

INTRO TEXT Panevezys exhibition, Lithuania 2026

‘Sound’s Hidden Journey Under Nordic Waters’

By Between Music

We welcome you to an exhibition that is a culmination of years of pioneering artistic research exploring and recording underwater echoes and reverbs. The exhibition consists of a sound installation, a video work and documentary films.

The sound installation is an artistic interpretation of the sensation of being surrounded by an underwater sonic space.

In the underwater realm sound travels four times faster than in air. It plays with our sense of direction, and as the sound flows, not through our ears, but directly through the tissue of the body, the line between the self and the surroundings becomes increasingly blurred. A liminal state of disorientation, ambiguity, perpetual flow - and potential new insight. What if we brought this state of mind to the surface? How can we create an experience of being surrounded by underwater sounds together with others? Those were the questions we asked in 2020 when our explorations began.

The underwater composer and vocalist Laila Skovmand (Denmark) and sound engineer Roman Komar (Denmark) started a series of journeys to record sound underwater, together with artists Jens L. Thomsen (Faroe Islands), Petri Kuljuntausta (Finland) and Inuk Silas Høegh (Greenland). The journey not only led them to many discoveries but also to challenges that were solved along the way with the help of scientists from Aarhus University AIAS, University of Southern Denmark, Faroese Geological Survey and several other Nordic universities and institutions. First tests were made in the tranquil archipelago of Småland in Sweden.

The underwater recordings used in the works come from wavy waters in the Faroe Islands, deep fjords in Greenland, and the silent waters of lake Saanajärvi (Sánajávri) in Finland.

The sound installation

The collective sound installation in this exhibition summarizes the underwater explorations of Laila Skovmand, Jens L. Thomsen and Petri Kuljuntausta. During an artist residency, the artists joined forces with the aim of presenting their individual compositions together as an immersive sound installation with 19 speakers.

Laila Skovmand has developed a unique underwater singing technique, featured in the acclaimed underwater performance *AquaSonic*. In *Sound’s Hidden Journey under Nordic Waters* she returns to the very roots of her vocal experimentation: the hauntingly fascinating songs of whales.

The composition is built upon recordings where Skovmand actively imitates, echoes, and dialogues with recordings of whale songs.

Driven by a fascination with inter-species communication, her work mirrors a profound shift in how we view the natural world. While human history has traditionally focused on forcing animals to adopt human language, modern science is turning the tables. Today, researchers utilize advanced technology and artificial intelligence (AI)

to decode and replicate the complex languages of animals—a breakthrough that brings deep ethical dilemmas in its wake.

With *Sound's Hidden Journey*, Skovmand explores what happens when we turn inward, using our own bodies and voices to embody the essence and expression of another species. The work unfolds as a musical interplay between imitating whale sounds, the vast resonance of the ocean and the water resonance within herself.

The work consists of underwater vocals from Laila Skovmand and Nanna Bech.

Jens L. Thomsen has crafted vast oceanic soundscapes based on ancient singing resonating through the depths of the sea. These lamenting echoes tell stories of countless sailors lost at sea while providing for their community. The sea is portrayed not only as the great giver but also as the great taker. He made his underwater recordings in the Faroese fjords.

Petri Kuljuntausta brings out the authentic underwater echoes of Saanajärvi (Sánajávri), generated by the repetitive sine wave sound played underwater. It combines imaginary sounds of the underwater environment. Rhythmic water drops, water echoes, and slow subsurface sound processes are interrupted when the rumble of the ship's engine leads to a broken underwater landscape.

The collective work also features a section in which only Nordic underwater reverbs and the sound of an underwater Corixidae insect ("water boatman") are heard.

Video work - Ode to the Melting Ice

Inuk Silis-Høegh have made audiovisual works based on audio spectrograms and the idea of the collapse of sound. By using reverb recordings from the fjords by Nuuk to "drown" sounds of animals in Greenland he contemplates on the fragility of the ecosystem under the current threat from global warming.

Special thanks to Greenland's Institute of Natural Resources for lending the sound of narwhales.

Documentaries

Based on the field recordings each artist offers their own perspective on water hovering between philosophy and science, myth, ethics, and aesthetics - documented by filmmakers Karin Pennanen, Benjamin Hesselholdt, Peter Sørensen and Jens-Christian Lyberth.

An e-book about the process by sound engineer Roma Komar is also displayed together with sound examples of the underwater reverbs and echoes.

