outcomes, but this time it seemed to indicate what did not work.

In the following, I will explain in detail the making of my first exhibition. Even though this experience did not lead to the main findings of this study, it still greatly affected the later phases of my research.

I had chosen four sources of inspiration 1) Niki de Saint Phalle and her narrative assemblages, 2) Man Ray<sup>60</sup> and his rayograms, 3) Raoul Dufy<sup>61</sup> and his textile designs and 4) Emil Nolde<sup>62</sup> with his watercolours.

### 3.3.1.1 Getting inspired by Niki De Saint Phalle and Man Ray

I started my process with **Niki de Saint Phalle** and **Man Ray**, who were supposed to answer the question of whether 'sources of inspiration' could be comparable to 'toys'. I wanted to discover what happens during the dim moments of initiation of the creative process. Could sources of inspiration

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**60** American Man Ray (born Emmanuel Radnitzky) lived 1890–1976.

**61** French Fauvist Raoul Dufy lived 1877–1953.

**62** Danish-German expressionist Emil Nolde lived 1867–1956.



- 13 **This photogram-rayogram (2016), colour photograph, c. 47 × 36 cm, was made with artificial flowers with a traditional colour photography technique. It presents a negative image which can be later used to make a positive one in 1:1 size.** Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2022).

inspire the process similarly to toys that evoke child's play? I took 'play' as a metaphor for the creative process.

I decided to recreate Man Ray-inspired photograms in a traditional dark room setting.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to Man Ray, I used coloured images (see image 13). Man Ray renamed the photogram technique "*rayogram*" to identify it as his own invention, even though several photographers had already used the same cameraless picture-making technique in the 19th century (L'Ecotais & Ware 2000, 18–20). No camera is needed; instead, an object is placed directly on top of light-sensitive paper which is then exposed to light – in this way, the shadows of the objects become preserved on the paper (ibid.). The picture is developed as a regular photograph, and this causes a negative image, where the light takes the place of the shadow and the other way around (ibid.). This negative image is then used to create positive image, where the light and shadow find their original place.

As I have previously studied photography, it was not complicated to adopt this technique. Instead, I enjoyed working in a dark room after so many years. The whole process resembled child's play for me, and working in the dark room gave me a sensation of happiness.

The things that I chose as my subjects (for my 'rayograms') were inspired by Saint Phalle. To simplify, I merged inspiration sourced from Man Ray with that from Saint Phalle: 'Man Rays' technique with Saint Phalle's subjects'. Saint Phalle's "*narrative assemblages*" sculptures were entirely constructed out of toys; she invented her very own way to play with her toys (Schulz-Hoffman et al. 2003, 56). Even though Saint Phalle's art often dealt with difficult themes such as child abuse and distorted family relations, her final artworks burst with colours and playfulness. Saint Phalle listed her favourite toys: "*Flowers and guns and dolls and skulls and monsters and cars and spiders and soldiers and snakes and horses and hearts and cowboys and aeroplanes and wheels and knives and hair curlers and crucifixes and masks and lions and leaves and roses and dogs and lizards and and and and and...*" (ibid.). For her, these objects worked as talismans that allowed her to explore and eventually make peace with her own demons (ibid., 6). As toy researcher Katriina Heljakka (2013, 93) states, toys have a purpose without having it, toys encourage one to play with them, but they

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**63** I could have used a digital device such as a scanner to create my image, but I wanted to remain in the realm of old school photographs. When photographic paper is developed with chemicals, it creates profound shades of colours. Comparing digitally produced images to it would be like comparing silk with polyester.

might not come with a manual that explains *how* to play with them. I see a toy as a tool, and it is up to the player (practitioner) to decide how to use this plaything and what kind of knowledge (if any) to achieve through it.

In my own interpretation of Saint Phalle's narrative assemblages, I decided to use tiny, old paper dolls shaped as animals and humans, artificial and real (dried) plants and flowers, pearls and chains. It was a strange mixture of real, fake and imitation. The toys that I chose were rather similar to those used by Saint Phalle, even though I used the material differently. Heljakka (2013, 368) notes that when toys are regarded as non-utilitarian artefacts, they need to be interpreted by the user; in this way their (the toys') capacity will be concretized during the play. I could not repeat Saint Phalle's play but needed to invent my own.

The rules I had created seemed too limiting and stiff: I followed the examples set by my sources closely and did not activate my own imagination sufficiently. I was repeating Man Ray and Saint Phalle, merging them together, but lost myself in the process. Besides I had not thought how my photographic sketches could be later transferred into textiles. The photographs that resulted from the process were rather interesting by themselves, and I was tempted to stay there, leave the photos as such and nothing else.

With regard to the related research question, "Can a source of inspiration be understood as a 'toy' in the creative process and give a spark to the process?" the answer was definitely 'yes', but instead of an extensive and interesting 'yes', it seemed like a rather narrow and unimaginative 'yes', which offered no ideas for further investigations.

As an end result, I reworked a few of my sketches into textiles; for example, *Coq* (see images 14 and 15), resembled a classic chain pattern as I used images composed out of jewellery in addition to old rooster paper doll, and another photo with flowers was developed also into woven fabric. I struggled with these, feeling like I was obliged to use the photos and make patterns out of them, as that was the rule that I had defined for myself. The outcome seemed forced. These pieces were not interesting alone, without the background information of their process of becoming, they were not able to breathe 'alone'.

### 3.3.1.2 Getting inspired by Raoul Dufy and Emil Nolde

Next, I began to work with inspiration sourced from **Raoul Dufy** and **Emil Nolde**. This happened still in the context of the first exhibition. My research





- 14 These photograms (2016) that I used as the basis for the Coq pattern merge inspiration from Niki de Saint Phalle and Man Ray. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).
- 15 Ready Coq pattern (2016) seen on a shirt, the model of which is by David Szeto). Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2022).



question concerned whether, when the practitioner achieves the ‘flow’ state, it enables her to drift further away from her sources of inspiration and, along the way, find her own personal artistic expression. As a metaphor, the practitioner leaves one harbour (the source of inspiration) and ends after various phases and challenges in another harbour (her own artistic expression). Some essence of the original source might still be detectable but now infused with the practitioner’s own artistic qualities.

This time, I did not merge my sources of inspiration but kept them apart. I used techniques that include water: ink for Dufy and aquarelle for Nolde. At this point, the exhibition was still in the future, and I had not learned my lesson from the Man Ray–Saint Phalle case, so I made the same mistake again and stayed close to the same techniques and visuals that my sources of inspiration used. Dufy could have used ink, and with Nolde, I was inspired specifically by his aquarelle paintings and still decided to use the same technique. The setting was an uninspiring one; I ended up by comparing myself constantly to my sources of inspiration.

I chose to work with ‘water’, as I assumed its uncontrollable qualities might lead to a creative flow state, helping me to drift further away from my sources of inspiration. American Hungarian psychologist and expert on ‘flow’ Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (2005, 116–118) has identified ‘hazard’<sup>64</sup> as one possible hook to attain the state of flow.<sup>65</sup> Even without the promise of flow, I have always found hazard an attractive concept to me because I become bored easily. As an artist and designer, I have been hunting for surprises. I have experimented with various working methods, from photography to embroidery, from installation to performance. Consequently,

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**64** By ‘hazard’ as part of the creative process, I mean a chance or an accident, which can be provoked by using techniques with uncontrollable factors that affect the outcome. Such techniques in addition to the wet technique in watercolours (the effect of the amount of water, temperature and so on) could be, for example, wood firing in ceramics where the exact qualities of the wood and temperature in different parts of the kiln make it almost impossible to control the outcome perfectly. These ‘accidents’ can be welcomed with open arms by a practitioner that enjoys surprises in their practice as I do.

**65** The American-Hungarian psychologist and writer Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (e.g. 2005) presented the concept of flow. The key factor of the flow experience is that the individual’s capacities are improved and enriched through it (ibid., 118.) Following Csíkszentmihályi’s analysis, when an individual starts an activity for the very first time, the flow-state can be achieved with a minor success, but when the basics have been learned, the risk of becoming bored arises. On the other hand, if the challenges are too demanding too soon, the feeling of inability can be so distressing that the individual stops. When a vital balance between challenges, agonizing and boredom is reached, a successful state of flow can be attained and maintained (ibid., 2005, 116–118).

I have not attained true mastery in any particular form of art, nor found an unlimited passion for one. Instead, I have preserved my status as a beginner, which has helped to regulate my own expectations and allow a certain self-criticism towards my artworks.

Dufy's art was known for its cheerfulness and *joie de vivre*.<sup>66</sup> His speciality was to make something difficult look extremely easy (Cogniat 1962, 6; Dufy et al. 1993, 138). For Dufy, both 'art' and 'design' originated from the same source, and he claimed that anything he drew and created could become a design for textile as well as a new work of art. Working as designer was just a continuation of his art (Dufy et al. 1993, 5, 9–11). Dufy designed textiles, for example, for Paul Poiret (Dufy et al. 1993, 8; Perez-Tibi 1997, 70) and Lyon-based silk fabricant Bianchini-Férier, which led to the emergence of over 2,000 pattern designs during the 1910s–1920s (Jackson 2011, 48–49). The influence of Dufy's abundant style seems visible even in the textile designs of today.

Following Dufy's example, I painted flowers such as peonies, daisies, and roses. I can hardly understand why I chose similar subjects to those he used. It made it harder to gain the required distance and find my own artistic expression. I must have been blinded by infatuation. Despite all this, I found flow in the process, feeling productive and inspired. I painted numerous sketches with black ink on white paper (see image 16), some on a very large scale. Later, I digitalized them and constructed the final patterns. In the end phase, I added the colours. Dufy loved colours, and so did I.

Nolde is known for his expressionist oil paintings and aquarelles, of which the latter acted as my source of inspiration (Ragon 1972, 35–42, 183). Nolde's technique was described as seeming as if the watercolour appeared to "*flow right out of his hands*" (Garbrecht 2011, 27). He believed the quicker he could paint, the better the result became (*ibid.*). Nolde elaborated his skills infinitely, leaving a vast collection, over 5,000 works, of watercolours (*ibid.*, 27–29). He enjoyed working outdoors during winter, when frost draw its own shapes on the paper, water – frozen or not – helped to create hazards and made Nolde appreciate this unexpected collaboration with nature (Reuther in Nolde 2011, 13–15). Painting sessions were prepared carefully: Nolde ordered the readily mixed paints pots with a brush in each pot always in same order, knowing their place as a pianist does her

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**66** *Joie de vivre* (The Joy of Living in English) is a French phrase which means the happy enjoyment of all things in life, such as food or conversation.



16 These sketches (2016), ink on paper, each 35.5 × 55 cm, inspired by Dufy's textile designs were used in two of my jacquard patterns; the one on top for the pattern *Small Flowers and Friends* and the one below for the pattern *South Sea*, both can be seen on p. 243. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

keyboard<sup>67</sup> (Garbrecht 2011, 29–32). Improvisation and virtuosity played a great part in his process; therefore, ‘composition’ – previously highly valued in the arts – was surpassed by spontaneity (ibid.).

After the inspiration sourced from Nolde, I painted a series of watercolours of pansies, leopards, and tigers. This was not the first time that I had used watercolours, but even then, a practising phase was needed before the process started to flow. I needed to find a balance concerning the hazardous qualities of the technique: they lead to interesting surprises but simultaneously gave the impression of risk – with flowing water all the colours could end up blended into one (brown) mess. I needed time to accommodate myself to the various external circumstances, such as the room temperature and humidity that directly affected the drying time of the paint. The more I painted, the better the results seemed to become. I practised the control of hazard – not every single sketch was perfect, but after a while the good ones did not feel like lucky shots either.

Only one of the watercolour sketches (see image 17), a painted pattern of tiger’s stripes, ended up being a basis for my hand-tufted rya rug *Amur*. As its material, I chose mohair, and when brushed open it resembled the clouded lines of aquarelles. I also wove the same pattern into a silk jacquard called *Sky*. Its colour was baby blue, and with its sharp lines and restricted colour palette it gave an entirely different impression from the rug. It did not capture the feeling of watercolours. It was not recognizable that these two works originated from the same sketch. Similarly, sources of inspiration can go through a metamorphosis during the creative process, all the choices influence the outcome.

There were plenty of other aquarelles that I made which did not seem fitting to be developed into textiles, but I showed them as part of the exhibition. They adopted the status of independent artworks, unlike some

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**67** Nolde’s spouse Jolanthe Nolde described his watercolour painting process: “During the painting process he employed his watercolours lavishly. He didn’t much care whether his brush dripped. Quite frequently a big drop would spoil a beautifully laid out picture, and he had to pretend the blot was intentional, or occasionally had to change his picture, saying that ‘it was often an improvement’, or ‘sometimes you lose the finest things’. - - - Some of the (watercolour) cups, with particularly important colours, have two or three brushes of the same size in them. Also, there are always several clean brushes lying on the table, ready for the use if he needs them. If he wants to work, there are two or three cups of water at hand, into which he dips the paint-filled brush when he wishes to thin the colours on that particular brush. The brushes on the paint pots are almost all quite crooked, because they stand there year in, year out, which warps them.” (Nolde in Nolde 2011, 150–151.)



- 17 **Watercolour sketches (2016) of tiger stripes inspired by Emil Nolde (each c. 26.5 × 19.5). A rather similar aquarelle, which was stolen from the Lokal Gallery exhibition in 2017, acted as the basis for the Amur rug (the finished artwork can be seen on p. 224).** Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

other paintings that I had labelled ‘studies’ in the exhibition catalogue. This might be because, since I liked these paintings, I felt that I could ‘stand behind’ them and be proud of them. Whether something could be called a ‘work of art’ finally depended only upon my gut feeling.

As for my research questions: whether the flow state could lead to finding my own artistic expression and ‘independence’ from the sources of inspiration, the answers were not yet clear. I had found ‘hazard’ to be one possible trigger to enable flow, yet it did not lead to highly individual artistic expression. Instead, the end result felt confusing.



### 3.3.1.3 In *The House of Play and Rain*

The finalized exhibition took place in Lokal Gallery, February 2017. It resembled an extensive ode to Dufy's creativity (see image 18). Flower motifs, based on the inspiration he gave me, dominated the space. This was not what I had intended – other sources of inspiration, Saint Phalle, Man Ray and Nolde seemed almost forgotten.

The answers that I had found for my two research questions (sources of inspiration as initiators of the creative process and flow state as vehicle towards individual artistic expression) gave no significant openings for further research. During the preparation of the exhibition, however, I had lived through some inspiring moments such as transferring photograms into a woven textile or seeing my designs in various techniques and materials, made by hands and machine. There were several artistic findings that later guided me into new ways of expression.

**18** The final exhibition looked like an homage to Dufy, an effect that was not intended, but probably linked to the fact, that I admired Dufy tremendously at the time. Photo: Katja Hagelstam (2017).





When I tried to define what went wrong, I realized that I had stayed too close to my sources of inspiration instead of developing my own ways of interpretation. Man Ray did rayograms and so did I, Saint Phalle loved flea market toys and so did I, I shared the love of flowers with Dufy and tried to paint watercolours just like Nolde.

Another reason might be that I had probably started with too many and varied sources of inspiration: too many to make any sense of the whole, and too many to pay enough attention to each. I decided that, for me, it is not easy to fall in love with many at a time. A source of inspiration needs attention, so the more I immerse myself into the world of my source, the stronger the inspiration becomes. As a result, I understood that it is more fruitful to be able to concentrate over a longer time on one single source of inspiration, in which way the relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration has time to develop.

This experience gave me the idea for the next research topic and exhibition: I would concentrate on the relationship between the maker and the source of inspiration. I was also going to dedicate as much time to the process as seemed necessary.

### **3.3.2 Exhibition II: *The House of Love***

The findings related to *The House of Love* exhibition will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter 4.1 *Monet and me – The Story of an Inspiration*. The main theme was the relationship between the practitioner and her source of inspiration.

Since 2017, I had been in contact with several possible museums and other exhibition premises, but due to the tight schedule of doctoral studies, it did not work out. When I was offered carte blanche to take part in Habitare's<sup>68</sup> Talentshop section, I decided to organize my second evaluated exhibition in this curious setting. It was organized in Helsinki 12.–16.9.2018. Earlier the same year, I had presented a solo project entitled *Broken Flowers in the House of Beauty* during Milan Design Week, but Milan was too far for the evaluators of this dissertation to visit. Furthermore, Habitare offered the opportunity to show a larger quantity of works.

*The House of Love* was the only one of the doctoral-studies-related exhibitions that dealt strictly with one theme. I chose Monet, including his

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**68** Habitare is a design fair organized annually in Helsinki, Finland.

works in the Orangerie museum and garden in Giverny, as my source of inspiration. I created several rugs, woven textiles, and ceramics. As these techniques required long days, weeks, and months of craft, the making of the exhibition spanned a longer period, almost 18 months. Ceramics were relatively new for me and as a challenge they became my new conquest.

On one wall hung a rya rug and against the other there was a rya rug installation with a bench (see image 19) – a third rug was laid on the floor. Vases and pots, in which I had planted green plants, were installed on antique flower columns and pedestals. There were fresh flowers<sup>69</sup> and ostrich feathers in the vases. All these, along with vintage furniture and abundance of colours, created a claustrophobic sensation of being in a hoarder's paradise, or at least on a movie set.

One of the 'open' walls had been partly covered with heavy jacquard woven curtains adorned with decorative hand-knotted fringes, which emphasized the impression of a (small) stage. There were stacks by Finnish designer Markus Koistinen, attached on the walls at various heights. This way I could also use the space vertically. I wanted to recycle something from the previous exhibition<sup>70</sup> here, so I had brought three Nikari chairs upholstered with my Dufy-inspired patterns to occupy the last free square centimetres. In this theatrical setting, it became hard to distinguish my artworks from other pieces, and they ended up being rivalled by the wild beauty of living flowers and plants.

I am not quite sure why I began to work on ceramics at this moment. Maybe textiles seemed too soft and suffocating alone, or I was too bored, yearning to learn new skills and step outside of my comfort zone. I had always been an ardent fan of ceramics – while living in France, I dreamed of collecting 19th century 'barbotine'<sup>71</sup> pieces, which I could not afford at the time. Now, I was able to develop my own barbotine-inspired technique and built by hand a series of pots and vases decorated with flowery reliefs. For me, these pieces demonstrated a strong sense of the past – they reminded me of the Art Nouveau era, corresponding with Monet's time. However, there was also something that was not intended – our teacher

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**69** Helsinki-based flower shop Cawell had sponsored me with an abundance of flowers.

**70** I wanted to create a continuous thread between the three doctoral exhibitions by recycling some of the artworks.

**71** The French term 'barbotine' can have several meanings but is often used to refer to pottery that has 3-dimensional decorations on the surface. This style mostly presented plants, fruits or small animals. An early exponent of the style would be 16th century French ceramist Bernard Palissy.



- 19 **Polaroid of the set when I was installing the exhibition, in September 2018. Plants, furniture and artworks created a messy whole. The *Broken Lake* rug (on the couch) can be seen in detail on p. 228. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021)**



**20** Platter by Bernard Palissy (last quarter of 16th century), lead glazed earthenware, 52.1 x 39.7 x 7.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Palissy was a significant influence for many ceramicists who followed him. Photo: MET/ Wikimedia Commons.

Nathalie Lautenbacher saw in my works an apparent resemblance to the French potter of the 16th century, Bernard Palissy (see image 20). I had never heard of Palissy, and yet somehow he seemed to be present in my works. This might have a connection with ceramics' long history, and clay's specific materiality, which, I believe, unites practitioners who work with it. Pieces are not made 'from' the clay but 'with' the clay (see also Kontturi 2018, 13), and this influences the way they become.

It felt like a gamble to present these ceramic pieces at the exhibition while I had so little experience of the technique. I reminded myself that I had started to work with hand-tufted rugs only one year earlier. This exhibition project felt like an experiment where I tested the kind of artworks that I could show, and how I could fit into the context of an interior design fair. My installation could be regarded as a crazy and a rather kitschy proposition for home decor. Many of my acquaintances came to visit as if it had been a real art exhibition. My stand was so thoroughly filled with things that visitors could hardly fit in and look at it from the outside. I was there most of the time, feeling almost like an actor on a stage.

After this second exhibition, I felt that I had finally found a way to combine art and research practice. Showing some of the same artworks in Milan, before the actual show in Habitare, had enabled me to gain in self-confidence and understanding regarding my project. I would have rather shown my works in an art context, a gallery, or a museum, but somehow this new setting had freed me of some pressure and made space for experimentation.

### **3.3.3 Exhibition III: *The House of Love and Rebellion***

When the time for the third exhibition came, my previous attempts to find an exhibition space paid off. I was given the chance to organize an exhibition during summer 2020 at a historical villa called Hvitträsk, which was managed by the Finnish National Museum. This time, I had a lot of space, so I decided to group some of the artworks from the previous exhibition next to new ones. I presented textiles, ceramics, and glass. The exhibition took place 24.6.–30.9.2020.

After dealing with just one source and theme (Monet and relationship) in the last exhibition, I felt ready to cover more this time. I decided to deal with 1) copying and 2) shared authorship. For the first theme, I chose Warhol since copying was a predominant feature in his artworks (Hautamäki 2003,

140). Hvitträsk was designed by three architects, and it became my main source for the shared authorship theme (Marjamäki 2020, 5).

I felt that I needed more sources of inspiration, so I chose two Finnish historical rya rugs: *Flame* by the Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela<sup>72</sup> and *Seagull* created by Finnish architect Jarl Eklund<sup>73</sup> (Karsikas 2020; (Svinhufvud 2009, 10).

As an exhibition space, Hvitträsk was special (see image 21). It stood out from the white cube gallery tradition that I had been keen to step out of in my previous exhibitions. Hvitträsk was created as a complete work of art, where every detail, from the surrounding trees to the tiniest details of the decorative items, was carefully thought through. It was created at once but grew and evolved with its inhabitants (Pallasmaa et al. 1997, 32–33). I did not want to metamorphose or hide its character. My aim was to continue the history of Hvitträsk as ‘total work of art’ by combining it with my own artworks and fortifying the aspect of Hvitträsk being ‘alive’ and ‘lived’ (see also Mäkelä & Latva-Somppi 2011). Several rooms in Hvitträsk had no furniture, so I was able to inhabit them once again and create an illusion in which the limits between my artworks and Hvitträsk would fade. I wanted my artworks to blend in effortlessly – it was not about recreating authentic looking art nouveau interiors, but more like some kind of fantasies from my own imagination forming an interesting dialogue with Hvitträsk (see image 22).

Hvitträsk had been created as a total work of art (Pallasmaa et al. 1997, 32–33.), and my aim was to merge my own artworks into it. As a total work of art, in my mind this also involved the presence of its past inhabitants through whom several stories of Hvitträsk were told. I took the ‘life that had been lived in Hvitträsk’ as part of my sources of inspiration. The installation called *The Death of The Flowers* that I built in Loja’s room, emphasized this idea. It was composed of ceramic vases, green plants (originating from Hvitträsk), antique furniture and fresh and withered flowers – regularly picked from the garden. One of the original inhabitants, Finnish textile artist and designer Loja (Louise) Saarinen,<sup>74</sup> was passionate about flowers and designed the garden herself (Marjamäki 2020, 28, 60, 76). By incorporating the flowers of the garden into the installation, I was able to build another connection with the history of the place, and somehow

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**72** Akseli Gallen-Kallela (born Axel Gallén) (1865–1931)

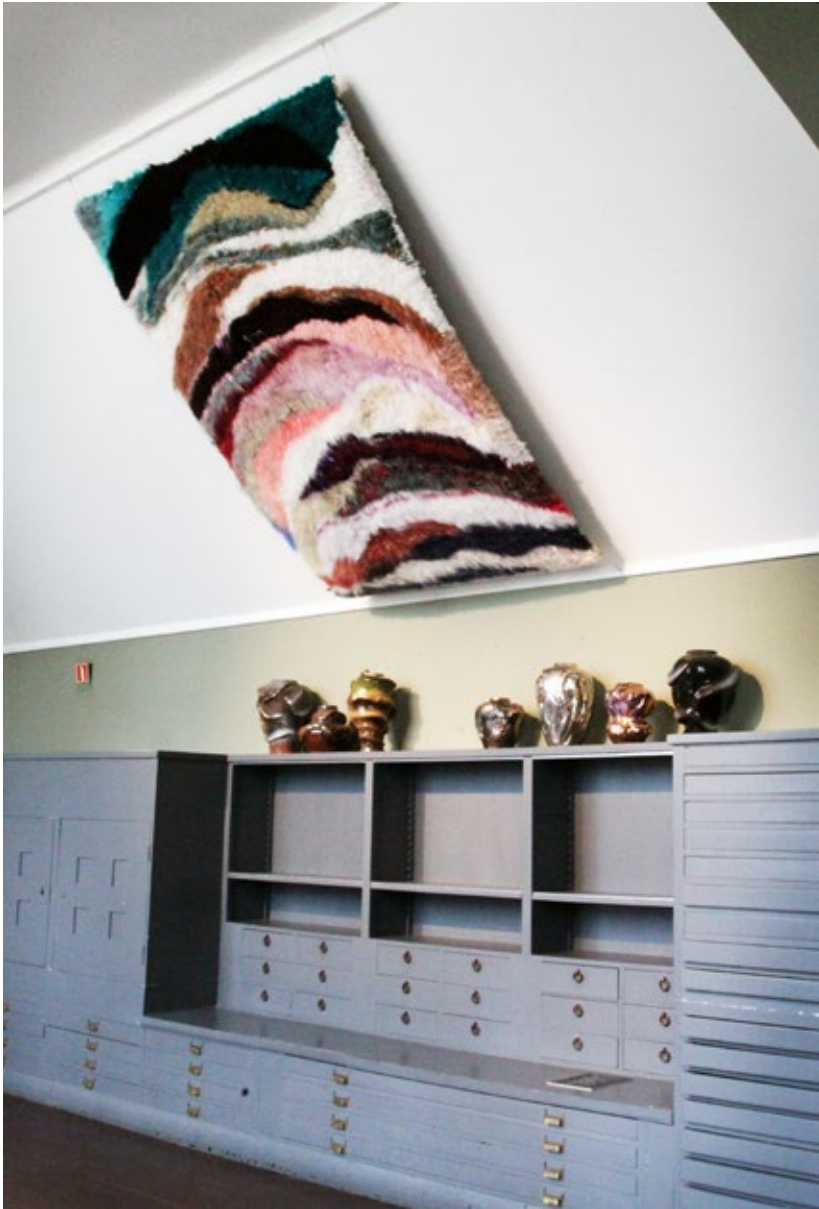
**73** Jarl Eklund (1876–1962)

**74** Loja Saarinen (1879–1968)





21 **Polaroid of Hvitträsk that I took, when I was planning the exhibition in 2019. Hvitträsk was not a typical space for exhibition. I studied this atelier space also by drawing (see p. 169).** Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).



22 **Exhibition view at Hvitträsk atelier space 2020. The specific architecture of the space set boundaries, but also interesting challenges for the exhibition set-up.** Photo: author (2020).

collaborate with one of its creators. I wanted to declare in person: *Thank you for the flowers, Loja!*

The preparation of the exhibition was done during the global pandemic. At some points I did not know whether the exhibition was happening in 2020, the year after or not at all. Ceramic, textile and glass studios were closed, and I could not finish the works in time accordingly. I was informed about the opening only 5 weeks in advance. The time that followed was filled with fervent preparations, such as writing the exhibition texts, finalising the floor plans, and collaborating with the graphic designer. At that time, I was able to return to the ceramic's studio, so I painted and fired the last pieces, while many of them broke because of the overly tight schedule. The last pieces were still hot from the kiln when I set them up for the exhibition, and on the morning of the opening I came early to fix some of the broken pieces. Although the exhibition received little media attention and the international guests were not able to come, almost 10 000 visitors saw it during the three months that it was open.

