

Statement - WEATHER REPORT ( Lucy Lippard ) Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art catalog

Lillian Ball

"66 Degrees, 32 minutes, 50 Years"

Media: Map morph animations projected on ice water (as currently exhibited).

Date: 2007

When the Swedish Embassy invited Ball to Jukkasjarvi to carve ice, she had to think about it only briefly. As an environmental artist, the primary focus of her work has been on wetland preservation. But having followed climate change issues for several years, she realized this was a rare opportunity to observe the developing situation above the Arctic Circle firsthand. "Clearly, any artwork that I might do there could only be about this most urgent challenge of our time," she says. "On arrival, snowy Lapland, mother of pearl sunsets, the Aurora borealis, and all the beauty of the North greeted me. But after speaking with several Sami people about how the tree line is rising, how reindeer herds are starving for lack of lichen, and how below zero weather never lasts as long as before, warming was apparent."

"66, 32, 50" is a history of the rapidly changing Arctic ice cap that projects into the future, from 1990-2040. It is a story told in ice on ice, as the dwindling ice cap maps are animated and projected on a carved ice "arctic circle." Finding the appropriate maps involved extensive research and was more challenging than imagined due to projection models. A square metal pool will catch the melt water that in turn accelerates the disappearance of the ice, as is actually happening in the Arctic. Subsequent exhibitions of the work will show the animation video directly on the saved Torne River ice water.

