

Máret Anne Sara
Gielastuvvon (Snared)

Installation of personal lassos from Sámi reindeer herders in the North Sámi region, 2018. In north Sámi the word *giella* means a snare-trap or it can mean a language to express yourself in. The word *gielis* refers to someone who does not speak or act truthfully.

“Suohpan, the Sámi equivalent of lasso is a very personal, key item for Sámi reindeer herders, one of the most needed and reliable tools. The suohpan is always present. When not in use, it is worn across the herders heart. Suohpan is a tool for capturing, rescuing, playing, improving the skills or even to kill.

I collect personal lassos from Sámi reindeer herders, because they represent individual stories of each of its owners from across the north Sámi region. The worn out lassos show as well the physical hardship of basic survival, relying on the untamed and natural.

In my opinion, the choice of a traditional life in today's capitalistic and industrially expanding societies, is a deep personal, cultural and to some extent a spiritual commitment. This primitive tool is for me a strong image of the hardships of people living in and with the wild and natural, echoing a constant and accelerating battle against the growing capitalistic societies surrounding us with intentions of neverending “development” and growth, not compatible with sustainable thinking nor traditional livelihoods.

This is a continuation of my long-term art project called Pile o' Sápmi, which was initiated to generate debate about new colonial practices in western, fair democracies such as Norway. I piled 200 hundred reindeer heads in front of the Norwegian court on a first day of my brother's trial against the Norwegian government in order to raise a critical voice against the indigenous affairs in Norway. Where state politics threaten Sámi livelihoods, lands and thereby our entire culture. Where current laws enforce devastation on a financial, cultural and on a spiritual level for individuals and community.

Whereas the political structures have been my main subject in earlier works, in Gielastuvvon (Snared), I am addressing a more personal side of the story. As I witness the personal costs that my brother suffers only for defending his existence, as I feel the distress of losing life as we know it facing an unknown future, I feel a need to address the structural neglect of humanity in state politics and laws regarding our lives as indigenous and as people.

I hang the lassos here in honor of our herders who are not only maintaining their reindeer but also a living Sámi culture. Secondly as a reminder of the fragility of culture, people and life.

Máret Anne Sara, 2nd November, 2018