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I FEEL THE CLIMATE CHANGING

Art School Alfa Helsinki, Finland 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
I Feel the Climate Changing - Artwork Presentation
Climate/Emotion/Climate Quilt
The Madonna of Biodiversity
Biodiversity Pietá and Mother Earth's Rage
Actions of Hope Curtain
Images and Thoughts from the Process 2023–2025
Tips for Handling Climate Emotions through Art

INTRODUCTION

Seven years ago, in 2018, I was in a deep crisis. I wondered how I would change my life if I had one year to live. The answer emerged from dark waters: I would paint. And I would use my energy to mitigate climate change.

Piece by piece, I began to create room in my life for these two themes: art and climate. I started working a four-day week to make time for art, found a studio for painting, and discovered the studies at Art School Alfa, which I could complete alongside work and family life.

At the same time, I increasingly focused on climate change mitigation in my day job. I studied more, got into roles where I could direct my energy towards mitigating climate change and preventing biodiversity loss. I also delved into the theme of climate emotions through Open University courses.

The I Feel the Climate Changing (Climate/Emotion/Climate) installation brings all this together. My dream is that it will invite the audience to pause and reflect on the emotions related to climate change.

On my journey, the lump of climate anxiety has melted into many different pools of emotions. I have also found relief from my `ant's agony` by creating meaningful work and art. My contribution is small, but I believe every of act of hope makes a difference.



I FEEL THE CLIMATE CHANGING

I Feel the Climate Changing (Climate/Emotion/Climate) is a mixed media installation that invites you to experience, feel, and examine various emotions related to climate change.

The installation consists of several parts:

- Climate/Emotion/Climate Quilt, 190 x 140cm, oil paint, acrylic, and embroidery on recycled fabrics.
- The Madonna of Biodiversity painting, 160 x 110cm, oil paint and embroidery on old linen fabric.
- Biodiversity Pietá and Mother Earth's Rage paintings, each 150 x 120cm, oil paint and acrylic on thin linen curtains.
- Actions of Hope Curtain, 260 x 280cm, oil paint, acrylic, pigment, and embroidery on velvet curtain.
- Writing corner with a painted chair, small table, "What do I feel today?" embroidered velvet pillow, woolen Hope Bubble pillow, and a cracked globe.

All the fabrics, threads, and objects in the artwork are made from recycled materials.



Illustration of the I Feel the Climate Changing artwork

The artwork asks:
WHAT DO I FEEL TODAY?
WHAT DO I WORSHIP AND CHERISH?
WHAT ACTS OF HOPE DO I SEE AND DO?



CLIMATE/EMOTION/CLIMATE QUILT, 190 x 140 CM, MIXED MEDIA ON FABRIC, 2024

CLIMATE/EMOTION/CLIMATE QUILT

The Climate/Emotion/Climate Quilt consists of 12 mixed media painting patches and a velvet background fabric. The paintings are made with oil paints, acrylic paints, and markers, as well as embroidery on recycled fabrics. The quilt can be touched, and you can even crawl under it to reflect on your own climate emotions and emotional climate.

The quilt depicts 12 different emotions related to climate change. The categorization of emotions is based, among other things, on the lectures of Dr. Panu Pihkala, who has researched the psychology of climate change.

The symbolism of the quilt follows the red thread of life running through it, starting from the top left corner:

WONDER: We are all part of the same wonder. The text on the patch "We are all wonders of the same life" proposes that we are all born from the same womb of biodiversity, innocent and marveling at the world.

CONCERN: Concern for the willow tit reflects broader concern in the face of biodiversity loss. How is our life line? What will happen to us if biodiversity diminishes?



WONDER: WE ARE ALL WONDERS OF THE SAME LIFE.



CONCERN FOR THE WILLOW TIT: HOW IS OUR LIFE LINE?



