



**GENTLE  
ACTIONS**

art  
ecology  
actions

# REPORT

KUNSTNERNES HUS  
OSLO

from 23. OKTOBER  
till 14. NOVEMBER  
2010



## REPORT

*Gentle Actions* - art, ecology, actions  
Curated by Anne Karin Jortveit and Eva  
Bakkeslett in collaboration with the director  
Maaretta Jaukkuri and the gallery Kunstnernes  
Hus.

# REPORT

## Gentle Actions - art, ecology, actions

*Gentle Actions* was a process based and interdisciplinary project focusing on art, ecology and actions curated by Anne Karin Jortveit and Eva Bakkeslett in collaboration with director Maaretta Jaukkuri and the gallery Kunstneres Hus in Oslo, Norway. It took place from the 23rd of October till the 14th of November 2010. *Gentle Actions* explored inclusive and collaborative ways of working interdisciplinary with an ecological approach to environmental issues, and finding new methods to investigate the complexity and breadth of our environmental crisis from a cultural perspective. In this way *Gentle Actions* was a living and active connector between theory and practice and between material and non-material production that created an arena for ecological thinking beyond the conventional framework. The exchange of knowledge, ideas and experience was integral to the project. *Gentle Actions* inspired people from different professions and backgrounds to connect across disciplines and boundaries and gathered people engaged in social transformation within the arts, culture, humanities, social and nature based academia together with cultural activists and an actively engaged public. It was an interactive and collaborative platform that included 10 different art-projects, dialogues and lectures, various presentations, workshops and discussions. Oslo Dokumentarkino (Oslo Documentary Cinema) curated and showed an extensive film program including 53 documentary films. The gallery Kunstneres Hus had extended opening hours throughout the project period.



There were several workshops to establish *The Artists' Garden* -the artist Katja Høst's contribution to *Gentle Actions*. This was an organic vegetable and herb garden created on the lawn in front of the gallery Kunstnernes Hus. Artist and headteacher Åsa Sonjasdotter with her students from the Art Academy in Tromsø contributed to the garden by planting potatoes.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT AND ITS STRUCTURE

*See attached program (English PDF version) about the different projects, and an overview of the many participants.*

In the summer of 2010 we established **The Artists' Garden**. This project turned into a lush and visually stimulating vegetable- and herb garden in the front of the gallery Kunstneres Hus. The garden functioned as an engaging and stimulating taster for *Gentle Actions*, with different workshops throughout the summer. The vegetables and herbs were harvested to create a meal for the opening night on the 23rd of October.

The opening weekend consisted of an international seminar on art and ecology, and related workshops the following day. Both days were fully subscribed. In the **Documentation room** the public had access to information about environmental art in an historical and contemporary context through a display curated by the art historian Nina Sundbäck-Arnes Kaasa. Important videoworks, and a comprehensive selection of literature was also available. The room was very well frequented, and the table of books with its casual seating was a popular place to hang out. In this room we chose to exhibit **The Oslo Reef** – a large, crochet coral reef collectively handmade by many different contributors. (This project was lent to and displayed by The National Academy of the Arts that mounted it for their official opening in December 2010.)

The **filmprogram** contained three films a day including several Norwegian premieres. The program was curated by **Oslo Dokumentarkino** (Oslo Documentary Cinema) and constituted of films with an engaging and critical view on environmental issues. Both the documentation room and the film room provided important and basic knowledge that supported the project as a whole. The majority of the art-projects were located on the 1st floor. All the spaces in the gallery were in use for the various parts of *Gentle Actions*.

The curators had an **open office** throughout the project period. It provided an informal meeting place for the participants and the public. Anyone could enter to ask questions or leave comments and many fruitful discussions took place here.

**Den Kulturelle Skolesekken** workshops (The Cultural Rucksack is a national programme for art and culture provided by professional artists. The programme helps school pupils to become acquainted with all kinds of professional art and cultural expressions.) were all fully subscribed with very good response from the pupils and teachers. The gallery's own scheme for children, **Minihuset**, was also very popular with several workshops throughout. **Fretex** (Salvation Army) lent us second hand furniture, cups and glasses for the project. All the items were for sale and the profit was in aid of Fretex.

