

# The 3rd International Artefacta Conference: Agency Turku, Finland, 16–17 February 2023

## Abstracts

Thursday, 16 February 2023

### Session 1: Suomeksi (in Finnish)

#### 1.1 Arja Koskinen (Tampere Historical Museums)

##### *Elastomeerimateriaalien lyhyen elinkaaren vaikutus museo-objekteihin ja -kokoelmiin*

Elastomeerimateriaalien lyhyen elinkaaren vaikutus museo-objektien kuntoon ja sitä kautta museokokoelmiin aiheuttaa haasteita kokoelmien hoidolle, kun kumimateriaaleja sisältävien objektien määrä kasvaa.

Kumimateriaaleista valmistetut tuotteet ovat yleensä massatuotantoa, jotka suunnitellaan käyttöä varten ja sen jälkeen hävitettäväksi.

Kun kumimateriaaleja sisältäviä tuotteita otetaan osaksi museokokoelmaa, niiden vaikutus saattaa jäädä huomiotta alkuvaiheessa. Objektin muoto tai kokonaisuus voi muuttua merkittävästi, kun kumi-materiaaliosan elinkaari päättyy sen rakenteen hajoamiseen. Tutkin väitöskirjassani kumimateriaalien lyhyen elinkaaren vaikutusta museokokoelmaan konservaattorin näkökulmasta. Kumimateriaaleista valmistettujen objektien säilyttäminen vaatii paljon resursseja varsinkin niiden tutkimuksen ja säilytyksen osalta.

Näitä kysymyksiä on syytä miettiä tarkasti, koska ne vaikuttavat objekteista tuotettavan informaation laatuun tai sen puutteeseen. Ne saattavat myös vaatia resursseja, joita museolla ei ole käytettävissään. Tehdyt päätökset on hyvä kirjata museon kokoelmapoliittiseen ohjelmaan, kokoelmatyön helpottamiseksi.

Konservaattorin näkökulmasta huolestuttavaa on, ettei kumimateriaalien konservointiin ei ole vielä löydetty todistettavasti pitkäkestoisia konservointimenetelmiä tutkimuksesta huolimatta. Tähän osasyynä on varmasti kumimateriaalien monimuotoisuus.

Materiaalitietouden levittäminen museoihin on tärkeää. Museoliitto on tehnyt hyvää työtä tällä saralla. Toivoisin myös, että ammatillisten museoiden tallennus- ja kokoelmayhteistyöverkostomuseot eli TAKO-ryhmä voisi olla myös asian edistäjänä.

## 1.2 Iina Schwanck

### *Modernin elämän esineet? – Esineitä suomalaisissa uuden aallon elokuvissa*

Aiheeni on esineet representoituina elokuvassa. Mitä ne voivat merkitä elokuvassa ja onko niillä aina jokin merkitys? Miten merkitys muuttuu, kun elokuvaa katsotaan eri aikana ja paikassa kuin se on tehty? Miten esimerkiksi arkiset esineet tai design esitetään ja millaisia kompositioita esineet muodostavat? Historioitsija Marc Ferron mukaan erityisesti fiktioelokuvalla on psykososiohistoriallinen ulottuvuus ja elokuva on ”objektien ja eleiden, asenteiden ja sosiaalisen käyttäytymisen museo”. Tutkimalla esineitä elokuvissa, niiden tarinaan upotettuna, voidaan hahmottaa myös esineisiin todellisuudessa liittyneitä mielikuvia ja asenteita elokuvien mm. luodessa suhteet esineiden ja elokuvan katsojien välille sekä käyttäessä esineitä kertovina elementteinä. Esittelen esimerkkejä esinemaailmasta ja esineiden merkityksistä suomalaisissa uuden aallon elokuvissa, kuten Maunu Kurkvaaran 1960-luvun alun, eteläistä Helsinkiä näyteikkunoineen, kahviloineen ja ihmisiä vilisevine katuineen sekä taiteilijakoteineen kuvaavissa elokuvissa. Näissä elokuvissa kerronta on modernistista ja uutta ilmaisua tavoittelevaa, mutta ”moderni elämä” nähdään niissä usein ristiriitojen täyttämänä ja esineet yhdistyvät negatiivissävytteisesti kuluttamiseen ja sovinnaiseen elämään.

## 1.3 Mia Haittoniemi (University of Turku)

### *Tuontilisenssianomukset ja synteettisten jalokivien toimijuus*

Tarkastelen esityksessäni kultasepänalalla käytettyjä synteettisiä jalokiviä ja pohdin, millaisena niiden toimijuus näyttäytyy 1940-luvun lopun ja 1950-luvun alun tuontilisenssianomusten kautta tarkasteltuna. Aihe liittyy kulttuurihistorian oppiaineessa valmisteilla olevaan artikkeliväitöskirjaani, jossa tarkastelen laajemmin synteettisten jalokivien merkityksiä Suomessa 1900–1960.

Synteettiset jalokivet ovat ihmisen valmistamia tuotteita, jotka vastaavat koostumukseltaan ja fysikaalisilta ominaisuuksiltaan luonnossa syntyneitä vastineitaan siinä määrin, että niiden tunnistamiseen tarvitaan erityisosaamista. Synteettisten jalokivien kaupallinen tuotanto alkoi Ranskassa 1900-luvun alussa ja niiden käyttö arkipäiväistyi kultasepänalalla Suomessa viimeistään 1920-luvulla.

Suomessa kivet olivat tuontituotteita, mutta niiden maahantuontiin liittyvää lähdeaineistoa on tarjolla niukasti. Esitys tarkastelee yhtä tällaista suppeaa aineistoa, Elinkeinoelämän Keskusarkistossa (ELKA) säilytettäviä tuontilisenssianomuksia, jotka koskivat synteettisiä jalokiviä.

Sotien jälkeisinä vuosina kultasepänalaa vaivasi ankara materiaalipula ja tarvikkeiden ja metallien lisäksi puutetta oli jalokivistä. Edulliset synteettiset jalokivet olisivat olleet erityisen haluttuja, mutta vuosina 1939–1953 kaikki maahantuonti oli kiellettyä ilman Lisenssitoimikunnan hyväksyntää. Kultasepänanalan toimijat hakivatkin tuontilupia useille

kivierille ja osalle sellainen myös myönnettiin. Lupaa haettiin täyttämällä tuontilisenssianomus, jossa tiedusteltiin tarkkoja tietoja tuotavan tavaran alkuperästä ja käyttötarkoituksesta. Tarkastelen käsiteltäväksi jätettyjen anomusten sisältöä, liitän ne laajempaan kontekstiinsa ja pohdin, millaiseen toimijuuteen anomuksiin merkityt tiedot synteettisten jalokivien osalta viittaavat.

## **Session 2: Anthropology**

### **2.1 Sonja Hukantaival (University of Turku)**

#### ***Agency and entanglements of Finnish folk magic objects***

This paper summarizes the key results and advances made in the project “The Materiality of Magic in Finland in a Long-Term Perspective: Developing the Archaeology of Folk Religion” (2018–2021, Academy of Finland). The material of the study is ethnographic folk magic collections of the National Museum of Finland and the Vapriikki Museum Centre in Tampere. The cultural phenomenon of magic causes a specific twist to questions regarding agency of objects. Here these questions focus on notions of magical efficacy and the applicability of archaeologist Ian Hodder’s human-thing entanglement approach to this particular material. This approach is in some respects similar to the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) of Bruno Latour and his colleagues, but it maintains a firmer connection with material culture and temporality (change). While not as strictly nondual as ANT, the human-thing entanglement theory attempts to avoid the extremes of materialism and idealism, objectivism and subjectivism. It also incorporates agency while at the same time de-centers the human. The kaleidoscopic perspectives of human-thing entanglement proved to be valuable in enabling a fresh viewpoint to the materiality of folk magic.

### **2.2 Anna Kajander, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Viktorija L.A. Čeginskas and Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro (University of Jyväskylä)**

#### ***Autobiographical materiality and affects in research of everyday objects***

All of us possess a variety of everyday objects, which can become important or even feel irreplaceable in our lives. The reasons for cherishing material items may vary. They can connect to meaningful memories or activities, or they can have a certain “something”, which triggers emotional and bodily reactions. Objects have the power to affect us through sensory, personal, cultural, emotional, narrated and un verbalized aspects. This raises interesting research questions but also methodological challenges for exploring the affective capacities of material objects. In this paper we explore affective human-object-relationships as autobiographical materiality, pondering upon the intertwining of materiality and life history. We introduce examples from our ongoing research project in which we study meaningful objects and materiality of home employing ethnographic methods, including autoethnography.

### **2.3 Katri Hirvonen-Nurmi (University of Helsinki)**

#### ***Preserving Wixarika objects for a local collection – Experiments with agency***

In my proposal for a paper in the The 3rd International Artefacta Conference: Agency, I deal with the usefulness of applying the concept ‘agency’ to objects within Wixarika culture. According to Alfred Gell, outside the Western art field art does not have semantic or aesthetic properties. Art objects are not sign-vehicles conveying ‘meaning’ nor are they objects made in order to provoke culturally endorsed aesthetic responses, but they are agents in art nexus, in logical causal relationships in societies [outside the European-American hemisphere]. Chua and Elliott (2013) criticize Gell on his positivist approach, because he does not treat art in a way that could be generalized over ‘cultural borders’. More recently, Joseph Neurath (2018), has continued to discuss agency in his writings on Wixarika art that crosses over these borders and onto-epistemological frontiers.

