

To the Sauna Congress in June 2018,

Please accept the following abstracts in submission for presentation at the XVII International Sauna Congress. I've also included a brief biography and supporting information, and am glad to answer any questions as needed. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Jesce Walz

University of Washington, Seattle

Bio:

Jesce Walz is a graduate student of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington, Seattle. In 2017, Walz researched sauna and kallbadhus in Finland and Sweden as a Valle Scholar. Compelled by the spatial and ritual typology of sauna, she is building upon her travel research to produce papers, a set of case studies, a gallery exhibit, and her graduate thesis: *Sanctuary & Sweat, Sauna as an Instrument of Systemic Health*. Underpinned by systems-thinking, her work recognizes sauna studies as a critical junction for research in consciousness studies, ecopsychology, public health, and architecture. Walz advocates for sauna as an accessible ritual and a pivotal networking point between individual, social, and ecological health in the contemporary built environment.

Proposed Abstracts:

1. Landscapes of Ritual and Health
2. Bodies of Water, Approaches to Gender in Sauna and Bath
3. Sauna, an Embodied Therapy
4. 30 Sauna & Kallbadhus

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Current Projects: A thesis excerpt and list of supporting work related to Sauna

Landscapes of Ritual and Health¹

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Subject area:

“History and Culture” / “Technology and Design”

Abstract:

Sauna and kallbadhus promote exchange between urban and ecological environments. When these structures are located near civic space, they invite visitors to the threshold of the city to pause for reflection and engage with the elements: Pathway, foundation, and aggregate respond to stone and earth; structure is derived from the forest; fresh air transports water vapor and heat; bathing requires clean water and adapts to seasonal cycles.

This ritual is a vital for health in certain Finnish and Swedish facilities, where popular sauna and kallbadhus boast communities who have visited the same site for social bathing throughout their lives. Some of these have been rebuilt several times over in the same location where they were first established.² This practice remains relevant today: Eleven or more public waterfront saunas and baths have opened in Sweden and Finland in the past fifteen years, and more are being built as local groups advocate for accessible bathing in their communities.³

This paper examines specific sauna and bath facilities and their ecological, topographic, urban, and historical contexts. Research draws from both qualitative and quantitative information: User group, ground cover, site circulation, relationship to urban space, use of material, climate data, and topography/bathymetry. It also cites examples of saunas that promote social, ecological, and economic health through innovation in their structures, systems, and operations, asking: How can the today’s sauna movement respond to the needs of our time? What potentials exist that have yet to be realized?

Keywords:

landscape, architecture, sauna, kallbadhus, ecology

¹ This paper is in-progress for “LARC 553: Historiography of Modern Landscape Architecture,” taught by Professor Thaisa Way at the University of Washington, Seattle.

² The longest running site I’m aware of is at Lysekil, which has hosted bathing since 1847, as confirmed by their kallbadhus website, and in Leandersson, B., & Lind, H. (2004). *Kallbadhus*. Stockholm: Byggförlaget.

³ See Figure 2 below for a graph that includes 10 newer facilities. In addition to these, Bornholm’s Hasle Harbour Bath opened in 2013. I’m aware of groups trying to start kallbadhus in Mariefred, Jönköping, and Ystad, Sweden, and assume that there are others beyond these.

Bodies of Water⁴

Approaches to Gender in Sauna and Bath

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Subject area:

“History and Culture” / “Technology and Design”

Abstract:

This paper builds on three months of on-site research in Finland and Sweden in 2017. During this time, I visited over fifty saunas and thermal baths (alone, with a partner, or with male and female identifying friends). I observed a variety of approaches to separation of gender and practices of nudity in each sauna/bastu and bathing space, and began to ask questions:

How do sauna and bathing spaces “open, close, or shift” in response to gender? What roles do formality of ritual and familiarity with other users play in decisions about whether saunas, baths, and community spaces are entered nude? What options exist to include persons of a variety of gender identities while maintaining the appeal of intimate and socially accessible safe space?

While conversations with sauna operators did not relay contention on this topic,⁵ each facility does take an intrinsic stance through its rules and spatial organization: Most public saunas I visited incorporate heteronormative gender division that begins at the changing room, yet customs of space-sharing and nudity in saunas and baths themselves varied greatly.

Approaches to gender and nudity may impact the sauna and bath experience as much as levels of heat/humidity and quality of design; these have potential to set the tone of a facility's long-term community. This paper does not place value or preference on any particular approach, but shares observations from experience, coupled with related research,⁶ to illuminate a variety of outcomes and underscore the need for additional examination on the topic of gender and bath.

