

SUBMERGED PORTAL

KUNSTPLASS
contemporary art [OSLO]

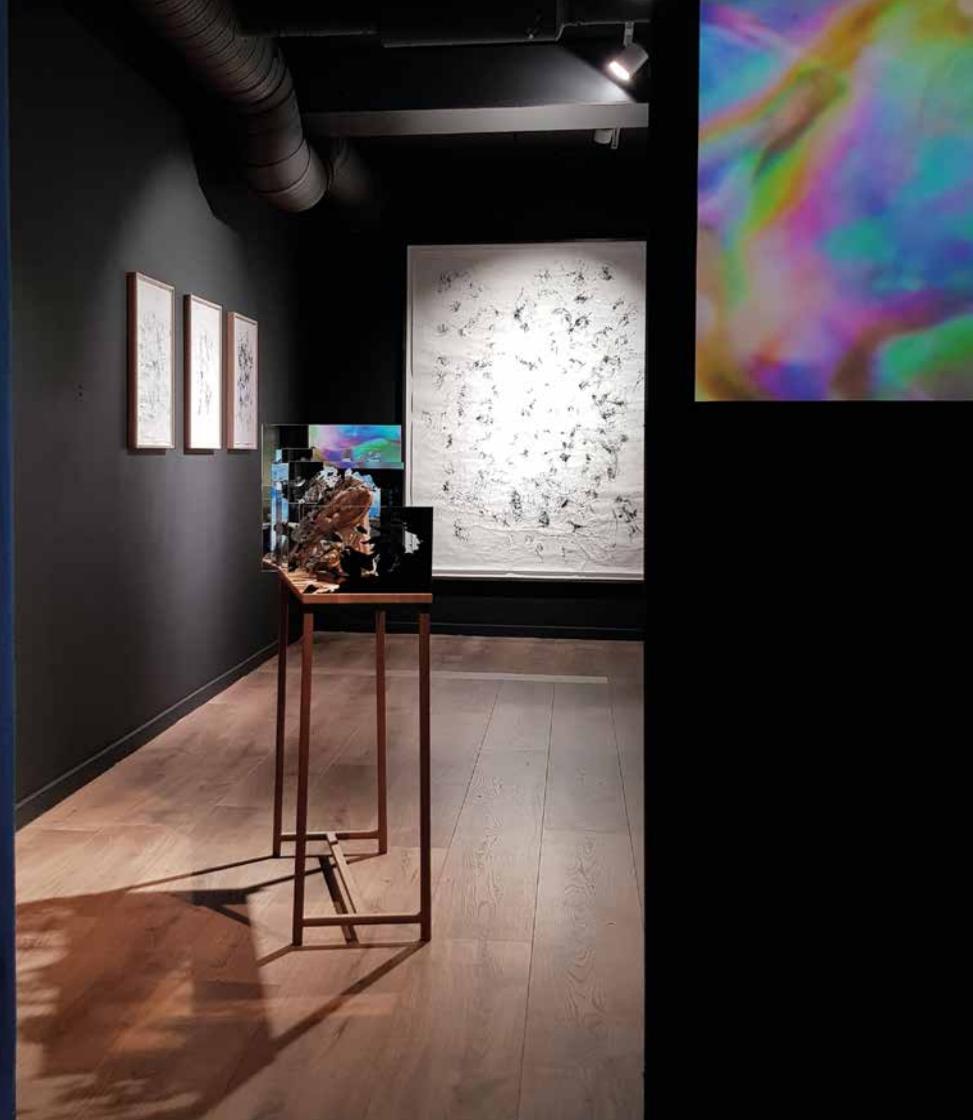
SUBMERGED PORTAL

ARTISTS // Kristin Bergaust / Randi Nygård / Elin T. Sørensen /
Tanja Thorjussen // Elly Stormer Vadseth
CURATOR // Vibeke Hermanrud from Kunstplass
VENUE // Kunstplass Contemporary Art [Oslo] / Akersgata 1 /
0158 Oslo / Norway
12 Dec 2020 - 17 Jan 2021

SUBMERGED PORTAL

The exhibition catalogue is a small anthology consisting of texts, poems, art projects and quotes by the artists in the exhibitions and others who have inspired my.

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SUBMERGED PORTAL

Kort sammendrag av den kuratoriske teksten av Vibeke Hermanrud

Velkommen til Submerged Portal - en gruppeutstilling om jordas komplekse økosystemer, og spesielt det grunnleggende elementet vann. Vann er livgivende, men også knyttet til ubehagelige understrømninger, maktkamp og politikk. Verden opplever hyppige vannkriser som tørke, ferskvannsmangel, flom og forurensning.

Inspirasjon til denne utstillingen er hentet bl.a. fra Astrida Neimanis' hydrofeminisme og boken «Bodies of Water». Hydrofeminismen tilbyr oss en ny innfallsvinkel - eller portal om du vil - til å tolke økologisk etikk og interseksjonalitet. Gjennom et tverrfaglig samarbeid, og med utgangspunkt i erfaring fra i Oslofjorden, har vi tatt tak i disse vanskelige og sammensatte problemstillingene. Med video, tegning og installasjon gjenspeiler Submerged Portal fem interdisiplinære kunstners forhold og omsorg for miljøet og vannet som knytter oss sammen:

// Kristin Bergaust er en kunstner, forsker og pedagog som tar oss med på en kunstnerisk forskningsekspedisjon i Oslofjorden.

// Elly Stormer Vadseth glir i takt med brennmaneter i sin performancevideo Sensate Drifter(s) rett utenfor sitt hjemsted på Nærnes i indre Oslofjord.

// Randi Nygård har vendt tilbake til sin barndoms isbre, Folgefonna, og laget frottager (kulltegninger) av isen. Isen er et arkiv som forteller historier om vårt miljø og klima.

// Kunstner og landskapsarkitekt Elin T. Sørensen viser oss den tidløse skjønnheten til øresneglen i en video laget i samarbeid med arkeologer fra Sør-Afrika.

// Tanja Thorjussens omsorg og respekt for alle skapningene i havet og naturen gjenspeiler seg i hennes tegninger og kunstverk.

Denne utstillingskatalogen er bygget opp som en liten antologi med kunstverk, dikt og tekster som på forskjellig vis omhandler vann og feminisme.

Digital omvisning

Har du ikke anledning til å besøke Kunstplass i Oslo, ta kontakt med Vibeke Hermanrud så avtaler vi tidspunkt for en digital omvisning i visningsrommet på Skype, Messenger eller Zoom.

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SUBMERGED PORTAL

Curatorial text by Vibeke Hermanrud

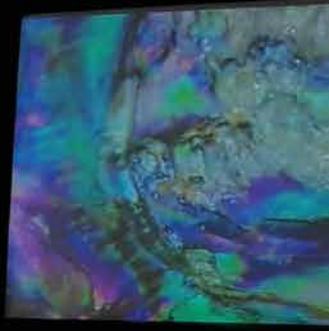
Welcome to Submerged Portal, contemporary art exhibition, which is a tribute to the world's ecosystems, and particularly the basic element sustaining us all, namely water. We are all bodies of water – and hence connected to each other across time, spaces and species. Our watery bodies are inseparable from other bodies of water, the oceans, and the global pressing ecological wounds and world's troubled waters.

Water is life-giving, but also linked to power structures and politics. The world is experiencing frequent water crises such as droughts, fresh water shortages, floods, contamination, construction of mega dams leading to displacement, and control over bodies of water. Inspiration for this exhibition is drawn from Astrida Neimanis' theory about hydrofeminism and her book "Bodies of Water". Hydrofeminism offers a new approach - or portal if you will - to interpret ecological ethics and intersectionality.

Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy, known for her book "*The God of Small Things*", wrote the article "*The pandemic is a portal*" just after the global outbreak of COVID-19¹. At the end of this article she expressed a hope that the global pandemic, and this terrible distressful period, will offer us a chance to rethink what luggage we will carry with us into the future and what choices we make. She sees this as a portal or gateway between one world and the next, and that this can make us imagine another world, and to be "ready to fight for it."

With art as an amplifier, I believe that collaboration and embodied experiences can create new and alternative gateways in addressing these complex issues. This exhibition came about through a joint process with an interdisciplinary group of artists, researchers and thinkers. The process started on a beautiful summer's day in August 2020, in between the first and second wave of the Corona pandemic. During one session of this gathering, we submerged ourselves in the Oslofjord in order to learn from each other, our bodily experience and connection with other non-human species and organisms.

Submerged Portal reflects five artists' relationships and care for the complex ecosystems, which we are all part of, local habitats and the Oslofjord:



// Kristin Bergaust is an artist, researcher and educator who takes us on an artistic research expedition in the Oslofjord.

// Elly Stormer Vadseth descends under water with jellyfish in her video *Sensate Drifter(s)* just outside her doorsteps at the Nærnes peninsula in the inner Oslofjord.

// Randi Nygård returns to a glazier in western Norway making frottages of glaziers, and in dialogue with researches layers of history emerge in the ice.