I apply Gell’s concept of agency to my anthropological studies based on fieldwork among the Mexican Wixarika people. I have studied Wixarika objects in their process of preservation, in the highlands of Western Sierra Madre, between 2014–2017. In my classes as museology teacher at the local high school I tried, through a participatory research method, to engage as many students as possible in a discussion on the terminology and the descriptions of local museum objects. Through examples from documentation of museum collections I shed light on the pros and cons of ‘agency’ for analysing the Wixarika understanding of museums.

### **Session 3: Religion 1**

#### **3.1 Sofia Lahti (Linnaeus University, Sweden)**

##### ***Agencies of reliquaries: Mediating more than fragments***

The agency of holy relics in interaction with people in European Catholic culture is often represented in medieval and post-medieval texts and images. This interaction requires a medium: a reliquary, which both shelters and represents the relics. The visual appearance of the medium plays a crucial role in shaping the interaction. After the Protestant Reformation, the surviving reliquaries are fragmented and mostly without relics, but not necessarily without agency.

At first sight, the agency of a reliquary may seem identical or directly subordinated to the agency of the relics within. Relics gain their agency from the saints, who are present in each relic. The saints, in turn, are instruments of God’s power.

This paper will address the following questions: What kind of agency is possible for a reliquary? Are there in fact various agencies beyond its most obvious purpose, the mediation of holy presence? To what extent does an object continue to have agency after being

fragmented or while no longer existing physically? The discussion will be illustrated with extant, fragmented and lost examples of Nordic reliquaries.

### **3.2 Saira Leskinen (University of Helsinki)**

#### ***Death, objects and agency in Early Modern Finland***

In my paper I'd like to discuss the possibilities of the concept of agency in the study of death-related objects. Out of the group of ecclesiastical and funerary objects, my paper picks examples from Early Modern (Lutheran) Finland that demonstrate the agency and networks around these objects, such as coffins, funeral biers, tumbras, funerary armours and coats of arms.

Funerary objects interact both with people and with each other. They have both practical and symbolic meanings, both intended and unintended ones. How were the objects in their materiality interacting with people, living and dead? For example, certain objects were in direct contact simultaneously with both the living and the deceased. Many objects were designed to relay a certain message for a certain audience in a certain context and space. Some objects even became physical manifestations of death or effigies of the deceased. For example, wooden coats of arms were deliberately broken and even buried to express the end of the family line.

Funerary objects were also used together or grouped together for display. They were depicted elsewhere as symbols, or they themselves contained images of other objects thus forming networks also with other material objects.

### **3.3 Kaisa Kyläkoski (University of Jyväskylä)**

#### ***Wedding band of Martin Luther***

Many museum collections contain silver or gold rings that are called copies of either engagement or wedding rings of Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora. The form of these rings is distinctive: it presents an image of a crucifix. None of the portraits of Luther or Bora have a similar ring. The ring is linked to the nuptials with the engraved date that has been faithfully copied to the replicas.

The first replicas were apparently made in 1817, when the tricentennial of reformation was celebrated. During the following 100 years newspapers reported several times that "the ring" was found from a second hand shop in the USA or a field in Finland. Due to the different sizes of the replicas the narratives deformed so that there were two original rings: his and hers. There was also a need to explain the expensive ring, so it was described as a gift from a patron of Luther. Additionally, since the pair knew and were portrayed by Lucas Cranach, the design of the ring was attributed to Cranach.

Via the replicas the ring became more than it was and it can thus be argued to have had agency.

## **Session 4: Religion 2**

### **4.1 Antonina Kizlova (National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”)**

#### ***Distribution of “St. Barbara’s rings” through the eyes of travel-writers (late 18th–early 20th century)***

In the late 18th–early 20th centuries Kyiv was the Orthodox center equal to Jerusalem. Millions of prayers and tourists from various countries visited, inter alia, holy relics of Great Martyr Barbara in Saint Michael’s Golden Domed cathedral. Rings of various kinds were consecrated directly in the tomb of the saint and distributed as immensely popular cherished artefacts right from there. However, narrative sources containing information on the social interactions between visitors and shrine attendants during the distribution of “St. Barbara’s rings” as non-human actors are scantily explored. The paper deals with the key characteristics given in the works by travellers from various social, gender, ethnic and religious backgrounds to the custom of distributing mentioned rings directly from the shrine, in the centre of St. Barbara’s aisle, not in a special store or in open air. It is possible to argue that there is no consensus among all authors on the appropriateness of the described custom, but a positive or negative attitude towards the tradition depended on the personal beliefs of the travellers rather than on their religion, country of origin, sex, age or social status.

### **4.2 Hagit Nol (Université libre de Bruxelles)**

#### ***Dipinto artefacts of Early Islam and their agencies***

Artefacts inscribed by ink or pigments dated to Early Islam (the 7th–9th centuries CE in particular) can be found scattered in the ‘Middle East’. They include jars, incantation bowls, marble stones, and sherds with texts in Arabic, Greek, Coptic, Aramaic, or Sogdian. Their distribution spans between Lybia, Sudan, and Pakistan. These inscriptions are clearly for daily-life use and some of them are drafts or writing practices. This suggests that dipinti represent the parallel use of decayed and thus absent materials such as papyri and paper. Looking at this whole corpus through the lens of agency and entanglement notions highlights several aspects. First, these objects imply the agency of their producers and users, reflecting individuals’ preferences of specific surfaces for specific writing purposes. Second, it can be argued for an impact of the availability of carbon ink and paper – both perhaps represented by dipinti – on society via literacy and administration. The third aspect is the influence dipinto artefacts might have had on the development and initiation of other objects, e.g. inkwells. The fourth aspect is the influence the dipinto artefacts had on refuse assemblages and thus the environment.

## **Session 5: Architecture 1**

### **5.1 Anna Wild (University College London, Bartlett School of Architecture)**

#### ***“As if I or someone akin to me”: Material agency and a sense of fit in W. G. Sebald’s *The Rings of Saturn****

This paper examines the idea of material agency from an architectural design perspective. While it has always been important for architects to ask what things and buildings do for us, architecture does things to us, too: it communicates on many different levels, taking hold of us – physically, emotionally, capturing memories and reshaping them, speaking to our senses. The paper follows a scene in the part-(auto)biographical, part-fiction work *The Rings of Saturn* by W. G. Sebald to tease out some of the entangled agencies and reciprocal relationships we share with our built environments. In this scene, in which the narrator visits a friend’s house, the architecture and things cause a shift in the narrator’s sense of self – a shift towards a false feeling of belonging in the house, and of merging identity with its inhabitant, Michael Hamburger. Between the difficulties of heating old houses and the familiar appearance of dusty spectacle cases, is it the house that fits the inhabitant, or the other way around? Drawing from this scene and other parts of Sebald’s narratives, the paper examines how this sense of fit – or lack of fit – is relevant to the discussion of agency in things and buildings.

### **5.2 Aine Ryan (Bauhaus Universität Weimar)**

#### ***The Irish handball alley: Material agent in the ordinary landscape***

The ‘handball alley’ is a ball court typology considered to be indigenous to Ireland. Handball was a popular outdoor pastime from at least the 12th C. until the 1960s; played by hitting a ball by hand against a rebound-wall in a similar manner to ‘fives’ in England, ‘pellaw’ in Wales, and ‘pelota-frontón’ in the Basque Region. Purpose-built handball courts are believed to have emerged in the mid 1700s. In 2007, I began to document the remaining examples throughout Ireland, most of which are ruins in the rural landscape ([www.irishhandballalley.ie](http://www.irishhandballalley.ie)). In doctoral research commenced in 2019, I examine patterns in the spatial diffusion of 570 examples, and ultimately connect the emergence of the handball alley building type to the ‘ordinary landscape’ of Gaelic society. I define ‘ordinary landscape’ as the material dimension of experienced everyday life that manifests in order to support activities of socio-collective communication. The handball alley suggests that the ordinary Gaelic landscape was an ever-changing constellation of material features that emerged and faded, recurred elsewhere and finally faded out of relevance once their social meaning became forgotten. My paper will describe this agency of the handball alley in the ordinary landscape, with reference to material evidence and folklore.

## **Session 6: Architecture 2**

### **6.1 Katarzyna Łatała (Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw and Institute of European Ethnology, Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich)**

#### ***Agencies of the building materials: the architecture of allotment gardens in Nowa Huta***

Nowa Huta was built as a model industrial, working-class town in post-war Poland. Under state socialism, local workplaces founded 30 allotment gardens there. The allotment plots were lent to the workers as a form of subsistence support. The workers built altany (small garden houses), cultivated plants and bred animals there. In the proposed paper, basing on my on-going fieldwork, I am going to investigate the processes of building altany from the perspective of agency of materials, identifying its three stages: availability, functionalism and functionality.

Availability: As under state socialism building materials were officially unavailable, the gardeners unofficially procured them from demolition and building sites or the Steelworks. The materials which were available in the environment, determined the possible forms of altany. Functionalism: Altany were built without blueprints. The forms which they took followed the functions which the gardeners wanted them to have. Functionality: When more space was allowed or needed, the gardeners built extensions of altany. They followed the buildings' forms – e.g. constructed an attic on top of a shed roof or turned a veranda into an extra room. These building processes, dependencies and relationships are visible in the present-day forms of altany.

### **6.2 Eva Repouskou (Department of Culture, Creative Media and Industries, University of Thessaly, Greece)**

#### ***The expression of architectural aspirations in material and immaterial manifestations of architecture: A connection of intentions, representations and meanings***

Architecture is an assemblage of artefacts; building materials, technological equipment, furnishing, and all the elements that serve domestic or communal life. The building itself is an artefact, as it consists in a narrative of the social, economic, anthropological, cultural context. On the one hand architecture has always been a creation that involves bodily engagement, multisensory stimulation and responsiveness to primary human needs for shelter, protection, comfort, belonging. On the other hand it has always been a vehicle for dreaming and for depicting aspects of utopia. 'Paper architecture', and in extension 'screen architecture', constitutes in itself a whole world of creativity and intelligence, and it can be interpreted as an important artefact of contemporary architectural practice.

