



Burning Stories:  
A Shared Platform Combining  
Science & Arts

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# 2015



# HOW TO BURN A PIKE!

Our guide to a student driven Burning Man project.

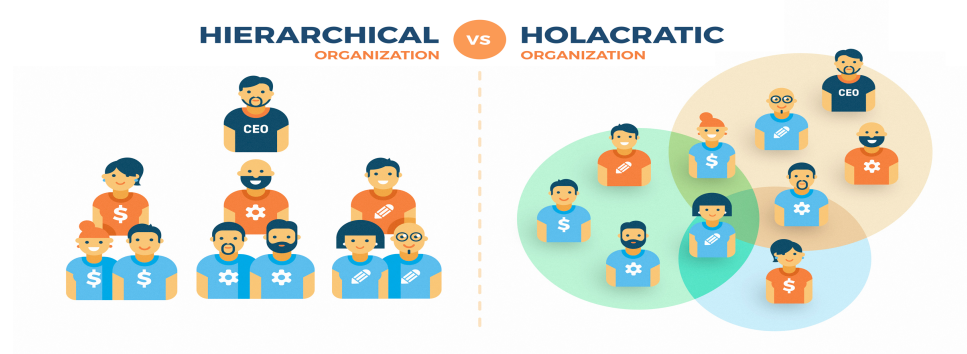
*Now that the concept's next destination is going to be a refugee camp in Nepal, I can say that it would be impossible unless we wouldn't had done Burning Man first...many people are excited about it.. Respondent X, Laurila (2016)*

Koulu The School (2016)

Laurila (2016) Cultivating entrepreneurial behavior through participatory culture of Burning

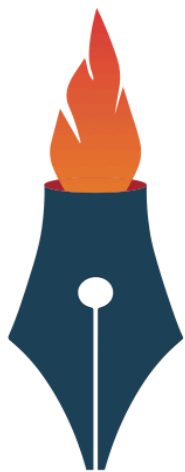
# Space on Fire (2017)





# The emergence of Burning Stories





**BURNING**  
**S T O R I E S**

# Twofold research project

In Finland, aim is to study the development of the community, personal journeys & temporary Burner project organisations (current data n=20)

Internationally, collect stories from the global community via Burning Stories website with the support of Burning Man Organisation

Founded spring 2018 - data shared back



Collecting expectations before and stories after the event:  
Studying identity changes & the impact to the institutions



# BURNING STORIES

*Share your wildest and deepest story for the sake of science!*



[BURNING STORIES](#)

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[OUR STORY](#)

[PRIVACY POLICY](#)

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## Posts



**Burning Man**

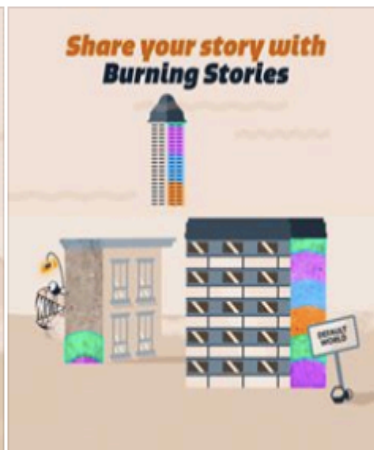
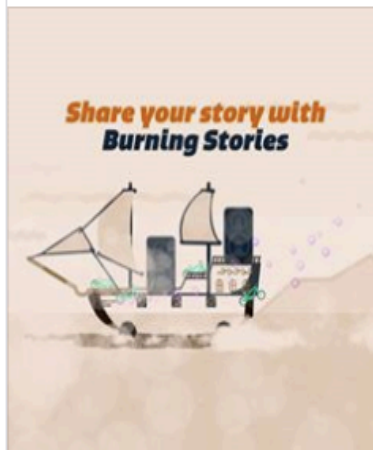
16 hrs · 🌐



Did you attend Burning Man this year (or any year)? Got a story to tell? The academic team at Burning Stories would love to hear it!

We know that time in Black Rock City leads to real, impactful change in individuals and communities, but as of now there is little scientific research on the topic. The Burning Stories project is dedicated to conducting research about the Burning Man experience and how it influences its inhabitants. You can participate by either writing your story or {NEW} sending in a video recording.

Visit <https://burning-stories.org> 🌐 for more info!



Toma Susi and 72 others

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burningman Did you attend Burning Man this year? Got a story to tell? The academic team at Burning Stories would love to hear it!

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| Graphic by the Burning Stories team |  
#burningman #brc #blackrockcity  
#participation #radicalselfexpression  
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galfestival ❤️

aurimaskvietelaitis 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

cuddle\_stripes ⚡🌟🔥❤️

antrimsmith #airpushercollective



17 HOURS AGO

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# Burning Stories = a platform for the interplay of science & arts

## Seminars

Academic seminar  
with visual and  
sound arts

## Dissemination

Animations and short  
films for participation

Dissemination of the  
most relevant results

## Authorship

New type of  
interactive paper

Every  
respondent as  
an author

## Art installation

Story sharing art  
booth on playa

Increase awareness  
and get field data

A person in a dark, textured costume with a hood is silhouetted against a vibrant purple and blue stage background. The person's arms are outstretched, and they appear to be in motion. The background is filled with bright spotlights and beams of light, creating a dynamic and atmospheric scene.