MOTHER'S GUILT: MODERN ATLAS



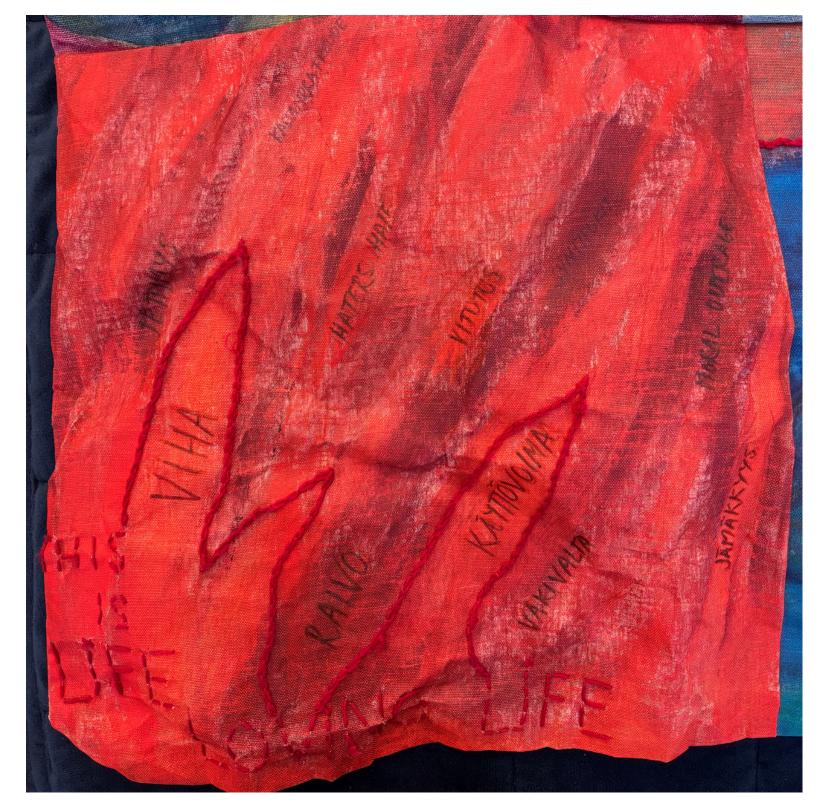
LATITUDES OF FEAR

From the willow tit, the thread of life runs to a child who blows fragile bubbles of hope from the thread of life. We will return to him soon, but first, let's explore the darker emotions at the bottom of the quilt.

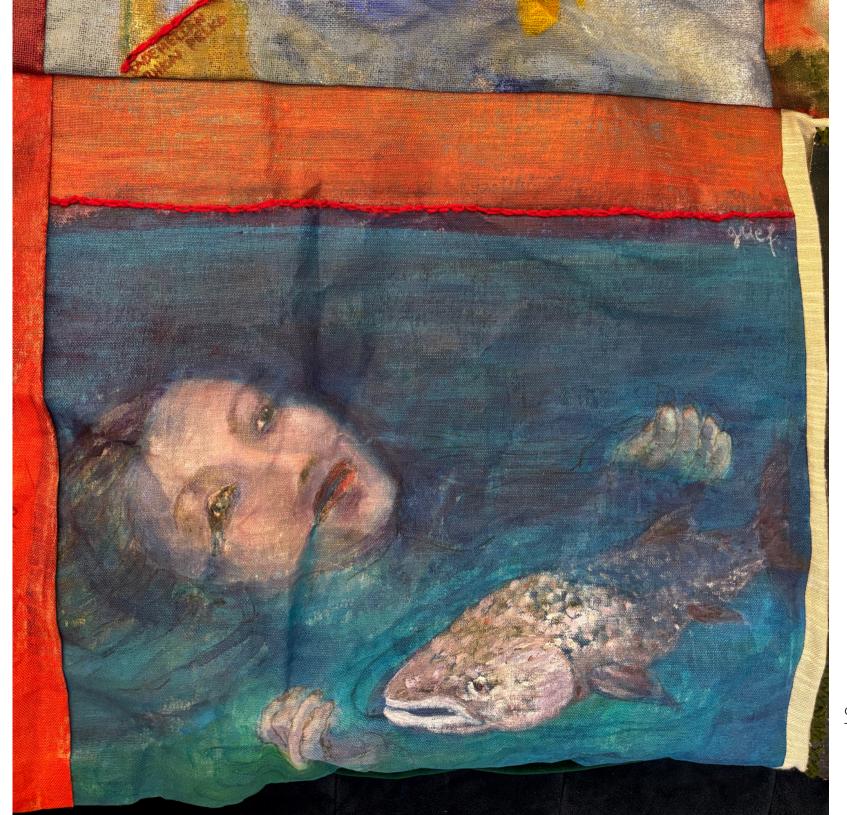
GUILT: The guilt of a mother, like Atlas holding up the world, when she supports more than three Earths instead of just one. If every human on Earth would use as much resources as an average Finn, we would need several Earths. At the core of guilt beats a caring heart.

