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HÖGSKOLAN FÖR KONST OCH DESIGN**

AFTER THE STORM

Environmental art in a textile practice

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Abstract

When we look closer at the world around us, there is so much art and beauty that we tend to overlook. There are aspects of nature that we can reexamine and explore. This can be done by reorganizing that which has grown and settled organically or by placing something foreign into the environment and seeing how the land responds. It is about developing a dialogue with one's surroundings. By observing and responding to that which the environment presents, one can continue to readjust and reimagine what is possible. This is an exploration of the concept of environmental art and the potential to create art in the world around us.

När vi tittar närmare på världen runt omkring oss kan vi upptäcka att det finns så mycket konst och skönhet som vi tar för givet. Det finns aspekter av naturen som vi kan upptäcka på nytt. Detta kan göras genom att arrangera om det som har vuxit och bosatt sig organiskt eller genom att placera något främmande i miljön och se hur naturen reagerar. Det handlar om att utveckla en dialog med sin omgivning. Genom att observera och svara på det som miljön presenterar kan man kontinuerligt justera och föreställa sig nya möjligheter. Detta är en utforskning av konceptet miljökonst och potentialen att skapa konst i världen omkring oss.

Key Words

Land art - Fiber art - Craft - Organic - Nature - Environment - Beach - Ocean

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Introduction

This report outlines my bachelor's thesis which I have completed in the spring of 2020. My thesis is titled *After the Storm* and explores different ways to create art by viewing one's surroundings from varied perspectives. First, I will provide background information as a context for the project. I will also describe my intention and the objectives that I seek to fulfill. Then, I will discuss my methodology of research and experimentation as well as the changes and developments that have occurred in more detail. Finally, I will discuss the insights and reflections that have emerged throughout the project and the result. Artistic and theoretical references that have aided my process will be included where relevant. Pictures will also be included throughout the report to illustrate my working process.



Material experimentation.

Background

Environmental art

This project delves into environmental art, a practice that examines our relationship with the environment. It is about being in balance and harmony with the world around us. The work often seeks to raise questions of sustainability and our impact on the environment. Environmental artwork is usually made using natural materials and presented in unconventional locations, bringing viewers closer to nature. Professor John E. Thornes has described it as, "A new genre to describe works of art that are [...] nonrepresentational and performative in terms of much less direct interpretation but more active engagement of the audience." (Blumberg, N. 2019)



Dead Hazel Sticks by Andy Goldsworthy (Goldsworthy, 2020)

One of the leading artists of the field is Andy Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy's work explores the sculptural potential of natural materials. Working in "collaboration with nature" he reassembles the materials in their natural environment, altering the viewers' perspective on what exists in the world around us. Goldsworthy articulated the central message of environmental art well, saying "We often forget that WE ARE NATURE", meaning that we need to learn to reconnect to the world around us and appreciate all that nature has provided for us. (Lewin, K. D. C., & Nichols, K. 2018)

Artist Sonja Hinrichsen argues that art is the best way to convey that message, stating, “through the means of art it is possible to point out the importance of environmental soundness, through speaking to emotion and passion for nature, and through unlocking an ancient sense of freedom and awe [...] I believe that we as artists have the power to reach out to society.” (Hinrichsen, 2020)



Snow Drawings, created by the local community walking together through the snow. Briançon, France by Sonja Hinrichsen (Hinrichsen, 2020)

Tides

My first experience with environmental art was through my project titled Tides, completed in the fall of 2019 in New Zealand. My intention with the project was to explore new facets of textile art. Being drawn to large mounds of kelp that were washed up on the local beaches, I chose to explore natural fibers and more specifically seaweed. To me it represented a direct connection to the ocean and to nature. Tides was about giving a material new life before returning it to its natural home.

Tides

*As the tide goes down,
New life forms emerge,
Strands of green appear in the sand.*

*As the shoreline rises,
Waves crashing in,
The waters reclaim their kin.*

Through Tides I discovered ideas and mediums I want to continue exploring. In my thesis project I will continue to find ways to combine refined textile construction techniques with raw natural materials. Working so closely to nature in New Zealand made me want to explore Sweden's landscape more. I want to use local natural resources that I have previously taken for granted, and overlooked as art materials. As with many artists, I am often inspired by nature, but I want to look deeper into that connection. I want to explore a different way of interacting with the environment, by using it as my medium.



