Akershus Kunstsenter

Programme 2019

English version
2019 Programme

I Am No More: Igshaan Adams
11.01–10.02

A painting is a poem without words: Wendimagegn Belete, Esther Maria Bjørneboe, Hennie Ann Isdahl, Kiyoshi Yamamoto

TRUTH IS FLEXIBLE: Lida Abdul, Shimon Attie, Line Solberg Dolmen, HC Gilje, Liv Kristin Holmberg, Malin Lennström Ortwall, Fredrik Raddum, Shwan Dier Qaradaki, Lars-Andreas Tovey Kristiansen
23.02–24.03

Sandra Norrbin / Snorre Ytterstad
05.04–12.05

From Object to Subject – An Experiment
15.05–26.05

Elise Storsveen
06.06–04.08

Mundane Art as Global Art: Guttorm Guttormsgaard’s Archive
16.08–22.09

My dream – Our Common Future?: Thierry Geoffroy, Tomas Rafa, Gelawesh Waledkhani, Iffi Qureshi

Sigve Knutson / Andrea Scholze / Ramona Salo / Aleksander Stav
04.10–03.11

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Andrea Bakketun, Sara Christensen, Nils Norman, Slavs and Tatars, Allyce Wood
15.11–20.12

The programme may be subject to change.
Cover: Thierry Geoffroy, Do artists have a role or a function?, 2015.
Photo: Thierry Geoffroy.
How does one comment on being human, on society, or the age we live in, through art? Through art, can we get closer to ourselves, or see things in new ways?

For this year’s exhibition programme, we have selected structures as our thematic basis, and through eight exhibition periods and a wealth of artwork ranging from large to small, we will delve into different aspects of this concept. Behind this initiative lies a desire to reflect a little more on which mechanisms affect our choices, values, and tendencies in society.

Over the course of the year, we will show artworks that tie past to present, artworks that deal with identity and cultural heritage, and artworks that point to how the human need to gather and archive is present in us all.

The need to create or see systems can also be tied to structure; the same applies to categorization and stereotypes. The dichotomy of simplification versus complexity might be worth extra consideration in this context, the same goes for writing stories. We also raise the question of whether truth exists, and if it does, how we can hold on to the “truth” in our digital age.

Language is another significant side of structures that affect society – often more than we know – where words, expressions, and actions go hand in hand, and where things left unsaid contain as much information as that which is spoken. Perhaps visual art can be considered as yet another kind of language?

Throughout the year, we will also discover works of art that in a more direct sense unveil or point towards structures in the form of brush strokes or the way threads are woven, be it tapestries of textile, pearls, or metal. In these layers, we also find a multitude of stories and fragments of lives, beliefs, and dreams.

As director of the Akershus Art Centre, I would like to thank all our artists who dedicate time and thought to developing art for every-one’s pleasure and contemplation.

Rikke Komissar

«WE ARE LIKE ISLANDS IN THE SEA, SEPARATE ON THE SURFACE BUT CONNECTED IN THE DEEP.»

WILLIAM JAMES
Igshaan Adams (b. 1982) is from Cape Town, South Africa, and has made his mark on the international art scene with solid exhibitions and rave reviews. Akershus Art Centre is proud to present Adams to the Norwegian audience for the first time. In doing so, we invite into a world of textiles, in which the main components are thread, rope, pearls and found materials that are woven and sculpted. Adams engages freely with the exhibition space; some of his exhibitions centre on wall-based work, while others occupy the room with site-specific installations.

The basis for the exhibition at Akershus Art Centre is prayer rugs. Adams recreates work based on pictures of worn-out, old prayer rugs, where traces of human weight appear as impressions on the textiles. In this way, these new pieces bear testimony to generations upon generations of prayer. At a distance, Adams’ work may look like textiles, but by examining the individual pieces, we find countless beads of wood, glass and plastic—and a world of minute details opens up.

For the artist himself, prayer represents a form of meditation, which facilitates contact with the inner self. A small prayer room is also part of the exhibition, where Adams invites people to take off their shoes, and step into silence.

