



# Love is in the AARK

**/ Hello Patti, could you tell us how you found your way to Korpo and to AARK?**

In 2016 I came to Helsinki, to the House of Science and Letters, to take part in a conference with the wonderful title 'Wild or domesticated – Uncanny in historical and contemporary perspectives to mind'. I had just started my doctoral studies, which involve researching the art and literature of northerly landscapes. The conference lasted three days, but I knew I wanted to spend longer in Finland, so I googled 'Finnish Art Residencies'. AARK looked by far the most interesting, and next thing I was spending a whole month here in Korpo.

**/ What did you find interesting here?**

Many things, from the free ferries (in Scotland the island ferries are expensive) to the environment here: the Baltic sea, the forest walks, the mushrooms, blueberries and lingonberries. On Scottish islands, the weather is always the main topic of conversation – I loved that it's exactly the same here in Korpo!

**/ Have you been in art residencies earlier in other places?**

Residencies were not possible while my children were young. Later, I was lucky to get funding for two residencies in north Iceland, one of which involved walking and camping for a month in the mountains with two artist colleagues.

**/ What is special for an artist about having access to a place like AARK, in an island like Korpo?**

At AARK you can be alone and undistracted as much as you like, or you can seek out the company of the other artists. Renja and Benkku are generous hosts, who

provide huge support and knowledge. It's incredibly valuable to have time and space to work, study, write, and think, without the usual life-distractions and commitments that normally eat up your time and focus. Being with the other artists generates dialogue and a creative atmosphere; you make new contacts and friends, people who just 'get' you and what you do. Then, there's the sauna and being able to swim every day - great for body and soul. The result is renewed energy and fresh perspectives.

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### **/ What did your time in the residency give to you?**

Well, in addition to all of the above, my time in the residency gave me Renja's brother, Risto!



### **/ Ah, interesting! How did you meet for the first time? How did that happen?**

**Risto:** First when we met, I thought: oh, she is so skinny but attractive and nice. We had a dinner party and some wine with the other artists, and during the evening we threw some shy looks at each other. Then we had a long conversation after everybody else went to bed.

**Patti:** The evening I arrived, Risto welcomed me with a big bear-hug. I was sorry when it ended. AARK had kindly put on a dinner that evening, and after the 'young ones' had got tired and gone to bed, we stayed up and talked most of the night.

### **And what happened after that?**

**Risto:** Soon we started to realize we liked each other more and more. I finally felt I'd found the soul-mate I always hoped was out there. Patti dropped a tiny, tiny hint about me coming to Scotland with her. I gave it a full 0.3 seconds' thought, then packed my bags.

**Patti:** At the end of my time in AARK there were decisions to be made. We had 'clicked' so well I dropped hints that Risto might perhaps come over to Scotland... and, the rest is history!

**/ I understood that you have recently bought a house in Korpo. How does that feel? Do you have an idea of spending part of the year on the island?**

**Risto:** The plan is to increasingly stay here in Korpo at least half the year, but there has been so much happening in Scotland. We feel safer being here at this moment, because of Covid. Brexit gives us endless laughs and sadness –another reason we like to be here.

**Patti:** I like the Finnish way of living, the sea, the forest, and the peace and silence. Our new neighbors in Bendby are very friendly, and have made us feel most welcome. Covid travel restrictions make it difficult to return to Scotland at the moment, so I've applied for a post-Brexit visa in order to stay here longer and fully experience the Finnish winter!



*Thank You!*

