Programme

2018

06.01–04.02
VOL. 1: I dress / therefore I am?
Kari Anne Helleberg Bahri / Karl Isakson & Moa Alskog / Victor Mutelekesha / Susanne Roti / Franz Petter Schmidt

16.02–25.03
VOL. 2:
Richard Alexandersson / Ayatgali Tuleubek

06.04–13.05
VOL. 3: Slow/Fast Cycle
artists to be announced

31.05–05.08
VOL. 4: Chlorophyl and Capital
Kjersti Austdal / Fransisco Diaz / Maiken Stene / Øystein Tømmerås / Andreas Öhman / Lene Baadsvig Ørmen

17.08–16.09
VOL. 4: SUB
Lili-Ann Chepstow-Lusty / Grete Johanne Neseblod / Tor Bæresen / Jan Christensen / Ben Allal / Marte Gunnufsen / Christian Blandhoel / Prins Preben / Synnøve G. Wetten / Sindre Foss Skancke / Maria Pasenau / Tor Navjord / Lars Korff Lofthus / Maria Gossè

28.09–04.11
VOL. 5: Brave New World?
Jalila Essaïdi / Thomas Kvam / Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen / Hege Tapio / Clemens von Wedemeyer

16.11 – 21.12
VOL. 6:
Marit Roland / Helle Siljeholm

Programme may be subject to change.
The exhibition year 2018 at Akershus Kunstsenter!

The term ‘navigation’ is key to our exhibition programme for 2018. Thus, we have chosen to take a closer look at the factors that influence how people lead their lives. How do we navigate in a society that gets more complex by the day? What are we searching for? Which guidelines do we follow? What can be said to characterise society and contemporary life – and how do humans navigate existence in a time where everything seems to be possible?

The concept of ‘navigation’ will surface throughout the exhibitions in various ways, some more direct, others less so. Still, the exhibitions and the artists all share one common trait: They each communicate thoughts on the individual, society and the global world – not to mention the role of contemporary art in all this.

Among the topics that will be explored are the search for identity and how our sense of self may develop, like how clothes are used as means of identification, or the way in which humans seek out culture in order to find a sense of belonging. In one exhibition the works explore thoughts on what it means to be young today, while humanity’s drive to discover new things and to leave something behind are topics in another. The world of technology and its premises come under the microscope in one exhibition, while nature, culture, and urbanity are examined in another. And perhaps most importantly, we turn a keen eye towards the artists and the art itself. What engages the artists of today, and by which stars do they navigate in their practices?

Each period is complete on its own, and each artist’s contribution is an independent project. Though, seen as a whole, we hope that these exhibitions will also comprise a kind of report on the state of affairs in 2018. Debates, lectures, publications and conversation will supplement the exhibitions and the ideas they put forward. And so, that being said, we welcome you all to a busy year at Akershus Kunstsenter.

«I MAY NOT HAVE GONE WHERE I INTENDED TO, BUT I THINK I HAVE ENDED UP WHERE I NEEDED TO BE.»

DOUGLAS ADAMS, THE LONG DARK TEA-TIME OF THE SOUL
Akershus Kunstsenter starts off the new year with the exhibition I dress / therefore I am?, presenting five projects that allow us to reflect on the possible meanings and symbolism of identity, roots, clothes, and textiles.

On the ground floor, we find works by Susanne Roti (b. 1984), who has made a name for herself with embroidery on white textiles. White canvas is transformed into clothing such as a pair of Levi’s or a Wrangler denim jacket by means of neat and detailed stitching – a canvas might even become business attire for that matter. Given the way that these types of clothes make fragmented references to iconic garments, they reflect concepts such as copy versus original, clothes as markers of identity, and the symbolic value of specific brands. Roti’s works are located in between installations and sculptures, presented both on walls and hanging freely in the room.

Identity is also at the core of Victor Mutelekesha’s (b. 1976) works, albeit in a slightly different way. He is contributing two different projects to the exhibition, which touch upon cultural identity from various angles. Mutelekesha is interested in how symbols are formed in various cultures, and how the connotations we add to them differ depending on where we are from and our heritage. The influence of multi-national corporations on the way we dress, and how we all seem to dress more and more similarly, thus erasing our individual characteristics, are also important aspects of Mutelekesha’s works.

