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Art combines: From traditional exhibitions to virtual environment

Authors: **Natalya Iakovleva & Juhani Rusachenko**

Natalya Iakovleva, Lecturer, Head of the Art Department of Karelian College of Culture and Arts. *CULTA is an ideal collaboration platform aspiring entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as student teams. The project helped to increase the possibilities of introducing the best practices of interaction between culture and business in the cross-border area, making it more attractive.*

Juhani Rusachenko (BBA/International Business) is a project planning officer, specialised in Karelia CBC projects employed at Oulu University of Applied Sciences. *As greatly passionate about Finnish Russian cross-border cooperation, it is in the high value to provide opportunities of getting inspiration, developing new products and services as well as acquire new, beneficial skills to the people living within programme areas.*

During three years of cooperation within the framework of CULTA project, three exhibition expositions were organized at the art platforms of the Republic of Karelia and Finland. The fourth exhibition was organized in virtual environment.

One of the first exhibitions was organized in May 2019 at Karelian College of Culture and Arts. The exhibition of creative works of Karelian and Finnish students was called “Shades of Imagination”. Its main idea was illustrations. The teacher at the University of Applied Sciences of Oulu, Nina Patriikka and her students presented their works on fantasy, reflecting an individual vision of plots and images. Riikka Savela’s series of Pikku Maatu, was her thesis production. The other artists Janika Kaunio, Petri Saarela, Senja Niva, Nelli Salmela, Anttu Herva and Otso Ritonummi presented their free creative works. Using a linocut technique, the graduates of Karelian College of Culture and Arts, Valentina Shapkina and Yulia Chezhina referred to the subjects of famous literary works. Their illustrations were based on the epic of “Kalevala” and novel “Wuthering Heights” by Emily Bronte. The highlight of the exhibition was contrast of colors. The authors used color as a means of conveying the shades of their imagination.

Finnish partners initiated the creation of the exhibition called “Flora and Fauna” in November 2019. It was opened at the art gallery of Oulu University



Exhibition “Shades of Imagination” at Karelian College of Culture and Arts

of Applied Sciences, and it was dedicated to rare animals, birds, insects, plants and sea animals from all over the world. Watching the beauty and uniqueness of nature, we understand how the world around us is fragile and how much it needs our help and respect. A group of Finnish students as well as Anna Rakhmatova, Arkady Nabirenkov, Evelina Eremina, Maria Shamshina and Olga Lonina, students of Karelian College of Culture and Arts, participated in the exhibition.

2020 was the year of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Karelia. The difficult epidemiological situation did not prevent the organizers from holding the international forum “Cross-border Cultural Cooperation in the European North” in Petrozavodsk.



Exhibition “Shades of Imagination: Between Technology and Art” at National Library of the Republic of Karelia

CULTA project showed another exhibition called “Shades of Imagination: Between Technology and Art” to online and offline forum participants. It was opened at the National Library of the Republic of Karelia in December 2020 and combined graphics and illustrations, and revealed the genre, technical

and plastic creative variety of the Russian and Finnish students. Students used linocut and computer graphics in their works. Linocut attracts Russian students for its modernity and potential mass use in design of public spaces.

Olga Lonina, one of the members of Combing Art with Sustainable Transportation team, the winner of Cultural Climate Change Pitching Competition: “Creating a linocut is a really exciting experience. It is interesting and useful process, as it contributes to development of plastic vision, makes us work with material, makes us draw a lot, practice and work with incisors and gravers”.

Sara Juntunen, Sirja Eskelinen, Emma Ronkainen, Jenni Nikkilä, Marleena Maliniemi, Nemo Karjalainen, Riku Kiviharju, Gabriel Ojanperä Arratia, Matias Huhtela, Varpu Mäkinen participated in the exhibition from the Finnish part.

The arranged exhibition turned out to be of great demand, and over the next six months it was exhibited in the art space “Blue Corridor”, the gallery of Karelian College of Culture and Arts.



Art space “Blue Corridor”



Art Gallery of Karelian College of Culture and Arts

The arrangement of art exhibitions was the first cross-border event within CULTA project, and it opened the virtual borders between countries for students.

EXPERIENCE THE VIRTUAL ART EXHIBITION

The most recent cooperation of students was opened in January 2021 - virtual art exhibition Images of Fantasy. The works are open for public to observe in the virtual space webpage. An online art exhibition is available at: <https://bit.ly/imagesoffantasy>

The virtual exhibition is the joint exhibition of creative works of students at Karelian College of Culture and Arts and Oulu University of Applied Sciences. It was an effective way to show art to people across the border and to anyone who is interested in arts, as travelling was restricted due to Covid pandemic. An exhibition was arranged while training students studied various artistic techniques in drawing, painting, composition, and computer graphics classes. The exhibition of works by Finnish and Russian students allows demonstrating these techniques. The exhibition presents works of students of the art department of College of Culture and Arts, made in the technique of linocut as mentioned previously, linocut is one of the types of letterpress with the inclusion of colour, precise lines, and a variety of textures. The Finnish students were second year design students. The works use digital drawing technique based on their traditional analogies. The themes of the Finnish works included self-portraits, life beneath the surface and movies. The main idea of the exhibition is to unite the creative ideas of Russian and Finnish students, to reveal the individual perception of plots and images.



"Images of Fantasy" online space

The producing of an exhibition was led by Katriina Klemola. Personnel that is responsible for technical arrangements included Sara Potila, Heikki Timonen, Nina Patrikka and Juhani Rusachenko. Nina Patrikka and Natalia Iakovleva provided student support during the preparations of works. Emma Ronkainen, Nemo Karjalainen, Varpu Mäkinen, Gabriel Ojanperä-Arratia, Sirja Eskelinen, Jenni Nikkilä, Matias Huhtela, Riku Kiviharju, Marleena Malinniemi and Sara Juntunen have created the works at Oulu University of Applied Sciences, and Karelian College of Culture and Arts artists are Alena Ershova, Valentina Shapkina, Sokolova Alina, Ekaterina Galysheva, Denis Alexandrenko and Ksenia Voenushkina.