FEAR: The latitudes of fear depict a world where the climate crisis causes various levels of fear. At the equator, the fear is drought and death. The next latitude carries the fear of war in the Middle East, exacerbated by climate threats, the fear of floods in India, the fear of rainforest destruction in the Amazon. Drying Southern Europe is plagued by the fear of fire. In the north, the climate crisis is visible as increased immigration and the fear of it.

ANGER: Anger is the climate emotion that is often the hardest for a girl raised to be nice to feel. However, anger is very diverse. In addition to destructive rage and violence, it can also serve as a driving force. The flames of anger are strongly drawn by the thread of life. The quilt reads: "This is life loving life." In the center of anger, like all emotions, is the desire to defend life.



ANGER: THIS IS LIFE LOVING LIFE.



GRIEF: I DROWN WITH THE SALMON

GRIEF: Grief and sadness are depicted as a suffocating, drowning emotion. The thread of life runs far on the horizon. The mourner barely stays afloat, submerged in green water. The threatened salmon of the Teno River tells of the grief of losing the fish encountered in the north and the pain related to the changes in northern nature.

DENIAL: Denial of the entire climate change or the emotions related to it is also part of climate emotions. In the image of denial, a person has imprisoned Minerva's owls, symbols of wisdom, closes their ears to research data, and tries to cut their wings. The thread of life is drawn as a halo of science. Even martyrs escape from their prisons: perhaps the time will come when Minerva's owls fly free again.

APATHY: Next to all these emotions, apathy stares at a phone. In the midst of horror, it is also easy to escape and disappear into numbing virtual realities, to decay and moss over in front of the screen. The thread of life is present, but only as a small piece, weakly hanging from the hand.



DENIAL: WE HAVE IMPRISONED MINERVA'S OWLS



APATHY: DOOMSCROLL, DECAY, DISCONNECT



LIFE GIVES BIRTH TO HOPE

LIFE GIVES BIRTH TO HOPE: In the center of the quilt, a child blows fragile bubbles of hope from the thread of life. We survive together with the help of three elements: meaningful actions, compassion, and strong hope.

ACTIONS: From the soap bubbles blown by the child, a whole pile of small actions of hope is born. A banker offering green loans, the EU Parliament approving dozens of changes to mitigate climate change, children with an environmental educator, a tree planter, and a district heating company's heat pump hall are all depicted as small acts of hope. Among the soap bubbles crawl ants and bees. Human actions are like the work of bees or ants, minimal alone but impactful as a large group. The patch reads: "It's not perfect but at least we try." There is no one action that can save us, but many small actions build a different future together.

COMPASSION: Fragile hope and the endurance of a small person are nurtured by compassion for others and oneself, rest, and care. "This is not the survival of the fittest, this is the survival of the nurtured," wrote psychotherapist and author Dr. Lou Cozolino. I want to rest in that thought.