The title of the exhibition (*The House of Love and Rebellion*) was inspired by my themes and sources of inspiration. The word 'rebellion' in the exhibition title had a connection with 'copying' and 'shared authorship'. 'Love' on the other hand was reminiscent of the previous exhibition as I was recycling some of its artworks and showing them as part of this third exhibition. Simultaneously 'love' created a necessary contrast to 'rebellion', and together the two themes made more sense.

In this chapter, I have opened up my method, 'exhibition making', where research nourished the making of the artworks and vice versa. Within my method I had a lot of space for experimentation, and it is notable that I learned many techniques for the first time and developed them further, such as creating my version of French barbotine or using open brushed mohair for the rugs. Even though in this method section I have dealt with my three peer-reviewed doctoral-studies-related exhibitions, the other solo and group exhibitions that I organized and took part in during my doctoral studies have also been meaningful when trying to define possible directions for my research.





An anatomical illustration of a human torso, showing the internal organs and structures. The illustration is rendered in a style that combines realistic anatomical detail with artistic shading and color. The background is a deep red, and the organs are depicted in various shades of brown, tan, and purple. The illustration is oriented vertically, with the head at the top and the feet at the bottom. The text is overlaid on the lower right portion of the illustration.

# 4

**Living with  
and through  
the Sources of  
Inspiration: The  
Main Findings of  
the Study**

# **4 Living with and through the Sources of Inspiration: The Main Findings of the Study**

Through the exhibition projects I tried to make sense out of three main aspects that concerned me when working with sources of inspiration: 1) the relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration, 2) the differences between copying and inspiration, and 3) the idea of shared authorship between the practitioner and the sources of inspiration. This was the motivation for the three case studies that I will present in this chapter.



## 4.1 Monet and me

### - The story of an inspiration<sup>75</sup>

*What kind of relationship is there between the source of inspiration and the practitioner?*

#### 4.1.1 Me and Monet – From the beginning

I approached the relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration through Monet, his paintings in the Orangerie Museum and his garden in Giverny (see Image 23). I have a long history with Monet. My mother, who was a fervent admirer of the Impressionist movement, presented his works to me when I was still young. At the time, I had an urge to disagree with the world, especially with my mother. Consequently, at first, I hated the entire Impressionist movement, even though I could not exclude the fact that they influenced my first pointillist paintings around the age of 10. I visited Parisian museums for the first time in 1993 when the scandalous Barnes collection<sup>76</sup> was shown at Musée d'Orsay, and the lycée where I was on exchange that year, organized the trip for that reason alone. All Impressionists looked the same for the teenager me. I have no

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**75** The first version of this chapter *Monet and me - The story of an inspiration* (2018) was published in *Synnyt-Origins* 3/ pp. 211-231.

**76** The Barnes Foundation, which originally opened in 1925 in Merion, United States, is a home for a significant collection of French painters from Cézanne to Matisse. Doctor Albert C. Barnes (1872-1951) and his heirs protected the collection, and the artworks were neither lent nor reproduced in colour, the foundation was open only to a restricted public. However, from 1993-1995 some important paintings were travelling the world's most famous museums due to renovation work in the museum building (Réunion des Musées Nationaux). Since 2012, the Barnes Collection has moved to new premises in Philadelphia, and it is entirely open to public.



23 **Claude Monet at Giverny, 1908. French Photographer, (20th century)** Credit: Bibliotheque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France© Archives Charmet/ Bridgeman Images.

memory of seeing Monet, only several Matisse. Later, I returned multiple times to Parisian museums and became familiar with Impressionists' works, too. Nevertheless, the turning point happened only in 2012, when I visited the oval halls of the Orangerie Museum filled with Monet's water-lilies – and instantly fell in love with his works. At that moment, our actual 'relationship' started.

It is noteworthy that this relationship had little to do with Monet as a real person, but I approached 'Monet' through a wider context. Following Bolt (2010, 153; also, Kontturi 2018, 80) an 'artist's name' put in quotations marks is not necessarily an identifiable person but related to the material identifiable processes – "*a material work that is work of art*" (ibid., 153). An artist becomes a synonym of her art, presenting the entirety of her works (Heinich 1996a, 22–23). So, when I address my relationship with 'Monet', I consider him in a broader sense, including his oeuvre along with his famous garden.<sup>77</sup>

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77 From hereon in, I omit the quotation marks to facilitate reading, nevertheless, the reader is free to imagine them there.

The more information I gathered about Monet, the more unattainable and heroic a character he seemed to be. My own position as a fellow practitioner felt surreal; how could I find any common interests or mutual ground? I positioned myself as a fangirl, which had nothing new – I have spent a significant amount of my lifetime admiring and dreaming of artists and their artworks. Heinich (1996a, xiiii) notes in *The Glory of van Gogh – An Anthropology of Admiration* that objects of admiration can hardly be discussed neutrally. The admirer is either positioned too close and affected by the glorification of her subjects, or she distances herself purposely and becomes excessively critical (ibid.). I felt that I needed to maintain some state of infatuation for the source of inspiration to continue to feel inspiring. Yet the fangirl role felt restricting – my field of action (admiring) was too limited and kept me from getting to know my subject more profoundly and from other angles.

#### **4.1.2 Trying to get to know Monet the artist, behind Monet the icon**

*‘SHHH silence!’, orders the guard of the museum. Tired and hungry travellers are expressing their enthusiasm too loudly in the oval halls of the Orangerie museum. The guard makes sure that all the visitors can enjoy the experience of Monet’s waterlilies without interruption. With embarrassment, we sit down on the bench in the middle of the room. Fatigue and hunger have disappeared. We stay there for a long while in perfect silence and absorb ourselves in beauty.* (Korolainen 2018, 214–215) (See Image 24).

While reading about Monet’s artistic achievements, personal life and studying the reproductions of his paintings, he continued to drift further and further away. Hours spent in the library or conducting google-research, did not bring me any closer. Strangely, each biography seemed to offer a different version about Monet’s life, interests, or artistic practice. It was hard to form any reliable image of Monet, the artist, his fame. I was not interested in his personal life, but I wanted to understand what motivated him, pushed him into certain artistic decisions or affected his practice. Rather, my information retrieval round seemed to consolidate Monet’s position as the unrivalled Master of Art and predecessor of the contemporary art world of today. The fellow practitioner behind the stardust was left unknown.



24 ***Reflets verts* (1914-1926) by Claude Monet, two oil “panels” attached to canvas mounted on the wall, 200 × 850 cm, in Orangerie Museum, Paris.** Photo: author (2017).

I tried to remind myself how my first experience of seeing Monet's waterlilies in Orangerie had been. There, surrounded by his paintings, I had felt close to something, almost like being inside his world. Why did I feel incapable of experiencing a similar sensation when looking at his artworks in the books or on the internet? I felt that there was a substantial difference. As Benjamin (1936, 3) noted, most artworks are at their best when experienced in their intended form. When Van Noten visited Francis Bacon's exhibition for the first time to see the real paintings (Golbin 2014, 40), he was almost frightened by the intensity of the unimaginably large, regrouped paintings. Previously, he had only seen them fitted on the pages of books. As a result, Van Noten said he had to slow down to digest his experience and become saturated by Bacon's artworks (ibid.). I could easily understand his situation, as it was the same for me, and I decided to return to Paris to 'meet' Monet and his works once again.

In the encounter between artwork and visitor, the latter must adopt an active role and go towards the work. The duration of the experience can be defined, but not its content. During this intimate and spontaneous encounter, some features of the artwork might seem foreign and some others familiar, and the visitor can be reminded of something long forgotten or experience new sensations. In the past, when I have experienced this kind of encounter in its most intense form, it has enabled me to re-identify what kind of maker I am and re-think or even re-invent my practice in some ways.

In the Orangerie, when I was surrounded by Monet's phantasmagorical world – bursting wild colours, reflections, and a sensation of abundant vegetation – an uncontrollable feeling of nostalgia and longing for some time and place, one that no longer existed, began to grow inside me. I returned there on several occasions. It never felt the same – my mood and the natural light coming from the ceiling were constantly changing. The atmosphere of the Orangerie somehow reflected the intense passion that Monet had for light (Joyes 1985, 41–43). From close up, the paintings looked very different: in some places, the subjects of the long canvases, such as waterlilies and weeping willows, seemed to have lost their distinctive shapes and melted together into an abstract composition. But when I distanced myself further from the painting, the impression of the landscape became recognizable again through Monet's masterful perception of light, space, and distance (Joyes 1985, 146–147). It was the combination of Monet's accurate observations of nature and his frantic, expressionist painting style that enchanted me enduringly.

I also visited Monet's garden in Giverny a few times (see image 25). There, he had painted his Orangerie series, and I wanted to experience the place myself. Arriving there felt like entering directly into one of his paintings, the waterlily pond was there and so were the weeping willows, and the intense reflections of the sky on the water looked familiar. The garden itself was another of Monet's creations as he was an ardent gardener (Denizeau 2012, 28–29); nevertheless, when he planted his waterlilies he never thought of painting them. After discovering their beauty, he devoted the last decades of his life to the gigantic project of filling the oval halls of The Orangerie Museum with waterlilies (*ibid.*).

Finally, I reached the feeling that I was getting closer to Monet. I discovered more reasons why his soft pastel shaded Impressionist paintings were later replaced by fervent brush strokes, vigorous simplification of the subjects and bold use of colours (Joyes 1985, 146–147) and found out about the problems with his sight. When Monet was ageing, both his long and colour vision were affected. He had to go through cataract operations which



interrupted his intense creative practice. As result he could discern blue well, but not red, yellow, certain greens or violets, and he had to count on his memory of colours (Denizeau 2012, 28–29), Even though Monet painted in front of real living subjects, he relied on his own impressions of reality without trying to repeat it slavishly (Joyes 1985, 146–147).

Monet, to whom light presented an ever-appealing subject, painted mostly outside (Joyes 1985, 41–43). He discovered new subjects while wandering in his garden, on the nearby hills or while rowing his boat. With the eye of a hunter, he inspected the surroundings until he found the perfect spot and set up his easel – on occasion even on the boat (if that presented the best angle). Changes in the light resulted in him rotating his easel and starting a new canvas. As he could not predict the time that light would linger somewhere, he painted fast in an attempt to immortalize his exact impressions. Monet’s quick painting pace might have affected the fact that he worked in series. In his exhibitions, Monet presented a large quantity of variations<sup>78</sup> of his favourite themes, such as waterlilies (Joyes 1985, 41–43.)

#### 4.1.3 Weeping willows and violent acts

Monet was hungry for light; I was hungry for ‘everything’ about him. Gradually, I felt I was getting closer and as a result increasing my inspiration. It was time to start my own process. Monet’s interest in light guided me to choose the grattage technique.<sup>79</sup> I was already familiar with this manner of sketching: first a pastel-drawn image was covered with a darker colour layer, and it was then scratched with a needle or knife. As a result, the image beneath became partly uncovered. Light was brought back in the manner of the sun illuminating a place of shadow. Once again, the hidden image became concealed, but now a previously figurative image had gone through

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**78** Somehow, this way of presenting things by multiplication seemed related to much more recent art traditions, and later I connected it with Warhol’s works, which will be discussed in chapter 4.2 Warhol and me - The battle of the authors.

**79** Grattage is a scratching technique often realized with oil pastels - I remember it from elementary school. There was this strange-looking metallic tool that was inside of the box of pastels, which looked like something half-fork half-knife and which hurt the fingers during diligent work. Pastels are not the only option for this technique as acrylic or oil paints also work, but I decided to follow my childhood memories and stay faithful to oil pastels. Scratching can be done in several ways: for example, it can be done only in a few areas in order to create new figurative elements or thoroughly to unveil as much of the original image as possible. I mostly use the second option.



**25** Path in Monet's Garden at Giverny, early 1920s. French photographer, (20th century). Credit: Musee Marmottan Monet, Paris, France/Bridgeman Images.

abstraction, broken into tiny fragments, where small areas of colours were divided by countless incisions. The scratched image obtained an instant patina, as if going through reverse cosmetic surgery – an instant ageing à la Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where the painting ages instead of the model. Similarly, my images became disturbed, distorted and 'monstrous'. They had not been accepted as they were, and therefore became detached from their original form to be ruined by the violent act of scratching.

Beyond its brutality, the technique reminded me of developing photographs in a dark room. When their dark surface was scratched, the images seemed to emerge as if by magic. The technique was hazardous, but lucky surprises motivated me to continue. Making in this way felt accessible as it required no special skills. The work had to be executed speedily; otherwise, the colour dried too quickly, sticking to the image underneath and becoming harder to scrape away. Even though the technique did not require any special skills, practising led to more interesting results.

Visiting Giverny had affected my choice of subjects, including weeping willows and similar. I had also sketched in another French garden near Poitiers, drawing raspberries and dahlias among other available subjects. The abundant growth of those two gardens combined with the blinding sun and was infused into my sketches. When I returned to Finland, I continued sketching, opposing Monet's sacred principles, often inside due to my fear of cold weather. Photographs of flowers and scenery reminded me of more summery scenes.

Regardless of the simplicity of my technique, some audacity was required when covering the first drawn image, which had taken my time and effort. Thus, at some moments, I was taken by the temptation to conserve the original image instead of covering it with a suffocating layer of dark colour. By covering it, I felt I was losing something valuable, albeit with the promise of something possibly more interesting to come. Metaphorically, I closed my eyes and accelerated.

It was possible to do the scratching in different ways, horizontally or vertically, or in shapes resembling fans or arcs, which created new patterns on top of my flowery subjects. As tools, I used either a thin and sharp or a thicker blunt needle. Some images were scraped twice when I crossed over my previous marks. This resulted in a structural effect reminiscent of bindings of a woven textile. The more I scratched, the more the image underneath became visible. Violence seemed present in the act of scratching; something had to be destroyed to produce something new. There was a strong presence of light and shadow; the latter brought dark

light to the original image, which made the colours appear more vivid and luminous. A peculiar illusion of three-dimensionality occurred, as if some space were added between the base image and the scratched surface. The subjects, such as dahlias, raspberries, or sceneries, seemed to be plunged in the water or observed through a glass window.

#### 4.1.4 From sketches to final forms

Even though the outcome of the above-described creative process was the result of a carefully retuned familiar practice, for me it presented the starting point of an emerging design practice. Therefore, when the sketches were ready, they had to be digitized for further development. I chose a digital camera for this, as scanning did not work: the three-dimensionality of the images apparently tricked the machine into focussing on the top layer (created with darker colour) instead of the actual image hidden beneath the scratched lines. Digitization facilitated the further development from sketches into textiles. The endless quantity of small details made the process more challenging, which led to a large quantity of trials. It was not easy to decipher whether something was more of a failure or just a lucky accident, and these surprises encouraged me to stay open to various options and challenge my preconceived expectations.

I reworked some of the sketches into continuous jacquard<sup>80</sup> patterns. My fabrics were woven in the 'Lapuan Kankurit' weaving mill in Northern Finland, where using industrial weaving machines made it possible to produce longer pieces. Beforehand, I had woven samples by hand with a smaller jacquard machine, which helped me to define the bindings and colours. The experience of working with a professional mill was magical: even the atmosphere was out of this world – there was a constant repetitive and mechanical sound and a smell that likely originates from machine oil. Most of the machines were several decades old and some of them had travelled from one mill to another, from Italy to Finland. The old machines had been repaired, and updated for our digital era, but still they gave me that otherworldly sensation, one where I could almost imagine myself transported into a weaving mill in the middle of the 19th century and the industrial revolution. All in all, it was a timeless experience. In the mill, the products of my imagination, the memories of the French summer, of

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**80** Jacquard is a woven fabric with an intricate, often continuous pattern.

the Orangerie and Giverny, became transformed into something tangible and undoubtedly permanent.

I called my jacquard series *Broken Flowers*, the word 'broken' referring to the scratched incision-like lines of the initial sketches. They created the unique impression of an antique tapestry, broken into thousands of thin horizontal lines, as if the fabric had been worn in some places. As material I had used thin mohair yarn that could be brushed 'open' to create a subtle hairy and warm-looking surface. Mohair was a familiar material for me, which made the testing process simpler.

Based on my sketches, I also hand-tufted three large rya rugs: *Broken Flowers*, *Broken Lake* and *Broken Dahlia* (see image 26). I ended up using similar titles to the woven pieces as they emerged from same series of sketches, although here the process and the outcome were different. With only a little experience of hand-tufting, I could not foresee the (long) time that it would take to transform such detailed sketches into rya rugs. If I had been aware of this, I might have looked for other options instead of hand-tufting.

The rug-making process itself is rather simple. The digitalized sketch was simplified and printed at the actual 1:1 size of the final piece. On the light table, it was then transcribed onto the tufting base fabric with the help of markers. Out of three rugs that I fabricated, two had to be made in two parts as they were too big for the available tufting frames. I chose loop mohair as the material and planned and tested various colour combinations since when brushed open mohair acts in a manner close to paint. When I got to tufting, time stretched, and days turned into weeks and months. Even when I lost my patience, I was not capable of increasing the pace – the process took its own time. At some moments, I was no longer sure I would be able to finish. If the rugs had remained in an unfinished state, I would have inevitably failed. This process tested my patience like nothing before. I swore to myself that after completing these three pieces, I would never again use scratching as a sketching method to create rugs, yet in some miraculous way, half a year later, those three 'Broken' series rugs came into being. They were no longer 'broken' in any real sense of the world, but they had left their mark on me as even after their completion they gave me a sensation of exhaustion.

**26** **Scratched sketch (2017), oil pastel on paper, c. 42 × 29.5 cm, for *Broken Dahlia* rug (final piece can be seen on p. 227. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).**





The sketches were now transformed into large, hairy and heavy textiles. The randomness of their creation and the heat of those summer days spent in the Orangerie and Giverny became a mere memory. The choice of material, hairy and warm mohair, had replaced summer with a wintery warm feeling. Even Monet's influence began to feel obscure and remote. Through the metamorphosis, the characteristics of the initial sketches had changed – their figurative elements had begun to approach abstraction, and the flowers and other subjects were no longer recognizable. Even I was not able to detect all the common features between the sketches and textiles. The process had offered me another, yet interesting, surprise.

I took the time to look at my finished textile pieces, trying to understand why, for example, I had made material choices that had replaced my memories of eternal summer by eternal winter. Mohair had been a simple choice for me as I had used it so many times before, but if I had chosen another material the result would have been significantly different. I had a feeling that something was missing in my quest to channel Monet through my practice. Everything seemed too soft and suffocating. I started to look for a solution, maybe some new material or technique that I could add to the whole that would affect the way my artworks would be experienced by others – and by me.

#### **4.1.5 Glazed flowers**

I got the idea to explore my inspiration from Monet through ceramics, too. Their cold and shiny surface contrasted with the mattness of my textiles, which could enrich the materiality of the final exhibition installations.

I channelled Monet's passion for flowers and attached reliefs of peonies, wisterias, roses, irises, daisies, and many other kinds of flowers I had witnessed in Giverny onto my vases. I made most of the glazes myself and used reduction firing in a gas kiln. It was an opportunity for me to learn many new things and concentrate on a new medium. These creations resembled organic, monster-like creatures – I became attached to them, even though I could not determine if they were beautiful or ugly, as they seemed to escape exact definitions and labels. They were alien, unfamiliar things, which however interacted so well with the textiles – somehow the

**27** *Rue de Paradis (2018) vase by author, gas-fired glazed earthenware, 35 × 15 × 14 cm.* Photo: Sofia Okkonen (2018).





whole started to make sense: warm and cold, matte, and shiny, as they all (ceramic and textiles works) looked better together.

A few months before setting my exhibition *The House of Love*<sup>81</sup> in Habitare (2018), I was able to present some of my textiles and ceramics at Milan Design Week. For that purpose, I carried out a photo shoot with Finnish Photographer Sofia Okkonen. Before the shoot, to help the planning process, Okkonen had asked me to collect inspirational visual material that would help to define the atmosphere and style and enable the two of us to discuss images ‘through’ images. Somehow the Renaissance still lives with flowers, and edibles became the main source of inspiration. It was winter, and the Finnish natural world was still asleep, but food and flower markets offered an abundance of choices – bread, eggs, grapes, tulips and much more – to gather in and around my vases. Suddenly, I was able to see my ceramics through somebody else’s eyes, and somehow I started to appreciate them more. Maybe the photoshoot should have been more ‘Monet-like’, but as Monet was already embedded in the essence of my artworks, it felt unnecessary to have ‘Monet on top of Monet’. However, after we finished the Renaissance shoot, Okkonen wanted more options, and she ended up photographing images using only natural lightning (like Monet). This time she worked alone, contrasting the previous heavy Renaissance-inspired imaginary with lighter colours, such as pale pink (see image 27) or storm blue to complement the hues of the ceramic pieces. I had the sensation that something Monet-like was there – not added by myself but the skilful photographer.

The images offered me a certain distance from my art, a vantage point from where I was able to better discover my own works. Through this new 2-dimensionality they seemed easier to approach, and the intervention of Okkonen’s artistic expression enabled me to see the works differently. The vases no longer felt like a direct continuation of my body. They grew out of my hands and became real creatures of their own. I could compare this process to what fashion designers do when they are in the middle of the process, and they examine the unfinished pieces of clothing by looking at them in a mirror, as reflection provides distance and helps to imagine the piece of clothing as part of another (pictorial) reality. Unexpectedly, the idea of reproduction which had kept me from feeling a closeness with Monet had offered me a valuable tool to understand my own works and gain the

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**81** The second doctoral-studies-related exhibition organized as part of the Habitare fair.

needed distance. I became capable of imagining my works outside of the studio space, and it helped me in planning future exhibitions.

#### 4.1.6 Monetland

Through this first case study, I discovered that the relationship between the practitioner and the source(s) of inspiration could not and should not be neutral, as the involvement of emotions was necessary for the inspirational process to blossom. The relationship had some similar features to falling in love, even though here rather more one-sided. When the relationship was well-built, with long-term commitment, it supported my creative process even when faced with difficulties, helping to reach the end of the process.

During the process, I had nurtured my creative practice by collecting all kinds of Monet-related experiences and fragments of information, but it is noteworthy that research through the internet or books did not provide a sufficiently stable ground for our relationship. I had to leave my studio and experience his paintings and garden in-situ.<sup>82</sup> This foundation helped me in building an imaginary universe, like a castle in the air, which I called 'Monetland'.<sup>83</sup> It was like a support system that helped in planning, structuring, and encouraging my making process.

This imaginary universe gave me the necessary motivation and desire to go on with my work. Instead of loneliness, I felt a sense of belonging somewhere as my visits to Monet's garden and the Orangerie had provided me with concrete site-specific memories. My ideal vision of these places – far from reality – continued to transform throughout the creative process according to my needs and wishes. I saw Giverny as a place of eternal summer, just the way it had been during my last visit, similar to the photographs that I had taken there. Occasionally, I opened the imaginary door to the silent, oval halls of the Orangerie, filled with waterlilies. Metamorphosed

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**82** Additionally, there are several other ways to build a strong bond between the practitioner and her source(s) of inspiration but having some kind of an emotional trigger should be emphasized. For example, in 1997 I was deeply impressed by Yves Klein's retrospective exhibition at the Sara Hildén Art Museum, Finland. Later, not only the experience of seeing the exhibition, but also the fading 'memory' of it and of my emotions at the time, enabled me to build a long-lasting inspirational relationship.

**83** By naming my imaginary universe 'Monetland', I am naturally referencing Walt Disney's Disneyland and Banksy's Dismaland, a "dystopian theme park", a gigantic exhibition of international artists, a sort of a 'anti-Disneyland' organized in 2015 in Weston-super-Mare, United Kingdom (Jobson 2015).



by my imagination, the garden of Giverny and the Orangerie Museum had become situated side by side.

My Monetland resembled a miniature utopia of my own. According to London-based designer-researcher duo Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby (2013, 73), when the idea of utopia is used as an external motivation to keep the process of creation awake, it is more than a concrete model to follow, as it can open up various opportunities and give a meaningful direction to the process. Wandering in my utopian Monet-world gave my creative practice many directions to follow while feeling uncommonly romantic and dreaming of rosy shades of pink, sunrise yellows and stormy greens.

The Monet case equipped me with the thinking tools that helped me to understand how and what kind of inspiration I could be looking for, also in the future. Above all, the source had to be something relatable, it had to 'speak' precisely to *me* and Monet's *Water Lilies* touched me – for a moment I felt as if I were 'living' his fervent brushstrokes and could not help but try to imagine the kind of passionate encounter between Monet and his source of inspiration (his garden) that had created such artworks. I became charmed by the idea that he had spent 20 years solely painting his own garden. I had been able to visit this garden in the present day and sense an incomparable feeling of entering into Monet's painting – mentally travelling to the past and to his wonderful (auto)fiction.

#### **4.1.7 From lovers to friends**

At the end of the process, I wanted to understand how Monet had influenced my process and its outcome. It felt difficult to shift the focus from Monet to my own works. Photographs had helped me in finding distance, yet it felt challenging to 'see' my artworks as if they were not 'mine', or at least observe them in a slightly less subjective manner. The most suitable tool for this kind of reflection was my exhibition *The House of Love*. There, I could almost imagine myself as an outsider, a visitor, who came to examine the artworks. This was backed by the sensation that the exhibition space and the surrounding gigantic halls (of the Habitare design fair) did not belong to me – it was a foreign, public space. However, to be able to understand my works, I also needed to be in one way or another 'close'; ergo, the task I had given myself felt impossible: feeling simultaneously distanced and close to my artworks.

Monet had in some way impregnated his essence into my process. Often it felt almost subconscious, and I discovered some new kind of

likeness or sympathy of souls – but it still seemed quite unclear how to perceive his influence in my artworks. I was certainly influenced by his peculiar use of colours and in the subjects that I chose. Even though the classic combinations of vegetation and water, sky and reflections has been represented countless times, the specific way I composed my landscapes was inspired by Monet’s garden. These rather direct influences were incorporated into my grattage technique: a zealous rhythm combined with intense hand movements ended up creating small repetitive areas of colours, comparable to the small touches left by a brush tip on the canvas. This appearance reminded distantly of an Impressionist painting. I had not planned this similitude, but it ‘happened’. Monet was there, lurking somewhere in the corners of my creative process, even if I was not always aware of it. I wondered if somebody could in fact guess my sources of inspiration just by looking at my works, and it actually happened: during Milan Design Week 2018 one of the visitors recognized similarities to Impressionism in the rya rugs.

Later I found out that Israeli-born painter Bracha Ettinger (1948–) had also been inspired by Monet.<sup>84</sup> Her relationship with sources of inspiration is discussed by Canadian philosopher and theorist Erin Manning and Massumi (2014, 64–65). Sources of inspiration are called “*friends*”, “*guests*” or “*intercessors*”, which take part and encourage the creative process and can shape the creative environment in which the artistic process takes place. Ettinger’s ‘friends’ are mentioned: *a reproduction of Monet’s painting*, a book by Da Vinci, a cup of iced coffee and Keren Ann or Radiohead. The overall processes of artistic practice, according to Ettinger, are not about seeing or being visual. Sources of inspiration function at the levels of thinking and feeling; the painting of Monet is there to be “*thought-felt*” (ibid., 65), not only to be looked at. The connection between Ettinger’s painting and the image of Monet’s *Water Lily Pond* was not an evident one: Monet painted with greens whereas Ettinger chose violets, but something, not clearly visible, connects these two – it lies somewhere in the feeling and light that vibrates in both works (ibid., 68–69). I guess my connection to Monet was some parts similar, happening on the levels of the vibrating light and the emotions Monet’s world evoked in me.