Keywords:

gender, sauna, LGBT, feminist, embodiment

⁴ This paper is in-progress for a “GEOG / GWSS 541: Feminist Geographies” research seminar, taught by Professor Kim England at the University of Washington, Seattle.

⁵ Sauna is widely known as “strictly egalitarian” space (see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_sauna)

⁶ There is a lack of research on gender in contemporary sauna and bath, however, I will draw from papers on the body, society, and bathing, gay saunas, health studies, and statistical information for reference.

Sauna, an Embodied Therapy⁷

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Subject area:

“History and Culture”

Abstract:

Sauna is a place where a broad cross-section of society can experience presence in the body, expansion of the mind, and connection with ‘other’ and ecology. Drawing from research in geography, ecopsychology, neuroscience, and consciousness studies, this paper locates the practice of sauna and cold bathing as a form of ‘embodied therapy.’ It further explores the potential for embodied therapy to support systemic health.

As cities densify, society seeks solutions to meet the needs/wants of masses living in tight quarters. Speed and stimuli increase, and social interaction decreases. Individuals need not engage each other, yet are always together, living in collective distance. This distance also happens between one’s own mind and body, manifesting in burnout, trauma, and disease, as is evidenced by a plethora of epidemics stemming from consumption and stress. Without opportunity to recover from such imbalances, coping mechanisms take root, resulting in disconnection from one’s own capacity to heal.

Embodied therapies addresses this disconnect by activating different parts of the brain simultaneously, networking instincts, emotions, and greater sense of awareness. Related practices have gained popularity in recent decades through traditions like yoga, quigong, and tai chi, and in dance, movement, and formal therapy sectors. These practices teach the brain new patterns, encouraging connection between self, other, and society. Sauna is a compelling format for embodied therapy because it is accessible and tied to natural resources. When practiced by many individuals, its benefits extend to social, ecological, and systemic realms.

Keywords:

embodied therapy, ecopsychology, systems, public health, consciousness

⁷ This paper draws from the author’s experience as a Certified Yoga Teacher (CYT), and is being written with supervision from trauma-informed yoga therapy instructor Hala Khouri (<http://halakhouri.com/>).

30 Sauna & Kallbadhus⁸

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Subject area:

"Technology and Design"

Abstract:

Sauna is a threshold between the wild and the civilized. It invites the human animal to engage in a visceral simultaneity of contrasts: sweat, cold, darkness, light, prospect, refuge, isolation, and congregation. Diagrammatically, this typology offers a compelling set of constant and variable: Each facility accommodates the same essential program and set of elements, while circulation, structure, and materiality adapt to varying cultural, ecological, and temporal contexts.

Building on three months of on-site research Finland and Sweden, this study examines thirty sauna and kallbadhus in case studies that span the past century and a half of bathing history. These analyses use photography, drawing, writing, and diagram to investigate four themes:

1. Context: Examines procession between urban context and sauna structure, and between the sauna and cold bath
2. Threshold: How does activity in the sauna environment differ from that of the outside world? What quality of social or introspective engagement might exist in a sauna?
3. Vessel: carving and holding space, multisensory experience (sound, smell, tactility)
4. Aperture: Does the sauna provide prospect and refuge? What view does it frame? How much light does it allow to enter?

These case studies are being developed into a book and gallery exhibit (forthcoming, January 2019), and could be presented as slides or shared as posters. The figures below offer further information about how case studies were selected.