// Artist and landscape architect Elin T. Sørensen shows us the timeless beauty of the abalone shell in her collaboration with archaeologists. It reminds us of time's fluidity, as it connects us to the past, present and potential future and our penchant for beauty.

// Tanja Thorjussen's care and respect for all creatures in the sea and nature is reflected in her drawings and works of art. Her acrylic paintings of the Thalassa - the ocean goddess- is insisting on the need for people to wake up and take action.

You can read more about their art practice and contributions to this exhibition from page XX.

I furthermore want to pay my respect to multidisciplinary artist Rebecca Belmore, who is a member of Lac Seul First Nation (Anishinaabe) and Swedish contemporary artist Ingela Ihrman. Both artists have from afar have been of great motivation. Two small texts about these artists can be read on page 32 (Belmore) and 34 (Ihrman).

Hydrofeminism opens up a portal

Where does the Oslofjord end?² Some people will claim that this fjord has its fixed perimeters stretching from the city of Oslo to somewhere around Ferder lighthouse, while others will simply say it is part of the world's oceans and bodies of water, because water knows no boundaries. The Oslofjord blends into Skagerrak, the Atlantic Ocean and the seven oceanic bodies of water. Just as the water that is flowing through my body during my life-time has now defined borders. The water I have consumed through food or from different water sources at various location in Norway and abroad, is absorbed by my cells and body, which comprise around 70% water, before it evaporates from my skin, is consumed by cells or flushed down in the toilet together with toxins and waste. This water is part of an everlasting global hydro cycle. The water is both part of the primordial soup, as well as future bodies of water.

I am not attempting to give a lesson in biology or hydrology, but rather to show my awe and wonder about life and the basic element water that we can learn so much from. Some call it hydro-logics

or hydro-strategies. Astrida Neimanis and others are opening up our minds challenging us to start thinking with water. Water is a facilitator, as it flows and moves through spaces, time and species. It connects us in our mutual responsibility to do something for the fragile ecosystem and all living organisms, humans and non-humans. Water confirms that our being is always a becoming. Astrida Neimanis uses terms like "transnationality", "transcorporality" and "transspecies".

With hydrofeminism Astrida Neimanis offers us an expanded feminist perspective. To me hydrofeminism opens up a new portal, entering a deeply intersectional realm. We are reminded to always carry with us the insight of the complex structures that we are entangled into of power, class, identity, religion, disabilities, and so on, and how all of these properties intersect with gender. Hydrofeminism brings a new feminist perspective related to ideas of embodiment and ecological ethics. As bodies of water, we have from a feminist perspective an ethical responsibility to take "account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part"³.

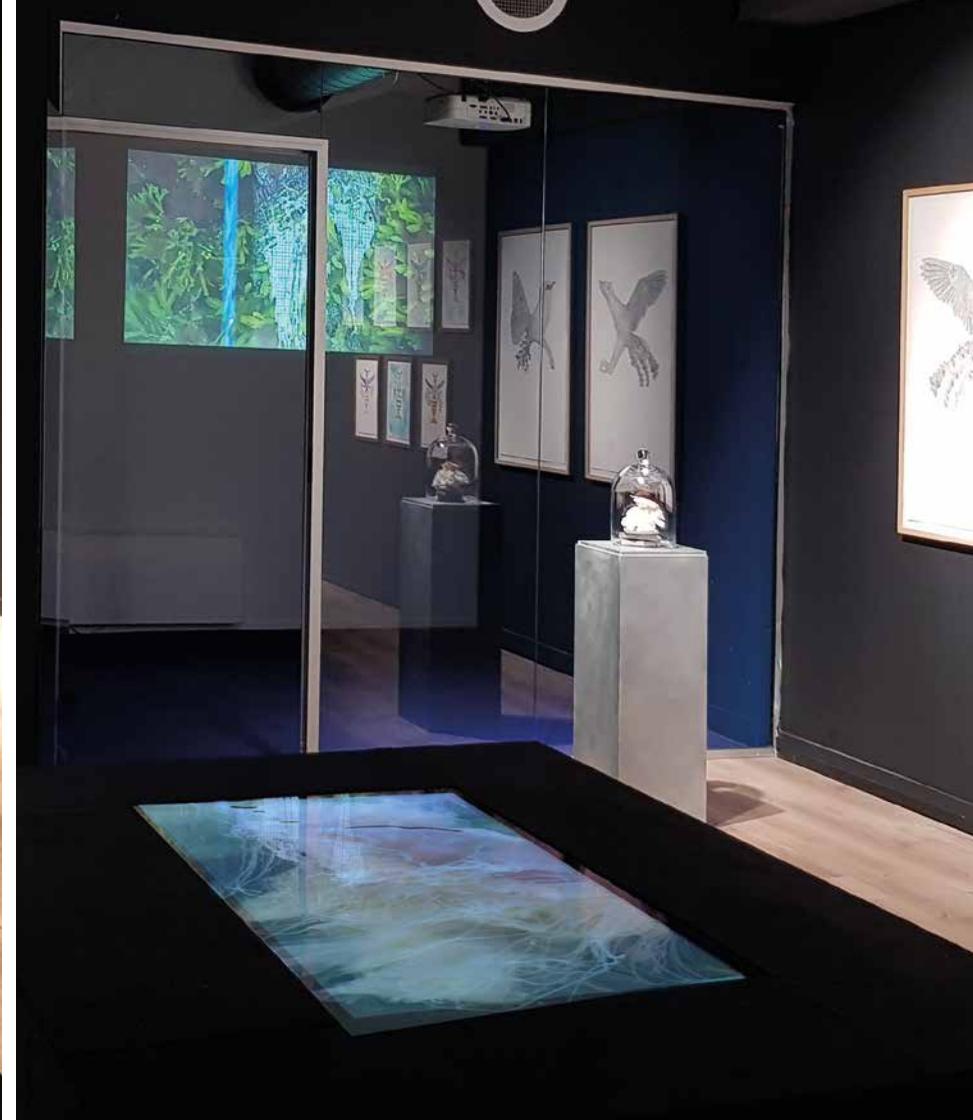
In a recent online speech, Astrida Neimanis tells the audience that she had spent a decade trying to concretise what Hydrofeminism means. She said she could call it a practical anthology, because it explains and describes what the world can be, but also how to practice it, and she says: "Water is an amazing teacher, as a practical anthology." She continues by asking us to listen carefully to a story about an exhausted woman standing by the edge of the sea. It is not only her who is exhausted – the sea and ocean itself is also very tired. Through this story, she gives me a hint to be patient, slow down and not hyperproduce.

When you enter *Submerged Portal*, I hope you will feel safe and embraced by the art and the space. This exhibition does not come with any solutions or straight answers, but I hope you will experience a sense of hope and wonder, as the different works of art resonate with your own life and our world's troubled waters. Maybe it can open-up a conversation. Together we can question the status quo, make borders blurred and margins more visible. Perhaps it can even open-up a new portal to alternatives and more sound ways of thinking and behaving?

¹ The article "The pandemic is a portal" was published in *Financial Times* on 3 April 2020.

² Kristin Bergaust and a transdisciplinary team asked the very same question in the startup phase of *Oslofjord Ecologies*, and they were reasoning along similar lines.

³ Astrida Neimanis "Bodies of Water" (2017)



Presentation of the artists in Submerged Portal

The interdisciplinary artists that you can experience in this exhibition provide artistic glimpses into the complex stories, undercurrents and wonders of water, oceans and the natural habitats we are part of.

Elin T. Sørensen is an artist and landscape architect with a deep passion for the ocean and the intertidal landscape. She just completed her Ph.D. titled "Multispecies Neighbourhoods in Urban Sea Areas." By means of explorative artistic research she has addressed the urban intertidal and underwater landscape using the inner Oslofjord and harbour as her case area. As a contribution to "Submerged Portal," Elin takes us thousands of years back in the beautiful and slow video "Perlemoen" (single channel, 7 min.)

Imagine a child - or yourself for that matter - finding an abalone on the beach for the first time and being filled with awe and wonder. When looking at the shells' interior displaying a colourful iridescence in transitions from shades of blue, purple, aquatic green and pink, it may resonate with something deep inside you. The captivating abalone, or "øresnegl" in Norwegian, thrives in seas at depths down to 10 meters. It is found in the intertidal today, as well as on archaeological sites around the world, for instance in California, South Africa and China.

The abalones (*Haliotis*) are identified as one of the many classes of organism threatened with extinction due to overfishing, ecosystem alterations and the acidification of oceans from anthropogenic carbon dioxide, with the effect that reduced pH erodes their shells. The abalones are declining in numbers several places in the world and will need protection throughout the globe, motivating the artist's wish to raise awareness on this species.

In South Africa, the common name for abalone is perlemoen, which comes from the Dutch term paarlemoer meaning "mother of pearl." With this video the artists ask "if the abalone's mother of pearl could be an imaginary gateway to a state beyond time and space?"¹ Can these shells connect us to the past, and give us an insight into early humans?

