

# Re-imagining the Past

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# Re-imagining the Past

1 Pohjakallio, P. (2009) *Kuvataidekasvatuksen historiaa tutkimassa*. *Kasvatus & Aika* 3(3) 2009, 133-151.

- Stories from  
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Intro

Susanna Kokkinen  
Manager  
Aalto University  
Archives

&  
Outi Turpeinen  
Art coordinator  
Aalto University

Aalto University Archives is celebrating Aalto 10 with exhibition 'Re-imagining the past 2'. Once again, we collaborated with the Aalto community by inviting Aalto alumni, professors, students and other associates to highlight their carefully selected favorites from the collections.

The exhibition brings forward a variety of themes and perspectives. Themes such as the fragility of digital media and the distinctions between handmade and digital form continue to fascinate even the younger generations. In a world full of digital tools and media, carefully crafted items or hand drawn designs have become art works themselves possessing new and sometimes even surprising meanings compared to their original purpose.

The exhibition also showcases the radical creativity of former members of our community such as Merja Salo's first ever multimedia PhD from the 1990's, Kim Simonsson's work "Watching You Watching Me" or Kyllikki Salmenhaara's ceramic test tiles from the 1960's and 1970's. These works depict the value of carefully designed objects over disposable culture and are good examples of sustainability in the long run.

Aalto University Archives continues to preserve the past and the present, aiming to show the world our creative people and their innovative work both now and for the future generations to come. Aalto University Archives still has thousands of untold histories within its collections. Perhaps these stories might inspire new enthusiastic people to come and find them.

The Aalto University Archives is an archive open to all researchers. The key task of the Archives Services is the preservation of Aalto University's documented heritage and the promotion of research based on it. The Aalto University Archives include the archive and museum collections from Aalto University, the Helsinki School of Economics (HSE), the University of Art and Design Helsinki (TaiK) and the Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) and their predecessors, as well as numerous private archives closely linked to Aalto University and its remits.

*Contact us at [arkisto@aalto.fi](mailto:arkisto@aalto.fi)*

# Visionary

Professor Martti Tiuri served as a professor of radio engineering at the Helsinki University of Technology from 1962–1989 and as a member of parliament from 1983–2003. He had an unusually extensive career as a teacher, researcher and societal influencer. He was forward thinking and future-oriented, often involved in initiating new things and in his role as professor of radio engineering at the Helsinki University of Technology, helped to create and shape both the technologies and the competencies we utilise in the information society.

As a radio engineer and researcher, he played a part in launching television operations in Finland and produced notable contributions to many areas of radio science and engineering, in radio astronomy and remote sensing as well as the research and development of antennas and the microwave antennas required in industrial automation. Measurement of dielectric properties of snow had his special attention. As a politician he created visions for the future, spoke in favour of environmental issues and advocated on behalf of the information society.

Tiuri was one of the five first people appointed research professor at the Academy of

Finland, serving in the position from 1970–1975. During this time, the millimetre-wave radio telescope of Metsähovi, the so-called great pumpkin, was built for space research.

Perhaps the most significant effort of Tiuri's period as a professor, particularly early on, was his untiring demand for establishing professorships in electronics and communications engineering. This was indeed done at the Helsinki University of Technology, enabling Finland's position as a trailblazer in the current era of information technology.

Archive  
1/13

Antti Räisänen  
Profesor Emeritus

and

Expert  
in  
Technology

Martti Tiuri (1925–2016)

# Robotics and

Archive  
2/13

Aarne Halme  
Professor Emeritus

Research and education in robotics started at Helsinki University of Technology in the 1970s. The pioneer was the Control Engineering Lab led by professor Antti Niemi. At that time, the subject was industrial robotics. After the mid-1980s, a significant change happened in the research and development activity of robotic technology worldwide. Activity was gradually directed from industrial robots to robots capable of automating tasks in society outside of production lines. In the new Automation Technology Lab, established in 1986 and led by professor Aarne Halme, the research and education were directed to this new field, called service robotics.