According to Manning and Massumi (2014, 64–69) the term ‘friend’ can suggest almost a supernatural presence; it is comparable to a force

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**84** Ettinger was most probably among the many others who became inspired by Monet.

which is conceived for the sake of the creative process. Its various roles contain 1) importing variable features to the process, 2) creating a connection with the (past and present) outside world, and 3) embodying the process-to-be for the artist.

Monet, who (along with his artworks and garden) at the beginning of the process had been the object of my unrequited love, had slowly transformed into a 'travel companion' and my 'friend'. He challenged my ways of working, helped to connect my practice to the surrounding world and time, and helped me to plan my process. He also walked silently beside me throughout the process, he was a 'friend' indeed, a friend in need.

Sometimes the artist also needs to be distanced from these friends, even when the process of creation advances smoothly. At these times, it is the process itself which takes the lead and 'making' becomes the leitmotif that moves things forward. This does not go on forever and for other moments, later, the friends will be called upon again. Inspiration does not only show itself in the beginning of the creative process, but all along the way, and finally materializes itself in the artworks.

The Monet-case emphasized how different each inspiration process and relationship between practitioner and the source of inspiration can be. Based on my experience as a designer and an artist, I have not been able to identify anything that could be defined as a recipe or a formula concerning the use of the sources of inspiration in the creative process. Instead, I have discovered countless ways in which sources of inspiration can function, and they are rarely as utopian as in the case of Monet. In contrast, inspiration processes can produce critical thinking, in which the process and its outcome resemble more a counter statement than a romantic attachment.

## 4.2 Warhol and me

### - The battle of the authors

*What is the difference between copying and inspiration?*

*Back in 2018 I saw a large Warhol exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris titled 'Unlimited'. I originally came to see and experience 'Shadows', a gigantic series of silkscreen works that occupied over 130 metres of wall space. The same image repeating over and over again, in different colours, in negative or positive. I saw it, and it was pretty impressive but not the thing that I would remember the most. It felt almost like climbing the Eiffel tower: it was done, no need to do it again. I remember many other artworks from that exhibition more vividly. For example, the wallpaper with pictured cows seemed heavily irritating, maybe Warhol's intention was to provoke, but I was not provoked in a good way; it felt just utterly unnecessary since there was no fruitful irritation in the work that might have inspired me to make things differently. On the other hand, there were other pieces that touched me, like the famous 'Brillo' boxes. Time had provided them with a nostalgic patina. The 8mm films had the same endearing antique feeling and their 'broken' film image felt strangely hand done, something that could not be further away from the current digital image and its perfection. Or maybe I am wrong? Of course there are filters now even on Instagram that create a similar kind of effect, but somehow it did not feel the same. This seemed 'authentically' old; somehow that was given due to the context. I loved the large-sized 'Flowers', which were presented in several colourways, it struck me to realize how efficient they still were, and felt the same for the 'Electric Chair' series, which to me looked as elegant as ever. I had seen many Warhol's artworks (or should I say his copies of his artworks?) previously, in different settings, but this experience was memorable, maybe it was due to the way it was all staged, in rather small spaces, which felt like a maze: there was always a new surprise waiting around the corner.*

Several different aspects related to authenticity, authorship and copying have already been discussed in this dissertation in chapter 2.5 *Worrying about authenticity and ownership issues* (pp. 63–64). Here, I will dive deeper into this topic for following reasons. When I started to work with this dissertation, a few professors from Aalto University proposed that I should entirely concentrate on the phenomenon of copying in the field of design. There was a real need for practitioners to themselves address these complex issues and discover how sources of inspiration can be used as part of the creative process without harming the original source. Nevertheless, my utmost aim was to concentrate on my own artistic practice without being forced to question each action concerning whether it was copying or not. However, this did not prevent me being extremely interested on the copying issue, and I will address this through my own practice in this chapter.

Along with my artistic career, I have been working as a textile designer and have been able to follow several cases of copying closely, even false accusations of copying. The internet era loves copying scandals, but most cases are dealt with in tribunals behind closed doors – very little information from these spreads outside. If a company can afford a trial, they probably have enough capital to purchase silence as well. There are many kinds of copy cases: if we think of, for example, the fashion industry, mass-produced high street companies copy from the luxury brands, large fashion houses copy from smaller (often yet unknown) young designer labels or directly from fashion history. When designers source from history, it could be considered as inspiration, but unfortunately it is often literal copying, which does not add anything to the design. In general, many who can afford it, copy. Instead, small designer brands probably do not even feel the necessity, as they are concentrated on creating their own identity in the vast market. When these small independent brands in their turn become copied, they very rarely can afford to follow the path of law, but instead try to reveal the wrongdoings through social media.

Copying and being copied forms an entangled and confusing jungle, where I personally feel lost. Therefore, I am concentrating on the role of the practitioner who performs the act of copying and put myself on the stage. I copied others and myself in the process, following the example set by Warhol as my source of inspiration. My artistic explorations became a way to investigate and understand the phenomenon of copying more profoundly. I tried to define how close to my sources of inspiration I could go and whether there were any limits at all, and what distinguished copying from inspiration? I had not found any clear rules concerning these dilem-



mas, so I wanted to find out more through my practice. Following Warhol, I used repetition and images made by others as the basis of my artworks. To find answers, I was ready to cross the border between inspiration and copying myself.

I believe that most contemporary designers and artists are mindful of copyright and authorship issues. Simultaneously, using creative content produced by others as the basis of an artwork or design, has become more and more common. Digital development has transformed copying into a close to acceptable form of creating new designs or works of art. By 'copying' I refer to when some content, such as visual or sound, is taken 'as it is' in creation of new contents. However, copying should not be labelled as solely negative. As a historical and ongoing phenomenon, copying can be practised as means of learning or improving skills instead of for criminal purposes (Charpigny, Gril-Mariotte & Privat-Chavigny et al. 2010, 5-6; Beylot 2004, 23-24).

I, myself, as a young art student, spend countless hours in drawing a 1:1 reproduction of the eternal Thutmoses' *Nefertiti* or Michelangelo's *David* plaster busts just like numerous art students before and after me. This has long been basis of a classical art education, and even I had to pass through this as a photography student. I suppose that literally drawing sculptures cannot be considered as copying as the medium has been dramatically flattened from three-dimensional to two-dimensional.

#### **4.2.1 How did we all become authors?**

Before being copied, the authenticity of an artwork needs to be confirmed. By whom, and when was the artwork in question created, and who can consequently be confirmed as its author? Authenticity and authorship are closely connected and if the author is uncertified, the financial value of an artwork decreases.

In our current times, anybody can become an author and often it can be quite easily indicated. A signature has been a common way of signalling the author since the middle of 18th century (Heinich 1996b, 98–102). Artists began to sign their works for recognition and consequently to be able to raise their prices. Some examples show that in the 6th century BC some potters and vase painters were already signing their works, proving that they were proud of their accomplishments and could become renowned for their artistic talent (Janson & Janson 2003, 14; Kris & Kurtz 1979, 5). Signing the works made the artist appear as an individual, a real existing person behind his oeuvre (Heinich 1996a, 22). Surprisingly, Warhol left his signature out of his works during the most productive and well-known period of his artistic career, between 1962 and 1982 (Matthieussent 1994, 110–111). However, according to Heinich (1996a, 28–29, 30; 1996b, 101–102), the signature is not the only certainty demonstrating authenticity: the artist's distinctive personal style and originality can confirm the origin of their works. Warhol had his very own style; it must have been very conscious decision to omit his signature.

#### **4.2.2 What makes an artwork be considered authentic?**

Historically, copying has been exercised for a variety of purposes (Charpigny, Gril-Mariotte & Privat-Chavigny et al. 2010, 5–6; Beylot 2004, 23–24), for example, royal portraitists during 17th century engaged copyists in their ateliers to assist in the execution of the paintings. Only later, during the 18th century did the word 'plagiat' emerge in France, along with the generalisation of the artist's signature (Heinich 1996b, 99). The term 'plagiat' meant copying related to profit (Charpigny et al. 2010, 29–30). Following these transitions, the idea of the 'original' was born (Heinich 1996b, 99).

According to Benjamin (1936, 3), only the authenticity of an artwork which is physically present can be confirmed – if copied or reproduced, the artwork might lose its authenticity and aura. Warhol's art contradicted these principles, yet he managed to achieve unforeseen fame (Matthieus-

sent 1994, 12). Heinich (2016, 48) disagrees with Benjamin by advocating that reproductions made from the original artworks (such as postcards, catalogues, postcards and so on) enable a wider crowd to appreciate the artists and their artworks as not everyone can travel to all the museums of the world to experience the artworks 'in the flesh'. American philosopher David Joselit (2013, 16) offers an up-to-date variation of Benjamin's aura, which he calls the 'buzz' effect. Buzz is made possible by a world-embracing presence, being omnipresent simultaneously on the internet and in museums, galleries, festivals, television and so on (ibid., 16–19). Warhol managed to accomplish this before the internet era and the digital worldwide connections it provided. Joselit points to the saturation strategy that was typical to the art world during the 1960s, when many artists were producing populations of images instead of single artefacts. Warhol could be considered a pioneer with his "Factory" produced artwork series and numerous media appearances (Joselit 2013, 16–19). He covered many fields, from the fine arts and film to advertising and performance. Warhol's self-manufactured public image was closely linked to his artworks (see image 28). He declared himself to be a "business artist" creating "product lines" instead of individual artefacts (ibid.). Manifestly, Warhol knew how to create his own colossal aura (Matthieussent 1994, 111).

### 4.2.3 Warhol and the art of reproduction

Warhol challenged the contemporary criteria of an authentic work of art in various ways. In his book *Andy Warhol n'est pas un grand artiste* [Andy Warhol is not a great artist], Art historian and critic Hector Obalk (1990) questioned Warhol's originality and artistic quality, stating he might be closer to an advertiser. Obalk's arguments were based on Warhol's working methods, the absence of an easily understandable 'message' or 'meaning' and his background in the advertisement industry as an illustrator (ibid., 18–20, 60–61). To support his theory, Obalk (ibid., 18–19) stated that Warhol produced illustrations with a purely decorative aim, lacked artistic skills, delegated work to third parties, followed industrial aesthetics and mechanization of labour, along with copying, tracing or other techniques not belonging to the (traditional) world of art in addition to using marketing and advertisement techniques.

Copying was one of Warhol's favourite techniques, and consequently some of his most famous artworks, such as *Marilyn Monroe* or *Flowers* (and many others), were based on photographs taken by others (Danto 2011, 54–59;

Vanel et al., 2016, 32; Mathieussent 1994, 96–98). This might be one reason why Warhol omitted his signature from most artworks<sup>85</sup> and provoked his audience by claiming he would prefer to be a machine (Mathieussent 1994, 99, 105, 110). Also, he did not work alone; inside Warhol's 'Factory', a great number of works were produced collaboratively. Following these principles, Warhol rejected the idea of 'the original' (ibid.). It is remarkable that even though he had adopted this machine-like-attitude, he could not restrain himself from adding vigorous brushstrokes on top of his serigraphs. He must have found the idea of the human-machine thrilling yet could not totally dismiss the idea of the artist-painter whose personal touches added value and made each artefact unique (Bulteau, 2009, 64–65).

Possibly something in Warhol's background explains his keen interest in the art of reproduction. Art had been his passion since youth, and during his art studies Warhol concentrated on commercial art (Bourdon 1989, 18, 20–21). Soon after his studies, Warhol landed a job as an illustrator for magazines, and during the next decade he became renowned for his particular drawing and painting style. Unexpectedly, Warhol changed the centre of his interest, and concentrated on creating artworks, copy-painting large-scale comics and advertisements (ibid., 62). His ostensibly ordinary subjects related to mass culture iconography, but once enlarged into 2 metre-high paintings, they suddenly seemed mad and out of place (ibid.). An episcopes (a projector for opaque images) helped him to create these enlarged reproductions of comics or images cut from magazines. Warhol projected the images on the wall and copied the outlines on the paper (ibid., 72). His motivation for reproducing such images remains unknown. Critics have struggled pointlessly to find irony. Possibly Warhol wanted to share his fascination with superheroes and other similar characters. Once enlarged and painted, the impression of the comics changed dramatically: the ordinary was replaced by the extraordinary. Comics were not valued highly as an art form at the time, they were considered part of the 9th art, the last (art forms) classification (ibid., 73). In contrast, painting was one of the most respected. In Warhol's hands, the popular art became transformed into a gallery-appropriate form. Consequently, the advertisements that Warhol had created using similar copying–tracing technique gained

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**85** An artwork by Warhol was still a 'Warhol', even if not signed. His artworks were exposed in exhibitions or events carrying his name, and his style was widely recognized. Nonetheless, omitting his signature could still affect the monetary value of his works when compared with those that have signature. This might be one reason why Warhol started to sign his works again later in his career.



**28** Franz Hubmann photographed Andy Warhol at his retrospective in Vienna's Museum of the 20th Century (1981), gelatin silver print, The ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna. Photo: author (2021).



greater value when considered as paintings and improved their position in the aesthetic hierarchy of the time (Bourdon 1989, 73).

Curiously, the method of copying is what made Warhol's style so recognizable. His artworks created wallpaper-like illusions of endless repetition referring to the commercial world. Prior to the 1960s, the art world had rejected mass culture. New principles of pop art, presented by Warhol and his peers, such as Robert Rauschenberg or Jasper Johns, began to shape general opinion, and Warhol rapidly gained fame with his Brillo boxes and Campbell soup labels (Danto 2011, 13–15). His fascination with these everyday objects, which seemed to have nothing special about them, was curious. (Danto 2011, 84–85). He immortalized subjects that all Americans had access to, from Coca-Cola to canned peaches (Bourdon 1989, 76). Certain critics judged these subjects as too common and unsuitable for the fine arts, criticizing commercial aesthetics as part of vulgar selling strategies (ibid). Warhol even presented some of his ad-paintings in a department store's window display, next to the fashion of the season. This was in accordance with his ideology, stating that the 'buying' was actually more American than 'thinking' (ibid., 79).

Art Philosopher Irmeli Hautamäki (2003, 138–141) sees Warhol's art as deeply questioning the relationship between the original and the copy. Warhol understood that the art of reproduction, such as photography, made the concept of worshipping authenticity unnecessary. In Warhol's hands, everyday objects from canned food to newspaper images were transformed into art instead of ending up in a bin, and these objects were no longer looked at as before. This returned to the relationship of the copy and the original: the copies Warhol made became valuable objects and interesting through their relation to their origin. Several newspaper images he used became researched objects, parts of many museum collections today (ibid.).

#### **4.2.4 The battle of the authors - two exercises of copying**

After observing copying through Warhol's lenses, I felt ready to move on to my own artistic explorations. Warhol remained present and acted as a mirror for my creative process. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, my first art studies were in the field of photography, which gave me a solid base in the art of reproduction. Similarly copying, repetition and reproduction are present in textile design, especially in patterns.

In this case study, I purposely crossed the border between copying and inspiration. Computer programs, a CNC machine and moulds assisted

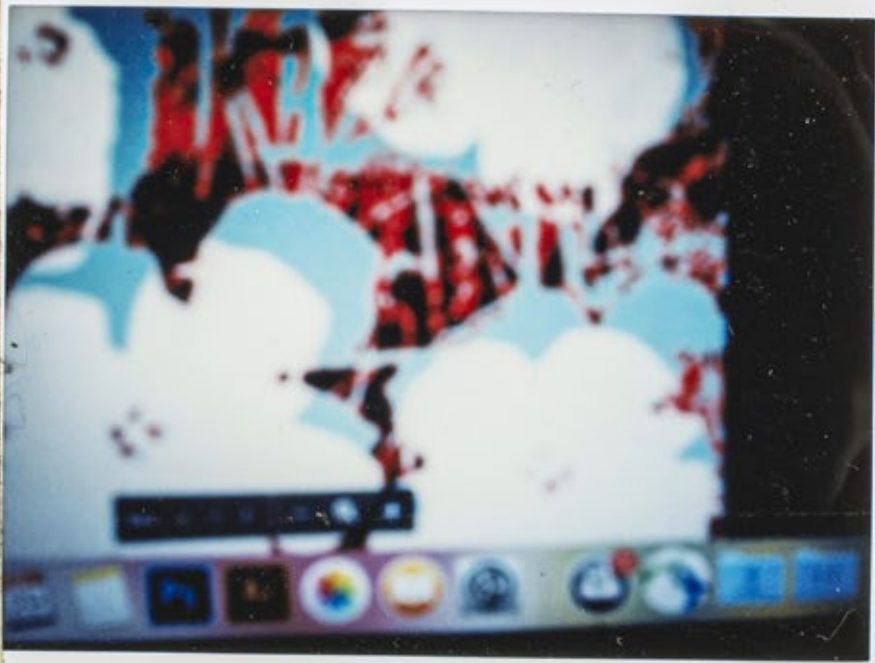
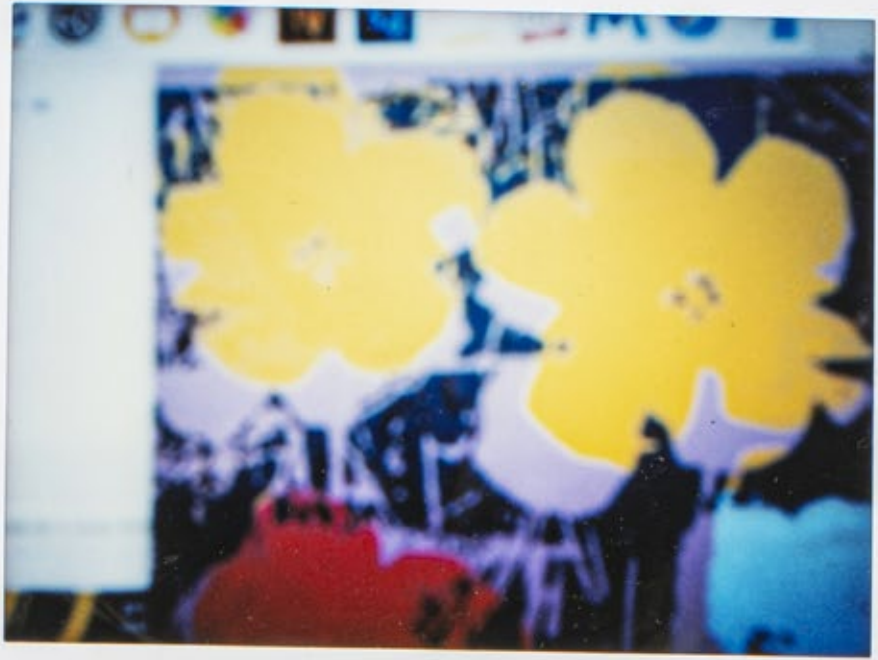
in the act of copying – if executed by hand, copying is not literally speaking considered to be copying as each person's 'hand' is unique (Beylot 2004, 25; Gerez & Mallet 2016, 35).

In my playful battle with Warhol, I decided to start by copying one of his artworks. The *Flowers* series (see image 29), which Warhol worked from 1964 onwards, were my choice (Vanel et al. 2016, 65). As a basis, Warhol used a photograph taken by nature photographer Patricia Caulfield. Warhol had manipulated the original photograph by cropping it, altering the sizes of a few elements, adding contrast, and modifying the colours. Nonetheless, the ultimate appearance was similar, and Caulfield recognized her image in Warhol's *Flowers*, in 1965, displayed in a bookstore window (Buskirk 2003, 84–87). Caulfield brought charges against Warhol, but the case was settled out of court (ibid.). This was not the only time that Warhol was attacked for using other people's images; it happened so often during his early career that later he decided to buy the copyright for the images he used or to take photographs himself or ask his assistants. A somewhat juicy rumour hints that even the Andy Warhol Foundation has an insurance against possible future copyright lawsuits. Somehow, all these stories and details seem irrelevant, as copying images is such a central feature of Warhol's art (ibid., 86–87). I am neither the first nor likely the last artist to take over the *Flowers*; for example, American artist Elaine Sturtevant<sup>86</sup> had already produced her own, identical versions in 1965, and Warhol went as far as to lend Sturtevant his original screen (ibid., 80–83).

I started by copy-pasting one version of Warhol's *Flowers* from Google Images and manipulating it into a rya rug model. While reducing the colours, I got the strange sensation of simulating Warhol's simplification method, which he used when he created his printing screens out of photographs. After finalizing the details of the rug model, I decided to repeat it on different scales and with colour combinations. To be able to channel the Warholian essence into my work, I determined that I needed to follow three principles: 1) use repetition, 2) change scales and 3) vary colours. I was not able to make many variations due to the slowness and cost of hand-tufting technique that I used for my rya rugs. I further decided that three variations (one large, 2 smaller) should be enough to achieve the impression I was looking for. As a basis for all three, I used the same version of *Flowers*.

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86 Elaine Sturtevant (1924-2014)



little electric chair

The finalized rug models had to be printed out in 1:1 size and transferred onto rug base fabric. Even though I had greatly simplified the original image, transferring a nearly 2-metre-wide, photograph-like-image onto a base fabric using a light table demanded time and patience, luckily the smaller models presented much less of a challenge.

I ended up by tufting the bigger rug (180 cm × 180 cm) along with the two smaller ones (70 cm × 90 cm) using my signature open-brushed mohair and Japanese silk chenille yarns that have an odd crunchy texture (my versions of *Flowers* can be seen on pp. 238–239). When I selected the colours, I was certainly influenced by Warhol, but as the yarn colour options were restricted, I mainly chose those that looked interesting together. As often before, initially I felt glued to my source of inspiration (Warhol and his art of copying), but as the process continued, I drifted further from original source and closer to my own ways of making things.

Even though I produce my rugs myself, traditionally those artists who designed the rya rugs did not execute them. This must have been related to the fact that previously rya rugs were woven and the technique demanded both skills and significant amount of time. ‘The Friends of Finnish Handicraft’<sup>87</sup> employed highly skilled trained weavers who made it possible for complicated art rya rugs to be made (Svinhufvud 2009, 257–258). *“It can be said that in the 1950s and 1960s ryijys [rya rugs] based on the collaboration between artist and weaver evolved into a specific art form”* (ibid., 255). I do not know how it would have been if I had been working with a weaver, if I had had somebody else to produce my rugs and, in addition, if I were using somebody else’s image as the basis of my design. What in the end would be my contribution then, except signing the work? The idea itself of making such rug would naturally be mine, but it would certainly not feel sufficient.

Historically, woven and knotted textiles were commonly produced by hand. A professional painter took days or weeks to realize a design

**29 Polaroids (2018) of Warhol's *Flowers* series in my sketchbook. For a while I became obsessed over this artwork.**  
Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

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**87** ‘The Friends Finnish of Handicraft’ was established by Finnish painter Fanny Churberg in 1879 to help the traditional crafts to survive (Karsikas 2020; Svinhufvud 2009, 10).

that a skilful artisan then worked on for several months or even years to accomplish, yet the artisan received only a fraction of the remuneration (Smith 1997, 49). The artisan was less appreciated than the artist. I was to take on both roles.

After a while, following the traced model exactly felt un motivating. I had the strong sensation that, unlike Warhol, I did not want to be an ‘emotionless machine’, even though, for reasons that I myself am not aware of, I did not sign this work ‘à la Warhol’ (Mathieussent 1994, 110). Possibly working with a ‘ready-made’ image did not feel completely mine. Kontturi (2018, 100) notes that images that are recognizable, become fixed, “*stopped*”. Somehow the life is taken out of them and they stop breathing. I had to allow more freedom to myself, and to my version of *Flowers*. Little by little, I found ways of adding a gradually increasing number of my own personal touches. If I had spent more days in copying Warhol slavishly, I would probably have been unable to continue. My small, improvised details might not be perceived by spectators, but for me they made a significant difference as Warhol’s *Flowers* transformed slowly into rya rug and became more 3-dimensional, heavy, fuzzy and warm, almost like a living thing.

#### **4.2.5 Copying myself and creating a factory – repetition becomes a method**

After the rug project, I started to wonder how I could possibly go further with my Warhol-inspired cases than copying from him directly. Hence, I adopted a slightly different approach. I took the role of a product designer and copied myself using repetition. This epitomized Warhol’s style, and when the essence of each unique artwork became lost in the crowd, they started to remind one of mass-produced goods (Mathieussent 1994, 98–99, 105–107).

For the first time, I got to know the world of glassmaking. Its shiny, polished surface, which seemed to evoke plastic and machines, felt captivating. Glass offered almost endless possibilities for colours, and therefore it made possible to incorporate Warhol-inspired candy colours.

I designed a mould-blown glass collection titled *Saaristo64* [Archipelago64], based on inspiration sourced from Warhol’s serigraphy series *Death and Disasters* (1964). In this this series, the use of borrowed images felt especially well founded. By using photographs from the daily newspaper Warhol denounced the violence of his home country and the way it was rendered banal (Honnef 1991, 60–62). I felt a deep connection to the origin



of Warhol's work in my glass series, even though they seemed to belong to the 'low-minded' world of consumerism. The connection gave me more to think about and meaning for my making process, if not the outcome.

After settling on my source of inspiration, I started to sketch the shapes and scales and began planning possible colourways (see image 30). Strangely enough, sketching the ideas for the 3-dimensional shapes by hand felt liberating. The models for the glass pieces simply required a drawing, or in fact just half of a drawing – half of the object's outline sufficed. Afterwards, this little line was digitalized and copied infinitely in a round 3D-model. I used a lot of thought while trying to envision what the final pieces would look like. During these brief moments, copying was replaced by dreaming.

It came as a surprise that I ended up working with a whole factory of people. As a glass design beginner, I required more support than somebody with more experience. There were up to 12 people involved in the process, one way or another. Production took place in the university glass studio, where teachers, studio masters, teaching assistants and fellow students gave me advice and practical help. Some phases required more time than I could imagine, for example it took several weeks just to find fresh alder for the glass moulds. Finally, I got lucky as the green space department of the nearby town, Espoo, gave me some. The lumberjack, employed by the city, cut the wood for me. This was followed by all kinds of help in mould-making, such as carrying those heavy logs and shaping the Rhino 3D models with the computer. Collaboration became the most central feature of the process, and the whole idea of singular authorship that is so deeply rooted in the traditional world of design started to seem more and more fuzzy.

At most stages I needed guidance from somebody. I learned various things by asking questions, watching YouTube tutorials, or simply practising, like making countless holes with a 25 cm drill bit onto the wet wooden moulds or melting coloured glass rods at 1200 °C. At the final, and the most decisive, stages I worked with a glassblower, Joonas Laakso, who realized my works. I assisted him in the process, but even as an assistant, my skills were lacking. Nonetheless, it felt important to connect myself in some way to the most crucial part of the process. Possibly I was desperately holding onto my last bit of authorship?

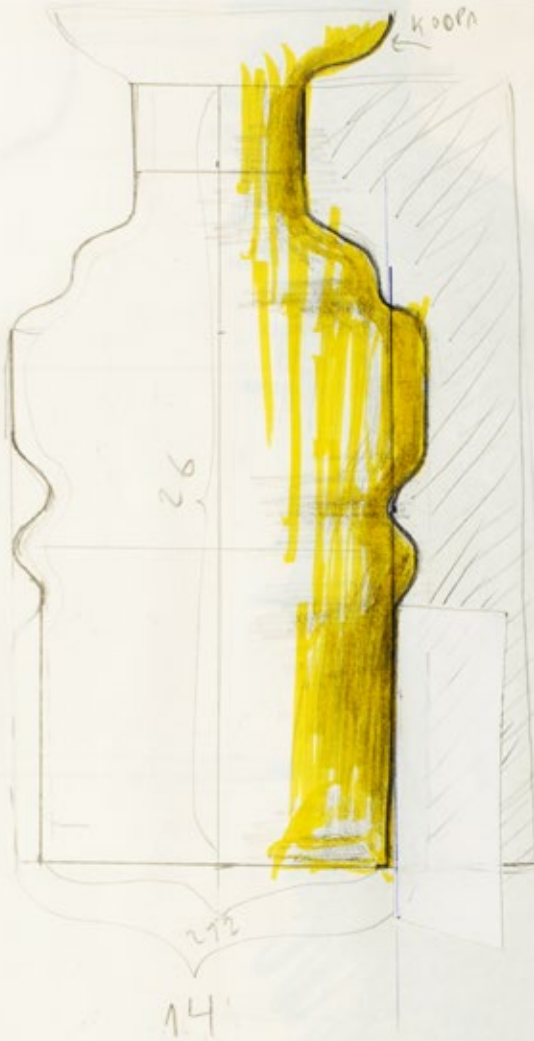
After cooling down (annealing), the glass pieces were finalized with what are termed ‘cold-work’ methods. I received help while using the diamond saw that cuts the glass. Fortunately, after that I was able to make most of the other finishing touches myself. I enjoyed the collaborative aspect of this project, but sometimes it felt challenging to constantly depend on others. Hence, it made me content that I was able to make something myself. It became possible when the glass was cold, and I was subsequently able to touch it with bare hands. When the glass is hot, it cannot be manipulated without tools, and this lack of handprints also adds to the impression of a machine-made, seemingly unapproachable material.

