Master thesis:
Marta Khrshanovskaya
School of Arts, Design and Architecture


**Thesis supervisors:**

Taina Rajanti
Max Ryynänen
Table of contents

Introduction 3

Part I. Visual Project Ä & ë (Dialogues) 7

Part II Space around us

Chapter I. Stranger in the space 28
1.1 Borders between homes 31
1.2 Space between strangers 32
1.3 Spaces left behind

Chapter II. Space inside the exiled artist 35
2.1 Ilya Kabakov. Space installations 36
2.2 Total installations 37
2.3 Personal spaces 38
2.4 Interpretations

Part III. Stranger in the space through moving image experience 43
3.1 Experimental documentaries 44
3.2 Fictional movies 48
3.3 Video art 55

Conclusion 61

Bibliography 62
Introduction

This is a written part of my MA thesis, of which a Visual Project called «Ä and Ы (Dialogues)» was a production part. The written part originated in the working process on the visual project. Both parts interact with each other creating versatile answer to the main question of my thesis. The thesis including the written part and the Visual Project investigates the questions of the invented and real spaces, focusing on the small city as a unique cultural environment and exploring the interrelations between the stranger and unfamiliar surroundings. I selected an image of small cities as a concept of space on which to focus on of a number of reasons. First of all, because provincial towns can be easily observed, all the features of the modern culture and society are accessible. Secondly, most of the artistic production for the thesis were influenced by my experience of moving to and living in a small town. Finally, the image of a small city is often used in cinematography and I wanted to analyze it in my thesis. Basing on the concept of a small city, I connect my own experience with examples from the movies, videos, documentaries. As a result of my research, collaborative visual project and the written part of the thesis together answer the questions that interest me. The Visual Project was conducted by me and Tommi Mäki in September of the year 2013. I selected the term «Visual Project» instead of «exhibition» as the definition of the production part because it better explains the combination of the diverse presented mediums. The second reason for calling the production part «Visual Project» is that I do not consider myself as an artist, but more an experimenter in the field of a contemporary art.

My collaborator Tommi Mäki is a fellow student of the «Visual Culture» Master program, Pori Unit, Art Department of the Aalto University of Arts, Design and Architecture. Tommi is a sound designer. I invited him to participate in the creation of the Visual Project in order to present two perspectives of view: perspective of the native person and mine as of a foreigner. I think, the collaboration aided me to create a fuller image by interacting and preparing the project with Tommi. The Visual Project shows the personal experiences of the space of two real persons embodied in the videos, photo installation produced by me and sound installation, photo and opening performance created by Tommi. He worked individually, having separate pieces, but these were interacting in the space, sparked by my pieces, but still independent productions. While the Visual Project shows the experiences of two living persons, the written part shows
the experiences of the space by others namely fictional characters presented in the movies, documentaries, video art and installations. From my point of view, the combination of the Visual Project and the written part together create the image closest to something I would call the real experience of being a stranger. I hope that the reader will be able to see and perceive it after reading my thesis.

The written part consists of three parts which study the relations between the stranger and the environment. The first chapter called «Visual Project. Ä & bI (Dialogues)» is devoted to the production element of the thesis. It describes the work on the Visual Project, the concepts and the contribution of the collaborative working process. I will tell about the videos made during the period of my studies that were eventually displayed during the Visual Project. In the following second and third parts I refer to some pieces of the Visual Project because they have relation to some specific movie or installation or work of art that inspired me. The second part entitled «Space around us» is divided into two chapters and several subchapters. The first one called «Stranger in the space» is mostly based on a collection of articles in the book «Indifferent Spaces» by Victor Burgin. It defines the position of a stranger and experience of being an «other» in the space from philosophical and sociological points of view. The following chapter «Space inside the exiled artist. Ilya Kabakov. Space Installations» presents the specific personal experience of an exiled Russian artist.

The third part of the research called «City space and the stranger through moving image experience». In this part I describe documentaries, movies and videos that depict the city space from the point of the personal experience in the space. It consists of three chapters. In the first chapter «Experimental documentaries» I describe the avant-gard movies filmed by Joris Ivens and Walter Ruttmann. The documentaries created by them give an evaluation of the space with the presence of the spectator who is being at the position of a stranger and creator simultaneously. The documentaries capture the surroundings inventing images of the cities and cultural spaces.

In the second chapter «Fictional movies» I support the concept of the study by examples from several Finnish and Russian movies in order to compare the views of two completely different cultures and find similarities in the identities through the perspective of cinematography. I follow the parallels and common descriptions of the small cities in Finnish and Russian movies. The settings of the city space presented in the movies can conceal the contemporary reality or, on the contrary, make emphasis on it. Depicting of any city can create the image of a
cultural background and reveal ethnographic peculiarities of a country. In the chapter Russian and Finnish movies depict provincial spaces and usually relations between a stranger and a landscape.

The last chapter of the third part is devoted to Finnish video art and documentaries influenced by a history and culture of Pori.

Theoretical and conceptual background of the thesis especially builds on the articles in the book «Landscape and film» edited by professor on Film Studies Martin Lefebvre; book «Ilya Kabakov» by art critic and philosopher Boris Groys. Also I read the essays by Walter Benjamin, the book «In/different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture» by theorist Viktor Burgin with the references to the articles by philosopher Julia Kristeva and cultural critic Edward Said.

I would to thank people who contributed and helped during my work on the thesis. First of all, Tomi Mäki who participated in the project, then Pinja Mustajoki, Antti Karttunen, Jussi Klemola who helped during the installment and the organization of the Visual Project. The project would not be possible without the help from Pori Unit of the Department of Art, art association T.E.H.D.A.S. ry, student house SAIKKU, theatre Annis, that provided necessary equipment. Special thanks to Anna Volkova, who helped to edit the text of the written part of my thesis and Tuomas Laurila who introduced me to Finnish video art. Special thanks to my thesis supervisors, who were guiding me and supporting during the work on the thesis project.
PART I

VISUAL PROJECT

Ä & bl

dialogues
The Visual Project organized in the autumn of 2013 (25.09-02.10) by Marta Khrshanovskaya (the visual materials, videos, photos, texts) and Tommi Mäki, student of the Department of Visual Culture, School of Arts, Design and Architecture (responsible for the sound design, sound installation, performance for the opening).

The collaborative project involved different mediums, with overlapping ideas that created a tension between displayed works. During working on the exhibition the dialogue between the workmates developed, delving into the culture of Pori city, digging into its peculiarities, into the community of the place, its environment and habits of the local space.

The project title creates a dialogue between cultures, people, spaces, citizens. The letters which don’t exist in Russian language (Ä) and Finnish (Ы) were united by (&)borrowed from English language. The English language helped to forget the existing differences and reduced the language barrier between the cultures.

The aim of the project was to create the installation that reconstructed the realities of Pori, small city within the context of art and temporariness of the instant moment of life. Other aspect of the work was to show a variation of perception of a space from the perspectives of temporary citizens of the small city with varied backgrounds. Having used the personal experience, we described changes in the comprehension of time and distance after moving from megalopolis to the smaller settlement (I moved from Saint-Petersburg, Russia and Mäki moved from Helsinki).

As an exhibiting space I had selected an abandoned building in the center of the city which was transformed into a gallery. We followed an idea of using an alternative exhibition space rather than any gallery. I got an idea of using the abandoned building after reading an article in the book «Thinking about exhibitions» which tells about the dissociation between public and industrial spaces and its conversion into private. I counted on the idea, that the combination of the personal content of the Visual Project and premises of the building ensemble would create an engaging contrast.
Empty building was converted into a pop-up gallery. We were keeping the place open by ourselves. We got the permission to repaint or rebuild it. Practically we could do whatever we wanted at and with the space. I wanted to shift away from the «white cube» and any limitations followed by the official city galleries. The abandoned building located right in the center also had relation to the concept of the transient experience of the moment. The consolidation of the gallery space and the artworks aided to understand particular moment, the question of the being artists at the space, reality of the space for the installation.

In the Project, my personal background story is used only as an example. I do not focus on some specific and personal details about myself. I do not consider a situation of being a stranger as a personal extraordinary experience it is rather a way of perception of the moment and a space. It does not have any negative connotation, more likely it gives broader aspect. I suppose, that being a stranger in the space is a way to perceive the surroundings. The visitors who came to see the Visual Project even they were citizens of Pori observed the space of the abandoned building in a new way. Practically they were strangers at the space. The familiar space of the city on the photos and videos were presented from another perspective.

The videos I made for the exhibition describe the life of the community, situations, social circles, places through the perspective of a temporary resident. Naturally, Pori is quite a small city, but it has its own culture, peculiarities. Being a stranger in the small city it is more captivating, because people are more interested in you. You start to be observed by the judgemental community that might discuss you and follow your life events.

