

Artistic Research Grown Wild

What can we learn from unpredictable, living and local processes that resist control; from forests and more-than-human relations to the agency of materials, tidal rhythms, bodily presence and encounters with urban wildlife? In a time marked by precarious living conditions for all species and ecosystems, the need to develop new forms of attention, community, care and coexistence feels more urgent than ever.

As our ways of living change, so do our senses. For instance, the human sense of smell has developed in interaction with ways of living, environment and diet, and our ability to detect specific smells, such as wet soil, have weakened as it is no longer essential to our survival. What we no longer need to smell, read or recognise in our surroundings, we may also lose the language for.¹

Under the title *ReWilding*, the four newly graduated artists Annamária Zemková, Marie E. Preston, Sigurd Fiske Hokstad and Erlend Elvesveen present individual projects that, together, explore possible forms of coexistence across species, materials, technologies and ecological processes. Through sensory, site-sensitive and material-based investigations, they ask what forms of attention can be recovered, and what new languages can be developed, when artistic practice moves away from control, order and fixed outcomes.

Rewilding is often understood as an ecological practice: a way of allowing landscapes and ecosystems to regenerate through less human control. Here, the term is extended to artistic research as a practice of following rather than mastering – of working with materials, environments and relations as they unfold.

In *Forest for the Trees*, Marie E. Preston creates a sensory forest landscape: a diorama built from foraged natural materials, hand-drawn illustrations, painted nightscapes on textile and cardboard sculptures. The project begins with a simple, playful gesture: making a small tree from recycled paper materials, bringing it into the forest, and photographing it together with a living tree. The tree that became paper becomes a tree among trees once again. This modest act becomes a method for rediscovering the immediate landscape, sharing stories and building relationships – between people, and between humans and nature. Preston invites us to slow down, encounter the forest as a living community of organisms, and take part in the gesture by bringing our own tree out into the wild.

Annamária Zemková's *Metamorphosis of Home* explores the relationship between humans and other species, with the pigeon as a central symbolic figure. Through drawing, poetry, walking and interventions in public space, Zemková follows the pigeon as an image of instability, displacement, adaptation and survival. Hand-drawn, often distorted bird figures are paired with poetic text fragments and pasted as posters along roads, in small towns and on urban surfaces. The work exists temporarily and exposed – vulnerable to weather, chance encounters, damage or removal. In this way, the project asks how to create empathy for animals often perceived as unwanted, while opening up reflections on human vulnerability, alienation and the search for

¹ Research article in Cell Reports: *Gene-culture coevolution shapes olfactory receptor gene diversity in Orang Asli populations.*

home. The installation becomes a hybrid meeting point between urban public space and the exhibition venue, blurring the distinction between them and allowing the two public spheres to overlap.

Sigurd Fiske Hokstad explores weaving as a material, sensory and poetic practice. Working with remnants, used textiles, found objects and waste, he allows the limitations of available materials to become an active part of the work's form and process. His works emerge in the tension between control and improvisation, craft-based precision and an open, associative working method. Hokstad also investigates the relationship between weaving, painting and the digital, connecting the structure of the loom to pixels, screens and older digital technologies, where images are built line by line. Against the rapid flow of the present, his practice insists on slowness, touch, repetition and the handmade, following the ebb and flow of the tide.

Erlend Elvesveen's sound installation *Swarmm* investigates the relationship between noise, computation, climate, labour and bodily presence. The installation is composed of swarms of computer fans, usually used to cool digital systems. Here, the fans emerge as sonic and physical traces of digital labour and technological infrastructure. The swarm system is controlled by temperature, combining the room's current temperature with historical climate data from Trondheim in 1972. The thermal gap between then and now becomes the compositional engine: the greater the divergence, the higher the frequency of change. As the audience's bodies emit heat, they become part of the installation simply by being present. In this way, *Swarmm* locates coexistence within the infrastructures that surround us – and in the residual noise of processes that were never meant to be heard.

Through materials, images, spaces, actions and situations, the four artists make complex questions tangible. They open up space for critical public conversation and create temporary communities in which new perspectives can be tested.

For the first time, Strandveien 94 is being used as a space for contemporary art. The old coal bunker from 1942 is a raw, cold and monumental industrial building, far removed from the neutral framework usually offered by the white cube. Here, the artworks encounter a space that already carries traces of labour, infrastructure, harbour activity and wartime history. Its location at Nyhavna makes the exhibition part of a larger urban landscape, where questions of place, ecology, community and urban development are already present.

Placing *ReWilding* here frames the exhibition as an artistic investigation of an area in transition, and of the role artistic perspectives can play in imagining new public spaces.

Text by Margrete Abelsen, Head of Exhibitions, Trøndelag Centre for Contemporary Art