Pictures from *Tides*, returning the kelp to the ocean.

Purpose

Exploring environmental art through local resources, I will find new ways to translate textile techniques to less refined, organic materials. This will also be an opportunity for me to explore my relationship with nature and what it means to me in my artwork.

Goal

A thought provoking installation made from materials found in the local environment. I want to reform the materials and create something that may appear to have grown organically in nature.

Question formulation

How can local natural resources influence my art?

How can I develop a dialogue with my surroundings through my artwork?

How can I document and capture my work for viewers who cannot interact with it?

Approach

I will gather materials from the local environment so that I can examine them, test their limits and identify compatible sculptural techniques. It is important that I work experimentally with the materials and try new ways of forming them to see what they are naturally inclined to. As the installation will be site specific and my materials will be dependent on what is available in my chosen location during the winter, it will be important to choose the location carefully. Documentation is also an essential part of this project, as the installation will be outdoors, perhaps far from my peers and audience. Both the process and final installations will be documented through photos and videos. Special care will be taken to ensure that the documentation effectively conveys the nature of the work.

Result of Process

Material research

To get a better idea of the parameters of the project, I wanted to find out what sort of materials I might be able to use. I searched for different plants that I could use as well as other natural materials, then experimented with construction techniques and material combinations. At first I explored plants that I might be able to use with textile and basketry techniques in mind. I would test the flexibility of branches by bending them and seeing what their breaking point was. A lot of plants were very dry at this time of year, so they snapped off easily. Others, like birch branches, were surprisingly resistant.



Searching for materials.

As a link to *Tides* I collected seaweed. Different types of kelp have individual properties and potential and I wanted to find something similar to the bull kelp I had worked with previously. Unfortunately the most durable type I could find in this area was blåstång, or bladderwrack, a much smaller and less stable species. Despite this, I still wanted to explore the material and learn about the possibilities of working with it.

Logbook February 28.

I've found 8 different types of seaweed and identified 5 of them. They are: Sågtång, Blåstång, Sockertång, Fingertång, and Havssallat

Fun fact.

All kelp in the area is actually edible.



Examining different types of seaweed.

The making process was very experimental and exploratory as I wanted to let the materials steer the course of the exploration. I used different techniques to form three dimensional structures. One method I used was molding a soaked material over an object and letting gravity work. I used different forms of basket weaving, including a coiling technique that I had developed previously, as well as a traditional maori flax weaving technique I learned in New Zealand. Basketry and weaving crafts draw on historical and traditional knowledge, building on our cultural heritage, but are still very open, broad concepts with a lot of possibilities. I also did some research into Swedish halm craft, a handicraft that my great-grandfather practiced many years ago. Halm informed my braiding techniques for use with dried straw and grass. These are all quite structured techniques and I could not translate them perfectly to the raw materials I was using. Therefore, I had to improvise and find my own solutions, which led to developing some of my own techniques, like weaving a wooden base when the seaweed was not firm enough to hold the shape on its own.



Trying different techniques.

