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With the support of an American-Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship and an SWEA North Carolina Scholarship, I have been traveling with researchers into remote forests that were used by the indigenous, reindeer-herding people of Scandinavia, the Sami. The northwest of Sweden is stark and craggy, with clear-cut vistas surrounding vast expanses of untouched, Scots pine forest. Throughout these woods, one can encounter sacred trees, boulders, mountains and settlements once inhabited by the Sami. Drawing from a rich tradition of spirit photography and early experiments with the medium, I populate this landscape with ghostly figures, two headed-mystics and indecipherable signs. I then weave these manipulated images with empty, eerie environments layered with cultural traces, creating an imagined underworld and asking the viewer to question the reality of what they are seeing.



So far this experience has been exceeding my expectations in everyway. I have made two trips with researchers to a remote reserve, Tjeggelvas, about 7 hours north and west of Umeå. Both times we flew in by helicopter and stayed for a week or longer, camping out and making excursions during the day. I have been primarily working with Lars Östlund, a researcher of Forest History at SLU in Umeå. On each trip I accompanied Östlund to various sites within the reserve, stopping along the way to take photographs and learn more about the history of the forest, the Sami's relationship to the land and to inspect possible remnants of hearths, storage platforms and fences. The terrain in this area is marshy, with forest and boulder fields interrupted by a network of small lakes and rivers. I am told that I will return to the

US with quite a unique idea of Sweden, and I have no doubt that this is true.

We have made several other trips to more accessible sites and will make one more trip to Tjeggelvas in late winter/early spring. Back in Umeå I have been developing film, scanning it and doing post-production work. Recently I met with curators at the Bildmuseet and have been in contact with some galleries and spaces in Stockholm. I have also been using this work to apply for residencies, exhibitions and festivals in Europe and the US. Additionally, I have been taking Swedish classes at Folkuniversitetet and volunteering at the local FolketsBio once a week.



This opportunity has been vital to my development as an artist. I received my MFA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2011 and immediately left for Sweden. Here I have been able to independently strengthen my artistic vision. For any artist at any point in their life having time to work is essential and quite rare. I have had the ability to focus my energy entirely on this pursuit due to the support of SWEA North Carolina and the American-Scandinavian Foundation.