On the first floor of the art centre are new works by Kari Anne Helleberg Bahri (b. 1975), which can be defined as installations at a cross between sculptures and clothing. The pieces allude to human experiences and events, and they are made from used textiles and old clothes which have a connection to the artist’s own life. Thus, in a rather personal way, Helleberg Bahri hints at something that is quite universal and recognisable.

Further into the exhibition we come face-to-face with a collaborative project by Moa Alskog (b. 1985) and Karl Isakson (b. 1983). Alskog’s project Alt vi äger har vi stulit från varandra [tr. Everything We Own We Have Stolen from Each Other] is based on her own collection of tartan fabrics, the iconic textiles identifying different Scottish clans in previous centuries. Since then, several fashion designers have redefined and added symbols to the patterns, thus taking ownership of something that used to be property of nobility. From these textiles, Alskog has made a patchwork and then turned it into a hanging chair where visitors may sit. Isakson, on the other hand, has put together a sound composition from four different persons located in four different places in the world. This is done by Isakson first sending a self-composed piece to the other composers, who then made their own musical replies in return. The result is a piece that can be seen as a musical communication across languages and cultures.

Finally, in the innermost room, Franz Petter Schmidt (b. 1969) shows his recent work Overall. Funded in an on-going collaboration between Schmidt and the Norwegian design collective HÅKw, the piece can be said to interpret the overalls, the actual work clothes the artist used while working with dyes at Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik, a weaving factory in Mandal, a small town in the south of Norway. The overalls bear traces of hard, long-term use, and together with a series of new garments made from fabrics produced at Sjølingstad, topics such as wear and tear, mending, vulnerability, and pride are explored.

The exhibition is curated by Kirsten Mørck, Tor Arne Samuelsen and Rikke Komissar. After the exhibition at Akershus Kunstsenter, selected projects will be sent on tour as part of Kunstvisitten, a department of Akershus Kunstsenter responsible for displaying contemporary art in health and social institutions in Akershus County.
In this period, we present two solo exhibitions, by Ayatgali Tuleubek and Richard Alexandersson. Both artists can be said to navigate mental and virtual landscapes, though while Tuleubek’s projects centre on a concrete physical landscape, Alexandersson’s works deal with more of an abstracted, intangible world. A shared trait is their use of multi-channel video installations and digital tools in constructing their stories, which gives visitors a chance to move through and around their narratives.

The most distant and desolate area on the planet, the area farthest away from the nearest human settlement of any kind, serves as the basis for Ayatgali Tuleubek’s (b. 1985) exhibition Here be Dragons. Through the use of various computer programmes, Tuleubek discovered that the most deserted geographical point on Earth is located at 35° 12’ 40” N, 87° 13’ 40” E.

A rather large amount of scientific information about this particular geographical point exists today. Yet, despite that, it is unlikely that any humans have ever set foot there. Immediately, Tuleubek had the idea to travel here, but quickly found out that it would be a next to impossible enterprise. Instead, he has – through moving images, sculptural elements, sounds and voice-over – created a virtual journey that allows for reflections on nature, wilderness, human presence there and our longing for discovery.

Contemplations on landscape are also at the core in Richard Alexandersson’s (b. 1982) complex, multi-channel video installation, which spreads out across multiple rooms, occupying the whole first floor. 3D animations deliver a somewhat fragmented and dream-like audio-visual monologue centred on existential meaning. It all takes place in a constructed landscape, simultaneously characterized by distress and beauty. Driven by a continuous, repetitive monologue, the installation echoes the media’s chaotic, yet rhythmic repetitions.

By means of a site-specific installation, characterised by a captivating cinematic imagery, Alexandersson invites us to join him on an unfamiliar, yet fascinating, complex, and tangled journey. In his works, we are confronted with claustrophobic, mundane realism set alongside awe-inspiring landscapes reminiscent a science fiction movie. The dreams depicted alternate between dystopia and utopia, and all the while, we are confronted with questions about what really makes the time pass.