The concept of the small city presenting a curious social scene is not used extensively. Anyway if we will refer to the existing examples in movies of American, Finnish or Russian production, small cities are represented as hopeless and bothersome places with a lack of opportunities. I will be discussing movie examples in the third chapter of this work.

Small cities present some diverse culture, which is based on the habits, peculiarities and it is built by the residents of the certain place. The city also the city keeps some characteristics of the whole country.
During the collaborative project I attempted to realize the questions such as:

- what is the relations between a space and an artist;
- what is the position of a stranger in the space;
- what is the connection between space and memory;
- how do we perceive any surrounding space;
- what is a memorized image and what is a real image.

As functioning answers to these questions we created an installation in the particular space. The Visual Project was an attempt to realize the spaces through an artistic approach where visual and audio material presented the point of view from two persons with different backgrounds and from varied cultures who had been impacted by the same cityscape.

The idea of the changing landscape both: cultural and physical by approaching it using own personal experience and artistic practice had been challenging me for a long time. After watching a lot of movies where a landscape is integrated into the concept, into the reflection of the society and as an image of the country I decided to use it in the Visual Project.

In a way in the documentaries I became a fictional character as well and the creator of the space. At the same time the city opened up through my views of a foreigner, an artist and a person. In a way documentaries transformed into the fictional movies. Borders between a documentary and a fictional movie are thin. Different interpretations might be created by a movie maker and by an audience.

An idea of the documentation of life of the small city through the views of a stranger had been developing during the whole period of my studies. I would say that I did not describe only my personal experience, but it was an assembled mixture of impressions of other foreigners.

The stories presented in the documentaries can be interpreted without a connection to the certain landscape or cityscape. They exist without a cultural context for the reason that the experiences that people obtain during a move to the new places and cultures coincide without linking to specific spaces. Documentaries used in the project (idea, video, editing by Marta Khrshanovskaya, sound «Motion sickness» and «Sedentary birds» by Tommi Mäki) present six experiences of a space. Documentaries present the correlations between a person, observer and the space of the city.
The videos show the way how any person experiences surroundings, new spaces and how the landscape or cityscape impact the person. Space is not only the physical structured phenomenon, it might define the cultural concepts of the existing environment having the relation to the transient position of the surroundings. The documentaries themselves created spaces as well. The series of the documentaries «Autumn, winter, spring and autumn again» were inspired by a visual anthropology studies that separate artistic and anthropological documentations. During working on the thesis I was thinking a lot about what can be the way to combine both genres of documentations together and what interpretations may occur. The title inspired by the Korean film Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter…. and Spring by director Kim-Ki Duk (2003) that tells about the circle of life and the resemblance of the people’s fate and mistakes. Documentaries of the Visual Project discover the story about moving into the new cityscape, experiences of the spaces and unknown cities. Now we are going to discuss the documentaries. I will explain what motivated me to make the documentation and how it helped me to develop the concept of the project.
The video tells about relationships built with a native cityscape during many years. In a way I compare a place I lived before with my position in a new surroundings and culture. As I mentioned earlier, one of the aspects of the work was to investigate the relations between real and invented space. The video creates own space around a stranger who is at the same time is a main character. My first apartment was transformed into another, less personal space. I was playing role of a character, being a filmmaker and a stranger simultaneously. In the video I tried to show the transient moment between a previous life and new beginnings at the new place. I mention a language, a new «home» and difficulties that came after a moving in. The main character is still in the process of adjusting which is unavoidable. At the same time an «old» life and experience are still significant for a person. Video shows how people feel the distances, percieve a time and an absence of anyone they care about. «Asunto 6» was the first video I made in my life and I expressed my feelings I got during moving into the new culture. Finns are the friendliest people in the World, but the process of moving was quite challenging anyway. I perceived the world outside Russia (by saying Russia I mean Saint-Petersburg and my daily routines) as a tourist destination as some temporary places for which I have had to save money and had visited in summer running around with a camera. Then, I moved in Pori in order to study. First impressions were memorized in this black and white poster alike video and it remains uncertain how the new life would go for me, if I would get accepted by a new culture and new life or if it would become a negative experience in my life. The main character is presented between black and white and then, in the future she would decide how the «play» went. I filmed the video in my first own apartment, that was huge and empty, where nothing was arranged yet. In other words, it was just me and my luggage that just arrived from Russia and I was about to settle in a new place.
I was inspired by a lot of American movies that show images of the road as a metaphor for the escaping the ordinary life and small towns. In the article by N. Maurizia «The course of the empire: sublime landscapes in the American cinema» it is written «The heroes romantic losers who suffer from modern anxiety and existentialist boredom in the desolation of small towns, and who, in their desire to leave everything behind, end up finding the «last exit». (Lefebvre, 2006, p.118). After reading an article, I started to think about several meanings of the road in the theme of the stranger and the surrounding space. In the third chapter of the papers I will give some examples of the Finnish and Russian movies where an image of a road is chosen as an allegory for an escape of main heroes.

I was thinking a lot about American movies having an image of the road as a metaphor for the searching of a better life. A lot of characters are looking for the changes by an exile or just trip. Escaping from the familiar environment always put characters into new conditions that set up the plot.

Another aspect of the video «Motion sickness» is an idea of a constant moving which is a part of a culture of a modern world. People due to some job or study opportunities are able to live in a different city or country. From my point of view it makes all events temporary, transient. A person can feel as a stranger most of a life time. Moments are lost in the moving. Surroundings, people, experiences are changing. Finally, people cannot stay in any place for a long time, they feel that they need to exile and move.

I did not move that much before I started to live in Finland. In other words, the travelling was a summer ritual that demanded careful planning. Thus, after I had moved to Finland, my perception of the distances changed. I would say that I started to feel that all the places are easily accessible.

**Revolution**

If «Asunto 6» and «Motion sickness» videos describe a moving to new places, the third documentary «Revolution» is devoted to a cityscape. After moving and settling down a person gets used to new surroundings and he or she can observe a l and be involved into a life of a new
city and community. A stranger in a new place can define peculiarities of a space of a city and of a country as well.
The documentary refers to a culture of any space. As an example I chose Pori Hockey Victory in 2013. Hockey being the most popular kind of sport in Finland means a lot for Finns. When the local team won, Pori citizens started to behave in an abnormal way. The cityscape changed under the events. Video looks ambivalent and it provokes certain affinities. In a way I attempted to show a power of a producer of the moving image in creating meanings for the audience.
As well as any landscape or cityscape influences the inhabitants, it can work other way around, so the city is changing under certain circumstances. The documentary is devoted to a cityscape influenced by citizens from a perspective of a stranger. The victory and the national celebration is unique collective shared experience which I perceived during my life in Pori.
The event described above changed the cityscape for one evening. The center was full of people, who were celebrating the victory. The video shows a deceptive nature of a documentation and strong existing stereotypes about people’s behavior within the cityscape. Gatherings of people can provoke ideas of strikes, revolutions as well as violent actions. During watching the video spectators cannot be sure what is happening.

Sacred second home

Another aspect of an interaction between a person and surroundings are places for socializing. In the Northern cultures people have to spend most of the time inside, so everyone meets at cafés or bars.
As an example of significant and popular spaces for a gathering and meeting I selected bars that represent the places of social communication and interaction for Finns. Certainly, a stranger has to visit places to get an idea about the culture of the city where she/he lives. In the Finnish culture bars are, first of all, places for discussions and communication. Some of bars are used as well just as cafes during the daytime.
In order to get some idea about a culture of bars I read an article «Bars, gender, and virtue: myth and practice in Barcelona’s Barrio Chino» by Gary Wray McDonough. In the article he writes about his interaction with the city and locals, which was useful for my thesis project. It was connected to anthropology questions about the documentation. McDonough was living in Spain, in Barcelona, making research devoted to the bars and meanings of the gender and
myths. He lived in Barcelona, making a research about an interaction between local population and bars. It was fascinating to read his article because he was a stranger in the another culture, working on the anthropological research.
Pori can not be compared with Barcelone and there is no specific bar area, but it was fascinating to find out some facts about the small family bars, to organize interviews with the owners and ask locals about legends or stories.
During my anthropological research I was curious about the bar phenomenon being an establishment that divides the society into different groups. Some bars are used as meeting points for cultural events, while other become sport bars.
Bars interact with a cityscape as well. As an example, bars are invisible at the day time and reveal themselves towards evenings. It is an impressive fact especially if we will refer to Saint-Petersburg’s street of bars «Dumskaya ulitza» located in the center and appears quiet and respectable in a day time. In the evening time, especially in summer or weekend it transforms into a chaotic crowd.
Bars can define characteristics of the varied social groups, as well as they are an essential part of any urban culture. The local bars commonly show great number of rituals and everyday practices of citizens and visitors of the city.
McDonough distinguishes functions of the bar during the 24 hour period. At the day time bar attracts tourists for snacks or coffee breaks and people from the neighborhoods, whereas evenings are reserved for the students. (McDonough 1992, p. 21)
The video «Sacred Second Home» presents an interpretation of a bar as an organization, that compiles features of the culture and peculiarities of the certain cityscape, as well as the role of the identity and the story of a family that moved to build the life in Pori. It shows some features of Finnish character as well.
Bars appear in a lot of movies filmed by Finnish film director Aki Kaurismäki as a curious social scene where the plot starts to twist. In my documentary there is no specific plot, but I wanted to attract an attention from the spectators on some place they got used to. During making the video I interviewed the owners and it is an existing bar in Pori, which attracts locals and international inhabitants of the city.
The video is devoted to another popular place that attracts everyone in the city. Shopping malls are a necessary component of the modern urban culture. They are always located in the center of the city.

