

# DISPERSED DIALOGUES

*Art and Common Space, Faculty of Architecture and Fine Art NTNU, 2015*

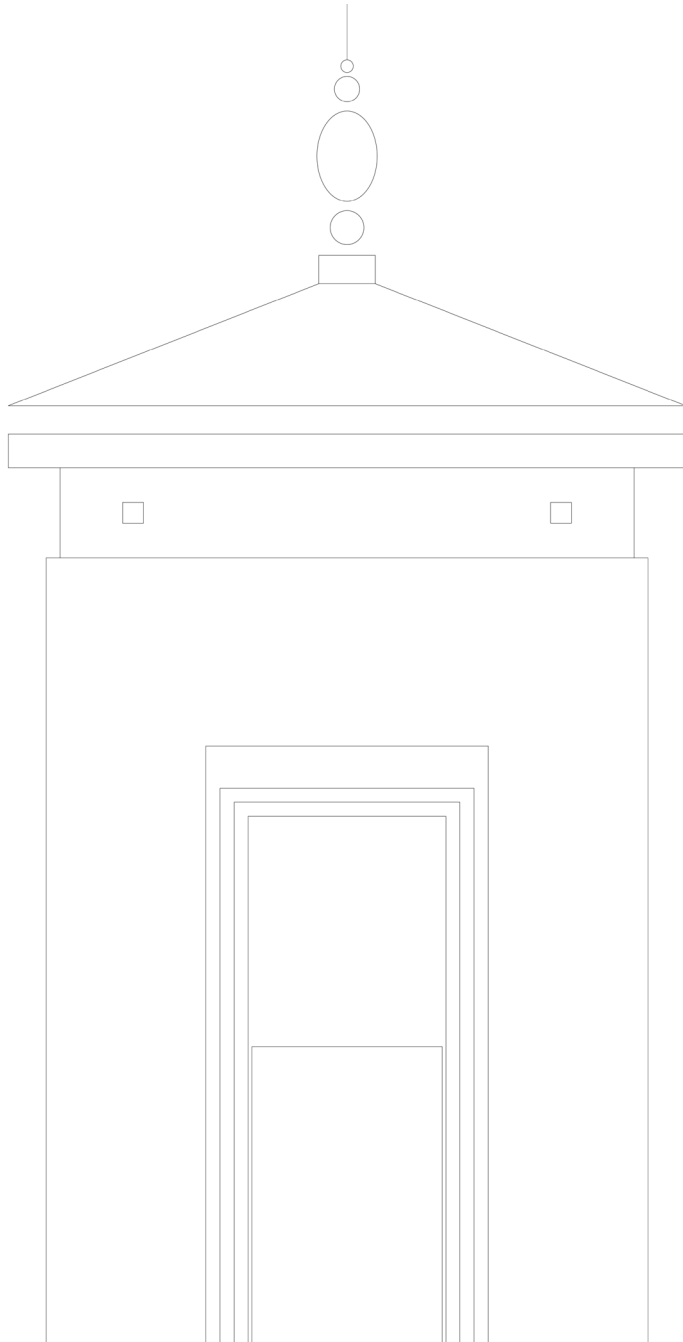


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A collective project focusing on activating participation in the public realm and investigating the role of art and architecture within the broader context of the city of Trondheim.





## LETTING GO

*by Simon Harvey*

... to build a bridge was a sacrilegious subterfuge ... a bridge, by virtue of its very essence, undermines some secret and inextricable economy, in which everything is interlinked and complementary. (Roger Caillois, *The Great Bridgemaker*)

Secrets, confessions, are the nutrition of this artwork. Students of Art and Common Space have been working with the concept of dialogue in and across public space, and have alighted upon the bridge as exemplary construction for working with these ideas. Bakke bru, the main road bridge linking Mollenberg with Midtbyen, has become the locus for one part of the work, and will be projecting secrets confessed and written on slides at the opening of the Art Academy's `open day` exhibition at Galleri KiT – the other part of the work. In a very real sense a bridge is created between the site of the exhibition and the expanded field.