An essential feature of service robots is the capability to move, because jobs cannot in most cases be moved to the robot like in factory lines, so the robot must move to the job. This caused the need to develop abilities for the robots to locomote, navigate and perceive the environment. The jobs are also difficult to define precisely beforehand, which led to finding new programming and automatic problem solving methods known as “artificial intelligence”.

The research and education activities in this new field of robotics supported the fast digitalization of Finland’s important work machine industry. WorkPartner project was part of Tekes national SMART program to boost up R&D activity in Finnish industry. WorkPartner robot acted as a demonstration platform for various new technological solutions. It was built from scratch at Helsinki University of Technology including all imagined features using the latest technologies.

Work  
Partner  
Story

# "Watching

I chose Kim Simonsson's work for two reasons. First, he is an alumnus for both University of Art and Design (TaiK) and Aalto University. Secondly, the works of Kim Simonsson have followed me during my career.

Before Aalto University, I worked for the Ministry of Education and Culture, responsible for the preparation of Aalto University. At the Ministry of Education and Culture Simonsson's work 'Alchemist' welcomes guests at the lobby and has overseen numerous delegations and arrivals.

The 'Alchemist' often looked on as the steering group of the Innovation University project (the name before Aalto University) arrived to meetings to discuss, sometimes even a bit dubiously, the charter of the university foundation. He also saw the jury arriving to name the new university as Aalto University. And continues to look on at the many other meetings after these.

For this exhibition, I chose a work from the Aalto University collections called "Watching You Watching Me". The stylistic connection to 'Alchemist' is obvious with a white ceramic head smiling mildly. However, the edges of the eyes are red. The smile is there but the eyes give away the hard work and long hours.

This statue reminds me of the committed and future-oriented work that many people have undertaken in creating Aalto University. I am happy and proud to have been part of it.

You

Watching

Me"

Archive  
3/13

Jari Jokinen  
CEO,  
TEK, Academic  
Engineers  
and Architects  
in Finland



# Read-only Memories

Archive  
4/13

Philip Dean  
Professor,  
Head of Department of Media,  
Aalto University

Professor of Photography, Merja Salo (1953-2018) was a pioneer of research in the field of photography in Finland. She pursued an interest in the 1990's *Hypermedia* possibilities for publishing and decided bravely, 23 years ago, to publish her doctoral thesis as a CD-ROM; the first Finnish, digitally published doctoral thesis.

650Mb CD-ROM media (compact disk read-only memory) was state-of-the-art. Including over 500 Finnish advertising images and anti-smoking propaganda pictures the CD-ROM format gave expanded possibilities, when compared to a printed thesis, for search and navigation, as well as the inclusion of the images interactively in the thesis.

However, by 1997 the era of CD-ROM publishing was in its last years. The real potential for open and accessible multi-/hypermedia was already focused on development for the Internet (WWW from approx. 1995) and the limitations of the CD-ROM format, the complexity and incompatibilities of the CD-ROM production tools and the rapid development of the Digital Video Disk (DVD) format and its hybrids quickly killed interest in the format.

Salo commented to her colleagues that she regretted having made her ROM-based thesis as, after only one decade, the CD-ROM was relatively inaccessible for anyone. Her thesis can be seen as a prime example of the fragility of digital media formats when considered from the points of view of archiving and accessibility of academic and/or creative media content.

The notion that the Internet has overcome these problems has to be challenged. In reality, accessibility of digital content is always governed by compatibilities and the resilience of systems, including infrastructure, tools and the content code itself. The preservation of complete digital systems for the next decades, or hundreds or thousands of years, in order that future generations will be able to experience our contemporary digital culture, does not seem a feasible proposition at this point in time.

from  
the  
1900s

# Test Tiles

The regular use of archives emphasises the educational nature present in the act of collecting and archiving things. My interest in Kyllikki Salmenhaara's archive comes from this guiding (educational) principle, which in this case is also the founding purpose of this collection.

Professor Salmenhaara (b. Tyrnävä, 1915-1981) has been seen as a pioneer of ceramics teaching in Finland, with a thorough knowledge of materials, methods, techniques and theory involved in the ceramic practice. Salmenhaara's collection was donated to Taideteollinen korkeakoulu, formerly Taik, today part of Aalto University, in the 1980s. Being myself a doctoral candidate at this university currently researching objects in collections as a topic for my research makes it all the more relatable to look with curiosity at this archive.