# Burning Stories preliminary findings from the Finnish community

20 in-depth interviews from Space  
on Fire project group

1095 minutes, 260 pages

Focus on the beginning, journey  
with Space on Fire and life after

*Slack, videos, field notes as secondary  
data*



## (1) Why? 'Bold' Imaginations, Shared Passion, Co-Creation of Opportunities

*"The **idea was so far out**, like, combining audiovisual art and space tech. I mean, when I heard about the concept, it was, like, OK, this is it. This is so **insane**, the whole idea was **completely insane**."*

*"I don't like saying too much [that] we aim [...] **to land on the moon** but that was pretty much what we did do."*

***In short: "I have never seen that many super-humans."***

## (2) Journey? Organizing Diversity, Shared Ownership, Emotional Energy and Inclusive Emancipation

*"...we had architects, skydivers, magicians, people [...] who do consulting, professors [...] everybody was very **comfortable just being themselves** and **bringing what they could** to the table."*

*"I meet people who give me **credit for being my genuine self**, the genuine skillset [...] so that was **emotionally very different** from I'm used to."*

*In short: "[...] it's stressful and exhausting, but it was fun. [...] "Nothing was set in stone."*

### (3) Journey? Temporality, Closure and Different Experiences

*"But of course, then, from an emotional point of view, that the **crazy part is then to burn it**. But at the same time, I think that was a very good thing for the project, to burn it. Because **it was a process. It was not about substance**, about, you know, that we get this monument. Was about learning, about this **mutual experience, so what more beautiful than burn it?** So there's no, there's nothing left, because you don't need that anymore."*

## (4) After? New Emotional Dynamics, New Sense of Achievement & Belonging, New Collaborations

*"Emotionally, I have never felt a connection that deep, because of course, we didn't know each other before the project, but after the project, we're like a family. The feeling of belonging was extraordinary."*

*"One of the proudest moments of my life, when thousands of people came in and were amazed by the fact that, like, this is not bunch of bullshit"*

*In short: "If you think of Space on Fire as a concrete project, then it has ended. But if you think of Space on Fire as a community, then it hasn't."*

# Preliminary data from Burning Stories 2019 global survey

Qs: What are your expectations (pre), share a story how it went, who did you hang out with and what are the takeaways?

(Pre-event) Expectations around 80, (Post-event) experiences around 70  
— ongoing—

Very early stage. We are not able to draw conclusions of any sort.

More rounds + follow-up interviews + follow-up surveys / tracking

Type of background data: *e-mail adds, location @ BRC, profession, age, gender, consent on research and sharing & GDPR*

What are your expectations? THE EXPECTATION LEVEL IS HIGH

*"This year I am expecting to reset my way of thinking, to get out of my own box and to widen my perspectives beyond what is usually possible. I am expecting to re-evaluate my own values and choices in life. As Burning man is a place of unconstricted thinking and infinite possibilities, it is the perfect environment to question what you usually take for granted without even thinking about it. I am also expecting to gain greater clarity about different relationship styles (monogamy vs. non-monogamy). And lastly , I just want to set myself free to be fully who I am."* N/A occupation, female, 28

*"It is important for me to be more and more natural and authentic continuously and to life a life full of meaning, purpose, passion, integrity and alignment. I am an individual who is passionate for exploring what is possible, curious to challenge my views and ways of acting, and also someone who needs a lot of freedom to flourish."*  
Doctor, female, 33

Share a most exciting story from the event?

*"Standing in front of the speakers felt like nothing I have ever experienced before. I felt alive and euphoric and free. Dressed in a white mini dress, white fishnets, white cowboy boots, and a pink wig, with my eyelashes white from the dust storm, I could not have felt more beautiful. Dancing, riding through and exploring Black Rock City with my best friend and my new romantic partner all while feeling an almost indescribable connection and liberty will forever be etched in my mind."* Entrepreneur, female, 32

*"I am disappointed with the attitudes of the mutant vehicle and art car folks. Their gatekeepers are very discriminatory on who they let ride. I was actually told, ""No, it's too late for old people to be out anyway,"" ""You're not pretty enough,"" and ""We're only picking up hot girls right now."" I asked other camp members and heard similar stories. One gay couple said they had tried for 3 years to get on a vehicle and were denied every time."* Retired artist, male, 70

Who did you meet and hang out with? Please share most memorable experiences?

*"I met two young couples in love who got engaged on the playa. Both were members of the LAFer camp. One from Buffalo and one from Italy. The pure joy of their love and the magic of the play made them among the most memorable connections I've made at the Burn. Entrepreneur, male, 35*

*"Our camp was challenged this year when one of our members was arrested. She was new to the camp and knew only one member slightly. How the members of the camp came together to come to our new camp mate's assistance was a beautiful thing." Student, female, 25*

What are the main takeaways from the event?

*"I am not sure if working in this type of environment makes you more successful. Nor do I think you need to go around hugging everyone you meet. But what I do know is how enjoyable it is to work in a team that has a strong sense of community. To work in a place where you can let your guard down to your colleagues, let them know when you are feeling stressed, and know that you'll receive support". Accountant, female, 25*

*"We are all a community. Radical inclusion brings us together from all walks of life. We find bonds between beings trying to live in accordance with the 10 Principals. Carrying the power of the ten principals with us, on and off the playa, will change the world."*  
Retired philosophy professor, male, 66