I am honoured to show "Perlemoen" at Kunstplass, as it reminds us of time's fluidity, where the marine snail is the 'transport vessel' into our ancestors' past and possible futures. It can furthermore help us to grasp people's aesthetic admiration and emotional connections with this beautiful sea creature. Geir Harald Samuelsen, has written a poetic text "Light —Darkness—Light" (page 36-39) for this exhibition about how this work of art came to life during the times of Corona, and the fruitful meeting between contemporary art and archeology.



Still from the video "Perlemoen" by Petro Keene and Elin T. Sørensen. Photo by Petro Keene 2020.

¹ Elin T. Sørensen & Petro Keene (2020). *Perlemoen*. Published for the European Association of Archaeology Conference.

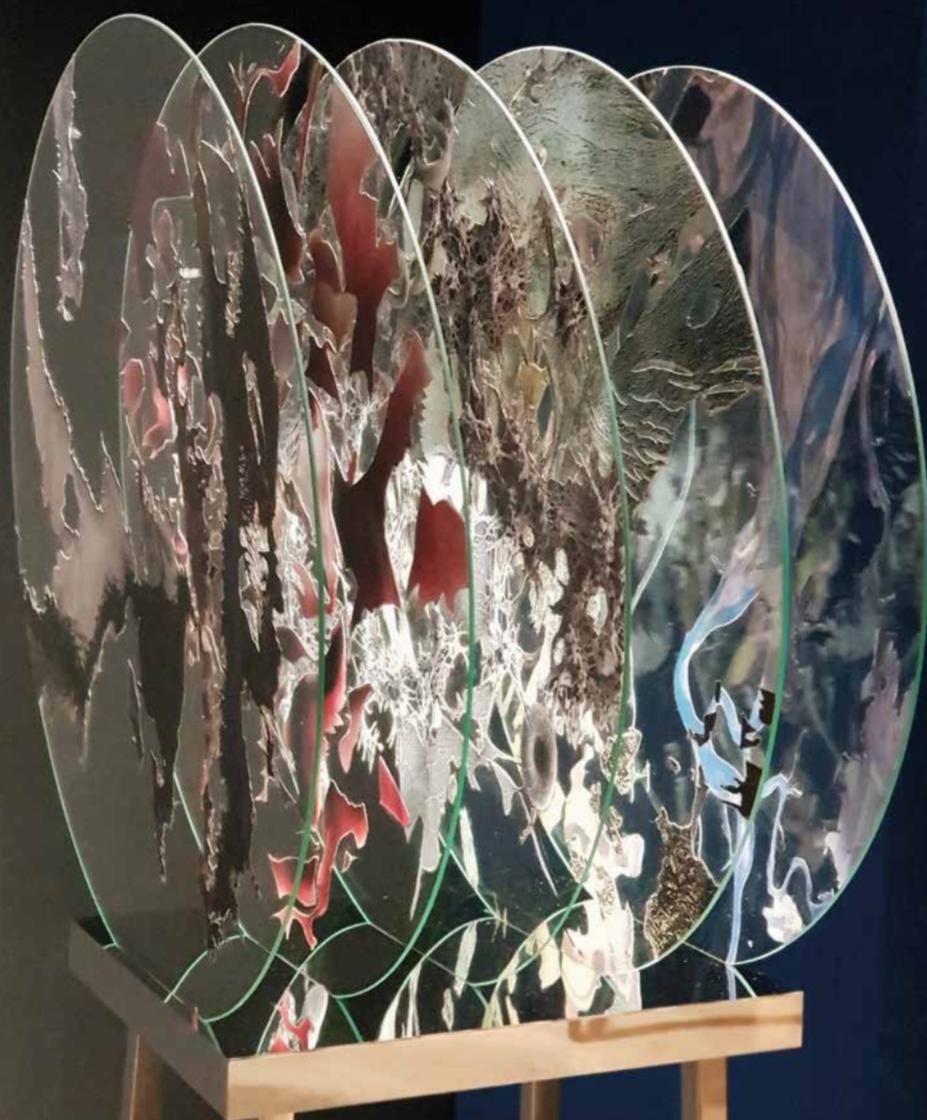
Randi Nygård is an artist whom for years has been working with themes related to nature and oceans. She grew up by the fjord in the western part of Norway, in a family who used to live off fishing. Since her student days at the Art Academy in Trondheim, she has enjoyed linking theory and abstract concepts to everyday life. She also appreciates having multiple perspectives and the artistic freedom of for instance imagining how it is to be a jelly fish or seagull.

In 2019 she visited her childhood glacier, Folgefonnen, which has retreated tremendously the last 20 years. She laid paper over the iceberg, and with her hands smeared in charcoal she would gently drag them over the uneven surface. New landscapes emerged in the meeting between her hands, structures on the ice and in the paper. The four frottages that can be experienced at Kunstplass are titled “Black Carbon Creates Clouds, Drifts in The Wind and Falls to The Ground (Blue Ice, Botnabreen, Folgefonna)”. Randi has been in dialogue with researchers, and she is particularly inspired by professor Kjetil A. Jakobsen’s reflections about ice as archive. Glaciers are becoming archives of memory and layered history, as it attracts dirt, dust, seeds, and other substances in layers upon layers through time. The glaciers are telling stories about the climate crises and changes in the ecosystems.

Nygård approaches her art in a multitude of ways, with a keen eye for the complexity in the ecosystem which she is a part. With layers of mirror, paint, photos, birds and wood she has created a three-dimensional collage titled “Sight, layer, poem”. This graceful art piece is mirroring the complexity and vulnerability of an ecosystem and the world as a whole. Pollution from the cotton industry is disrupting the ecosystem linking the birds and the clouds in the sky to the fish and the ocean. When you see the sculptural installation from a particular position, it turns two-dimensional and your body becomes part of the reflection.

<https://www.randinygard.com/>





Above: Sikt, sjikt, dikt (bomull, skyer, fugl, fisk, sjøsprøyt) / Sight, layer, poem (cotton, clouds, bird, fish, sea spray). Randi Nygård 2019. Mirrors, photo, cotton gloves, birds, wood. 120 x 72 x 36,5 cm

Left: If You Imagine Cutting the Universe into Pieces, the Different Parts Can Serve as Clocks for the Others 2 (Mountain, Cell, Flower, River, Clouds) Randi Nygård 2013/2017, mirrors, digital prints, steel, 130 x 50 x 50 cm

Photo: Vibeke Hermanrud

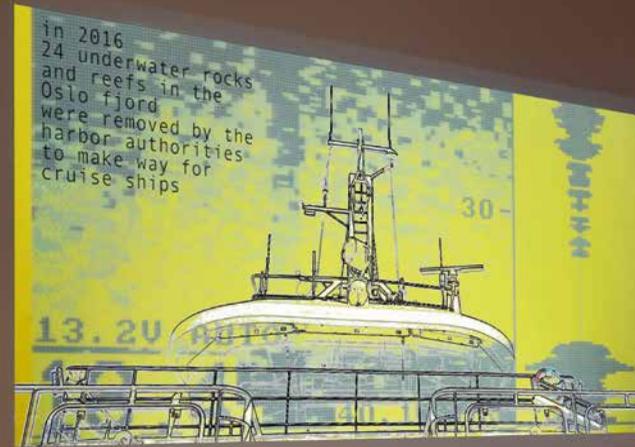
“My mother told me that as a kid, she just put me in the kitchen sink, and I would play with water and everything got wet, but I was happy,” **Kristin Bergaust** tells us with her warm sense of humor. Her relationship with water goes way back to her early days as an art student, and the ecology perspective is particularly important to her. She started to work seriously with this topic around 2008, when she was part of forming an international network called Renewable Futures. Since then this network has been making conference series, publications, exhibitions, field trips, and various activities.

Since 2015 Kristin has been working on a transdisciplinary artistic research project titled The Oslofjord Ecologies, which is also part of this Renewable Futures network. The group started up asking themselves the unsolvable question: “What can art do?”, and then they reformulated it to: “How does art do (something)?”. Through artistic research, they found that the essence is in the process and their ability to practically act and learn through artistic sensibility. Layers of interpretations are surfacing and coming into action. This is what art can do: it can give room for collaboration across various fields, and new questions and ways of thinking arise. Artistic practice and artistic sensibility can therefore open up new portals, so the question is what you decide to bring when going through it.

Through artistic research Kristin and a group of interdisciplinary practitioners used the Oslofjord as a base for testing and doing in practice. For the exhibition at Kunstplass Kristin has edited a new version of the video “Oslofjord Ecologies Expedition” consisting of two chapters. One chapter is an animation titled “CRUISE”, which is about how the harbor authorities with rough methods removed parts of the bottom of the sea in 2015 to give more space to large cruise ships entering Oslo. In this process the breeding grounds for cod were severely harmed. The population of cod has decreased drastically since then. The reasons may be manifold. Since June 2019, the directorate of fisheries has put in protective measures and it is now forbidden to fish for cod in the Oslo Fjord.