Igshaan Adams is represented by blank projects gallery in Cape Town, and received the Standard Bank Young Artist Award for Visual Art in 2018.
Just as there are numerous types of poetry, we can discern various forms of painting: from classically figurative to abstract, from monochromes to installations. As with poetry, paintings can often describe a situation, an experience, or a thought process. They can invite moods or prompt admiration, just as much as they can be humorous and playful. In the exhibition *A painting is a poem without words*, we meet four artists who immerse themselves in the different processes of painting.

**Hennie Ann Isdahl** (b. 1955) works across painting, object, and sculpture by examining the sculptural aspects of painting and the painting-like aspects of sculpture. Both colour and materiality are significant parts of her work, explored to the fullest in her project *Alternation*. The hues and the force of their interplay come across as precisely as the curve of a sculpture, in which it is crucial to find the point where each part fits perfectly, and where they become part of a greater whole.

**Esther Maria Bjørneboe**’s (b. 1971) project consists of a series of abstract paintings under the title *Omdreininger [Revolutions]*. The project started in the process of clearing her studio, where productions from many years ago saw the light again. Bjørneboe casts an inquisitive and curious gaze at her earlier work. Seen in retrospect, there was one particular question that emerged, given her many years of painting: did she really problematize one and the same image over and over again? Had it always been about form, colour, surface, and the format delineating where the painting would end? Even though Bjørneboe’s work has gone through huge changes in composition and colour, a traceable core to her earlier works shined through all paintings, creating a clear theme: *Revolutions*.

**Kiyoshi Yamamoto** (b. 1983) has, for a number of years, been inspired by the German artist and textile designer Anni Albers (1899–1994), who throughout a life-long career explored textiles in a minimalist and graphic expression. Albers also started the mass production of several patterns, which in turn affected Yamamoto’s way of working. In fact, Yamamoto sees no contradiction in something industrially produced being perceived as unique. As a source of inspiration, Yamamoto also highlights a visit to Hopperstad Stave Church: a place where the relationship between painting, material, and architecture are part of forming a greater whole. Yamamoto’s work also comes across as exploratory and sensorial, where various materials and shapes melt together into a larger composition.

**Wendimagegn Belete** (b. 1986) works with abstract paintings and figurative notes, in which the collection of motifs is often taken from documentation related to his homeland, Ethiopia. Historical fragments from Belete’s homeland are woven into an intuitive and expressive style of painting, and his work bears witness to a strong presence, where multiple stories can be told in parallel. The different layers of Belete’s paintings overlie each other, but if one looks closely, a manifold world of images may appear.

The exhibition is curated by Kirsten Mørck, head of Akershus Art Centre’s department for art in health- and social-institutions. Upon its conclusion at the Art Centre, the exhibition will be divided into four smaller solo exhibitions that will tour the health- and social-institutions in Akershus County.
TRUTH IS FLEXIBLE

Lida Abdul, Shimon Attie, Line Solberg Dolmen, HC Gilje, Liv Kristin Holmberg, Malin Lennström Örtwall, Fredrik Raddum, Shwan Dler Qaradaki, Lars-Andreas Tovey Kristiansen

Truth’ is a key philosophical concept — while also pointing towards a type of definition, or objectivity — that many can agree on. Today, the big question is: who defines what is true and who writes it down? Across the world, the concept of truth and the many sides of a situation seem particularly relevant — with “fake news” being a buzzword and social media’s quick ability to set up opposing agendas. Another perspective on truth is what will be left to posterity, as for example history books being re-written, with greater and smaller details being left out. How can one deal with this, and take more control?

With TRUTH IS FLEXIBLE, Akershus Art Centre welcomes another type of debate on truth, one in which visual works of art set the agenda. In this exhibition, clearly articulated statements can be found alongside vaguer expressions. In addition to the exhibition inside the art centre, the project spills out into town, with artworks in the squares, on building fronts, and projects engaging with the local community.

