

LIFE-BOATS

A SAILING SCULPTURAL INSTALLATION IN FERROCEMENT



by sculptor
Marit Benthe Norheim
www.life-boats.com www.norheim.dk

CONCEPT DESCRIPTION - August 2013



Models of the "Life-boats" digitally manipulated into a picture from Larvik fjord, Norway

"Life-boats" is until now supported by:



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Index

Foreword, the artist behind "Life-boats"	page 4
Introduction	side 6
The overriding theme is communication	side 7
Subtitle: "My ship is loaded with..."	side 7
Involvement and collaboration with different population groups	side 8

Practical implementation

The preparation phase	side 10
The first sketches	side 11
Ferro cement boats	side 12
Letter from Brøndby Boat Builders	side 13
Letter from Shipping Engineer	side 14
Budget and quote from the ship engineer	side 15
Drawings from Danish Marine Design ApS	side 16

Models in measurement 1:5

Photos	side 18
"My ship is loaded with Longing"	side 20
"My ship is loaded with Life"	side 21
"My ship is loaded with Memories"	side 22

In full scale

Production in full scale	side 23
Photos	side 24
The first steps - The chest	side 25
Productions photos	side 26

The Journey

Phase 3: The journey in Scandinavia and on the European canals	side 39
The sailing route over the sea and on the canals in Europa	side 40
The voyage along the Danish coast	side 41
A suggestion of an organizing model, in relation to receiving	side 42

Collaborating partners

Organizer group/support group	side 44
Norwegian collaborating partners	side 44

Internationale collaborating partners	side 45
The composer Geir Johnson	side 47
The music for "Life-boats"	side 48

Visibility

Target groups	side 50
Expected outcome	side 50
Promotion in newspapers and the electronic media	side 51
A review of "Life-boats" in VG	side 52
Financing plan for production and what the project can give to spon ..	side 53

Recommendations

Recommendation by Mary Miller	side 57
Recommendation by Jorunn Veiteberg	side 58
Recommendation by Else Marie Bukdahl	side 59
Recommendation from Skien Municipality, Department of Culture	side 60
Recommendation by Norsk Maritimt museum	side 61
Recommendation by Holger Koefoed	side 62
Recommendation by Jørn Simen Øverli	side 63
Recommendation by Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer	side 64
Recommendation by Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen	side 65
Recommendation by Inger Grund Petersen	side 66

Appendices

Of routes and roots	side 68
Powerful frontal figures by Jorunn Veiteberg	side 69
Excerpt from a letter to schools in Stavanger	side 70
Marit Benthe Norheim, curriculum vitae	side 72
Contact details	side 74

Introduction

LIFE-BOATS - A SAILING SCULPTURAL INSTALLATION IN FERROCEMENT, WITH DIRECT SOCIAL PARTICIPATION, ARTISTIC EXCHANGE AND MUSIC BY GEIR JOHNSON

I am currently working on three sculptures in concrete which will become functional boats, shaped as female figures. They will be 12m in length and rise 3m over the surface of the water. The sailing figures will be propelled forward by electrical motors which will be charged with alternative energy.

The sculptures will become "floating cultural houses" and will sail on the European canals, which naturally lead the ships through the heart of the European cities that are built up around the old waterways. The project will not be related to the borders of the respective countries, but rather, will connect their cities together through a cultural exchange - which has always been a part of the history of Europe.

The towns that we dock at will be decided through agreements with the respective locations – and the networks that we are in the process of building up. Here, part of the idea is that there should be a cultural exchange, where every country meets us with their own performance artists, musicians, etc.

Through my collaboration with the European Capital of Culture Stavanger2008, in connection with the Campingwomen project, (www.campingwomen.com) a good European network has been established.

The Life-boats project is about meetings – about exchange – about receiving foreign expressions – about daring to move into unknown territory and opening up into "intimate spheres". In addition, I will, as with several of my previous projects, be using direct participation and direct involvement in the process, both in the production phase and on the journey.

I have always been interested in the manner of which populist, recognizable symbols provide a portal into the irrational, and I have therefore several times worked with the symbol of the figurehead as a protection on many different levels. There has been a need for protective symbols for as long as humankind has travelled on water. These have changed over the course of history in relation to the trends and ideologies of the time. I want to find the stories of specific figureheads and their journeys, and work them into my own framework.

The figurehead in this instance should take over the entire boat, instead of keeping watch from the bow. She will become the boat itself.

The water, the boat/ship - and the act of sailing, contain many symbols that relate to life and passion, rebirth and death, overcoming and communication on many levels. Each "Life -boat" character and its interior will relate to this. The audience in the towns that the boats will be docking, will be able to go on board and experience the installations within the sculptures. * as described in the next chapter.

The Norwegian composer Geir Johnson with whom I have had several collaborations, will create music for each "Life-boat" such that the female boats are all profiled by his soundscapes, which contain musical interpretations of the various "sailing womens" characters and lives.

*The Inuits of Greenland
have had a tradition of
"wife boats", which sailed around
to different communities
and functioned as a
communications channel,
a kind of primitive Internet.*

Each sculpture has its own identity and narrative. The individual titles are: My ship is loaded with Longing, My ship is loaded with Life and My ship is loaded with Memories. (- Based on a scandinavian word game, often played whilst travelling; "My ship is loaded with something beginning with ... - then mentioning a letter)

The preparatory part of the project, with the artistic and ship technical preparatory work to ready them for realisation of the project, is now finished.

The first sculptureship is fully financed and the second is ca. 25% financed. This means that production of the first sculptural boat has started in my studio which has been converted into a "ship wharf".

The overriding theme is communication

The overall aim of the "Life-boats" project is to create new kinds of dissemination of art and culture. That is why we will be establishing, coordinating and planning exchanges on many different levels.

Women use their bodies to develop, protect and nourish life, both physically and intellectually, until it is viable. These are values that I, as a woman, want to keep elevated and visible in our pessimistic times, where fellowship needs to be emphasised. By doing this I want to demonstrate, what we can achieve together, and that we are dependent on both giving and receiving care and protection.

The figurehead as a protection against unknown dangers will be a reminder and an admission that we need the irrational and spiritual aspect in our meeting with the world. - A reality where all the unknowns have come closer through our communication possibilities, both digitally and physically.

Subtitle: "My ship is loaded with..." :

The sculptural group, "Life - boats", will sail and will comprise three female boats, where the preliminary overriding theme will be woman in the three phases of life;

1. **Longing** - the young one, entering the world
2. **Life** - in the middle of life and fertilised
3. **Memories** - the aging or the dead

These biological components of the female reality are the same for all women in all cultures. Obvious, but nevertheless full of incomprehensible and irrational magic.

The sculptures get their titles and content according to their phase of life.

*The three ships always follow one another.
When one sails in front,
the other two don't just follow behind,
they are both part of the cargo.
Where there is life, there is longing and memories.
Where there is longing and memories, there is life.
Longing gives memories life, and life, memories.
Memories give life longing and longing, life."*

**Hans Fink, D.Phil., Mag. Art. et. D.Phil.
Institute of Philosophy and History of Ideas Aarhus University**

Involvement and collaboration with different population groups

Social participation is a big component in my concept building, where the participation of the local population has resulted in direct involvement e.g. in 'The Lady of the Sea', where 905 children and young people between the ages of 3 - 16, worked with protection figures in ceramics and glass, which were then inlaid as a mosaic into the body of the sculpture.

In the 'Rat Maiden' sculpture www.rottejomfruen.no for the National Ibsen jubilee in Norway, 2006, 2318 children and youths participated in the process. They ended up making eyes in porcelain which were incorporated into the 7m high concrete figure. In addition, the sculpture has a slide, which can be used by both children and adults. Inside the sculpture one can hear music, written by the composer Geir Johnson.

This form of participation was transferred to the 'Campingwomen' project, made in collaboration with the European Capital of Culture, Stavanger 2008. Two of the five 'Campingwomen' have wallpaper made out of collected camping and wedding pictures. One of them is filled with a porcelain relief about fleeing, made by children and refugee women working together.

www.campingwomen.com

In this "Life-boats" project I will also, as described in the chapter with the subtitle "My ship is loaded with", use participation of a variety of population groups.

