

Laura Soisalon-Soininen

*Seven
Recipients*

2020. Installation.



The work of *Seven Recipients* is an ode to various transitions and seasons that take place in life. Each of the elements have been gathered, measured, arranged, re-arranged and crocheted together while walking in the lakes and shores of Helsinki city and Uusimaa region.

Soisalon-Soininen's work presents, in a material form, questions of knowing and access addressed in the *Rehearsing Hospitalities* public programme. In her practice Soisalon-Soininen asks how performative embodiment within certain natural, spiritual and social contexts can simultaneously inform artistic practice and tacit knowledge. Her artworks become objects for hosting her deeply personal process of enquiry, where intimate memories and situated knowledge are merged with scientific formulas and observations of material environments and public spaces.

Seven Recipients is an installation composed of seven distinct artworks which inhabit the Frame office foyer. Each work offers a differing perspective: some hang from the walls reaching towards the floor, while others remain on the floor. These positions are carefully measured to mark the pitches and intervals of the artist's journeys through the transitioning spaces of the city. In the works Soisalon-Soininen combines plant parts and various findings from walks to knitted elements, made from yarn bought in the shop below the office. Woven together these form "recipients" for holding traces and residues left from her embodied working process.

"Carried across several seasons, my process of artistic enquiry can be likened to a hymn or a prayer, one which captures the sounds, materials, steps and resting places, of an internal and external pilgrimage. The works can be read as containers for the seven sacraments of the Eastern Orthodox Church or as carriers of life.

I walk upstairs to the office and lay down the first hay. I count the steps of the stairs. I circuit the block. The office floor seems to follow the level of the highest treetop in the opposing park. I use the floor to map my access in and through this block. I direct my movements toward a blind spot made visible, and investigate the entryway to the office while taking note of the hay's change in height and it's ability (or inability) to find, access, and respond to it's change in conditions."

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1. ABOVE THE ISLAND. A bundle of reeds (new and old) cut to contain measurements of the building's stairs and floors. Reeds are circled crocheted yarn to complete the measurement. (reed, cotton yarn)

2. BARNHOUSE. Three crocheted traps/pots within their 'catches'. (rye, notes, willow, scales of a perch)

3. A DOOR. A door of a basket woven from the freshly picked reeds together with the rest of the reeds collected during the working period. The work is hooked from the ventilation hole on the wall. (cotton, Common reed—Järviruoko, wool, piharatamo—Plantago Major)

4. A FLOCK. I spend four days by a lake after I have cut the first reeds. I circle a flock of reeds made by an unusual entrance allowing me to enter the deep straight from the shore (usually covered by the reeds growing towards the sand). I measure the width of the water path and the loop by yarns. I mark the starting point to receive the end. I remove the yarn and adjust the length to the building's floor height, again.

The measure is shared with the office. I cross the circled flock of reeds a few times. I swim with the remnants of the walks and reach the wharf. I gather lines of reeds close to the wharf and tie them together on a stone covered with moss. While tying them, I lift the reeds from the stone as tenderly as I can.

I travel back to the seashore and lift the structure onto the wall. I lay down another frame of reeds with a crochet pattern prepared on the sand. I join them together onto the same spot on the wall. On top of the holder I place a second part of the floor height with reeds and the remains of my walk in the lake. From the side corners I crochet tree chains to host a piece of swimming shorts followed by two lines reaching further to the reeds carried now by a nutshell.

Underneath on the floor I leave a round piece of linen and a container of berries collected from an island close to the sea. I add a triangle covered with crochet. I add a triangle covered with crochet between the two first layers. (reeds, wool, cotton, a mixture of silk and cotton, linen, shell of a horse-chestnut, mountain ash, rye grains)

5. A FLOAT. Collected parts of a plant sewn into round layers of old sheets. When placed into a wider container the sewn recipients are hidden and given privacy. Attached to the wall from the strings of the inside layers the container floats like a buoy, directing something yet to happen. (wood, cotton)

6. SAUNA WALL. A fishing net for further use. Knotted from three lengths of the floor-height on the wall where fishing nets are spread and sorted out. I finish the work under the carpet in the office. There I add the sinker with chewed words and bread. (wool, wool and cotton from the Ratakatu block, paper, wood, bread)

7. SEEDS AND CHAFFS. To separate out the chaff from the seed, early cultures tossed baskets of grain into the air and let the wind blow away the lighter chaff. I arrange hay on the corner of the carpet and weave a small piece. I hide it under the carpet. After their first threshing by the people walking on the carpet, I lift the seeds and the chaffs onto two pieces of cotton. I join the layers with yarn. Above the two layers I place a berry with the head of a flower. From an outside view the highest top remains sealed and empty. As the woven part of the hay remains under the carpet the seeds are exposed and left vulnerable to the draft in the hall. (cotton, cotton yarn, mountain ash, seeds of Metsälauha, wavy hair grass, Deschampsia flexuosa)

Seven Recipients by Laura Soisalon-Soininen, is the second work in a series of artistic commissions at Frame Contemporary Art Finland's office space. These works are commissioned in the context of *Rehearsing Hospitalities* public programme for 2019–2023. *Rehearsing Hospitalities* connects artists, curators and other practitioners in the field of contemporary art and beyond to build up and mediate new practices, understandings and engagements with diverse hospitalities.

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