The exhibitions are curated by Tor Arne Samuelsen. Thanks to BKH, the Relief Fund for Visual Artists, for funding the technical equipment required.
Akershus Kunstsenter has dedicated the exhibition year 2018 to a dive into the term ‘navigation’. We will be looking at which factors people navigate by, and how we lead our lives in a society that grows more complex and tangled by the day. As part of this programme, we have decided to dedicate an entire exhibition period to so-called young adults – those just starting to shape their lives. What is it like to be a young adult today, and what is their focus in life? In search of answers, we invited two young curators to make an exhibition of their own. They brought us back the following hypothesis:

Being an adolescent is not something very different [from being an adult]. To be young is to go through phases of awareness, discovery, and creation. It is to be in a constant cycle of creative destruction. Young people operate within an already given framework. Consequently, with this exhibition, we wish to establish that young people are not a specific something or someone. Rather, young people are humans looking for their own framework within which to operate. Adolescence is not a static state of being – it is part of a dynamic cycle. And because of that, this exhibition will be universal. It will hopefully be something with which all visitors can identify – given how all of the artwork included references conditions we dare say most people experience at some point in their lives.
As an art centre located in a rapidly developing town on the outskirts of a large city, towns as an organism and urbanity as a phenomenon are constantly on our minds. As a result, these concepts form the basis of this year’s summer exhibition. Through virtual art experiences and an outdoor wall-painting, we aim to utilize the many nooks and crannies of our town, thus extending the exhibition into public domains. We invite our visitors on a walkabout through the streets of Lillestrøm, offering reflections on what exactly makes any urban space an interesting place to be.

Throughout time, humans have settled together in various kinds of physical constellations that have turned – by and by – into cities. Urbanity is not something new, but rather a phenomenon that is continuously redefined as time passes. At the same time, towns all around Norway are experiencing a decline in activity, as shops and cafés move into malls rather than helping to maintain the vibrancy of smaller streets. The consequence of this is empty spaces across the cityscape, which in turn beg several questions: How should politicians deal with this development? What makes a city interesting, what makes it vibrant? What do we actually need, as humans? Is the answer the opposite of commerce, namely nature and culture?

On the basis of questions such as these, the exhibition Chlorophyl and Capital brings together artists who reflect on topics such as nature, culture and capitalism.

31.05 – 05.08
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In the works of Maiken Stene (b.1983), we are faced with landscape painting in 2017. These are not your traditional, national romantic homages to countryside and nature. Rather, they are explorations of what contemporary landscape painting may be. In her motifs, Stene makes use of multiple perspectives and lines of sight, which result in different perceptions of nature and landscape. What is the status and position of nature today? Do we still consider it grand and sublime?

Juxtaposed are paintings signed Øystein Tømmerås (b. 1976), where urban spaces take the lead role. Each is a jumble, and their hotchpotch of perspectives and fragmented cityscapes seem to mirror that urban energy – which to some may be chaos, yet to others may be a source of inspiration.
In line with the visual chaos in Tømmerås’ works, we also find those of Kjersti Austdal (b. 1990). To many, billboards are synonymous with the big city – just think of how iconic Times Square is, with its massive and flashing billboards. As screens that portray flickering images in typical advertising language, Austdal’s works come off as a clear depiction of today’s commercial pressure. Questions on whether it is visual pollution or actually belongs in a city arise quickly and leave us to ponder.

While many perceive ads of any kind to be visual pollution, fine art is seen as something to which any town or city with a modicum of self-respect will dedicate space. Outside of the art centre, on the sidewalk, Lene Baadsvig Ørmen (b. 1984) will present a sculpture in which the more mythical aspects of nature figure prominently. Ørmen will also show works indoors. A common thread to her work is how her projects often tend to peek back at the past, to the days when nature, mysticism, and superstition where things that would connect us as humans.

In addition to Ørmen, two other artists will contribute their work and adorn the streets of Lillestrøm this period.

Argentinian Francisco Diaz (b. 1986) has devoted his practice to monumental wall-paintings all over the world. With motifs inspired by and drawn from nature, his works are constant reminders of how humans are drawn towards greener surroundings. For this exhibition, Diaz will make a monumental wall-painting on the wall in Voldgata, giving Lillestrøm its very own mural and adding a touch of green to the cityscape.

Last, but not least, Andreas Öhman (b. 1988) and his project will literally lure visitors out on a journey around town. With a self-made app downloaded to your phone, the art works are made available virtually. As an interactive work of art happening through augmented reality, the project invites us to reflect on art in public spaces and in our lives, all the while still pointing towards the future.

