



SOTAN OPEN CALL: Living Water workshop @ MaaJaam

The edges of any landscape - horizons, the lip of a valley, the bend of a river around a canyon wall - quicken an observer's expectations. The attraction to borders, to the earth's twilit places, is part of the shape of human curiosity.

Barry Lopez, Arctic Dreams



Aly Ogasian + Claudia O'Steen (US), Keweenaw Observing Station, 2021
Installation, dimensions: variable
Site-specific installation + performance on Rabbit Island, Lake Superior, MI.

ABOUT Living Water workshop

We invite you to take part in the workshop by Aly Ogasian + Claudia O'Steen (US) in the framework of Wild Bits residency in a farm for art and tech, Maajaam.

SOTAN members and other participants are invited to take part in the workshop that introduces the project "Living water" by the artists duo Aly Ogasian + Claudia O'Steen. The artists will introduce their methods on creating the artwork "Living water" for outdoor exhibition Wild Bits in the wild nature of South of Estonia.

The project and workshop creates tangible linkages between human activity and climate change; examining how individual choices can contribute to the larger instability or stability of the system. The goal is to change the way we conceptualize our role on this planet as symbiotically enmeshed rather than separate from and working against the natural world and each other. Through shared insight, the project presents a way forward that suggests equitable, interdisciplinary collaboration across community, class and species. Our observations will be collected on-site and archived in both physical and digital logbooks. The artists' will be using citizen science methods to connect with local communities in the Valga County region in order to better understand how they interact with the river and what role it plays in their lives, and to look at the importance of the river and nearby bogs in Estonian history and folklore.

The workshop and artwork that the artists will be working on, examines human impact on the Elva river in Estonia and the ways in which the river impacts the surrounding landscape. We will conduct extensive fieldwork near the river, developing a series of site responsive, portable sculptures that function as observational stations/instrumentation. The workshop and artwork that the artists will be working on, examines human impact on the Elva river in Estonia and the ways in which the river impacts the surrounding landscape. We will conduct extensive fieldwork near the river, developing a series of site responsive, portable sculptures that function as observational stations/instrumentation. Building off a project that began at Rabbit Island Residency in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (USA), Aly Ogasian + Claudia O'Steen draw inspiration from weather monitoring systems that serve as an archive of global historical weather and climate data. The instruments will poetically measure wind, precipitation, water-level and biodiversity, exploring the possibilities and limitations afforded by perceptual observation. Our observations will be contextualized vis-a-vis ongoing collections of data via scientific instrumentation, human memory and citizen science. The project explores the river as a "site of memory", examining how it has affected the surrounding watershed that drains into nearby bogs, considering how conditions from one locale directly affect and impact conditions in a geographically distant locale.

The Elva Jogi River offers an enigmatic zone for exploration; it is a territory where the register between remote sensing data and ground truth is unusually slippery. We propose approaching the river, the riverbank, and nearby bogs and as both pseudoscientists and artists in search of

boundaries, edges and ecotones in order to interrogate contemporary notions of navigation, observation and inference. These boundaries - where habitats combine, the shifting periphery between water and shoreline - mark sites of transformation that are difficult to capture because they are subject to constant change.

CONCEPT

The portable observational stations will be positioned at different points along the river bank and surrounding bogs and wetlands. The artists will operate using a "leave no trace" methodology, and are not interested in modifying the existing landscape. The sculptural stations will carefully consider the fragility of the environment in which they are placed, recognizing that peat restoration in bogs is key to Estonia's climate action plan.

In terms of materials, we anticipate working with lumber, hardware and paint to produce the structure of the stations, and will also need drawing paper, photo paper, and drawing supplies. We may also use the CNC or laser cutter to fabricate custom hardware or fixtures, if necessary. In terms of technology, we will use field recorders, a hydrophone, projectors, and a variety of cameras.

From our studio at Maajaam, we will use our cursors to explore pixels - noting bends and tributaries in the river and accumulation of peat in the bogs, navigating around trees to climb the highest points, observing depressions where snow has collected on the ground, and measuring and describing the changes that occur on the river between summer and winter months. We will search for moments where digital resolution fails or falls short, and document the expectations we form as the result of spotty data. From a distance, we will develop our own theories about the terrain and the presence of sites of change and transition.

ABOUT Aly Ogasian + Claudia O'Steen

O'Steen and Ogasian work collaboratively to produce multimedia, research based installations. Their work incorporates sculptural elements, digital media, drawing, writing, and photography, and their studio practice takes a flexible, idea driven approach that requires one dedicated space for working that is shared between the two. They collaborate on all elements of the work. Their projects always involve fieldwork, and installations incorporate artifacts and "data" collected from the landscape itself, and they are inspired by their immediate surroundings. Their work focuses on their relationship with the changing environment, and uses methodologies borrowed from citizen science to critique traditional notions of exploration and conquest. They attempt to re-orient themselves in a contemporary world dominated by data and technology, where the romantic and adventurous spirit of discovery has been lost or forgotten. They are interested in the moments where science and technology give rise to the nebulous, the enigmatic, the mysterious -- where the primary goal is to "make sense" rather than to objectively know. They mix the romantic ideals of exploration with the promise of scientific discovery, believing neither to be absolute.

O'Steen and Ogasian have been awarded collaborative residencies at Rabbit Island, The Wassaic Project, Montalvo Arts Center, The Arctic Circle, Rural Projects, and The National Centre for Contemporary Art St. Petersburg, Russia, and have exhibited both nationally and internationally at venues such as The Russian State Arctic and Antarctic Museum apexart, Flux Factory, University of New Hampshire and Ohio State University, amongst others.

Claudia received a BFA from Watkins College of Art Design & Film and an MFA in Digital + Media at Rhode Island School of Design. She currently resides in Rock Hill, South Carolina, USA and is an Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Winthrop University. Aly received a BFA from Queen's University and a MFA in Digital + Media at Rhode Island School of Design. She is based in Los Angeles, California, USA and is an Assistant Professor of Art + Design at Scripps College.



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ABOUT Maajaam

Maajaam is a farm for art and tech situated in South of Estonia. It is concentrated on researching of, experimenting with and reflecting on the relationships between people, technology and nature. Substituting the urban environment with a hilly rural landscape allows us to observe technology in it's pure form. Mixing the past technological wonders of the historical farm with present day hi-tech offers us a shift in perspective. This perspective is projected through the prism of art. Maajaam is operated by artists [Timo Toots](#) and [Mari-Liis Rebane](#). We run an artist residency, a creative studio and an art park.

Maajaam means "earth station" in Estonian.



www.maajaam.ee

HOW TO APPLY?

Please send a short motivation letter, with a link to an online portfolio and CV to sotan@maajaam.ee. Please include "SOTAN: Living Water workshop" in the email subject.

A collaboration between the State of the Art Network, Maajaam, Wild Bits.

Location and time:

Maajaam, Neeruti, Valgamaa, South of Estonia – 12th-14th August, 2022.

Application deadline is 20th July 2022.

Number of participants via Sotan network: 5

Costs covered on the trip are: International and local travels, accommodation, food, materials.

www.maajaam.ee