Why involve children and young people?

It is important for me when I involve children and young people in my projects that they should not just "do" but that they are made aware of the creative process - of thinking for themselves - of finding their own expression and sticking with it. This is why the schools have worked in parallel with me on a variety of related themes - also in many different subjects. This project will involve children and youths as cultural players, cultural creators and cultural consumers.



Caravans with a refugee theme

The sculptor Marit Benthe Norheim will be converting four caravans based on each of their respective female characters. She will now be getting help from the pupils at Soma school and also from 10 refugee women.

BY TROND EIRIK OLSEN

Pupils in year 5-7 at Soma school as well as 10 refugee women from Sandnes will be helping the artist to decorate parts of one of the caravans internally. The caravan itself has been given the title "Refugee Woman" and the decoration will revolve around this theme. Soma school indicated early on that they wanted to be a part of the project and at the school they were delighted that the request for participation came from the artist herself. "We are actually the only school in Sandnes that is a part of this project and we are naturally very proud of this," says teacher Marit Anne Almås.

Ceramics

The decoration will be in ceramics and the pupils have started to make sketches in preparation for the ceramic work. Each pupil has an A4 format to work in. When Sandnesposten popped in last Wednesday they were in full swing with discussing and

laying the foundation for the next stage. Based on key concepts like "flight", "I love" and "I leave" the pupils will be immersing themselves in the fate of the refugee women.

Great enthusiasm

Almås talks about the enthusiasm of the pupils, who had a visit from the artist herself this week.

"The meeting with Norheim was extremely inspirational and her enthusiasm was very infectious for the pupils. They have no shortage of ideas," she says, adding that they have also had a lot of teaching regarding refugee issues in the past week.

"We have concentrated a lot on the refugee issue and their fates in both social sciences, KRL and Norwegian. We have also had visits from refugees who have told us of their circumstances," she says.

The four caravans will be coming to Stavanger in May and will be transported around different parts of Rogaland for the rest of the year. Almås hopes that the caravans will also come past Soma school.

"That would be great. Not least because part of the work has been carried out here. It will be a feather in the cap for the students" she says.

Article from Sandnesposten, 17 January 2007

PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

THE PREPARATION PHASE

THE FIRST SKETCHES

FERROCEMENT BOATS

LETTERS FROM BOAT BUILDER
AND SHIPPING ENGINEER

TECHNICAL DRAWINGS
FROM DANISH MARINE DESIGN

MODELS IN MEASUREMENT 1:5

THE PRODUCTION
IN FULL SCALE

THE JOURNEY

The preparation phase

Fall 2008 - Winter 2011

It started with a dream I had one night that I saw the Campingwomen sailing on the water. After that I researched the possibility of making boats out of concrete.

Ferrocement boats have a long history going all the way back to 1848. The reason why it is not a technique that is used very often today is due to the fact that it is difficult to make the process effective. Building a boat in this technique is a handcraft, and is approximately the same process that I have used for many years to make my sculptures.

The planning phase was fully financed by Kulturaftale Nordjylland, Hjørring and Frederikshavn Municipalities,

A travelling exhibition of a presentation of the "Life-boats" started in November 2009 and is still on the move. This exhibition is expanded as the project progresses. In addition there has been two seminars arranged with the Life-boats project as a turning point. (*added information in the back of this documentation)

CDE Danish Marine Design ApS, Copenhagen has produced technical drawings which will ensure the seaworthiness and the CE certification.

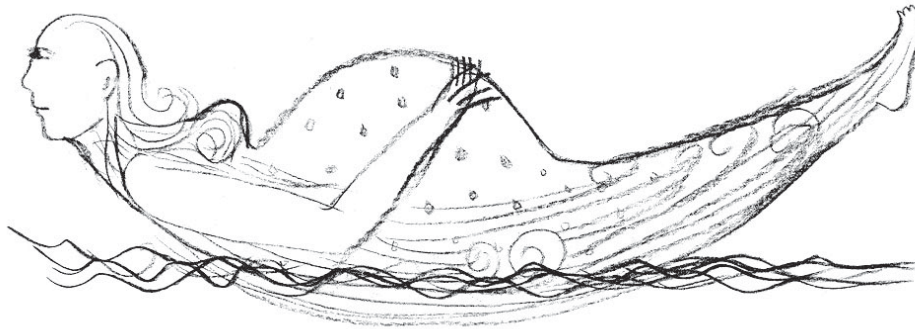
Brøndby Boat builders, with experience of building boats in Ferrocement, are assisting both technically and practically as consultants during the building process.



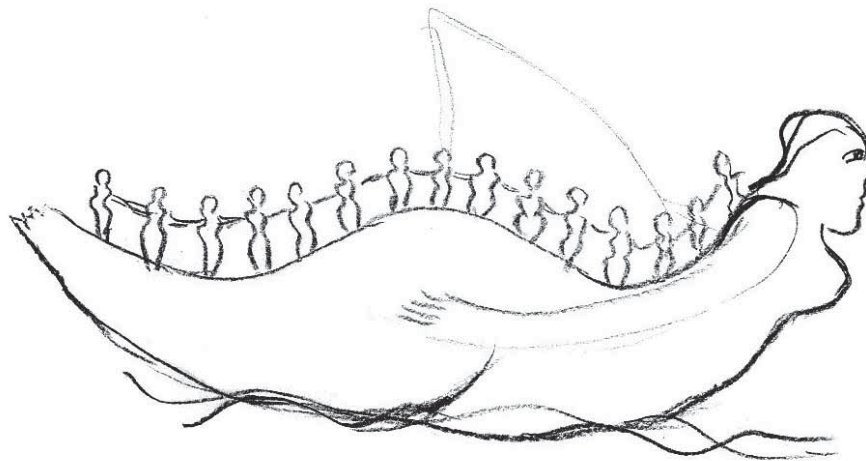
Bronzemodels of "Life-boats" i scale 1:40



"My ship is loaded with Longing"



"My ship is loaded with Life"



"My ship is loaded with Memories"

Ferro cement boats, by Hans C. Bredahl

A little known, but definitely not dull, area of application for Ferro cement is boat building. This is despite the fact that cement boats have been built for the past 100 years in sizes ranging from the smallest canoes and kayaks to large motorised torpedo boats. If you study the subject of Ferro cement, sooner or later you will come across the names of Joseph Luis Lambot and Peir Luigi Nervi. These two; Lambot is French and Nervi Italian, created the foundation for modern Ferro cement boat building techniques. Lambot built a rowing boat in Ferro cement, or as he called it, "ferciment", in 1848. We know that that boat was used extensively for at least 50 years. After disappearing for many years, it was found by chance at the bottom of a lake in the vicinity of Paris in 1955, still intact and seaworthy after more than 100 years. Nervi developed Lambot's ideas in the 1940's. He called the new material Ferro cement. Through attempts and experiments with thin plates reinforced with different types of nets, he discovered that the result was a material with remarkable elasticity and strength, well suited to boat building. It is Nervi's boats and their successors, especially in New Zealand, Australia and Canada, who we can thank for the development of the modern Ferro cement technique.

Regardless of which building method or combination of methods one uses to build a Ferro cement boat, the end result should always be a hull that fulfills the following requirements:

1. Smooth, neat lines in accordance with the model and drawing.
2. Regular thickness of the hull with all the reinforcement covered by a 1-2mm thick layer of cement mortar.
3. Armature weight between 400 and 600 kg/m hull material.
4. Equal weight distribution in the armature with a high level of form stability, completely filled with high quality cement mortar.



Despite many directly contradictory perceptions amongst Ferro cement constructors and builders about how the reinforcement and molding of a hull should be carried out, the uniformity of

the material and the composition of the finished hull are fundamental. If the finished result is a hull, which fulfills the requirements of the above definition, then all is well. A Ferro cement boat can be built in two months, either upright without a wooden

frame or in a wooden frame, where the boat lies upside down. The armature, which consists of reinforced steel with several layers of chicken wire, mesh wire or similar, is formed so that it follows exactly the shape the boat needs to have. Painstaking accuracy is required for the building up of the armature, because a skew or bowed armature cannot be straightened after molding. The wire armature is bound or welded together and thereby attains sufficient stiffness and accurate dimensions.