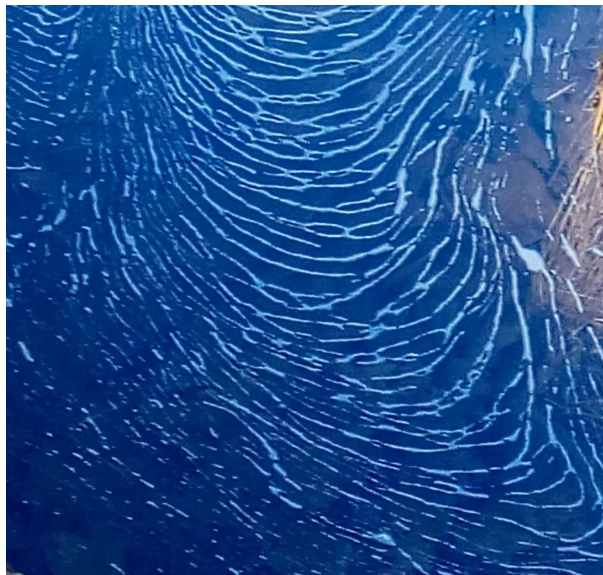
To see how I could reintroduce the materials into the environment, I also created small scale installations. I wanted the work to be site specific, only using materials from the immediate surroundings. It was also important to me that this would be a sustainable way of working, so I made sure to use organic materials that had been displaced or started to dry out and I created a new life and purpose for it. Most of the pieces were made in place and then left there, in their natural environment. The making process did not compromise the integrity of the material, so I was able to return it to where I found it and let nature take its course without disturbing the natural balance. The next step would be trying to find the ideal location with access to different materials, which would also lead to new ideas.



Early tests of small scale installations.

Naturally occurring art

When exploring the environment around me and searching for useful materials, I also found a lot of what I would call naturally occurring art. These are seemingly ordinary things, that when you look closer or change your perspective, can be viewed as artistic compositions. It simply depends on our interpretation and how we choose to create meaning in the world. I could find patterns in the water, geometric forms in the moss, and mosaic compositions in the rocks.



Natural occurrences.

These are things that are often overlooked. I'm sure that we have all walked past these sorts of objects without ever looking down and noticing them. So, is it art? Is it art if it is not noticed? Is it art if it was not intentionally created? I believe it is, or at least it can be. Everything in nature can be art if you look at it as art. If you really take the time to look, there is art all around us.

This idea, as well as a deeper message of conservation, is hilariously captured in a video made by The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, called Natural Reality The Real Reality. It shows our lack of appreciation for the beauty and wonder of nature. The video is an ironic parody of our generation's use of technology and virtual reality to engage with the environment. It demonstrates the absurdity of living through a screen and consuming manufactured beauty, as opposed to that which nature has provided for us. I believe that in nature, the simplest thing, like a ray of sunlight shining through the canopy, can be art. (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2016)



Natural occurrences.

Location search

When determining the ideal location to work, there were a few things to consider. Did I want to stay in my current location, the village Dals Långed? If so, did I want to be close to the water or in the forest? I considered working down by the lake near the school as it would be the most convenient location. An important factor was access to materials and the vegetation near the lake was somewhat sparse. Eventually, I decided that the space was too limited and searched elsewhere.



Dals Långed.

The other locations that I explored were in Grebbestad, on the west coast. I was really drawn to the ocean and I wanted to continue to explore the space between land and sea. I also felt connected to the area because of the history of land art there. Tanum is home to a UNESCO protected collection of ancient stone carving sites, which I have long been fascinated with. (UNESCO, n.d.)



Rock carvings in Tanum. ("Vandring i världsarv", 2019)

Earlier in the process, I had been to a beach at Sövalvs Camping to collect seaweed, so I had it in mind as a potential space. I went back there to assess the access to materials and it was very promising, with kelp washed up on the sand as well as a lot of trash that had accumulated. The area was very sparsely visited, especially at this time of the year, so there would be some privacy and freedom to explore. Krossekärr beach had characteristics similar to Sövalvs Camping. The beach offered many possibilities in regard to materials, it was also an interesting space because it was sort of in between nature and civilization. There were several small beaches surrounded by fishing cabins with little docks. My main issue was practical, these locations were a bit too far away from where I was staying and I did not have regular access to a car, so I narrowed my search, sticking closer to town.



Sövalvs Camping



Krossekärr

Another consideration was if I wanted to be in a public space, with regular visitors like the local family beach in the center of town. I contacted the local municipal government and was given permission to occupy the beach for just one week as long as I did not leave anything behind. I also got permission to work at a smaller, more secluded beach across the harbour and I thought that a combination of both might work for me, but later on after finding my ideal location I wanted to focus my efforts there.



Family beach in Grebbestad.