At the end of the process, I tried to understand my own claim of ‘copying myself’. I had designed and partly manufactured (with many helping hands) wooden turn moulds which enabled glass production in series. While looking at the finished glass pieces, I remembered the moment when they came out of the mould, still blazing. The pieces had different colours, yet the overall forms looked very similar. I had fabricated 5 different moulds, but their shapes resembled each other: I went as far as copy-pasting some angles and lines from one model to another. The uniqueness of each piece was lost when repeated like this. It was impossible to define which one was the first and therefore the ‘original’ one. Just as in Warhol’s silkscreen paintings where he added brushstrokes or simply used a different level of pressure or quantity of ink, the small variations in my glass works did not reduce the impression of repetition.

In the process, I became overwhelmed by the sensation that each similar shape somehow replaced the previous one, creating the illusion

**30** This is an initial sketch made on 26.10.2018 for Saaristo64 series ‘small bottle’ (marker on paper, 25.2 × 18.9 cm) that can be seen for example on pp. 289–290. I was surprised by how simple designing mould-blown objects was; nevertheless, it took me a lot of time. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

26, 10, 18  
scale  
50%



26  
MUOTIN koko  
k. 26 (#0)  
l. 18

↑  
sifityy  
+ 2m  
kuvastee

26  
parh<sup>tohti</sup> mikans  
26 x  
20 + 1m  
mikans



of senseless endless repetition. Warhol's *Shadows* (1978–79) had given me a similar impression when I saw them in the Paris Museum of Modern Art back in 2015, all 102 pieces, 17 different colours spreading over 130 metres (mam.paris.fr). While passing Warhol's ever repeating *Shadows*, I had felt stuck. Time went by, second by second, and yet I found myself looking at almost the same image. They were so many that I had soon lost interest in investigating the smaller or bigger differences between them. The impression of my glass pieces popping out of the moulds one after another felt very much the same. A unique work of art is regarded as something rare and therefore appreciated, but when repeated it transforms into something less precious and even ordinary, just like countless soup cans advancing on a factory line. Wasn't it precisely that what Warhol wanted? By employing mundane subjects in his art, his aim was to make them even more ordinary, "ordinary-ordinary" (Bulteau 2009, 52–53). Through their making process, my reproduced glass pieces also became ordinary, losing their uniqueness and authenticity, resembling products instead of artworks. Repetition caused a certain feeling of emptiness – there was no ending, no beginning.

Through this glass making process, I realized that repetition was not a new feature in my artistic process. It had already been highly visible in the pieces that I presented in *The House of Play and Rain*, repeating the exact same patterns from rugs to woven and printed fabrics. It was fascinating to see how their identical features appeared in different scales, techniques, colours or materials. Repetition played a decisive role even in the initial moments of my creative processes: while sketching, I had repeated the same subjects, lines and angles over and over again. Tarde (2015, 7) suggested that 'repetition', such as cells multiplying inside the body of a child, can signify growth and not merely creating a series. My repetition was not solely about possible development, such as ameliorating my sketching skills, but I identified my repetition as related to some kind of obsessive behaviour. Repetition created a feeling of approaching my subjects' profound essence, getting to know them and letting them become a part of me. I never felt that I was making the exact thing over and over again. Bolt (2010, 156) pointed out that, for Deleuze, repetition was never the same, as it contained differences in the level of intensity, flow and linkages which made each repetition "always a singular behaviour". The difference became felt-lived by the maker; it was written in my memory of making. Each of my repetitions was different from all the previous ones – each of them seemed to have a reason to exist.

Repetition became a working mode that enabled my thinking to ‘switch off’ and made me feel more connected to being in the present moment, my entire being transferred into the state of all arms and legs and no brains. Repetition after repetition, I seemingly arrived nowhere. Repetition was my breathing, my trial to cope with the world, to find moments of flow and fluidity and finally open up a path to a closure and the next subject of interest. I repeated, as if there were no other choice than the final goal of getting over the subject, exhausting it, wearing it out – which could take years. I need to feel that I am ‘over with it’. This is different when I am working in group. In the glass studio, the process was all about collaboration, consequently I become the arms and legs of the glassblower, and it took much longer before we wore out a topic as we shared the experience of making, which, in this way, became more complex and included even more unexpected possibilities, keeping my interest alive.

#### **4.2.6 From lacking aura to bad and good copying**

While evaluating my process, I wondered which one of us, Warhol or me, had more impact on my artworks, and whether that could even be evaluated. Art and its characteristics seemed to be escaping strict definitions. My aim had been to evoke the Warholian principles of copying and repetition with my rug and glass series. With the first, I had managed to channel Warhol’s copying, and with the latter (the glass series), both. Benjamin (1936) identified these characteristics (‘copying’ and ‘repeating’), as reducers of the authenticity of the artworks. Losing authenticity meant also losing originality – losing the artist’s own recognizable style. In conclusion, my pieces were lacking aura, the Benjaminian stardust hovering around ‘true’ artworks. My ‘artworks’, ‘pieces’ or ‘products’, however they were to be named, could be considered to be mere pastiches of originals, even though they themselves were copies of themselves and therefore also original sources of those copies. In addition, due to their collaborative making process, my glass pieces could be considered not solely ‘mine’ but instead ‘ours’, as the elements required for singular authorship were conspicuous by their absence. The rugs were made with my own hands, but their idea, the image that they represented, was not originally mine.

Even though Warhol was mostly a friend of provocative personal statements (see, for example, Hautamäki 2003, 153, 155–156; Mathieussant 1994, 105; Warhol 2018), rather than preaching for a better world, some critics have found in his art criticism against consumerism (Matthieussant



1994, 111–112) or banalisation of violence (Honnef 1991, 60–62). Initially, I had opposed becoming an ‘emotionless machine’, but while producing my glass series piece after piece, their ever-growing number had blinded me. The Warholian shiny, plastic-like surfaces and candy colours were there – but no meaning whatsoever. After some while, it all started to feel burdensome and meaningless. I had lost myself in those bottles and bowls, just like Warhol seemed to be trapped in his never-ending repetitions. A pathetic illusion of eternal continuation: as long as there was a ‘next’ one, there was still life to come.

While using ‘copying’ as my artistic method, at some moments I doubted the legitimacy of my actions. Copying in a negative sense is always in some ways related to profit. It is not always easy to determine whether something was done for profit or not, but a good cue is to verify whether the original source is openly cited or not. When hidden, it seems likely that the act of copying has been conducted for fraudulent purposes and can be compared to the act of stealing. Openness becomes the key concept; for example, Saint Laurent sourced inspiration quite literally from various more or less famous artists<sup>88</sup> and artworks, which he titled as a ‘homage’ to or an ‘inspiration’ from this or that artist (Chenoune & Muller 2010, 364–365).

When I looked at Saint Laurent’s interpretations of artworks, I became aware how different and how similar they were to the original artworks, yet they were not the ‘same’. Like Magritte’s painting of the pipe was not a pipe, but a ‘painting of the pipe’ (Bolt 2010, 166), my *Flowers* based on Warhol’s artworks were not ‘his’. It was not the ‘same’, nor was Warhol’s interpretation of Caulfield’s hibiscus flowers the ‘same’ as hers. With their heaviness and hairy, warm surface, my *Flowers* differed dramatically from the wallpaper kind of 2-dimensionality in Warhol’s repeated silkscreens. Furthermore, this repeatedness was absent in my rug pieces, three did not make a crowd. Warhol’s artworks created an impression of surrounding the spectator inside the exhibition walls, they were everywhere, making the audience feel small and placed ‘in the middle’. Almost like they were observed by the eyes of the *Flowers*. Instead, my *Flowers* did not ‘look’, but waited to be touched, with their pet-like fur and radical softness.

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**88** Yves Saint Laurent sourced inspiration from many of his contemporaries, and in this manner he proved to be radically modern – in contrast to me, who only sources inspiration from the faraway past, from artists who are no longer here. I have opted for safer ground, where I cannot be so easily accused of copying.

Copying in a positive sense can be regarded as creating a discussion, a close encounter between the artist and the source (Gerez & Mallet 2016, 88, 90). My encounter with Warhol was most definitely rather enjoyable, despite the theme of 'copying'. Besides visual inspiration, Warhol's production gave me new insights about the relationship between art and authorship. Some of his gigantic aura spread upon my work as I was working with *Flowers*, which drew a lot of attention. I do not consider the outcome solely a fruit of my personal efforts, but also Warhol's (and in a related manner also Caulfield's). As the process advanced, the original idea of *Flowers* started to feel as if it belonged to me, too, like shared capital. I moved from copying to sharing, and the old formula '*author* → *artwork*' was transcended by '*author* + *sources of inspiration* + *collaboration* → *artwork*'. I felt proud of my own work and had no need to conceal my original sources; on the contrary, I followed Warhol openly and unashamedly, just as many influential precursors have always been followed (see also Tarde 2015, 3–5).

#### **4.2.7 Investigating the borders between copying and inspiration**

When I began to investigate the differences between copying and inspiration, I was struck by how confusing it was. Previously, I had this idea that there had to be 'something' that I could solve, some kind of 'truth' or an 'answer' to be discovered concerning what can be done and what not. Rather quickly I understood that nothing like that existed. I simply copied and demonstrated how it was done. By choosing Warhol as my source of inspiration, I now have a feeling that I wanted to play it safe. I used his artworks as the basis of my works, and as he was the 'copy-artist' par excellence, it was certain he would not come to haunt me in my nightmares afterwards. We were in the same boat. Nevertheless, I managed to some extent to dissolve my own confusion about copying. After having tried copying myself consciously, I gained the feeling that now, if and when I copy, I know why I would do that. In addition, I would be able to convey my reasons to others as well. Sometimes copying is well-founded, sometimes not, but it is a decision which influences the process and the content of the artworks.

I chose Warhol for several reasons, and not least was my 'personal relationship' with him. During my photography art studies in the 1990s, Warhol was very much in vogue among photography students. The discussion of the legitimacy of the photography as a 'seriously-taken' part of the field of fine arts was still ongoing. Warhol represented the epitome of a famous artist who had based most of his artworks on reproductions of photographs

(see, for example, Hautamäki 2003, 138–140). I had been admiring his art and bold attitude, and perhaps surprisingly, before going through this case study, I had not doubted the justification of Warhol's methods.

I chose *Flowers* to be worked into a rya rug pretty intuitively, as it pleased me aesthetically and functioned for this purpose. I was rather familiar with this artwork, having seen it multiple times in exhibitions and reproductions. *Flowers* was an iconic artwork that even people who are not interested in art would recognize. However, I suppose that they, like me, were not familiar with the history behind the artwork. I had never even heard that it was taken by the photographer Patricia Caulfield and borrowed by Warhol without her consent (Buskirk 2003, 84–87). I had not even thought that there might be a story like this behind the artwork. I am used to doubting most information, but I was not dubious about an established artwork. I took it for granted that an iconic artist and their works were unimpeachable.

Warhol's status has remained incredibly high, and no lawsuit or rumour<sup>89</sup> has managed to make a dent in his shining armour, either while he was living or now that he is long gone. This led me to ponder the role of ethics related to my creative practice. I came to understand more profoundly the importance of being aware where ideas come from, especially when using found images – that is, appropriation. Expressing certain things would be complicated if all images had to be recreated every single time; nevertheless, when ready images are used, the connections between the origins and makers should be revealed, if ethically necessary, as I would deduce would have been the case regarding Caulfield.

After concluding that the maker of the original artefact should be cited in most cases of appropriation, I came to think about unknown authors. What if I was to paint on top of a porcelain vase fabricated in China and claim that it is my work of art? I would have created the 'decoration' on its surface, but the shape and volume of the piece would still belong to its anonymous author. Should I reveal where the vase came from before it is sold to a collector under my unique, authorial, name? It is hard to do justice to an anonymous and possibly mass-produced origin. On top of that, the shape of that Chinese vase would most probably reflect centuries-old traditions and might be already considered to be a 'copy' / 'another variation of a tradition'. And why not? Appreciation of the uniqueness of the

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**89** One of Warhol's provocative statements said that any publicity is good publicity (see, for example, Macias 2020).

artworks was typical in the *Western* art world only from the late Renaissance until the era of photography (Hautamäki 2003, 132–133). I wonder if (when presenting the artwork) noting ‘ready-made Chinese porcelain vase’ as part of the artwork’s information might even considerably decrease its value?

The tradition in contemporary art is not to reveal all the sources, or the collaborative aspects of the making processes, probably in order to fortify the position of the author. This is part of the art system – the artist who signs the artwork has the role of genius-creator. Design follows similar principles, the origin of every single fabric, clay, paint, or nail is not revealed, even though recent years have seen something of a change – for example, some fashion designers have chosen to reveal some details such as ‘fabric from Japan’, sometimes even citing the fabricant, which in these cases increases the value of the product.

Warhol’s artworks were produced collaboratively inside his creative studio “*factory*” (Mathieussent 1994, 99, 110–111). There are several other examples of such ‘factories’,<sup>90</sup> from Renaissance masters appropriating the works of their students (Hautamäki 2003, 133) to contemporary artists such as Judy Chicago<sup>91</sup>, Koons or Damien Hirst.<sup>92</sup> Chicago’s famous *Dinner Party* project (1979) required 400 assistants (25 forming the main group), while the artist herself acted as the main designer of the process and remained in control in all times (Jones 1996, 106). Due to the large number of participants, she could not get to know each of them individually remaining a “*more distant, isolated authority figure*” (ibid., 106). Instead of having his own images copied, Koons chose famous artworks (Needham 2015). His team members, who in 2015 numbered over 130, working in his Manhattan based studio, were not named (Brookes 2015). As a micro-manager, Koons followed each creative process closely (ibid.). Britain-based Hirst has famously hired up to 250 workers for his ‘factory’, producing thousands of artworks (Cascone 2018). Surprisingly or not, all three, Hirst, Koons and Warhol have without a doubt achieved remarkable financial success.

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**90** The practice of employing assistants for art production is not limited to ‘factory’ models, many artists do employ assistants in some phases of their working processes. Think, for example, of Matisse and his paper cutting works. Due to his health, Matisse was incapable of working alone, although in general he worked just with one assistant at a time, making the collaboration intimate (Deparpe 2013, 43). Another example could be the painter Susana Navedo (1967), who named many ‘collaborators’, from her daughters to craftsmen and other artists (Kontturi 2018, 125).

**91** American feminist artist, art educator and writer Judy Chicago (1939–)

**92** British artist Damien Hirst (1965–)

Collaborative working methods allow more artworks to be produced and in cases such as these, enable more sales and financial growth. The artist also becomes in a way his own manager and businessman, just as Warhol claimed (Hautamäki 2003, 145).



## 4.3 Hvitträsk, *Flame, Seagull* and me – From solitude to sharing

*Could there be an alternative for singular authorship?*

After investigating the relationship between copying and inspiration through Warhol's lenses and through my own practice, I started to question the principles traditionally linked to 'authorship'. I wondered if the 'singularity' of the concept was relevant, or even necessary, and whether there may exist some kind of alternative. Even though artistic movements from surrealism to postmodernism have questioned similar issues, I felt there was more to be done – authorship could be understood from a more collaborative standpoint, which would emphasize the complexity of creative processes.

Developing from the principles of intertextuality (Makkonen 2006, 24), along with Friedell's (1932–1933, 614–615) and Tarde's (2015, 52–53) ideas that influences inevitably travelled through time and over distance, a concept of 'shared authorship' might be closer to reality. Even Monet or Warhol must have been influenced by countless factors when thinking of aesthetics, such as their peers, the historical past, the present situations of the societies they lived in, along with their subjects, or simply the colours and materials of their choice. Knowing all these details might not be necessary while enjoying Monet's or Warhol's artworks but understanding the process of creation helps us to understand 'what' we are looking at and how it is related to various other factors. Realizing linkages – between past and present, cultures and societies, alive and dead beings – enables ideas to circulate with less fear (of plagiarism) and create enriching, identifiable connections. This understanding of relations could create a stronger sense of belonging and widen our perspectives towards art and life itself.

Earlier, when I needed to define clearly what sources of inspiration 'did' to my practice, I had chosen to work with only one source at a time. Now, as I felt that I had gained more experience and knowledge, I felt

ready to move on to a more broad-minded way of working with inspiration. I wanted to replace the idea of being directly inspired by one particular and relatively narrow subject to a more holistic view. Consequently, when I was invited to organize my third doctoral-degree-related exhibition in the historic villa of Hvitträsk, I decided to incorporate the place itself into my creative process. Therefore, Hvitträsk became my main source of inspiration and a symbol for collaborative working methods where ideas coming from several sources create one whole.

One of the most interesting features of this last case was that I was able to present the artworks in the same milieu that functioned as part of their inspiration. I was hoping to create a dialogue between the different layers of time that Hvitträsk had gone through, leading to an illusion where the limits of time would visually vanish. I planned my artworks in a way that created a plausible impression of belonging to the place, almost like they had always been there, even though I did not have detailed information on the kind of objects that had been in Hvitträsk, apart from some original objects or others that had been reproduced and placed on display. Many pieces of the original furniture were gone and several rooms such as 'draughtsmen's room' or 'Loja's studio' had no original furniture left, and nobody knew how these rooms had looked in the past (Marjamäki 2020, 10, 38, 48). On the other hand, these empty spaces offered a wonderful opportunity for me to re-imagine them. The objects that I placed in those rooms created the impression of somebody still living there. They were not reconstructions of the national romantic era or real functional living spaces but more like installations based on my imagination.

#### 4.3.1 Collaborating with the 'past'

Hvitträsk, designed by Herman Gesellius, Armas Lindgren and Eliel Saarinen, functioned as an office and home for the three architects and their families (Marjamäki 2020, 5) (see image 31).<sup>93</sup> Hvitträsk was a collaborative project; for example, the main building had the south wing designed by Saarinen as a home for his family and the north wing by Lindgren for his,

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**93** Harmony in the artists' residence did not last long and Gesellius, Lindgren, and Saarinen continued to work and live together for only two years, 1903–05. After the architectural collaboration of these three ended in 1905, Gesellius and Saarinen continued to work together for 1905–07. After Gesellius' death in 1916, Saarinen became the sole owner of Hvitträsk (Marjamäki 2020, 6).



31 **Hvitträsk (1920-1922), at the end of the building there is a tower that was Lindgren's living quarters and which later burned down.** Image: Finnish Heritage Agency/ Signe Brander (1910-1922).

and these two parts were united by a long atelier space (ibid.). Later, when north wing burnt down, Saarinen's son, Eero Saarinen, also an architect, designed a new part of the building for that location, which was much more modest than the original (ibid., 6). Although it has been thought to represent a central piece of the Finnish national romantic movement, many details, and materials of Hvitträsk were inspired by English and American architectural traditions (ibid., 5). Hvitträsk was considered to be a complete work of art, where everything from furniture to textiles, from lamps to other decorative pieces were either designed by the trio, their friends and family or local craftsmen (ibid., 5, 16, 21, 22, 27).

Even though I chose Hvitträsk as my main source of inspiration, not everything there interested me equally. Naturally the specific atmosphere of the place was present, but as for details, I became more inspired by some than others. One of them was the *Flame*<sup>94</sup> rug in Saarinen's living

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94 Flame received considerable attention at the time of its creation, and it has impressively remained the most famous Finnish rya rug.

room – it had been personally gifted to the architect by Gallen-Kallela himself (Marjamäki 2020, 17, 21). *Flame* had been part of Gallen-Kallela's award-winning living room design (textiles and furniture) for the Finnish Pavilion's 'Iris Room' in the 1900 Paris Exposition (Karsikas 2020). The pavilion itself was designed by the trio of Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen (ibid.), so the friendship between Gallen-Kallela and Saarinen (Wahlroos & Karvonen-Kannas 2008, 24–26) might explain why *Flame* ended up in Hvitträsk. As a consequence of *Flame*'s fame, rugs became fashionable. Following Gallen-Kallela's example, many architects and artists began to design them. Consequently, the status of the rya rug as art in Finland became established (Svinhufvud 2009, 252–253; Pääkkönen 2020). Many Finns also might have a copy of *Flame* in their home as it has long been and still is a part of 'the Friends of Finnish Handicraft's' DIY kits, which enabled anybody to purchase and produce their own copy of *Flame* (Karsikas 2020). Due to this, *Flame* has become a part of Finnish popular culture, and it fascinated me ever since I first saw it.

*“They worked almost incessantly: ‘Eliel Saarinen was a happy mixture of artistic ability, intelligence, energy, ambition, seriousness and wit. This made him an ideal person for even the most demanding competitions... Time began to run short while we were involved in the Canberra competition, arranged by the Australians during my early years at Hvitträsk. We worked until two and three in the morning during the last two weeks: A diary of the time tells of fifteen and sixteen-hour working days. I recall lying outstretched for days on a table used for perspectives over general views of the antipodal city. When Saarinen had finally finished the views with his inimitable hand, we had the impression that we were at the far side of the globe.*

*But as the working day drew to an end, and the light of dawn dispelled that of the lamps, our toil was rewarded as Mrs Saarinen came in carrying a tray of sandwiches and Hungarian wine and we, reclining on soft couches against coloured Hungarian cushion, felt like so many princes from A Thousand and One Nights... some months later, when we heard by telegram that Hvitträsk had gained second place in the competition we celebrated in the studio toasting one another with glasses of sparkling wine.’”*(Memories of Hvitträsk by architect Frans Nyberg, in Pallasmaa 1997, 49.)



32 **Seagull rya rug (designed c. 1904) by Jarl Eklund, 387 x 201 cm, wool. Development of the rya rug model and execution by Friends of Finnish Handicraft in 1914.** Photo: Archives of Design Museum Helsinki/ Rauno Träskelin (2009).

While I was working on the Hvitträsk case, I was also asked to take part in ‘the Friends of Finnish Handicraft’'s 140-year celebration exhibition *In Good Hands*. I was (along with three other invited artists) asked to source inspiration from their archives. *Flame* was an obvious choice, and in addition I chose another rya rug, *Seagull* [Lokki] (see image 32), by Jarl Eklund, which was designed in 1904 (Ahonen-Kolu et al. 2009, 88–89). I became intrigued by the similarities that I found between these two rugs, and I suspected that *Seagull* might have been inspired by *Flame*. Eklund was also an architect and had worked for some time as an assistant in Hvitträsk (Marjamäki 2020, 39–39), so he was certainly familiar with *Flame*. Both rugs had a similar, kind of simplified decorative feeling, the same that was also present in Gallen-Kallela’s paintings. The lines in both designs could be described as organic, ‘wavy’, reminiscent of the typical Art Nouveau style ‘swan-neck lines’ (Hämäläinen 2010, 21). Both rugs were intended to be used as bench rugs, and they therefore had a similar scale and shape. Even the colours of the first version of *Flame* corresponded with the blue-green tones of *Seagull*. Both rugs acted as important sources of inspiration during my inquiries into the shared authorship theme. The *Seagull* inspiration was taken from beyond the walls of Hvitträsk, but it had a clear connection to the place, and it was from the same era.

#### 4.3.2 Living the ‘Hvitträsk experience’

My creative conversation had various interlocutors, from the place and the artworks to the makers, such as Saarinen, Gesellius and Lindgren, along with Gallen-Kallela or Eklund and the anonymous craftsmen who participated in the creation of Hvitträsk. My dialogue extended to the pine trees that grew around the villa and the flowers in the garden that played a part in my exhibition installation. The way I experienced Hvitträsk differed

- 33 **My sketch of the Hvitträsk atelier 22.10.2019, marker on paper, 25.2 × 37.8 cm. This space was so complex that I also had to draw it without adding the artworks I was imagining displaying in there. This was my attempt to understand its colours, shape, and lighting.** Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).
- 34 **My sketch of ‘Loja’s studio’ 8.10.2019, marker on paper, 25.2 × 37.8 cm. I measured the room and imagined by drawing which artworks would fit in and look good. My *Alphabet rug* (on the bench) can be seen on p. 231 and *Tigersun rug* (on the ground) on p. 230.** Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).





from the time of its creation, and even though I also sought to examine it through history, I was inevitably rooted in the present. Between me and the period that Gesellius, Lindgren and Saarinen had created the place there lay 120 years. Time could not be faded away; it added to the sensation of distance I felt towards the original creators of Hvitträsk. Between us lay two World Wars, a few revolutions – artistic or political, heat waves and snowless winters, Elvis, Kekkonen and Princess Diana. Instead of trying to live Hvitträsk in an authentic manner, as it was in the past, I was free to live it as ‘my own’, as part of my life and present. It became engraved into my personal history and creative practice.

Unexpectedly, the ‘Hvitträsk experience’ transformed into a home-like one. I was not aware of that growing sensation of familiarity while it was occurring – it took place so slowly and unconsciously. I became infatuated by Hvitträsk’s atmosphere and singular aesthetics. At the beginning, I had been trying to imagine its previous inhabitants – this idea was soon replaced by me imagining myself living there. There was a speechless interaction between Hvitträsk and me; the more I spent time there, the more it began to occupy my thinking, my very structure seemed to be linked to that place. As a result, when the artworks were ready and transported to the exhibition, they all fitted into Hvitträsk seamlessly.

During the planning and making process of the exhibition, I spent as much time as possible in Hvitträsk. I occupied my days there mostly by sketching. From October to March, the museum was closed to the public, which offered me time for calm and intimate exploration. I brought my markers and drew the interiors of the spaces where I was going to present my artworks. When I started to inspect a new space, I took measurements and made notes, easily spending from half to an entire day just trying to capture that one space. While I was drawing the interiors (see images 33 and 34), I started to understand how complex their architecture was, none of the rooms was typically square or even squareish; instead, they were filled with arches and unexpected angles. The way that natural light entered through the windows must have been carefully planned by the architects as it felt so impressive at various moments of the day and during the changing seasons.

After some time, returning to Hvitträsk began to feel like coming home. I parked my car at the front, entered and continued from where I had left last time. During our brief conversations with the personnel of the museum, I got to know stories about the history of the building and the families that had lived there. I tried to imagine how their life had been, but somehow it felt surreal and very distant. I was fully living the ‘Hvitträsk

experience' while the place grew in me. This, my own experience, became a more significant source of inspiration than the historical information that I could read in the books. Instead of written information, 'living Hvitträsk' was enough, more than enough.

#### 4.3.3 About 'NOT remembering' – The fuzziness of internalized sources of inspiration, and the eternal *Flame*

Strangely – during my long sketching days in Hvitträsk – I never felt a need to draw the *Flame* rya. Since it had already grown inside of me long before this project, it was carefully conserved in my visual database. Instead of looking at the 'real' *Flame* in Hvitträsk, I was mostly scrutinizing my memory of it. This memory was not exact: through the years it had become vague and distorted. I preferred this blurry impression of it, as it was not the 'real' *Flame*, but instead 'my vision' of it. The way that *Flame* inspired me was not solely visual, it was based on my emotional bond<sup>95</sup> and our common past experiences; it had become part of my structure as a practitioner (for the influence of past experiences, see also Dewey 2005, e.g., 74, 93, 108).