The mortar for the molding must be of good quality. We recommend Low alkaline cement that is mixed in the a proportion 1:2 with pure sand with the largest grain size between 2-3mm dependant on the dimensions of the armature and with at least 8-10 weight percent sand less than 0,125 mm. The water/cement ratio must be around 0,35 and not over 0,40 to ensure that it is strong and watertight. If a super-plastifying additive is used then the water content can be reduced by 20-25%. The mortar can be applied either by hand or with a spray. Vibration can assist in ensuring that the mortar is distributed evenly so that the wire armature is filled completely. After 28 days of hardening the internal buttressing can be removed and the adaptation can commence. The boat owner can now begin to see that he is the owner of a boat. A carefully executed cement



boat will, after the final surface treatment with e.g. epoxy lacquer, look just as beautiful as a ship built out of steel, aluminium or fiber-glass in a shipyard. The stability on the water is excellent because of the low point of gravity and weight distribution, which is similar to that of a boat built out of wood in an old fashioned way. The molding of the hull is often done communally. It is therefore not unusual, when a molding party is called, that 30-40 men and women meet up to participate in the molding, which should preferably take place in one go, "wet in wet". In Denmark, Ferro cement boats are built mostly by people without any prior know-



ledge of the subject, and the construction time for a boat can vary between about 6 months to 4-5 years. In the Danish waters and also on the World's seas, there are several Danish-built Ferro cement boats sailing today, and many more are under construction all around the country.

Letter from Brøndby Boat Builders, Erik Foldager, process description



The following is a description of producing the Ferro cement hull as previously described.

The hull will be constructed over an armature that will be molded in special cement. The shape of the hull is created by 11 ribs that are welded in reinforced steel. When the ribs are raised, 5 mm of reinforced steel is pulled up alongside the hull for every 50mm. After this the same type of steel is layered diagonally at the same distance. The steel is fastened to the frame with simple welding. At the end 7 layers of reinforced net is fastened to the interior and exterior of the steel. 4 layers internally and 3 externally. Now all the connections are bound together between the 2 layers of 5mm wires with binding wire.

When the steel hull is built up, the hull can be molded. For the molding 10-15 people have to assist because this has to be done in one day without any interruptions.

For each hull the following materials will be needed:

110m 16mm reinforced steel

1000m 5mm reinforced steel

320 m2 chicken wire

1,5m3 special cement binding wire

I don't know how much I will be able to produce myself, but as a starting point I would imagine that I would be able to help with most things but that you will take care of production. That is that I will assist in producing templates for the frame after which you will weld them together yourselves. My next job will be to set the frames up in a jig. When the hull is aligned correctly we will set the lengthwise-running steel on to ensure that the frame is stable. When the frame is finished, I will check the structure before we start the molding process.

For the molding we will have to build the necessary scaffolding and we will need to have the cement mixer and other tools present. It would probably be a good idea to have a plasterer present depending on what kind of finish you would like. I will be participating the whole day. When the hull is molded the cement needs to be kept moist for the next 14 days. After the first 14 days the hull should be allowed to harden for a further 14 days before it is made to take any load.

When the hull is finished hardening it will need to be painted with acrylic cement. It will need two layers. After this 4 layers of pure epoxy and a base coat. I can participate for the application of the acrylic mortar.

The propulsion for the boats will be electrical. There is also a little uncertainty here because we have still not carried out calculations of the hull's resistance in water. We expect that 30 kW will be sufficient and have dimensioned the parts according to this. The size of the battery will depend on how many hours the boat will be sailing every day. I imagine that the boat will be able to sail with half effect for 6 hours.

I hope the abovementioned will help you further your project. “

Yours sincerely Erik Foldager

Letter from Shipping Engineer Lars T. Olsen



WWW.CDE-DMD.COM

C D E D A N I S H M A R I N E D E S I G N A P S
N A V A L A R C H I T E C T U R E A N D M A R I N E E N G I N E E R I N G

*Marit Benthe Norheim
Houenvej 52
Mygdal
9800 Hjørring*

Christianshavn d 2. april 2009

"Dear Benthe

Re: Lifeboats - a sailing sculptural installation in cement

With regard to our pleasant meeting here at the office, I would like to confirm that from a marine technical viewpoint it would be possible to carry out this project.

We look forward to assisting you with the technical and legal aspects of the project in event that this is necessary."

Med venlig hilsen


Lars T Olsen



Member of the
Danish Association of
Consulting Engineers

D a n i s h

Member of the
Danish Boating
Industry Association



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Letter from Shipping Engineer Lars T. Olsen

Dear Benthe

Yes thank you, we received the scans.

The task was a little harder than we had anticipated, but we will be able to do the job.

We estimate that every figure (we have already done 1) will take around 25 hours and in addition there are drawings of the floating element and CE certification.

Every figure is surface mapped, the centre of gravity and approximate weight, sections in 3D are produced for the rough production and 3-4 renderings are produced so that you can show them to interested parties or contributors.

Approximate hours for our work can be broken down as follows.

3 figures	75 hours
Floating element and arrangement	45 hours
Preparation for CE certification	25 hours

Total number of hours will be approx. 145 hours

With regard to the sailing route, we will have to bill on an hourly basis.

With kind regards

Lars T. Olsen

CDE Danish Marine Design ApS

Wilders Plads 8 A

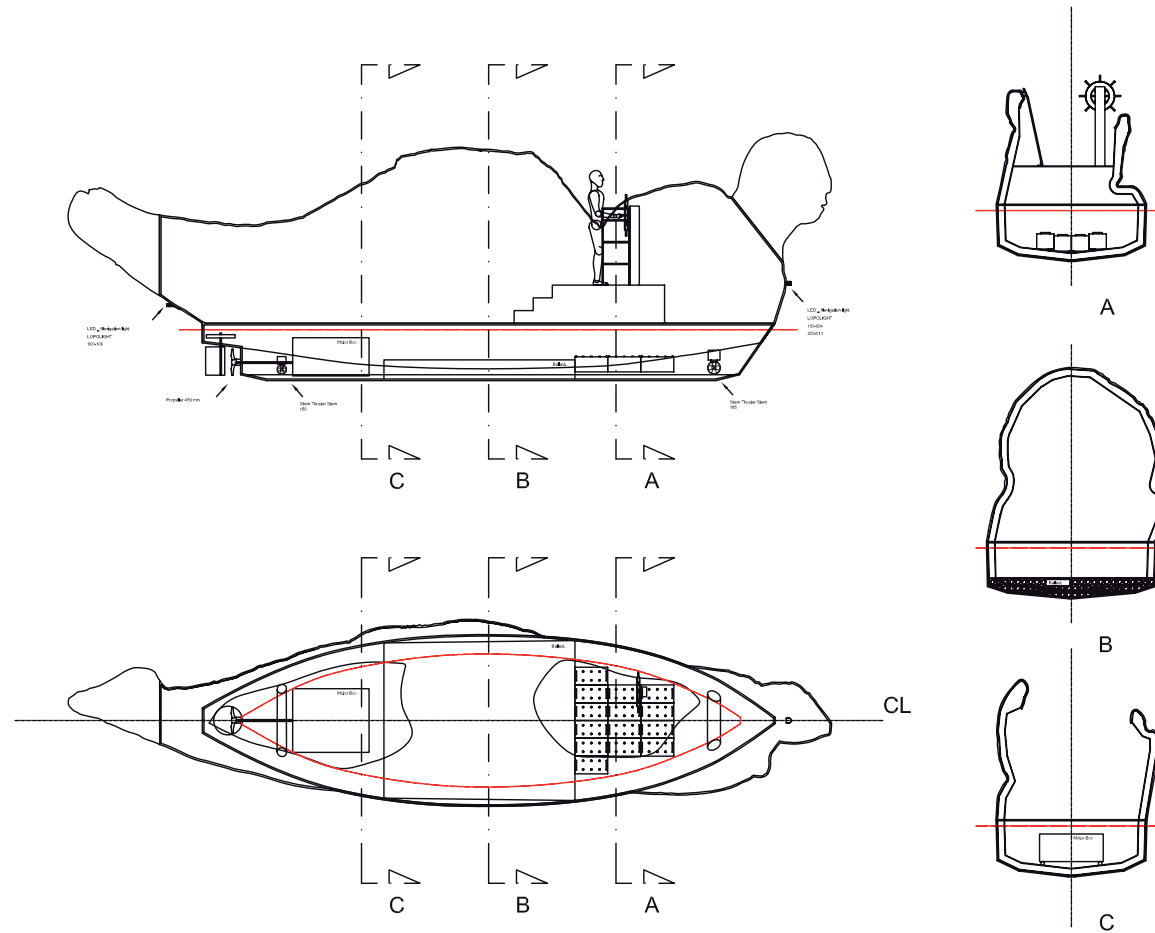
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Drawings from Danish Marine Design ApS www.cde-dmd.com