The bay

Ultimately, what I was looking for was a space that inspired me, somewhere that I could find beauty and the potential to create more. After exploring different locations and different materials, I was drawn back to the ocean. I have long admired the immaculate structures and the immovable strength of the cliffs in Bohuslän's archipelago and I enjoy lazing around the beaches and listening to the sound of the waves. I spent my childhood summers there, finding secret places and creating my own worlds. All of that is what led me to continue my search there and eventually return to a secluded bay that I had not visited in a few years.

Gliskilen is a small inlet just west of Grebbestad's main harbour. I got permission from the land owners to work in the area as long as I didn't make any lasting changes to the land. One side of the bay consists mainly of cliffs, but the other side is more varied. There are crescent shaped beaches in between small rock formations that stick out like peninsulas at high tide. Above that is a grassy bank that leads to other vegetation and is backed up against another cliff. What really drew me to the area was the freedom inherent in the vastness of the space. The bay opens up to the main strait and archipelago, the only signs of human life, small houses in the distance and an old broken down dock.



The Bay, Gliskilen.

With a cursory viewing, the bay feels almost untouched by human hands. That is until you look down. Other than the clearly defined walking path, there are the occasional pieces of colorful plastic debris here and there. After you notice that, you can find everything from rubber gloves, to wooden planks, to plastic bags, disguised within mounds of grass and seaweed. Further down the bay, there are old fishing nets tangled in the trees and random car parts washed up among the rocks.

The bay seems like quite an extreme example of marine pollution today. It also raises larger questions for me, like how the ecology and animal habitats are affected. I realize that this is really just a small representation of the larger existential threats that are affecting the world, which is quite overwhelming. I have chosen not to focus on those issues specifically and instead take a more direct approach to helping the environment, by cleaning the bay. First I spent a couple of days doing what felt like the major clean up, collecting larger, more noticeable debris. After that, I would bring a bag with me to do a little bit of cleaning every day I went there. I also left some bags and put up a sign, encouraging others to help out, which a couple of people have. This process became an essential part of my relationship to the bay. I felt a responsibility to make sure that the environment was taken care of and respected.



Cleaning the beach.

Exploring materials

Something that I struggled with was the idea of using the trash that I had collected as part of an installation. I was worried it would go against the concept of not disturbing the environment and I didn't want my artwork to add to the pollution in the area. Are we as artists entitled to do whatever we want in a public space? At the same time, it was not my intention to hurt or negatively impact the space. The material was already there on the beach. I simply collected it and rearranged it in a purposeful way, wanting to make a positive impact. So, I came to the conclusion that it was alright, as long as I kept an eye on the installation and that I would eventually collect the material again.

This was the point where the main focus of the project changed. Originally, I wanted this to be a direct sequel to the *Tides* project, where I would continue to experiment with the use of different textile and basketry techniques to reform plant fibers, but in a Swedish environment. As I explored my chosen location more, my focus became about connecting with the space around me. I still did more material experimentation, where I used my knowledge of textile and basketry techniques to guide me, but the process was more intuitive and based on my surroundings.



Material experiments.

Wanting to explore the natural materials in the bay, I did more site specific material tests. I collected straw from the deepest part of the bay and I tried braiding it like halm, but it was very dry and fragile. Soaking it had limited results, so instead I tried to combine it with kelp that had washed up on the beach, as well as the long grass along the shore, weaving them together.



Straw experiments.

Then I became very drawn to the grass. It had just rained and the grass was matted down to the ground, creating a beautiful slicked back, fur-like texture. This led me to treat it similarly to how you would treat hair, brushing it with my fingers and styling it. I bound tufts together like little ponytails and I french braided it along the ground. Struggling to make a longer braid, I eventually adapted a new method where I would twist the grass through more stands to create a longer twine-like structure.





Grass experiments.