What you see on display is a family of items from Salmenhaara's archive, the grouping of which evolved around tracing some of the documented life and biography of a set of test tiles. The test tiles can at first look like multiples; they are the result of multiple experiments with clays, pigments and glazes. Because of their correlation,

they can easily be mistaken for one another. Individually though, they introduce a different story, Salmenhaara's test tiles present themselves also as independent abstract artworks. In their miniature beauty, these tiny little things have dual identities as both artworks and educational experiments. They are recognised by their multiplicity, but also individuality.

One can refer to this family as a subset collection within its own archive. Part of its strength comes from belonging to a group that shares similar features. The potential the test tiles hold is embedded with chance — an array of possibilities for further studying, not only of ceramics, but also the act of archiving itself.

Archive  
5/13

Marina Valle  
Noronha  
Doctoral candidate,  
Department of Art,  
Aalto University



# Radical Composition

Kaj Franck's General Course

Archive  
6/13

Marika Sarvilahti  
Information  
Specialist,  
Aalto University  
Archives

The General Composition course taught in the 1960s at the Institute of Industrial Art was inspired by the basic course at the famous Bauhaus. Compulsory for all students its aim was to free talent from conventional patterns and biased attitudes. Group work was required to prevent individualism.

The course developed by the Artistic Leader Kaj Franck crossed departmental barriers, encouraged students' possibilities to express opinions and become aware of societal and environmental problems. The course no doubt astounded Franck's contemporaries by anticipating many challenges of our time and laid the foundation for design education in Finland.

Examples I have chosen are exercises from the course's environmental projects such as the building of temporary shelters out of waste materials in the then deserted Jätkäsaari (1966), and the building of a children's playground in an unused site in Kallio (1967).

The playground project was an artistic work but also contained social commentary for claiming the site for children's use. The playground functioned for three days offering a cave, trampoline, puppet theatre, slides, a rocket and a sculpture made entirely

from pulla. There was also an environmental analysis of Katajanokka including a complete redevelopment proposal for making the area more socially varied and inclusive.

Who

Will

Miss

You

Archive  
7/13

Amy R. Gelera  
Student,  
Visual Communi-  
cation Design,  
Aalto University

If archives are suspended in time, do they ever cease to exist? They tell us more about ourselves and our current ways of thinking than we give them credit for. We believe that what has been spawned in our brain is our own, but is it? We are attracted to the new and shiny things. We are drawn to them like moths to a bright bulb and in that frenzy, we discard the importance of the basis that sustains us today.

This project was originally made for the 'Other Pasts' exhibition in Väre Kipsari Lobby gallery 2019, in which we explored archives and recycled the past by creating something new. I explored the idea of sketchbooks as archives of ideas and origins and from that point, created a series of Riso-printed posters asking the similar existential questions but connected them to my topic.

However, the idea is not mine, it was implanted there and spawned. I propose this as a call to reflect through our own practices and use of archives, to think about their value in the past and in future space and time, as we are still able to move through it and think about the possibilities of when we no longer are.

When

You

Are

Gone?

1  
1

# Dinner

# Party

Archive  
8/13

Vera Anttila  
Student,  
Art Education,  
Aalto University

In 1974, this drawing was submitted to a national drawing competition themed “Co-existence”, organised by the Finnish Schooling Administration. It is not known how it was perceived by the judges, but it ended up as part of the History of Art Education archive at Aalto University. This specific archive includes 30,000 student works<sup>1</sup>.

Especially the 1970’s, national drawing competitions appealed to me, because that time portrayed a strong collective consciousness of environmental issues in media, geopolitical anxiety and neoliberalism on its rise in the global North. In current time, the same struggles continue to exist more globally, with an especially strong emphasis on anxiety. However, living with anxiety also brings forth the notion of being together with something. This is also why this drawing felt urgent and humorous to highlight. In contemporary art education studies, there has been a recent wave of post-humanist and post-colonialist research and art practises. It brings to light questions such as for whom does this archive exist and what does it leave out? Does the person know that their drawing is in Aalto’s archive and what gives me the rights to display it? How is the being

with visualised in this drawing and on whose terms?