Some of the presented artworks are poetic, other formalist, while others deal directly with specific events, recognizable from the media. There is no doubt that there are more questions than answers, just like there are as many interpretations of an artwork as the number of people who have seen it.

Across the Art Centre’s entrance, Fredrik Raddum’s light piece Truth is Flexible can be seen: truth is flexible, and lies in the eye of the beholder. But what are the consequences that can be seen in today’s society? Ruminations on the same topic can also be found in Shimon Attie’s light-work, which states: “What I hear is not what I see”, while the relativization of history and the consequences of prejudices against “the others” are themes in Liv Kristin Holmberg’s project Til Minne om Ruth Maier. The consequences of war, conflict, and opposing world-views under Malin Lennström Örtwall’s neon piece Maybe I’ll Never See You Again and Shwan Dler Qaradaki’s latest film Mother.

Lars-Andreas Tovey Kristiansen’s utopian monument in Lillestrøms city square draws attention to the idea of places where people gather, while Line Solberg Dolmen comments on architecture, residences, and the illusions real estate developers “sell” with tarpaulin-covered building sites.

Inside the Art Centre, Fredrik Raddum comments on prejudice, as well as on how the fear for truth is more dangerous than acknowledging it. Both Lida Abdul’s White House and Shimon Attie’s video The Crossing reflect on the wounds left by war and the consequences they have for the individual. On the first floor, a site-specific installation by HC Gilje brings to mind how visible and invisible structures imperceptibly affect us and form the basis of what we see.

The indoors exhibition is curated by Rikke Komissar and Tor Arne Samuelsen, while the outdoor projects are curated by Monica Holmen together with Mari Meen Halsøy.
Both Snorre Ytterstad and Sandra Norrbin work with site-related installations in a subdued, minimalist expression. They deliberately use elements from the world outside the art-space that may hint at possible stories, interpretations, and chains of associations.

Sandra Norrbin (b. 1976) works with large room installations, in which she builds up volumes of different materials, often taken from the industry of transport and construction—among others. Norrbin’s idiom is abstract and monumental, and she lets these everyday materials become part of a new context, in a dialogue with the space. Lately, she has been focusing on materials which have—in various ways—been compressed or stacked on top of each other. Between the different layers created, a story might be hiding—like sediments of information regarding a specific place, parts of a life or an existence. Through a dynamic cooperation between artist, space, and materials, there arise shifts on a balance where materials are often related to the extremes, somewhere between construction and collapse.

Snorre Ytterstad’s (b. 1969) exhibitions often comprise minimal interventions in their various exhibition spaces. Ytterstad has a love for mechanical machines and constructions, which through a modified use, can spark new thought processes in both the artist and the viewer. In his recent work, Ytterstad has started to explore elements of artificial intelligence and algorithm-led processes, by which machines—through probability calculations—can solve problems based on information they have previously been fed. Ytterstad’s work often has an element of the absurd, where a mechanical process is started, creating a situation that can be read in variable ways. His body of work also presents power and destruction, and within a greater context, hints at military re-armament and arms-races as the backdrop of our time.

The exhibitions are curated by Tor Arne Samuelsuen.
How is arts and craft shown and displayed in a shop, in contrast with an exhibition space? Do we look at a cup or vase differently when placed on a plinth, rather than on a shop shelf next to other objects of its kind? What are the mechanisms that underpin our penchant for categorization, and how do they affect our perception of these objects? In this experiment, AKS draws artists out of shops and into the white cube, opening up to sliding transitions between the two divisions. Welcome to the pop-up exhibition *From Object to Subject*.

The exhibition is curated by Anne Silje Kolseth and Tor Arne Samuelsen.
What is worth keeping? How is a collection, or an archive, made? What choices form their basis? And further: what structures become apparent—both in the individual and in societies—through an archive?