Who needs to experience the actual, physical artworks in 'real space' if the emotions it rouses and associations that it evokes are already somehow engraved in the memory? Even though I have been highlighting the importance of experiencing the actual places and artworks (for example, the Monet case in Chapter 4.1), in the case of the *Flame* rya rug, it did not feel necessary. Maybe each case is different. This time, I *had* seen the actual *Flame* (or versions of it), on a few occasions. In addition, I had seen countless *Flame* images in the pages of the books or digital media and discussed it with my friends, all of which had enabled me to build up a stable affection for it. Maybe in this case, as the rug had been duplicated countless times and represented in various contexts, the need to *see* the 'original' felt unnecessary. I don't even know where and if the 'original' exists, and what is certain is that there are several 'originals' because when *Flame* was first designed with its decorative border, it was too large to fit the Paris Exhibition room, so it was woven without the border. Gallen-Kallela even made

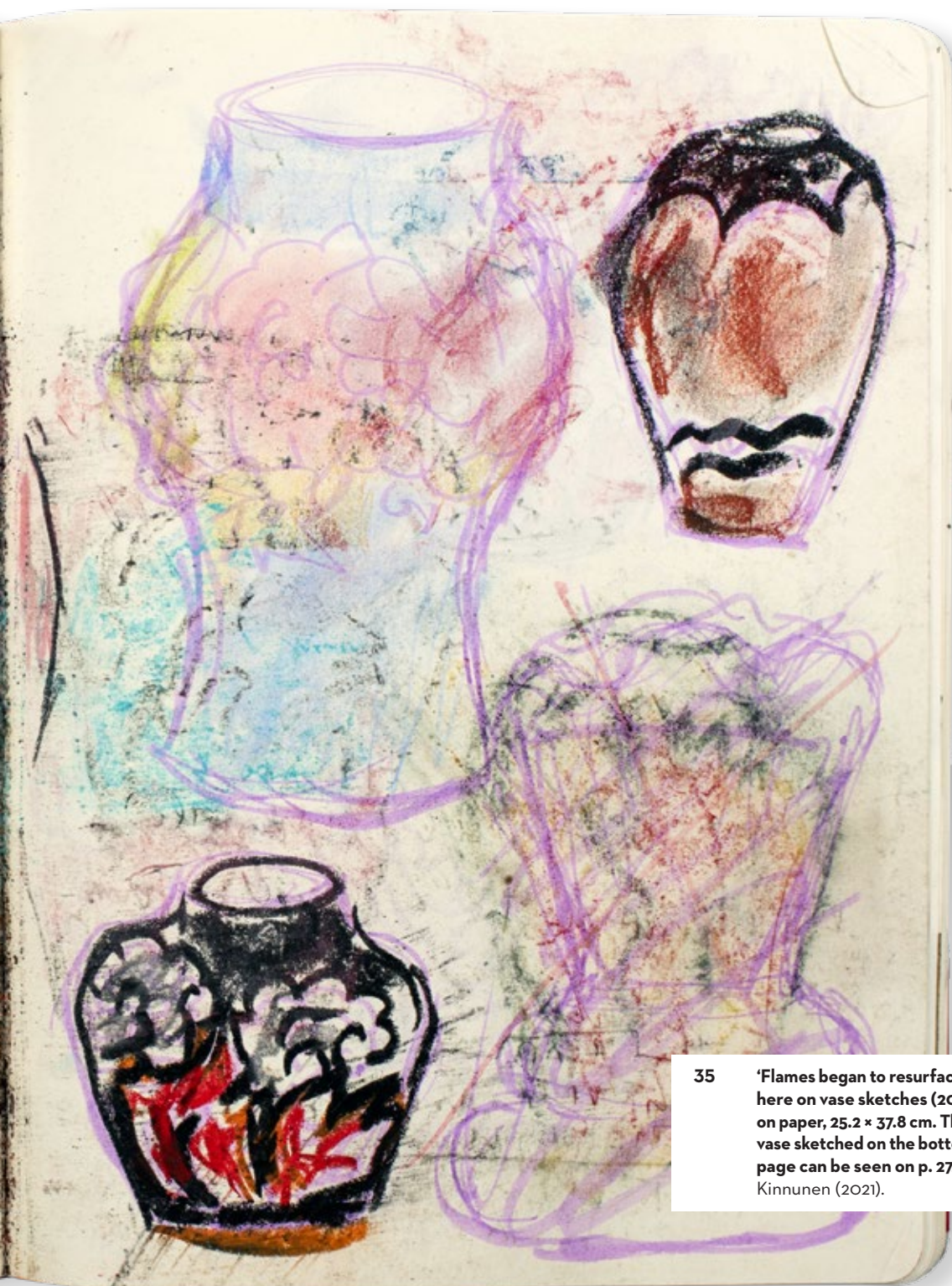
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95 Van Noten mentioned 'being touched' when seeing a work of art; for example, a dress by Cristóbal Balenciaga can act not as a literal source of inspiration but in the levels of emotions it arouses in the viewer. This personal experience is somehow transferred into the creative process. (Golbin 2014, 39.)









35 'Flames began to resurface everywhere', here on vase sketches (2019), dry pastel on paper, 25.2 x 37.8 cm. The *Small Flame* vase sketched on the bottom of the right page can be seen on p. 274. Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).



**36** Image of the *Seagull* rug (behind white table and chairs) in an exhibition in the early 20th century. Photo: Archives of Design Museum (original photo dated 1906).

several variations of the original *Flame* until 1915, and, in fact, the ‘original model’ based on his initial design was woven only in 1965 (Karsikas 2020).

I could go as far as claiming that the idea of ‘not’ remembering every visual detail of *Flame* felt thrilling, and this misinformation felt even more inspiring without anchoring my creativity in an exact form. My memory–source–of–inspiration was like a shapeless amoeba-like creature constantly metamorphosing according to my desires. Nevertheless, it felt comforting to know that *Flame* was there, in the living room of Hvitträsk, and I could see it whenever I felt the necessity.

*Flame* occupied my thoughts in many ways; even its title, ‘*Flame*’, made me curious, as the actual rug did not look exactly as if it represented flames, and in addition its original blue-green colours are not typically associated with flames, yet in my artworks flames began to surface everywhere (see image 35). At some points, flames made me think of American cars and the tacky aesthetics of the 1980s, so on I travelled, far from the departure point.

Inside my imagination, Hvitträsk and *Flame* had become inseparable. On the other hand, *Seagull* was elsewhere, at the time it was carefully stored in the storage of Design Museum of Helsinki. My interest in it was



born after I saw it in an old black-and-white photograph (see image 36), during the time I was researching the archives of 'the Friends of Finnish Handicraft'. Later, I saw a coloured photograph of it in a book, but the actual rug I only experienced once during my creative process, when I visited the museum storage. I was surprised by its large size and the fact of how faded the colours appeared. Still, somehow, experiencing the actual artwork felt empowering, maybe because I had been looking forward to that moment, or maybe because being able to inspect the details and the construction of the pile materials and colours from up close felt precious and rare.

#### 4.3.4. Into practice – From Swansong to snakes

Based on the inspiration described above, I created textiles, ceramics, and glass pieces. I started with a large textile piece, a bench rug,<sup>96</sup> *Swansong* (see image 37). Even though I had been studying *Flame* and *Seagull* rya rugs, I decided not to follow any strict set of rules such as with Warhol's *Flowers*, but instead leave space for my imagination. Possibly due to my rather extensive (inspiration) research, the idea came to me extremely quickly. I made few rough sketches. At that moment, the exact details were still obscure. I did not look at or consciously remind myself of my sources of inspiration, but instead I was letting the actual making process take the lead, and swiftly started to work with the materials.

As *Swansong* did not have an exact pre-drawn model, I drew some rough outlines into rug base fabric and started tufting. While the process was ongoing, I altered several details and made most of the decisions concerning the colours and exact shapes. The process felt very similar to painting, but instead of mixing paint I was mixing yarns to create new shades. In addition to open brushed mohair, I used other materials, such as felting wool and Japanese silks. The overall idea was to picture a large rya rug showing a snow fall with stylized pink flames in the bottom and at the centre top part an oval medallion picturing a Japanese miniature landscape surrounded by flames. I did not myself have a direct explanation as to why this landscape would be 'Japanese', but that is how it came from my imagination.

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96 In the early 20th century, rya rugs were mainly used on the floor or on a bench (Svinhufvud 2009, 11). Still today, visitors can see three bench rya rugs in Hvitträsk (Marjamäki 2020, 17, 24–25, 35).



37 My first sketch (2019) for the Swansong rug. At the time I titled the rug in process *the Sea in the Snow*, marker on paper, 25.2 × 37.8 cm. The finished rya rug can be seen on p. 233. (On the left page there is a colour planning for Lokal Gallery's *Helsinki Tones* group exhibition, where I first presented my glass pieces based on Warhol's inspiration). Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

This 'Japanese feeling' might originate from discovering many visual similarities between the national romanticism of *Hvitträsk* and Japonism.<sup>97</sup> An Asian feeling was also somehow present in *Flame* and *Seagull* – at the time of their creation, Asia and more particularly Japan had presented important aesthetic influences (Hämäläinen 2010, 16). The Asian influence

97 The term 'Japonism' meant admiration for the Japanese style and aesthetics that began to rise in Europe at end of the 19th century, when Japan opened to the Western world and Japanese art became familiar for many through exhibitions. Japonism was a big influence for Art Nouveau. In Finland, for example, Akse- li Gallen-Kallela and Jarl Eklund were ardent admirers of the Japanese style. (Hämäläinen 2010, 16.)

might also be explained through my personal preferences and history. I have always been drawn towards Japanese aesthetics. As part of my B.A. studies, I spent one semester in Beijing, where all my close friends were Japanese. This influence of Asian aesthetics has continued to shape my artistic practice until now. At the same time, *Swansong* had an obvious link to its ancestors. It had flame-like-figures at the bottom of the piece and the composition with the medallion reminded one of *Seagull*.

*Flame* and *Seagull* remained important influences when I started to work with ceramics and, strangely, translating inspiration sourced from textiles to sculpture-like objects happened effortlessly. Soft and matt material was transformed into something hard and shiny this time, and I did not need to fear getting too close to my sources of inspiration. Inspiration became quite literal, to the extent that at first the 'waves' pictured in *Seagull* and the 'flames' in *Flame* started climbing up the sides of my vases, yet after some time they transformed first into octopus tentacles and finally into snakes.

The snake-theme took on a significant role in the process; I made many variations of it. A number of pieces looked rather similar, especially those made in black clay, as the material absorbed colours and created a dark aspect each time. Even if there was no significant development, I had to continue – snakes were keeping me in their grip. At that moment, I realized I had become possessed by a new, even though associated, theme which had almost replaced the original idea of my sources of inspiration. Following my fresh addiction, I went on finding more, mostly visual information, and I even became interested in how snakes had been represented historically, such as in ancient Egyptian art and culture. I spent half a year solely with snakes, and worked on ceramics pieces in white, red, and black clay, making flowerpots and vases on the sides of which snake reliefs swarmed. For the coloration, I used spray painting for the first time, experimenting once more with a new technique.

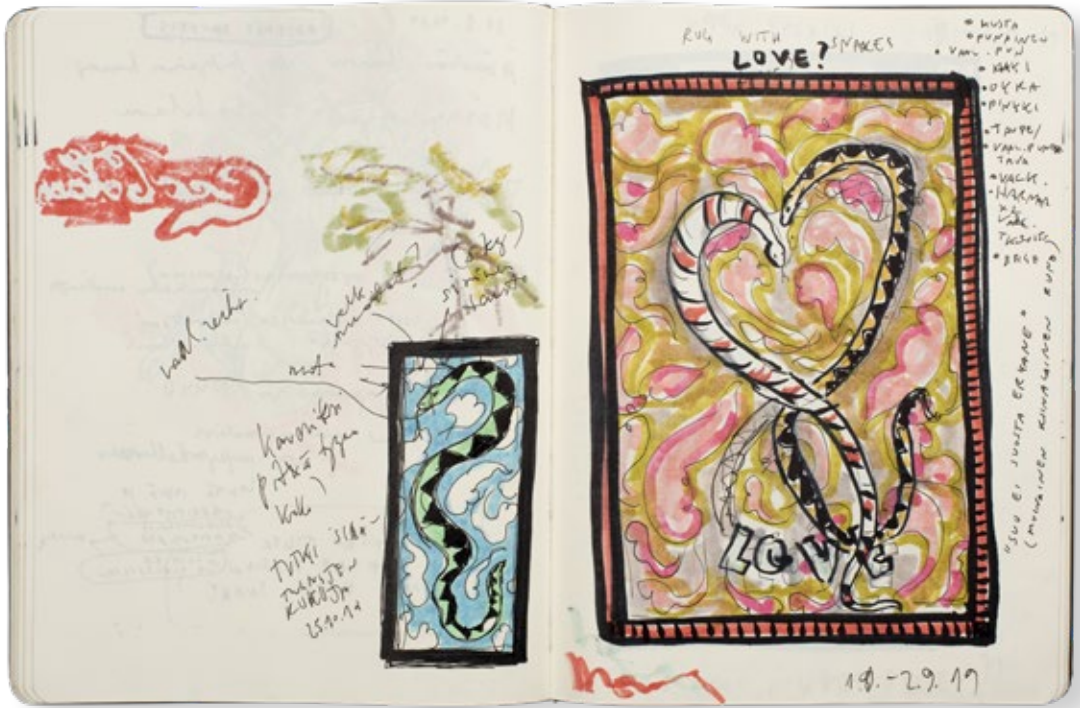
As tends to happen with new ceramic trials, many of them failed, breaking in the kiln. This happened more often than ever before, and I had to get *used* to this continuous cycle of breaking. I managed to repair a few of the pieces and cover them with luxurious silver or bronze lustres. I was repairing my potter's broken heart. On several occasions, I felt like I should give up the ceramic process, but from somewhere I found more motivation and finally these mishaps that had challenged my skills enabled me to acquire plenty of new knowledge.

I also created some free blown glass pieces that featured a similar octopus theme to my ceramics. For this process, I formed a team with two

glassblowers, so we were three working on heavy pieces of glass. To be able to explain the shape to the blowers I brought a ceramic vase along that I had made earlier. It was easier to have something 3-dimensional when talking about shapes. Naturally the glass pieces ended up looking quite different from the ceramic one, as all materials seem to possess their own will. Glass has a certain way it 'wants to move' and where it 'wants to go', always to the direction of the ground, driven by gravity. We made several rather variations of the shape that resembled each other, improvising on colours, each time adding several layers of them, in solid, powder and frit forms to create vivid animal-like surfaces.

After all these experiments, snakes still did not let me rest. I decided to return to textiles, designing a rug called *Mouth Shall not Separate from Mouth*. As I had just done, I did the sketching in a very liberated manner (see image 38). Maybe I had become lazy, but the idea of copying a real-size rug model on a light table for days or weeks did not feel tempting. Instead, I was thrilled by the idea of letting the rya rug come into existence, detail by detail, following its own rhythm. This decision included risks – I could end up creating a large piece, demanding a lot of commitment yet failing to deliver an interesting composition or colour combinations. At the same time the intuitivity of the process felt rewarding; most of the time I trusted myself along with the artwork in the middle of its 'becoming'.

While following my obsession with snakes, I had travelled rather far from my initial sources of inspiration. Without truly questioning my process, I had created yet another snake-themed piece. Did *Mouth Shall not Separate from Mouth* have any connection with *Hvitträsk* or *Flame and Seagull*? When I tried to look deeper, I was able to discern an art-nouveau-like linkage related to small decorative details added along the borders. The biggest link was, however, the long chain of associations that could be traced through my practice, materialized in multiple ceramic and glass pieces. Nonetheless, *Mouth Shall not Separate from Mouth* was an independent work of art. When I looked at the finished piece, I was suddenly reminded of Niki de Saint Phalle's 'diary works', they had similar colours, candy-decorated snakes in addition something else that I cannot quite verbalize. Also, Hilma af Klint's occultist and mystic art shared some connection. Snakes had taken such an inexplicably overpowering position over my artistic practice that it had left me amazed. My process had abandoned representational logic and surrendered itself without restraint to the process, following the effects of the radically transmutating present (see also Bolt 2010, 184–185). This experience confirmed that I was not the one in control nor was the process entirely conscious.



38 My first sketch for my *Mouth Shall not Separate from Mouth* rug on 1.-2.9.2019, marker on paper, 25.2 × 37.8 cm, and a sketch for the *Snake* cushion on the left page added 25.9.2019. (The finished artworks can be seen on pages 235 and 237). Photo: Anne Kinnunen (2021).

The intertwined bodies of snakes could be seen as a metaphor for the shared dialogues that I was creating with my sources of inspiration, past and present, where the ‘authorship of ideas’ did not have to be addressed to a one singular author but to a whole thread or a map of possible linkages and influences, swarming like a nest of snakes.

#### 4.3.5 Inhabiting and being inhabited by Hvitträsk

The experience of working on the third case, after Monet and Warhol, felt different. When I worked with Monet, I was trying to figure out our possible common ground and build a strong bond. While the process with Warhol was clearly related to the theme of ‘copying’, and I experimented within



much tighter frame, Hvitträsk gave me rather loose walls and process felt effortless. I did not have a clear path which to follow. Nevertheless, the process went rather smoothly and in a relaxed manner, though working at a feverish rhythm. Most of my decisions were not conscious ones, but as the process advanced, every new step gave an idea for the continuation. Even when I got stuck with ‘snakes’, my emotion was not anguished but rather obsessed and thrilled. It was a positive, necessary obsession.

Bolt (2010, 183–185) explains that some works of art “*breathe*” and have a “*life*”, qualities that depend on the processes that precede their becoming. Yet sometimes “*consciousness intervenes and representational thinking can take over from the logic of practice*” (Bolt 2010, 185). When a work of art is too carefully predefined before its emergence, the work itself has no influence on its becoming and as such is ‘just’ an image, a representation of something without being itself. For the works of art to be able to breathe, the processes that precede them have to breathe as well, they need to be and be felt alive (Bolt 2010, 183–185.) Hvitträsk was breathing with me, inside and outside of me, feeling alive. I no longer perceived it as some historical relic but instead as something real – as part of my very existence.

I found myself in Heidegger’s (in Bolt 2010, 107) description of the artist as a passageway. Hvitträsk, *Flame* and *Seagull* had inhabited me and through me the artworks emerged and became part of the present. Heidegger (ibid.) stressed that this artist-passageway destroyed itself in every process. I see it as the artist-passageway renewing itself each time when the process changes, when works of art have been brought to become a part of the present. The passageway is made unnecessary as it has been used. The artist also goes through a transmutation along with the works of art. I was not a passive passageway, but instead, I was actively taking part in the becoming of the work of art. In the process, I was filtering and deforming the essence of the sourced inspiration, in a way which I identify now as collaborative. I can’t claim the credit alone, as Bolt (2010, 40) declared, in practice “*the work [of art] can take on a life of its own*”.

Many factors acted as my collaborators during this process: there was the *place* (Hvitträsk), along with ‘other sources of inspiration’ (*Flame* and *Seagull*) as well as the ‘historical era’ (early 1900), which was demonstrated by the overall aesthetics, the history and the invisible presence of its creators and previous inhabitants. ‘Materials’ from clay to glass or textile and ‘equipment’ along with other ‘actors’ such as glassblowers or museum staff played all their part. My inquiry into shared authorship had become a collaborative effort where various actors did not need to actually ‘meet’: time and space were transcended, the interaction occurred, for

example, through visual traces (such as artworks) and their materialities (Kontturi 2018, 55–56, 80–81, 198). In this ever-widening understanding of the creative process I could even include the ‘stylistic features of the Art Nouveau era’ or the ‘stories of former residents of Hvitträsk’, as they took part in shaping my vision and experience.

In conclusion, “*creative practice is co-emergent practice*” (Bolt 2010, 84–85) where the artist represents only one player (see also Kontturi 2018, 55–56, 80–81, 198) In the “*autonomy of the process*” Kontturi (2018, 83–84), the artist functions as the initiator of the process, but later the process needs to take “*a course of its own*”, otherwise it could get “*stuck*”. As an artist, during my co-emergent practice, I was to let go of predetermined processes and the illusion of having absolute control, which led to a better-flowing practice and an unexpected outcome. I became even capable accepting my ceramic failures as an inevitable part of the process. Once the artworks were ready, it was their turn to be let go. Their interaction was to continue with the audience, as long as they kept on breathing (see also Duchamp 1987, 5–6).

#### 4.3.6 Coming home

Once the extensive making phase was over, and the artworks were set up for the exhibition in Hvitträsk, I got an odd sensation of home-coming. There was this interplay between the space and the works coloured by hints of Hvitträsk, *Flame*, *Seagull* and even the Art Nouveau style, but it was not possible to name which factor had affected which details in specific artworks. Just as in Hvitträsk, where it was hard to name the author of every detail or corner of the house, my artworks were some kind of mixtures or collaborations between me and my sources and the experience of ‘living the Hvitträsk’. Like listening to a choir, I could not clearly distinguish separate voices, but they fitted together. Somehow, they created an organic whole with Hvitträsk. The place and the works were both affected by each other. The works went through a bigger transformation, as they travelled from the studio to this place, becoming loaded by its specific atmosphere.

My works combined influences from the past and present, and yesterday and today came together. Regardless of some clear stylistic Art Nouveau influences in my artworks, they belonged to the present time, including the aesthetics and characteristics of today’s art world. Ceramics were clumsy and heavy with a sometimes-exaggerated hand-made feel, occasionally coloured in candy hues and decorated with bold metallic

lustres and the glass pieces followed the similar aesthetics. The rugs were similarly connected to the present day, with their furry surfaces which blended the colours in an expressionist manner. They resembled soft, heavy, and malleable paintings. My heart was at times longing for the past, but I could time-travel only metaphorically.

According to French-Russian expressionist Wassily Kandinsky<sup>98</sup> (1981, 19–20) artworks are mainly culturally affiliated products of their own time. Every cultural era produces its own style of artworks which cannot be replicated in another time. How could the feelings or the inner life of ancient Greeks be re-experienced or even imagined? Kandinsky assumed that if these old methods of working, such as the Greek technique of sculpting were to be replicated, the artworks which were produced in such ways would remain without a soul and a meaning, simply resembling an imitation – a copy of another time (ibid.) My inspiration process never felt like copying, more as if it were a game or a dance that I performed with the elements from the past. It allowed me to extend my habitual practice and broaden my thinking. My standpoint of looking at the past was rooted in the present day; I did not pretend to belong there, albeit I did see myself as a continuation of history, one particle in the thread, as the world that preceded me has shaped my experience of it.

This time was different from the beginning of my doctoral studies when I was working on the inspiration sourced from Raoul Dufy, and things had gone wrong. At that time I had tried to re-create artworks as if I were literally referring to Dufy's time. My stance had been that of an outsider, looking at something from a distance without knowing myself or understanding my own emotions. Experiencing Hvitträsk was not the same; it was a close and intimate encounter. I had the chance to slowly create my own impressions and digest the inspiration I sourced properly. My personal relationship with Hvitträsk surpassed my admiration for its past. Living Hvitträsk and being part of it, 'making it mine' became the key concept. Langer (1957, 25) compared works of art to projections of "*felt life*" (called such after Henry James), projections "*into spatial, temporal, and poetic structures*". Something must be lived and truly felt in order to become material for artworks; I needed to become fully imbued with Hvitträsk, and through this experience I projected my feelings into my practice. In Hvitträsk I had found a home for my creative practice, my 'house of inspiration'.

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98 Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944)

#### 4.3.7 From the author-centred concept of authorship towards a more open shared model and ‘togetherness’

Even though appropriation, collaborative working methods, borrowing and direct inspiration have long been accepted as part of the contemporary art world (although not always openly cited), inside the field of design this kind of ways of working still seem to face opposition, or at least raise eyebrows, and their justification is often questioned.<sup>99</sup> This is most probably linked to the traditional learning model, where the author is identified and rewarded for her input. If it becomes uncertain who the real author is, it might damage the entire system – how could we remunerate the deceased or other more-than-human actors? It seems oppressive that monetary issues should overrule the possibility of more open understanding of the authorship, which in my opinion could lead to new kind of appreciation of the linkages between the past and the present and the various factors of the creative process.

When I was working on the Hvitträsk case in the midst of my sources of inspiration, other possible unconscious influences and collaborators, such as glassblowers or potters, the concept of singular authorship seemed at the very least odd. It could, and perhaps should, be replaced by a broader idea of shared authorship, which might reveal the nature of the creative process more accurately.

During my inspirational research phase, instead of relying on printed or digital documentation, I spent considerable time in Hvitträsk, living my own present-time experience, staying open to what it *was* and what it ‘might have been’. This phase felt significantly inspiring while working on the artworks. I created a multi-voiced dialogue between my various sources and eras, and this kind of strange collaborative working system began to look like an interesting way of working. The discursive character made me more aware of what really influenced me, and I remained curious about possible new sources of inspiration that could enter the process. I noticed new linkages between the past, present, and possible futures, almost as if my understanding of the world had been widened. I came to wonder whether it could be that, as ideas travel in constant transformation through time, most ‘innovations’ are based on ‘innovations’ that preceded

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<sup>99</sup> Here, I am not solely referencing the multiple copy cases revealed on social media or discussed in court, but also the confusion that consumers visibly have in separating cultural appropriation, direct copying and inspiration.

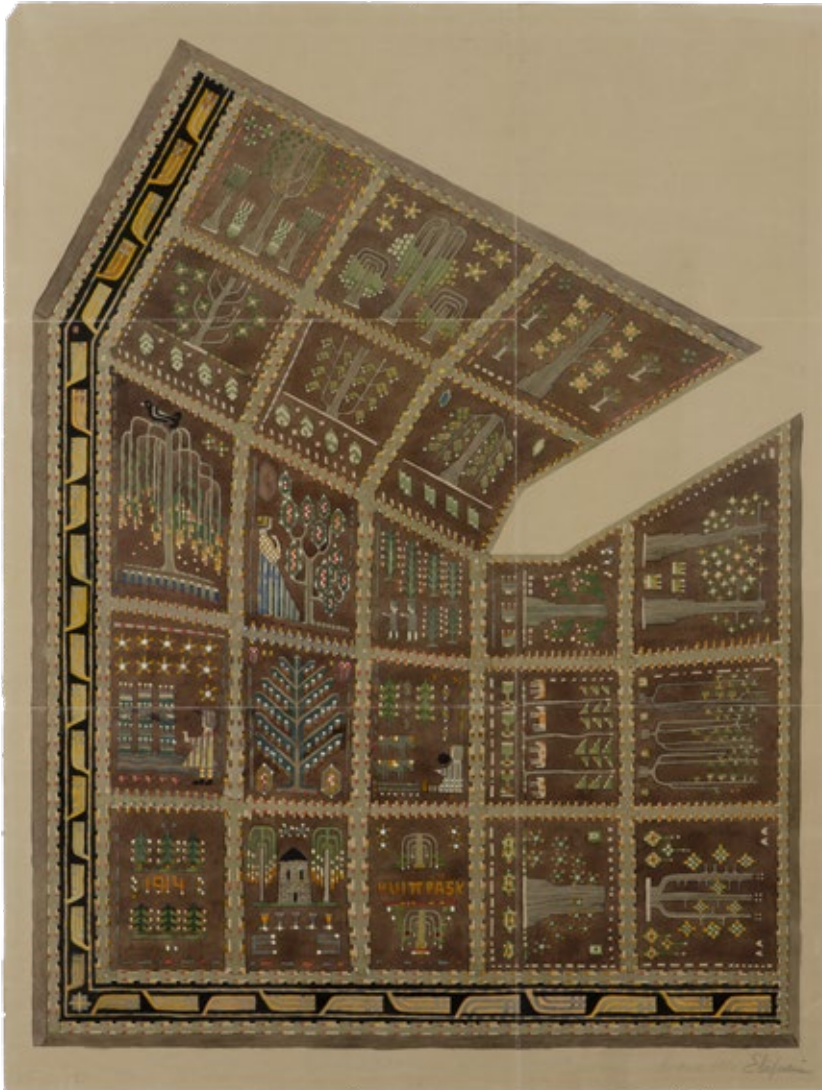
them? Newness never remains eternally new but might become important material for any future ‘newnesses’.