I sent a message to the artist through social media, asking them if they recognised the drawing, but didn’t get an answer. This might be a way for the drawing to coexist beyond the original idea, becoming something else together with this exhibition.

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<sup>1</sup> Pohjakallio, P. (2009) *Kuvataidekasvatuksen historiaa tutkimassa*. Kasvatus & Aika 3(3) 2009, 133-151.

# Object and Environment

Exhibition 1968–1971

The pedagogical exhibition “Esine ja ympäristö” (Object and Environment) by the STTY (Finnish Society of Crafts and Design) took consumer education of Finnish design to libraries, schools and exhibition spaces between 1968-1971.

“The goal of this exhibition is to offer with 200 images, 80 slides and 200 objects something most essential that we all should recognize and be able to discuss of.” (Uusi Suomi, June 6th 1968)

Finnish design was internationally known but in Finland there were no educational materials for schools or wider audiences on the subject. Hence, the exhibition was executed with the support of the Finnish National Agency for Education and included in-service training for teachers in Helsinki, Rauma and Jyväskylä.

The objects and black and white images chosen for the exhibition depicted the evolution and cultural specificity of object design, and its contemporary challenges.

“There are no luxury items in this exhibitions, just essential everyday objects from door handles to chairs and plates to vehicles. The aim is to show visitors with these images and objects how design makes things more convenient,

easier to use and also cheaper through mass production.” (Pieksämäen uutiset, March 26th, 1969)

1960’s Finland was urbanizing fast and ways of consumption were changing. Increasing wealth and free time accelerated spending as well as producing consumer goods and services. Living environments were developing fast and with the new “telecommunicational devices” the world was closer than ever.

Now the “technologized” society was facing challenges like short life span of consumer goods, “acceleration of consuming”, throwaway culture and the waste issues resulting from the use of artificial materials. On the other hand, new materials were also seen as a necessity and plastic was seen as a solution.

In the 1960’s there was strong design criticism against the establishment in Finland. At the time STTY was the main promoter of Finnish design industries and exports and this exhibition is an intriguing gesture from this institution.

“Esine ja ympäristö” exhibition was made by Esa Vapaavuori (exhibition architecture), Jaakko Lintinen (texts) and Jukka Pellinen (graphic design).

Archive  
9/13

Leena Svinhufvud  
Educational  
Curator,  
Head of Learning,  
Design Museum  
Helsinki



# Interpretation Matters

Archive  
10/13

Anni Rupponen  
Student,  
Nordic Visual  
Studies and  
Art Education,  
Aalto University

How do you archive images today? I am fascinated by printed photographs and original art works made on paper. I print annually a collection of photos from my life and store original hand-drawings to look at and to touch later.

When browsing my collection, I sometimes wonder why I wanted to archive this image - it feels now insignificant. My collection has taught me to see my memories differently. I have archived these images because stories connected to them were meaningful to me at the time of adding the images into my archive. Without my archive I would have probably forgot these stories forever.

It hasn't been that long since art schools didn't have paper model teaching materials. I wanted to exhibit a glimpse into a time when printed teaching materials were very rare and valuable in Finnish art schools. The images used in the installation present the collection from the first printed teaching materials of Aalto ARTS' early years in 1870.

I feel lucky that I found these fascinating images which have ended up under the protection of Aalto University Archives. These images made me wonder how they were

seen and used as educational materials, both at the time of their appearance and in the years after.

It is interesting to think how radically paper models have changed the visual art education. How the exhibited images have formatted visual art education's current emphasis on teaching critical reading and thinking skills. These skills are precious at a time of endless images which we view and interpret every day.

Try out how viewing the same images as printed paper copies and then as digitized ones affect your interpretation.



# Atmospheric Interiors

For an interior architect it is crucial to be able to imagine a space and its wanted atmosphere in order to practise in this field at all. Then, the ability to transfer this multidimensional entity into a 2D image sequentially to explain it to other people is even more crucial.