Kristin is a pioneer in early media art. She has a long practice as an artist, researcher, curator and educator, and she is a professor at Oslo Met belonging to the Faculty of Technology, Art and Design.

www.bergaustvideo.net // kristinbergaust.no



Elly Stormer Vadseth's artistic practice circulates around water, nature and ecology. Since the autumn of 2019 she has explored submerged ecologies, watery temporality and interspecies relationships in the Oslofjord performing with other bodies of water on, through and below the fjords surface. After encountering a gelatinous mass of jellyfish in the inner Oslofjord, where she currently lives and works, she started an art project working with *Cyanea Capillata*, a type of jellyfish native to Norwegian seas. She draws inspiration from post-human dance/ choreography, Sci-Fi aesthetics, temporality, bio-entangled technology and hydrofeminism.

Elly is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher currently based on Nærnes, a peninsula in the Oslofjord. She has a background in new media and performance/choreography from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston. When returning to Norway after half a decade studying and working in the USA, she discovered several uncanny changes in the Oslofjord where she grew up. The cod is almost gone, mussels are disappearing, and nearly invisible sea walnuts are drifting in, multiplying in increasing numbers, changing the fjords' bodily feel and ecological constellations. She looked at the narratives being told and believed it lacked nuances. In her art practice she wants to look at the deeper roots about why this is happening, and the human interruption.

“In the video 'Sensate Drifter(s)' I explore corporeal inter(actions), human and more than human watery choreographies, protection and interspecies vulnerability”, Elly tells me. She has for a while now been working with jellyfish in the Oslofjord with an interest in their embodied intelligence and survival choreographies. She is interested in their resilience over the course of many million years of climate changes and predicted increase in future oceanic constellations.

A central question in her project is “what we might remember or learn about our own bodies and connection to other organisms through more intimate encounters with other beings such as the jellyfish?” These enigmatic creatures are drifting across borders and fluctuating in numbers in mysterious ways. Limited research has been conducted within marine biology, as they until now have in many oceanic systems been believed to have little to offer humans in terms of resources, but a sting. However, this is changing as jellyfish have been observed in increasing numbers worldwide and is by several scientists connected to changing ecologies and negative feedback loops.

The beautiful suit Elly is wearing is made in collaboration with bio scientist and textile artist Lilly Alice Steffensen. Unlike a traditional wetsuit, it is loose fitting, functioning as a second skin and partial protection from the nestle threads of the lion's mane jellyfish.

The robotic jellyfish that appear are found footage of robots developed to clean up oil spills or surveil oceans. In the piece the performer is drifting through the scenes with its own agency and with the waters that surround her, commenting on the problematics of how the human body is relating and adrift in current ecological constellations, and the potentialities of what it might become in the future.

www.esvkunst.com

*Still image from the video Sensate Drifter(s)
by Elly Stormer Vadseth (2020)
Supported by Norwegian Visual Artists Fund*





Tanja Thorjussen's tender care and respect for all creatures in nature and our common earth is reflected in her art practice. She attentively explores the existential and metaphysical realm betwixt and between space, state and time, as she works in the intersection between drawing, performance, land art and site-specific installations.

At Kunstplass Tanja exhibits artwork inspired by the Tupilaq, which is a creature in Inuit and Greenland folklore and mythology. A Tupilaq traditionally takes the form of an amulet or object created by a shaman from parts of an animal or plant into creatures with the spell and intention from its creator. A Tupilaq can be a protection or hold an avenging message usually only visible to the shaman, however its spell can be sensed by anybody.

After these Tupilaqs, Tanja has made a series of complex multispecies drawings and simple sculptural objects of rocks, corals, driftwood, and other organic matter. She wishes to meditate on and investigate the shamanistic bond between animal, nature and human. She explains to me that her Tupilaqs has a spell with the intention to give love and protection to these living beings and the ecosystem in which they belong, instead of symbolizing a vengeful curse.

At Kunstplass Tanja furthermore exhibits a new series of aquarelles titled Thalassa - the sea goddess in Greek mythology. The sequence of seven are representing the seven oceanic bodies of water, and they are titled "Thalassa of the seven seas - Nanshe, Danu, Mazu, Nàmaka, Sedna, Nehalennia, Mami Wata". Tanja and her sea goddesses are insisting on the need for people to wake up and take action to save the environment and the oceans.

Tanja Thorjussen is educated in fine arts from Bergen Academy of Art and Design and Parsons The New School in New York, and she studied curatorial work at Telemark University College. Parallel with her own artistic practice in drawing, which is very intimate, she enjoys being involved in collaborative projects. She calls this work for "tentacular research". She created Studio Toad together with her husband Don Lawrence, and they work in the interface between architecture, performances and land art. LOCUS is another such initiative that she started all the way back in 2006 with Thale Fastvold. LOCUS has become a well-known curatorial and artistic team highlighting "Art as sanctuary and catalyst in a time of environmental change".

Diptych: "Tupilaq Bali I and II". Pedestal: "Tupilaq Relic nr 4" (found materials: stones from Lofoten, crab shell from Finnmark, and coral)

www.tanjathorjussen.com

Tanja Thorjussen, "Thalassa of the seven seas - Nanshe, Danu, Mazu, Nàmaka, Sedna, Nehalennia, Mami Wata" (2020)





One sunny day:

Hydrofeminist Gathering at Kunstplass and in the Oslofjord

The first phase of this curatorial project took place on a sunny day in August at Kunstplass and in the Oslofjord together with an interdisciplinary group of artists. This was a starting point to explore, learn and analyse art practices and problems. The dialogue has continued and an informal network has developed. The following participants were invited by virtue of their knowledge and interest in art, politics, feminism, the environment, ecology and water:

Kristin Bergaust, Elly Stormer Vadseth, Randi Nygård, Maja Nilsen, Tanja Thorjussen, Elin T. Sørensen and Elisabeth Eie. Along the way Linn Cecilie Ulvin was picked up and she willingly dived into the fjord on deep water. Thanks to Joanna Joanna Chia-yu Lin for documenting the event and Henriette Stensdal for helping out with the logistics. Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris, joined us digitally during the first session. During that one sunny day we only had time to take a brief glimpse into each person's broad-ranging and interdisciplinary work and driving force.

Session I: We are all bodies of water

Introduction / Get to know each other / conversation about hydrofeminism: Everybody shared some info about their experience and passion for water and ecology, and how it has impacted their artistic backgrounds. Elisabeth was present as a mentor, feminist and gestalt therapist. Bronwyn gave a presentation about her PhD, curatorial practice and Precipitational Learning in the Hydrocene. She explained that "these terms conceptualise the potential for watery ways of learning. That is the learning that takes place in constant movement and flux between co-learners in a vital and vibrant setting."

Session II: Performative event on a boat

Shortly after we had left shore in Bjørvika the houseboat headed calmly out in the Oslofjord. The group was then made to listen attentively to a 20 minutes long sound piece "Wherever The Ocean Takes Me" by Maja Nilsen. It is an intuitive and surrealistic story about a person traveling alone on a boat. The group and the boat became in integral part of this performative, poetic and dream-like journey. At the end of the sound piece, just as we were about to reach our destination close to Gressholmen, the main character dissolves and becomes one with the ocean. This performative

event became nearly meditative as we drifted in and out of the poem and our presence at the fjord.

Session III: Multisensory Observation / Submerging bodies in water

When arriving at Gressholmen we found a quiet bay close to the shore, where we could explore the intertidal landscape. Elin T. Sørensen guided us in this session, as we submerged into water encouraging us to study the non-human organisms that we encountered on our way.

Session IV: Art flow conversation

When we had ascended into the boat again, we continued to reflect on our own (art) practices, experiences and memories in light of hydrofeminism. This was an open and creative conversations about various artistic projects inspired by water.

Session V: We ended at Kunstplass with a simple dinner, more conversations and rounding off.



Fountain (2005) by Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore is an multidisciplinary Anishinaabe performance artist working in the intersection between art and politics. She is currently living in Toronto, Canada. She has been a dedicated artist for more than three decades. *Fountain* (2005) is a single-channel video installation projected onto falling water. This short 1 1/2 min video starts with a fire. In the next scene you see a woman (Rebecca Belmore herself) struggling to gather water into a bucket, and while doing this she is herself emerged into the sea. The water is carried on to land, and when she is getting closer to the fire she throws the water towards the flames, but it is blood. And the blood hits the camera lens – or the spectator if you like. This video has made an everlasting impression on me.

I believe “Fountain” can be seen as a metaphor for our time and life at so many levels. The artwork becomes even more relevant in these trying days with the corona, climate crises, environmental destruction, process of decolonization, and the list could go on. It makes me reflect on how hard it can be to stop a relatively simple problem – in this case to put out a fire, and the repercussions a problem can have, even when the flames have faded. The blood makes me think about struggle, conflicts and being overpowered. And maybe she is also talking about the water being colonized? No words are needed, as the plot and bodily movements are telling a multitude of stories. On Belmore’s website she writes: “The time is both now, in the industrialized landscape of North America, and in another zone, a time of creation, myth and prophecy. The element of water is represented both as a body of water in the projection and literally as a wall of falling water. Water turns to blood. As befits our times we do not know whether this is a metaphor for creation or an apocalyptic vision”.

