

# Finnish Diaspora and Cultural Intervention

Laura Gwynne Hudson  
Independent, Canada

## Abstract

I am a fifth generation Canadian with First Nations' Cree, English, Irish, Scottish, and Finnish ancestry. I spent much of my formative years with Finnish members of my family, enjoying garden vegetables grown from seed, gathering wild blueberries, savouring fresh caught trout cooked over an open fire, bathing in saunas, and huddling indoors in winter months. As an adult, I examine the impacts of Finnish diaspora on my identity, and my understanding of what it means to be Finnish through art making processes. It is through processes of making that I re-connect with resilient female ancestors who wove rags into rugs to warm homes in northern Ontario, knit woollen socks and sweaters for family members, and handcrafted the cinnamon korpu that I dipped into my morning cups of coffee. I arrive in Finland, finally, to attend InSEA 2018 Interventions, eager to find assurances that the abandon to which Finnish sauna bathers jump into cold lake waters speaks to the level of warmth in the Finnish spirit that is able to withstand the coldest, and most cruel of life's winter seasons. The Finnish connection to the natural environment, the ability to find light in utter darkness, and the heartfelt capacity to commune with others, are so strong as to have survived diaspora. Are these qualities strong

**enough to maintain themselves within an influx of diverse cultural influences,  
and if so, what shape do they take?**

### **Keywords**

Finnish, Diaspora, Identity, Culture, Resilience, Commune.