One would think that with the modern technology of 3D modelling programs, AR and VR possibilities and the endless options of photographic manipulation that this task of how to represent an atmosphere would be easier. I am sceptical.

Sometimes all you need is paper, a pen and some watercolours to create a miniature universe rendering its atmosphere so carefully that the viewer can almost smell the room.

When a designer needs not only to imagine the space, but also to carefully construct the details and materials in their mind thinking of how to draw them by hand, I believe that something more transfers onto the paper.

I was thrilled to be able to see these beautifully handmade images done by past student Ilmari Tapiovaara. The use of line, colour and detail creates a sophisticated image full of information about the space, the materiality and its

atmosphere. I think there is more to an image like this than meets the eye.

What do you think? Who can you envision living here and what kind of atmosphere does this space have?

Archive  
11/13

Anna Akins  
Student,  
Interior  
Architecture,  
Aalto University





# Hand-drawn Renderings

Archive  
12/13

Veikko Ahola  
Student,  
Marine  
Technology,  
Aalto University

I selected hand-drawn renderings of ships. These are things which are no longer usually seen in times of computer graphics and 3D-renderings, not least in public. I even think that the word “render” has replaced “artist’s vision”.

These pictures are not nearly as photorealistic as their digital counterparts today. Nor do they strictly follow the actual drawings from which the 3D-modelings are usually made of. Instead, they are much more impressionist in nature which is evident in the mistiness and more free-handed perspective.

For me, another characteristic of these drawings is their caricature-like and therefore more dramatic feeling. This may make this technique good for a designer to highlight some features on the design. Also, in early phase of design, it is easy to hide unfinished places without making the picture look incomplete as easily happens with computer graphics if the level of detail is low.

Personally, I love handmade sketches. In hand drawing the designer can simply let ideas just flow. Changing one’s mind and correcting lines on top of existing ones is also part of the charm of this kind of picture.

It would be nice to see more sketching by hand still today. As I now searched for pictures of future ship and city visions in the internet, sadly almost everything that I found were computer made visualizations. It would be also interesting to know if computers have allowed new people, not feeling confident with doing things by hand, to enter the design field.

of  
Ships

4  
5

# 100 years of History

Imagine if you could get a glimpse of how it was to be an art student in the very beginning of the last century, taking a break from ceramics class to glance through the window at the new railway station being built. Or if you could find the thesis of a technology student in Hietaniemi, who ran into a burning school after a Russian airstrike in 1939 to save teaching materials from the flames. Or what if you could meet one of the few female students in Töölö in the 1920's, who decides to take a degree in economics, while all her friends studied to become assistants.

Today Aalto University archives have digitized over 200,000 images to make the legacy of the University available to all. This was one of the goals in the mass digitization project between 2017-2019, which was conducted as a joint commitment between the Aalto University Archives, Library and IT services. The main aim was to digitize and make available over 50,000 master theses and dissertations from the schools of technology and economics over the last 60 years. Anyone can now find them, read them, and do searches in them from any Learning Centre computer and

the images can be found from anywhere at [aalto.finna.fi](http://aalto.finna.fi).

Project owner: Ossi Naukkarinen (RIS) • Project manager: Susanna Kokkinen (LSS) & Juha Juvonen (ITS) • Theses & Publication collections: Matti Yrjölä, Marja Malmgren, Miira Sarkki, Tove Ørsted & Titta Tuovinen • Image collections: Marika Sarvilahti, Tove Ørsted & Hanna Talasmäki

Archive  
13/13

Tove Ørsted  
Photo Archivist,  
Aalto University  
Archives



in a  
10-year-old  
University

Re-imaging the Past Vol.2  
-Stories from the  
Aalto University Archives  
11.3.-29.4.2020,  
Dipoli Gallery