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 Project : Ladet Med Lønsel Date : 2010.01.12
 Subject : General Arrangement Sign : KW / LTO
 © Danish Marine Design ApS



Selected photos from the construction of the models on a scale of 1:5, precisely according to the shipping engineer's calculations of the models at 1:40



Pictures from the exhibition of artistic and ship technical preparations at the Utzon centre in Aalborg, 2010.



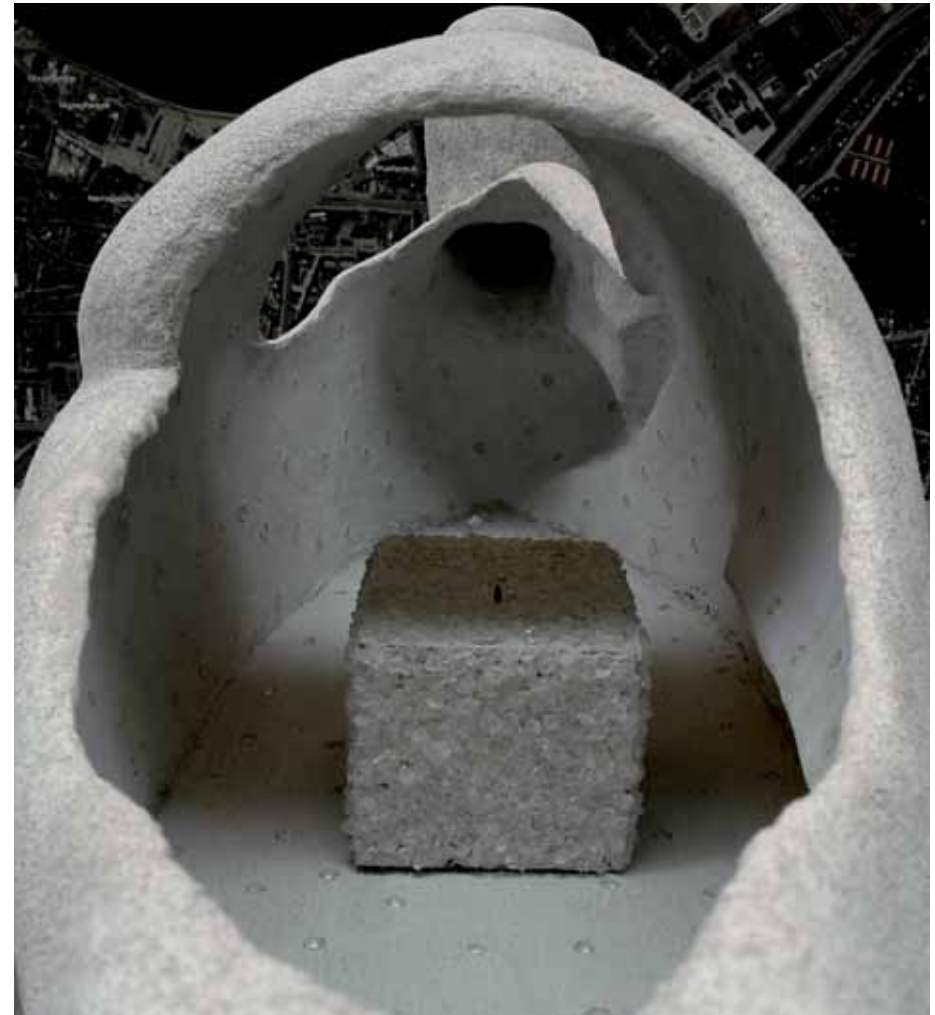
"My ship is loaded with Longing"

She lies on her side, with her hips as the cabin. She will have a treasure chest inside her body

The treasure chest is decorated with true pearls and prisms, with a letter opening, so that the people we meet will have a chance to deliver letters with their dreams, hopes and longings for storage in this chest. These could be texts that they write in their encounter with the sculpture or letters that they have lying around.

In the roof there will be a large prism, which will send light into the space of the body.

Her eyes will be made in glass, by glassblower Peder Kuchinke, Mygdal.





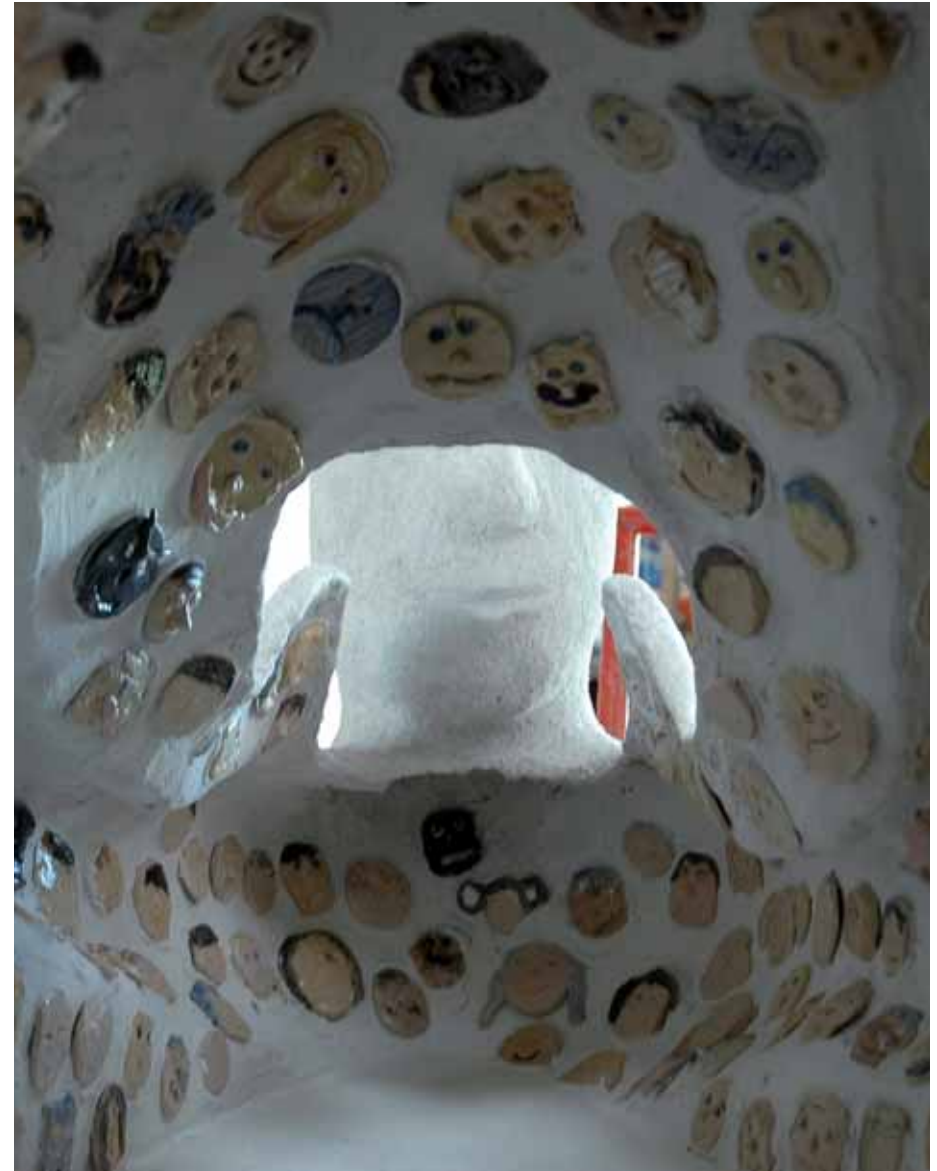
” My ship is loaded with Life”

She floats on her back - fertilised - with her pregnant belly as the cabin.