“Just realizing that I can use my body to speak” is a quote by Rebecca Belmore that I think says a lot about her lifelong art practice. She said so in an interview given during her retrospective exhibition “Facing the Monumental” at Art Gallery of Ontario, curated by Wanda Nanabush in 2019. In this interview she explained her non-verbal performance titled “Creation or Death: We Will Win” that she did at the fourth Havana Biennial 1991 that focused on “The Challenge of Colonisation”.

Text by Vibeke Hermanrud



Photo credit: José Ramón González (production stills / installation view) from <https://www.rebeccabelmore.com/>

“The element of water is represented both as a body of water in the projection and literally as a wall of falling water. Water turns to blood.”

Rebecca Belmore

A conversation about water with Ingela Ihrman

Text by Vibeke Hermanrud

In the beginning of this year I watched a video where Swedish contemporary artist Ingela Ihrman was swimming along the seashore in Sweden with the huge Øresund bridge in the background. She was collecting seaweed to an herbarium, while she reflected upon the importance of seaweed “*Ulva intestinalis*” – also known as sea lettuce, gutweed and grass kelp, and the connection with her own intestines and stomach. In this video titled “A great seaweed day” made by artLabGnesta, she said: “I have an inner ocean in my body. My body is part of the landscape – the landscape is part of me... It is about relationships. («Jeg har et indre hav i min kropp», «Kroppen er en del av landskapet – landskapet er en del av meg.. Det handler om relasjoner.»)

Her reflections in the above mentioned video and many of Ihrmans art projects resonate with Astrid Neimanis’ ideas, as well as what I am exploring in this curatorial project. So I reached out to Ingela eager to talk to her about her art practice and relation to water, the oceans, feminism and queerness. Her is a small abstract of what Ingela Ihrman told me:

I love to swim! It is a necessity. I swim and bathe in the ocean, in bathtubs, lakes, rivers. I become playful and joyous! As many people do. I was at an artist-in residency in 2016 at Neil Island, India. It was organized by Earth CoLab & Art Lab Gnesta. It was so hot, so I ended up swimming many hours every day. I learnt to scuba dive, but it wasn’t for me, so I snorkelled. This experience became very important for my art afterwards. I found water everywhere. The border between my body and other bodies are erased. I started thinking of the inner ocean, as well as the nectar in passion flowers. I recently did a performance as giant mussel reading from my self-produced magazine in my apartment. Also linked to water. I dream about everything that is warm, humid, wonderful colours – like an aquarium. I have made an herbarium consisting of a beautiful collection of seaweed. It is like an aquarelle painting, and I cannot paint.

Several of my artworks are of large scale, as they relate to my body. You can orient yourselves in the world from various scales. You could use your hand as an entry point or architectonic scales

and large rooms, but I use my body. I am in this world with my body, not a hand. Sometimes I want to be a giant petal or a giant hogweed. I compare it to taking over a landscape.

I want to turn things upside down. I can be a landscape, and become part of something larger, and to make life into a mystery. Everything today must be rational. Understood. I insist that it (living and all life) is irreplaceable and magical. It is about not understanding and letting go.

Ingela Ihrman (1985) is a well-established artist, who moves freely between performance art, installation, video and text. She often works with concepts related to her daily surroundings, non-human life forms, landscapes and what we often refer to as Nature. In 2019 she participated in the Nordic Pavilion’s exhibition Weather Report: Forecasting Futures in the 58th Venezia Biennale.



Stillimage from “A great seaweed day”. You can see the video here:



Light—Darkness—Light

Text by Geir Harald Samuelsen, Oslo, November, 2020

“Perlemoen”¹ represents a unique encounter between contemporary art and archaeology—across time, space and continents. The working process between Elin Tanding Sørensen (Norway) and Petro Cecilia Keene (South Africa), has been one-of-a-kind: Elin, who this spring was deeply buried in her Ph.D. study, discovers the amazing history and aesthetic qualities of the marine snail abalone (*Haliotidae*), and comes up with an idea for a video. However, this is an artwork difficult to realize without being able to interact with the shell in its natural habitat along the rocky shore of South Africa’s marine shoreline. Archaeologist, Petro, sitting in her house in Cape Town close to Smitswinkel Bay, was likewise deeply engaged in the writing of a paper on Anthropomorphism. Both were confined to their homes due to the Corona pandemic. Both were taking part in the artistic research project “Matter, Gesture and Soul,” affiliated to the University of Bergen. Elin contacted Petro, and over a period of a few months, they developed *Perlemoen*, a video of intertwined and hypnotic images of the abalone shell, accompanied by a textual reflection on the shell’s significance both spiritually, artistically and ecologically, as described by archaeologists studying early human relationship to nature and the development of a material culture.

“Abalone shells connect us emotionally to our ancient distant past”

The opening sentence of their joint text “*Perlemoen*,” sets the tone for the work’s expressive ambition and perspective. The creative process is significant and becomes metaphorical: Petro’s photographs of the shell’s lustrous interior travel through the digital darkness, from the beach in Smitswinkel Bay to Elin’s laptop at Nesodden. Much like the remarkable find of ancient

¹In South Africa, the shell is called *perlemoen*, after the Dutch name *paarlemoer* which means “mother of pearl.” In Latin, the marine snail is called *Haliotis midae*. It is one of five native South African abalone or ear snail species. *Perlemoen* is the country’s national shell. Ear snail shells have been found in the Blombos excavation led by archaeologists Christopher Henshilwood and Francesco d’Errico, Center for Early Sapiens Behavior (*SapienCE*) Center for Outstanding Research at the University of Bergen.



*Two Abalone washed up on the beach in Smitswinkel Bay, South Africa.
Photo by Petro C. Keene 2020.*

abalone shells—excavated at Blombos Cave in South Africa—have been travelling from the hands of our ancestors, who used them as containers for ochreous pigment compounds, to the researcher’s examining gaze under a microscope. A journey of 100,000 years through several layers of soil all the way to the museum’s illuminated display cabinets and the researcher’s laboratories. This is a movement from light via buried earthly darkness and back to light again.

Presumably, our ancestors were captivated by the suggestive radiance and beauty of the shells and their mysterious aura. Perhaps they looked into the future, towards our reality? When we study the shell today, we are transported back in time towards an obscured reality: as if the past can be glimpsed through a fog arising from the play of iridescent colors, which in themselves form abstract landscapes and worlds. No wonder, the shells have played a role as regalia in rituals through time. So, if we metaphorically turn our gaze 180 degrees, maybe we too can grasp our future selves in the shell’s shiny mother of pearl—through yet another time travel like the imaginative journey our ancestors made 100,000 years ago. Their way of life and thinking will forever remain hidden. Nevertheless, perhaps the mesmerizing shells can be perceived as carriers of signals, like a loudspeaker membrane, converting weak signals from a future that resonate with our souls.

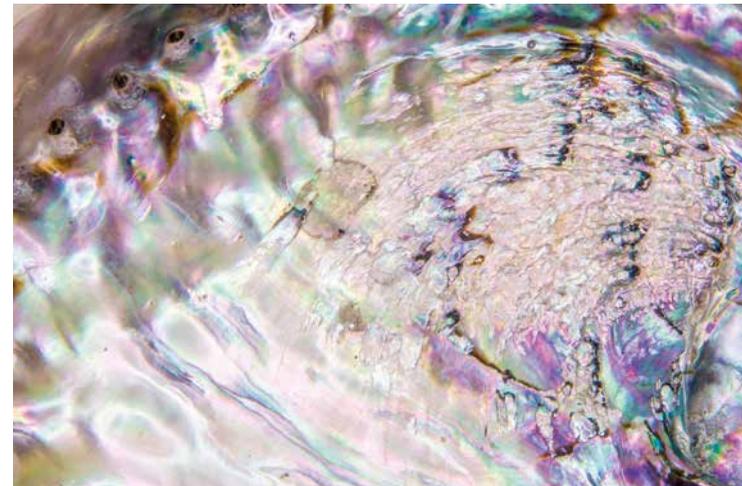
At the time of writing, the artistic research project “Matter, Gesture and Soul” has been running for just over a year. It originated from an intense encounter with Stone Age rock art in the Fontainebleau forest, close to Paris. From this point onward, the project has expanded to include collaborations and co-creation with artists- and archaeologists from South Africa, Romania and Belgium, among other countries. The project aims to use art as a context for forming new ties—and hence allowing for creative expression to merge at the intersection of contemporary art and archaeology. One might say that it is the encounter, in the broadest sense of the word, that constitutes the core of the project. The encounters between people, perspectives and horizons, disciplines and different forms of consciousness and materiality.

Examining a lustrous abalone shell, or sitting in front of abstract engravings made by early humans, like the ones in the Fontainebleau forest, is both mind-expanding and a profound

experience—as the artwork “Perlemoen” reflects. Going forward, we will keep searching for new meeting points: new encounters within art and history, between people, matter and culture. Hopefully we may learn more about the art of capturing ancient signals that might lead us towards a better future. Strengthening our presence in an effort to approach and convey their meaning and bringing them to life—possibly incorporating this wisdom from the past into our contemporary life and sensibilities.