The installation debuted at Nordic Culture Point premises in Suomenlinna, Helsinki, in 2024.

Credits (short)

Produced by Between Music

Co-produced by MiklagårdArts, Finland.

Robert Karlsson, project management

Roma Komar, sound engineer, all recordings, post production of reverbs

Kristian Ekholm, sound engineer of installation

Supported by

Teledyne RESON

Nordic Culture Point, Suomenlinna, Finland

Nordic Culture Foundation

Danish Arts Council

Nordic Institute in Greenland

City of Aarhus

KODA kultur

William Demant Foundation

The Danish Composers' Society

Greenlands Institute of Natural Resources

Credits (long)

Produced by Between Music

Co-Produced by MiklagårdArts, Finland

Supported by Teledyne RESON: hydrophones

Main crew

Laila Skovmand: Artist, Between Music, Denmark

Roma Komar: Sound engineer Between Music, all recordings, post production

Petri Kuljuntausta: Artist, Finland

Jens L Thomsen: Artist, Faroe Islands

Inuk Silis Høegh: Artist, Greenland

Ceyda Berk-Söderholm, MiklagårdArts, Finland: Co-producer

Sigrid Aakvik: Co-development of concept and producer during field work stages

Robert Karlsson: Innovative Director, Between Music, project management

Kristian Ekholm: Sound engineer of the immersive installation

Documentaries

GotFat Productions: Overall dogmas

GotFat Productions: Faroe Islands (Jens L Thomsen)

Peter Sørensen, GotFat Productions, director: Faroe Islands (Jens L Thomsen)

Benjamin Hesselholdt, director: Denmark (Laila Skovmand)

Eva Ørum, concept development: Denmark (Laila Skovmand)

Karin Pennanen, director: Finland (Petri Kuljuntausta)

Jussi Rastas, cinematographer: Finland (Petri Kuljuntausta)

Jens-Christian Lyberth-Lennert (Jaqqi), Director and cinematographer: Greenland (Inuk Silis Høegh)

Scientific collaboration and supervision

Magnus Wahlberg: Supervision, University of Southern Denmark, Fjord & Bælt

Søren Rud Keiding: AIAS, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Science, Aarhus University
Arjen van der Schoot: Supervisor, Audio Ease, NL
Ralph Kessler: Supervisor, Master Penguin, Germany
Line Anker Kyhn: Supervisor, Bioscience Aarhus University
prof. Peter Teglbjerg Madsen: Supervisor, Bioscience Aarhus University
Jakob Tougaard: Supervisor, Bioscience Aarhus University
Uni Egholm Ártíng: Supervisor, Jarðfengi, Faroese Geological Survey
Uni K. Petersen: Supervisor, Jarðfengi, Faroese Geological Survey
Olli Loisa: Supervision, Turku University, Finland
Niclas Hjerdt: Supervision, hydrologist, SMHI, Sweden

Additional credits overall

Eva Ørum: Text and communication
Frederik Jensen: Research
Anne Hübertz Brekne: Text

Supported by

Nordisk Kulturfond
Nordic Culture Point: Residency and exhibition in Finland
Danish Arts Council
Nordic Institute in Greenland
City of Aarhus
KODA kultur
William Demant Foundation
The Danish Composers' Society
Greenlands Institute of Natural Resources: sound recordings of narwhales

Online workshop about underwater reverb 2021, participants

Laila Skovmand: Artistic Director, Between Music
prof. Søren Rud Keiding: AIAS, Aarhus University, Denmark
prof. Preston Wilson: Underwater and Physical Acoustics, UT Austin
Ass. prof. Magnus Wahlberg: SDU, University of Southern Denmark, Fjord & Bælt
Mark Johnson: fellow specialized in Electrical Engineering and Bioacoustics, AIAS
prof. Angelo Farina: Università Parma, Italy
Gorm Wendelboe: Lead Acoustician for Underwater Acoustic Equipment, Teledyne Reson
Bjorn Munster: 3D Sound Specialist and Managing Director, Astro Spatial Audio
Ralph Kessler: Audio Engineer specialized Auralization and Impulse Responses, Master Penguin
Christ de Jong: Senior Consultant specialized in Acoustics and Sonar, TNO
Niels Christian Hansen: AIAS fellow specialized in Neuroscience and Music, AIAS
Sylvie Tesson: AIAS fellow specialized in Microorganism and Water, AIAS