This structure reminds me of Maya Lin's work, called *Eleven Minute Line*, in which she created a 12 feet high and 1600 feet long line of grass running through a cow field. Hers is of course a giant mound of rocks, soil and replanted grass, whereas mine is a simple twist of grass. Still, I feel like they speak a similar language, encouraging the viewer to take a second look and follow the journey of the line. (Tucker, 2012)



Eleven Minute Line by Maya Lin. (Tucker, 2012)

Similarly, I can relate to Richard Long's work. One of his earliest pieces, "A line made by walking", was a line in a field that was made from the impressions of his footsteps repeatedly walking through the grass. His work was about leaving his mark, however temporary it may be, in the landscape, an idea that he continued to explore throughout his career, finding ways to work in tandem with nature and using his body as a tool. The idea of making more subtle, temporary marks in the environment is something I have tried to embrace throughout my project. (Fuchs, 1986)



A Line Made By Walking by Richard Long. (Long, n.d.)

After my initial material tests, I started to consider different types of materials in the area. I realized that I could not just focus on fibrous plants, especially since those were limited during the winter and spring, although that is something that I would like to revisit in the summer. There were other things that intrigued me, like the stone mound that acted as a small landmark and could be seen clearly from the other side of the bay. I started moving some of the rocks around, to make a more compact formation, and I discovered rocks at the water's edge with kelp clinging to them. At low tide I was able to access more kelp rocks and I incorporated them into the larger mound, making a trail of kelp rocks leading further into the ocean.



High and low tide.

It was important that I explore the land, not just the materials. Through this exploration, I discovered a tidal islet at the shallow end of the bay. I had intended to experiment with sand as a material, when I noticed the phenomenon. At low tide, a small islet of sand was uncovered, to the point that I could walk across it to the other side. I wanted to find a way to use the space, so I started making different compositions in the sand. One of the rare passersby actually commented that they thought it was exciting that I was doing something in that area and that they hadn't even realized that you could walk on the sand there.



The sand islet.

It is fascinating how some environmental art is the result of a spontaneous act, someone creating something organically without consciously regarding it as art. That was how Michael Grab developed his artistic practice. He started out balancing stones on top of each other for fun and it has now become an incredibly precise and meticulous art form. It has become essential to his life and his mental well being. I briefly attempted Grab's rock balancing method, resulting only in collapsed piles of rocks and frustration. It is however something I would like to try again when the weather is nicer and I can spend more time on it. This type of artistic journey is very inspiring and I hope to achieve something similar with my work. I want to focus more on the process and take the time to enjoy it. To do that, I also need to think less about what the result might be. For Grab, the making became a calming, meditative process that happened to also result in seemingly gravity defying sculptures. (Grab, 2020)



Del Silenzio by Michael Grab. (Grab, 2015)

The effect of the weather

The “result” is a difficult thing to establish in land art, as things can change quickly. You can not have a foregone conclusion of how the artwork will turn out. Everything is dependent on the weather conditions.

The weather affects my working schedule. I have tried to keep a close eye on the weather forecast, but it is very unpredictable, especially the rain. The forecast can change every hour and it is difficult to keep up. I don't want to walk down to the bay on days when it is extremely windy or rainy. This, in turn, affects the progress of my work. After I was away from the bay for a few days, new trash had accumulated, seaweed had washed up and things had been moved around. I needed to clear the area again. I also needed to re-do some of the work on my installations.

Logbook April 10.

*“Some of the straw has broken off.
It is broken at the base, still buried in the sand.
The thicker ones are still whole.*

*The wind has blown out the twisted grass.
It has returned to its original state.
It is basically a blank canvas again.”*

These unforeseen complications make it so that I can not have too many ongoing installations at once. I must focus on one at a time, a few days at a time. Still, the bay that I am working in is generally quite windy and the twisted grass continues to be undone. Instead of letting it be a problem, I have decided to embrace it, by making the destruction of the art, a part of the art. The grass is such a fragile and delicate material that it is able to capture the fleetingness of the moment as it unravels.

Another important aspect of the weather is the changes of the seasons. When I started this project, it was still the middle of winter, and now summer is fast approaching. According to phenologist Libby Ellwood, spring is the most active season, at least in the northern hemisphere. Phenology is the study of cyclic events in regard to plants and animals, essentially the study of the seasons. Life cycles are recorded every year, establishing patterns that repeat at the same time of the year.