The current 'post-digital' paradigm stands for the redistribution and mixing of the available media, digital or others referring to artistic and manual practices such as the collage. Architecture as an object can be immaterial, theoretical, a scenario for a way of life.



This announcement will explore examples of architectural representations of utopia from the French neoclassical architects, the Italian groups of the 1960s, OMA's projects of the 1980s, deconstructivist drawings to contemporary post-digital renderings of architectural proposals for domestic or communal life.

## **Session 7: Collections 1**

### **7.1 Debdutta Sanyal (Ashoka University, India)**

#### ***A sight to behold: Artefacts, communities and the story of a museum***

This paper charts out the trajectory of an endeavour with an antiquarian root- an entirely individual initiative undertaken by a small group of local people, without any help from the state, which culminated in the establishment of a public museum that would eventually house cultural elements of an entire region. This would be the story of the Acharya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhavan Museum, located in the quaint town of Bishnupur in West Bengal, India— one of the oldest and richest in terms of its collection in Rarh region (the plateau region of south western Bengal, Singbhum, Manbhum, Mayurbhanj). Artefacts, or material objects are supposed to have a manner of making history, in which memory binds the past and the present together. In this context, it is important to note the contribution of the museum in forging a sense of identity among the local population. With its archaeology, music and folk-art galleries, it now proves to be a microcosm of the culture of Bankura or southern Rarh. Also, in the space of the museum under public gaze, the artefacts and even folk arts, removed from their original contexts, are given a new meaning. In this museum, the objects gain a new life – binding together the past and the present of an entire socio-geographical region. Objects bind the community as an active player, itself becoming an agent and active participant in history.

### **7.2 Leila Koivunen (European and World History, University of Turku)**

#### ***Pearl of Congo: The agency of atypical***

Certain artefacts in museums and private collections seem to stand out from other contemporary objects because of their physical, outward qualities: they are particularly big, heavy or otherwise imposing, made of highly valuable materials or executed in a rare or especially skillful manner. A material quality separates them from the masses and raises them above the seemingly typical thus giving them a certain agency of their own. Many of these artefacts end up being presented as “treasures” of museum collections: they reappear in permanent and temporary exhibitions and become recognizable to many. In this paper, I focus on one such object, an impressive kifwebe mask, collected in the area of the present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo, brought to Finland and sold to the predecessor of the National Museum in 1908 by a certain Viktor Huotari who worked for the Congo Free State. I follow the life of this particular object in Finland by concentrating on aspects that seemed to give it an agency of its own, assisted its visibility and created its status within the collection.

### 7.3 Katja Weiland-Särmälä

#### *Family archive as a source of emotions, identity and agency*

In my Thesis ”Pappisperheen aineeton perintö” my main aim was to observe how immaterial and material heritage moved from generation to generation in the Kjälström family. The family is an interesting combination of an old noble family and a rising bourgeoisie family. Elin von Rehausen (1859–1928) and Oscar Kjälström (1857–1955) married in 1883 and had six children. I consider how they combined values from their respective backgrounds as well as the kind of new values they perhaps created as a religious priest family. For me, being a part of the same family I studied, meant that I was in a twofold role as a researcher and family member.

As my main source in my study I have used a large family archive. The archive is private and it has not been studied before. The oldest material is from the early 18th century and there is material till late 1950s. The archive contained written material but also different kinds of objects and things. The family kept material in old coffins and drawers. They were full of memoirs, diaries, letters, photo albums, glasses, handkerchiefs, fans, and other small stuff. First I was interested only in written material and disregarded what at the first sight seemed to me insignificant things. After a while I understood that the family valued them as important as written material. The aim of the family was to pass values, identity and immaterial heritage through the family archives not just via written sources but also material things.

However, through the last 70 years the archive was forgotten and just laid in the attics and garages. How did the immaterial heritage survive? I was the first person to sift through the archives, and there was a lot of information and family history that was already forgotten. However, part of the family history was still passed from generation to generation via oral history. The family furniture, portraits, and valuable family treasures from old Weikkola manor, vicarages and townhouses were still part of families’ homes today. Stories around those different kinds of things such as great great-grandmother’s desk, medallions, a set of dishes from the late 19th century and an old golden pocket watch kept the family tradition alive.

For me the family archive was just one source to search answers for the immaterial heritage. An important way to pass through identity, family traditions, values and family history were old family antiques, paintings, photographs, jewelries, and small memory items. In my study I was interested in the different kinds of meanings and values that family items carried. It was possible to view items from different perspectives how they carried emotions, status, stories, and identity. The family member who inherited furniture, paintings, and jewelry, had also responsibilities to maintain and continue the story, repair, and carry for them – and keep them in the family. Family items had their own story and originality but from generation to generation they accumulated with different kinds of meanings from each owner.

The approach used in the research was partly based on Pierre Bourdieus theories of "habitus", and I also view them from the "auratic" perspective used by Walter Benjamin. The things had agency also as their own.

## **Session 8: Collections 2**

### **8.1 Carolyn Russo (Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum)**

#### ***The Evolution of Space Art: Visual Agency in Shaping National Identity***

The art collection of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum includes approximately 7,000 artworks on aerospace. Thematically, "Space Art" depicts the history of space exploration as seen by artists from the late 19th century to the present day. Étienne Léopold Trouvelot (1827–1895) rendered astronomical drawings from telescope observations and presented the far reaches of the solar system as early space "science" to the general public. In the 1950s, Chesley Knight Bonestell (1888–1986) popularized space travel with futuristic interpretations of Mars and the moon. When NASA sent astronauts to space in the 1960s, artists selected for the NASA Art Program officially documented humankind's first lunar landings—a public affairs initiative to gain wider audiences and sell a controversial space program to skeptical Americans. Space informed the work of many contemporary artists, including Alma Thomas (1891–1978), Norman Rockwell (1894–1978), and Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), who amplified cultural patterns, racial injustices, and socio-political tensions on the ground. In close readings from the Museum's art collection, "The Evolution of Space Art: Visual Agency in Shaping National Identity" examines the varied roles of space art artifacts and considers their critical influence in scientific, socio-political, and cultural viewpoints in the United States.

### **8.2 Liisa Oikari (The Mannerheim Museum)**

#### ***The power of a name***

House museums hold unique collections. Especially houses or homes, left behind by a specific person or a family, are significant because they present history from a very personal point of view. A home with its interiors and objects, collected and arranged by the original owner, presents history preserved in a time capsule. When museumified, a level of presentation and interpretation is added. Add in a museum audience, and the interpretation and meaning of a home and its collection becomes threefold.

In a house museum, the agency of an object is not only in the hands of current day museum professionals and museum audiences. In fact, agency is still held tight by the historical person who in his or her lifetime gave meaning to objects by adding them to a personal collection and the exhibition that is "a home". The more significant and popular the person, the more power he or she still holds to said collection. A mysterious aura emanates from objects once

in the possession of a name we all know. How to interpret and navigate a collection of objects whose agency is still strongly tied to the past and the persona of someone long gone?

### **8.3 Mirela Duculescu (National University of Arts Bucharest)**

#### ***Activating agency. Craft, object design and architectural heritage: Villa Golescu (1910) and the Honest Goods Collection (2016–2022), Romania***

This paper aims to scrutinize the agency of a group of household artefacts as a cultural and sociological phenomenon that helps preserve and innovatively engage with cultural heritage. On one hand, I use Alfred Gell's power model of agency (1998) as a macroscopic view and on the other hand, I shall make use of Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory (1996). The study case that I am examining in this paper pertains to a group of household artefacts (of European and local traditional origins) from a historical monument – the Villa Golescu in Câmpulung, Romania (1910) and their impact on a recent household design and craft collection (Honest Goods, 2006–2022).

I shall explore how the contemporary 'responsible' objects made by designers and local craftsmen/women with local materials and techniques – which attach a narrative, a local value and emotion to their use when meeting people's needs – are an inherent result of the turn of the century artefacts' agency.

In the case of the group of household artefacts from Villa Golescu (the historical and the present-day ones) one can observe the ongoing agency between objects and persons as agents, the continuous process in reassessing their identity and memory that help to preserve the cultural heritage.

## **Session 9: Archaeology 1**

### **9.1 Aki Hakonen (University of Oulu)**

#### ***The curious case of adolescent gouge twins***

At an abundant Stone Age site in Southern Lapland, two nearly identical stone gouge (curve-bladed chisel) preforms were found in the context of a pit interpreted as a human burial. Their discovery offers an avenue for considering the agency of gouges in the large scheme of things. The two artefacts are of an enigmatic stone that to a large extent dictates its own finalized form, arguably participating in its own fashioning. Intimate familiarity with the material allows predicting its wants and needs. The materialistic and social entanglements of the twins extend from woodworking to the effect of light reflecting on polished stone surfaces, and the enchanting influence they transmit on human senses. Considering these issues from multiple perspectives leads to other intriguing questions. Why were the two gouge preforms deposited in the first place, and what is the power in a work left unfinished?

## **9.2 Marika Sandell (University of Helsinki)**

### ***Warfare, migrations, and social change – How a new type of bow changed Indigenous lives in Alaska***

New technologies can often have a crucial impact on societies. My presentation describes the arrival of a new Asian-inspired bow technology in Alaska in circa 1000 CE and I follow the trail of the bow until the early 19th century. This new weapons technology adapted by Alaskan Indigenous peoples for local conditions was a game changer as it permitted building a more efficient bow for both warfare and hunting using readily available materials. I describe how the so-called sinew-backed bow sparked Indigenous warfare, migrations, and social change across the North American Arctic and beyond. Later, during the Russian colonial era, the sinew-backed bow still played a significant role in Indigenous resistance to colonization.