I decided to make an «illegal» documentary in the central shopping mall of Pori. In Finland it is strongly forbidden to take any pictures inside the supermarkets. I started to wonder why it is illegal to make images of the most popular place among citizens. During working on the video I was thinking how people spend their leisure time in the city space. The video «Sacred second home» tells about the Finnish bar culture. Shopping malls are also usually used as meeting place because everyone knows where it is situated.

Aside from that, shopping malls create an atmosphere of friendly place for people placing posters with smiling people and beautiful models that encourage everybody to buy. Finally, the focus of the video is on the idea of consuming and selling, but not from a point of hard critics of capitalism, but more likely as an absurd reality of the present days.

It is a fact that shops are more attractive than museums or galleries, for example, I suppose that the Pori Art Museum is approximately of the same size as the main shopping mall of Pori (Iso Karhu), but you would never meet so many people at the cultural space. Nonetheless, the conditions are the same. It is possible to have a lunch, drink coffee, it is warm inside, you can see some art pieces that you do not have to buy. Despite the fact that both of the places have same amenities, people prefer to spend their leisure time at the shopping malls. People find that it is more comfortable and pleasant to spend time in the commercial centers.

I tried to realize why it is appealing despite the fact that it is a bit stressful. I was making videos at the shop and observing people who come there without any purpose. I visited the same place several times in a day and sometimes I saw customers who were coming there several times during the day. It was captivating to be a stranger surrounded by other people, shops and goods making the «illegal» videos about the citizens and the most popular place in the city.
video «Asunto 6», 2011, black and white

I feel like I live in two places at one time
video «Motion sickness», 2012, colour
video «Revolution», 2012, colour
video «Sacred Second Home», 2013, black and white
video «No video», 2012, black and white
An installation «Sedentary birds» was presented separately, but it is also included to the list of the documentaries. The video is devoted to the constant emotion of being in a state of confusion. Main character wants to move away from the everyday life and thinks over the possibilities to leave. The video shows the relations between a person and home and the idea of leaving any space. The described earlier documentary «Motion sickness» inspired by American movies is connected with the particular one. In «Sedentary birds» I tried to tell about the emotions caused by the solution to leave.

I tried to catch the flow of thoughts, when a person is tired and sick of life for some reasons and the mind tries to solve the overwhelming anxiety caused by an inability to stay in the surroundings, place, space, landscape.

It is also connected with the Russian views on the moving away, which I will try to open up further, using as an example the life of the Russian artist Ilya Kabakov, whose art and life were exceptionally interconnected.

The text is a part of the installation. It is a description for the visual material, and it represents a sort of inner dialogue. The language is broken and the thoughts seem to be scattered and discontinuous.

*It is all temporary...It will be all gone. And whatever will come. We fly from here to there to find us or just to look for other us....Looking for a new temporary home or space to stay for a while. When the storm will calm down? We will continue if only we can...But we can. We do. I know. To have new temporary home..new temporary friends, new happy life and take it easy..Not to see them ever again..Forget what was before..Was it anything before? What were people around like..but what was a place again? where are you now and how...Is it still you or you brought everything with you again..
We run, we hope, we loose. We see temporary faces, we feel temporary feelings, where we will rest and stay or should we do that...
Big city, small city. We want to live or do we want to go? Do we need to stay.
We have a power to leave if we want, but we want to stay or do we have enough forces to lose and start over what would be lost in advance?
We have to decide now. Can we decide?
We run from here to there, staying the same and changing, writing the same, but feeling different.. Or not. Is ot all illusion?
It is just a grotesque moving around. World soon be too small...so we will stay in a temporariness of the feeling that we are living and leaving...We will be captured forever. Without home. sense of time.. but what is it..now..
Dull, it is all dull..cold and dull..See that?Have you seen sun..Can not stay.But I can leave.But I do not know what is outside..What if we will be too different....too dull, too grey and too cold. We wont be accepted..Lets stay then.Forever...

Installation «Sedentary Birds», 2013
Memories sized 6x4

The photo installation «Memories sized 6x4» presented the relation of a modern person to the surroundings. People travel and take photos everywhere and it seems to me that instead of the observing the surroundings, the first thing is to memorize it.
During two years I spent in Pori I used to take more photos than I had taken in Saint Petersburg. I think, that the idea of the temporary presence in the space encouraged me to take pictures repeatedly. Although, some of them are pointless presenting some moments, situations, at the same time they are a unique documentation of the space. I will talk about this installation later in the second part of the work devoted to Ilya Kabakov and in connection to his ideas about the garbage at the museum spaces.

*The description for the installation:*
There are always memories about places, spaces, people, situations, experiences, days, events, moments, celebrations, moods, sounds good, bad, new, old, sad, fun, significant, meaningless, but we move and move around and we don’t remember the city…. what was that Helsinki, Paris or Madrid or London….or maybe was it Pori… sometimes you would like to forget but you have 1000000000 photos to remind you something that has passed or something that will come soon or repeat and you will feel happy or ashamed. Photos are part of our everyday routine now. Got a meal-take a picture, they keep memory together!
In the first part of my thesis I described the Visual Project «Ä & ël. Dialogues». During the work on the videos I found the answers for the questions related to the interaction between a stranger and surroundings. I was in the position of a creator, an actor and of a spectator at the same time. I expressed myself using the possibilities of a video tool in order to investigate the Finnish cityscape from the position of an artist and a foreigner. I think, that the videos present for the spectator the logical image of the experience of being a stranger in the city. The collaboration with Tommi played the role of making the atmosphere of the project more diverse and versatile. Tommi’s independent pieces elaborated with the videos and photo installation. In the next chapters I will explain what influenced me and what I used as a background for the project.
II PART
SPACE AROUND US

I. Stranger in the space
1.1. Borders between homes
1.2. Space between strangers
1.3. Spaces left behind

II. Space inside the exiled artist
2.1. Ilya Kabakov. Space Installations
2.2. Total installations
2.3. Personal spaces
2.4. Interpretations
CHAPTER I. Stranger in the space

1.1 Borders between homes

In the previous part I introduced the visual project and in the current chapter I would like to show the conceptual background of the research. In the book «In/different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture» by Victor Burgin, the article «Paranoiac space» devoted to the exile, describes the situations when people cannot cope with the consequences of the exile, of the moving from home. The fact of moving affects people and they are not able to fit into another society. The author compares the emotions of the immigrants and exiles with the condition which is closed to the psychotic disorder. He mostly discusses the situations when people had to leave because of the unstable and dangerous situation in the countries of origin. He refers to the 80s and the immigration to the USA from the Middle East countries.

If we would take a look at the current situation of the modern society, moving around on different purposes is one of the opportunities for everyone. In the last few decades the life of society has changed. Moving became a global opportunity that lets people to reach any place in a short period of time. People are not tied to one place anymore. It is possible to live, study and work in the different places around the world. Paul Virilio calls it «The changes of the spatial relations». He defines the world as «shrinking geographical space» (Burgin 1996, p.120). He is right, every place of the world is accessible and the perception of the distances has changed. People leave their homes, their places of origin, looking for new places that would become for them temporary or permanent «homes».

During the work on my thesis project I was thinking about the reasons of moving away and how it appears to be more complicated for some people and easier for the others. I cannot be sure what actually any person experiences after leaving the home behind forever or how does it feel to know that you will not be able to come back home. Another question I reflected on is what does it the definition of «home» itself involve. Is it possible to describe home as a physical space or is it a mother tongue or is it a surrounding community?