## TARGETS AND KNOCK-ON EFFECTS

The response from the public and from the many participants of the different events and workshops has been very good. Our impression is that the public came from varied backgrounds and practices and came to Kunstneres Hus with a mutual interest for holistic and ecological thinking. Since the different events and exhibits offered both an intellectual as well as a more practical approach to ecological thinking there was something to attract the interest for a great variety of people.

Several groups of people who met at *Gentle Actions* will stay in contact and form independent networks. The newly started **Transition Network Norway** and networks around the **Centre for Ecological Economics and Ethics** in Bodø are good examples of this. Both curators have been contacted by several academic institutions to present the thoughts behind the project.

## **AUDIENCE**

The calculations from Kunstnernes Hus show that *Gentle Actions* was visited by around 5000 people. This number is well above most of the other exhibitions for the last ten years (except the popular annual show “Autumn Salon”). Since *Gentle Actions* only lasted for three weeks this is to be considered a very good result. .

## **COLLABORATORS AND FUNDERS**

Norsk Kulturråd // Fritt Ord // Kunstnernes Hus // Norges forskningsråd // PLAN prosjektet ved Universitetet i Oslo // Den kulturelle skolesekken // Billedkunstnernes Vederlagsfond // Mondriaan Foundation// Oslo kommune // Cultura Bank // Oslo Dokumentarkino// Senter for Økologisk Økonomi og Etikk ved Handelshøyskolen i Bodø // Nordnorsk Kunstnersenter // Nordland Fylkeskommune // Oslo og Omegn Økologiske Hagebrukslag // Bilkollektivet // Stiftelsen FLUX // Fretex

## **PRESS**

### **Radio:**

NRK Nordlandssendingen, October  
Radioorakel - Kulturrådet, 27. October  
Kulturnytt - 10. November - interview about Gentle Actions  
Kulturnytt - 15. November - interview with David Rothenberg

### **Newspapers/Magazines:**

Aftenposten, 22. June  
Avisa Nordland, 23. September  
Kunst+, 21. September  
Aftenposten, aften, 21. October  
Ny Tid, 22. October  
Kunstkritikk, omtale, 22. October  
Dagsavisen, 22. October  
D2 - Dagens Næringsliv, 22. October  
VG, 22. October  
Klassekampen, 23. October  
Vårt Land, 23. October  
Billedkunst, 26. October  
Kunstkritikk, anmeldelse 1. November  
Nasjonen, 12. November  
Pengevirke, 04/10  
7.G Sedma Generace, 06/10 (Gentle Actions had a whole article in this Czech magazine)



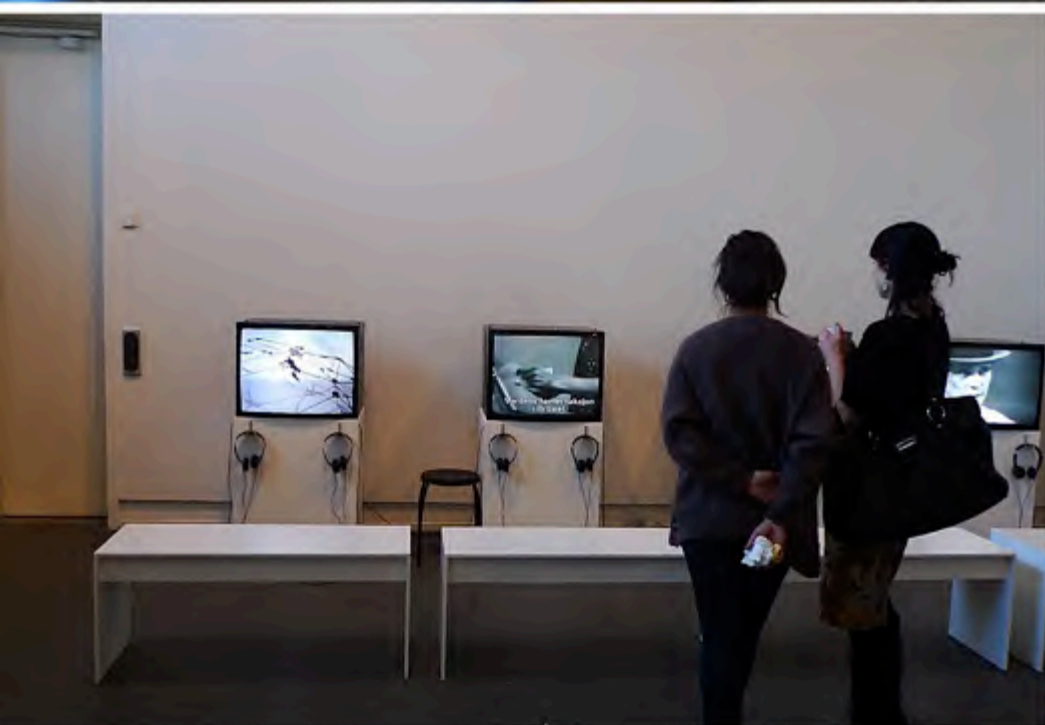
*THE ARTISTS' GARDEN* was a collaboration between landscape architect Marianne Leisner from Gaia Arkitekter and Linda Jolly, biologist, researcher and manager of Living Learning, University of Environment- and Biotechnology.