ACTIONS: IT'S NOT PERFECT BUT AT LEAST WE TRY



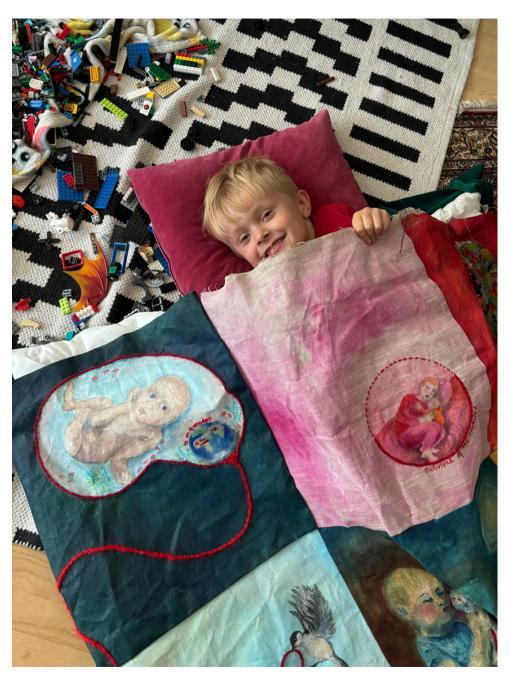
COMPASSION: SURVIVAL OF THE NURTURED



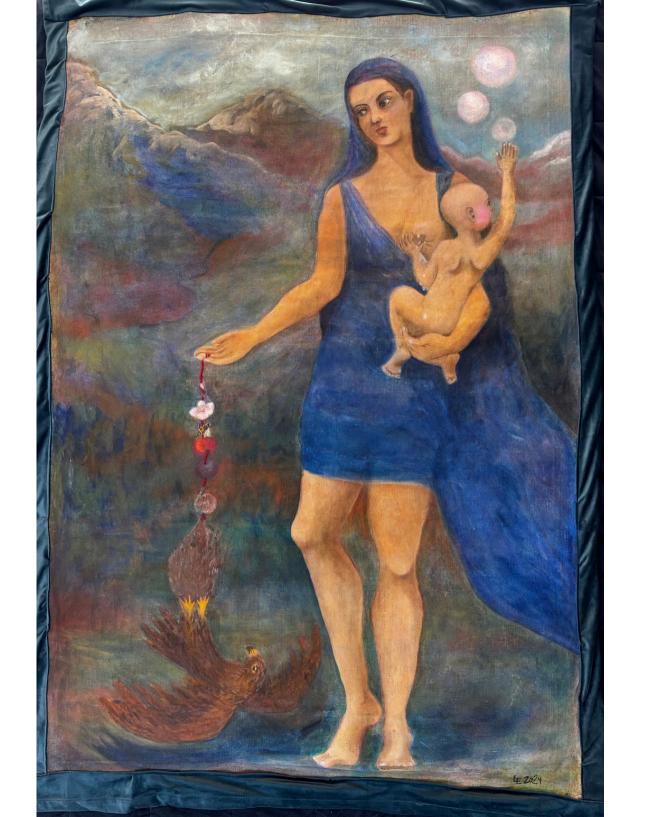
HOPE: The strongest bubble blown by the child is a large bubble of hope. The bubble is full of the power of nature, mosses glittering even in rainy winter days, autumn leaves, the abundance of rowan berries.

Among the embroidered mosses and plants peeks: Hope is not extinct. There is hope - Toivoa on in Finnish.

HOPE IS NOT EXTINCT. TOIVOA ON - THERE'S HOPE.



Ohto, who modeled for the paintings, tries out the unfinished quilt in the autumn 2024.



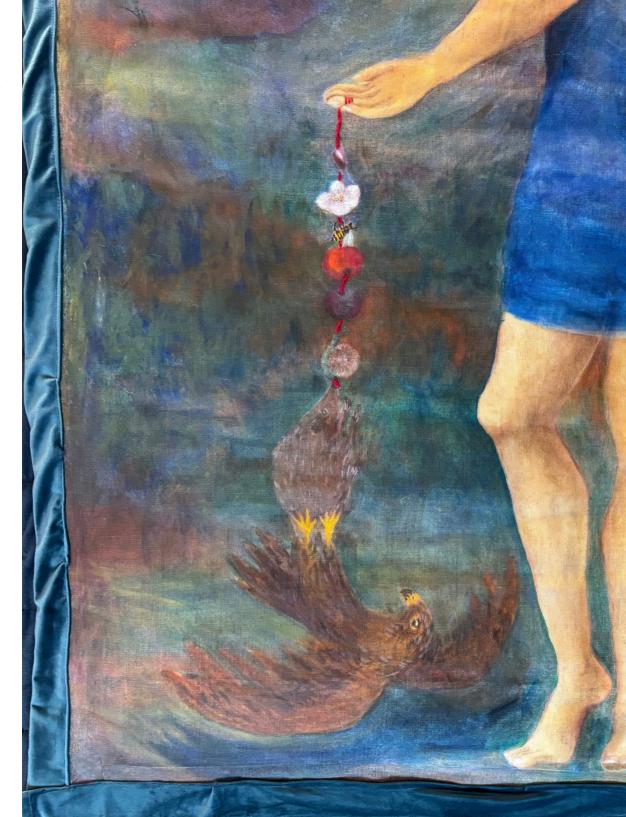
THE MADONNA OF BIODIVERSITY, 160 X 110 CM, OIL PAINT AND EMBROIDERY ON FABRIC, 2024