The artwork “Perlemoen” was conceived and has been realized in co-creation between archaeologist Petro Keene and artist/landscape architect Elin T. Sørensen. The shells were photographed on location by Petro Keene and Mark Callanan at Smitwinkel Bay during the summer of 2020. Concept and animation by Elin T. Sørensen. Editing by Jon Gorospe. Sørensen © BONO 2020.

“Perlemoen” was initially created for the virtual exhibition “Body, Memory and Repetition” in connection with the European Association of Archaeology conference 2020. In addition to being shown in the exhibition Submerged Portal at Kunstpluss Contemporary Art [Oslo] December 2020 to January 2021, the video will be screened in the exhibition Matter, Gesture and Soul at the Natural History Museum in Bergen June-September 2021.





Bente Sommerfeldt-Colberg: «Troubled Water» (2016)

This art piece was exhibited at Kunstplass' Human Rights/Human Wrong exhibition in 2016.

Under the glass bowl is a magnet making tiny waves in the water. The continents are made of thin golden leaves floating freely around. Bente Sommerfeldt-Colberg is appealing to our recognition, and at the same time opening up for new interpretations. The contradiction in her works can give you a sense of unease and ambivalence.

“Troubled Water” was also the title of the exhibition, and was furthermore a witness and reminder about ordinary people's life and struggle to survive in war zones and as refugees.

Two Ming Ming Shi Tou 石头 (China)

At Kulturhuset and Kunstplass Shi Tou exhibited “Two Ming Ming” in part II of the trilogy Qui Vive in 2019. This picture serves as documentation of Shi Tou and her partner Ming Ming's own lives, encounters, feelings, and dedication. The works contain (in)direct comments on (eco)feminism, LGBTI issues, over-consumption, environmental protection, social control and lack of freedom of expression. Shi Tou (China b. 1969) is a leading and renowned contemporary artist living in China, who graduated from Guizhou Art Academy in 1988.





Vatnajökull (the sound of) 2007–08

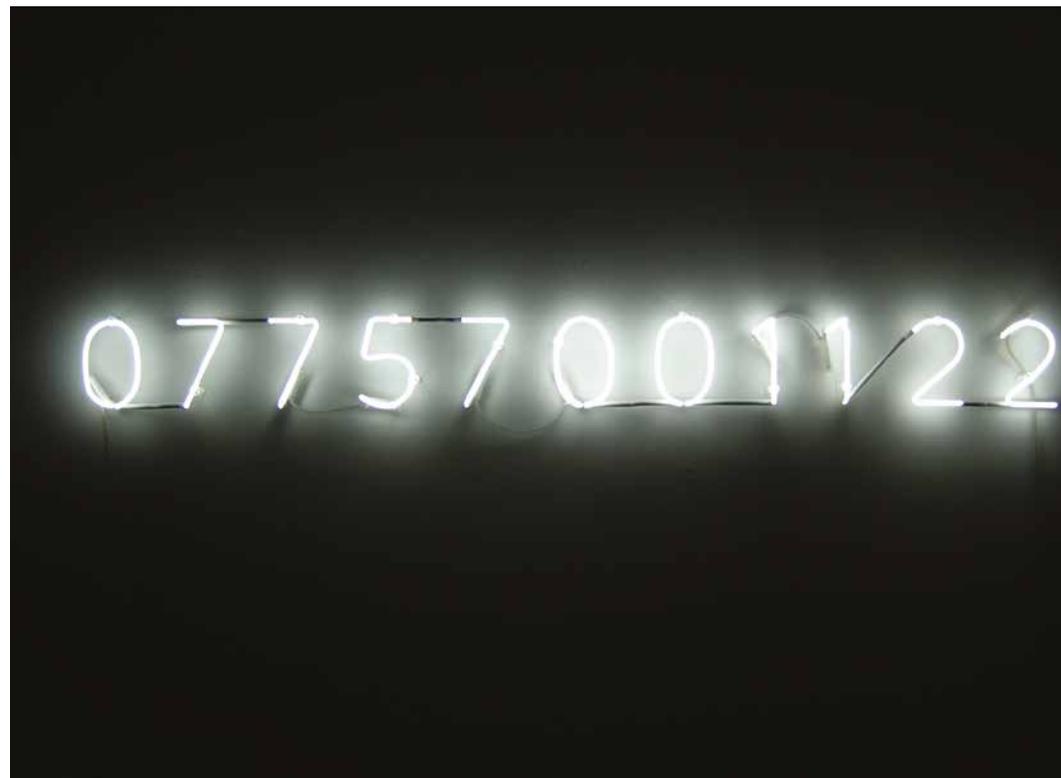
by Katie Paterson

A live phone line was created to an Icelandic glacier, via an underwater microphone submerged in Jökulsárlón lagoon, an outlet of Vatnajökull.

The number 07757001122 could be called from any telephone in the world, and the listener would hear the sound of the glacier melting.

For more information about Scottish artist Katie Paterson's mindblowing artworks, check out <http://katiepaterson.org/>

*Katie Paterson, Vatnajökull (the sound of),
2007/8 Photo © Katie Paterson, 2007*



*Katie Paterson, Vatnajökull (the sound of), 2007/8 Photo
© Katie Paterson, 2008 Installation view Modern Art Oxford*

Rise

by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna

Sister of ice and snow
I'm coming to you
from the land of my ancestors,
from atolls, sunken volcanoes—undersea descent
of sleeping giants

Sister of ocean and sand,
I welcome you
to the land of my ancestors
—to the land where they sacrificed their lives
to make mine possible
—to the land
of survivors.

I'm coming to you
from the land my ancestors chose.
Aelon Kein Ad,
Marshall Islands,
a country more sea than land.
I welcome you to Kalaallit Nunaat,
Greenland,
the biggest island on earth.

Sister of ice and snow,
I bring with me these shells
that I picked from the shores
of Bikini atoll and Runit Dome
Sister of ocean and sand,
I hold these stones
picked from the shores of Nuuk,

the foundation of the land I call my home.

With these shells I bring a story of long ago
two sisters frozen in time on the island of
Ujae,
one magically turned into stone
the other who chose that life
to be rooted by her sister's side.
To this day, the two sisters
can be seen by the edge of the reef,
a lesson in permanence.

With these rocks I bring
a story told countless times
a story about Sassuma Arnaa, Mother of the
Sea,
who lives in a cave at the bottom of the
ocean.

This is a story about
the guardian of the Sea.
She sees the greed in our hearts,
the disrespect in our eyes.
Every whale, every stream,
every iceberg
are her children.

When we disrespect them
she gives us what we deserve,
a lesson in respect.

Do we deserve the melting ice?
the hungry polar bears coming to our islands

or the colossal icebergs hitting these waters
with rage
Do we deserve
their mother,
coming for our homes
for our lives?

From one island to another
I ask for solutions.
From one island to another
I ask for your problems

Let me show you the tide
that comes for us faster
than we'd like to admit.
Let me show you
airports underwater
bulldozed reefs, blasted sands
and plans to build new atolls
forcing land
from an ancient, rising sea,
forcing us to imagine
turning ourselves to stone.

Sister of ocean and sand,
Can you see our glaciers groaning
with the weight of the world's heat?
I wait for you, here,
on the land of my ancestors
heart heavy with a thirst
for solutions
as I watch this land
change

while the World remains silent.

Sister of ice and snow,
I come to you now in grief
mourning landscapes
that are always forced to change

first through wars inflicted on us
then through nuclear waste
dumped
in our waters
on our ice
and now this.

Sister of ocean and sand,
I offer you these rocks,
the foundation of my home.
On our journey
may the same unshakable foundation
connect us,
make us stronger,
than the colonizing monsters
that to this day devour our lives
for their pleasure.
The very same beasts
that now decide,
who should live
who should die.

Sister of ice and snow,
I offer you this shell
and the story of the two sisters
as testament

as declaration
that despite everything
we will not leave.
Instead
we will choose stone.
We will choose
to be rooted in this reef
forever.