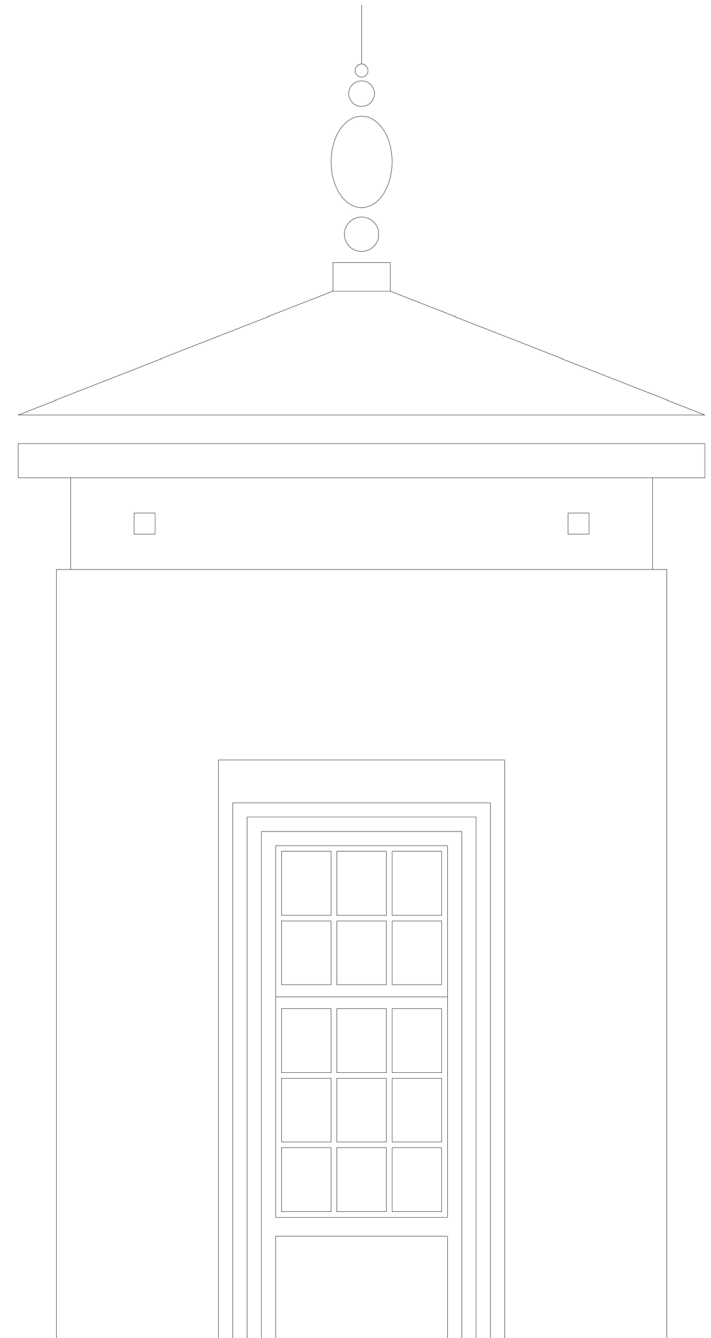
Bakke bru is a busy bridge. In many ways it serves well an economy in which things are `interlinked and complementary`. It facilitates flow within the city; usually people make for their workplace or for the shops with relative ease. At other times, we have to admit, crossing the bridge is a little more arduous: head down, shoulders hunched, sinking into our coats and scarves, we fight to avoid being blown away by fearsome cross-winds.