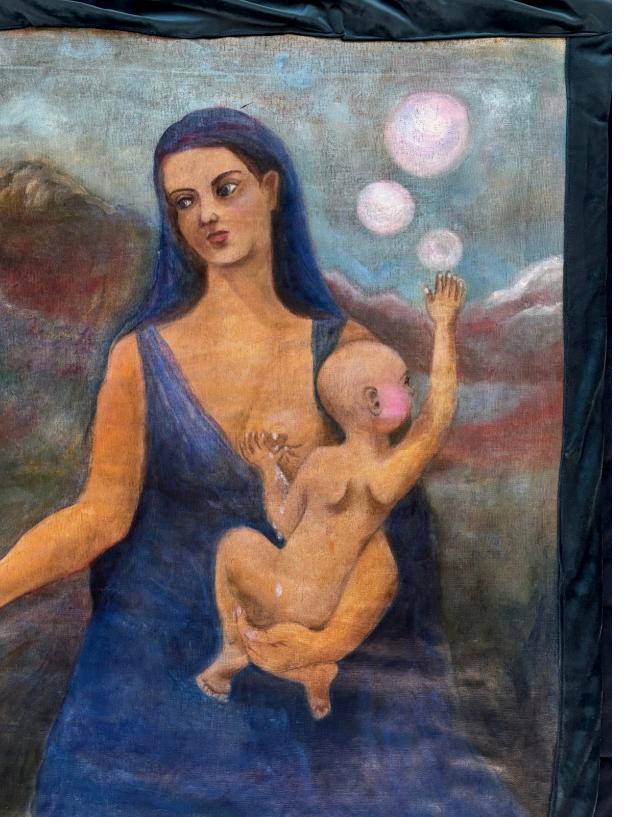
MADONNA OF BIODIVERSITY

The Madonna of Biodiversity is painted with oil paints and embroidered with wool yarn on recycled linen fabric. The artwork is made in reverence to old church art and invites to reflect on what we should worship. The Madonna of Biodiversity tells of the abundance of nature, the value of biodiversity, and the role of humans in all of this.

From Madonna's hand hangs an entire food chain, supported by the thread of life. The chain begins with an apple blossom bud, a bee and the juicy apple that results from their cooperation. The apple's life cycle ends in decay, decomposition, and feeding snails. The snail, in turn, is eaten by a hedgehog, whose life ends with a hawk's strike.

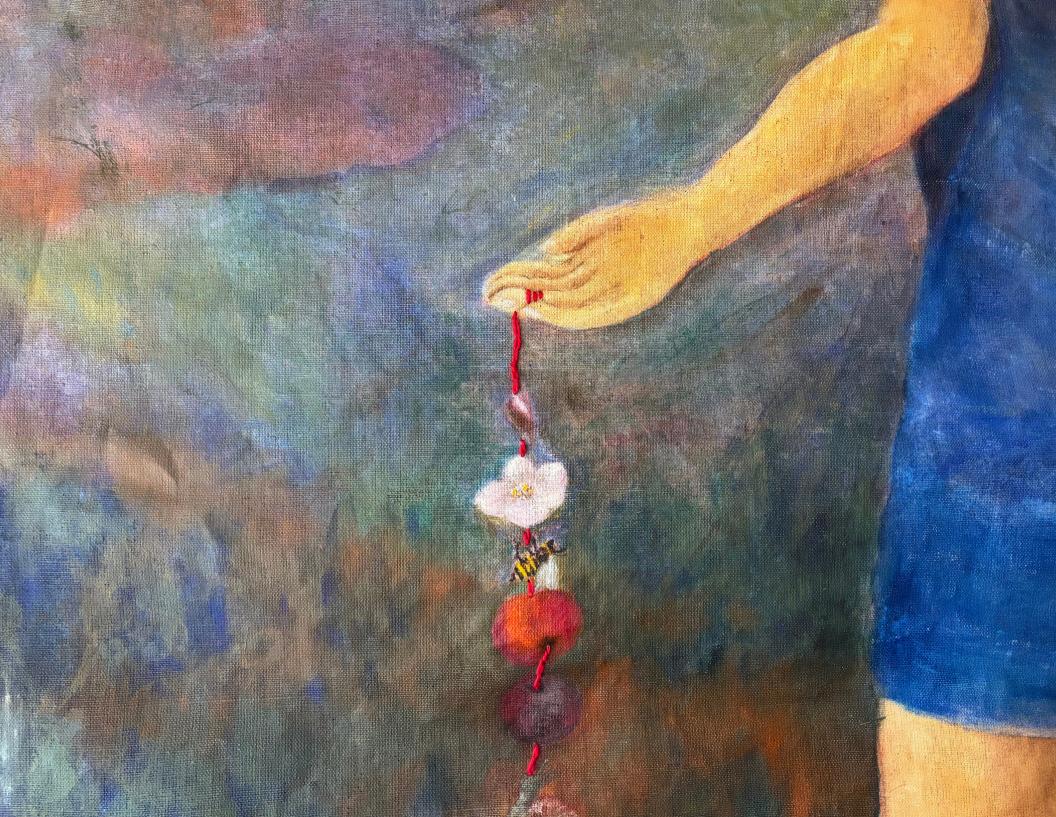
Similar chains could be depicted millions of times around the world.