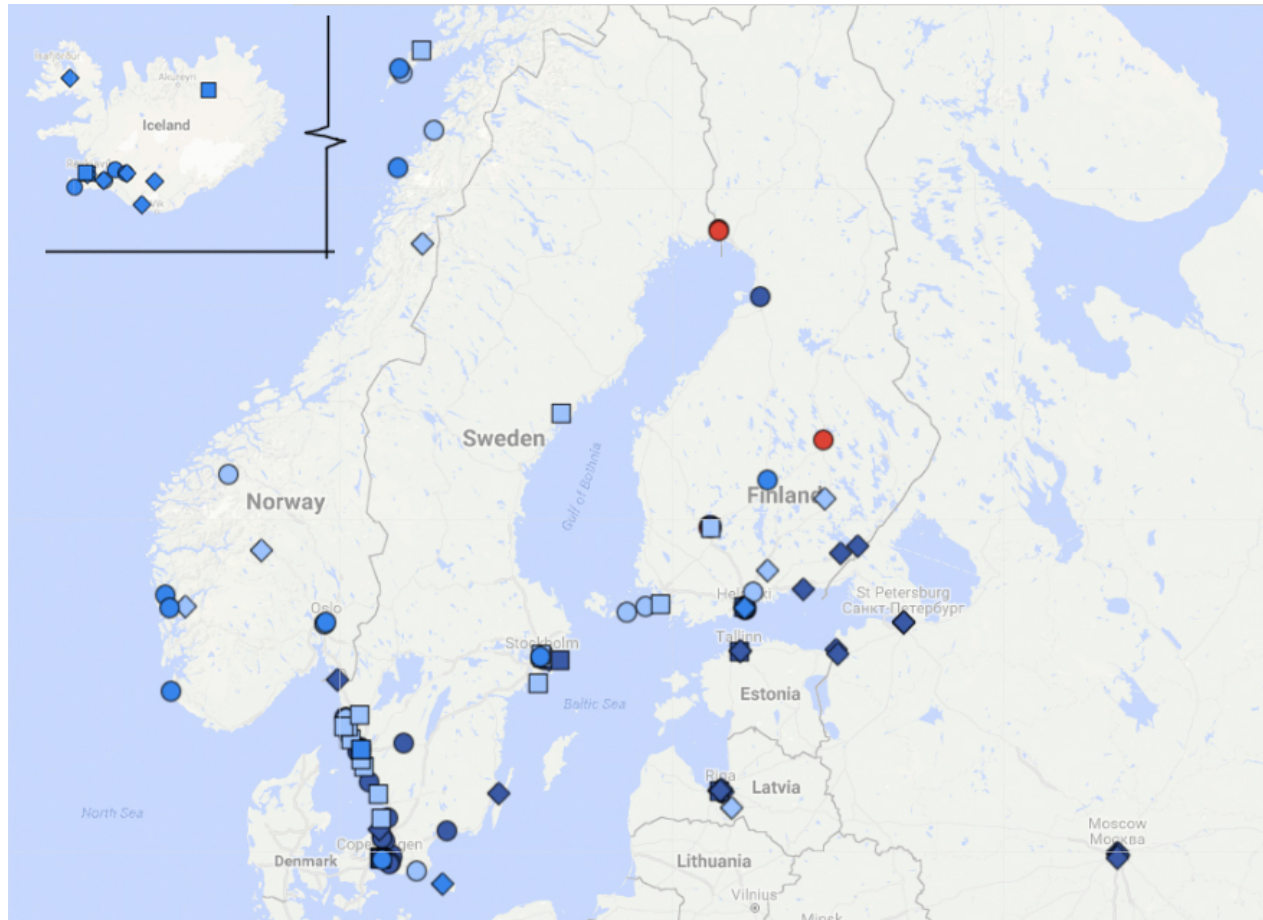
Keywords:

sauna, bath, architecture, public space, ecological design

⁸ This set of case studies build on a research fellowship awarded by the Valle Scholarship & Scandinavian Exchange Program (<https://depts.washington.edu/uwvalle/welcome>), and serve as precedents for the author's graduate thesis, "Sanctuary and Sweat, Sauna as an Instrument of Systemic Health"

Figure 1: Case Study Map

The map below highlights saunas, baths, thermal pools, & kallbadhus that I researched in August - November of 2017. Circles indicate sites visited in-person; squares and diamonds indicate sites researched online. From the 57 sites visited, I selected a set of 30 sauna and kallbadhus for case study analysis (detailed in the spreadsheet below). All are located in Finland and Sweden, which share a northern border and offer a compelling spectrum of sauna traditions.



Selected case-studies ideally express the following characteristics:

- 1) Publicly accessible (individual visitors can purchase a day pass)
- 2) Open year-round 3 + days per week (with a few exceptions)
- 3) Economically priced (Löyly was most expensive at 20 € per visit, others cost much less)
- 4) Accessible by foot, transit, or bike from a nearby residential area (with one exception)
- 5) Operated with some level of participation by or input from community members

For organizational purposes, I've categorized my case studies into three typologies:

- 1) City Sauna
- 2) DIY & Outlier
- 3) Kallbadhus

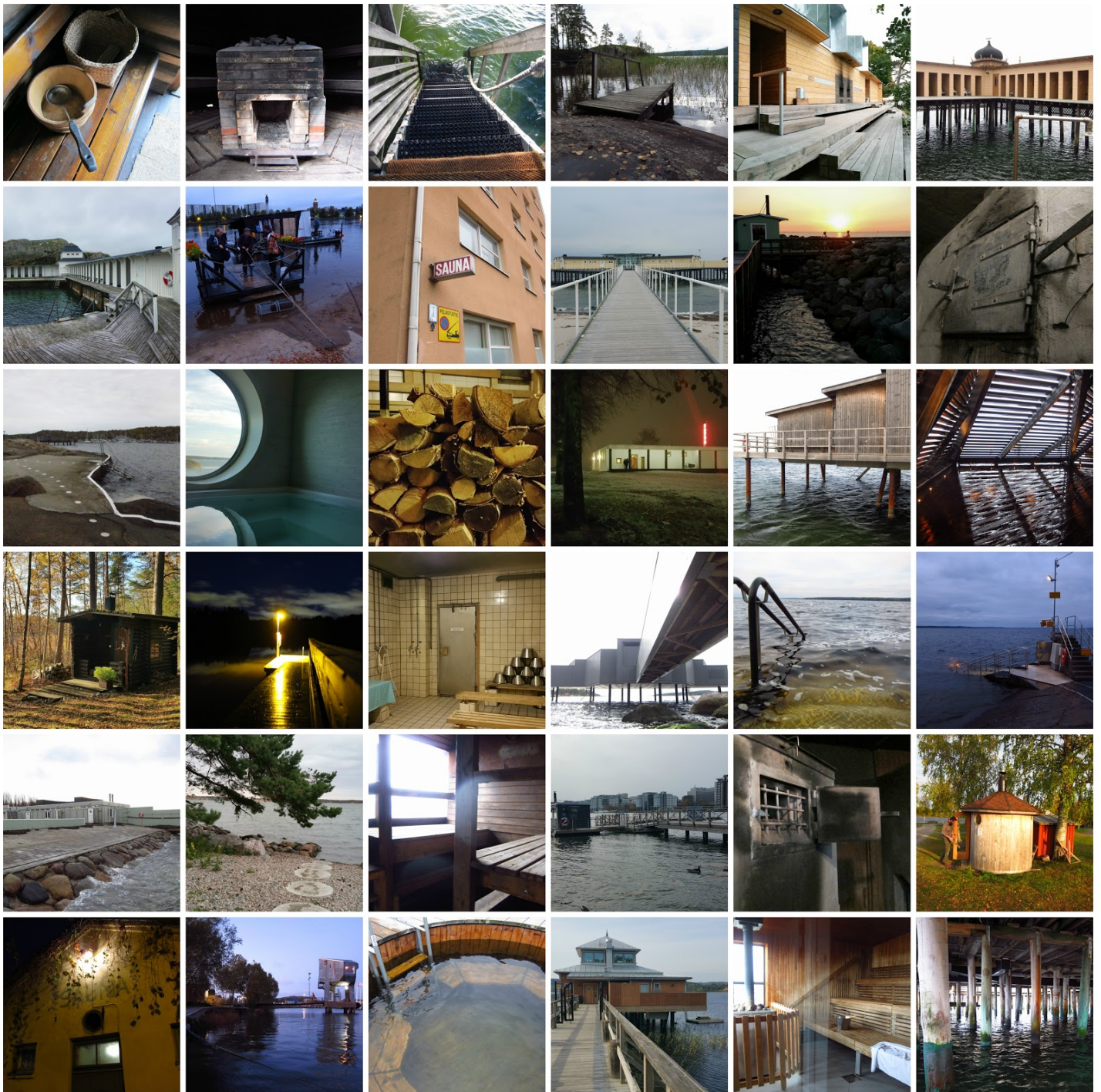
Figure 2: Sauna & Kallbadhus Case Study List