Here we will ask some children and young people from every country that we sail to, to model a self portrait in ceramics. I want to have the greatest possible diversity of nations and cultures represented

We will collect the reliefs, when we arrive in the various docks and fix them into place in the boat.

The photo shows the inside of the model on a scale of 1:5, where children have created self portraits on a scale of 1:5 as a test of the resulting mosaic.



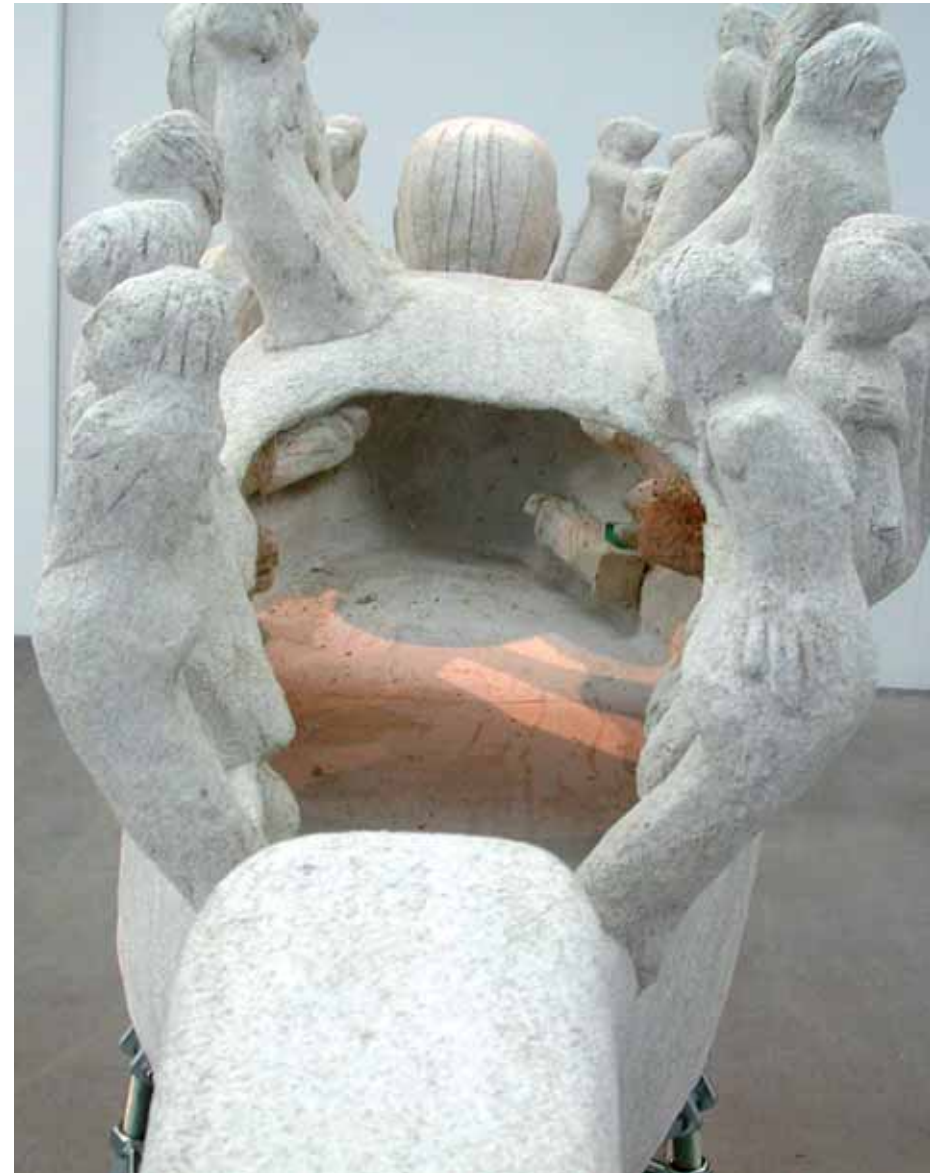


” My ship is loaded with Memories”

She travels on her belly, full of small figureheads on her back, so that they can maintain watch in all directions.

This ship will be built out of many composite notions of women, based on a variety of portraits of women from the participating countries. The women will be over 70 and will have a history which means that they will have travelled and lived in countries other than their own – and for different reasons. We will include interviews with refugee women and immigrant women from as many different cultures as possible – living in the participating countries. The interviews will be about belonging and identification and will be made available to the public audio visually inside the sculpture.

The interior will have small shelves, which we will fill with new memories from our journeys.



Production in full scale

Because the whole of the first sculptural ship is fully financed and some of the financing for the second ship is in place, the construction and casting of the first ship is done. The second and third sculptural boats are also well on their way. Funding is being applied for on an ongoing basis for the implementation of the whole project.

The technical and artistic process takes place in my workshop in Mygdal, near Hjørring, North Jutland, Denmark. The workshop has undergone a comprehensive refit in order to be able to function as a “shipyard.” The door has been expanded both in height as well as in width in order to get the 12m long 4.2 m high and 3m wide sculptural boats out (there is room for only one at a time)

Shipping Engineer Lars T. Olsen from CDE Danish Marine Design ApS has produced drawings to full scale for the sculptural ships.

Boat builder Erik Foldager, who has built several ferro cement boats, has helped to start the process and will be following up, both practically in the building process and as a consultant.

I have two assistants in the workshop, who take part in the welding and building of the sculptural ship.

Alongside the production process, I will be applying for funding for the next two sculptures.

The whole project will only be launched when all three sculptures are fully financed and finished together.

The process is shown on the following pages, step by step in photographs and text.





The treasure chest for the first sculpture, "My ship is loaded with Longing" at the Friis Shopping Centre in Aalborg as a part of the Port 20:10 Art Festival

The first steps - The chest to scale which will be inside "Life-boats" loaded with Longing"

As a part of the Danish Art festival, Port 2010, the chest, in full size, which will be inside the first "Life-boats" sculpture, was exhibited at the active shopping centre. This was the beginning of phase 2 of the project; the production phase and the start of the chest's collection of letters and texts. Here is the letter, with the invitation to take part in the project.

Dear children, young people and adults of all ages

I am writing to invite your innermost longings on a journey.

The chest you see before you will be placed inside a female sculpture called "My ship is loaded with Longing", part of the "Life-boats" project. She will be the first one that is made, of the three (12 metre long) sculptural ships in concrete that will be launched in North Jutland and will sail on the European canals.

This chest is the first step - the first part of the "Life-boats" project in full scale.

The idea is to involve as broad an audience as possible throughout Europe, starting at Friis.

In the chest you can place love letters, poems etc. which you have lying around which you perhaps don't dare to send or to show to anyone, but which you nevertheless do not want to throw away. Texts about dreams and longings can be written on site, (Use the paper and pens that are lying here) These can be placed in the chest and mixed with everyone else's hopes and longings. The chest will sail out into the unknown, it is sealed and will never be opened.

"What can easily be shown and what is so intimate that you want to keep it to yourself?" By placing the texts into the chest, one doesn't need to explain anything to anyone, or to reveal oneself.

What are the boundaries of modesty for the written word in our era of mobile and internet communication?

Children and young people do not write letters any more. All communication takes place quickly. One doesn't wait longingly for a reply for days – weeks – months. Generation 30+ wrote love letters and handwritten poems, which were kept in a secret place, if one didn't dare to send them by post. If they did get sent and an answer was received, then these were read many times and hidden well. Many people have looked after these kinds of valuable personal letters their entire lives.