## **9.3 Hanna-Leena Puolakka (University of Oulu)**

### ***Round and oval brooches in northern Fennoscandia – Their use and materials***

Round and oval brooches are not as common in the Late Iron Age northern Fennoscandia as they are in the southern regions. Only a few are known from the area of northern Sweden, northern Finland and North-Western Russia. Most of them are loose finds.

I will approach this subject through the case study of an oval brooch found at Juikenttä. It is an unusually coloured grey metal, and it has sometimes been described as made of silver. Due to recent studies, it was found that this was not the case.

What does the composition of the brooch tell us, and what did it mean to its users? Was it a forgery, and the brooch sold as silver? Or was the choice of metal deliberate, perhaps only the colour mattered or held a special meaning?

When describing metal objects and their value, we often turn to contemporary knowledge, especially with precious metals. In this paper, I will take a novel angle in studying these rare brooch finds from Northern Fennoscandia, asking; how the items and their properties were transformed, and how these items transformed their users.

## **Session 10: Archaeology 2**

### **10.1 Risto Paju (Tallinn City Museum, Estonia)**

#### ***A window pillar with images of musicians from late medieval Tallinn in the Tallinn City Museum's carved stone collection as an 'agent' of 16th-century Tallinn musical culture***

We don't know much about the musical life of medieval and late medieval Tallinn nor about the musicians who worked there. Therefore, every archival reference or artefact from Tallinn at that time, is very important. Hillar Saha has written the study based on archival sources (published in 1972). As the curator of the Tallinn City Museum's collection of art and carved stone, I study the artefacts and one of them is related to the musicians of Tallinn in the 16th century. That is a fragment of a decorative window pillar from the 16th century, which is special compared to others of its kind both in terms of art history (exceptional design) and because musicians and caged bird are represented at the base of the pillar. It could be said that the name of the pillar image program could also be called sound. In the naive style, a singer and a shawm player are carved to the pillar. The pillar is made of limestone, but exceptionally, it is not the usual limestone used in Tallinn, but it may be Gotland stone, which again makes this artefact stand out among its kind.

The exact origin of the artefact is unknown (apart from the fact that it was probably a find in Tallinn), as it was taken into account in the museum during the turbulent times after World War II during the general arrangement of the collections. It is not ruled out that the detail may come from the house of the town musicians located in the Tallinn Town Hall Square (piper bode, spelludeboden). It is not possible to determine this, but the object itself is nevertheless an eloquent agent of Hanseatic Tallinn.

## **10.2 Arvi Haak (Tartu City Museum)**

### ***Is it just the form that matters? Clay replicas of prestigious pots and jugs in Tartu and Viljandi, Estonia (12th–14th cc)***

Wheel-made clay pots were introduced in South Estonia during the 11th century, and from that time onwards, the question whether local production also begins has been addressed. The development of local stylistic variations from the mid-12th century can be considered the result of local production: vessels of similar form were produced using a significantly different technique. This leads to discussion regarding the role of wheel-made vessels in the society, and their perceived agency. Another development – replicas of proto-stoneware jugs and tripod vessels, that appear sporadically from the mid-13th century, may be interpreted as a later occurrence of a similar phenomenon, but in a significantly changed social setting.

The presentation focuses on the dynamics of these developments from the perspective of social role of the vessels: for whom were these replicas meant for and were they given similar meaning as the originals? Would ascribing inanimate agency to these vessels enhance our understanding of these processes? Should we suggest *longue durée* processes for understanding this phenomenon, or would focus on individual actions (perhaps a certain potter) be a more realistic interpretation of the events?

## **Session 11: Artefacts 1**

### **11.1 Maija Mäkikalli (University of Turku)**

#### ***“They felt like living beings”. Carl-Johan Boman's modern furniture between the 1920s and 1950s***

Between the 1920s and 1950s a Finnish furniture designer Carl-Johan Boman (1883-1969) designed a variety of modern pieces of furniture for private homes. Many of these artefacts were displayed at industrial art and design exhibitions in Finland and abroad, and these artefacts were also observed by critics writing about their perceptions in the press. Boman was also one of the owners and the managing director of N. Boman Ltd, a furniture manufacturing company known for its skilful cabinetmakers and high quality products. In this paper I take a closer look at Boman's designs and explore the ways they created action or produced particular effects on their observers, users or surroundings.

### **11.2 Francisco Martinez (Estonian Academy of Arts)**

#### ***Between Past and Future: An Ethnography of Basements in Eastern Estonia***

This article reconsiders the role of basements in negotiating the private and the public self in eastern Estonia. After conducting ethnographic research in 30 basements, I argue for the need to go beyond the understanding of basements as passive containers and repositories, and instead approach them as an entangled space with a social projection and a future orientation. Basements are part of an iterative ordering and adjustment of personal identity, family roles, and wider socio-material transformations, working as a spatio-temporal fixer. These time-technologies facilitate the sorting of different relationships to people, places, and events. Keeping things in the dark thus is a social gesture, part of a normative order, producing a complex entanglement between the private and the public self. A sense of privacy is generated through these restricted spaces of material enclosure. They operate as a threshold, allowing concealment and alternative notions of value, temporality, and representation.

## **Session 12: Artefacts 2**

### **12.1 Xiao Sheng (Arizona State University)**

#### ***The vanished painting as a living agency: The tale of Autumn Mountains***

A famous tale of the legendary Chinese painting by Huang Gongwang (1269–1354), Autumn Mountains, is written by Yun Shouping (1633–1690) according to Wang Hui's (1632–1717) oral narration. Both Yun and Wang were famous painters of the early Qing dynasty, who, like many other painters of their time, spoke highly of the Yuan master Huang Gongwang and eagerly studied his style of painting. Autumn Mountains was once in the possession of Zhang Jinchen, a collector of the late Ming dynasty, but later it disappeared. The tale of Autumn Mountains vividly records how this legendary, yet vanished painting affected the most accomplished painters in late Ming, and even after fifty years, the Ming dynasty had fallen and the Qing had been established, it was still discussed among the painters of old and new

generations and remembered as a symbol of perfection. Autumn Mountains thus was beyond its materiality as a painting. The painting had become an independent body mingled with life and death, a living agency crossing the boundaries between the percipere and the percipi and connecting the minds of human and inhuman.

## **12.2 Daniela Salgado Cofré (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Université Libre de Bruxelles)**

### ***Transformations for continuity: Tracing clay and pots in Pomaire, Chile***

This proposition explores the agency of artefacts and materials in the village of Pomaire in Chile, positioning it as a relevant case study relating to the frictions and controversies in crafts. This village, the majority of whose inhabitants are engaged in craft-making, is recognised as being representative of the craft heritage and of national identity. However, Pomaire has been continuously criticised for its loss of tradition, primarily due to the modification of traditional pieces or artefacts developed by artisans in response to global trends and marketing. Despite conflictive transformations, the village's pottery production has widespread consumption, characterised by a series of utilitarian typical artefacts made in clay, which are associated with the national culinary identity.

To explore transformations and adaptability, the methods focused on tracing the materials and the objects, finding inspiration in the field of Design, Sociology and Anthropology for their relevance to the study of the interaction between humans and non-humans. The perspective used in this research moves away from studies that relegate materiality and objects to the background of human agency or consider humans and objects in opposition and instead analyse the agency of clay and the objects as participants in articulating relationships in Pomaire. Objects are thus recognised as taking part in the transformation of pottery making while acting as visible traces of these transformations along with written and spoken discourse.

## **Session 13: Textiles 1**

### **13.1 Jenni Sahramaa (University of Helsinki)**

#### ***Spiral decorated shawls in Late Iron Age Finland***

Remains of spiral decorated shawls have been found from inhumation graves in Late Iron Age Southern Finland. The most elaborate examples come from female graves, but shawls were also placed to cover men and children in the burials. These shawls were precious and prestigious garments, perhaps used by the richest members of the society or reserved for special situations like rituals and festivities.

Decorating garments with copper alloy spiral ornamentation was very popular in Southern Finland during the Iron Age. Decorations were often done as part of the finishing techniques



of the garment, but separately made ornaments were also used. Fabrication of these decorations required material resources, time, and skill. The combination of dark blue fabrics with shimmering metal decorations has been striking, but spiral ornaments may also have had magical and symbolic meanings both for the living and as a protection for the deceased on the journey to the afterlife.

This paper analyzes the remains of spiral decorated shawls from female, male, and child graves in relation to fabrication techniques, value, and use - both in life and in the burial ritual.

### **13.2 Jenni Suomela, Krista Wright and Git Skoglund (University of Helsinki)** *Monastery textiles from European peripheries*

Both Finland and Iceland had imported monastic systems in the Middle Ages. Even though the Icelandic abbeys belonged mostly to the Augustinian or Benedictine order and the only convent in Finland was Bridgettine Sisters, the Catholic church textile tradition appears as shared. Textile traditions, materials, motifs, tools, and skills have travelled through trade and exchange with people. Visual similarities in embroidery and choices of embellishment cannot be denied even though the cultural sphere and distance set them at the opposite peripheral corners of the European cultural sphere.

Research material in this study is several medieval monastery textiles from both countries. Especial interest is on linen textiles, the main aim is to identify plant materials to test a hypothesis that flax was not the only bast fibre material used in production. Additionally, these artefacts are studied with the methods of textile research.