The exhibition will include projects for children and youth.
The exhibition is curated by Rikke Komissar, Monica Holmen and Tor Arne Samuelsen.
In the exhibition SUB, we turn our gaze towards that which falls outside what is usually termed the mainstream. What makes some things fall ‘inside’ and other things ‘outside’ the mainstream? Who can claim the right to define what belongs where? And how do individuals and society relate to such partitions and categories? With SUB, we wish to explore a number of subcultures more closely, and look into how they affect and influence us. We assume a broad stance, and the perspectives revealed will be numerous. In order to do so, the exhibition will present a wide spectrum of artworks and artists.

Quite a few of the artists in the exhibition have a documentary approach, and give us insight into the multitude of subcultures that we find in society. Among those portrayed are burlesque dancers, Viking cults, black metal fans, and self-staging off the beaten path – inclinations and tendencies perceived as anything but normal by many. Yet, for those in question, subcultures serve as markers of identity, and provide a sense of belonging.

Other artists contributing to the exhibition may be said to have been left out of the established art scene, despite having gone through the ‘proper’ education. How is it that one thing is accepted, whilst other expressions of the same thought are not? Who defines the leading view in art at any given time?

The concept of ‘finding yourself’, the wish to form an identity true to oneself, serves as a kind of core to the exhibition – a wish to which we can all relate. For what makes some people desert their struggle to find a place within the norms of society and instead seek something else? The same goes for the art scene: What is ‘proper’ art today? Why is something perceived as either ‘in’ or ‘out’? And does it really matter to everyone else how you choose to lead your life?

The exhibition is curated by Bjørn Hatterud and Monica Holmen.
Considering the digital inventions we surround ourselves with today, not much separates contemporary reality from the plots of many science fiction movies. Remote-controlled drones, weapons capable of firing on face-recognition, self-driving cars already exist. General artificial intelligence is nearly a reality, and soon CRISPR/Cas9 may the replacement of faulty parts of our genes with new and healthy ones. The ideas of transhumanism are on a roll, focused on speeding up evolution by scientifically improving humans.

At the same time, there is unrest all over the world, and most of those conflicts are the result of exclusive access to or lack of wealth and resources. The distribution of wealth will no doubt influence our future and the future of human relations. Against this backdrop we pose the question: What will the world be like in 30–40 years? Or in 100 years? And what scenarios will we see in contemporary art as a response to this?

In the film ESIOD by Clemens von Wedemeyer (b. 1974), the protagonist is a woman in search of her own memories – her own hard drive, so to speak. Since they are stored digitally, she needs to identify herself for a computer programme, an AI system, in order to get her memories back. But what happens if the system does not recognize her?

In his exploration of what the effect on humans might be, should we all of a sudden lose that which defines us and who we are as individuals, Wedemeyer outlines a horrific possible future where humans’ very existence may be in the hands of machines.

Artificial intelligence is also at the core of Thomas Kvam’s (b. 1972) work HAL and the Horse. The piece is inspired by the historical event – symbolic of a technological paradigm shift – in which Russian chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov lost against the computer Deep Blue, which was able to calculate a staggering 200 million possible moves per second. The title of the piece also relates to the iconic motion picture 2001: A Space Odyssey by Stanley Kubrick, showing us that Kvam is looking to the past to point out the future.

Kvam’s work Machine 6.2, a robot made as early as 2004, is also part of the exhibition. The robot is anything but aesthetically pleasing, babbling incoherently, both terrifying and fascinating all at once. Yet, what if it was beautiful? Would we dislike its cacophony as much?
At the intersection of visual art and technology, Dutch artist Jalila Essaïdi (b. 1982) puts forth the idea of a bulletproof suit for civilians. The suit is intended to be made out of spider-silk, which is – relatively speaking – extremely strong for its weight, and is therefore used in bullet-resistant vests. Is it possible to imagine mass-production of the suit, in order to provide civilians with protection should the nations of the world resist disarmament?