Questions like these arise when encountering the expansive archive of the Norwegian artist Guttorm Guttormsgaard (b. 1938), who—in addition to being an active artist—has travelled around the world and been an avid collector all his life. Guttormsgaard’s archive consists of over twenty thousand objects, and among their number, one may discover anything from art, artefacts, and objects—to books, antiques, disposables, maps, furniture, coins, masks, magazines, films, and posters—to name a few. In his archive are also objects that Guttormsgaard was given from scrap dealers and disposable items that set against pieces most would recognize as art. One might then wonder what constitutes a valuable object, and what sorts of things deserve a place in an archive.

Guttorm Guttormsgaard’s collection is so multifarious that it almost comes across as unsorted and with no apparent intent. However, the archive reflects an awareness of all the world’s cultures through genuine curiosity, both for history and towards the stories that often are left out of conventional records.

This collection has been a life-long project for Guttormsgaard, and through countless acquisitions it has evolved into what is known as the Guttormsgaard’s Archive, based at Blaker Skanse in Akershus. Today, the archive emerges as a significant supplement to the collections of renowned historical, cultural, and institutional acquisitions. The exhibition at Akershus Art Centre will display a selection from Guttormsgaard’s global archive.

The exhibition is curated by Monica Holmen and Martina Petrelli. Many thanks to Guttorm Guttormsgaard and the Guttorm Guttormsgaard’s Archive Foundation.
In Elise Storsveen’s (b. 1969) exhibition, the artist’s genuine interest in salvaging and history can be traced. In her work, older textiles become new weavings and installations—and yarn from car boot-sales finds its way into new, singular tapestries. Expression-wise, Storsveen’s work references the graphic style of modernism as well as the suggestive and figurative shapes of the 70’s: geometry, abstract human forms, hands, houses, and eye are intermingled. The artist plays and improvises while creating, her singular expression radiating an infectious energy.

Materiality is of considerable significance to Storsveen, as patterns, textures, colours, and points of reference comprise additional values that are drawn into her most recent works—also including ready-made elements, testimony of years of searching car-boot sales. Re-use and collage become references to time as a phenomenon, in which signs of life are key—and testify to the structures that bind us across generations and geographies.

Elise Storsveen is renowned for her solid body of work, consisting of numerous exhibitions and public commissions. The exhibition in Akershus Art Centre will present new works by the artist.

The exhibition is curated by Rikke Komissar.
Akershus Art Centre will be delving in 2019 into the concept of “structures”. One of the most obvious contemporary structures are population migrations in various forms—from political refugees to labour migrants and family reunions. Regardless of their moving reasons, most people share the hope for a better life.

On the other side are to be found the resistance to migration and strong currents of xenophobia seen in recent years. What is this fear based on? Where does it come from? Today, a number of countries are setting stricter immigration rules, and strong nationalist forces are growing, visible to the public. How can one relate to these contemporary peculiarities, which obviously are not reconcilable? Through art, can one get a closer look at xenophobia in contrast to the individual dreams carried by people?

The exhibition works present video, photo, drawing and performance art, with a gaze towards both the global outwards and Lillestrøm’s local inwards.

The exhibition is curated by Rikke Komissar and Monica Holmen.
What shapes people, and how do structures form the basis of thoughts and expressions? Can cultural and biological origins become visible as recognizable elements of art? AKS invited four young artists who all share the quality of looking back when working, in order to form a visual identity. With these exhibitions, AKS wishes to highlight a few chosen bodies of work that have made their mark as singular, and which express something universal about being human today.

Sigve Knutson’s (b. 1991) work is set somewhere between visual arts, design, and craft. Intuition and playfulness with shapes can be found, as he explores new methods and tools that allow for the intuitive shaping of materials. Knutson experiments with techniques in which form and expression restrict the choice of materials. Underlying his work is an awareness of getting closer to visual impressions that can feel honest and sincere. The viewer is left to contemplate abstract objects, whose appearance and execution hint at something belonging to the past, seemingly coming from previous times, while also resonating with cultural history and identity.