There is very little archaeobotanical evidence of flax or hemp growing in Iceland whereas both were abundantly farmed in Finland. The trade connections and networks of the monastic system hopefully come more visible through this and would provide us with an understanding of how unified the textile traditions in the Catholic monastic system were.

### **13.3 Riikka Räisänen (University of Helsinki)** *Agency of a Karelian traditional costume as a historical and contemporary artefact*

Women's traditional handwork has been an important part of Karelian folk art until recent times. Wool and linen have been treated for use in the households: cloth has been woven, socks and mittens have been knitted, and various kinds of textile objects decorated with embroidery. In Karelia, women used dresses that were homemade and richly embroidered with knowledge and patterns obtained from previous generations. These folk costumes represent the most primitive and unfashionable costumes in Finland when comparing cuts, fabrics and embroidery motifs. In Karelia, folk costumes were in use till the latest and with elderly women even in the beginning of the 20th century. After the Second World War parts

of Karelia were ceded to Russia, and the Finnish Karelians moved to Finland. Wearing the Karelian traditional costumes has been an important part of Karelians' culture, heritage and identity in Finland till these days. This study examines the agency of Karelian traditional costume in history and within the contemporary Karelian society in Finland. Data is collected from literature, internet and interviews and it is analyzed by the means of qualitative content analysis. Results show the traditional costume has had many meanings over the decades, and even today the agency of the traditional costume is strong in building multilevel identity of Karelian rooted people.

## **Session 14: Textiles 2**

### **14.1 Luisina Silva Blanc**

#### ***The power of clothing in colonial Latin America***

In the colonies clothing was employed to show individuality or commonality, to emulate or to deceive and to perform identities in a highly controlled environment. Specific clothing items gave individuals agency and served as a tool to show that a person belonged to a group that had commonalities or were part of a shared space. Additionally, dress allowed the wearer to alter his or her identity.

In my paper I present examples of commonality, emulation and deception through appearance. Through an analysis of criollo portraits in Lima and Mexico City, I demonstrate how clothing and accessories were used to imitate Spanish and French style by displaying a European connection. Furthermore, groups from lower castas such as mestizos, indios, mulatos, and negros, negotiated their identity through appearance while exploring the possibilities and navigating the ins and outs of various categories. Lastly, I analyze the case of Tapada Limeña, a woman who utilized certain clothing items to deceive her identity. All of these examples of the female dress were contemporaneous in colonial Latin America and are proof of the power of clothing.

### **14.2 Anna Parviainen (University of Helsinki)**

#### ***The true stripes of Scandinavian unisex: Retracing similarities and differences of three striped collections by Nørgaard paa Strøget (1967), Marimekko (1968) and Polarn O. Pyret (1975)***

TBA

### **14.3 Jo Pilcher (University of Brighton)**

#### ***Printing and wearing Aboriginal Australian textiles: Agency through embodied sensation***

Arts and craft centres were introduced within Indigenous Australian communities across Australia from the 1930s onwards in order to provide a creative outlet for some members of the communities. Rooted in the missionary and colonial power systems, these centres arguably serve as a concentrated microcosm of the wider neo-colonial issues within Australia. The artefacts that many of the centres create serve as documentation of the tensions between artist and manager.

The majority of the textiles produced in these centres are made with the intention of them eventually being worn. This wearability also establishes a unique relationship between the buyer and the textile that is not present in other forms of Aboriginal Australian art and design. Building on Pajaczkowska's argument that the temporality and haptic quality of textiles expresses 'a paradox of absence and presence,' this paper will first explore the notion of the makers' absent presence in contemporary Aboriginal Australian textiles. It will then consider the embodied relationships that both makers and wearers create with these textiles to explore the notion of agency within neo-colonial power relations. In doing so, the paper will demonstrate that an embodied analysis of these artefacts complicates established understandings of Indigenous Australian textile-making, its dissemination and use.

### **Session 15: Textiles 3**

#### **15.1 Evgeny Manzhurin (University of Eastern Finland)**

##### ***How wearable heraldic badges determined the late Soviet symbolic imaginary***

I discuss the explosive growth of heraldic badge collecting in the late Soviet Union and interpret the heraldic badges as imaginaries of Soviet space and time. I argue that the heraldic collectables determined how late Soviet and early post-Soviet territorial symbols were imagined and created. Production of heraldic badges followed the onset of the Soviet Heraldic Revival. (Manzhurin 2021, 2015). Adoptions of heraldic city symbols began in the mid-1960s when discourse promoting new city symbols was established through the press. Until that Soviet, cities had no official symbols, while the badge as a form was only utilised for rare specific occasions. From the late 1960s dozens of new symbols were adopted locally and badges were mass-produced by tens of factories. A black market emerged, and "fake" symbols were invented and manufactured. Millions were collecting and every urban family owned at least a few. With industrialisation, mass housing in separate apartments and destigmatization of consumption, the new urbanites were now fashioning identities, drawing symbolic borders, and consuming badges as tokens of modern lifestyle. The new symbols acted like local appropriations of previously uniform Soviet symbolic space, introducing the city as its new and central feature. Heraldic badges were much more numerous and popular than the heraldic city symbols per se. I argue that due to the popularity of the former, both the mass consumer and the designers of the new symbols imagined the city symbol as a heraldic badge. This has led to the popularisation of a number of distinct features in late Soviet and early post-Soviet city heraldics that have come directly from the medium of metallic badge. These are the inclusion of the city's name and its date of establishment, conceptualisation of

the heraldic symbol as a three-dimensional object, gilded borders around the side of the shield, and many more which I will discuss in my paper. Thus, the heraldic badge overran the previous symbolic tradition and changed late Soviet imaginary in ways dictated by not only the ideology of the Heraldic Revival but by the material form of the badge itself.

### **15.2 Ildikó Lehtinen (University of Helsinki)**

#### ***Mari traditional embroidery in the private and collective sphere of life***

The focus of my interest is the Eastern Mari (Russia, Volga region) embroidery. What I ask is this: What was the role of the embroidery in different periods of history? How was interpreted the meaning of embroidery pattern related to the ideology in socialist and post-socialist time? Why am I interested in looking at this? Embroidery is a typical women's activity. In the beginning of Soviet time, in the 1920s the women's section of the Party, the Zhenotdel, would involve the total emancipation of women, including everyday life. The embroidery, and in general all that was "soft" was considered hazardous and superfluous. Ideally all decorated items should disappear, the motto "nothing superfluous" (*nichego lishnego*) prevailed in all matters of judgment (Buchli 1999, 45). What about the Eastern Mari embroidery, how and why it is preserved in the present? It is about the protective energy of the embroidery which protected the women from dangerous power. The embroidery was controlled only by women, and the women understood the language of embroidery's patterns. Embroidery indicated a bridge between the past and present, between life and the ancestors.

My comments related to the embroidered ritual cloths in the museum collections, and to the interviews based on my own field works in 1981–2019.

### **15.3 Azar Emami Pari (Regensburg University)**

#### ***The Persian carpet is a way to be stabilized on Earth***

The carpet was the essence of space and could be moved on different days, seasons and times of the year. In ancient Iran, the inhabitants of any building, would allocate themselves in the optimum place of the building, looking for the most optimum amount of sunlight and temperature and were in fact migrating within the buildings. The south porch was used in a particular season and the north or west porch at another time. The carpet would also be moved along with the residents and would determine seating places. There is still this habit of splashing and carpeting in the yard, porch, terrace or roof in many cities. Focusing on paintings before the Qajar era, it is obvious how the carpet would define and move the limits of any group of people and its function was not limited to the interior spaces. In this sense, the carpet takes the motifs where the crowd was present to give colors to the community. From this perspective, the carpet is the background of presence in Iran. In this sense, the carpet defines its own boundaries, and this is one of its most important functions.

## **Session 16: Theory 1**

### **16.1 César Lugo-Eliás (Unexpected Media Lab, Research Institute for Design, Media, and Culture (ID+), Porto, Portugal)**

#### ***Mapping agency at the dance floor. How agency helped a designer to challenge functionality and see beyond the 'physically evident'***

Techno music clubs are spaces characterized by loud sound systems, darkness, indulgent sensual and sexual activities, social interactions of diverse nature, and the relaxed use of recreational drugs. Studies on clubbing are traditionally a realm of the social and health sciences. Facing this, I conducted my doctoral study on clubbing from the perspective of the discipline of design, focusing not on the objects 'inserted' within the physical space of the club, but on the way all elements present on the dance floor interplay with each other creating the intense dance floor experience.

In this endeavor – based on two years of participatory observation and interviews – the concept of agency became crucial since it allowed me to observe beyond the object, and beyond what is physically evident while challenging 'traditional' design concepts such as functionality.

In the present paper, I want to offer a reflection on how the concept of agency came to shape my research in the field of design by helping me to acknowledge the role of both humans and objects in the assemblage we perceive as the dance floor experience.

### **16.2 Taina Syrjämaa (University of Turku)**

#### ***Things in a multispecies society***

Studying the entangled relationships of things and humans becomes even more complex and messy when we acknowledge that materialities are simultaneously and continuously shared by nonhuman animals whose life-worlds and sensory regimes differ from humans. Things and animals can create relations that are radically different from human intentions and understandings. Things also play a key role in mediating human–animal relations. This paper explores complexity and relationality of agencies by focusing on interactions between things, animals and humans.

The paper draws from historical inquiry and human-animal studies. It focuses on methodological and theoretical considerations and presents empirical examples of interactions between things and 19th century farm animals and pets. It acknowledges Latourian actor-networks otherwise but calls for inclusion of non-human animals. When societies are understood as multispecific, can we find out more about agencies of things, animals and humans? In this paper, inspiration is sought from another theorist, Michel de Certeau, who also neglected animals, but whose theory of everyday life helps to make visible anonymous actors as well as diffuse agency going beyond formal power relations.