For this artwork one of the watchtowers on Bakke bru has been opened up as a heated, hospitable, temporary site of refuge from the elements. But what does it mean to interrupt the flow, to play with the natural order of things, to delay a little our arrival on the other side? The order of things has shifted. For the ancients, to build a bridge across water was a sacrilege, but at some point in time, and just as we began to dominate nature, to overcome the elements came to signify the potency of mankind. To be a `bridge-builder` was lauded, and some of its practitioners became powerful men: the Pontifex Maximus ruled ancient Rome, and later the Pontiff - the Pope - ruled Renaissance Italy.

In Trondheim the building of modern Bakke bru was perhaps a final stage in the re-orientation of the city from the north-south of river travel to an east-west road traffic beginning at the airport; river commerce giving way to transportations of capital by other means. Now the sacrilege is to interrupt the flow across the bridge, to delay the passage from cosy Bakklandet to the hard commercial spectacle of consumer-dominated Midtbyen.

But then again, perhaps we need to slow down, to soften the harsh footfall across the bridge, to overturn, to perform, as the Situationists urged, a detournement. The watchtowers, for this art event, are sarai, tambos - places of rest and sociability. As non-site for the projection of secrets they become platforms for the launching of confession into the fast flowing stream. And, perhaps more importantly, in the disruption of one dialogue, a busy one, they initiate another, more proximal, warmer, slower communication: an affective one.

The gallery guards jealously the boundaries of its art, but this work escapes the more usual economy of the `art space`; it creates a bridge between the white cube and the city.





# DISPERSED DIALOGUES

*A project by NTNU Architecture & Fine Art Students  
from Art & Common Space.*

☀️ 12-18 / 🌙 18-12  
04.12.15-06.12.15  
📍 KiT (Innherredsveien 7) & Bakke Bru

*Enter the control towers during  
the day to warm up / Look in to see  
secrets projected during the night.*

*Everyone is invited to participate in this  
project by submitting a secret at Gallery  
KiT during Open Academy.  
ALL SECRETS ARE WELCOME!*

 NTNU  
Kunnskap for et bedre verd

*Thanks to Scandic Hotel and Norges Kreative Fagskole*

## DIALOGUES IN HEATED SPACES

Using the towers as temporary heating stations, the intimate setting is meant to facilitate organic conversation through shared space and shared moments that are a slight deviation from the ritual of everyday life.

## DISLOCATED SECRETS

The public is invited to share thoughts or secrets that will be projected onto the inner walls of the towers at night. Connecting the site of the towers and gallery KiT, visitors will be encouraged to share secrets at a confession booth built at the Academy.

This project hopes to activate the audience at Open Academy and at the same time construct an intimate art space outside of KiT with the goal of creating a temporary interruption in the everyday life of passers-by and in a sense create a dialogue between the local art world and outsiders.

The control towers at Bakke Bru will be transformed into temporary heating stations from 12:00 – 18:00 from December 4-6th, 2015. The public is welcome to explore the historical sites of the bridge towers and enjoy a moment of rest from the cold weather. During the night, the towers will transform into sites of dislocated secrets projected onto the inner wall and visible to the public. Everyone is invited to participate in this project by submitting a secret at Gallery KiT during Open Academy.









*“This is just amazing! Here you could have a kiosk selling newspapers, or a café, with kitchen downstairs and tables up here, or you could sell in the one tower and have seating in the other. ...”*

*“Alternatively, what about arranging closed parties. Wow, I could have lived here, the coolest apartment in town. You do not have to travel a long way South before people live in less space than this. ...”*

*“...In addition, we complain and say we do not have enough space in Trondheim. There are so many nice rooms that stand empty that you can use.”*





## HEATING

by Prerna Bishnoi

*It's Paris at night. Two young girls, runaway to the big city, get out of a taxi, inexplicably receive keys to an apartment from someone leaving town, reach the apartment and ask each other:*

- “What shall we do now?”
- “I’m hungry.”
- “I’m cold.”

