



OUTI PIESKI

*Beavvit - Rising Together*

*Rematriation of a Ládjogahpir – Return to Máttaráhkká* in collaboration with Eeva-Kristiina Harlin

16.10-21.11.2021

Outi Pieskis paintings and installations delve with the Arctic region and the interdependence of nature and culture. Her work combines the Sámi visual tradition of duodji and contemporary art practices to reopen conversations about the Sámi people within transnational discourses. Duodji is a collective way of making and for Pieski duodji is also a way of dealing with vulnerability, sincerity, sensibility and communality. It is a way of remembering that we are living in a reciprocal relationship with all living entities and the practise can be connected to counter-forces against individual-centeredness and the competitive society.

The main title of the exhibition at the Norwegian Sculptors Society refers to one of the two installations that are part of the exhibition. The word Beavvi(t) means “(many) good friends” and is also very similar to the word for “sun”; beaivi. But Beavvit is also a question of doing and making. It’s an act, a verb. The installation *Beavvit -Rising Together* is inspired by the gathering of good friends, a flock that heals individuals in the common struggle against the background of the colonial history. Based on the Sámi revitalisation movement it represents an empowering situation born out of the duodji tradition.

*The work Beavvit - Rising Together* is made in collaboration with several woman across the Sápmi in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Making the numerous knots that are part of the work is a ritual, a ritual for redress, consolation, and sacrifice. Created collaboratively, Pieski imagines this “three-dimensional painting” as a textile architecture of handwoven knots that echoes calls for self-determination and kinship, and, inevitably, destabilizes the hierarchy between contemporary art and artisanal creative processes.

For the second installation five foremothers’ ládjogahpir hats have been borrowed from Norsk Folkemuseum archives and placed in a different context. The place of display is connected to how we value the objects. This deliberate act of displaying them at The Norwegian Sculptors Society takes part in the ongoing discussions around why the visual cultural history items from Sapmi, (that can be looked upon as art objects), are usually displayed in Ethnographical Museums while the Western art objects are displayed in Art Museums.

The installation *Rematriation of a Ládjogahpir – Return to Máttaráhkká* is part of the interdisciplinary rematriation project Máttaráhku ládjogahpir—The Foremother’s Hat of Pride (2017–20) by Pieski and archaeologist Eeva-Kristiina Harlin. The project is a collaboration project between historical and archaeological research, social activism, and craftivism, including the revitalising of duodji and artistic practices. The project investigates the colonization of the mind and body in Indigenous Sámi women’s history through a story of one object, the ládjogahpir hat. Pieski and Harlin rekindle ancestral links through the ládjogahpir as cultural heritage and mobilize the terms of rematriation as a matrilineal mode of belonging, collective remembering, and entitlement. Rematriation is a relatively new concept and much of the power of rematriation is derived from its origins in Indigenous feminist practice. The Indigenous concept of rematriation refers to reclaiming of ancestral remains, spirituality, culture, knowledge and resources, instead of the more Patriarchally associated repatriation.

The ládjogahpir is here revitalized or, rather, rematriated, which in this context means a gender equal re-socialization of cultural belongings into society, beyond the reach of repatriation.

Pieces of matriarchal duodji, like ládjogahpirs, have a life of their own as they interact with the duojár/maker and the geavaheadjji/user and belongings, like ládjogahpir, can be truly helpful in the processes of remembering, decolonizing, and healing. They can lead Sámi societies to discussion about gender equality, reciprocity between all beings. And they can provide a bridge into the past, enable the possibility to re-remember and use these philosophies for the future, to return towards eana eannážan, our mother earth. When we embrace gender justice and pay attention to the larger biocultural reality, we will also comprehend that mother earth—the eannážan—as a female being, must be respected.

The project has also resulted in a book; *Ládjogahpir—Máttaráhkuid gábagahpir/ The Ládjogahpir—The Foremothers' Hat of Pride* published by Davvi Girji in 2020.

Outi Pieski (b. 1973) is a Sámi visual artist based in Ohcejohka (Utsjoki) and Numminen, Finland. She graduated with an MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Painting, Helsinki in 2000. As a member of The Miracle Workers Collective (MWC) Pieski has been currently exhibiting in the Finnish Alvar Aalto Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (2019). There she presented her site-specific sculptural installation *Ovdavázzit – Forewalkers* (2019), which is part of the project *Máttaráhku ládjogahpir (A Foremother's Hat of Pride)* in collaboration with archaeologist Eeva-Kristiina Harlin and the project *Rájácutmmá (Kiss from the Border)* in collaboration with Sámi artists and activists Jenni Laiti and Niillas Holmberg. Pieski has exhibited in Sápmi and internationally, most recently at Helsinki Biennale, 2021, 13th Gwangju Biennale, 2021, Sven Harry's Art Museum, Stockholm, 2021, Bergen Assembly, 2019, EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, 2018, Espoo. Outi Pieski is represented in many collections, among others EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, The Norwegian Parliaments Art Collection, Finnish National Gallery and the Sámi Parliament Norway/ Sámi Art Collection. Outi Pieski won the Fine Arts Academy of Finland Award in 2017 and the Finnish Cultural Foundation Grand Prize in 2020.

Eeva-Kristiina Harlin (b. 1972) is a doctoral researcher at the University of Oulu, Giellagas Institute (Institute for Saami Studies) in Finland. Her doctoral dissertation deals with Repatriation politics of tangible Sámi cultural heritage. She has worked at the Finnish Heritage Agency, the Historical Museum in Sweden, SIIDA - The National Museum of the Finnish Sámi, RiddoDuottarMuseat in Norway and the Sámi Archives of Finland. She has worked with themes like Sámi cultural heritage and repatriation questions together with the Sámi society for a long time. Harlin has conducted surveys regarding Sámi cultural heritage in Nordic and European museums and she is currently doing a survey of Sámi archival materials in European institutions. In addition to Sámi collections and repatriation she is specialised in ethical questions in archaeology related to Sámi culture. *Máttaráhku ládjogahpir (A Foremother's Hat of Pride)* also forms part of her doctoral research.

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