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Portrait Without a Model

She was the first assistant professor of landscape planning in Finland in 1978–1983. A pioneer who broadened the field and contributed to large-scale planning, from municipal landscapes to motorways. A founding member of the Finnish Association of Landscape Architects in 1946. An active and influential writer who published the book *Puutarha ja maisema* [garden and landscape] in 1951.¹

She was all this, and yet I could not find a proper photograph of landscape architect Katri Luostarinen (1915–1991), just a blurry greyscale group photo taken at a Christmas party of the Association of Finnish Landscape Architects in 1947 (figure 4.4). I heard from her former students that she had red hair and wore colourful clothes. But no picture of her was to be found, even though she is a key figure in the field of landscape architecture in Finland. How can we tell the stories of our pioneering landscape architects if we do not even have pictures of them to show?

Landscape architecture is a young profession in Finland and has grown up in the shadow of architecture, a field with a longer history and a more established position. Education in the field of architecture began in the 1870s, but the degree programme in landscape architecture was introduced only in the late 1980s. The Museum of Finnish Architecture was established in 1956, one of the first in the world. The *National Biography of Finland* includes 86 architects in its database, but only four landscape or garden architects. Numerous exhibitions, research projects, and books portray the profession of architecture. However, a full depiction of landscape architecture is still missing.

In her story *Det osynliga barnet* [the invisible child], Tove Jansson – a Finnish author and illustrator, and the creator of the Moomin characters – writes about Ninny, who becomes invisible as the lady who takes care of her neglects her.² In the end, only a tinkling silver bell around her neck marks her location. The legacy of landscape architecture is fragile – it will become invisible without deliberate preservation, without research into its historical roots. Luostarinen's extensive collection of five hundred drawings, found in cardboard boxes in her son's possession, was fortunately rescued in 2009.³ The drawings were listed and archived at the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki. In addition to Luostarinen, there are

1 Eeva Ruoff, "Luostarinen, Katri," in *Kansallisbiografia-verkkojulkaisu: Studia Biographica 4* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1997).

2 Tove Jansson, *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* (Helsingfors: Schildts, 1962).

3 Kati Susi-Wolff, *Katri Luostarinen Drawing Collection Catalog* (Helsinki: Archive of the Museum of Finnish Architecture, 2009).

collections from seven other landscape or garden architects at the museum. What about the contributions of other pioneers in landscape architecture?

Besides archives and research, our heritage is also conveyed through education, though the positioning of the field and the construction of its traditions. When I started my studies in landscape architecture in 1990, the silence about our past was striking. For example, Luostarinen was not mentioned, either as a pioneering professional or as one of the first academics in our field. We were not familiar with her work or the work of other pioneers – even when we graduated. I have since wondered if this silence was due to frictions in the field. Different schools of thought painfully divided the profession in Finland in the 1980s and early 1990s, to such an extent that the disputes were even discussed in Finland's biggest newspaper.⁴ Did the degree programme in landscape architecture want to start afresh? We do not know the reason, but the fact is that we grew into the profession without knowing its roots. Thus, it is not only Luostarinen who needs to be researched; many other pioneers also deserve more attention. A profession needs its roots to grow and develop.

The core question of the network – “where are the women in Scandinavian landscape architecture?” – seems a little different from a Finnish perspective. I could ask: where and what is Finnish landscape architecture in general? Its historical traces have not been documented or researched; its stories have largely remained untold. The invisibility and marginalised position of female landscape architects – often discussed at our meetings – applies to the whole field and its history in Finland. Perhaps to the profession of landscape architecture in general?

Finally, let us return to Ninny, the invisible child. The core of the Moomin books is friendship, love, and equality – and they also indicate a feminist approach, as they challenge how women should behave. At the end of the story, invisible Ninny regains her physical presence and takes her rightful place in the world. This is thanks to Moominmamma's kindness and the potion she gives to Ninny, which is based on a recipe created by Moominmamma's granny and is meant for friends “who start to get misty and difficult to see”. But Little My – a tiny but fierce and independent character – also plays a key role, giving Ninny the advice to stop being too polite and learn to get angry: “You'll never have a face of your own until you've learnt to fight”. In the end, Ninny becomes visible when she gets furious with Moominpappa and bites his tail. Should we too take Little My's advice and apply it to our profession, which has got misty and difficult to see?

4 Marjukka Liiten, “Maisema-arkkitehtien opetus riitaisaa: Uuden koulutusohjelman it-senäisyydestä ei vieläkään yksimielisyyttä,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 26 April, 1991.

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Figure 4.5: Collage and Muusfeldt's photos. Pattern inspired by "The Genius is so Over! Using Collage as a Tool to Write Women's Histories", "Ecology of the Mind and Garden" and "Intentions of a Place: Viemoseparken".