From Chantal Akerman’s short film *J’ai Faim, J’ai Froid* (1984)

The control towers on the Bakke Bru house the necessary technology to open the bridge. However the bridge has been sealed since the early 80’s and these machines are painted silver making them unusable. These two storied 8m<sup>2</sup> towers have been zapped off all electricity and stand empty, locked and too cold to be inhabited by creatures big or small. They overlook the postcard-perfect wooden houses of Trondheim along the banks of the Nidelva.

Sitting against one of the towers is a beggar. That is his usual strategic (?) spot. He has a crutch. Not quite sure if he is hungry, but in November-December as the temperatures drop to single digits, he’s definitely cold.

We, a class of artists and architects, have got permission from the local commune to open the doors to these square meters of land. We enter it, clean it and open it up for the public. Most importantly we also decide to heat it. The first invitation is extended to the beggar.

We borrow a small iron heater. It has iron plates and a fan– a combination that is a development from the first fan heaters from 1735. In addition we get a lightweight electric heater and a space ship like radiator, suspended from the ceiling, where the light conceals the heat or is the heat concealing the light?

Heaters suck a lot of power; even the lightweight ones draw 1.5 Kw at least. Even though the bridge connects commercial, abundantly-powered spaces like hotels, restaurants, gyms and local newspaper offices, they usually only have one odd plug point, on the exterior of the building, to lend to our para-site. Our heaters extend their long, outdoor cables to these points, risking an overload. (I wonder if we could draw more electricity in the night while people slept?)

I come from the tropics. I've never experienced such a feeling of cold before. It passes through my faux leather shoes and throttles my toes. Over time it makes a deeper dive into my skin, towards my bones. That's when my brain gets woozy. We wait patiently for the heaters to get to work. They are slow but steady. Nothing trips. But we must be cautious.

It is December 8th 2015. The doors to the control towers are now open to the public. There is a red carpet outside. An elderly woman walks in as Oscar and I make micro gestures of lounging in this small square. As she walks through the door there's a slow but visible relaxation in her facial muscles. Her shoulders loosen. She is comfortable. She looks all around keenly and smilingly and engages Oscar in an animated conversation in Norsk. I don't understand but I know she is appreciative of this pop-up discovery. There's a twinkle in her eye. She sees potential. She waves her hands to create an imaginary counter that serves coffee, tea and cakes. She indicates how strategic this space is to lure passersby making use of this wonderful piece of engineering – the bridge. She says the words students, initiative and earnings excitedly. And as she leaves I swear I hear her say she is a broker. She leaves me feeling hyper aware I am standing on a piece of real estate.

For all that, I can't help but think what if the heaters had conked off in the middle of that conversation. Would she have taken-in the square meters of this land beyond the defunct machinery? Would she have envisioned this pet coffee shop? Would she have pictured that delicious cake? Would she even have engaged us in a chat? In the history of comfort heating it is said that enormous efforts were made to make sure heating systems would make “a permanent impression” – a system so reliable, that even in an 8m2 area that is cluttered with two heaters, one wouldn't give it a second thought. Yes, we have opened the doors to a historical and valuable piece of land that becomes more visible on a cold December morning because our heaters have fallen into our peripheral awareness. Maybe we just managed to create the perfect conditions for that conversation. Koselig\* indeed!

\*It defines something/someone /an atmosphere that makes you feel a sense of warmth very deep inside...(http://afroginthefjord.com/2014/02/02/how-to-make-things-koselig/)



## **DISLOCATED SECRETS**

*by Alice Lødemel Sandberg*

The gallery space in Galleri KiT, which was open to the public for four days for Open Academy, was used to create a space for the writing of secrets. These secrets were then to be projected in the night at one of the towers at Bakke Bru.