From the opening weekend *The Art of Looking Sideways - Reflections on the Art of Actions*.  
There were around 80 participants at the seminar on Saturday the 23rd October and four fully subscribed workshops on the following Sunday.



Many events took place throughout the three weeks of *Gentle Actions*. Here are two examples: The artist Runa Carlsen organized a free yoga session lead by Heather Love. Over 60 people participated. Senter for Byøkologi (Centre for Urban Ecology) in Bergen had a two day workshop: "The mobility of the every day" with a bike repair workshop on the gallery terrace.



In *THE DOCUMENTATION ROOM* we showed a comprehensive exhibit of environmental and ecologically orientated art from the 1960's till today. Through pictures, texts, books, exhibition catalogues, films and videos the public were given the opportunity to get to know more about this exciting field. Responsible for the documentation room was art historian Nina Sundbeck-Arnäs Kaasa.



*THE OSLO REEF* is a satellite of the worldwide *The Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef* created by Margaret and Christine Wertheim of the Institute for Figuring in Los Angeles in 2005 ([www.theiff.org](http://www.theiff.org)). *The Oslo Reef* was created for *Gentle Actions* through several workshops and continued to grow throughout the project. The Oslo Reef was organized by Masterstudent Aurora Passero.



OSLO DOKUMENTARKINO, (Oslo Documentary Cinema) lead by Ketil Magnussen showed 53 films during Gentle Actions. The films represented different issues related to the thematic platforms of the project. The film *Play Again* by Tonje Hessen Schei had a Norwegian premiere at the opening weekend.