*Curators*  
Susanna Kokkinen  
Outi Turpeinen

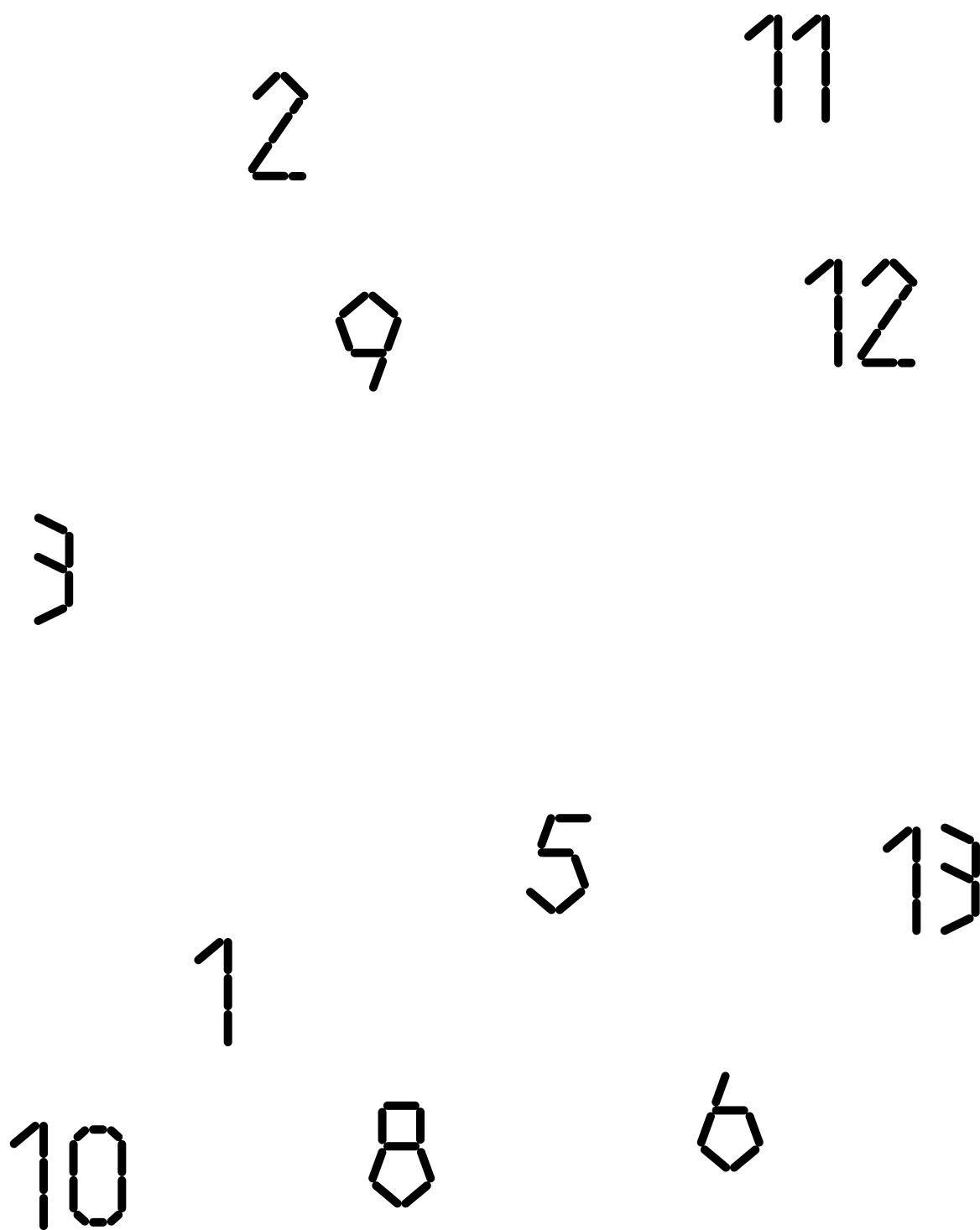
*Aalto University Archives Team*  
Sani Kivelä,  
Marika Sarvilahti,  
Tove Ørsted

*Graphic Designer*  
Joosung Kang

*Copy Editor*  
Edel O'Reilly

*Communication*  
Anitta Pirnes





- 3p Intro, Susanna Kokkinen & Outi Turpeinen  
4p Martti Tiuri 1925–2016 – Visionary and Expert in Technology, Antti Räisänen  
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