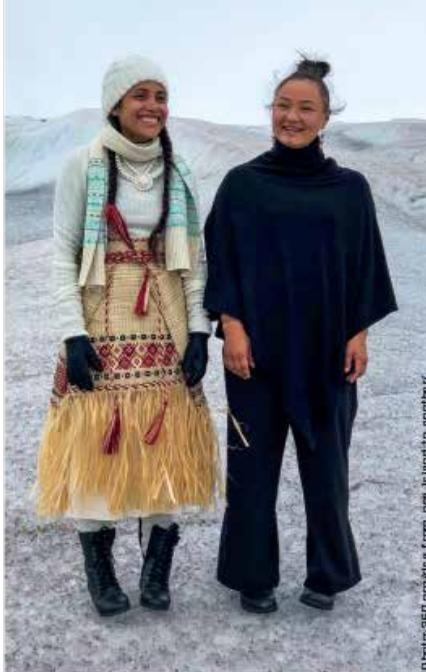
From these islands
we ask for solutions.
From these islands

we ask
we demand that the world see beyond
SUV's, ac's, their pre-packaged convenience
their oil-slicked dreams, beyond the belief
that tomorrow will never happen, that this
is merely an inconvenient truth.
Let me bring my home to yours.
Let's watch as Miami, New York,
Shanghai, Amsterdam, London,
Rio de Janeiro, and Osaka
try to breathe underwater.
You think you have decades
before your homes fall beneath tides?
We have years.
We have months
before you sacrifice us again
before you watch from your tv and computer
screens waiting
to see if we will still be breathing
while you do nothing. My sister,

From one island to another
I give to you these rocks
as a reminder
that our lives matter more than their power
that life in all forms demands
the same respect we all give to money
that these issues affect each and everyone of
us
None of us is immune
And that each and everyone of us has to
decide
if we
will
rise



*Poem, video and photos:
350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/*



You can watch this poem as an expedition between two islanders, one from the Marshall Islands and one from Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland), connecting their realities of melting glaciers and rising sea levels. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna use their poetry to showcase the linkages between their homelands in the face of climate change.

Through this video by Dan Lin (Hawaii) we get a glimpse at how large, and yet so small and interdependent our world is. The science behind climate change and its causes has been clear for decades. And yet, it has not been enough to drive the change we need to see in order to salvage our planet. We hope this poem can spark the emotion and drive needed for more people to rise and take action. This is an invitation to take a few minutes to watch this film, unplug from your daily distractions, immerse yourself in the beauty of our shared home, and let the poetry heal.

Kunstplass showed this video as part of the exhibition trilogy "Qui Vive" in 2019.



I find myself submerged deep down in the sea.

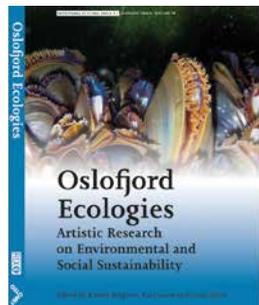
When swimming through a forest of corals, I see squid mating, shoals of barracudas, a group of clownfish, a lonesome turtle, and sunbeams from above.

But then I see that the bottom is shattered with small, dead fish, turning white as they have started to decay.

A sudden bang hits my head, heart and makes my body shiver.

After a safe ascent to the surface, I learn that we had just experienced dynamite fishing happening a few kilometres away, and that we had witnessed the aftermath of a previous explosion.

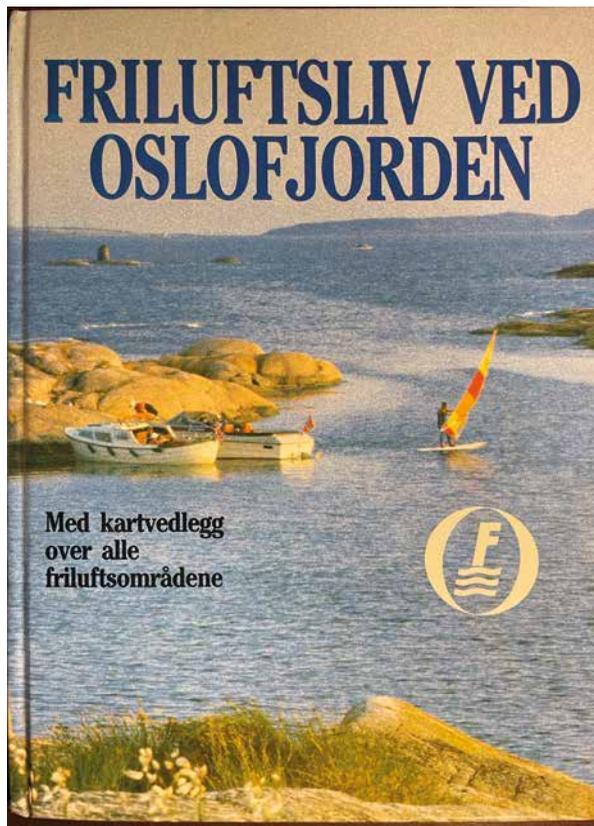
Mating squid in Andaman Sea, Myanmar (2018)
Photo/text Vibeke Hermanrud



The articles and visual representations in this book are attempts to communicate our experiences and develop questions and concerns following our engagement with Oslofjord Ecologies. The contributors are artists who have presented ideas and developed works in the project exhibitions and activities, as well as authors engaged in transdisciplinary discussions on art and ecology.

Authors of the research papers: Venke Aure, Kristin Bergaust, Boel Christensen-Scheel, Tona Gulpinar and Anneke von der Fehr, Helene Illeris, Sabine Popp, Merete Røstad, Elin T. Sørensen, Gunhild Vatn, Nina Vestby. The album visually presents the Oslofjord Ecologies exhibitions, performances and activities by participating artists.

ISBN 978-9934-8434-8-8
Open Access Publication
PDF file for free downloading here:



Med kartvedlegg
over alle
friluftsområdene



Fjord med alt. Oslofjord Ecologies

Tekst av Kristin Bergaust

Det var en augustkveld i 2014 eller kanskje 2015. Etter en bursdagsfeiring i en bakgård på Grønland tok jeg farvel for å rekke Nesoddbåten. Bursdagsbarnet stakk til meg en bok hun mente kunne passe på reisen: Friluftsliv ved Oslofjorden. Med kartvedlegg over alle friluftsområdene. Den fine lille boka med stive permer og fargerikt fjordbilde på omslaget, var redigert av Georg Parmann, utgitt i 1983 av Schibsted i anledning 50-års jubileet til Oslofjordens Friluftsråd. Ombord på båten hjem åpnet jeg boka, og alt som finns i Oslofjorden strømmet ut, støttet av helt riktig dosert Cava-servering fra bursdagen. Jeg så 1980-tallets «Kulturen lever» på Aker Brygge» erstatte sveiseflammene på Akers Mek der båten la til da jeg var ung student. Jeg zoomet inn utbyggingen av Bjørvika og Sørenga på vei ut fjorden. Tjuvholmen og Filipstad er godt synlig til venstre på de daglige morgenreisene til byen i mitt voksne liv på ferga. Ut i fjorden til alle de særpregede øyene og historiene om folkene som slo seg ned der gjennom århundrene. Munker i middelalderen på Hovedøya, arbeidere og håndverkere på begynnelsen av 1900-tallet på Nakholmen, Gressholmen og Lindholmen. Se fuglene på skjæret, den spesielle geologien og de tørre, strittende strandplantene som lukter så godt. Smådyra langsmed 14 fots plastbåt som dupper ved skjæret, rur, sjøstjerner, maneter, småfisk i tangen. Morild lyser opp her, ikke bare på Sørlandet. Tang, tare, ting i vannet. Plast, sko, støvler, annet søppel, mista fiskeredsaker. Fiske vi fiska før, blåskjellene vi ikke finner mer, stillehavstøstern som skjærer i føttene, torsken som er borte og forbudt å fiske om vi ser den. Svømme fra en gul badebøye til den neste med datteren min og en flokk unger til vi har svømt rundt hele avgrensingen av badeplassen og tilbake. Været, vinden og lyset over fjorden. Tilbake til barndommens Oslofjord, i Hvervenbukta med mamma, søsteren min, broren min som er baby i fjæra og de andre barna og mødrene deres. Nabodamene våre med filtersigaretter, permanentkrøller og bikini. Ikke bad der kloakken kommer ut, gå litt lenger vekk, roper mamma på 1960-tallet mange år før Bekkelaget rensestasjon ble etablert. Vi lever med fjorden, alltid i tilpasning.

Ikke noe av dette sto i Friluftsliv ved Oslofjorden. Med kartvedlegg over alle friluftsområdene, men den viste meg det opplagte. Oslofjorden har alt, den er min greie, og det er jeg ikke alene om. Cathrine Constance Gjelsnes var bursdagsbarnet som lånte meg boka hun fortsatt ikke har fått tilbake, jeg er jo ikke ferdig med den. Takk Constance!

THE WAVES, BY VIRGINIA WOOLF (1931)

The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.

As they neared the shore each bar rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. Gradually the dark bar on the horizon became clear as if the sediment in an old wine-bottle has sunk and left the glass green. Behind it, too, the sky cleared as if the white sediment there had sunk, or as if the arm of a woman couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow spread across the sky like the blades of a fan. Then she raised her lamp higher and the air seemed to become fibrous and to tear away from the green surface flickering and flaming in red and yellow fibres like the smoky fire that roars from a bonfire. Gradually the fibres of the burning bonfire were fused into one haze, one incandescence which lifted the weight of the woollen grey sky on top of it and turned it to a million atoms of soft blue. The surface of the sea slowly became transparent and lay rippling and sparkling until the dark stripes were almost rubbed out. Slowly the arm that held the lamp raised it higher and then higher until a broad flame became visible; an arc of fire burnt on the rim of the horizon, and all round it the sea blazed gold.