## **Session 17: Theory 2**

### **17.1 Pekka Hassinen (University of Jyväskylä, Contemporary Culture Series (Nykykulttuuri) (publishing editor))**

#### ***Agency and constitution fallacy***

I call the prevalent notion of artefact the constitution fallacy. I will analyze how we often encounter the material only through its constitution or, having surmounted the object of the constitution, as the pure internality of thinking and language within the enclosure of the symbolic.

I see the material-physical as momentum for immersion and as a source for thinking-language deferentialities, which I uncover and analyze. In its deferentialities (unlike in its referentialities or its closed identicalities), thinking discovers its radically hybrid aspect. The radical actant would be the decontextualizing materiality of agency, which also defers towards the symbolic and gives rise to the hybridized objects and affordances of our practical activity.

The concept of “the symbolic” is in my thinking always conceived of as being in a deferential relationship to the matter-body continuum, not in opposition to it.

The human domain cannot be separated from the artifacts we use and form collectives with. But what if the impossibility of purification described by Bruno Latour is also “too human” and ultimately only the result of the perfecting of the process of cultural constitution of “material” artifacts? Is it the product of the modern, which, according to Latour's understanding, shouldn't even exist?

### **17.2 Bettina Bruder (University Osnabrueck, Germany)**

#### ***Tools as agents – Matter making meaning***

The objects within this research are tools and apparatuses in the form of manipulated measurement devices, interfaces, and gauging procedures sparking alternative modes of meaning-making. While the predominant function of conventional measurement devices is a separating, stabilizing, and verifying capacity to produce truthful and reliable values, the agential tools in this paper disturb and enrich a measuring process provoking unconventional encounters. The devices activate a process of change and transformation employing the concept of elastic materiality. Thus, the altered devices reveal epistemological *power imbalances* enabling *worldly re-configurings* (Barad).

These measurement tools and *inscription devices* in Latour's sense become *boundary objects* (Star, Griesemer) destabilizing a user's position, redirecting a user's gaze and reconfiguring a

user's body, behavior, perception. Complex and controversial situations may be understood and negotiated differently through human engagement with the manipulated measurement devices so that a more viable reality can be envisioned and constructed. Consequently, tools as agents may cultivate a different sensorium stimulating unconventional thoughts through their material-discursive agency.

This paper exemplifies the agency of artefacts on the basis of manipulated measurement devices affecting the interactions between matter and meaning making explicating cultural, material and sociological consequences.

## **Session 18: Suomeksi (in Finnish)**

### **18.1 Susanna Siro (University of Turku)**

#### ***Kaupunkipienoismalli esineenä***

Väitöstutkimukseni käsittelee historiaa esittäviä kaupunkipienoismalleja. Erityisesti olen keskittynyt alueellisissa vastuumuseoissa esillä oleviin kaupunkipienoismalleihin.

Tutkimuskohteinani ovat Porin, Rovaniemen, Sortavalan ja Viipurin kaupunkipienoismallit. Yksi tutkimukseni kysymyksistä on, miksi kaupunkipienoismallit on rakennettu. Tarkastelen aihetta tässä esityksessä esineen näkökulmasta. Pienoismallit ovat museoesineitä, mutta niiden reitti museoon ei ole samanlainen kuin useimpien muiden kokoelmaesineiden. Oikeastaan kaupunkipienoismallit ovat museoesineeksi rakennettuja. Niiden funktio on erilainen kuin ”tavallisten” museoesineiden. Museoesineen historia tunnetaan ja sen käyttötarkoitus tai käyttäjä on syy ottaa esine museon kokoelmiin. Kaupunkipienoismalleista tulee museoesineitä valmistumisensa jälkeen, ja niiden rooli näyttelyn osana on useassa museossa merkittävä. Kaupunkipienoismalleihin etsitään tietoja ja jälkiä menneisyydestä.

Tutkimissani malleissa kaupunkipienoismallit on rakennettu vasta kaupunkikuvan muuttumisen jälkeen. Esimerkiksi sota ja sen aiheuttamat tuhot ovat muuttaneet kaupunkikuvaa. Porin kaupunkipienoismalli on rakennettu vasta yli sata vuotta kaupungin palon jälkeen. Kaupunkipienoismallit on haluttu rakennuttaa muistinpaikoiksi, jotta jälkipolville jää jälki ennen tuhoa olleesta kaupunkikuvasta. Näin ollen kaupunkipienoismallin rakentamisessa elementit, valinnat ja perustelut on merkityksellisiä siinä suhteessa, miten sitä esineenä esitetään ja katsotaan.

Tutkimieni kaupunkipienoismallien rakentumisprosessit ja museoesineeksi päätyminen ovat olleet omanlaisensa prosessit. Kaupunkipienoismallit ovat muistinpaikkoja, joissa katsojan rooli vaikuttaa kokemukseen. Katsoja tarkastelee menetettyä kaupunkikuvaa omista lähtökohdistaan: toiselle kaupunkipienoismalli on taideteos, toiselle muisto synnyin kaupungista.

## 18.2 Suvi Toivanen (University of Helsinki)

### *Kozelštšanin Jumalanäidin ikonin toimijuus*

Case study -aiheeni on Uspenskin katedraalissa Helsingissä sijaitsevan Kozelštšanin Jumalanäidin ikonin toimijuus. Tämä ukrainalainen painokuvaikoni 1880-luvulta on löytänyt tiensä Viipuriin viime vuosisadan vaihteessa, missä se sai ihmeitätekevän maineen nuoren tytön ihmeeparantumisen myötä. Ikoni evakuoitiin talvisodan jaloista ja sijoitettiin Uspenskin katedraaliin. Se on saanut Suomen ortodoksisen kirkon virallisen hyväksynnän yhtenä maamme kuudesta ihmeitätekevistä ikonista. Ikoni on toisinto samannimisestä, kymmenistä parantumisihmeistä kuuluisaksi tulleesta Kozelštšanin Jumalanäidin ikonista, mikä sijaitsee Ukrainassa.

Käsittelen esityksessäni Kozelštšanin Jumalanäidin ikonin toimijuuden ilmenemistä kolmesta näkökulmasta: hellä parantaja, voimallinen esirukoilija ja rauhanaktivisti. Tutkimukseni aineistona olen käyttänyt ikonista kirjoitettuja lukuisia uutisia ja muita artikkeleita sekä osallistuvan havainnoinnin kautta keräämääni dataa. Parantamisen ja esirukoilijana toimimisen teema pohjaa koko ikonin elinkaaren ajalle, poliittisena rauhanaktivistina toimiminen sen sijaan vuoden 2022 Ukrainan sotaan liittyviin tapahtumiin Suomessa.

Uspenskin katedraalin Kozelštšanin Jumalanäidin ikoni asettuu pitkään ihmeitätekevien pyhien kuvien jatkumoon, josta on paljon esimerkkejä niin ortodoksisessa, katolisessa kuin antiikinkin maailmassa. Erityisen tästä ikonista tekee yhteisön sille antama merkitys ja kunnioitus. Tämän esineen performatiivinen toimijuus ei ole uskon asia, vaan se näkyy havaittavasti sen kulkemissa ristisaatoissa, sen edessä pidetyissä rukouspalveluksissa ja ylipäättään sen kanssa vuorovaikuttavien ihmisten toiminnan ja kokemusten kautta. Viimeistelen aiheesta taidehistorian opinnäytettä Helsingin yliopistossa.

**Friday, 17 February 2023**

### Session 19: Politics 1

#### 19.1 Joseph H. Larnerd (Drexel University)

##### *The Centennial Wine Set's doubts in the wake of the American Civil War*

For all the pomp around reconciliation between the North and South at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition (1876), the so-called “Centennial Set” had its doubts. Made by laborers at Christian Dorflinger’s factory in Pennsylvania, the set consisted of a cut and engraved eighteen-inch-tall decanter and a smaller, similarly ornamented wineglass for each of the thirty-eight states. It was yet another optimistic image of unity between northern and southern states after the Civil War. However, as my paper shows, formal disharmonies in the decoration of the wine glasses undermined the political harmony suggested by the set and the Exposition at large, inviting fairgoers to feel apprehensive, even doubtful, about the ease of



national reconciliation imagined by both. Each wineglass was engraved with a state's coat of arms, but the diamond pattern cut into every glass, flanking and "behind" this iconography, visually interrupted and distorted the latter, making the state emblems exceedingly difficult to discern. The Centennial Set's disharmonious design undercut the intentions of its makers and the fair, suggesting that national unity would come at the expense of a clear acknowledgement and respect for the uniqueness of each state's identity and sovereignty, a suspicion held by many bitter citizens of the former Confederacy.

## **19.2 Monika Stobiecka (Faculty of Liberal Arts, University of Warsaw)**

### ***Weak artifacts: Precarious heritage of the Women Strikes in Poland***

My presentation will focus on conceptualizing the idea of weak artifact as exemplified by the material remains from the Women Strikes in Poland in 2020 and 2021. The fight for women's rights in Poland was the main subject of an exhibition held by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw. "Who will write the history of tears? Artists on Women's Rights" was organized in autumn 2021 and referred to the famous artwork by Barbara Krueger. Although most of the rooms were displaying artworks, there was a separate space to host the weak artifacts of the Women's Protests in Poland. Already during the protests, the Museum organized a call for posters to be collected and included in the museum's register. All collected pieces of paperboards were exhibited alongside photographs documenting the events from October 2020. The objects: mostly paper banners, posters, and paperboards, covered with slogans, short poems, but also vulgarisms stood proudly among famous artworks. The way the museum presented the objects reframed them as testimonies and evidence for the tragic history of women's protests. The paper boards looked monumental when presented on a background covered with heartbreaking and moving photographs. These weak artifacts: paper and carton displayed in a museum contested the idea of exhibits as durable and solid. In a sense, these weak artifacts were more impressive and affective than meticulously crafted artworks and city monuments.