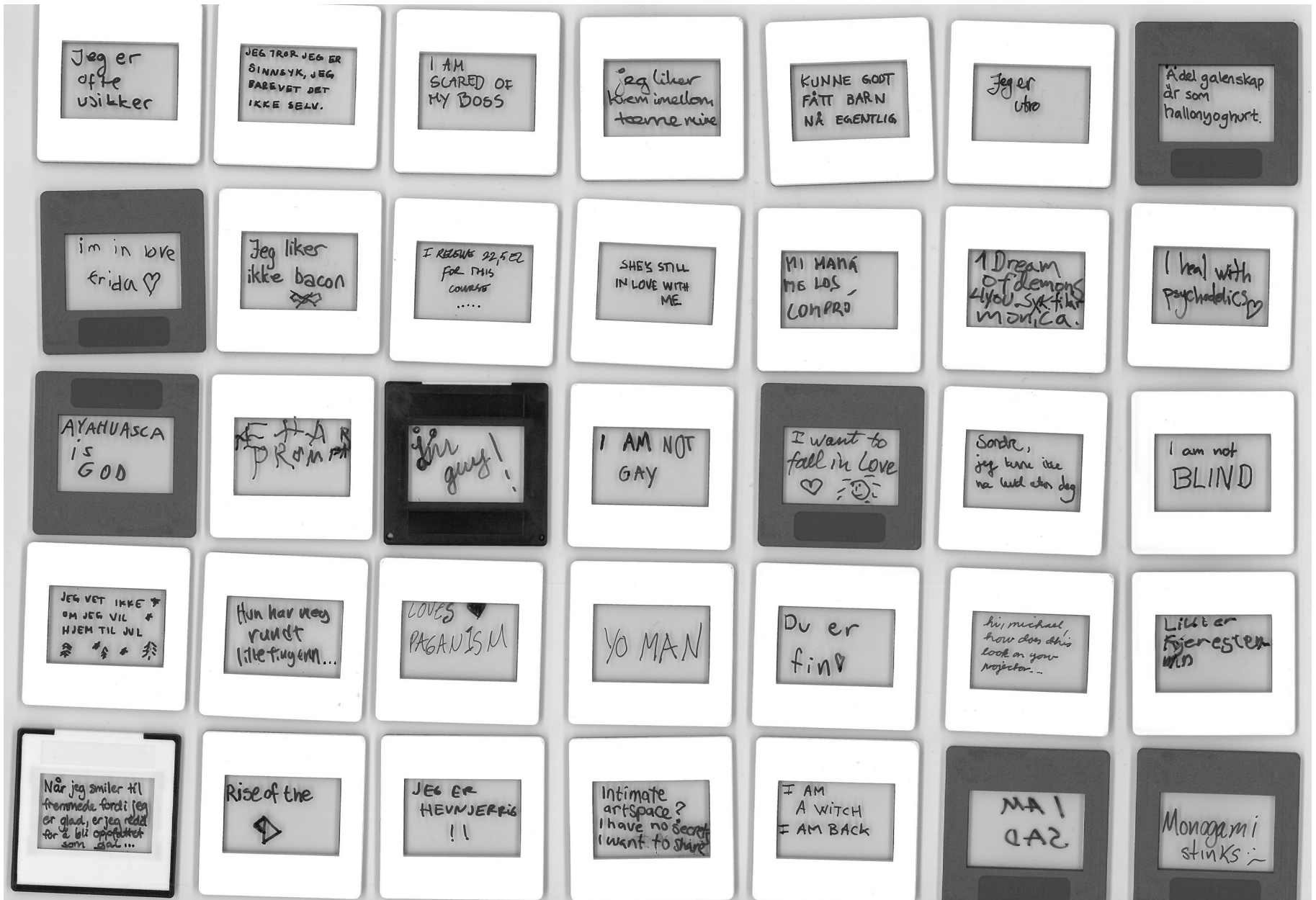
First, an outline of a replica of the tower was created at Galleri KiT. By doing this, a clear line was drawn between the towers and the gallery space, and a connection between the two was established. By using simple measures as defining a space with the same dimensions as the tower and using objects from the towers in the gallery space, a third tower emerged in the gallery. The white space of the gallery absorbed the atmosphere of the tower while the tower in the city was opened as a new gallery space.