As Hvitträsk was a total work of art from its architecture to textiles (see example image 39), from its hand-painted wall decorations to its garden, it had led me to work on ceramics, glass and textiles, all at the same time. Many of my artworks were planned swiftly and then produced slowly, such as the rya rugs. During this time, I was supported by my sources of inspiration, but as the making phase advanced, I realized that I had floated far from my original sources, new associations had followed old ones and the creative process itself had become a strong and rather independent engine. When the process approached its end and the artworks were almost ready, I remembered my initial sources and became comforted by them. They motivated me to reach the end of the process, which is often for me the hardest moment – everything looks ready but there is still a lot to do, all kinds of details such as the exhibition logistics need planning and fixing, and last-minute alterations take place. This time, however, a certain ‘togetherness’ supported the process, as if I had been making the exhibition ‘with the place’, both of us working hard to achieve the best possible outcome. In the end, my artworks formed some kind of unity with Hvitträsk – much of the inspiration process had happened intuitively, yet the atmosphere and even the colours suited each other.

The concept of ‘togetherness’ might seem somewhat cheesy, but it was the word that seemed to describe my Hvitträsk case best. This process had been highly intuitive and a great deal of it had happened inside of me, and not so much in my conscious thinking. It was different from the previous cases. With Monet, I had been following a clear structure: reading about the artist and visiting the Orangerie Museum and the artists’ own garden in order to learn and experience as much about Monet as possible. While investigating Warhol, I had drowned myself in books about the artist and related topics, such as copying, authorship or appropriation. I had spent weeks in libraries just reading. Hvitträsk had no words; the inspiration process was all about living the experience of the present ‘inside the source of inspiration’. Instead of reading and writing, I had spent my exploration phase drawing the rooms of Hvitträsk, trying to get hold of the place somehow. As a result, the inspiration I gained was not related to written information or conscious thinking, it was about internalized impressions and freshly made memories. I had felt protected throughout the process by the sensation of not being alone. It is challenging to dress this experience in words as it was not happening with words but instead unconsciously. Nevertheless, I managed to interpret it through my material artworks.



- 39 Eliel Saarinen designed the *Fairytale [Satu]rya rug* for Hvitträsk's dining area, drawing, detail (1914). Image: the Museum of Finnish Architecture.









# 5

## General Discussion

# 5 General Discussion

This artistic research adds my voice to the discussion on attempts to grasp more profoundly how an artist or designer conducts her creative process: on which ground it is built and by which kind of forces it is driven. Of particular interest has been understanding the role of sources of inspiration as the starting point of the creative process. Via three case studies, this study has managed to make partly visible the process of working with sources of inspiration. It offers an in-depth view into the mind of the practitioner and explains the interaction between the practitioner and the source(s) of inspiration.

This study discusses the various phenomena related to the ‘concept of inspiration’ and ‘working with sources of inspiration’. Together, the theoretical and practical part of this study bring new information which will, I hope, consequently offer both practical and theoretical implications for art and design education, artistic practice and research.

## 5.1 The importance of being aware of and sharing sources of inspiration

Being aware of the sources of inspiration(s) can sound a confusing concept for those who may fear that the quasi-magical, other-worldly presence of the inspiration could in some mysterious ways break or disappear when tackled as a part of the practitioner's everyday life. Or perhaps think that 'true' inspiration should not be chosen in a conscious manner but instead considered a state that should be passively and patiently awaited. Nevertheless, this study shows that being fully aware of the inspiration process does not hinder its impact but makes it more satisfying – an interplay of control and surprises. Similarly, actively choosing the sources of inspiration, like a painter who is looking for the perfect spot to place her canvas before starting to paint, often leads to a fruitful outcome.

One way of sharing inspiration happens between peers, which strengthens their relations and ultimately reinforces the artist's position. This practice has a long history. For example, in the early 19th century, artists eagerly formed artistic groups such as the 'Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood',<sup>100</sup> or 'Barbus' and 'Primitifs' (Heinich 1996b, 47). At the time there was a great need for such groupings,<sup>101</sup> as the system of art education had been suppressed and the academies were open only for rare members of bourgeoisie. Since then, the system of groups<sup>102</sup> has continued to develop

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**100** A group of English artists formed in 1848.

**101** In the absence of an educational system, these artist groups were in general formed in cafes, which was the perfect place for meetings. For the participating artists, establishing groups was a way to step away from solitude and an attempt to increase protection for artists' status in the form of, for instance, unions dedicated to arts and artists' rights (Heinich 1996b, 46–48).

**102** Obviously not everybody felt comfortable labelled under a certain group, and some artists created their own, such as Kasimir Malevich with his Suprematism. Soon, some of his fellow artists joined him (Fauchereau 1992, 21).



and become the basis for the modern artistic system (ibid., 46–48.). The way their (the artists’) art and even their overall artistic qualities became understood by the audience was related to their close peers, common statements, and manifestos which could be considered shared sources of inspiration. These groups were defined by what inspired them as individuals – and as a group.

In addition to sharing inspirational interests, the members of artistic groups<sup>103</sup> were inevitably influenced and inspired by each other. Together, for example, members of certain groups resisted common values and frustration like the Dadaists<sup>104</sup> (Hautamäki 2003 39) or shared similar principles, such as the Impressionists,<sup>105</sup> painting ‘real subjects’ mainly outside (Honour & Fleming 1992, 603). There were group exhibitions such as the *Salon des Refusés* in 1863, which brought together a number of future Impressionists (Honour & Fleming 1992, 601). In some cases, the artists that belonged to the same group even worked collaboratively, such as the new realists Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely (Riding 2006). These common characteristics and shared practice delivered spectators a shared ‘message’ that helped them to grasp the purpose and meaning of this and that ‘art’, and how these artists should be situated in their respective field(s).

Being aware of and sharing information about sources of inspiration, which are part of practitioners’ creative processes, can reduce the risk of being misjudged for copying or, even worse, plagiarism. Theory chapter 2.5 and the Warhol case study highlighted more profoundly the complex relations between inspiration and copying, imitation and authenticity. These findings help to understand the nature of the inspiration processes, one that can be misunderstood, including as it does methods such as appropriation and the reproduction of images. Careful documentation of the making processes should always be included as a part of the creative practice, as it can serve as a ‘birth certificate’ for the artwork (see also Larros 2014).

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- 103** This system of groups benefitted many: for example, well-known artists attracted attention and the more unknown (and often younger) artists gained recognition more rapidly. Simultaneously, the presence of youth and the novelty of younger makers enabled those more established to remain topical and renew their image.
- 104** Dadaists (formed in 1916 in Zurich) for instance, shared a common feeling of anger and “*nothing is nothing*” attitude. They aimed at refusing and surpassing art (Hautamäki 2003, 39).
- 105** The Impressionists also aimed at painting with a new technique using variable, disconnected brushstrokes (Honour & Fleming 1992, 603).

Sharing becomes a concept which expands into various layers of this study. When multiple factors, such as sources of inspiration and other actors become part of the creative process, the idea of a singular authorship begins to feel misplaced. The third case study (*Flame, Seagull* and *Hvitträsk*) demonstrated the concept of ‘shared authorship’, a more collaborative view of the ideation and materialization of the creative processes. If a broader understanding of the relations between things becomes internalized, the old-fashioned need for the singular authorship fades. These inevitable connections between past and present, between makers, phenomena and artefacts make the wide protection for singular authorship in the field of art and design less necessary – or at least the concept could be rethought and renewed in the new light supported by the findings of this study.

## 5.2 Practical Implications

I suggest that the practical implications of this study would benefit art and design education, practice and research. Laamanen and Seitamaa-Hakkarainen have already made a great contribution to this (see, for example, Laamanen 2016, Laamanen & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen 2008), while this study presents the perspective of the practitioner herself in greater detail. Previously, practice-led research conducted by practitioners has investigated the characteristics of the creative process in-depth (for example, see Mäkelä 2003; Kosonen 2018). The role of the inspiration sources presents yet another important element to add to the discussion related to creative practice.

### 5.2.1 Inspiration in education

Tarja-Kaarina Laamanen (2016, 55) noted in her dissertation *Generating and transforming representations in design ideation* that early phases of the creative process (i.e. ideation) have not been widely researched in her specific area of interest, craft research and education. She suggests including ‘learning ideation’ more profoundly as part of craft education (ibid., for example, 63–66). The same need exists for art and design studies. Even though learning ‘design research’ is included as a part of several courses in Aalto University’s Department of Design, where I occasionally teach, a more profound understanding of the topic is required. In my experience, many students face confusion in relation to such concepts as inspiration, appropriation, and originality. This study elucidates these concepts, and these findings could well be useful as part of education. It would clarify to students what can be done and in which ways, and further help them to ‘develop their individual thinking’ on the matter.

- 40 **In *Inspiration (Crépuscule d'atelier)* (1896) Akseli Gallen-Kallela has illustrated inspiration as some kind of rays of light, or mysterious wavy rays arriving from somewhere above to enlighten the tired artist. 17.3 × 10 cm, woodcut, Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum. Image: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Pakarinen.**



The concept of inspiration has often been considered to be something abstract and invisible or even a gift given at birth to especially talented individuals, and therefore difficult to communicate in exact terms or taught (Laamanen 2016, 2). The idea of this innate talent has been widely acknowledged, meaning that an artist who is considered to be ‘original enough’ and has ‘artistic genius’ does not need to resort to external inspiration as everything is already there, inside this genius mind (Moffitt 2005, 14–16, 189–190). Even if the existence of an external source of inspiration is accepted, their characteristics remain unknown and miracle-like. How does a practitioner find inspiration and how is it processed? The inspirational ‘data base’ seems to be mysteriously placed somewhere inside the creative mind without a clear shape or exact function, inspiration being part of the realm of imagination (see also Laamanen 2016, 8). ‘Mystery’ and ‘miracle’ are persistent qualities of inspiration (see image 40).

These unresolved and vague ideas about inspiration also seem to persist in design education. Back in 2015, soon after I had presented my

Master's thesis dealing with inspiration, I received a call from the Aalto University's Department of Design. A group of evaluators had been inspecting Bachelor's level theses that dealt with sources of inspiration as a basis of the design work and one of the evaluators had raised a question about the legitimacy of this work, asking if the student should not generate the ideas 'herself' instead of sourcing external inspiration. Based on my Master's thesis, I was asked to explain how sources of inspiration can be used as part of the creative process, without reducing or removing the originality of the maker. Unfortunately, I am not convinced that I knew how to provide the right arguments. A year later, I was again asked advice, when some students in the textile course had used images found on the internet as part of their textile patterns, including recognizable facial images, which is always problematic. Although this does not exclude the use of ready-made images as part of the design or an artefact, students need to gain a clear understanding what can be done and what not. Inspiration is not about copying but instead a multitude of other issues, as discussed in this study.

Therefore, I suggest that this compiled theory of inspiration that is greatly entangled with my own artistic explorations could be useful as a part of art and design pedagogy, when creative processes are taught and students' works are evaluated. The skilful use of sources of inspiration adds value to the creative work and shows the knowledge and skills of the student. Similarly, a broad knowledge of history and the contemporary aspect of disciplines should be provided to students as inspiration cannot be offered 'ready-made' but should arise from the student's own personal interests. The more consciously the external sources of inspiration are used as part of the creative processes, the more accustomed to dealing and working with the sources the students become. In addition, in order for the students (and their teachers) to be able to evaluate the outcome(s) of their processes, broad general knowledge related to their own (and neighbouring) fields seems necessary to help in perceiving multiple relations around the sources of inspiration.

A very practical example of working with a source of inspiration was demonstrated in the Monet case study. Such examples could help students to better understand their own practice when mirrored with some (here, art historical) examples. For instance, the fact that Claude Monet spent over a decade in painting the artworks that are presented in Orangerie Museum (Denizeau 2012, 28–29) could give the students new ideas concerning how they can process learning and the time some processes demand. Some could work with only a few deeply internalized sources of inspiration during their entire career. Using external sources of



inspiration enables students to reflect and understand their own practice in relation to other makers and phenomena while situating themselves in the field of art and design.

### **5.2.2 Inspiration and creative practice**

Above, I have been talking about the pedagogical implications, but in a similar manner this ‘inspiration theory’ can offer tools for professionals to approach their own practice from a new angle. When I started this research, I was desperately looking for other peers who would tackle similar issues. I found relatively little literature on the topic of inspiration created by practitioners themselves. To be able to reflect myself as an artist, my artworks, themes, and ways of working with other artists is vital. It helps me to situate myself better in the field and grow as a practitioner. Creative practice is my paramount area of interest, and I hope to be able to read a growing amount of literature generated by practitioners themselves dealing with creative processes and sources of inspiration.

Increased knowledge and awareness about sources of inspiration could possibly relieve practitioners of the fear that they are losing their own artistic voice if they include external sources of inspiration in their process. During creative practice, sources of inspiration become processed, and consequently external sources of inspiration can shift into internal ones. The fact remains that it is still necessary to stay open about the sources that have been involved and cite them consequently. Even practitioners who claim not to use any external sources in their practice could benefit from understanding more broadly that no process exists on its own and their work inevitably has connections with the outer world.

Although this study has attempted to make inspiration visible, it does not offer a unified model of how to work with sources of inspiration. Every practitioner and creative process is different and so is each collaboration with the sources of inspiration. This dialogue-like process includes two or more participants who shape the process and change its course through their common discursive dynamics. Further, by opening up my own process and analysing the impact of the sources of inspiration, I believe that the thinking I have developed in the process could well benefit other makers – for example, if they come across a situation where they need to justify the way they have handled inspiration sources or develop their practice in novel directions.

Practice becomes supported by the sources of inspiration. A source of inspiration is not an answer, it does not clearly illustrate the outcome of the open-ended creative process, but it accompanies the process and keeps it company, shaping a 'home' of some sort for the practice. Sources of inspiration help to build protective walls around the process, and thus construct a place where creative – often fragile – process can be safely placed. Through this development, the process feels less insecure and gains in potential as the possible solutions begin to emerge.

### **5.2.3 Inspiration and research**

This study has managed to create a wider understanding and draw new, more concrete outlines of the concept of inspiration and the role of sources of inspiration in the creative process. This inside view enables researchers to approach and better understand practitioners' experiences while working with sources of inspiration. There is no longer a need to place 'inspiration' in the mystical box or be afraid of touching a concept which could not be understood also from the 'outside'.

There exist various ways of working with inspiration, and this study reveals some possible ones, such as the understanding that inspiration does not only participate in the beginning of the ideation phase but takes part in a more holistic way in the entire creative process. The Monet case revealed how the sources of inspiration travel from the beginning to the final artworks, and how strong relationship between practitioner and the source leads to more satisfactory results. Different sources inevitably lead to different processes.

Through the Warhol-case, this study provided material for understanding the limits between copying and inspiration, how appropriation is sometimes necessary for the artistic idea to function and that if cited openly, the sources are rarely unfairly treated in the process.

The Hvitträsk case displayed multiple factors that inevitably influence the creative process from initial sources of inspiration to atmosphere, history, and surrounding world along with many collaborative processes that are included in the artistic practice and making of the exhibitions. This underlines an understanding of inspiration as a more active participant of the process, as one of the 'active' actors that shapes the creative process and its outcome. It makes the concept of shared authorship relevant.

## 5.3 Reflections on the study

My goal was to uncover the role of source(s) of inspiration in my own practice and gain a proper insight into the concepts of inspiration and sources of inspiration. Along the way, I sought to gather information and build a theory that could be used when sources of inspiration were discussed and researched. I wanted to make sense of this abstract concept and offer tools for later research. The findings of this study broaden the concrete understanding on the topic – inspiration and the sources of inspiration and are useful for other artists when they are either working with or looking for inspiration or researchers are seeking to understand the mind of a practitioner who collaborates with sources of inspiration.

### 5.3.1 From preconceived ideas to new openings

At the beginning of the research, having already dealt with a similar theme in my master thesis back in 2015, I thought that I was well equipped to tackle this topic and rushed into artistic exploration. It was only after the first exhibition (*The House of Play and Rain*, 2017) that I understood that this was not the case – I was not ‘open’ enough for the variety of unpredictable processes and outcomes, nor open enough to meet my source(s) of inspiration on common ground without preconceptions. Bolt (2010, 185) emphasizes that the artist should not only “*set the world before her/ him as an object*” but also become (according to Heideggerian term) a “*passageway*”.

*“In the creative act, the artist no longer sets the world before her/ him as an object, but rather allows a total openness to the Being of art, that is the ‘work’ of art”* (Bolt 2010, 186).

Preconceived ideas can prevent one from being present at the moment of the happening of the 'art' and hinder the interaction between the practitioner and the source of inspiration.

The experience of my first exhibition challenged me to question more the relationship between me and my selected source(s) of inspiration (case I: Monet), which ultimately led to understanding inspiration as being unique every time, an individual experience: no one source of inspiration and the related working process resembled another. The interaction and dynamics between the two generated the starting point of the creative process, not the source of inspiration alone. I needed to accept the discursive nature and subsequent unpredictability of the process.

Another preconceived idea when starting my artistic research path was that artistic practice needed to be somehow protected from research; therefore, I decided to place the research only second. This led to my being reluctant to use systematic methods such as autoethnography. I was afraid that if, for example, I had to take a photo or make notes at regular intervals, my process would destabilize. Other practitioners seemed to share similar problems as, for instance, Laamanen's (2016, 61–62) studies on professional designers showed that it was difficult for some of them to interrupt their creative flow in order to fill in the questionnaire which was part of her research. This missing data ended up causing a sample bias affecting the overall data (ibid.). Similarly, I was scared of losing my artistic flow and that my artistic qualities would in some way lessen. Later, when I had already worked on my research for a few years, I noticed that my research practice had started to inform my artistic practice. This was not a conscious choice, nor did it transpire to be an unfortunate one.

I tried to analyse why and when the research began to have an impact on my artistic practice, and when these two began interacting. I deduced that it must have been following the unsatisfactory conclusions drawn from my first exhibition (*The House of Play and Rain*, 2017). Even if I had been rather content with the quality of the artworks presented in that exhibition, their making process had caused me feeling of being lost and confused. Confusion itself is not only negative, sometimes leading to eureka-moments and new, unexpected results, yet, this time it felt unbalancing, like swimming in water next to the boat, when I was supposed to be *on* the boat. On several occasions, I felt that I was too 'literal' with my sources of inspiration – lacking intuition and flow. My sources felt external and distanced, and I felt incapable of making them somehow 'mine', a vital part of my process. I became restricted by them. This led to changes in my subsequent combined art and research practice, and I decided to

concentrate on something clearly defined: the 'relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration'. From this moment onwards, research started to affect my practice, I had stopped insisting. I surrendered to sources of inspiration and was no longer trying to protect my artistic practice from external actors.

Artistic practice and research practice in some ways ceased to be separate, and even if they sometimes still seemed to be two different sides of the coin (myself), they often became inseparable. I began to take research as something equally creative, a continuation of my creative practice. I started to think that, for example, 'selecting sources of inspiration' was research (and creative practice), as well as finding out of the history of this inspiration. I managed to place these findings in relation to my material practice, seeing my own practice from new angles. Finding new sources of inspiration led to new openings and challenged my thinking every time. One benefit of consciously working with sources of inspiration was that – when I mastered the system – it prevented fixation, becoming stuck in familiar patterns of practice and preconceived ideas. Instead, I found myself challenged to renew the ways that I did my combined art and research practice.

The fact that the new data that I produced was based on my own individual artistic explorations, positioned my findings in a very subjective light. At the beginning, as I was alone, I let my preconceived ideas blind my process; I had no experience of reflecting on my own actions. If I had, for example, been able to ask other artists to work with similar themes as I did, we would have been able to compare our processes and outcomes which would possibly have offered a wider view on the changing roles of sources of inspiration. Eye-opening moments and a lot of learning from each other could have taken place. Nevertheless, as the topic of sources of inspiration appeared vast and I included three exhibitions in my research, I had no opportunities to widen the scope of my research by including more participants and methods. The fact that I was able to only concentrate on my own practice enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of what the role of sources of inspiration was for me, and I finally let go of at least some of my previous fixations.

### **5.3.2 Hidden mysteries**

When I tried to find a suitable theory for the basis of my research, I did not manage to find a clear direction. At the beginning, I had a hard time



finding any academic research about inspiration or sources of inspiration. Similarly, when I was researching other (contemporary or historical) practitioners about how they dealt with sources of inspiration, the result was almost as poor. I was certain that many practitioners included sources of inspiration in their practice, but somehow this information was hidden. I decided to ask my fellow artists about their thoughts. To my surprise, either they said they did not use any, or that they did not want to reveal their sources as if the related to on-going or future processes would have been too fragile to be put into words. I could almost sense a superstition that if these unfinished phases, hidden ideas, and sources were unfolded, then the processes would never materialize. Also, I could sense an anxiety that if the ideas concerning the origin of the artwork were exposed, art's profound essence and mysterious qualities could be transformed into something banal.

I can understand mystery as an important element of an artwork, as art is capable of revealing things that can be hard or impossible to put into words, art can 'move' its audience and transport one away from the everyday, even if for just a brief moment. Maybe 'art' has not always been marked with quasi-magical qualities, but according to Heinich (2016, 31–33) the birth of art academies dedicated to painting and sculpture<sup>106</sup> brought a fundamental change. Art education presented an extremely exclusive system, whereby students were selected based on their artistic talent. Simultaneously the concept of "*closed studios*" was launched. It has been thought that this academic elite of artists wanted to differentiate themselves from craftsmen, who sold their products on the street in their "*boutiques*", where products were openly displayed and could be seen by anyone. Creative processes began to take place hidden inside these closed studios, from where the finished artworks popped out as if by magic. They were presented only on rare occasions, for instance during the "*Salons*" of painting (ibid.). This mysteriousness and the opaque processes still belong to the art world, even if a desire for change (in the form of transparency) has been more widely noticeable at the present time.

This demand for transparency seems to be typical of our digital era. There is an increasing pressure to expose the origins of the creative processes. Even if I am revealing many aspects of my process and sources of inspiration, I am not ready to undress all the mysteries. I believe part

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**106** Such academies were founded in Italy during the 16th century and in France in the 17th century. (Heinich 1996b, 20–23.)

of the art worlds' charm is due to this exclusiveness and mystification. If I were to be asked, I would rather work inside a closed studio than behind a glass window. I have experience of both. I believe the fragility of the creative process is better protected when hidden inside opaque walls. But not everything needs to be hidden; I do not believe revealing certain parts of the creative processes could usurp their magic. Is 'life' less miraculous if we know how it is initiated? Or is art less 'art' if it is discussed in a more detailed manner? Inspiration for me is part of art's big mystery, and it cannot be taken away even if it is discussed and partly exposed. The peculiar, mutable collaboration between a source and the practitioner remains mysterious, as does the profound essence of the art itself.

### 5.3.3 Translating or transpositioning inspiration

The term 'translation' originates from language, but in art the language can be also visual or musical, not necessarily written words; translation happens in the medium, something is interpreted and transformed into something else (Elo 2007, 150–152). In visual art, this can be seen as an attempt to interpret and translate something in the artwork; words can be translated into images and vice versa, thinking can produce images and images can be thought of as thinking (Kella 2014, 23).

In relation to my practice, I could think of the way that sources are interpreted through me and my practice, and how these found ideas, shapes, colours, or meanings become translated and re-interpreted in my artworks. How did inspiration from Monet mutate into rya rugs, and in what way did the *Flame* rya rug's 'flames' convert into snakes climbing my ceramic vases, and how were the colours of Warhol's *Little Electric Chair* silkscreen series materialized in my glass series? Is it even possible to trace a process of translation, which happens mainly in the domain of intuition and the act of art making? I wonder if some of Monet's essence is truly embedded in my work of art as a material part of it, or is it just poetically there as product of my imaginative process?

Artist-researcher Mika Elo (2018, 282) writes that "*In many Romance languages, the presence of the Latin 'trans-' in the vocabularies of conversion of sense marks the process of moving from one domain to another: 'translation, transmission, transmutation, transduction, transference, transposition'*". Language can be used as a metaphor to understand how the translation happens. Benjamin understood language in broader sense than merely spoken or written words (ibid., 286–287), and in like manner I could define art as a



41 **Translating Monet's language required multiple steps, such as retracing my initially scratched sketch onto the rug base fabric for hand-tufting.** Photo: author (2017).

language, or art could be several languages at a time; at least its language has significantly evolved through time and its ancient language might feel rather disconnected from its contemporary forms.

The language of art is composed of various aspects (comparable to words) and their combinations (as phrases), such as techniques, materials, and the artists themselves. Bigger entities become 'stories', artistic movements and styles. These words, phrases and stories could be transpositioned into new contexts or translated into new forms, even new languages if we now assume that art cannot be just one language. The idea of language creates an impression that something *is already there*, that as a writer I have an alphabet, a keyboard – tools, means, and methods to work with although what happens next cannot be dictated from the outside. Which words, musical notes or visual aspects I choose to transposition or translate depends upon my personal preferences, and so does what I decide to

exclude. There is no ‘truth’, nor some kind of traceable characteristic<sup>107</sup> left by my original source(s) of inspiration that could be recognized in my works. The interesting question then is, where did my sources’ language come from? What I sourced from Monet, he could already have sourced from somewhere else and translated into his own practice. There could be an entire thread of previous translations.

I would like to return to reflect upon the rya rug(s) inspired by Monet’s garden and his paintings in Orangerie. I took the highly appreciated art form of painting and transformed it into craft, historically often produced by women (Svinhufvud 2009, 254–255). I translated my subject, the lush vegetation, with little touches, using suffocatingly warm mohair. Once brushed open, the flowers and other plants lost their figurative shapes and figures. I decomposed Monet’s paintings and his garden, eternal summer, and weeping willows. It was like I was translating Monet’s French into my Finnish, the content remained close to the original, but the shape was totally new (see image 41).

Somebody who came only across my ‘translation’, my final output, might not recognize Monet’s language behind it, but I, as the translator, would know Monet’s impact on the process. While translating his language, I was obliged to make many changes as the translation had to ‘function’, and it had to be ‘great’ as I was the one responsible for these artworks. I needed to feel proud of ‘our’ work. So, I could not only slavishly follow Monet’s example and exact words – I had to make the translation functional also in ‘my language’. In this visual, artistic translation, I followed different rules to those I would have done had I really been translating a written text. I had more freedom, and through the process of translation I became something that could be called the ‘main’ author. I could ask myself if there was even the necessity to reveal Monet’s influence to the viewer. By revealing his name, did I truly want to do justice to my source, or just to add value to my own process by placing a famous artist’s name alongside mine? *Monet and me, me and Monet*. Through translation, I became a little bit him, and he became a little bit me.