During the work on the diploma project I tried to answer the questions relying on my own experience. The collaboration with Tommi helped me to overcome the borders of my own perception.
The teamwork on the Visual project was much more objective and versatile than if I would have organized it by myself. Besides if I moved from Russia to Finland, Tommi moved from Helsinki to Pori. Certainly, the experiences are different, but they are based on the fact of moving away from the space the person got used to the most and considers «home». As well as moving from one city to another means losing previous connections along with a separation from the familiar environment. During the conversations we found some similarities in our experiences juxtaposing in some changes of the perception of the space. Surely, because of our dialogue I could define some cultural differences as well.

As an example, I see that Finnish people move a lot within the country to study or because of a job. A lot of Finns get professional and educational experiences abroad. From my point of view, in Russia, it is not that common yet. Quite often Russian people do not move, they prefer to stay at the same city, but I talk only about my own experience. Certainly, after the collapse of Soviet Union it is possible for everyone to visit foreign countries as a tourist or student etc. Despite the possibility a lot of people do not like to travel, they are afraid to go outside of the «comfortable space» of their native country.

I suppose, it might be still an effect of the «closed society» to which Ilya Kabakov, about whom I will talk in the next chapter, refers in his installations. Russian person does not feel secure outside of the native country. Probably, after many years of a life at the same place within one country it is complicated to accept the diverse cultures and it is easier to deny or avoid them. For instance one could look at the relations between Russia and Finland, (by Russia I mean, most of all, Saint Petersburg and the territory of Karelia). They are neighbouring countries with a lot of cultural connections but at the same time they are completely dissimilar. Sometimes, for a Russian person it is very hard to feel comfortable in Finland because of the cultural differences. At the same time for the Finnish person it is very difficult to feel secure in Saint-Petersburg. It is quite easy to get from Russia to Finland and the landscape is almost the same but it is two separate worlds. In the video «Asunto 6» I compare the perception of distances by people. When I told everyone that I move to Finland, everyone implied that it is very close to Russia. In reality, it takes 10 hours to get from Pori to Saint-Petersburg.
From Pori to home town I can get in 10 hours

long uncommon finnish words like järjestelmällistämättömyydellänsäkääänköhän
1.2 Space between the strangers

As I mentioned earlier in the article «Paranoiac Space» the consequences of the moving and life in new environment are compared to the psychotic disorder such as paranoia. As it is explained in the book, paranoia is «a feeling of persecution unjustified in reality» (Burgin 1996, p.118).

I think the author did not mean exactly paranoia as a medical condition, but he described the state of experience caused by being an «other» in the space. Julia Kristeva in the article «Etrangers a nos-meme» writes: «To live with the other, with the foreigner, confronts us with the possibility.....of being an other. It is not simply a matter – humanistically – of our aptitude for accepting the other, but of being in his or her place, which amounts to thinking of oneself and making oneself other than oneself. Rimbaud’s «I is an other» was not only the avowal of the psychotic phantom that haunts poetry. The word announced exile, the possibility or the necessity of being foreign and of living in the foreigner’s country, thus Time and Bodies» (Burgin 1996, p.124 ). She writes about a necessity of acceptance of the «others» not only as a fact of the agreement to see a different personality but as acceptance to the particular culture of the country. If being an «other» gives an opportunity to be on someone else’s place would it still be a possibility to have own cultural identity or with time all the people would be equal strangers.

Edward Said talks about the relations between a stranger and the surroundings. He describes it as «hopeless attempts to make satisfying contact with new surroundings» (Burgin 1996, p.142). By the surrounding he means the community and the culture itself as well as a lack of acceptance among the natives. E. Grosz writes that «it is our positioning within space, both as the point of perspectival access to space, but also as an object for others in space, that gives the subject any coherent identity» (Burgin 1996, p.124).

The question of the personal identity arises when a person finds her- or himself in a new space, new surroundings where any previous connections do not matter. After leaving some place with the time the person will be forgotten. If he or she would change under the influence of the new cultural space she/he would not be the same personality anymore. The question that was bothering me during the work on the thesis project was if it is possible to realize if any connection exists between a person and the surroundings. Thus, it is important to know If it is possible for a person to admit any change in the perception that lets him or
feel that they are being integrated into a new society. Then, I was thinking that it is quite common that people move to the new culture but they keep their identity because they live with the other exiles from the same country, forming the community.

E. Said divides the term «exile» into several types. He distinguishes them as «exiles», «refugees», «expatriates», «emigres». The origin of exile, he observes is in the ancient practice of banishment, which stigmatizes the exile as rejected. Refugees, he finds, are byproduct of the modern state, political innocents united in bewilderment (Burgin 1996, p.118).

He continues: «Expatriates share the prefiguring the art of living in a modern era, the cosmopolitanism of the excoriated. Space, condition of the exile in all respects but one: having chosen to leave their homeland they are therefore free to return. The status of the émigré is «ambiguos»: the émigré may once have been an exile but, like the European settler in Africa, Asia, or Australia, may have constructed a new national identity away from national origins» (Burgin 1996, p.119).

Said does not write about temporary exiles but, I suppose, they are close to the definition of the expatriates, because they are eligible to come back home and they are able to support the connections with a homeland. Anyway, the modern society gives a possibility to travel if not the opportunity for temporary settlement for everyone who wishes to get cultural experience of another country.

In the book Said gives some examples of the artists who never could be separated from the homeland and could not survive the detachment. Surely, sometimes an exiled person just does not have any other choice than to stay and try to fit in.

As we see both writers, Kristeva and Said, perceive the subject of their research through personal experience. The experience of being «an other» intertwines with the personality becoming inseparable part of the life and sometimes work.
1.3 Left spaces

Edward Said writes «achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever» (Burgin 1996, p.137). However, only the fact of exile can evaluate the previous life experience. In some cases a question what would have happened if a person would have stayed at that particular moment at some place arises. In a modern situation, in a case of constant moving, the image of the home can be blurry especially if a person can interact with the surrounding using the language of the country. Quite many people admit that they can feel home far away from the place of origin, but they cannot describe what exactly in the space makes them feel that way.

Undeniably, a language is still one of barriers between people that separates the foreigner from a surrounding culture. Any language is also important in the space as a way to get to know the environment. If a person lives in a small city, he or she attends the same places like cafés or bars, or grocery shops where with the time she/he becomes a recognized customer and it creates a new form of a dialogue or change a meaning of the particular space for the person. Furthermore, the knowledge of the nuances of the language quite often helps to apprehend the cultural differences. For example in the video «Sacred Second Home» made for I compare the Finnish way of ordering a beer with the English one.

Nowadays some cultures appear to be more detached also because of a language. Particularly, I would say that a Russian culture because of the language seems separated from the other world. Russian people speak foreign languages rarely. It is a matter of fact, that not many people can get any information about Russia, about Russian contemporary art or Russian culture. The dialogue is not evolving, despite the fact that Russia is an open country and everyone can visit it. As we see a stranger in the space perceives and experiences a lot of things. He or she can be can dissolve in the space and the surroundings.

The next question connected to relations between a stranger and space is how a surrounding environment perceives the stranger. In the first part of the study devoted to the Visual Project I mentioned that me and Mäki attempted to present three perspectives, three points of view, including the city itself that was also the one showing own perspective through the point of view of the artists.

Every city has own structure, history and culture and in the videos I focused on the details that might be considered familiar and unremarkable for the locals and, on contrary, fascinating
and noticeable for the strangers. It can be said, that in a way the surrounding space of the city impacted us and we perceived it through the obtained impressions.

Before moving to Finland I had never been to Pori and when I moved there I could see an image different from Helsinki. Usually people see Helsinki as the only one Finnish city and do not consider others parts of the country as depressive countryside.

EVERY NOW AND THEN YOU HEAR
-YKS KARHU...
IN FINNISH IT MEANS
-EXCUSE ME, SIR, MAY I HAVE
A PINT OF BEER, PLEASE?

video «Sacred Second Home», 2013, black and white
CHAPTER II Spaces inside the exiled artist

2.1 Ilya Kabakov. Space installations

In the following chapter I will describe the life of one Russian exiled artist. In the previous chapter I analyze the philosophical and sociological perspective on the questions of the exile. Now I would like to illustrate the theme by presenting the life and works of the exiled artist. For Ilya Kabakov the fact of the moving away became a source of inspiration and the only one opportunity to materialize the idea and concept of the space.

Kabakov was born in Ukraine in the year 1930. During the war he was evacuated to Samarkand where he had begun attending the art school, which was later moved to Leningrad (Saint-Petersburg nowadays). Afterwards, he was studying at the Surikov State Art School located in Moscow. His major studies were in the book design and illustration. Later he was working for the DETGIZ, (the leading publisher of books for children at that time). He was involved in the art group «Sretensky boulevard» that was created on the wave of ideas of the 60s. In 70s impacted by French structuralist theory, «Sretensky boulevard group» developed into the movement known as «Moscow conceptualists». Kabakov stayed in Soviet Union until the end of 80s, then he started to work abroad. Now he lives and works in collaboration with his wife in New York.