I work physically with my art. The digital for me is a tool for necessary, practical communication, but not for the most intimate thoughts. Does handwritten become more private than what is written or stored on the computer? Is the personal computer or mobile today's private/secret treasure chest?

Hope you will sail with us - both in spirit and in words.

Best wishes from Marit Benthe Norheim





Full scale production of the armature.



"My ship is loaded with Longing" The framework is made in wood, which will be removed after the rest of the body has been welded with transverse and diagonal steel reinforcement



The framework in wood, with a polystyrene filling to shape the body, which will be removed after the rest of the body has been welded with transverse and diagonal steel reinforcement



The framework in wood, is pictured here with a polystyrene filling to shape the body, which will be removed after the rest of the body has been welded with transverse and diagonal steel reinforcement in the same way as the body under water (see photo) Afterwards the wooden construction will be removed and the whole structure covered by 7 layers of chicken wire before the ferro cement is applied thickly everywhere and the detailed modelling is done.







The casting of the first boat "My ship is loaded with Longing"









The first sculpture ship is moved outside, for making room for the next ship to be build. October 2012





*The second sculpture ship "My ship is loaded with Life" is well on its way. **Mygdal "shipyard": june 2013***

Phase 3: The journey in Scandinavia and on the European canals

The journey can be undertaken over the course of many years during the summer season. We will be applying for funding from the EU or EEA for the journeys and the cultural exchanges.

The process of planning and organising the trips and the artistic exchange – which is a large part of the aim of the “Life-Boats” project, will run alongside the production phase.

During the course of the production phase we will appoint an international coordinator, to take care of the contacts with the different cultural institutions in the various cities, and to enter into collaborations.

The cities that the sailing sculptures will be docking at will be chosen in collaboration with a network which is in the process of being built up. It is an important part of the overall concept of the project that “Life-Boats” become an open narrative framework and that it establishes an artistic exchange, where representatives of each country meet the sailing sculptures and the artists that are travelling with them, with their own performance artists, musicians, singers, etc. The sculptures will function as mobile cultural institutions.



Bronze models on a scale of 1:40 digitally manipulated into a picture of Venice.

The sailing route over the sea and on the canals of Europe



The sculptural ships can undertake many journeys in the years after they have been launched.

On this school map several possible routes are charted, which can take place at different times. The one could be a Nordic journey, the other an Eastern European and the third a West European canal journey.

**This is an extract from the book "Europa's vandveje"
(The waterways of Europe)
Finn Havland, Volume 1**

"It was probably the fjord and the river that lured people on the first voyage over water on something or other. But soon the sensible people allowed their wares to be borne on the riverwater so that they didn't have to carry it themselves, the adventurous ventured out onto the sea. Boats were developed and navigation was made into a precise science thousands of years before historic times and became a logical prerequisite for trade and industry. Noah built boats even though he lived many miles from the sea. This is where the history of the canals is told and of their enormous network of more than 70 000 kms. And of how it grew right up to the mountains and over them. And that it is still growing. They are popular now, the waterways. For hundreds of years they slept like Sleeping Beauty, but now environmental problems and the interest in their many adventures have woken them again. They are starting to function anew and now have a bid for how to solve some of our problems. But they are just wiping the sleep out of their eyes and the adventures from the dreams are clear and ready in their thousands.

The "Life-boats" project will hopefully be one of them!

Phase 3: The voyage along the Danish coast

Life-boats will be launched in North Jutland and will sail along the Danish coast - on their way towards the European Canals - stopping at the harbours of several towns. There will be many ways of creating artistic exchanges as well as an opportunity to experience the interiors of the sculptural ships.

On this map, you can see the Danish towns that have already expressed an interest in being visited by the Life-boats” and which we are in dialogue with.

The process of planning and organising the journeys and the artistic exchanges – which are a large part of the aim of the “Life-boats” project - will take place alongside the production phase of the boats.



A suggestion of an organizing model, in relation to receiving the Life-boats

Text by Inger Davidsen, promoter of network group Fredericia

*Former vice mayor and chairman of the Cultural Committee of Fredericia
Member of committee for Bjørn Nørgårds mosaic decoration in Christianskirken,
Fredericia. Member of Portemento in Fredericia (decoration committee for Fredericia Harbour. Former deputy chairman in Musical Academy Fredericia and Fredericia Theater. Member of the rural district committee under the Danish Interior Ministry*

Local networks are to be established in the cities and areas visited by "LIFE BOATS". It is important that the network members are people with local interests, being that particularly local interest nourishes commitment and a great feeling of ownership to the artistic experience of a visit by "The Sailing Sculptures".

In addition, locally based members of the network groups have specialised knowledge of the cultural life in their specific area, giving them unique possibilities for deciding how to present the load of Longing, Life and Memories. In this way, the network group of each individual country can uniquely design their own LIFE BOAT visit.

Tasks of the network group:

1. Responsibility for the course of the sailing sculptures, preferably in co operation with local authorities, state or local business community.
2. Raising funds covering the visit of LIFE BOATS.
3. Organisation of the artistic performance on the spot.
4. Organisation of accompanying boat in connection with the visit in their area.
5. Direct reference to the steering committee for approval of the visit planned.
6. Assistance with both idea creation and application for ship production funds.

the text has been translated into english by, Helena Davidsen



COLLABORATING PARTNERS

ORGANIZER GROUP/
SUPPORT GROUP

NORWEGIAN
COLLABORATING PARTNERS

THE COMPOSER GEIR JOHNSON

INTERNATIONALE
COLLABORATING PARTNERS

Organizer group/support group

The Norwegian sculptor Marit Benthe Norheim has created the concept for "Life-boats" and been responsible for the planning phase with the help of her part-time employee, cultural promoter and graphic designer Malene Pedersen. Region Nordjylland, Hjørring and Frederikshavn municipalities provided financial assistance and advice as well as a confidence that the project is sustainable and has possibilities for development.

Representatives for these are a part of a support group for the project together with Dr. Phil. Else Marie Bukdahl, former Rector of the Royal Danish Academy of Art and Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, Rector of The Kolding School of Design, and previous cultural minister in Denmark.

The cultural project was reorganised in February 2012. The "Life-Boats" committee was established as a solid committee of nine persons who recognise the relevance of the project. (DSILB) Inger Davidsen is the chairman of the Committee. The committee has accepted responsibility for the economic side of the completion of the three boats as well as the completion of a series of journeys of exchange.

The artists, representatives from the cultural institutions and other cultural personalities in the various countries and cities that we will be collaborating with on the journeys, are in the process of being prepared and established.

Norwegian collaborating partners:

The festival Director Anders Beyer, from Bergen International Festival has expressed a strong wish to use the Life-boats project in Bergen

Dr. Phil. Jorunn Veiteberg, Art historian, curator, writer and Professor at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts. She participated on the Campingwomen journeys and will take part in the canal journey of the "Life-boats" both as promoter as well as passenger.

Holger Koefoed, Art Historian and writer and principal of the Oslo National Academy of Arts, has shown enthusiasm for the "Life-boats" project. He is an active ambassador for the project in Norway.

Mary Miller, Leader of The New Opera in Bergen. Former Director of the European Capital of Culture Stavanger 2008.

During the course of the planning phase I had several meetings with the Scottish Mary Miller, who has a good network in Europe. Mary Miller is an ambassador for the Life-boats project based on our previous collaborations, which have taken place over a number of years (Campingwomen, Rolling Angels, "Standing Proud", "The Lady of the Sea")

The Park Theatre in Oslo, - Is in the network: Trans Europe Halles, an international network for exchange, support and collaboration. The management are working at getting Life-boats involved in this network, whereby we will get access to an apparatus which could be part of the organisation of the artistic exchange in Europe.

The Norwegian Marine Museum, by Director Espen Waehle wishes to give Life-boats an exhibition venue and a harbour in Oslo

Ragnar Nielsen, Head of Culture in Skien Municipality and Tom Erik Lønnerød, project leader for Art town Skien. - Who also, as a canal town want the "Life-boats" project to use the canals in Telemark.