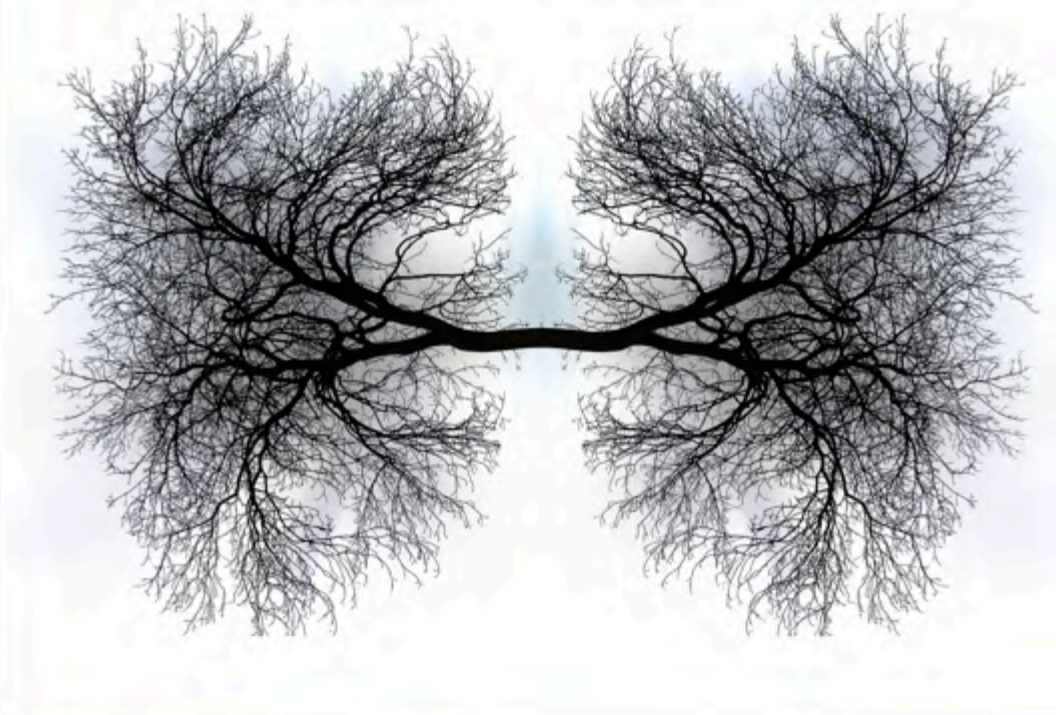


Above: *Sørfinnset skole - the nord land*, artists Søsja Jørgensen and Geir Tore Holm with guests.

Below: *INTERSPECIES COLLABORATION*, artists and researchers David Rothenberg, Tuula Nikulainen, Heike Vester, Rauno Lauhakangas and others.



*PLATFORM* represented by artist and researcher Jane Trowell and Anna Gregoryeva.  
*KUNSTREVVYEN* (Anonymous Petroholics) with performance artists Kristin Jørgensen, Vibeke Steinsholm and Ragnhild Lie.



Above: *STILL/SPILL*, artists Anne-Katrin Spiess and Samantha Clark.  
Below: *HALLUCINOGENIC PARKS*, artists Nis Rømer and Lise Skou.



*ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS*, an interdisciplinary meeting between artists and economists working with green and holistic approaches to economy. Irene Nygårdsvik, Spekulatoriet, Centre for Ecological Economics and Ethics, Bodø Graduate School of Business, Norway with Ove Jakobsen, Øystein Nystad and Stig Ingebrigtsen, Transition Sweden with Jan Forsmark and Cultura Bank with Lars Hektoen and Christine Bakke.



*WALDEN - WALK THE TALK*, aesthetic and philosophical reflections around nature and culture inspired by Henry David Thoreau. The artists Walter van Broekhuizen, Anna Widén and environmental historian Hilde Ibsen.



Above left and below right: *MAKING A LIVING*, the artists Runa Karlsen and Karen Kviltu Lidal.  
 Below left: *FRØSENTRALEN* (Seedbank), artist Katja Høst.



*FOOD AS COUNTERCULTURE: Artists and food-activists Sandor Katz, Rebecca Beinart and Jana Frøberg.*



From different events: Multiartist and musician David Rothenberg jamming with saxophonist Bendik Hofset, the author Freddy Fjellheim launching his latest book. DJ's Mungolian Jet Set jamming with David Rothenberg and philosopher David Abram holding a performance-lecture with fellow philosopher Per Ingvar Haukeland.



Above: "Minihuset" at *Gentle Actions*. It was so popular that Kunstnernes Hus had to extend the opening days.  
Below: There were five days with workshops and tours for 8th og 9th grade with "Den Kulturelle Skolesekken".



Below: The last day the English art and activist group PLATFORM held a workshop on art and activism. The rest of the vegetables from *FOOD AS COUNTERCULTURE* was handed out to passing guests.







## ATTACHMENTS TO THE RAPPORT

*Gentle Actions'* program  
Filmprogram  
Program for Opening Weekend  
Accounts

Presscuttings in PDF available from  
Kunstnernes Hus website:  
[www.kunstnerneshus.no/site/index.php?](http://www.kunstnerneshus.no/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=113&Itemid=105&lang=no)  
[option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id](http://www.kunstnerneshus.no/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=113&Itemid=105&lang=no)  
[=113&Itemid=105&lang=no](http://www.kunstnerneshus.no/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=113&Itemid=105&lang=no)

Webside: For more information and pictures  
of *Gentle Actions* see our website:  
<http://gentleactions.wordpress.com>



*"Creativity is the driving force in any process of change"*  
*Alfred North Whitehead*