Ellwood explains that spring is the period when everything changes. It is when plants grow and flowers bloom, because it is finally warm enough for them. Plants need to be dormant for a certain amount of time and if the winter isn't long enough or cold enough, the cycle is thrown off. Climate change can also affect the life cycles of certain plants and animals differently, causing an imbalance in the ecosystem. (Ward & Ellwood, 2019)

It would be interesting to return to the bay that I am working in next spring to see if the seasonal changes are consistent. I would also like to return there at different times throughout the year, to see how it is affected by different seasons as well as how my installations react to the forces of nature.

Back in mid february, the area was greatly affected by storm Dennis, a major storm that overwhelmed europe. The storm caused a lot of damage along the coast, including raising the water level dramatically to the point of flooding. (Fernstedt, 2020) I believe that the intense winds were also responsible for the excessive amounts of garbage that litter the bay. I have continued to clean up the bay and I think that there is a discernible difference to how it looked before I started. Exploring the materials and creating installations also feels like I am taking care of the area and making a positive impact, both visually and emotionally.



Before and after cleaning.

Social distancing

Working on this project in the spring of 2020 has been a unique experience. At the beginning, when I was formulating my project description, I only knew that I was drawn to the outdoors and I wanted to explore the Swedish landscape after just coming back from New Zealand. I did not realize how well my idea would work under quarantine.

Going to art school in the time of Covid19 is definitely a challenge, with no access to workshops and limited access to tools and materials. I know that some of my peers have had to completely change the focus of their projects to adjust to the circumstances. Fortunately for me, I have been able to spend more time than I had originally planned working on my project, as I have been in self quarantine at this location.

The bay that I have been working in is quite secluded and not often visited by passers-by. I have developed a routine of walking down there almost every day, depending on the weather. First I observe any changes since I was last there, then I spend some time cleaning the beach. I also work on the ongoing installations, either re-making something which has washed away or making new adjustments. It has become somewhat of a ritual, being alone with my thoughts and with nature.

This project is like a representation of my time during quarantine. Looking back, I am sure this will be a strange period in our history, and this will be the illustration of my mind set and experience. It shows how I have distanced myself from society and drawn closer to nature. It also expresses my retreat into my own mind, sometimes to my detriment. Having so much time to myself, having this creative outlet has been indispensable.

Natural compositions

After exploring the environment of the bay and making smaller installations, I wanted to focus on creating something larger. Multi-tasking too much led to some of my work unravelling before it was finished, so I decided to dedicate more time to developing one idea at a time. I still had a lot of ideas, so I came up with a compromise where I developed three of my earlier tests into more substantial installations.



Experimenting on the islet.

The first piece I completed is titled Rising Waters. It is a development of my idea to use the space created by the sand islet that emerges at low tide. I started by collecting straw that was growing nearby and finding a way to insert it into the sand, which was a quite a simple process when the sand was wet. I arranged the straw in different formations and ended up creating a rising curve shape that really spoke to me. It represents the rising of the water and the cycle of ebb and flow. There were a few issues with the straw, as it broke off quite easily and it was difficult to see from a distance. I considered incorporating a second material to strengthen it, but instead I decided to replace the straw with driftwood that I had collected while cleaning the beach. It worked almost better than I thought and at high tide, I was able to create the illusion of the driftwood spiral emerging directly from the ocean.

The cycle

*With the tides,
Life is brought to the surface*

*Depths are untold
Waves are relentless
Beaches are cleansed*

*With the tides,
The cycle continues*



Rising Waters

The second piece, Foraged Fibers, is made from ropes and fishing nets that I collected when I was cleaning the area. I wanted to take something deemed unimportant, take care of it, and give it more worth by changing the context. This was an ongoing project that I would work on in my workshop at home when there was bad weather. I used traditional basket weaving and coiling to create round, stone-like forms. That wasn't actually my intent, but as I was weaving, the material guided the form. I chose to place these forms among the stones in the stone mound, where I also formed some of the fibers directly around the stones to make them more incorporated, while still contrasting greatly against the neutral grey setting. The placement shows the immediate contrast between the man-made against a natural material. It is a foreign material that does not belong there, but the reality is that I found it on the beach and it has become a part of the environment. It cannot be ignored, so instead I chose to highlight it.