In his memoirs he writes about the irrational fear of leaving the USSR when he was offered a working grant abroad. Finally, he left «home» by accepting the temporary opportunity to work at the artist residence. He is one of the most well-known and significant conceptual Russian artists in the post-soviet era. After reading a book devoted to his artworks with his interviews I got some ideas for the visual project. Kabakov explores the phenomena of the Soviet Union from the perspective of an exiled artist. He is focusing on the social life in Soviet Union being a rewarded artist outside Russia. Kabakov connects his personal background with the history of the country of origin in his art installations creating the new spaces which exist outside the context of the Russian culture. I attempted to use the same concept for the subject of the small Finnish city investigating it in a broader aspect. Also I used my own experience of a stranger as a concept, because a lot of people can relate to the feeling of being «an other».
Kabakov invents and describes «total installations» that transform the premises of a museum or a gallery into three-dimensional spaces. He says «installation is a three-dimensional invention, and one of its features is a claim to totality, to a connection with universals, to certain models that, in the general view, no longer exist... All the parameters of the space are re-created anew; a cosmos of sorts is brought to life» (Kabakov, 1999, p.62).
Kabakov creates «total installations» that are being a way to exile from the accepted western «white cube» gallery spaces. He implies that «white cube» type establishes «alien context» for the artworks (Groys 1998, p.54). He arranges the spaces resembling home inside museums or galleries.
Kabakov left the most repulsive soviet spaces to recreate them on the West as art installations. If usually visitors enter any gallery or other institutional organization and then they can see the artworks right away, Kabakov’s installations are integrated into the space.
He constructs installations reproducing elements, structures and forms, overcoming time and space borders, capturing the transitional moments between the epochs and cultures.
In a way, I. Kabakov has transformed his own memories into the whole image of the failed society. Compiling the intimate and public, he shares with the audience fears of an oppressed and insecure person.
The installations are «devouring» the viewers inside some new dimensions filled with imaginary characters telling the real stories. It is fascinating to see how he transforms the Soviet realities into art installations, initiating new spaces in between reality and imagination, in between personal and universal.
Ilya Kabakov writes a lot about an interaction between the artist and working or living spaces. He investigates the world using his own experience based on the Russian culture. The life experience of Kabakov is inextricably merged with his art. I would say that his life experience became the art piece itself. He often uses family photos and documents. As I see it, «total installations» create an image of the reality of the Soviet times and people. They are not related only to the Past and precisely Russia, they are also connected to the present days.
In a way, his installations create a universe constructed on the concept of a failed country but integrated into the modern society. The personal experience plays significant role here as
well. The appreciation of Kabakov’s art by people of varied nationalities and countries derives from familiar personal experiences. Kabakov’s installations capture the system interpreting the existing regime, explaining its development and the reasons to collapse. He tells about self-expression under constant supervision and oppression. It seems to me, that Kabakov’s artworks immerse the audience into the world of fictional, but existing spaces if not in the reality but in some metaphysical level.

2.3 Personal space

Kabakov in his artworks investigates relations between intimacy and the communal life. He implies that being under the gaze of anyone most of the time turns «everyone into an artist, or into an artwork» (Groys 1998, p.64). Kabakov perceives the surrounding spaces through the perspectives of some fictional characters that, for example, share an apartment. The perception of the space of home changes for a person who has to communicate with the other inhabitants of the apartment. Kabakov describes the lives of the created characters, but it is real stories which makes his installation so personal and captivating. The definition of home represents the private space and it means that the person feels comfortable and safe. Kabakov’s installations show the private space of home which under constant gaze transforms into the exhibition. At the same time the life of the character alters to the art piece at the space of the exhibition. This interpretation of the installations made me think about the cityscape as an art piece and as the exhibition space concurrently. The position of the stranger for example in a new environment also can be compared with the art piece that is observed by the spectators. The documented life experience of the person embodied in the visual materials creates the private space at the unfamiliar environment.

Kabakov often works with the «ready made» using a lot of household objects and photos from his private collection. Certainly, Kabakov did not move the objects from Russia to United States. They were made later for the exhibitions. I was thinking that people who move a lot have to leave the belongings. Usually, most of people just buy new objects if they move to a new place. At the same time it gave me an idea to use the weightless «visual garbage», by that I mean, random photos of impressions of the cityscape and the surrounding spaces. The installation «Memories sized 6/4» was inspired by the idea of visual but weightless non objective garbage, that would have stayed unrevealed for ages if we would not have organized the Visu-
al Project. I did not have to but any objects during my stay in Finland, but I was taking photos of everything that seemed bewitching. Another aspect is that if I would not have selected Pori landscape as the main «figure» of the exhibition, the photos would have stayed unrevealed. The same we can see at museums. The found during archeological excavations objects which Kabakov calls «garbage» are presented at the museums as rarities. Kabakov also writes about the garbage, how it becomes significant within the space of the museum and how the relation to the things changes with the time. I considered that the photos after the life in Pori would become useless and insignificant. Having had meaning for the period of the exhibition, they became just «visual garbage» after. I encouraged the visitors to take some of the photos so the memories would last longer.

2.4 Interpretations

Kabakov says that the artist does not work in «here and now» context and the artworks are able to create meanings in the different contexts and times. Kabakov claims that: «The artwork is made in the expectation that it will live beyond the context of its production, that it will be perceived in the other times and the other places that we cannot predict, let alone describe» (Groys 1998, p.41).

Kabakov always writes the texts and explains the concept and idea behind the installations. He does not ask an audience to think, he limits their interpretation control. From my point view, it gives visitors a possibility to perceive the spaces better, because they, first of all, need to observe the installations.

The interpretative control arises the question of how the artworks will be defined and perceived after the death of the particular artist for the reason that he is being closely connected with artworks. His background, personality and experience are embodied in the installations. In a way it might seem that the installations have a limited life period, they are based on the experiences of the artist, on his own interpretation of spaces. During planning of the project, the question how people would «read and interpret» the production part bothered me.

The interpretation by the audience is a part of the working on any exhibition or other artistic project. In the particular situation the project was evaluated by the visitors who live in the city permanently and they might have different idea of the space.
Another problem is that personal experience is surprisingly difficult to embody into the Visual Project probably because it implicates sharing with the audience. Kabakov writes «The artist wants attention from the viewer, but not interpretive control» (Groys 1998, p.35). Kabakov has dealt with this mixture of hope and fear coming from the uncertainty of how the viewer, the stranger would interpret and would feel inside the installation. During the «dialogues» in some way the inhabitants of the city observed the familiar place from the perspectives of the strangers.

Kabakov’s example shows the connection between diverse experiences of people and how the art can connect audiences of different cultures. Certainly, his experience of a stranger plays the most significant role in his installation and his views on the space of another culture and country. Common cultural background with Ilya Kabakov aided me to develop the conceptual background for the thesis. His life experience and his views on Russia gave me ideas about the mood for the exhibition. The Visual Project was inspired by the art installations of Kabakov and his interviews about his life and experiences of being an artist in a society with no freedom. I followed his ideas about installing in «white cube» types of the galleries, that seem repulsive and empty.

Ilya Kabakov, installation «School No.6», 1993 (photo from the Chinati Foundation)
Ilya Kabakov, «The Man Who Flew Into Space From His Apartment», 1985 (photoby Artnet’s AWC)
In the second part of the thesis I analyzed the phenomenon of being a stranger basing on the ideas of philosophers and sociologists who were exploring the interactions between a person and culture. From my perspective, it is very important question of the modern society how the foreigners can integrate into another cultures. I follow the ideas of Kristeva and Said who were writing about being «an other» which is a pivotal theme in the thesis. Both of the writers explore the sociological questions related to immigration and how the fact of exile affects the personality. Kristeva writes about the interaction between the community and the person. Said is focused on the process of the integration of a person into any new culture. Both of them giving examples of the exiled artists, probably, their friends and how they were assimilating. I use an example of life and art of the Russian artist Ilya Kabakov to illustrate the concepts implied by J.Kristeva and E.Said concerning the perception and interaction between a person and new surroundings. Kabakov was impacted by spaces he used to live in. I see the parallels between views of Kabakov and my perception of the moving. I did not focus on his art, but mostly how he embodied his life experience into the art pieces and installations. His writings and interviews aided me to organize the whole project. During the process of the installation of the works I could perceive the space of the abandoned building turning it into the completely new place which became a temporary «home» for the memories of my lifetime in Pori.
PART III

Stranger in the space through moving image experience

3.1. Experimental documentaries
3.2. Fictional movies
3.3. Video art
During my work on the thesis I was influenced by a range of Finnish and Russian movies which inspired me to make the videos influenced by the concepts of the cities. Except for the fictional movies, I based the Visual Project on the experimental documentaries that aided me to create the narrative and the atmosphere for the production part of my thesis. Besides, movies and documentaries provided the visual material and examples for the study. In the previous chapter «Space inside the exiled artist. Ilya Kabakov. Space Installations» I introduced space installations of Russian conceptual artist and the relations between surroundings and a stranger. In the following chapter I will include to the study images of the spaces created in the movies. Videos for the Visual project were mostly affected by the early 20th century experimental movies such as *Rain* (1929) by Joris Ivens, *Berlin: Symphony of a city* by Walter Ruttmann, 1927, and Canadian directors such as David Rimmer and Jack Chambers. The documentaries «Autumn, winter, spring and autumn again» described in the first part are connected to the concepts of the fictional movies and of the avant-garde documentaries. I will elaborate on that later in the chapters dedicated to the documentaries, fictional movies and video art.