Bolt (2010, 170–171, 173) defines matter as an active partaker in the creative process, a “scribe” becoming language, which can inscribe itself in the co-emergence of the work of art. She also extends her understanding of matter to contain the bodily performativity of the artist, whose body

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**107** Except in the direct cases of appropriation, such as taking Warhol’s *Flowers* as the basis of my rya rugs.

also becomes a language, one which writes and at the same time is ‘written’ (ibid.). Bolt’s understanding of ‘matter’ could be expanded in my research to contain the sources of inspiration. These sources ‘wrote’ themselves as matter into my process, became ‘written’ by my bodily actions, and filtered through my emotions. Via our shared practice, the works of art became materialized. The language of the sources was mixed with my own (or borrowed) previous languages, eventually translated into final artworks.

### 5.3.4 Thoughts on collaboration

Another important underlying narrative in this study is that of the collaboration.

There can hardly be artistic processes which do not include at least some kind of collaborative elements (see, for example, image 42). As Kontturi (2018, 19) describes, the concept of collaboration can be widened to include various actors, such as materials, light, or bodily movements. In my case, this could also include influence of my sources of inspiration and the ever-lingering sensation of the past that they brought with them. The discursive character of collaborative ways of working created unexpected solutions because the artworks were generated ‘together’ with multiple actors in the process.<sup>108</sup>

Heidegger’s example of the emergence of a silver chalice highlights the co-responsibility and “*indebtedness*” between several factors: 1) ‘material’ (silver), 2) the ‘shape’ (chalice), and 3) the idea of “*chaliceness*”<sup>109</sup> – the appearance of other sacred vessels (Heidegger in Bolt, 74–75). Lastly, Heidegger mentions 4) the artist-silversmith, who is partly responsible for the end result, yet the artist-silversmith represents only one factor that takes part in the process (ibid.).

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**108** This way of working ‘together’ is not a novelty in itself, for example ceramicists often emphasize the meaning and character of their material, and the topic has previously been researched (see, for example, Groth 2020 or Mäkelä 2016). As I had already investigated the sources of inspiration in my Thesis (*Inspiraation arkeologia* [Archeology of an Inspiration] 2015), I had long been sensitive to this topic. Nevertheless, only through this research did I begin to realize how many different actors affect the creative process, what my relation to them could be, and what my personal role in the creative process was.

**109** This idea of ‘being indebted to *chaliceness*’ reminded me of the principles of intertextuality, where text is related to the previous literary tradition, the contemporary literature and the on-going discussion around literature (Makkonen 2006, 24–25).





**42** Akseli Gallen-Kallela painting side by side with 4 assistants in the Jusélius Mausoleum in Pori, 1903. Image: Satakunta Museum/ John Englund (1903).

Following Heidegger, Bolt (2010, 162) further develops the idea of the emergence of the work of art and the understanding of ‘matter’. Bolt insists on the “*productive materiality in the work of art*”, and for her matter “*does not only include materiality of the medium, but also includes the matter of the artist in graphic performativity and the matter of the thing itself*” (ibid.). Bolt stresses that this “*methektic performativity*”<sup>110</sup> is necessary for the ‘co-emergence’ of the artwork. Whilst I add the sources of inspiration to these ingredients, the role of the practitioner seems to be reduced even further.

*“Creative practice can be conceived of as a performance in which linkages are constantly being made and remade. As one of the actors, the artist becomes a force of intensity involved in the action. The other actors similarly become forces and intensities. Whilst each has the same praxiological status, each has its own character and contribution to make. Thus creative practice is a co-emergent practice.”* (Bolt 2010, 84–85.)

Curiously, Heidegger (in Bolt 2010, 74–75) places the matter (silver) as the first attribute in the emergence of the work of art. In understanding of matter, Bolt (ibid., 162) emphasizes the interaction between its various actors: the primary material such as paint or clay, “*the matter of the artist in a graphic performativity*” and the outcome itself. Along with my insertion of sources of inspiration as part of the ‘matter’, the origin of the work of art becomes more and more complex and less artist-derived. This revolves around the idea of the creative process and raises the question of the artist’s role. What if the artist was not the initiator of the process, but instead it was actually the source(s) of inspiration? For instance, it could be considered that ‘Monet’ as an art historical phenomenon, and as a possible source (of inspiration), was already existing in order for somebody to enter into an interaction with *it* and as a consequence ‘become inspired’. The question about the identity of the inspired (ultimately ‘signing’) artist might become equally relevant as the identity of the source.

When I start to think of all possible factors that influence the process and the outcome, I become almost out of breath. For instance, Heidegger did not include the miners who sourced the silver in his theory. They also influenced the emergence of the silver chalice, and maybe they should be somehow credited in the process which led to the outcome. Through my

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**110** *Methexis* according to Carter (in Bolt 2010, 125) means a “*non-representational principle that involves an act of concurrent actual production*”.

second and third case studies (Warhol and Hvitträsk), I became aware of the collaborative aspect of the creative processes, which led me to consider the possibility of shared authorship. For instance, in the Warhol case, without the help of lumberjack(s), I would not have been able to produce the glass moulds. Ultimately, the Hvitträsk case, with its multiple physical or imaginative collaborations from museum staff to artisans of the past, made the concept of singular authorship seem unnecessary. Overall, I felt responsibility for the process as a whole, but it felt more like a privilege than a pressure. Collaborative ingredients and letting the concept of singular authorship slowly fade away brought many positive aspects to my creative, everyday practice.

With this idea of ‘shared authorship’ I am trying to introduce a certain kind of way of thinking about contemporary and historical creative processes and their outcome: A notion of being aware of the multiple actors that enter the scene of artistic practice and production. Furthermore, somewhere in the background of my mind there is a need also to question the rightfulness of the remuneration system: in some cases, the person who has the ‘idea’ is paid more than the craftsman who ‘does’ the work. For example, when we are talking about the hand-produced crafts, the artisan makes several decisions during the process that greatly affect the outcome. Many of these choices can naturally be discussed with the ‘author of the idea’, but some might happen so unconsciously, in relation to artisans personal ‘hand-writing’, that they cannot be entirely traced. Luckily today, there are several instances<sup>111</sup> that equally celebrate the master artisans and the artists. This pondering could advance much further, such as thinking about current factories, which might include artificial intelligence, as living entities that are no longer under a control of one single person or humans, but that would be a topic for another dissertation.

### 5.3.5 Role of the houses

The concept of houses runs through this study, it is present in the introduction, in the names of the exhibitions and in the experience of Hvitträsk-

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111 For example, I could cite Michelangelo Foundation (<https://www.michelangelo-foundation.org/>) or the Loewe Craft Prize by Loewe Foundation (<https://craft-prize.loewe.com/>).

case. It has become almost like a method for this research, in addition to 'exhibition making'.

My 'house' is ultimately 'a house of inspiration' – a loosely drawn amoeba-like-construction, which has no fixed walls, no clear structure – it shapes itself according to the needs of each process. Its role is to give structure to the abstractness of the creative practice, create a safe frame with a set of case-specific rules and varying 'guests' or 'friends' – the sources of inspiration.

From the beginning I had this idea of a 'house', but I could not quite understand where it came from, what it meant and how to talk about it. Instead, I was aware from early on of how it functioned. It started to take shape when I found suitable sources of inspiration, at that moment the house would be only a faint shadow, a reflection somewhere in the furthest corner of my thinking. Slowly, as the process began to take shape, so did the house. When walls started to rise and the garden grow, my process curled inside like a cat in a warm shelter. There, it was protected from outside gaze, most of the time just shared between myself and my silent collaborators. The process found strength from this setting that was created for the specific purpose each time. This structure, even if imaginary, supported my otherwise possibly frail creative process. Inside the house I was accepted, inside the house I was part of it. The house was part of the process and part of the inspiration itself; it helped to structure the creative process and encouraged its accomplishment.

The house as a method for advancing through this research became one of the most enjoyable and practical findings. A structure that could benefit other practitioners as well when they are planning and conducting creative processes. Similarly, this 'house thinking' can help researchers in understanding the possible structures of their creative processes.

## 5.4 Updating inspiration and its role in the creative process

This study has brought new, more exact tools to work with and talk about the concept of inspiration and more precisely ‘the sources of inspiration’. The idea of mystically arriving otherworldly inspiration has faded as this study has clarified how the practitioner can actively seek suitable sources according to her needs.

The sources are there, helping the practitioner to build her ‘house of inspiration’, the imaginary universe which inhabits the creative process and gives it its shape. Even though an imaginary constellation, it comes with very concrete tools that enable the creative process to take shape, provide direction, and channel various, sometimes contradictory, creative endeavours.

There are some guidelines to follow when working with sources of inspiration. First of all, enough information should be gathered, preferably in various ways, such as books, visiting places and analysing possible artworks. This information allows not only a smoother practice to be conducted, but the artist to become more attached to the chosen sources, being able to incorporate them more tightly into the practitioner’s own creative expression(s) and understand more widely the linkages between various concepts such as eras, phenomena, materials, and makers. This acquiring of information also provides a basis for responsible and balanced collaboration between makers and their sources.

The sources of inspiration should be always cited. This gives more value to the artworks when they can be linked into the thread of various connections; this does not fade away magicality, as artworks will continue to also communicate directly without words and trigger emotions.

There is no recipe for how to work with sources of inspiration – they act on different levels and ways in the creative process. For example: 1) the inspiration sourced from Monet was rather emotional, supporting



the process in a 'walking along method'; Warhol gave 2) literal material (*Flowers*) and a method (copying) to my process and made me critically ponder the consequences of my creative processes and their outcome; 3) whereas during *Hvitträsk* I was 'living with my sources' and became inhabited by them which finally let my process flow. In this co-habitation, various factors began to react naturally towards each other. What is certain is that the further I continue my creative practice with the sources of inspiration, the more new ways to work with them I will discover. Each experience casts its shadow on the next.

Understanding the role of sources of inspiration as a concrete part of the creative process widens the entire understanding of the process – it stretches backwards and draws a picture of a process that starts well before the practitioner even enters the studio. The process in some ways can even already be there before the practitioner becomes consciously aware of it, as the connections that the practitioner encounters are slowly working their way into her creative processes, which are made 'together with the world'. Not all connections are even visible for the practitioner who conducts the process, but through the findings of this study, even those connections can be discussed and analysed.

## 5.5 Recommendations for further research

This study has limitations, and not least because it focuses only on the point of view and practice of one practitioner. It would be interesting to research sources of inspiration among several practitioners: for example, each could choose the same sources, and later the process and the outcome could be evaluated. This kind of research would certainly lead to an interesting artistic exchange between the makers and possibly new artistic groupings could be born from this kind of development. The next phase, for example, could be inviting other researchers from the fields of art and design education and history or sociology to join in the research process, and at the end the internal point of view of the process (practitioners) and external point of view (researchers) could be compared and combined.

This would require creating long term research projects. Inspiration needs time to function, and practitioners need time to get to know their source(s). Possibly not all the practitioners would feel capable of being inspired by the same sources, and this would lead to frustration. When I was still a design student, I took part in one course where the sources of inspiration were chosen with the teachers' guidance. The group work during the course was challenging, but I remember being able to work with this 'common' inspiration (i.e. not based on my personal preferences) even though the sources of inspiration did not feel internalized but remained in a superficial state. We also shared the same pre-determined colour scheme; everybody was working with exact same colours. After managing to work with colours I disliked, I realized that 'liking' is not a good leitmotif in a creative process, instead 'challenges' work for me. Considering this previous experience, I still think involving more makers and researchers together around the sources of inspiration could produce extremely interesting results.

Something that I had been thinking of including in my study was the point of view of the spectators. I had been thinking of interviewing them in relation to the exhibitions, and maybe even going as far as to give them some kind of 'probe', which could include things such as a camera or a notebook and a questionnaire, which could be used to 'measure' more precisely how spectators reacted towards the exhibition, but then some questions arose. What it was that I wanted or expected the spectators to answer, how should they react and why would I ask *them* how my inner process of working with sources of inspiration happened or how successful they found it? I could not imagine any possible answers that would be helpful to my personal quest. Certainly, I would be content if I were able to inspire the spectators in turn and the river of inspiration were to continue to flow. That kind of exchange would have been interesting to follow, but I had insufficient resources (time and ideas) to work out how to do that. Nevertheless, for future research, there are several possible threads of continuation, also including the presence and interpretation of the audience in the process. Duchamp (1987, 5–6), Barthes (1968) and Foucault (1969) all stressed that the role of the spectators is as important as that of the practitioners, as the way(s) artworks become interpreted changes their existence. This is certainly something that the artists themselves cannot and should not try to control.

In this study, I have been solely concentrating on the inspiration that has existed *a priori* the creative process. In this tradition, there is the practitioner who selects sources of inspiration and then includes those in her creative process which leads (after several incidents) to an outcome, normally a finished artefact. I have been looking at these finished artefacts and contemplating how sources decided beforehand, and therefore well-known, affected the outcome. In addition, there are sometimes other sources of inspiration that can be perceived *a posteriori*, things that have possibly inspired the process, but which were not consciously chosen or worked with by the practitioner (see also Golbin 2014, 39). When the process has ended, the practitioner may notice, or have suggested by an outside person, the existence of other possible sources of inspiration that came along, uninvited so-to-speak. For this reason, the practitioner must be always ready to question her own process and the influences behind it. Here again, an outside view could be helpful, an art or design historian could distinguish influences in the outcome that the artist would have never thought of but nevertheless can be perceived in the final outcome. Naturally, most of these subsequently perceived influences and possible sources of inspiration can be interpreted individually, and not every out-

side viewer – regardless of their background – would identify the exact same sources. On some occasions though, there are features that are so obviously related to history or other well-known phenomena that many would recognize them.

As time passes, even the artist herself will inevitably perceive her own artworks differently, since between the moment of initial creation and the moment of returning towards an older work, she will have accumulated experiences of the lived life and multiple creative processes. All these will change the way the artist perceives her artworks in the ever-changing 'now'. It would be interesting to have another study focusing on the outcomes and reconstructing their possible inspirations, influences, and other connections. This is something I could continue even by myself, after conducting all this research, along with the making of a large quantity of artefacts and understanding the basic theory of inspiration. I should begin to look at my processes and artefacts from the necessary distance and analyse them and their creation much more deeply. There are things that I did not notice because I was in the middle of the action, or too close chronologically to exhibitions, and so still filled with all kinds of restless thoughts and emotions – not yet able to find calm.









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Summary



## 6 Summary

The goal of this doctoral research was to understand the role that sources of inspiration hold in the creative process. I conducted this study as artistic research, and it included three exhibitions, leading to three related case studies. Each of these cases dealt with a specific theme related to the topic and was accompanied with suitable, pre-selected source(s) of inspiration. The exhibitions formed a method of blending art and research, giving shape to my inquiries and helping me to grasp what I had been doing. This helped me to gain some distance from my works and analyse them also from the point of view of a researcher, not only that of an artist-designer. When artworks came out of the studio, they transformed into individual beings and were separated from my immediate touch; they consequently began to feel no longer like extended parts of my body. It was only after the exhibitions that I felt ready to write about the cases and related findings. My own practice was at the heart of this research, and I wanted to make sure that the quality of my artworks was constant even when the research context was present. It was not easy to understand what it meant to be an artist *and* researcher.

Traditionally, it is thought that “*good researcher focuses on the verbal and the artist on the visual articulation of ideas*”, but today the professional artist-researcher simultaneously assumes several positions in the fields of art and research (Elo 2007, 12). At the beginning of my research, I fell into the trap of this rather dualistic thinking, trying to keep my art and research practices separate. Slowly, after my first doctoral-studies-related exhibition, I came to the understanding that both practices, art *and* research, were connected and developed together. They were not two sides of the same coin, so-to-speak, but just different embodiments of my creative practice (see also Elo 2007, 19–22).

My reflections, related to my combined art and research practice, crystallized in the artworks. The challenge for me was to understand how my artworks relate to this written form of creativity, and how they can 'talk' to me. As I had witnessed and documented their process of becoming in the front row as it were (as their maker), I had an insider's view of their emergence. Ultimately, this offered me a way to conduct the study. The insights that this study offers are therefore related to my personal practice and would differ greatly if the research were conducted by another practitioner.

In addition, during and after my intensive periods of making, I have gathered related literature and theory around the themes of inspiration and the sources of inspiration, which situates my practice and inquiries in the fields of art history, philosophy, the sociology of art and artistic research. Reading has acted as a supplementary source of inspiration that has also fuelled the making of the artworks. All come together as a form of creative practice.

The first exhibition failed to provide me with major insights, and it was only afterwards that I found suitable directions to continue my research. The first case study was about the **relationship** between the practitioner and the source of inspiration: Claude Monet, more precisely his landscape paintings in the Orangerie Museum and his garden in Giverny. The water-lilies and weeping willows presented in the Orangerie had been executed in the artist's own garden, and that was one of the reasons why I chose Monet; the artist himself had a special relationship with his garden that he spent decades immortalizing. In addition, he seemed to be veiled by some kind of romantic aura, possibly related to the Impressionist movement's pastel tones or flowery subjects. These characteristics fitted my idea of relationship studies. While learning to understand and connect with Monet, I felt free to source inspiration from him, incorporating it into my practice. Through this case, I discovered my ways of working with sources of inspiration, taking time, and focusing. Eventually, the implications from the first exhibition led to new discoveries: I had struggled to 'invent' ways to work with inspiration, I had rushed into my process without taking time to become 'saturated' by the sources and get to know them properly. As a result, I had not managed to find my own artistic expression; I had been lost. With Monet, I managed to fix my relationship with my source(s) of inspiration.

In my second case study, I looked more deeply into the tricky concept of **copying**. I approached the theme through Warhol's silkscreen series *Flowers* and *Little Electric Chair*. Warhol commonly used photos taken

by others as the basis of his works. I was interested in grasping Warhol's motivation and defining how close to the original source(s) I could go in my own creative practice – without inspiration becoming copying. I went as far as copying Warhol's *Flowers* into rya rugs. During the process, at some points copying felt unmotivating, but by the time that the artworks were close to being finished, I had ended up adopting them as my own. Careful reflection is required concerning how and why things may be appropriated, in addition to taking responsibility for one's actions. Strangely, finding out more about the topic felt liberating instead of restricting; I finally knew how to function when dealing with copying and appropriation. Increased understanding has helped me to know where I stand and what I think about copying and inspiration myself, as there are no ready answers.

The second case study led to the third, as I began to question the necessity of singular authorship. This was a mostly philosophical inquiry, instead of being based on legal or economic aspects. As ideas can travel through time and space endlessly from one 'thing' to another, sources of inspiration affect the creative work in invisible and hard-to-detect ways; therefore, could we not start **sharing** ideas in a more liberated manner? Following Bolt–Heideggerian (in Bolt 2010, 74–75, 145, 162) ideas about the emergence of the work of art, the co-responsibility of 'making' is shared between several factors (material/ matter,<sup>112</sup> form/ aspect, context/ circumscribing bounds, maker). The maker is only one of those factors, a fact that hardly implies a very strong case for singular authorship. As my main source of inspiration in this case I selected Hvitträsk, a historic villa, which is today a museum. The making of Hvitträsk was the collective effort of three architects, along with a number of designers and craftsmen who participated in the process. Inside the villa, it was almost impossible to define exactly who had designed what, and where somebody's design ended another one's continued in a seamless manner, which finally created the whole. It felt a perfect metaphor and source of inspiration for handling the theme of shared authorship; I ended up creating my version or vision of Hvitträsk in collaboration with my inspiration sources and other factors affecting the process.

This time, with Hvitträsk, my way of sourcing information (and inspiration) had not been studying the phenomenon from books and real-life visits; instead, I had purposely spent considerable time on the

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**112** Here, 'matter' is thought of in a broad sense, including "performativity" (Bolt 2010, 162) and the sources of inspiration.

site, becoming familiar with it to the point where I started to gain a home-like attachment to the place. It was indescribable to be able to display the artworks 'inside' my source of inspiration, Hvitträsk, where the works appeared as small fish in the villa's whale-stomach. They (the artworks) joined the genealogical thread of Hvitträsk and the place grew as they became a part of its history. A living dialogue was formed between my works, the historical frame, and the visitors to the museum; it extended even outside the museum walls, to the garden, the flowers of which acted as part of my installation.

In Hvitträsk, I managed to rethink my place as a part of the creative process: it felt comforting to no longer consider it an individual project. I became more confident when planning future projects – there is no need to doubt my strength to go through them – I would not be alone. What if all art and design was understood as collaboration and continuation? Should we adopt a new kind of attitude towards creation, abandoning the throne of the author and celebrating the co-emergence of all creation?

Returning to my key objective, did I find an answer to the question: **What is the role of sources of inspiration?** I found out about the relationship between the source and the practitioner, the differences between inspiration and copying and about the collaborative aspects that sources of inspiration bring to the process. But what is the role of sources of inspiration in the creative process? For me, they were in some way guiding the process, like guardian angels, friends, guest or cousins – sometimes distant, sometimes close – and their qualities allowed me to dream about the content of the final works.

Throughout the study, it became clear that every inspiration process is different; when the source or the practitioner changed, a different kind of exchange was created. Other factors, such as time, also caused changes. When time passed and the practitioner returned to same source once again, it suddenly felt almost as if it were new again. Eventually, a strong bond between a source and a practitioner can motivate the practitioner to overcome temporal challenges in her career while bringing new perspectives and possibilities.

This form of discursive practice between me and my sources brought unexpected turns – when I was taking the process in one direction, the sources challenged my thinking and making processes pushed me to re-evaluate my decisions. They were walking with me, changing the ways I processed art and research, and sometimes even comforting me. They were material but not passive material that I was shaping, instead active actors who themselves influenced the process. They were performative.



Instead of directly affecting the outcome (finished artefacts), they influenced the working process and they produced an ardent desire to make and helped me to 'move'. They were 'co-responsible' for the outcome, but their significance was far more important during the process. By triggering my interest, they participated in the initiation of each project and helped to keep it going.

Every time that I chose a new source of inspiration, I re-evaluated my identity as an artist, I reflected upon myself in relation to my source(s) and I questioned my working methods and their meaning – just as French painter Paul Cézanne<sup>13</sup> did with his "*little sensations*", when he was trying to repeat reality just as he 'saw' it. As Merleau-Ponty claimed "*Cézanne wanted to see as a new-born in order to paint the perception itself*", staying foreign to his own work, seeing the world constantly as something new, (Bolt 2010, 161), "*with no other guide than the immediate impression of nature, without following contours, with no outline to enclose the colour, with no perspectival or pictorial arrangement,*" (Merleau-Ponty in Bolt 2010, 161). Cézanne was embracing the unknown by relying only on his vision; I, on the other hand, was set more 'boundary conditions' through my sources. Somehow, I find similarities in our tactics, doubting preconceived ideas and staying 'open' to the process. I was very much conscious, but still I had the feeling of not quite knowing where the processes were going, and most of all, I did not know when they would end. Sources of inspiration grew in me, became part of me, and I became impregnated by some of their essence. I became more connected to the 'world'.

I actively approached the sources of inspiration of my choice, those that I found personally interesting, that 'spoke' to me and touched something inside my own construction. In each source of inspiration, I found something of myself, a reflection, or a fragment of some kind. My own practice became more diverse in relation to sources, materials and changing contexts along with other actors, which fuelled my ongoing creative practice. My practice itself began nourishing and informing my future practice, one work led to another, often seamlessly. There was no time to wait for inspiration. I had to shut out the overflow of inspiration in order not to be drowned in the sea of inspiration. As I tried to concentrate on only a few sources of inspiration at the time, I had the sensation that I was able to get closer to them, build trust and in that way remain 'open' to their essence. In this way, as I was giving my full attention to them, it became natural


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113 Paul Cézanne (1838-1906)

to receive their support and inspiration in return. It formed a discursive co-emergent practice, where the sources' impact was most sensed through the process itself, yet the outcome was also our co-responsibility, 'ours' in the broad sense as Bolt (2010, 190) crystallizes it. The process enables the 'world' to become part of the work of art, and in return the work of art "*casts its effects back into the world,*" and this is what touches us. The world of mine is in large part informed by my sources of inspiration.

As an end note, I am reminded by how Kontturi (2018, 234) finishes her *Ways of Following* by acknowledging that various factors had influenced the way she wrote her book, from the outside weather to her surroundings or the texture of her clothing. Evidently, this same thing happened to me. Due to the specific conditions of writing this dissertation during the global pandemic, my main place of work has been my very own kitchen, from where I followed the changes of the season. I became extremely affected by the outside light and spring heralded a more fervent rhythm of working. My work was interrupted by the duties of everyday life and exercise, and everything seemed to influence my writing mood, from the way I had been sleeping or the daily news to delicious Russian-style fish soup. Often, I had to clean the kitchen before starting to work; there was no leisure to wait for sudden bursts of inspiration. Fortunately, I had learned to actively hunt for those moments. I can say with conviction that this book was not solely written by me, but with the 'world'. A world that felt smaller than ever before, and more insecure, but nonetheless a world that gave me my voice, or should I say, gave this book a collective voice that I had the privilege to note down.