Notam. Technology relating to sound and music will be developed in collaboration with NOTAM, which works to develop technical solutions and understanding of the role of technology and possibilities within the cultural field. The center plays multiple roles in Norwegian cultural life and in the international music community.

Geir Johnson, Norwegian composer, is working on the music for the "Life-boats" interior installations, funded by the Norwegian composers Society. He has been the initiator and leader of several Norwegian music organisations.

Jørn Simen Øverli, a Norwegian balladsinger and leader of the Norwegian Polish project Karuzela and who has great experience in the field of cultural exchange as a mean of direct communication, will take part in the project with a new version of the Karuzela concept. He has extensive Polish connections and is working with **Grzegorz L. Duszyski, an experienced Polish cultural organizer** who is expressing great desire from the Polish side, to collaborate with Life-boats and its cultural exchange, on the Vistula canal/river.

Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer, Singer/Vocal artist www.wilhelmine.no
The singer is working with the voice as sound without words and often in relation to children.
She has started a new piece of work in relation to the Life-boats journeys, where she will involve the audience directly into her musical performances/happenings, called "Life-sounds". She also works a lot in Poland and has good contacts there.

Magni Jensen, Potter
- Has received a 3 year working grant from the Kunsthåndværkernes Fond 2010 in Norway, where her project will focus on developing "Maritime ceramics" in connection with the "Life-boats" project.

The Norwegian Embassy in Copenhagen, www.norsk.dk

Cecilie Willoch, then Senior Embassy Adviser for press, culture and information, provided a symbolic support award, to kickstart the production process. In all the years that I have lived in Denmark, I have had a very good relationship with the embassy, with support for the various projects. We are currently working on a seminar which we want to hold at Scæffergården, which is owned by the Fund for Danish Norwegian collaboration (www.schaeffergaarden.dk). Dr. Phil Else Marie Bukdahl from the support group, has good contacts in this context and has decided on a temporary title of "The aesthetics of movement - and sustainable art projects." We have contacts to good speakers on these themes.

International collaborating partners

Grzegorz L. Duszyski, an experienced Polish cultural organizer has communicated a great desire from the Polish side, to collaborate on the project and its cultural exchange. He has since visited my workshop to observe the building process.

KTO The well-known and respected Polish street theatre KTO, has expressed interest in organizing the Polish cultural exchange., through **Grzegorz L. Duszyski,**

Culture Clinic, Works with projects in connection with cultural and democratic development, both in Sweden as well as internationally.

Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, Rector of Design School Kolding

The former Danish Minister of Culture. She has been involved specifically with the projects' climate change section and is the ambassador for the project and its extensive network. At the School of Design in Kolding they are collaborating with a series of companies researching how battery-driven cars can become viable. The project is called etrans (www.etrans.dk) and i

generally about how the transport sector can be taken into a greener future. “Life-Boats” will draw on the experiences of etrans and will disseminate its results in a European context.

Aalborg University for advice, promotion and collection of results.

My contacts there are: **Lone Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Dean, Professor, Ph.D. Faculty of Humanities. Ann-Dorte Christensen, Professor** of Sociology, Member of CASTOR and FREIA (Centre for Gender Studies).

Dr. Antje Gimmmler, a german Associate Professor of Sociology, Member of C-MUS. (Centre for Mobility and Urban Studies) and CASTOR (Centre for Social Change) Institute of Sociology, Social Work and Organisation. Gimmmler has arranged a seminar and workshop in connection with the exhibition at the Utzon Centre with the title: Of routes and roots.

Else Marie Bukdahl, Dr. Phil Art historian and former Rector of the Danish Royal Academy of Art. E.M. Bukdahl contributes as an active ambassador for the “Life-Boats” project. She writes and gives lectures about Marit Bente Norheims related artworks and about “Life-Boats.” She also passes on contacts from her comprehensive international network.

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Jens Frimann Hansen, leader of the project Helsingør Theatre and www.hjemstavn.com -cultural diversity as a resource in art.

Jens Frimann Hansen has also created connection with:

- **Jørgen Selmer, Director of the Maritime Museum in Helsingør**
- **Jørgen Sprogøe Petersen, Head of Culture, Helsingør Council,**
- **The Museum of Childrens' art in Helsingør**
- **Dunker Cultural house in Helsingborg, Sweden**

Eugenio Barba, leader of the Odin theatre in Holstebro, www.odinteatret.dk

- Has shown great interest in a collaboration and said after a visit to my workshop that he would also use his network in Europe for this project.

The Odin theatre was founded in 1964, and has survived partly because it has succeeded in creating a large international network ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology), which, under the leadership of Eugenio Barba, has researched various transhistorical cultural movement forms amongst dancers and actors from different cultures and styles.

Region Nordjylland, Frederikshavn Municipality and Hjørring Municipality have provided financial support and advice as well as a belief that the project is sustainable and has possibilities for development.

Deutsch – Dänische Zusammenarbeit, Flensburg, Germany

Has shown a great deal of interest in a possible collaboration.

We are in dialogue with several countries that want the Life-Boats to visit when the project is completed. We have contacts who have expressed interest in Sweden, Germany, Holland, Belgium and France in addition to Norway, Denmark and Poland.

The composer Geir Johnson

CURRICULUM VITAE

Geir Johnson (born 1953 i Fredrikstad)

- Has a cand.phil of music and philosophy from the Universities of Oslo and Bergen. He studied computer music at Stanford University in California from 1988-89 and is mostly self-taught as a composer. He has written about 40 works in the past 20 years, music in different genres, both electro-acoustic, instrumental as well as vocal music, which have been performed in a variety of contexts internationally.

He has a varied musical background, with experiences both as a singer and conductor for choir and ensembles. He also established and conducted a series of large musical events in the 1980's with works by both Norwegian as well as international composers.

Geir Johnson has been an active creator of musical events, first as coordinator during the mid 1980's of the Henie-Onstad Art Centre outside Oslo, later by being a part of establishing BIT 20 Ensemble and the contemporary music festival Music Factory in Bergen.

He was one of the founders of the musical theatre company Opera Vest, today called The New Opera in Bergen. From 1989 to 1995, he was President of Ny Musik, the Norwegian section of ISCM. He has had a series of honorary posts in prominent cultural organisations.

Geir Johnson has lectured on central themes in the music of the 20th Century at Universities and high schools all over Europe and has published articles and reviews mostly in connection with international contemporary magazines and newspapers around the world. From 1998-2009, he was the director of the ULTIMA Contemporary Music Festival in Oslo.

Since 2006, Geir Johnson has established and led Transposition, a collaborative project between five Vietnamese and seven Norwegian music organisations. <http://transposition.no/>

The collaboration with the visual artist Marit Benthe Norheim started in the mid 1990's and includes "Rolling Angels" together with the choral work "Angel Revelations" which was shown in a variety of locations in England, Scotland, Denmark and Norway between 2000-2001. He also composed the work "The journey between laughter and crying" for the interior of "The Rat Maiden" sculpture, which was produced for the Ibsen jubilee in 2006 as well as music for the unveiling of several of her sculptures.

From 2006-2008 he made music for Marit Benthe Norheim's moving sculptural installation "Campingwomen", which was a part of the European Capital of Culture, Stavanger 2008.

Geir Johnson is now in the process of producing music for the "Life-boats" project, where he will enhance the experience and content of each of the three sailing female sculptures with his soundscapes.

Of the music for the Life-boats, he says:

"To write about music that hasn't been written yet is as difficult as catching one's dreams in flight. I imagine a music that communicates with the infinite sea, but also that life is just as fleeting as a haiku, and with a hope of being able to provide some visions with resonance that can accompany the "Life-boats" on their odysseys, without the crew having to bind themselves to the mast in order to resist the songs of the sirens."