I think that movies capturing the spaces and inventing images of the existing or imaginary places create visual pictures of the cityscape including the cultural and social life of a settlement. I explore spaces invented in the movies that form a final image of the city. Usually, the filmmakers generalize different images and embody them into a certain concept of space, presenting it in movies.

Martin Lefebvre in his book «Landscape and film» differentiates terms «settings» and «landscape». He writes that after inventing cinematography, the role of the landscape remained the same in a sense that it presents the background for the events. He draws parallels with the theatre as well, implying that landscape or cityscape are used for the complication of the plot and as a point of reference (Lefebvre 2006, p.20).

In a way the Visual Project «Ä & ë (Dialogues)» presented the settings as well as Pori had been used as the landscape for fictional documentaries about life and settlement in a small city. Three points of view were performing as well as they interacted with each other creating a dialogue. It might be implied that the cityscape offered an idea of settings and at the same time it created the narrative for the stories. The Visual Project shows the «experimental» documentaries while most of them are impacted by the culture of the particular city.
I suppose, the combination of the real events and places, personal experience presented the theme of a stranger in the cityscape in the best possible way.

I had been living in Saint Petersburg for twenty three years and it is my home town and it does not matter if I am fond of it or not. People move somewhere temporarily or permanently because they feel a need to change something in order to contemplate, to compare. Russia, even though it has been a free country for over twenty years, but it still has inner focused culture. Surely, it is changing, but in general people stay at the place they were born. It is quite common that people of my age have never been abroad and they do not even have a wish to go. Some of them might feel insecure because of the language barrier and for example people of the older generations cannot feel comfortable outside Russia. As the main reason I would name inefficiency in foreign languages.

I moved to Finland and it is close to Russia, but still people did not expect me to come back ever. In Finland I started to think that it would be so fascinating to document every day of life, cause everything is so different. After hectic life in Saint Petersburg, Pori everyday life was full of time for the contemplating and observing the surroundings, focusing on the details. Non-capital cities keep the unique atmosphere by supporting own subculture. I watched a lot of documentaries and movies devoted to the small cities and, eventually, I decided to combine these two genres in the thesis.

**Experimental documentaries**

Documentary is an interesting combination of the factual material presented through the perspective of one person who creates the narrative, the story, the plot. Aside from that, the documentary director refers to the footage based on real life events. I really wanted to use the concept of the documentary for the thesis work. I would add, that my fascination of the documentary came after the Visual Anthropology questions that remain what artistic documentation is and what anthropological documentation is. During the work on the video «Sacred Second Home» for the thesis project I was researching this question. Having been inspired by the first avant-garde documentaries made by Joris Ivens, Walter Ruttmann and Dziga Vertov I included the concepts and narratives of the first experimental documentaries into my thesis. I would like to stop in more details on work of the documentary artists.
Joris Ivens (1898-1989) was one of the first Dutch documentary film makers. Besides he was working in the Soviet Union making the promotional movie about the industrial Russian settlement called Magnitogorsk. The film Song of heros (1932) represents communist regime of the USSR by showing the industrial city. Documentary shows the power of the communist society captured in the image of the developing provincial city. The video served on the propagandistic purpose. The city appears quite futuristic for that period of time. His another works is The rain (Regen, 1929) which captures the life of a city and the way it changes under the weather circumstances. In the documentary, rain confuses people and causes panic. The regime of the day is ruined. It is fascinating to see, because the first decade of XX century was time of the industrialization and the cities were developing precipitously. At the same time Ivens shows how the natural event such as rain can simply ruin the routine of life.

I was wondering a lot about the impact of the nature on the inhabitants of northern countries such as Russia or Finland. The installation «Sedentary birds» (video Marta K. sound T.Mäki) was influenced by the interrelations between a human and a surrounding nature. Weather conditions are a part of an international image of Finland and Russia as well. Sometimes it seems to me, that due to images in movies the life in the northern country automatically means that people have to survive the darkness and cold struggling with depression. We can remember film Night on Earth by Jim Jarmusch that shows Helsinki as a cold, depressive and dark place. Quite often the image of Finland is connected with an empty landscape covered by snow. The video «Sedentary birds» shows the personal relations to a landscape and the way how the personality interacts with undesirable surroundings. Another aspect of the video is how the life in some is affected the way of thinking. In the video I do not refer exceptionally to Finland but also to Russia. An image of a flat covered with snow, a landscape with a small settlement is common for the northern cinematography.

Another source of inspiration were the movies by Walter Ruttmann (1887-1941), who was a German experimental filmmaker. One of his most famous movies Berlin: Symphony of a Great City is devoted to the German capital and it was filmed in the year 1927. The movie captures the time of changing life of the city by showing the daily routine. In the movie a theme of existing relations between a human being and a cityscape develops. The filmmaker himself observes the surroundings through a lens of his camera, capturing a daily life of the city. In the documentary the changes of the epochs represent a perception
of time. A modern person knows what would happen and the documentary is therefore perceived with the knowledge of imminent events.

Another aspect of the movie is an interaction between inhabitants of the city and the surrounding space. They organically involved into the life of the settlement. The city and its inhabitants ensemble create the surrounding space. The movie is full of the references to the future that is just about to happen, but is not there yet.

I was thinking that it captures this transient moment of everyday life that later would lead to some significant events. Documentary captures the Zeitgeist and the generation of Berliners of the time when it was filmed. We can perceive the whole atmosphere of the capital as well as it shows the spirit of the time.

In the documentary «Revolution» I explore the interaction between the citizens and cityscape under the cultural and social events. If you remember, the local hockey team won the competition and the peaceful and empty scape shifted to the crowded space creating the unusual scene for the spectators.
3.1 Fictional movies

While working on the project I was inspired by the fictional movies produced in Russia and Finland at the end of 1980s and early 1990s. As the social structure of the Soviet Union collapsed and a future remained unpredictable, Russian artists were inspired by an ambiance of the changing times. Many artists and filmmakers started to analyze a whole system of the Soviet Union, looking for the coherent metaphors for it. Cinematography became one of the ways to show the reality and the possible explanations. Images of towns outside capital cities began to symbolize Russia. Artists attempted to find the truth about the events, about the Russian mentality in the outskirts, in the cities «in the middle of nowhere». In the movies filmed during that period of time a landscape is merged with the history, and with the cultural reality of the moment of reforming the society.

I selected the movies to illustrate and explain how fictional movies can describe the relations between a person and certain cityscape that can be home or transient space.

Another aspect is that the movies show the interaction between a stranger and the space of a city. At the same time, Finnish movies, having own aesthetics and cultural background, show their own perspective. Certainly, there are some similarities between Finnish and Russian movies especially the ones that were filmed at the end of 80s and the beginnings of 90s. Finnish movies produced in the 90s were quite similar to Russian movies in their narrative to find a solution when situated with a crisis.

In the movies by Kaurismäki such as Varjoia paratiisissa (Shadows in Paradise, 1986), Ariel (1988), Leningrad cowboys go America (1989) filmed in the end of the 80s the main characters choose to escape hopeless Finland in order to find a better life somewhere else. As well as the theme of moving away was common in the Russian movies as well.

In many Finnish movies, the characters and the landscape are merged with the storylines. If we refer to the present days, small towns of Finland are pictured as undesirable places, for example, in the fictional Finnish movies Syvalle Salattu (Body of the water, 2011) by director Joona Tena. The film represents the interaction between traditional beliefs and the modern society. In the movie the community of a village does not accept the incoming stranger who wants to help to prevent building of a factory. Under the impact of the ambiance and the childhood memories, the main character feels confused, destructed and paranoid.