# **7** Hidden Life of Sources of Inspiration - Catalogue of Inspired Artefacts

## 7.1 Rugs



1

title and year

**Amur (2017)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**140 x 110 x approx. 4 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

source(s) of inspiration

**Emil Nolde aquarelles**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Tiger tripe pattern**





## 2

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Bambi I* (2017)**

**50 × 50 × approx. 15 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

**Raoul Dufy textile designs**

**Leopard spot pattern**

## 3

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Bambi I-III* (2017)**

**50 × 50 × approx. 15 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug cushions**

**Raoul Dufy textile designs**

**Leopard spot pattern**



4

title and year

***Diamond Dogs (Homage to David Bowie) (2017)***

measures, material, and technique

**60 × 60 × approx. 10 cm  
silk  
hand-tufted rug cushion**

source(s) of inspiration

**Raoul Dufy textile designs**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Josef Frank textile designs for  
Svenskt Tenn**

5

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Flowers (2017)***

**200 × 140 × approx. 3 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

**Claude Monet (*Orangerie and  
artist's garden*)**

**Simon Hantai's gestural  
period, Sawako Ura's pattern  
designs for Marimekko**



6

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Dahlia (2017–2018)***

**170 × 170 × approx. 4 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

**Claude Monet (*Orangerie and  
artist's garden*)**

**Simon Hantai's gestural  
period, Sawako Ura's pattern  
designs for Marimekko**





7

title and year

***Broken Lake (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**180 × 110 × approx. 4 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet (*Orangerie and  
artist's garden*)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French-Hungarian artist Simon  
Hantai's gestural period, Jap-  
anese designer Sawako Ura's  
pattern designs for Marimekko**





## 8

title and year

**Max (2018)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**50 x 50 x approx. 10 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug cushion**

source(s) of inspiration

**Auguste Herbin's Plastic  
Alphabet**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Checkerboard patterns**





9

title and year

***Tigersun (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**140 × 110 × approx. 4 cm  
(pictured horizontally)  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

source(s) of inspiration

**Auguste Herbin's Plastic  
Alphabet**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Zebra Pattern seen on Alvar  
Aalto's chair no. 400 for Artek**



10 ↑

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Alphabet rug (2018–2019)***

**270 × 140 × approx. 4 cm  
(pictured horizontally)  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug**

**Auguste Herbin's Plastic  
Alphabet**

**Swedish artist Hilma af Klint's  
abstract paintings**

11 →

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Flame (2018)***

**50 × 50 × approx. 3 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug cushion**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela**

**Flame patterns in 1990's  
fashion**





12

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Star (2018)**

**50 × 50 × approx. 3 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug cushion**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela**

**Russian artist Kazimir Malevich  
and his Suprematism**



13

title and year

**Swansong (2019)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**270 x 154 x approx. 3 cm  
mohair, silk, wool  
hand-tufted rug**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed by  
Akseli Gallen-Kallela and *Seagull*  
rug designed by Jarl Eklund**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Influence of Japanese aesthetics  
such as Sumi-e painting**





14

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Tristan (2019)***

**200 x 140 x approx. 4 cm  
mohair, wool  
hand-tufted rug**

***Flame rug designed by Akseli  
Gallen-Kallela***

**Finnish artist Reidar  
Särestoniemi's paintings**





15

title and year

***Mouth Shall not Leave a Mouth rug (2019)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**200 × 140 × approx. 3 cm  
mohair, wool  
hand-tufted rug**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed by Akseli Gal-  
len-Kallela and *Seagull* rug designed by Jarl  
Eklund, ceramic vases I made myself**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Swedish artist Hilma af Klint's abstract  
paintings, Yves Saint Laurent's *Love* poster  
from 1971, Japanese traditional tattoo art**



16

title and year  
measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Flaming Sea (2019)***  
**50 × 50 × approx. 15 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-tufted rug cushion**

***Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed***  
**by Akseli Gallen-Kallela**

**Traditional folk textile**  
**patterns**

17

title and year  
measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***First Snow (2019)***  
**50 × 50 × approx. 15 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-tufted rug cushion**

***Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed***  
**by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Swan-**  
**song rug designed by myself**

**Kazimir Malevich and his**  
**Suprematism**



18

title and year

**Snake (2019)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**30 x 70 x approx. 15 cm  
mohair  
hand-tufted rug cushion**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed by Akseli  
Gallen-Kallela, Mouth Shall not Leave a  
Mouth rug designed by author**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Yves Saint Laurent's Love poster from  
1971**



19

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Flowers (2018–2020)**

**180 × 180 × approx. 4 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-tufted rug**

**Flowers by Warhol**

-





20

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Flowers I (2018)**

**60 × 80 × approx. 15 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-tufted rug**

**Flowers by Warhol**

-



21

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Flowers II (2018)**

**60 × 80 × approx. 4 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-tufted rug cushion**

**Flowers by Warhol**

-



## 7.2 Other textiles



**22**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

weaver

**Sweet Thing (2016)**

**220 (with fringes) × 110 cm**

**mohair**

**hand-woven jacquard (tapestry)**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs for  
Svenskt Tenn**

**Eeva Kulju**



23

title and year

***Flowerbed (variation of Sweet thing) (2016)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**width 145 cm  
mohair, wool, silk  
industrially woven jacquard**

source(s) of inspiration

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

possible 'a posteriori'

**Josef Frank's textile designs for**

source(s) of inspiration

**Svenskt Tenn, Animal patter**



## 24

title and year

**Various patterns for shirts  
(2016–2017)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**silk, wool  
digitally printed fabric**

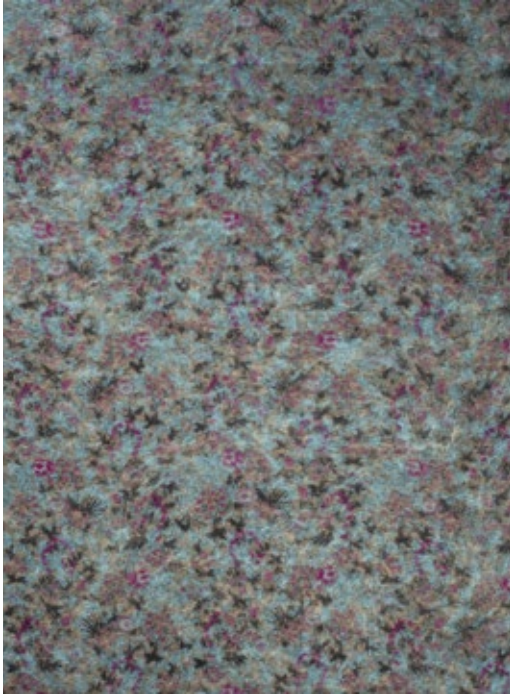
source(s) of inspiration

**Raoul Dufy, Niki de Saint Phalle,  
Man Ray**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Josef Frank's textile designs for  
Svenskt Tenn, Animal patterns**





**25**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration  
possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Small Flowers and Friends***  
**(2016)**

**width 145 cm**  
**mohair, wool, silk**  
**industrially woven jacquard**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs for**  
**Svenskt Tenn**

**26**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration  
possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***South Sea* (2016)**

**width 145 cm**  
**mohair**  
**industrially woven jacquard**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs for**  
**Svenskt Tenn**



27

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Various patterns for pillowcases  
(2016-2017)**

**45 × 45 cm  
cotton, linen  
digitally printed fabric**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs for  
Svenskt Tenn**

28 ↑

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Various patterns for pillowcases  
(2016-2017)**

**45 × 45 cm  
cotton, linen  
digitally printed fabric**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs for  
Svenskt Tenn**

29 →

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
weaver

**Sky (2017)**

**224 (with fringes) × 110 cm  
silk  
hand-woven jacquard (tapestry)**

**Emil Nolde's aquarelles**

**Tiger stripe patterns**

**Author**







30

title and year  
measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
weavers

**FC Artistes (2017)**

**35 × 250 cm**  
**mohair**  
**hand-woven jacquard,**  
**hand-knotted supplementary**  
**fringes**

**Raoul Dufy, Man Ray, Emil**  
**Nolde, Niki De Saint Phalle**

**Football fan culture aesthetics**

**Eeva Kulju & author**

31

title and year  
measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Broken Flowers I (2017)**

**width 145 cm**  
**mohair**  
**industrially woven jacquard**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs**  
**for Svenskt Tenn**



**32**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Flowers II (2017)***

**width 145 cm**

**mohair**

**industrially woven jacquard**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs  
for Svenskt Tenn**



**33**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Flowers III (2017)***

**width 145 cm**

**mohair**

**industrially woven jacquard,  
added fringes on sides from  
weaving waste**

**Raoul Dufy's textile designs**

**Josef Frank's textile designs  
for Svenskt Tenn**





34

title and year  
measures, material,  
and technique

***Pink-haired Debbie (2021)***  
**107 × 162 cm (without fringes)**  
**silk**  
**hand-woven jacquard,**  
**'fransu' Finnish hand-knotting**  
**technique, mixed media**

source(s) of inspiration

**Andy Warhol silkscreen**  
**technique**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
weaver

-  
**Author**



**35**

title and year

***Suspicious Minds (Elvis)*  
(2017–2020)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**107 × 116 cm (without fringes)  
silk  
hand-woven jacquard,  
'fransu' Finnish hand-knotting  
technique, mixed media**

source(s) of inspiration

**Andy Warhol silkscreen  
technique**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
weaver

-  
**Henna Aalto**





**36**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
weaver

***Mother (Niki) (2017-2020)***

**110 × 123 cm (without fringes)**

**silk**

**hand-woven jacquard,  
'fransu' Finnish hand-knotting  
technique, mixed media**

**Andy Warhol silkscreen  
technique**

-

**Henna Aalto**

## 7.3 Ceramics



37

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Rue de Paradis* (2018)**

**35 × 15 × 14 cm  
stoneware  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



**38**

title and year

***Blue Lagoon (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**27 × 13 × 13 cm  
stoneware, glaze  
gas fired, hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



39

title and year

***Bleeding Vase (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**34 × 14 × 14 cm  
stoneware, glaze  
gas fired, hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



**40**

title and year

***Black tulips (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**17 × 20 × 20 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre,  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**





41

title and year

***Du Feu et du Champagne***  
**(2018)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**19 × 13 × 15 cm**  
**wood-fired stoneware, glaze,**  
**hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet**  
**(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics**  
**and French ceramicist**  
**Bernard Palissy**



42

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Petrol Parade (2018)***

**28 × 20 × 18 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre,  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



43

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Broken Flowers bowl**  
white, black (2018)

**6 × 15 × 15 cm**  
wood-fired stoneware, glaze,  
pressed and hand-built

**Claude Monet**  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)

**French barbotine ceramics**  
and French ceramicist  
**Bernard Palissy**



44

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Broken Flowers bowl low**  
grey, yellow (2018)

**4 × 15 × 15 cm**  
wood-fired stoneware, glaze,  
under-glaze  
pressed and hand-built

**Claude Monet**  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)

**French barbotine ceramics**  
and French ceramicist  
**Bernard Palissy**



**45**

title and year

***Broken Flowers plates*  
reddish brown (2018)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**each 1.5 × 15.5 × 15.5 cm  
wood-fired red stoneware  
pressed and hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



46

title and year

**LovePowerMax (2018)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**16.5 x 15 x 15 cm  
gas-fired stoneware, glaze  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**





**47**

title and year

***Night in the Forest (2018)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**34 x 20 x 20 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



48

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Still Here* (2018)**

**20 × 15 × 15 cm  
gas fired stoneware, glaze  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



49

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Profondo Rosso* (2018)**

**35 × 14 × 13 cm  
gas fired stoneware, glaze  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



50

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Jade Warrior (2018)***

**24 × 18 × 18 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**

51

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Fruits et Bronze, 1910 (2019)***

**29 × 17 × 17 cm  
stoneware, glaze  
hand-built**

**French painter Henri Matisse's  
painting *Fruit et Bronze* (1910)**

-



52

title and year

***Hyacinths and Lemons, Fleur-de-Lys Background, 1943 (2019)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**25 × 22 × 22 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built slab technique**

source(s) of inspiration

**French painter Henri Matisse's  
painting *Hyacinths and  
Lemons, Fleur-de-Lys Back-  
ground (1943)***

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

-



53

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Queen of the Night (2019)**

**20 × 18 × 18 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine and  
Art Nouveau**

54

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Bagatelles (2019)**

**21 × 20 × 20 cm  
stoneware, glaze, under-glaze  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine and  
Art Nouveau**





55

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Roses (2019)***

**26 × 15 × 15 cm  
stoneware, glaze,  
under-glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine and  
Art Nouveau**



56

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Daisies (2019)***

**24 × 26 × 26 cm  
stoneware, glaze,  
under-glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artist's garden)**

**French barbotine and  
Art Nouveau**

57

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Little Darling (2019)***

**21 × 16 × 16 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

***Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund***

**Art Nouveau**





58

title and year

***Deep Sea (2019)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**33.5 x 18 x 18 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

***Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund***

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**



59

title and year

***Pink Sea\** (2019)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**30 × 22 × 22 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

***Seagull rug* designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

*\*This vase acted as a model, when the glassblower  
Joonas Laakso and I created the Octopus glass series.*



60

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Silver Flame (2019)***

**30 × 19 × 18 cm  
stoneware, glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela**

**Art Nouveau**





61

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Medusa (2019)**

**16 × 19 × 21 cm  
stoneware, glaze, under-glaze  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Seagull rug  
designed by Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**

62

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

Hand-thrown

**Fruit Bats and Peonies (2019)**

**36 × 23 × 23 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artists garden)**

**French barbotine ceram-  
ics and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**

**Salla Luhtasela**



63

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Snakes and Lovers I (2019)***

**14 × 17 × 17 cm  
black stoneware,  
under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Seagull rug  
designed by Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**

64

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Snakes and Lovers II (2019)***

**15 × 17 × 17 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Seagull rug  
designed by Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**

65

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Snakes and Lovers III (2019)***

**17 × 19 × 19 cm  
black stoneware, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Seagull rug  
designed by Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**





66

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Broken Flowers bowl (2019)**

**6 × 15 × 15 cm  
wood-fired stoneware, glaze,  
pressed and hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artists garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**

67

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Broken Flowers bowl  
brown, greens (2019)**

**6 × 15 × 15 cm  
wood-fired stoneware,  
under-glaze, glaze,  
pressed and hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artists garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**



68

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Flowers* bowls small  
cream, multi (2019)**

**6 × 10 × 10 cm  
wood-fired red stoneware,  
pressed and hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artists garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**

69

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

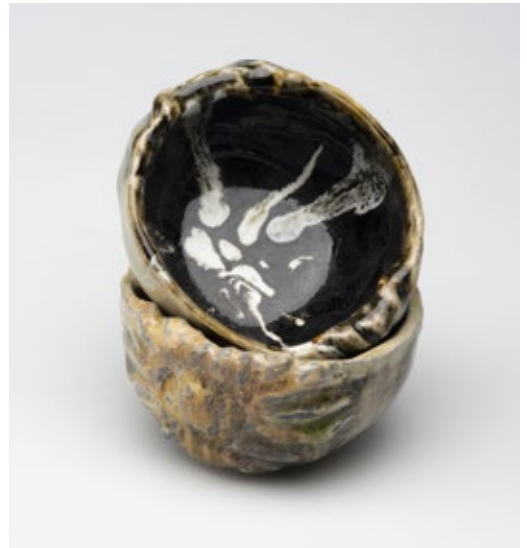
possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Broken Flowers* bowls small  
cream, black, white (2019)**

**6 × 10 × 10 cm  
wood-fired red stoneware,  
pressed and hand-built**

**Claude Monet  
(Orangerie and artists garden)**

**French barbotine ceramics  
and French ceramicist  
Bernard Palissy**





**70**

title and year

***Small Flame (2019)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**21 x 19 x 18 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame rug* designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**





71

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Alphabet Vase (2018)**

**31.5 × 20 × 20 cm**  
**red stoneware, under-glaze,**  
**glaze, lustre**  
**hand-built**

**Auguste Herbin's Plastic**  
**Alphabet**

**Ancient Greek ceramics**



72

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Snakes Do Not Die I (2019)**

**21 × 20 × 19 cm**  
**red stoneware,**  
**under-glaze, glaze,**  
**hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed**  
**by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and**  
**Seagull rug designed by**  
**Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**



**73**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

***Snakes Do Not Die II* (2019)**

**32 x 24 x 22 cm  
red stoneware,  
under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull* rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

**Art Nouveau**



74

title and year

***Snakes Do Not Die III* (2019)**

measures, material,  
and technique

**30 × 23 × 23 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull* rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**



75

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Snakes Do Not Die IV (2019)**

**34 × 20 × 19 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

-

76

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Snakes Do Not Die V (2019)**

**18 × 16 × 16 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

-



77

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Snakes Do Not Die VI (2019)**

**18 × 16 × 16 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze, glaze,  
hand-built**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund**

-





78

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
Hand-thrown

***Nudes and Flowers I (2020)***

**29 x 28 x 28 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

-

**Camilla Groth**



**79**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

Hand-thrown

***Nudes and Flowers II (2020)***

**28 × 22 × 22 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

**Yves Saint Laurent's Love  
poster from 1971,  
Japanese traditional tattoo**

**Camilla Groth**



**80**

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

Hand-thrown

***Nudes and Flowers III (2020)***

**35 × 24 × 24 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

-

**Camilla Groth**



81

title and year

***Nudes and Flowers IV (2020)***

measures, material,  
and technique

**36 × 25 × 25 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

-

Hand-thrown

**Camilla Groth**



82

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

Hand-thrown

***Nudes and Flowers V (2020)***

**34 × 19 × 19 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

-

**Camilla Groth**



83

title and year

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

Hand-thrown

***Little One (2020)***

**26 × 22 × 22 cm  
stoneware, under-glaze,  
glaze, lustre  
hand-thrown and -painted**

**Hvitträsk, Art Nouveau,  
Asian aesthetics**

-

**Camilla Groth**

## 7.4 Glass



84

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64<sup>114, 115</sup> (2018)**

**neon yellow, black**

**32 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Riikka Latva-Somppi,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

**114** Coldwork on all *Saaristo64* pieces done by Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen, Miia Lötjönen or Pauliina Varis.

**115** This piece could be named symbolically as the first of the series: it is the first I remember, and that I was happy about.





**85**

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**off-white**

**33 × 20 × 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



**86**

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**rose**

**33 × 20 × 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



87

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**taupe, cream, blue and  
clear glass**

**36.5 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

88

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**alabaster, taupe, rose**

**40 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



89

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**alabaster, taupe, black**

**45 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



90

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**cream, black, red**

**28 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

91

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**ochre, black, red**

**33 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

92

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**rose, green**

**28 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol***

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



93

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**yellow, red**

**29.5 x 14 x 14 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol***

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



94

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**amber, green**

**29.5 x 14 x 14 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol***

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**







95

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**light brown, taupe**

**28.5 x 14 x 14 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

96

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**khaki, black**

**25.5 x 14 x 14 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



**97**

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**off-white, black**

**32 x 20 x 20 cm**  
**mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



**98**

title and year

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

colour

**yellow, black**

measures, material,  
and technique

**48 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

glassblower

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



99

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**yellow, black**

**26 × 14 × 14 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

100

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**yellow, black**

**21.5 × 20 × 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



101

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2019)**

**jaffa**

**22.5 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

**Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

102

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'

source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2018)**

**light alabaster**

**22 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

**Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**





**103**

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2020)**

**rose, cream, green**

**33.5 x 20 x 20 cm**  
**mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



**104**

title and year

**Saaristo64 (2020)**

colour

**rose, neon yellow, black**

measures, material,  
and technique

**32.5 x 20 x 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Death and Disaster series by  
Andy Warhol**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

glassblower

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



105

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2020)**

**dusty jade, neon yellow, black**

**32.5 × 20 × 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



106

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Saaristo64 (2020)**

**beige, green, rose**

**33.5 × 20 × 20 cm  
mould-blown glass**

***Death and Disaster* series by  
Andy Warhol**

**Tapio Wirkkala glass designs**

**Joonas Laakso, assistant:  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



107

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Octopus I (2019)**

**cream, turquoise, clear glass**

**23.5 x 16 x 16 cm  
free-blown glass**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull* rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase *Pink Sea***

**Art Nouveau**

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Miia Lötjönen,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



108

title and year

**Octopus II (2019)**

colour

**white, violet, green, clear glass**

measures, material,  
and technique

**24.5 x 15 x 15 cm  
free-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull* rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase *Pink Sea***

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

glassblower

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Miia Lötjönen,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**





109

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Octopus III (2019)**

**amber, black**

**24 × 17 × 17 cm  
free-blown glass**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase Pink Sea**

**Art Nouveau**

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Miia Lötjönen,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**

110

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Octopus IV (2020)**

**rose, amber, black**

**25 × 16 × 16 cm  
free-blown glass**

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase Pink Sea**

**Art Nouveau**

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Orcum Erdem,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



111

title and year  
colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
glassblower

**Octopus V (2020)**  
neon yellow, black, close-to-  
clear neodymium

**24 x 17 x 17 cm**  
free-blown glass

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase Pink Sea**

**Art Nouveau**

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Orcum Erdem,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



112

title and year  
colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration  
glassblower

**Octopus VI (2020)**  
cream, black, red

**24 x 17 x 17 cm**  
free-blown glass

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase Pink Sea**

**Art Nouveau**

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Orcum Erdem,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



**113**

title and year

**Octopus VII (2020)**

colour

**rose, amber, black, brown**

measures, material,  
and technique

**24 x 17 x 17 cm  
free-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame rug* designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull rug* designed by  
Jarl Eklund,  
my ceramic vase *Pink Sea***

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

glassblower

**Joonas Laakso,  
assistants: Orcum Erdem,  
Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen**



114

title and year

colour

measures, material,  
and technique

source(s) of inspiration

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

glassblower

**Robert (2021)**

**rose, amber, black, brown**

**22 x 12 x 11 cm**  
**free-blown glass**

**Hvitträsk, *Flame* rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull* rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund, continuation from  
my *Octopus* glass series**

**Art Nouveau**

**Slate Grove,  
assistant: Paulina Varis**



**115**

title and year

***Maria* (2021)**

colour

**rose, amber, black, brown**

measures, material,  
and technique

**20 × 17 × 15 cm  
free-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame rug* designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull rug* designed by  
Jarl Eklund, continuation from  
my *Octopus glass series***

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

glassblower

**Slate Grove,  
assistant: Paulina Varis**





116

title and year

**Angelique (2021)**

colour

**rose, amber, black, brown**

measures, material,  
and technique

**22.5 × 16 × 15 cm  
free-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, Flame rug designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
Seagull rug designed by  
Jarl Eklund, continuation from  
my Octopus glass series**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

glassblower

**Slate Grove,  
assistant: Paulina Varis**



117

title and year

**Honey (2021)**

colour

**rose, amber, black, brown**

measures, material,  
and technique

**21 × 16 × 16 cm  
free-blown glass**

source(s) of inspiration

**Hvitträsk, *Flame rug* designed  
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela and  
*Seagull rug* designed by  
Jarl Eklund, continuation from  
my *Octopus glass series* (2020)**

possible 'a posteriori'  
source(s) of inspiration

**Art Nouveau**

glassblower

**Slate Grove,  
assistant: Paulina Varis**













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# Image references

- 01 *Flame rug sketch* (1902) by Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Photo: Archives of Design Museum Helsinki/ Katja Ketola.
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- 03 *Slaughtered Ox* (1655) by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, Louvre Museum, Paris. Image: Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved 04.01.2022 from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt\\_-\\_The\\_Flayed\\_Ox\\_-\\_WGA19252.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rembrandt_-_The_Flayed_Ox_-_WGA19252.jpg)
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- 05 *Oceania, the Sea* (realized as silkscreen 1946) by Henri Matisse. Credit: Private Collection© Succession H. Matisse/ DACS 2022/ Photo © Christie's Images/ Bridgeman images.
- 06 *The House among the Roses* (circa 1917-1919) by Claude Monet, ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna. Image: Wikimedia Commons/ Monet: Catalogue Raisonné, (1956). Retrieved 26.01.2022 from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monet\\_-\\_Das\\_Haus\\_in\\_den\\_Rosen.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monet_-_Das_Haus_in_den_Rosen.jpeg)
- 07 *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) by Edouard Manet, Orsay Museum, Paris. Image: Wikimedia Commons/ Retrieved 04.01.2022 from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Édouard\\_Manet\\_-\\_Le\\_Déjeuner\\_sur\\_l%27herbe.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Édouard_Manet_-_Le_Déjeuner_sur_l%27herbe.jpg)
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- 10 *Las Meninas* (1656-1657) by Diego Velasquez, Prado Museum, Madrid. Image: Galaría Online, Museo del Prado/ Wikimedia Commons. Found on 03.01.2022 at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Las\\_Meninas\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Las_Meninas_01.jpg)
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- 22 View of the exhibition *House of Love and Rebellion* in the Hvitträsk 2020. Photo: author (2020).
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Illustrations on pages 18, 28, 61, and 78 are done by author (2021-2022).

## Image references for Chapter 7 (Catalogue of the artworks)

All photos by Kinnunen Anne (2020-2022)  
 except:  
 1-3, 22, 24, 27, and 28 by Kokki Ulla (2017)  
 5-7 by Suorlahti Eeva (2018).

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

List of solo and group exhibitions involving the author and related to this doctoral thesis

### Solo shows

- 2020 *The House of Love and Rebellion*, Hvitträsk museum, Luoma (FI)
- 2018 *Broken Flowers in the House of Beauty*, Ventura Future, Milan (IT)  
*The House of Love*, Habitare Talenshop, Helsinki (FI)
- 2017 *The House of Play and Rain*, Lokal Gallery, Helsinki (FI)

### Group shows

- 2022 *Displaced*, Schloss Hollenegg for Design, Hollenegg (AT)
- 2020 *In Good Hands*, The Friends of Finnish Handicraft 140 years- exhibition, Design museum, Helsinki; Craft Museum of Finland, Jyväskylä (FI); Ostrobothnian Museum (2021), Vaasa (FI)  
*Battle Royale*, Gallery Tiketti, Helsinki (FI)  
*Gathering*, Lokal Gallery, Helsinki (FI)  
*Paljain Silmin [With Naked Eyes]*, Haa-gallery, Helsinki (FI)  
*Art of Research VII*, Conference exhibition at Aalto University, Espoo (FI)
- 2019 *Interwoven*, Textile Art exhibition, Emma museum, Espoo (FI)  
*Helsinki Tones*, Lokal Gallery, Helsinki (FI)  
*Textile Tomorrow Summit*, Väre Building, Espoo (FI)
- 2018 *Tekstiili 18*, TurbiiniSali at Kaapelitehdas, Helsinki (FI)  
*Väre Opening exhibition*, Espoo (FI)  
*After Monet*, Skanno Showroom, Helsinki (FI)  
*2 Rooms*, Marikka Kiirikoff's artist home, KotkaArt Bonus exhibition, Kotka (FI)
- 2017 *Art of Reseach VI* Conference exhibition at Aalto University, Espoo (FI)  
*Dorothy Waxman Textile Design Prize*, the Invisible Dog Art Center, NY (US)  
*Nakuna*, Milan Design Week, Circolo Filologico Milanese (IT)  
*Pre-Helsinki Pop Up*, Artek, Helsinki (FI)

## Appendix 2

List of exhibitions I could not forget, and that have influenced the content of this doctoral thesis

1991	Helene Schjerfbeck, Ateneum, Helsinki, FI
1993	Jacques Henri-Lartique & Sally Mann, Retretti Art Centre, Punkaharju, FI
1993	From Cézanne to Matisse: Masterpieces of the Barnes Foundation. Oray Museum, Paris, FR
1995	ARS 95, Ateneum, Helsinki, FI
1996	Leni Riefenstahl, VB Photography Centre, Kuopio, FI
1997	Yves Klein, Sara Hildén Museum, Tampere, FI
1999	Edward Munch, Retretti Art Centre, Punkaharju, FI
2000	Keith Haring, Amos Andersen, Helsinki
2001	Les Années Pop, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2001	Yayoi Kusama: Installations, Maison de la culture du Japon à Paris, FR
2003	Francesca Woodman, Kamel Mennour, Paris, FR
2003	Marléne Dietrich, Creation of a Myth. Palais Galliera. Paris, FR
2004	Elsa Schiaparelli, MAD Paris, FR
2006	Dada, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2007	David Lynch: Air is on Fire, Fondation Cartier, Paris, FR
2009–2010	Madelaine Vionnet, MAD Paris, FR
2011	Great Expressionism, Pinacothèque of Paris, FR
2013	Mike Kelley, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2013	Surrealism and The Object, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2013	Simon Hantaï, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2013–2014	Pierre Huygues, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2013–2014	Philippe Parreno: Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World. Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
2014	Hilma Af Klint, Kunsthalle Helsinki, FI
2014	Jean Tinguely, Amos Andersen, Helsinki, FI
2014–2015	Sonia Delauney, Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, FR
2014–2015	Niki de Saint Phalle, RMN Grand Palais, Paris, FR
2015–2016	Karel Appel: Works on Paper, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR
2015–2016	Ragnar Kjartansson: Seul celui qui connaît le désir, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
2015–2016	Warhol: Unlimited. Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, FR
2016	Niki de Saint Phalle, Kunsthalle, Helsinki, FI
2017–2018	Camille Henrot: Days are Dogs, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR
2018	Christian Dior, Couturier du Rêve, MAD Paris, FR
2019–2020	Keith Haring, Bozar Brussels, BE
2021	Joel Slotte, Tampere Art Museum, FI







Hanna-Kaisa Korolainen (1976) is a Finnish multidisciplinary artist, designer, and researcher. She started out as a photographer, specializing in autoportraits and polaroids, later moving to France to work in the field of fashion and nourish her aesthetics through the decadence of the Parisian rock scene, French countryside antiques markets and Saint Laurent. A decade later, she returned to her natal Finland, and after designing prints for Marimekko, she concentrated herself on art textiles (rya rugs and silk jacquards), glass and ceramics. Korolainen has been showing her artworks in exhibitions in Finland and abroad. In addition to her artistic practice, she teaches at Aalto University, Department of Design.



Every practitioner yearns for inspiration. It fuels the creative process with desire and motivation. However, it seems unclear what inspiration exactly is and where it comes from. The sources of inspiration, from the practitioners' point of view, have not been extensively researched within the fields of art and design.

This study traces how consciously selected sources of inspiration influence the creative process and its outcome. It investigates specifically the relationship between the practitioner and the source of inspiration, the differences between inspiration and copying, and the idea of shared authorship.

The centre of this study lies in a collaboration-like relationship between the practitioner and sources of inspiration. Even without spoken words, sources can speak to a practitioner who has learnt to listen to them. Often these relationships can endure for many years - even a lifetime.

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