To achieve this effect, we measured the tower and temporarily taped a replica in its dimensions onto the walls and floors of the gallery to simulate a three-dimensional visual perspective. Then small hooks were put in the corners of the outline and red yarn was taken through the hooks in a continuous red thread to mark the space. Without any further meaning the thread became the enclosure of the space and allowed the viewer to imagine the physical space of the tower.

A desk and a chair were collected from the towers and placed into the space to transform it into confession booth. With their worn looks, they were placed to invite the audience into the space to participate in the project. Several smaller objects were also collected from the tower to complete the space and to achieve the right atmosphere of the tower. These objects created an interesting and inviting installation in the gallery that encouraged public participation.

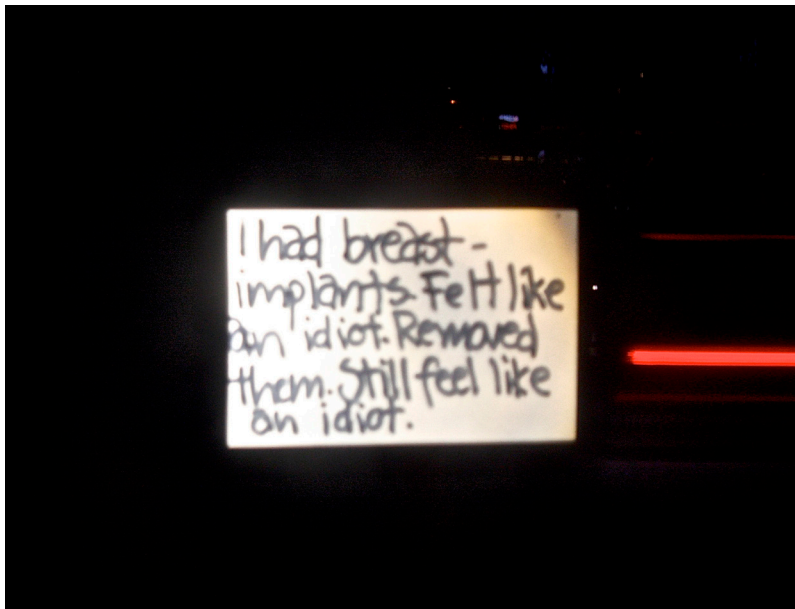
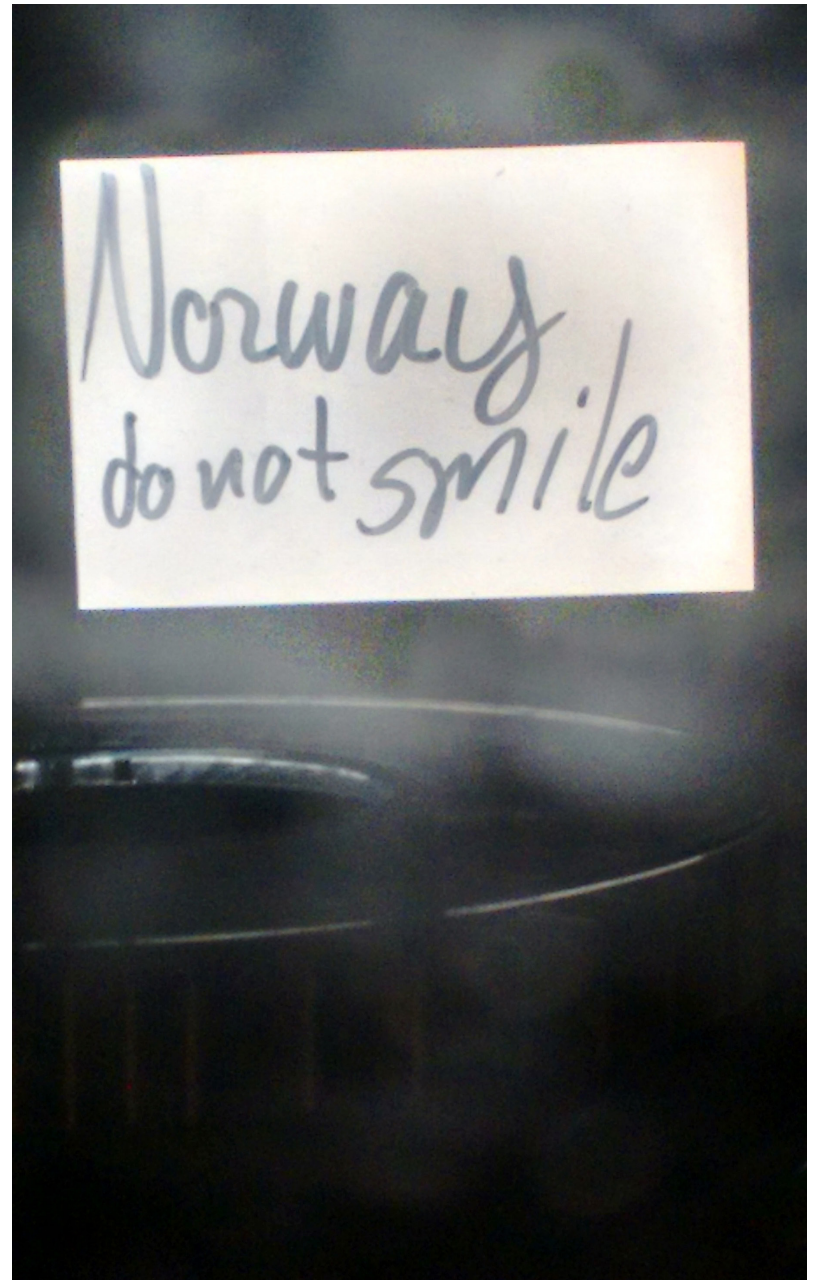
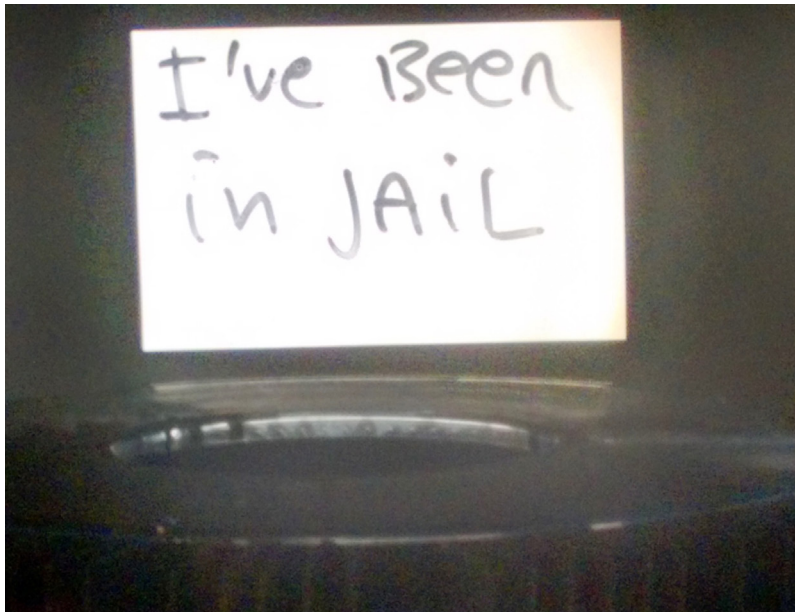
The crucial part was to manage to communicate to the audience the link to what was happening outside in the city on Bakke Bru. At the same time this was meant to be a space where people felt safe to confess their secrets. The goal was to connect the people visiting the gallery to the public spaces we had created in the city.