The movie also shows the modern tendencies of moving within the country. People leave the
countryside in order to settle down in the bigger cities or capitals. Sometimes people feel anxious when living in the same place especially in small towns; the life of everyone becomes public and person has to communicate with the neighbors and be careful with their actions.

I selected movies of different genres to illustrate that the similar landscape can be settings for varied stories. Another Finnish movie is *Reindeerspotting* (Janoos Neuvonen, 2010) which is a documentary about the drug users in Rovaniemi. The filmmaker shows the city itself and on the background of the cozy, small northern Finnish city the main character suffers from the boredom and his addiction. Dreaming about leaving the place forever, he finally he manages to escape the country.

Janoos Neuvonen, *Reindeerspotting*, 2010, colour
Aki Kaurismäki, *Ariel*, 1988, colour

Joona Tena, *Syvalle Salattu*, 2011, colour
3.2 Russian movies

The movie *Cloud paradise* made in 1990 by the Russian film director Nikolai Dostal shows the image of a Russian provincial small town. The main character Kolya accidently lies that he is moving away because he got a job offer. All the inhabitants of the town start to persuade him to leave by giving advices and feeling happy for him. They organize a farewell party without his knowledge. The inhabitants practically force him to move and start a new happy life outside the familiar space. Kolya does not want to go, but he likes to be in the center of attention. In the end he has to leave under the pressure, even though he has nowhere to go. He enters the unknown path, he moves somewhere where he does not have anyone.

The image of the city is captivating, it represents what people call «middle of nowhere»: an ordinary small town who that no one knows about or has heard of. The image of the city and inhabitants present the unique ambiance of the city. In some of the scenes the inhabitants of the city have discussions about possibilities of leaving the city.

In the second part of the movie the plot develops; Kolya comes back to the small city after 10 years of absence. He finds out, that the life without him is stable and tranquil. His friends are happy to meet him at first, but then it seems that everybody wants him to leave. It comes into sight that Kolya and his former girlfriend have a son. Nonetheless the child does not know anything and she is married with another man. The appearance of Kolya ruins the peace and in the end he moves away forever.

The image of home and familiar neighborhood transforms into absolutely unbearable place for the character. The way I was moving away from Russia was different; I moved only for a temporary residence in Finland, but the way it was perceived by people was fascinating. I described the connection between a person and the relationship with the place of origin in the video «Asunto 6».

In the movies of the 90s this concept develops. A small city simultaneously becomes a metaphor for Soviet life in general and Russian mentality. In many movies people spend their lives in the unacceptable conditions, they live in the factories or some industrial spaces. In the movie *Children of Iron gods* (1993) directed by Hungarian filmmaker Tamas Toth people live at the premises of a factory. The absurdity of the life and the inner feeling of hatred towards the surroundings affects the main character Ignat. Desperate attempts to improve the life or find
some meaning force Ignat to suffer. The action takes place at the metallurgical plant, which is located somewhere in the Urals. People became integrated into surroundings, they are a part of a landscape, part of the dreadful machinery town.

In the movie City Zero (in Finnish Kaupungin nimensä Nolla, Karen Shakhnazarov, 1989) engineer from Moscow Alexei Varakin arrives to a provincial town to figure out the technical details related to the necessity of design changes of air conditioners that have been operating in the company for fifteen years.

Absurdities and oddities began already at the entrance of the plant which for some reason he is refused to enter. Later, in the factory he meets a young secretary of the factory manager calmly working at her workplace being completely naked, but nobody pays any attention. Then, by refusing the food offer from the chef at the local restaurant, Varakin becomes a reason of the cook’s suicide. But even this event is a prelude to the chain of events that are more like a nightmare: the tickets at the train station of the city are sold out; roads lead nowhere, a taxi driver brings him in the middle of a forest instead of the next train station because the road just ends. Varakin finds the local ethnographic museum; the curator shows him the incredible exposition, which mixes all the nations and epochs, from the Romans to the Trojans and the recent soviet leaders. Finally, Varakin is captured by the city and if in the beginning he tries to resist the absurdity of the life of the city and the inhabitants, towards the end his rationality is gone.

The absurdity of the life in a city and a craziness of people appear scary for the viewers. The main character tries to escape the city, but all the attempts fail. It is impossible to resist an unknown and unexplainable force of the provincial town that detains the main character. Varakin loses the connections with the outside world. In the beginning he calls his wife. Later he is not capable anymore of giving explanations to his family.

The movie has also philosophical aspect concerning the time period of the 90s. When the Russian system failed and something new was forming. From this point it is also interesting, because the provincial cities all around Russia can be similar to the city Zero in a real life. City Zero shows a collision between a stranger and surroundings and how the reality of the other place can devour the person from the outside world.

The image of a town is represented as an evil place as well as the equivalent of the normality. On the surface city lives normal life, but it is also a hidden world of a small city.
N. Dostal, *Cloud paradise*, 1990, colour

K. Shakhnazarov, *City Zero*, 1990, colour
3.3. Video art

Pori is a small city on the west coast of Finland. It has own structure, rules, story and dialect. Pori is famous for its friendly art scene and music bands as well for the internationally known festival called Pori Jazz. My thesis is associated with the certain city space of Pori that inspired me, Tommi Mäki and other artists and filmmakers. On the art scene of Finland Pori is popular thank to a few artist organizations that promote the city in order to make it appealing to the young artists that are willing to build a carrier. As well as the Pori Art Museum attracts visitors from all over the country by staging political and street art orientated exhibitions.

It was simple to follow the infrastructure of Pori, the way life there is organized, the circles, the crowd and the community. It was really fascinating to see how the nature and humans are in a perfect balance. The capital cities are certainly more complicated to discover for the several reasons. First of all, metropoleis are bigger and busier and most of the time people spend preoccupied with work or studies or travelling in the city.

Another problem is the tendency that all capitals are more international and less authentic due to the more diverse society. The social factor works here as well, a community of Helsinki is varied from these in the other parts of Finland.

Pori being a working class city became, eventually, the most outstanding Finnish art center and it is effortless to organize any artistic events such as exhibition, workshop, art project or festival. In the report of the Baltic Circle, international theatre festival held in Helsinki Janne Saarakkala writes: «Pori is the home base of Performance Art in Finland. This is due to T.E.H.D.A.S. Association that runs two annual festivals and smaller events in between in their Gallery 3h+k. The international festival Perf takes place in May (since 2005) gathering performances from Europe, USA and Japan. In the more local Pori Celebration Weeks (since 2007), by the end of the year, the association spends all the remaining subsidies in performances, concerts, parties, happenings and workshops. The financial system is the same as in Tampere: free entries, no wages, no need for marketing – and there’s always plenty of audience. This is part of the association’s agenda: lowering all thresholds for art to be free and available for everyone, so that anything can happen and people get used to other genres and the odd stuff, they learn to accept the unfamiliar», visions the godfathers of Finnish Performance Art, Jussi Matilainen and Simo Saarikoski from T.E.H.D.A.S. What is particular in these guys approach is that they don’t buy the motive behind the applied science agenda: turning art into proper
occupations with steady incomes. The association is run solely on public grants, which all go into the costs of visiting artists and arrangements. The godfathers, for instance, live on unemployment benefits and odd personal grants. They spurn the art establishment and expertise – and seem to do just fine. In my opinion, the inhabitants of Pori have the best self-esteem in the country. They were the first to crash into recession and they were the first to survive it by swapping hardware production into software – and into barter economy. Pori lacks competence and there’s a real sense of sharing space. No wonder, a lot of artists want to move there and Pori-born stay in their hometown. They don’t necessarily need Helsinki for anything, they make their own connections worldwide. Some examples: Pori Jazz Festival since 1966, Circle (the band) since 1991 and the Outlaws Theatre Festival since 2001. One can study arts at the Department of Art and Media, the Pori branch of the Aalto University School of Art and Design. (Saarakkala Baltic Circle Seminar Publication 2011, p.22)

After an introduction about Pori I would like to tell about some of documentaries and videos by Finnish artists that influenced me during the work on the thesis project.


A documentary appears as an example of an anthropological and artistic research that is one of the questions of my thesis. I became interested in a genre of a short movie that describes historical events in an artistic way.

The short movie tells the story about the prosperous merchant who lived in Pori. His daughter dies and the merchant builds the mausoleum for her. The short movie is filmed as a documentary, but it is fictional at the same time.