Location, context, approx. date established, and description of cold bath

<i>Typology: CITY SAUNA</i>				
Sauna Arla	Helsinki, FI	Within Urban Block	1929	Washroom with Buckets & Courtyard
Kotiharjun Sauna	Helsinki, FI	Within Urban Block	1928	Extensive Shower Room + Front Lawn
Sauna Hermannii	Helsinki, FI	Within Urban Block	1953	Washroom with Buckets
Kulttuurisauna	Helsinki, FI	Waterfront Sauna	2013	Suomenlahti (Gulf of Finland) + washroom
Lonna	Helsinki, FI	Waterfront Sauna	2016	Suomenlahti (Gulf of Finland) + washroom
Löyly	Helsinki, FI	Waterfront Sauna	2016	Suomenlahti (Gulf of Finland)
Yrjönkatu Uimahalli	Helsinki, FI	Historic Swim Hall	1928	Constructed Pool
Kaupinajan	Tampere, FI	Lakefront Sauna	1977	Näsijärvi (lake)
Rauhaniemi	Tampere, FI	Lakefront Sauna	1929	Näsijärvi (lake)
Rajaportin	Tampere, FI	Within Urban Block	1906	Washroom with buckets below sauna
<i>Typology: DIY & OUTLIER</i>				
Sompasauna	Helsinki, FI	Community Initiative	2016	Suomenlahti (Gulf of Finland)
Rauhalampi Sauna	Kuopio, FI	Rural Smoke Sauna	1990	Kallavesi (lake)
Kesän Sauna	Oulu, FI	Community Initiative	2015	Pohjanlahti (Gulf of Bothnia)
Kukkolaforssén	Haparanda, SE	Sauna Academy	1988	Torne (river)
Hellasgården	Nacka, SE	Nature Reserve	1940	Källtorpssjön (lake)
Tanto Bastu	Stockholm, SE	Community Initiative	2016	Årstaviken (bay / waterway)
Bastun i Frihamnen	Göteborg, SE	Community Initiative	2015	Pöl Harbour (outdoor pool)
Kvickbadhuset	Höganäs, SE	Community Initiative	2013	Kattegat (sea)
<i>Typology: KALLBADHUS</i>				
Ulricehamns Kallbadhus	Ulricehamn, SE	Cold Bath & Sauna	1871	Åsunden (lake)
Lysekil Kallbadhus	Lysekil, SE	Cold Bath & Sauna	1864	Skagerrak (strait / harbor)
Saltholmens Kallbadhus	Västra Frölunda, SE	Cold Bath & Sauna	1908	Kattegat (sea)
Varbergs Kallbadhus	Varberg, SE	Cold Bath & Sauna	1866	Kattegat (sea)
Skansen Kallbadhus	Båstad, SE	Cold Bath & Sauna	1875	Laholmsbukten (bay)
Pålsjöbaden	Helsingborg, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	1909	Øresund (sound)
Kallis	Helsingborg, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	1864	Øresund (sound)
Rååbaden	Råå, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	1897	Øresund (sound)
Bjerreds Saltsjöbad	Bjärred, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	2004	Øresund (sound)
Ribersborgs Kallbadhus	Malmö, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	1898	Øresund (sound)
Sibbarps Saltsjöbad	Limhamn, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	1967	Øresund (sound)
Karlshamns Kallbadhus	Karlshamn, Sweden	Cold Bath & Sauna	2015	Östersjön (Baltic Sea)

Figure 3: Photos from Research

The images below are a small excerpt of photographs I took during on-site research in 2017.



Current Projects

GRADUATE THESIS

The abstracts submitted above and the projects listed below support my graduate thesis for dual graduate degrees of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (forthcoming, Dec 2018):

Sanctuary and Sweat: Sauna as an Instrument for Systemic Health

Sauna and cold bath are ancient spatial typologies that maintain cultural continuity through change over time and continue to evolve in contemporary expressions. The practice of sauna transcends class and stereotype to stimulate health across individual, social, and ecological realms. These systemic benefits of this practice rely on equitable access to sauna as a space and the placement of collective value of sauna as a ritual.

Given these requirements, can sauna take root in a contemporary capitalist setting as an authentic public amenity?

This body of work consists of three volumes (case studies, history/theory, and design), which convey an understanding of sauna as an "instrument" to be operated in concert with its specific user group and ecological / urban context. The work explores the greater potential of sauna to promote systemic health, and the intrinsic value of ritual space. It also contributes resources to groups who hope to establish practices of sauna in their communities.

SUPPORTING WORK

Bastu, Skog, och Modern Metod: Travel research via the Valle Scholarship and Scandinavian Exchange Program (complete, Aug-Nov 2017)

Vessel: Competition entry in the "Holloman Hall Health Challenge;" a business model for a scalable, ecologically integrated sauna for the Port of Seattle's Marinas (Feb 2018)

Geographies of Gender, Embodiment, & Bathing: Coursework for "GEOG / GWSS 541: Feminist Geographies," this syllabus for a hypothetical course is designed to generate research on the roles of gender and embodiment in public saunas/baths (Mar 2018)

Sanctuary & Sweat: Gallery exhibit at University of Washington, Seattle's Gould Pavilion, featuring sauna and sanctuary spaces in Finland and Sweden (Jan 2019)