In the Madonna's lap sits a child who spills milk from the mother's breast onto the ground and reaches for bubbles of hope. The child reflects both carefree abundance and wastefulness, but also innocent hope.

In the background is our unique, irreplaceable northern nature.





BIODIVERSITY PIETÁ, 150 X 120 CM, ACRYLIC, OIL AND EMBROIDERY ON A THIN LINEN CLOTH, 2025

BIODIVERSITY PIETÁ & MOTHER EARTH'S RAGE

Biodiversity Pietá and Mother Earth's Rage paintings are created with oil paints, acrylic paints, and embroidery on thin linen tablecloths. The works are counterparts to each other. Both sorrow and anger stem from the defense of life.

BIODIVERSITY PIETÁ urges us to pause at the loss of biodiversity, to cherish it before we lose the irreplaceable. In the lap of the blue Madonna is a Saimaa ringed seal, but in her hems climbs a wolverine and at her feet coils a viper. These challenge us to recognize that biodiversity is valuable not only in its cuteness but also in the form of predators and snakes. The ecosystem is wonderful and worth cherishing in its entirety. The thread of life lies as a knotted, tangled ball in the seal's lap. The state of nature needs untangling.

MOTHER EARTH'S RAGE walks alongside sorrow. The blood-red Madonna speaks of strong anger stemming from the loss of the irreplaceable or the fear of it. Embroidered, broken threads of life flow from Madonna's hand. We are not used to seeing Madonna angry, but defenders of biodiversity now have good reason for anger and rage.



MOTHER EARTH 'S RAGE, 150 X 120 CM, ACRYLIC, OIL AND EMBROIDERY ON A THIN LINEN CLOTH,, 2025



ACTIONS OF HOPE, 260 X 280 CM, MIXED MEDIA ON FABRIC, 2025

ACTIONS OF HOPF -CURTAIN

Actions of Hope were created by sewing small paintings made with oil paint, pigment colors, and acrylic markers onto a velvet curtain. The curtain is embroidered with small actions of hope depicted as floating, fragile soap bubbles. The painting style of the bubbles refers to 19th-century romantic paintings depicting the industrial era. The bubbles depict actions to mitigate climate change and prevent biodiversity loss in Finland.

NEW MARINE LANDSCAPE depicts an offshore wind farm. Reducing emissions from energy production and moving away from fossil fuels is a great source of hope. The role of wind power is an important part of this, although the significance of nuclear power is much greater in percentage terms. Inspired by the emission distribution of energy production in Finland.

SNOW SUBSTITUTE presents an artificial nest made for seals in Saimaa. The artificial nests made by protectors help Saimaa ringed seals to nest in lowsnow winters. Inspiration: WWF.



NEW MARINE LANDSCAPE



SNOW SUBSTITUTE



FEEDING THE PUPS



THE CLEANER

FEEDING THE PUPS depicts an automatic feeder for the endangered Arctic fox, helping its pups survive the winters. Inspiration: WWF.

THE CLEANER depicts a person cleaning concrete elements for reuse. Reusing building materials is one way to reduce emissions and material use. Inspired by the Recreate project, which has experimented with reusing elements.

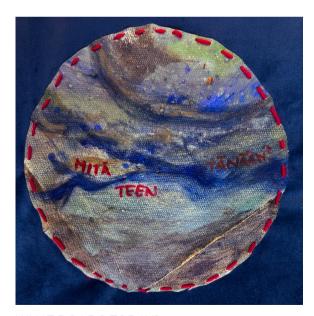
THE PROTECTOR depicts a forest activist examining felled trees. Inspired by Sanni Seppo's photo series.