In a short movie it is possible to see the most famous parts of the city such as Kukkari, the wooden buildings area of city and the old cemetery where Mausoleum is located. The murals were painted by the famous Finnish painter Alex Gallen Kalela. A documentary shows the city-scape from the perspective of a director. The video is an anthropological research made from a point of view of an artist. The settings of a documentary remind the time of the beginning of the XX century. The documentary has a historic value.
Maija Hirvonen was a visiting artist in Pori, but it is plenty of local musicians, filmmakers that use the cityscape as a source of an inspiration for their work. One of the most famous bands from Pori is Circle. Circle was formed in 1991 in Pori and it seems to be the most prominent name in the Finnish underground music scene. The band has been experimenting with the sound for the last twenty three years. The founder of the band and its only permanent member Jussi Lehtisalo continually reinvents the style. Having survived changes, the band constantly improves itself. Since the year 2003 the band has consisted of Lehtisalo with Mika Rättö, Tomi Leppänen and Janne Westerlund. The band is also closely associated with the filmmaker Mika Taanila: in 2011 they provided a live soundtrack to his 1998 silent film Pori and in the year 2012 recorded several new tracks for Six Day Run, also released subsequently as an album. The film was shown in Pori and the music complemented the video. During the concert the video was projected above the musicians and the performance had the special atmosphere of the music and visual material together.

One of the famous Finnish artists Mika Taanila usually works with a documentary footage and combines it with the videos he makes himself. His works are related to Pori and its surroundings. He investigates the relations between men, nature and technology. The connection between the modern technology and humans is a pivotal theme in Mika Taanila’s art. His videos and installations take us back to a time when the future used to be full of promises. A character of the modern society searches for truth in science and technology, and nothing seems beyond reach. There are no limits for science, but some limits still exist for the humans. Art works of Taanila create a special atmosphere of the transitional moment between the instant experience of moment and universal technological industrialization. The videos appear to be personal for the reason that he uses images of the Finnish landscape. Taanila shows the images of a small, cozy and deliberate city and its surroundings where the greatest inventions of the humanity are located. His video installation «The Most Electrified Town In Finland» (2012) shows the life of Eurajoki, which is situated not far from Pori. The piece uses documentary
footage made during the construction of «Olkiluoto 3» which is a nuclear power plant in Finland.
Taanila explores how nature is transfused with a human and how technology is involved in the dialogue between the modern men and the progress. Another aspect of his works is the question is if people would still be able to control the technology in the future. To some extent when he shows the peaceful Finnish landscape with the biggest Power station surrounded by the woods it looks a bit scary, a bit surreal but at the same time it is the reality of every place around the World. In his works Taanila creates the space that exists somewhere in between the reality and the future but referring to the past by using the documentaries. Documentaries provide an idea of a space with a new connotation for the modern society. Taanila becomes a spectator as well as a creator at the same time. He creates new connotations for existing documentaries by watching and inventing new perspectives.
W. Benjamin in the essay «The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction» writes that with the invention of the mechanical reproduction of the works of art, it started to lack «unique existence at the place where it happens to be». He continues by saying «This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence» (W. Benjamin The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. Accessed 13.03.2014).
Paul Virilio writes that modern events do not happen at the particular locality because they can be broadcasted simultaneously in the places all over the world. (Burgin 1996, p.120) As well as works of arts leave outside of a context, historical events no longer simply «take place» in their immediate locality, but they «may be broadcasted at the speed of light to simultaneously appear in a myriad other places» (Burgin 1996, p.120). Following his ideas, it might can be sad, that any documentary happen again, because they can be reproduced and reinvented at the space and time. The events of my life were embodied in the documentaries based on my experience without any strong connection to the locality. If I will show them in the other cities or countries they would leave outside of a context of Pori. Maybe later I can work more on the documentaries implying new aspects.
M. Hirvonen, *Mausoleum*, 2006, black and white


Mika Taanila & Circle Kiasma-theatre 22.11.2013. Photo: VTM/KKA, Pirje Mykkänen
In the third part of my study I gave examples of the documentaries and fictional movies that impacted me during the work on the project. I selected the movies and films because they show the interaction between spaces and a stranger who finds herself/himself in the particular city and situation.

I started with the first avant-garde documentaries filmed by the experimental filmmakers who were using moving images as a way to find a position of a person with a camera in the space. Filmmakers were spectators and the creators simultaneously. They were observing the realities of the cities, inventing the images having been focused on the details of the life that from their perspectives of an artist.

I decided to give Finnish and Russian movie examples for the reason that I was impacted and inspired by cinematography of both of the countries. Finnish and Russian cultures are different but if we look at the movie examples it is possible to see some similarities in perspectives and views on the questions of a space.

The last chapter of the third part presents Pori as a source for inspiration for varied art projects. I give examples of using the same landscape in the different connotations. A lot of artists have made documentaries about Pori. I described *Mausoleum* by Maija Hirvonen that appears as an example of an anthropological and artistic research combined together. One of the questions of my thesis is the interaction between an anthropological research and an artistic documentation. From my point of view, the film by M.Hirvonen illustrates both of the genres in the best way as it is based on the real events.

Another Finnish artist Mika Taanila uses Finnish landscape to create the space that exists somewhere in between the reality and the future but referring to the past by. In the artworks Taanila combines documentary footage with his own videos to create the most realistic image. He invents images of Finnish small cities, capturing the present moment. Documentaries provide an idea of a space with a new connotation for the modern society. He creates new concepts for the existing documentaries by watching and inventing new perspectives from his position of an artist, Finnish person and a member of the society.
Conclusion

The written part and the Visual Project investigate the questions I was interested in. After focusing on the small city Pori as an example of a curious social scene I created the documentaries that presented my personal relation of being a stranger in a space. Besides, I managed to perceive the space from different perspectives of view: as an artist, a foreigner and a observer. The collaborative project with Tommi Mäki aided to involve and perceive the position in a space from the point of view of a different person.

I selected my experience of moving as a motive and as a background for the thesis because it was the most significant event in my life. I tried to express myself in the videos and memorize emotions and impressions of a stranger who is enjoying life in a particular place and country. The image of a small town changed for me and I see life outside capitals in a new way.

Basing on the concept of a small city, I connect my own experience with examples from the movies, videos, documentaries. As a result of my research, collaborative Visual Project and the written part of the thesis together answer the questions that interest me.

The Visual Project and dialogue with Tommi answered the research question of the perception of a space of a city. Both of us do not consider ourselves as artists and we managed to show the outcomes of the cultural dialogue. My documentaries were working perfectly in a dialogue with a space and Tommi’s pieces.

I analyze the phenomenon of being a stranger basing on the ideas of philosophers and sociologists who were exploring the interactions between a person and culture. I use an example of life and art of the Russian artist Ilya Kabakov to illustrate the concepts implied by J.Kristeva and E.Said concerning the perception and interaction between a person and new surroundings.

I see the parallels between Kabakov’s views and my perception of the moving and position in a space. Kabakov’s writings and interviews aided to during the working on the whole thesis project.

In the third part of my study I give examples of the documentaries and fictional movies that impacted me during the work on the project. I selected the videos and films because they show the interaction between spaces and a stranger who finds herself/himself in the cityscapes that, eventually, play an important role in their lives.

I started with the first avant-garde documentaries filmed by experimental filmmakers who were using moving images as a way to find a position of a person with a camera in the space.
Filmmakers were spectators and the creators simultaneously. They were observing the realities of the cities, inventing the images having been focused on the details of the life that from their perspectives of the artist were the most significant. The last chapter of the third part presents Pori as a source for inspiration for the artists. I give examples of using the same landscape in the different concepts. As an example, one of the questions of my thesis is the interaction between an anthropological research and an artistic documentation. A film «Mausoleum» by M. Hirvonen illustrates both of the genres combined together.

Another Finnish artist Mika Taanila uses Finnish landscape to create the space that exists somewhere in between the reality and the future but referring to the past by using the documentary footage. In the artworks he invents images of Finnish small cities, capturing the present moment. Documentaries provide an idea of a space with a new connotation for the modern society. At the same time he is a spectator and a creator as the first filmmakers were and as well as I follow this concept in my documentaries.

I combined examples of different genres for the written part: movies, installations, documentaries to show the versatile answers for the study question. Experimental documentaries created the narrative and an ambiance. Kabakov’s installations show the personal involvement merges with the question of being a stranger. Movies analyze and create visual descriptions of the small cities. The combination of the Russian and Finnish movies invent a dialogue as well and new perspective on the question of the space. I selected both documentaries and fictional movies to illustrate the concept of the Visual Project and the balance between the reality and fiction. The documentary, supposedly, shows the objective truth, but the fiction movies have accents and focuses.
Bibliography


Web-sites


Movies


Song for heroes. Dir. Joris Ivens. 2008. DVD.


The Rain. Dir. Joris Ivens and Mannus Franken. 2008. DVD.


Город Зеро. Дир. Карен Шахназаров. Крупный план. 2006. DVD

Дети чугунных богов. Дир. Томаш Тот. Крупный план. 2005. DVD

Облако Рай. Дир. Николай Досталь. Русское кино. 2001. DVD