Rope experimentation.



Foraged Fibers

Finally, my third piece is titled *Liminal Connections*. This consists of a continuous line that leads from the grassy shore, through the stones in the sand and along the kelp covered rocks into the ocean. It is a development of my twisted grass line idea as well as the underwater kelp rock line. They meet in the middle through a stone-lined path in the sand.



Liminal Connections



Line experimentation.

It is the line in the sand that has been the most challenging. I was not sure what material to use for it. A simple line carved into the sand was barely visible when you took a step back. So, I tried using stones as well as incorporating whole and crushed oyster shells. Ultimately, I think the subtle stone line helps to convey the feeling of liminality, as it illustrates the indeterminable border between the ocean and the land, that sort of intangible quality of existing between two spaces.



Foraged Fibers

Documenting nature

It has been challenging to translate such tactile work to a digital medium. I do think it is better viewed in person. Ideally, I would want it to be discovered organically, by somebody casually walking by, seeing something out of place, and investigating further. That sort of experience can not really be translated to a viewer who is separated from the space. In regards to what I will present as the final product, that has been a difficult decision. I have gone back and forth a lot when considering what I want the external viewer to see.



Documenting.

Early on, I was sure that I wanted to make a film, showing the installations in their final form. I thought that photos would not be enough to capture the essence of the space. The video would provide a more sensory experience. You would get to hear the sound of the waves and the wind, as well as feeling the movement of the seaweed flowing in the water and the grass dancing. This was before we became limited to a digital presentation because of the pandemic, so I also wanted to incorporate physical aspects into my exhibition. I wanted to bring in fresh seaweed and other plants in order to share the tactility of the materials as well as the smells associated with them.

That idea changed a lot as the focus of the project changed and it became less about the result and more about the process. I spent more time trying to capture the making process and showing my interaction with the material. This is also when I realized that it was important to show how the natural forces at play affected the work. I became more fascinated by the process of creating something, building it up, and then watching how the elements can break it down. There is a satisfying balance in that sort of cycle. I have come to appreciate the idea of the fleetingness of some of my work.

The reality of working outdoors, in a constantly changing environment means that the artwork itself is continually changing, and that change is outside of my control. It can be hard to watch as the elements slowly unravel and undo all of my work. Throughout the process of documentation, I have come to accept that more and even embrace it. I can only observe it and try to find the beauty in it. I hope I can effectively capture the moment in time that an installation inhabits. A great inspiration to me in this process has been the documentary "Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time". It shows Goldsworthy's making process as well as some of the aftermath and really captures the ephemeral qualities of land art. (Riedelsheimer, 2002)

I have tried to find ways to make the changes in the environment a part of the documentation process by taking before and after pictures. I have also photographed the work in different weather conditions and at different times of day, in order to capture different aspects of the space. These changes even became an essential part in one of my installations, Rising waters, where I needed to show how the water level affected the perception of the piece.

The result of my documentation is a lot of varying photos and videos. Trying to consolidate everything into one film is not really ideal. I eventually dropped the idea of a film entirely. Instead, I selected photos that capture a moment of change or discovery. I have had to compromise some of my ideas, like trying to create an immersive experience for the viewer, but I still want there to be a closeness to the material and the environment, so I think this is a good solution.

Discussion and reflection

Looking back

Throughout this project I have focused a lot on developing my process and trying to establish a deeper connection between my artwork and the space around me. At first, I thought that this would be a direct sequel of the Tides project, doing essentially the same thing but in a Swedish environment. That was what I was thinking when I chose the location for the project. After a while, that no longer seemed as important. I realized that I was thinking too far ahead and that I needed to step back and look at the bigger picture. That led to me exploring other types of materials that I found in the space. With my knowledge of textile craft as a background, I was able to use that perspective to lead my interaction with the different materials and develop techniques more tailored to those new materials. I really focused on my relationship with the bay and I used what I felt most drawn to. It became quite an instinctive and intuitive process, where I would make new discoveries on a daily basis and I continually had to adapt to the changes in the environment.