## **19.3 Irene Brunotti and Lara Krause-Alzaidi (University of Leipzig, Institute of African Studies)**

### ***Wor(l)ding un/racializing artefacts***

We think the agency of artefacts through matterphorics, a method for "the articulation of meaning in relation to matter, understood not as fixed entity, but as constantly shifting (-phoric) and thereby establishing entanglements and relationalities" (Reading Matters, 2018, np). To us, matterphorics is a method of wor(l)ding, of word-and-world-making, and not of representation. One of matterphorics' ethical imperatives is theorising from the wound outward (Weizman and Gandorfer, 2021). Our concern is the wound of race: the production of racialized bodies and the injustices and violences continuously emerging from it (Hooks, 2015; Williams, 2021). We both encountered the open wound of race in empirically unrelated former research, one attending to the rubble of the collapsed House of Wonders in Zanzibar,

the other to the banners held during Black Lives Matter protests in Germany. The rubble and the BLM banners have pulled us into attentiveness towards the manifold matterings of the wound of race and towards the many ways in which it is continuously being covered up, neglected. Responding to this neglect, we re-turn, re-member rubble and banners, in fact we wor(l)d these artefacts “to account for the devastation wrought as well to produce openings, new possible histories/futures by which time-be” (Barad 2019). Wor(l)ding the (Zanzibari) rubble and the (German/American) banners is to matter-forth the wound of race, an act of response-ability towards the pastpresentfutures from which we inherit, in which we are dwelling, and to which we are heading.

## **Session 20: Politics 2**

### **20.1 Holly O’Farrell (Leiden University)**

#### ***Collaboration and individual agency: Mabel Bent in the Hadhramaut and beyond (1893-1897)***

Countless women traveled the globe alongside their husbands as they conducted business on behalf of the British Empire. Many spent years abroad and became deeply connected to the lands and cultures in which they were situated. Furthermore, as will be seen, these women contributed to scientific and historical knowledge whether it was alongside their partners or through their own interests. The agency of such women in collecting and contributing to archaeology and anthropology has often been overlooked. This paper focuses on the collections of Mabel Bent.

Mabel and Theodore Bent traveled through Europe, Arabia and parts of Africa establishing Theodore as a published writer on a wide variety of ancient civilisations and a collector for numerous museums. While Mabel had traveled alongside him, had taken part in digs, and had been instrumental in taking the notes that Theodore would depend on to write his books, little has been done to highlight her involvement and agency in their adventures. This paper will look at the unprecedented journey of the Bents through the Hadhramaut region using Mabel Bent's travel chronicles and collections to understand this couple and their relationship as travelers, archaeologists and collectors.

### **20.2 Derya Acuner (IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca)**

#### ***Remembering with textile objects: Hripsimeh Sarkissian’s embroideries, reinterpreted and refunctioned***

In Turkey, like elsewhere, collective memory issues have become the subjects of public discussions/clashes. Especially since the early 2000s-and despite the ever-increasing oppressiveness of the government, there have been insistent efforts to reveal and confront the past (and present) violations of rights of different groups and communities. The Armenian

Genocide is a focal point of these efforts. Among many other atrocious incidents, less known internationally, there is also the Dersim Massacre.

A survivor of both, Hripsimeh Sarkissian (1908, Dersim–2000, Istanbul) (re)started embroidering in the early 1970s. Her embroideries, first, functioned as household objects. Years later, Anita Toutikian, a granddaughter of Hripsimeh and a psychoanalyst and an artist herself, saw one of her grandmother's needlework used as a floor mat in a relative's kitchen. This event marked the beginning of her journey to collect her grandmother's embroideries and track their possible meanings. Eventually, she converted the narrative she constructed on how these embroideries tell her grandmother's sufferings caused by the Armenian Genocide and Dersim Massacre, into exhibition content. During this journey, the lives of Hripsimeh's embroideries have transformed, and they joined a collective struggle. Besides, these embroideries not only added new layers to Toutikian and Hripsimeh's relationship but also the materialities of these objects, by emphasizing the flows between touching and seeing, and the other deals with the limitations and utilities of the interactions between (textile) objects and the discourses entwined with them in the context of curatorial practices. I hope this paper, which takes the multisensory and affective features of relations between humans and (textile) objects as its main interest, will contribute to the approaches trying to comprehend the interactions between humans and objects, and their impacts on meaning-making.

### **20.3 John Harries (Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh)**

#### ***The stories a thing can tell (or not): Am Ll.2***

This paper is about a small artefact, a harpoon head made of bone, that is held in the collections of the British Museum. The object is innocuous, but it is associated with a notorious instance of settler violence towards the Beothuk, a people, thought to be extinct, who were indigenous to the island of Newfoundland.

By working with this object, and, in particular, through the process of making a series of replicas, this paper addresses how we tell stories with things and the ways in which we render things articulate in our story-making strategies. In so doing, we will argue that the storying of things is a material process, indivisible from the agential capacity of things and the material hermeneutics by which we make things knowable and articulate. Given that this object is withdrawn from public view, and intersecting with recent discussions of the capacities of replica and virtual objects to animate conversations about difficult histories, we will particularly attend to the ways in which such objects are made, and, in being made, draw these stories to them (or not).

There will be an (un)real artefact handling session accompanying this presentation.

### **Session 21: Making & crafting**

### **21.1 Madalyn Wilson-Fetrow and Vanessa Svihla (University of New Mexico)**

#### ***The materiality in making: Making for engagement, development and learning***

Engaging in making can be complex, expensive, challenging to orchestrate, and does not always result in learning; there are substantial obstacles to incorporating making in school settings, particularly in schools that serve marginalized youth. This study investigates making at a construction, architecture and engineering-focused school that serves students who have been marginalized by traditional schooling. We present making episodes (a modelslum, dome homes, arches) and consider them in terms of their material and social qualities, their ill-structuredness, how they fit in context, and their potential to support learning. This analysis highlights uses of making—as a way to engage learners; as a way for learners to develop as learners; and as an experience deliberately leveraged to support learning. None of the episodes supported deep learning on its own, but in context, a well-designed making activity can provide a pivotal experience for making meaning through reflection.

### **21.2 Fredrik Leijonhufvud (University of Gothenburg, Department of Conservation)**

#### ***Affordances of old boats, tools, materials and nature in traditional clinker boat building***

This contribution is a result of a PhD project, studying a local boat building tradition where there are no living tradition bearers, just old boats that still can provide craft knowledge. Boatbuilders work in interaction with tools and boatbuilding material like timber. There is also interaction with the surrounding nature, using locally grown wood and adapting the boats to local waters and weather conditions. Can we map the craftsperson's relation to tools and natural resources and the possibilities they offer for craft and design? To what extent is the design ruled by the craftsperson and to what extent is it ruled by the environment? Posthuman actor-network theory has come to include not only human interaction, but also material agency or more-than-human agency. James J. Gibson's concept affordance can describe how a craftsperson can make use of tools and raw material. In comparison to material agency, I have concluded that the concept of affordance presents a comprehensible theoretical approach when it comes to mapping the craftsperson's relation to tools, natural resources, and the possibilities they offer for craft and design. The materiality does not rule the design, but with its specific properties it presents affordances for the boatbuilder's actions.

### **21.3 Manjola Xhaferri (University “Aleksander Moisiu” Durrës, Albanian)**

#### ***Craftsmanship in the 18th-19th centuries, evidence of cultural artifacts in Albania: Case study Kruja***

This paper is intended to analyze issues that aim to show the continuation of the Albanian artisanal tradition, focusing mainly on the traditional handicrafts of the province of Kruja, including the craftsmen of the city of Kruja.

An important impetus has been especially the fact of the large dimensions that cultural tourism has taken, where I had the desire and interest to address the problem of reactivating some of the traditional crafts to be able to be put at the service of current developments.

It is interesting that in Kruja the only Market is preserved, with all the traditional features, and therefore it offers the most optimal conditions, not only to activate but also to trade since here tourism has reached great dimensions of development. We emphasize that currently in this Bazaar, in addition to the products of traditional crafts that continue to practice their crafts, imported products are also sold. Without denying the right of merchants to sell these goods, I think that local products should have priority and we should dominate the traditional market of this city, where every foreign visitor and local ones are allowed to choose.

In this study, I focused mainly on the handicrafts made by the women of this province as well as by the women of the surrounding villages, based mainly on several forms of work such as woolen works, linen works, silk works, and especially cotton works.

According to archaeological evidence, some masters who practiced this were known since ancient times. The oldest is considered the manufacture of clay vessels, such as pots for water, pitchers for boiling water, and many other vessels used to prepare food. Some of the crafts were practiced by women and some by men. In general, women developed their activity in domestic environments.

The skills practiced by them were aimed at meeting family needs and less for the market. While the men for the most part worked on goods to sell within the province, but also in markets further away.

Usually, men's work consisted of working with stone, metal, wood, etc., the products of which were used not only for family needs but also for trading. This study will serve to further deepen the knowledge about the various artistic works of this province and the preservation of this tradition in future generations.

## **Session 22: Digitalisation**

### **22.1 Daniel Gammenthaler (University of Bern, Switzerland)**

#### ***Reverse engineering of digital artifacts***

In my research, I investigate the history of digital media artifacts, specifically malware. A material perspective on the digital media artifact of malware offers a new, somewhat adventurous way of looking at history.