In Hege Tapio’s (b. 1973) work, we can trace a similar explorative and innovative approach to the challenges the future may hold. Tapio has made a name for herself at the intersection of art and science, and in her project Human Fuel, she researches the possibility of transforming human fat (from liposuction) into fuel and other sources of energy. Ideas such like this may seem odd and funny at first, but a lack of resources might be a real part of the future, and alternative approaches to current technologies are vital.

Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen (b. 1971) is the last artist in this exhibition. In his film Quicksand, the plot is set in the year 2033, and we can only just glimpse the outlines of the dramatic events forcing humans to migrate. Is it a Europe on the brink of breakdown we see? And if the people were us, how would we react? How far would we be willing to go in search of a safe haven and a safe life?

As part of the exhibition, there will be lectures, round-table talks, and artist talks. Stay tuned on www.akershuskunstsenter.no and Facebook.

The exhibition is curated by Rikke Kammers and Monica Holmen.
During the final period of the year, Marit Roland and Helle Siljeholm will each occupy a floor with a solo exhibition. Despite their rather young age, they have both made names for themselves nationally and internationally, albeit each in her own field.

With white paper on big rolls as her medium of choice, Marit Roland (b. 1981) creates monumental site-specific installations. They all go by the title Paper Drawings, and they grow out into the space they occupy, from walls, ceiling and floor. Although usually quite massive and ambitious in character, her work can also take shape as smaller, more controlled objects and sculptures.

Faced with her works, a viewer may be struck by associations to both landscape and nature, but also by the specific character and materiality of the paper, such as its lighting, shadows and shape. In her student days, Roland worked with traditional drawing, but it was not until she discovered the way paper can truly ‘explode’ into a space that she felt that her work had truly found its correct form.

Roland refers to her method like drawing with paper. Yet, given the sheer size of her works, visitors are invited to walk into her installations. Their size also bears witness to the complex and physical demanding labour required in the weeks prior to any exhibition opening.

Helle Siljeholm (b. 1981) trained as both an artist and a dancer, and is today active in both fields. Around 2003, she began her career in dance with both national and international productions, but her wish to extend her visual and conceptual language led her to the visual arts, and in 2016 Siljeholm received her MA in Fine Art.

Her interests are manifold, and all of her projects are an exploration of various and possible connections between art, politics, and society. Concepts such as time, use of time, fantasy and future lie at the core of Siljeholm’s work. What influences us? How do we experience the world, and what kind of interactions are we part of?

The use of personal or others’ archived material interwoven other with methods such as interviews, participatory observation, and site studies, is typical of her process-based style of work.

Rather than focussing on a single material or form of expression, Siljeholm chooses whatever works best for the project at hand, thereby exploring how different materialities can co-exist in time and space as both artistic and choreographic elements.

Despite different modes of expression, Roland and Siljeholm are alike when it comes to spatiality and site-specific work, the ways in which a space itself forms the basis of the shape of and the outcome of any exhibition held there. Both artists often make works on site. If we keep in mind Akershus Kunstsenters’ guiding theme for 2018 – namely navigation – we might even say that these two artists are united by their choice of visual art as their way of trying to say something about being human today.

The exhibitions are curated by Rikke Komissar.
Akershus Kunstsenter is a contemporary art centre located in Lillestrøm on the outskirts of Oslo. The centre’s exhibition programme consists of both Norwegian and international artists at all stages in their career, all representing a wide range of media and expressions. With aims to represent the vibrant art scene, many young aspiring artists have had their first exhibitions here. In addition to temporary exhibitions in their gallery, Akershus Kunstsenter offers advisory services, appoint consultants to public projects, and actively cooperate with institutions at both county and regional levels. Akershus Kunstsenter is also a partner in international projects.

PILOTTAGELLERIET [the Pilot Gallery] is part of Akershus Kunstsenter, and responsible for the production and communication of visual art for the ‘Cultural Rucksack’ initiative in Akershus.

KUNSTVISITTEN [the Art Visit] is part of Akershus Kunstsenter, and responsible for the production and communication of visual art at health and welfare institutions in Akershus.

THE ART SHOP has everything from crafts, such as jewellery, glass and textiles, to fair trade products and fun activity gifts for kids.

THE READING LOUNGE has its own seating area with art-related books and magazines, where visitors may also enjoy tea or coffee. The children’s area offers kids a chance to unfold with colours, paper, and button-making machine. Pop up exhibitions and workshops also take place here.

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