Utrymningsplan - This shape is difficult to grasp; it keeps slipping out of my view, escaping downwards or upwards. Its straight lines seem endless, but then they do end, disappearing into space or bending sharply. The sculpture appears structured and clear, yet undefined. It seems as if the snow cube from which it was formed was not shaped at all, but rather intertwined within itself and then extruded again.

Aljoscha Schmidt

What a delight in the long-awaited snow – an experiment with line and form. What an enrichment for my work as an engineer – a transition from the mathematical description of natural and technical processes to the creation of a natural entity, animated by our hands and our minds. What a comfort and honor – working with young people as equals ...

... I would do it again in a heartbeat.

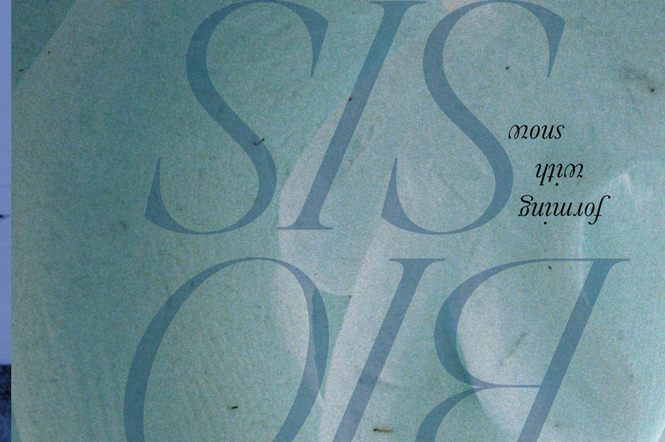
Prof.Dr. Christian Stollberg

At minus twenty-five degrees Celsius, I'm reminded that I have hairs in my nose. They freeze instantly and prick the inner skin. I pull out my smart phone to document the impressive scenery of the mining town of Kiruna. After the third photo, my fingers give up; I laboriously activate the lock screen and put the device away again. The cold knows no mercy. The indigenous Sami people, who live here, sing about it in their yoik. I feel completely comfortable here. Even as a small boy, the snow made my heart shine. I am grateful for this experience. The time and empirses with this wonderful group shall be remembered for a long time.

Franz Kotte

During our excursion to Kiruna, I explored snow as a sculptural material for the first time. The sculpture JEAHKAL translates the fragile structures of reindeer lichen into snow. At the beginning, it was hard for me to imagine that snow could allow such forms. While working, my perception changed as I began to understand the play between positive and negative space. What started as a simple sphere with holes became a three-dimensional structure of intertwining arms and small branches folding and overlapping with one another. Toward the end, carving the snow almost became an obsession — it had to become ever more fragile. How far could I go? Fortunately, Ilka eventually slowed us down.

Matthes Golz

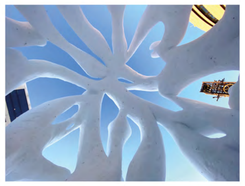


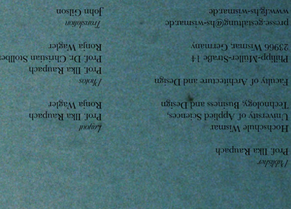
Cüüs
Tack så mycket
Thank you very much

Robert Gustafsson
Ida-Louise Svonni
Elin Persson
Snöfestivalen
Kiruna Lappland
Kiruna Kommun
John Gilson

snow-blue
growing
yoik magic
snow-yellow
sore muscles
snow-grey
layering system
snow-black
reindeer-soft
butt slide
snow-white
mountain view
warm people
snow-red
freezing
breakthrough
northern lights

Ronja Wagler





f.l.t.t:
Matthes Golz
Franz Kotte
Prof. Ilka Raupach
Prof. Dr. Christian Stollberg
Ronja Wagler
Aljoscha Schmidt

SNÖSKULPTUR

Kiruna Snow Festival, Sweden, January 21st to 24th, 2026

This interdisciplinary field trip was a journey into the snow. 200 km above the Arctic Circle. We (along with the other teams) shaped two walk-in sculptures from two large blocks of snow, each measuring 3 x 3 x 3 meters, a total of 27 cubic meters and weighing approximately 20 tons. We had developed this concept experimentally shortly before in Wismar.

JEAHKAL (Sámi term for *reindeer lichen*)

Lichens are a symbiotic community of a fungus and an alga. They can occur as fossil sea feed in alpine regions under a wide variety of environmental conditions and can grow on almost any surface. They have adapted to survive in some of the most extreme environments on Earth, such as the Arctic tundra, hot, dry deserts, rocky coastlines, and toxic mine tailings. Lichens are among the oldest living organisms. They often grow regularly very slowly, less than a millimeter per year, and take decades to recover after overgrazing, fire, trampling, or other damage. In the past, lichens were used to treat skin infections due to their antibiotic properties. They also served as insulation and moisture reservoirs. Today, they are used as "artificial trees" in architectural models and as sound absorbers. Lichens are very sensitive and important indicators of air pollution. Last but not least, Reindeer lichens are the main food source for reindeer. The culture of the Sami people in Northern Europe is deeply connected to nature, the landscape, and reindeer herding. It is an ancient, powerful symbiosis now in an extremely fragile state—influenced by both humans and nature.

Työpaikkaliike (Swedish for *excursion fabric* is a crystalline, deformative, yet pliable system or network of passages leading to the inner core and outward from it. It is difficult to imagine. Each is entrance. The weight and lattice, not only of the material, is noticeable.

JEAHKAL is the complete opposite—an opening, blowing, soft, and nurturing form full of lightness. The two snow sculptures address this merging in brutality very different ways and attempt to make these remarkable spirituness visible and tangible. The sculptures resonate with each other and with the modern urban space around them. They poetically create a regional, cultural connection.

They are accessible places for encounters and contemplation, where one can reflect on the past and our shared future.

After the festival, the sculptures created will be on display in Kiruna's new public city center until the end of winter.

During the Snow Festival, we were in direct contact and collaboration with international ice and snow experts from various design disciplines. We also visited the nearby ICEHOTEL in Jukkasjärvi (an ephemeral architecture made of ice and snow), the new Kiruna Art Gallery, and the Kiruna Music Festival. We experienced the unique urban development of Kiruna, Sweden's northernmost city, characterized by a popular underground iron ore mine amidst the vastness of the Arctic mountains, the mixture and conflict of Swedish and Sami cultures, as well as the deep winter temperatures.

Prof. Ilka Raupach

Publisher
Prof. Ilka Raupach

Hochschule Wismar
University of Applied Sciences
Technology, Business and Design

Faculty of Architecture and Design
Prof. Ilka Raupach
Prof. Dr. Christian Stollberg
Ronja Wagler

Philipp-Müller-Straße 14
23966 Wismar, Germany

Prosse zu Schulungs-Inhalten
www.fe-wismar.de

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Ilka Raupach

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Ilka Raupach
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Ronja Wagler

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