Themes concerning existential and evolutionary aspects are common across Andrea Scholze’s (b. 1988) work. Ceramic sculpture has long been the main component of Scholze’s practice, while currently she is increasingly exploring new materials and expressions—in which elements of biology and human moods are placed alongside the animal kingdom. Scholze’s works of roughly modelled ceramic apes are reflections of ourselves, and bring to mind ruminations on the existential. An interest in architecture and design is also to be found, in which everyday objects wind up as sculptural elements or become part of a larger installation—which in turn references a grander scenario.
Ramona Salo Myrseth’s (b. 1991) work is based on Sami culture and identity. Salo Myrseth is born and raised in a multilingual community on the Norwegian-Finnish border, within the Arctic Circle, where her childhood was in large part affected by the encounters between cultures, people, and traditions. Her early-years life-experience is manifest in her design practice and aesthetics. Elements from personal backgrounds are interwoven with contemporary expressions and, as a designer, she reflects on exploring materials, textures, contrasts, origins, and identity. Through textiles and storytelling, Salo Myrseth invites the audience on a personal journey through Sami culture. Her work reflects on definitions of “Sami-ness”, and points to the challenges indigenous peoples experience today, where the struggle over natural resources and access to their own areas is still fierce. In this sense, her work offers a personal perspective on a diverse culture, from within- and out in the world.

Aleksander Stav’s (b. 1983) work is to be found in all of his pieces do not point at anything concrete, one may get the impression that they refer back to something archaic, an origin that may affect us all. By working primarily with wood, Stav explores a material we all have a strong connection with in Scandinavia. His work represents a contrast between culture and nature, referring to the organic as opposed to the factory-made, the synthetic. When processed—for example carbonized—Stav’s work seems to comment on the cycle of life and death as an eternal loop.

The exploration of nature and cultural history is to be found in all of Aleksander Stav’s (b. 1983) work. Though his pieces do not point at anything concrete, one may get the impression that they refer back to something archaic, an origin that may affect us all. By working primarily with wood, Stav explores a material we all have a strong connection with in Scandinavia. His work represents a contrast between culture and nature, referring to the organic as opposed to the factory-made, the synthetic. When processed—for example carbonized—Stav’s work seems to comment on the cycle of life and death as an eternal loop.

The exhibitions are curated by Rikke Komissar, Monica Holmen, and Martina Petrelli.
What are the structures that languages carry? How can we understand them, their phenomena, expressions and effects? “Language is not transparent”—no thought exists without supporting concepts, but what happens when those are challenged? The participating artists call into question existing vocabularies by creating new language visualisations in our cultural spheres through physical, ethereal, private, collective, digital, political, domestic, geographical and structural means. The exhibition encourages a revisionary understanding of language, its experience, its intrinsic cognitive value — and the consequent emphasised agency of contemporary artistic creation.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan’s (b. 1985) video Rubber Coated Steel mixes sound and politics while investigating audio effects on human rights and law. Abu Hamdan’s work has also been used as evidence in international forensic platforms.

In her project Grand Complications, Andrea Bakketun (b. 1983) has developed a structure of do-it-yourself sensing-equipment, translating subtle changes in and around the old school of Rommen over a one-year period, visualizing the language of the environment, which would otherwise be hidden.

Sara Christensen’s (b. 1979) work derives from everyday life experiences. Without looking for concrete answers or solutions, Christensen repeatedly returns to the same problems and their incomplete, indecipherable language through new structures. Questions related to the functions of public art and the social necessity for cultural practices are central to Nils Norman’s work (b. 1966). Utopian structures merge with existing urban planning, local politics, ecological systems and play. In the exhibition, he will show a library installation open to all age groups for play and use.

Slavs and Tatars is an international art collective devoted to researching the ascension and fall of empires and religions in Eurasia. Investigating social and political phenomena, they don’t approach language as a transaction, but as a form of theory and methodology for interpretation.

In Allyce Wood’s tapestries (b. 1988), digital and handmade processes are merged, mediating on- and offline experiences in a process that codifies languages’ old and new symbols in order to reconfigure messages to provide new meanings or clarify old ones.

The exhibition is curated by Martina Petrelli.