THE PROTECTOR



I SEE HOPE IN EVERY LIVING THING



WHAT DO I DO TODAY?

Forest activists, builders of clean energy, construction workers, and seal protectors are united by the fact that their actions strengthen hope. Each of us can also choose how we view the world and what we do.

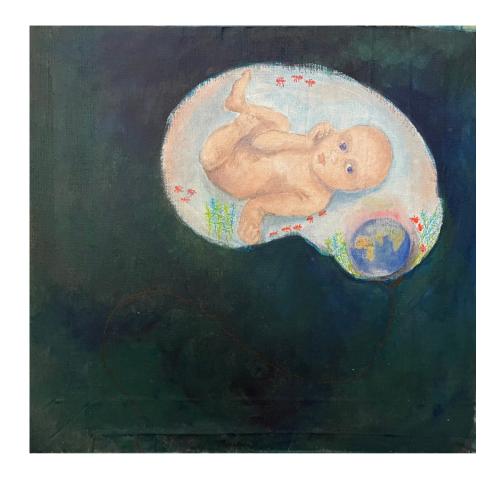
I SEE HOPE IN EVERY LIVING THING. There is hope as long as there is life. At the core of living beings is the struggle for life. It can manifest through many emotions and actions, but it is at the core of both climate deniers and activists. I can choose what I do to fight for life.

WHAT DO I DO TODAY? What is my act of hope at work, in everyday life, with my family, in conversations? We can choose to strengthen hope and take persistent actions for good.

The artwork also includes a painted chair, a writing corner where visitors can write their own experiences and thoughts, and a velvet pillow embroidered with the text "What do I feel today?". The embroidery of the pillow continues as part of the exhibition in the exhibition space.



WHAT DO I FEEL TODAY?



IMAGES AND
THOUGHTS
FROM THE PROCESS

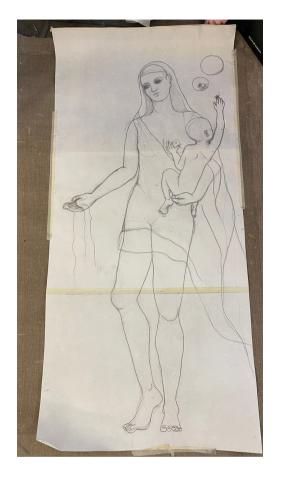
I got the idea for the climate emotions quilt in the fall of 2023 while thinking about my thesis at Art School Alfa. Could paintings be made into a patchwork quilt? I began to develop this idea piece by piece.

The second theme of the artwork, the Madonna appearing in different ways, represents to me not only the sanctity of life but also a model of womanhood. Can Madonna be angry and sad? During the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, all aspects of the life-giver emerge.

I wanted to use recycled materials. During the work, I learned a lot about how different fabrics behave with oil and acrylic paints, how to embroider on a painting, and how to put it all together.

Colors represent emotions to me: the blue of sorrow, the strong red of anger and love, the calming green of nature, and the yellow of hope alternate in the works.

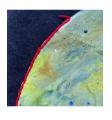
The images capture moments from the journey of creating the I Feel the Climate Changing -installation from 2023–2025.





















TIPS FOR HANDLING CLIMATE EMOTIONS THROUGH ART

My dream is that the I Feel the Climate Changing -installation will encourage people to pause and reflect on their own emotions related to climate change and biodiversity loss. This can be done, for example, in the following ways:

PAINT YOUR OWN CLIMATE EMOTION QUILT

A climate emotion quilt can be made together with friends or your school class. All you need are recycled fabrics, acrylic paints, and sewing supplies. What if everyone made their own patch for a shared climate emotion quilt?

DRAW ACTIONS OF HOPE

Pausing to reflect on acts of hope strengthens your own hope and the experience of the existence of good. Draw, write, make a mind map of acts of hope.

This can also be done together with friends, colleagues, or your school class.

INVITE THE I FEEL THE CLIMATE CHANGING ARTWORK FOR A VISIT

The I Feel the Climate Changing (Climate/Emotion/Climate) installation and Liina will gladly come to visit, present, and discuss climate emotions. Lying under the climate emotion quilt can help you notice your own emotions and their diversity - which in turn can melt the lump of climate anxiety into something smaller and more manageable.

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