# BEGGARS

by Enrique Roura Perez

'A hope for a better life' this is the main cause of immigration. From rural settlements or underdeveloped countries, people have decided to migrate to urban scenarios– the centers of modern life. Romani people, also known as Gypsies, are an itinerant ethnic group that live all over Europe. A tragic history of persecution and oppression has travelled together with them. It is the face that does not fit with the progress of Europe– begging for a coin or some food.

This is the story of the guardian of the tower– a Romani individual who sits every day in front of one of the Bakke Bru towers. He lives off the charity of the people that pass by and give him a coin. With cardboard and plastic he has created an insulation layer that protects him from the harshness of the weather. Sitting on a bridge in Norway may not be an easy job. I come from Mexico, a place with one of the highest ranks of inequality, a place where the minimum salary is not enough. In places like Mexico the people that beg on the streets earn more money than workers with a minimum salary. But in Norway the situation is very different: the minimum salary allows you to live a decent life and I really doubt that beggars come close to this income. So, why do Romani people beg on the streets? Is it really that they can't get a job? Or, are they rebels of an economic system that imposes routines and schedules on you– free people that use the system that oppresses them. Maybe it's just a romantic way of seeing the whole picture, maybe they are happier than the owners of the world. The only truth is that the world is getting more and more divided, the gap between social classes continues to grow, and beggars, homeless, gypsies, immigrants represents the bottom of the social pyramid. In a world organized by wealth, poverty will always exist.







## SCRIPT

by Oscar, Emilie, Belle, Enrique, Mishi, Prerna, Michael, Reidun

When in Trondheim, I often sense a personal feeling of belonging and not-belonging at the same time.

I know the city, or town, as well as my back pocket.

When the night takes over, I accelerate the rhythm to cross Bakke Bru. Two towers sequence the way and mock at the tourist's selfies with the famous Bakklandet warehouses that make Trondheim so proud. They mock, and so do I, because I only think of my cup of tea waiting for me at home.

We needed a place where we could work towards an understanding of what common space is. A space available to all, where all are welcome, without feeling beholden to an institution or subject to a cafe-latte culture. A free space... To Seek shelter, simply take a break, take a rest, eat your sandwich, drink your tea.

We found a bridge with two beautiful watch towers - Bakke-bru a perfect, and odd, location.

At Bakke Bru, I sensed a discovery of something new, something unspoken but very immediate, perhaps an urgency, a potentiality.

What do you need? What do we need?

A stop where the passers-by simply enjoy a warm moment. But where to find conviviality when all the climatic conditions are going against it?

So, we created a heated station.

Inspired by the intimacy of a sauna.

The intimate space, created with candles,

A lightweight electric heater

A spaceship like radiator, suspended from the ceiling,

The warmer environment could facilitate an open discussion about the weather -- a favourite topic!

Where they can speak openly, maybe, even confess!

A momentary break in the passerby's daily ritual, invited by a red carpet!

We created a condition for conversation and you don't know who you will meet there.

I come from the tropics. I've never experienced such a feeling of cold before. It passes through my faux leather shoes and throttles my toes. Over time it makes a deeper dive into my skin, towards my bones... We wait patiently for the heaters to get to work.

Tropical Trondheim !

What do you need ? What do we need ?  
“Laget om”, an old Viking concept, “having enough but leaving enough for others”, Lagom in Swedish, Passe in Norwegian.

The potential of leftover, forgotten or neglected spaces to engage people and become stages of the common.  
We created a positive act of opening up.

On this 8m<sup>2</sup> land, in these heated stations in the city, this is where I would like to drink my tea from now.

Skeleton trees in the water  
The wind scraped the words from my lips  
A whirlwind so high, the deepest maelstrom  
Thick surrounding air pressing against my body  
Inside and out

The smell of freshly fished mackerels bleeding on the ground  
filled my hair

Deafening silence when the river exploded  
Surrounding us, going upstream  
Along the shore the torn trees were slowly dancing,  
Dipping their roots and leaves in the calming water

A poem inspired by a dream I had during the bridge project.





## *CREDITS*

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