The process was also somewhat intimate. It really became about my personal connection with the environment both physically and emotionally. The work was a reflection of how I perceived the environment. I learned to accept that there are a lot of aspects of nature that I could not control and I had to adapt to those changes. I was able to embrace the idea of creating something that may not be particularly long lasting. When I go back to the bay now, there are only faint traces of my installations. The kelp covered rocks are still in place, but the twisted grass has smoothed itself out. The fleetingness and fragility of the work just makes the process more valuable.

After the examination

The discussion following my presentation made me think more about a few aspects of my work that I had not addressed very much. I think that it is helpful for me to reflect on those questions in order to gain new insights about my project.

One thing that I want to address is the idea of environmental art being a political statement. I think it is interesting how land art has developed into what is now called environmental art, which often has a more political inclination. However, making that kind of statement about larger environmental issues is an intimidating task to take on and I have not really allowed myself to go there fully, focusing more on my personal

relationship with the space. I do think that my use of marine debris and the more general beach cleaning addresses issues of pollution and protecting marine ecosystems, though maybe not so clearly. I do still want it to be open to interpretation. These are difficult issues, but it is definitely something that I am interested in exploring more in future projects.

I have also thought more about the presentation of my work. In this project, it was necessary for me to document the process and the final pieces for a remote audience. However, I do not think that is the ideal way to present it to the viewer. Digital documentation can never fully capture the feeling of being in the natural environment. I hope that it will not be the only way for me to present my work in the future and that I can invite an audience to come and see my installations in person. That was actually an idea that I had at the beginning of this project, that I could invite the local community to view my work, but that was not possible because of the pandemic. An example of the way I would like to present my work is the land art exhibition Tyst Vår around Kaknästornet in Stockholm. It is presented as a walk through a park, where the viewer has the option of following a map to the installations or just wandering around and discovering the artwork on their own. I really like the idea of my work being discovered by chance and creating a memorable moment for the viewer. (Slöör, 2020)

Thinking about all of the installations together and the space as a whole, I realized that I have not thought a lot about their connection to each other. I can understand that it is difficult to understand how the pieces relate to each other in the space without actually being there. I am not sure how important that is as all of the installations were quite temporary and there was never a time when all of the pieces existed in the same space at the same time. Still, there is definitely a connection between them that goes along with my journey of exploring the bay. At first, I was most drawn to the mound of stones that I saw as a clear landmark in the bay. Then as I explored more materials I also explored the space more and discovered the sand islet deeper in the bay. That was when I spread out more and made small installations throughout the area in between. There are also connections in the materials and expressions that were not intentional choices, but developed organically. In the end, I think that my final three pieces strike a good balance. They are all simple ideas that relate to the space in different ways.

Conclusion and result

The title of the project *After the Storm* comes from the literal storm that affected the west coast in February as well as the larger metaphorical storm that has affected us all throughout the spring. It means that something good can come from the chaos and that after the storm, the sun will shine again.

The result of the project is several transient land art installations made from materials foraged from the surrounding area. Some of the installations, like *Liminal Connections*, appear to have grown organically in nature. While other works, like *Foraged Fibers*, are more about creating a contrast in the environment. Ultimately I think that the work is best seen in person, but I have tried my best to document it for a remote audience. Through these images, I want to highlight the impact of the environment on the artwork. I want to share my experience with the viewer and show what drew me to the bay in the first place, the beauty and tranquility of it. I also want to convey the transience of the artwork. I hope that my installations will intrigue the viewer and perhaps make them question what they can see in nature.

Through my exploration of land art over the past year, I have gone on quite a journey. It started with me trying to get to know a new environment and culture in New Zealand and it has now led to me reconnecting with a familiar space here in Sweden. I have learned to let go of my preconceived ideas in order to allow the material and the space to guide me. I feel that I have only scratched the surface and I have found something that I can continue to build on in the future.



Under the Surface



Drifting Away



Natural Contrasts



Rising Water



Foraged Fibers



Liminal Connections



Liminal Connections

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