Copy of the first page of "The Waves"

A small personal anecdote: This text was read by Elizabeth Sellevold at Henriette Stensdal and my wedding ceremony at Nordic Black Theatre in 2013. 

INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES AND ...

"My body - like yours - primarily comprises water. My existence as a body of water is a biological fact, but living my embodiment as watery - embedded in a world that I share with other human, animal, vegetable, geophysical and meteorological bodies that also comprise water - has other implications as well. We are all bodies of water."

"I propose that reimagining oneself as a 'body of water' opens possibilities for a posthumanist feminism that specifically addresses the need to cultivate more ecologically responsible relations to water."
Astrida Neimanis, Page 24, feminist review no 103 / "Water" (2013)

"Watershed pollution, a theory of embodiment, amniotic becomings, disaster, environmental colonialism, how to write, global capital, nutrition, philosophy, birth, rain, animal ethics, evolutionary biology, death, storytelling, bottled water, multinational pharmaceutical corporations, drowning, poetry. These are all feminist questions and they are mostly inextricable from one another."
Astrida Neimanis, page 95, chapter 6 in Undutiful Daughters (2013)

"Living ecologically demands more attention to difference" (p.15) "Again, as bodies of water, 'we' are all in this together (Braidotti 2002), but 'we are not all the same, nor are we all 'in this' in the same way."
Astrida Neimanis, page 15, "Bodies of Water" (2017)

"Whatever it is, coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves. Nothing could be worse than a return to normality."
Arundhati Roy, The Pandemic is a Portal, April 3 2020 Financial Times

"Without community, there is no liberation...but community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretence that these differences do not exist."

Audry Lorde (1934-1992)

"All writing is political. All actions are political" *TV interview - Susan Sontag (1933-2004)*

“Art challenges my reality and how I look upon the world,” Marianne Hultman (2020)

... Maura Reilly’s definition “...‘curatorial activist’ - is a term I use to describe people who have dedicated their curatorial endeavours almost exclusively to visual culture in, of, and from the margins: that is, to artist who are non-white, non-Euro-US, as well as women-, feminist- and queer-identified”.

Reilly, page 22, Curatorial Activism (2019)

Some definitions from the book “Great Women Artists” 2019:

“POLITICAL ART. Broad term to describe art where the maker’s intention is to highlight or critique political, social or ideological systems in the wider world, particularly in relation to issues of power, economics, inequality and injustice.”

FEMINIST ART. Feminist rejects the notion that a heterosexual, white, male view of the world is a universal one and seeks equality. The term “feminist art” has roots in the women artists’ fight for increased visibility since the early twentieth century. Feminist theorists and art historians have also challenged the orthodoxies of the mainstream canon of art history and initiated research into overlooked female artists.

QUEER ART. Term used for art that represents issues relating to queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-) identities. The term evolved out of the gender and identity politics of the 1980s and refers to art that takes alternative sexuality as its subject, including historic works made at a time when sexual fluidity was considered deviant.”

Examples of political, feminist and/or queer exhibitions at Kunstplass: Victor Lind (2019), annual Human Rights/ Human Wrongs Film festival exhibitions (2012-2020), annual Oslo World Music Festival exhibitions (2018-2020), Jannik Abel and Margreta Stølen In Borderland («I grenseland»), 2012, Zanele Muholi (2013, 2015, 2016), annual queer exhibitions 2012-2020, and Ahmed Umar “Carrying The Face Of Ugliness.”

Special thanks to

// to all the artists in this exhibition for their important contribution and for letting Kunstplass show their amazing art work, and also to Linn Cecilie Ulvin, Maja Nilsen, Kjersti Vetterstad and Elisabeth Eie for inspirational inputs on 12 Aug;

// professor Anne Szefer Karlsen, for directing me in this process;

// external tutor Bronwyn Jean Bailey-Charteris for important and inspiring advise;

// fellow students and friends Ben Hampe, Kathy-Ann Tan, Daniela Ramos Arias, Kristina Melbø Valvik, Ditte Knus Tønnesen, Lèna Szirmay-Kalos, Dina Syafiatudina Saja, Izabella Borzecka and Ryan! Feddersen for important conversations and fun times. A special thanks to Lèna for showing me the exhibition Web of Wet at Trafo gallery in Budapest;

// friend and colleague Joanna Chia-yu Lin for filming the hydrofeminist gathering on 12 Aug and transcribing parts of it;

// friend and Kunstplass’ “ambassador” Sidsel Aas for proof reading;

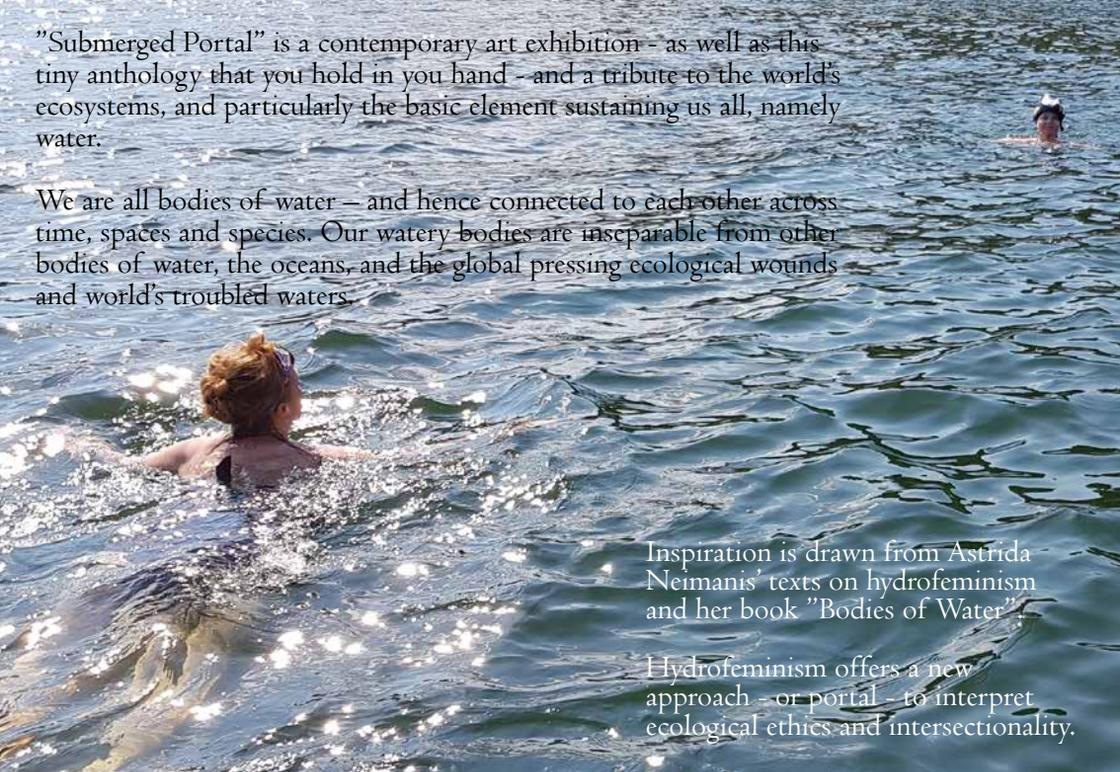
// my mother for encouragement along the way;

// my dearest life partner Henriette Stensdal for her love and technical support.

Editor/design: Vibeke Hermanrud
2nd edition: 20 ex, January 2021
Paper: Cover: SVA/Papir Scandia 2000 White SRA3 240 g. Inside: SVA/Papir Scandia 2000 White SRA3 115 g
Fonts: Centaur (front page and body text) and Candara (headings)

Photo credits: Images of the artworks and exhibition Submerged Portal are taken by Vibeke Hermanrud if nothing else has been mentioned, so are the underwater images from 12 August outside Gressholmen in the Oslofjord.

Vibeke Hermanrud (1971) is a curator, cultural producer, communicator, activist and feminist, with an interdisciplinary educational and professional background. In 2012 she established Kunstplass together with Henriette Stensdal as a venue for contemporary art with a political and feminist undertone. She is currently in her 2nd and last year of a MA in Curatorial Practice at the Art Academy (KMD), University of Bergen. This exhibition and catalogue is part of her curatorial MA project. She has previously a BA in fine arts and economics from New York, and she holds a MSc in Management of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Tropical Areas from NBMU. She left international development



“Submerged Portal” is a contemporary art exhibition - as well as this tiny anthology that you hold in you hand - and a tribute to the world's ecosystems, and particularly the basic element sustaining us all, namely water.

We are all bodies of water – and hence connected to each other across time, spaces and species. Our watery bodies are inseparable from other bodies of water, the oceans, and the global pressing ecological wounds and world's troubled waters.

Inspiration is drawn from Astrida Neimanis' texts on hydrofeminism and her book “Bodies of Water”.

Hydrofeminism offers a new approach - or portal - to interpret ecological ethics and intersectionality.



KUNSTPLASS
contemporary art [OSLO]



kunstklass5



kunstklass10



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