By largely ignoring the event history to focus on the malware's functional domain, this history can be reinterpreted and also offers exciting new points of connection. Digital artifacts do not only consist of what is experienced, visible on the screen or audible through

audio boxes. They are actually bits and bytes of functions and processes. These artifacts can be broken down using a method called reverse engineering. In the case of malware, this is done in order to determine its ability to act, but also to identify its authorship. It also helps to analyze the agency of the media artifact, since it is often not clear at first glance what operations a malicious digital artifact performs. The historical view of malware is also exciting because it is an autonomous self-acting artifact. Created by humans but largely self-operating after creation and malicious to this day.

## **22.2 Leena Svinhufvud, Lily Diaz-Kommonen and Gautam Wishwanath (Aalto University, Design Museum Helsinki)**

### ***Virtual design objects generating social cohesion and participation in cultural heritage – Case Pop-up VR Museum***

Everyday life objects possess a unique ability to evoke memories and promote storytelling. As media designers and heritage professionals, we seek to use this feature to provoke engagement and social cohesion amongst diverse museum audiences through a semantic approach to collection objects including Citizen Curation and Interpretation and Reflection Loop (IRL). This approach is being implemented in the co-design of a “Pop-up VR Museum” prototype with objects from the Design Museum collection.

The prototype also uses gamification and virtual reality to engage end-user communities. It enables research of intricate distributed actor-network relationships and multimodal sets of interaction. Important features include listening to stories about design objects while experiencing novel perspectives of these objects in a virtual environment; contributing one’s own story and broadening the scope of accessibility to audiences who may not be able to visit the physical museum.

This presentation will discuss the agency of objects in the complex network of interpretations and reflections created in the process, and presents initial results from testing sessions. The Pop-up-VR Museum is a collaboration between Aalto University and Design Museum Helsinki in the EU Horizon 2020 project SPICE.

## **22.3 Rebekah Rousi (School of Marketing and Communication, University of Vaasa) and Gilbert Cockton (University of Sunderland, UK)**

### ***Soulless algorithms, segmented bodies and assemblages in HCI***

The sociological approach of understanding phenomena through the lens of Assemblages is not new, yet remains intriguing from a range of perspectives. Particularly in the design world, the feat of understanding designs, their applications, impact and lifespans, Assemblage Theory (AT) has proved a fruitful basis for hypothesising and observing objects and services in the dynamics of human systems. AT characterising object existential complexity. Objects were already complex even in their offline, material, simplistic forms. Now, with the

connected, learning and networked nature of new products and materialisms, assemblages are even more ephemeral and effervescent (fluid) than before. Redström and Wiltse (2020) coined ‘fluid assemblages’ to describe the flowing nature of objects in digital spaces – a phone may be a cinema, a game console or mobile office. In this paper we extend Zygmund Bauman’s discussions on liquidity to explore the volatile area of digital human augmentation, where notions of the body, self, presence transgress between spaces. In the age of digital twinning, ‘twinning’ is adopted here as an alternative concept to describe how the assemblages of human life are wrapped and streamed between digital artefacts. Territorialisation is also described in an effort to consolidate some basic properties of new assemblages.

## **Session 23: Decay & repair**

### **23.1 Tenno Teidearu (Estonian National Museum)**

#### ***Agency of decay: Material failure and repair as engagement with the material lives of things***

This presentation focuses on the decay of things, and their repair, as response to and engagement with the material lives of things. The empirical material for this research is based on ethnographic fieldwork on contemporary DIY repair and reuse in Estonia, and a collection of repair stories collected by the Estonian National Museum. This empirical data shows how decay and repair evoke engagement and involvement with things as agentic and vibrant matter.

Things and materials that compose the human socio-material world are often expected to be permanent, which affords predictability and existential security to human life. However, things wear, break and fall apart, actions that can be seen as material failure. From an anthropocentric perspective, the material world sometimes fails and does not follow human intentions. From a posthuman and new materialist perspective, materiality has its own life and temporality, and decay is a natural part of the life of vibrant matter.

Decay has a specific material agency and cultural potential that is generative and productive. Repair is a response to decay, evoking profound human engagement with things and matter; it affords material knowledge of things, and care for the material world.

### **23.2 Ari Tanhuanpää (Finnish National Gallery)**

#### ***On the will of preservation***

Countless artworks have been destroyed – intentionally or unintentionally – over the course of history. This fact seems to call into question the ‘categorical imperative for conservation’ one of the greatest authorities on conservation Cesare Brandi (1906–1988) launched in his prestigious *Teoria del restauro*. Brandi argued that when an individual encounters an artwork

s/he “feels immediately an imperative [...] for conservation.” Does such an imperative really exist?

I propose that the problems encountered in practical conservation work can be considered as categorical imperatives. This is different from how problems are usually understood, in a way that – in philosopher Levi Bryant’s words – they are conceived in the “inverted image of their solution”, containing “all the properties of the solution in an unrealized form.” He believes that real problems are not empirical but transcendent in relation to their solutions.

I argue that the problems of conservation are of that kind. There are no final solutions to such problems. They impose their moral ought time after time on us requiring us to act – without telling us how to act. These dilemmas, as Bryant points out, “continue to insist within their solutions, the manner in which they function as imperatives.”

### **23.3 Aura Colliander (University of Turku)**

#### ***Human/plastic intra-actions in the museum – a case study of a life preserver***

There is a growing number of plastic objects in museum collections worldwide. In museums the aspirations are to safeguard objects for future generations, but some plastics are far from immortal materials. Since the 1990's there has been a growing amount of research in the field of conservation science on historical plastics indicating that the degradation of plastics may occur suddenly and be irreversible. This has led to developing practices of preventive conservation of plastics, such as storing plastics in low temperature, darkness, an oxygen-free environment, or well-ventilated space. When these preventive measures are viewed through lenses of sustainability of such practices and the accessibility of plastic objects, a need for plastic policies and practices in museums arises.

This paper is based on PhD research and a case study of a life preserver which is currently exhibited at the Maritime Museum of Finland and originates from the ship MS Estonia that sank in 1994. This paper questions the ethics of preventive conservation of plastics and suggests an approach to plastics in museums based on Karen Barad’s agential realism, extending the agency from humans and plastics to their intra-actions.

## **Session 24: Learning**

### **24.1 Vanessa Svihla, Anna Rotty, Mary Tsiongas and Madalyn Wilson-Fetrow (University of New Mexico)**

#### ***Textile technology: Listening with materials***

Materials hold energy from their pasts that speak to how we can—or should—use them to create artefacts. We consider the agency of materials in the context of a university course on textile technology. We explored string, etextiles, laser engraving and cutting fabrics, hand



and TurtleStitch embroidery, and eco-dyeing to create a textile artefact from a memory. In this study, we sought to examine how we use materials to develop human/non-human relationships built on reciprocity versus extraction, and that attend to power dynamics. By taking a post-humanist turn, we examine traversals across materials, exploring artefact creation as joint projects involving collaborative/shared agency. By treating materials as living and having the capacity to engage in joint projects, we center “withness” (Shotter, 2006) in which materials are worthy of respect. We take a situative approach to agency (Svihla & Peele-Eady, 2020), in which decisions unfold interactionally with materials and vary in their consequentiality. With this stance, we think about material agency as paying attention; there is a slowness and intimacy that forms when we look closely, take time to understand its history, and allow its agency to assert itself, rather than manipulating it to serve a need for us.

## **24.2 Madalyn Wilson-Fetrow, Sherry Hsi, Colin Dixon and Vanessa Svihla (University of New Mexico and BSCS Science Learning)**

### ***Negotiating material agency in micro:bit coding and paper making***

While we commonly treat humans as having agency – and even define agency as a human property – research on design has long troubled this notion by treating designing as a conversation with materials (Schön, 1992). We investigated how learners negotiate their agency with materials in the context of an informal STEM camp focused on making and radio communications. The camp aims to develop student understanding of wireless radio communication through making. We mounted micro:bits – the small, BBC-developed computer with block programming software (Austin et al., 2020) onto paper templates folded into a box to create “my:Talkies.” The established nature of my:Talkies indicates they may have high agency (White, 2019) and could be potentially coercive, strongly shaping students’ creativity in working with my:Talkies. Although all students received the same context and base papercraft form (my:Talkies), they created divergent designs. Qualitative analysis of video data of students designing with the my:Talkies highlights how they negotiated agency with the materials. They showed low agency over the base form of the my:Talkies, not altering the paper itself. However, they demonstrated their negotiated agency through adding to the my:Talkies and through the coding process.

## **24.3 Niina Hynninen (University of Helsinki) and Tiina Räisänen (University of Oulu)**

### ***Smart technology as a participant in customer training interaction***

Health technology products such as wearable electronics and other smart devices increasingly impact our lives and affect our behavior. In this presentation, we discuss the ways in which a new health technology product gains participatory roles in customer training interaction. The data have been collected through video-recordings, observation and field notes of customer training sessions, planning documents and interviews in a health technology company that at the time of data collection was developing a new service concept around their product, a

digital training stick. We zoom in to the video-recorded product training interactions and present examples in which the role of the technological object changes and in which the technological object gains more participatory roles in guiding participant action. We consider these participatory roles in the light of the notion of agency to discuss to what extent the technological object may or may not be seen as agentive in such interactions. We argue that having a participatory role does not necessarily mean having agency. In our analysis, we apply multimodal interaction analysis and multimodal conversation analysis of objects-in-interaction and draw on our ethnographic understanding of the service concept development process.