Taavi Suisalu "Arctic Embassy"

Tartu Art House

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Wed–Mon 12–18

The Arctic has long served as a symbol for uncharted territory and inspired countless travel journals and adventurous stories. It has been portrayed as endless white, a blank canvas of sorts, the last frontier of freedom awaiting a hero’s discovery. Mapping an unknown is always intertwined with power dynamics and challenges the cultures and well-being of its indigenous inhabitants. While often represented as grandiose, sublime resists on being captured whilst possibly overshadowing more nuanced perspectives. Today, a realm primarily accessible to scientists and polar bear cruises, with ongoing climate warming, new corridors for transportation and opportunities for resource extraction are emerging. The Arctic, so romanticized, sublime, and untouched on one hand, is also exceptionally fragile and vulnerable to climate change on the other.

The exhibition stems from fieldwork conducted around Svalbard and on Icelandic glaciers, engaging playfully with the methods of art and science, touching upon the challenges of climate change communication, and questioning the role of the sublime in the present day. Within the embassy, architect Helmi Marie Langsepp appears as a guest contributor with material-based aftermath of her project Melting Models, created during the polar night.

Taavi Suisalu conjures miniature utopias that act on technical, metaphorical and poetical levels. He has previously recorded volcanoes and malfunctioning satellites, explored data-fictions, composed for lawnmowers, blended living and digital ecosystems, and inquired about the self-image of humans in the age of artificial intelligence.

Helmi Marie Langsepp is an architect who enjoys working with space in extremes, learning about the relationships and opportunities between humans and natural forces at their limits. She is the founder of the experimental architecture studio Lee Ell and a doctoral candidate and junior researcher at Tallinn University of Technology, where her research focuses on temporary infrastructure and nature-based solutions in the High Arctic climate.

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