

PASSAGE 2011



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Description of Installation

This small installation at the Kerava Art Museum, Finland, was part of the group exhibition 'Hole in the Universe', in 2011. The gallery walls were black, and so my installation continued these black walls out into the gallery space to create a volume, or big black box, with a small door. Only a small outdoor white cube lamp above the door marked this as different from the gallery's own architectural structure. Through this small door was a small room that had its vertical planes tilted in two directions. Floor and ceiling were left flat and parallel.

Inside this room, all of the materials and objects were either made of something or functioned as something different to how they appeared; the floor was plastic flooring printed with wood grain, the walls were covered in wood-grain patterned wallpaper, the suitcase was a bookshelf, the hairdryer was a flashlight, and the chest of drawers was a doorway. These materials were chosen to offer an illusory element in the first viewing of the space, though in some cases an obvious fakery of materials, in order to encourage a second looking that would determine the reality of this space, possibly to encourage an explorative investigation that would lead to the discovery of this doorway through the chest of drawers. Through this doorway was a ventilation duct that one could crawl through on hands and knees, made of galvanized sheet metal. Along this two-meter duct were four peep holes (door viewers, *ovisilmät* in Finnish) one could look through and see into small scenes that were collages, somewhat like Cornell boxes, made from a 19th century French atlas and old natural science drawings. Each told a different story of exploration: The box with the sailing ships, penguin and pumpkin: 'Abruor non Obruor' is latin for 'washed and purified but not destroyed'. the pumpkin was to be a figure of courage, and in the renaissance period in europe belonged to a group of large flowers that people regarded as having some special significance for their own lives, and was sometimes used symbolically. Taken from the book *Mundus Symbolicus* (1687). Sailing ships are a drawing of the 'James Clark Ross expedition discovers an erupting volcano in the Andtarctic'. The expedition was

from 1839 to 1843, and the volcanos they saw were named after their ship, Erebus. they were also the first europeans to study penguins. The box is to illustrate courage needed to take a dangerous voyage, and also curiosity for new distant worlds and what they hold. Explorer with flower and natives: 'Joseph Dalton Hooker explores the plant life of the Himalaya'. Hooker was an English botanist, who also went to the ant-arctic at an age of 25yrs. He was the most traveled botanist of the century. in 1847 - 1851 he crossed tropical India, discovering new species of plants, and went through mountainous region of the Himalaya. This is the journey here illustrated, and it was not an easy or romantic one, as is apparent in his expression. It is this aspect that I wanted to bring out, that distant lands don't live up to expectations of being some kind of paradise, but are often full of hardship and perhaps disappointment. Maps on the sides of the box are taken from a French atlas printed in 1859. I don't have info about the 3rd box with the horses on the natural rock bridge, not sure where the image came from. The red background is an interpretation of solar winds. Last one, with the octopus: 'Octopus Vulgaris' as drawn by Guillaume Rondelet in the 16th century. At the time little was known about the octopus, this was one of the first accurate drawings of it. It was believed to be a monster of the sea that would come ashore at night and destroy stores get at salted fish. One of nature's curiosities. The star chart was taken also from this old french atlas, and the images on the sides of the box are interpretations of a moon landscape and of a comet.

This ventilation duct ended at a corner, around the corner was a door, and through this door was a small room made of steel, with light coming only from a small ventilation tube, as though the light were coming from outdoors. The room was only large enough for one person to sit in. Exiting this space, one left the installation, and was back in the gallery space, but at the end of a dark narrow and tall corridor some 6 meters from the main gallery space.