Composer Geir Johnson

The music for "Life-boats"

During the last fifteen years I have worked out a lot of music to Marit Benthe Norheim's sculptures. Some have been implemented for the unveiling and inauguration. Others have been mounted inside her sculptures - and some have been pure sound installations - music to accompany the sculptures. When she asked me to compose music for Life-Boats, it was soon clear to me that I would need to consider at least two different tasks. One would be to create music that follows the sculptural boats on the journey, and which is mounted inside the boats, while the other will be the music used when the Life-boats come to their port calls elsewhere.

This time I decided to take on the first task, to create music that is in the boats, and which will face the public when they enter the boat, or which may accompany the crew on trips.

In this music I'm interested in mythical conditions, such as the Sirens' song of Odysseus: What was it really he heard, that was so beautiful that he had to bind himself to the mast? But music which is based on man's relationship with the sea has many other points of departure. One can also ask the question about the world of sounds that have followed the sailors at all times when they crossed the oceans, home from the trade mission or from looting, with spices and fine fabrics, or with slaves and booty. And in all this, the seafarers' own music, which often expressed longing for another life, and the songs of those who sat at home, and as expected, perhaps in vain for one who never came back.

As a textual basis, I work for example with texts by Enheduanna, the world's oldest-known poet, who was the princess and priestess in the city of UR in Mesopotamia about 4,000 years ago.

This is the starting point for the music that will fill the three Life-boats of Marit Benthe Norheim, where hardly anything is going to be recognizable, but where the elements of this will be to rediscover in the creative process.

Geir Johnson

About the ship of fools

by composer Geir Johnson

The French philosopher Michel Foucault introduces his famous piece on the history of madness with a description of the ships of fools from the Middle Ages.

In the Middle Ages, says Foucault, there was also a concept of madness, but it was not systematised and institutionalised like it is in our time. Rather, the group of people who were considered to be "mad" consisted of many different kinds of deviants, one could find eccentrics, the mentally ill, possibly artists and perhaps some people who for various reasons did not fit into rural society and could be interpreted to have been witches - in short, many of those who wouldn't fit into the norms of the society of the Middle Ages. The fool was a well known figure in the social life of the time, a person who had the freedom to disrobe both the Emperor and the prelate, and to tell the truth about the court and the proletariat. The fool had a social and intellectual free room

How did one solve the "problem" of these deviants? Well, they were taken onto a ship which sailed around freely like a kind of a travelling asylum. This was how ships of fools came into being, claims Foucault, like a kind of floating village which sailed from harbour to harbour on the Rhine. Wherever they arrived, it became the existing town's responsibility to provide food and lodging for the "guests" for a limited period of time until one sent the ship of fools on its way to the next town. That is how the tradition of wandering travellers came into being, of which Europe has had so many of through the centuries and which one can still see the remains of amongst those who live on the canals and in houseboats around about Europe. The ships of fools were a kind of encapsulation of the "mad" before the concept of "madness" was made into a science and separated from creativity and from social and political rebellion.

"Life-boats" picks up this tradition and creates a sailing artwork in the spirit of the ship of fools.

VISIBILITY

TARGET GROUPS

EXPECTED OUTCOME

PROMOTION IN NEWSPAPERS AND
THE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

A REVIEW OF THE LIFE-BOATS IN VG

FINANCING PLAN

Target groups

Children, youths, an adult art audience and an audience of random passersby, or people that the sculptures sail past – who do not expect an art experience. Both those who seek out the project as well as those who are sought out will have unexpected experiences.

The project relates to the common human condition, with a desire for inclusion and not segregation of the various population groups, ages, etc. Because the sculptures relate to basic experiences and stages that people move through. From young, the fertile to the aging or dying, the target group includes children, young people and adults in all age groups.

This project will involve children and young people as both cultural creators as well as cultural consumers. It is important for me, in the work involving children and young people in my projects – that they not only “do” - but are made aware of the creative process – of thinking for themselves, of finding their own expression and vouching for it. That is why schools and daycare centers have always worked in parallel with a variety of related themes in all my previous participatory projects – and also in many different subjects.

Another target group is the aged. I will collect stories and memories to be made available in a variety of ways.

In one of the boats as many people/nationalities will be involved as possible, from all the countries that we sail to. By doing this, I hope that we can open a dialogue and interest in each others' experiences and memories.

The sculptural ships will be used in connection with tourism, both at the launch ceremony, the journeys as well as between journeys, when the boats are docked, but cannot be opened to the public.

The private sector is also a part of the target audience and is included in both the construction process as well as the development of technical skills and craftsmanship.

Cultural institutions and educational institutions are the target groups and collaborative partners for the collection and dissemination of knowledge and experience of the artistic and ship technical process regarding the journeys and the exchanges both artistically and culturally.

Expected outcome

“Life-boats” is a trans-national and trans- cultural project.

The project will lead to cultural exchanges, with a starting point in our region, further on to countries in the North, East and West of Europe, which can be developed further after the completion of the “Life - boats” journeys.

The project will also attempt to create lasting international relationships between children (the citizens of the future) and artists through the exchanges and development of the projects component elements.

On a more specific level, it will create a focus on the Scandinavian backing of a project, which sails in the name of peace and not “Viking violence” - Where the aim is not confrontation, but rather communication, inclusiveness and exchange.

But an important aspect is the fact that the sculptures will be accessible to everyone they meet en route. Contemporary art will in this way come to areas, people and places which might otherwise not have easy access to it.

The “Life-boats” sculptures can be made into a permanent installation at the end of the journey.

The project will provide useful experiences through its use of existing European cultural transport and communication channels (cultural inheritance) in the form of a contemporary artistic expression as well as local events.

As far as I am aware, sailing sculptures out of ferro-cement have never been made before.

It is exciting to take the water and canals as an exhibition arena for sculpture. This will be a floating, nomadic exhibition, where the artworks move on their own power - with their own motors. They will be experienced during the journey rather than being locked inside a freight container.

The project will also result in a collaboration with the cement industry and in exchanges with different types of expertise within cement building. The Ferro-cement boats must function both practically as well as artistically. The project will use different types of technology and research within engineering, building and construction as well as communications. The project will involve the use of technology and research in the engineering, building and construction branches and communications technology.

"Life-boats" aims to show how life can be lived differently and how one can transport oneself without it having irreversible consequences for future life. The "Life-boats" are CO2 neutral. The motors are battery driven electrical motors that can be charged with energy from sustainable energy sources. The "Life-boats" will themselves become living proof that it is possible to travel in a CO2 neutral manner and will hopefully help to convince us that a future without coal, oil or atomic energy is possible. Art can be an eye-opener. Also in a climate context. **From Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen's recommendation page 61*

The outcome that I am hoping for is that people will see that irrational and - at the outset - mad visions can be realised. That belief can move mountains. That one can embark on unknown journeys in and outside of oneself and create a foundation of value in the service of culture, which creates opportunities for lifting and carrying together.

Promotion in newspapers and the electronic media

In connection with the "Life-boats" exhibitions about the artistic and ship technical preparatory work, there has already been great interest and press coverage. We have contacts within newspapers, radio and TV as well as art-magazines, that have followed the creation of the "Campingwomen" and their camping tours, who have expressed interest in covering "Life-boats". The Norwegian National News visited the studio recently, and showed cuts from the process during the daily news on NRK TV. see www.life-boats.com

Several European countries have made TV and newspaper/magazine articles about the "Campingwomen". France was particularly active on the press side of things. Euro-news made an excellent film, translated into at least 10 languages, staying on the internet for several months. I expect the interest in the "Life-boats" project will be just as great as there will be more players involved in large parts of Europe.

The plan is to make a film and book about the whole "Life-boats" project, about the process and the voyage.

The camping tour had some of our best cultural promoters on board, they would also like to come with on the "Life-boats" voyage to contribute as ambassadors of the project. This includes Dr. Phil Else Marie Bukdahl, former Rector of the Danish Royal Academy of Art, Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen, former Minister of Culture and current Rector of the School of Design in Kolding, and the Norwegian Professor of the Bergen National Academy of the Art, Dr. Phil. Jorunn Veiteberg. Amongst these are fabulous writers who are willing to write about the project.

www.life-boats.com has started. The website is under development and is being updated constantly, both during and after the production phase and the journeys.

Translation of the review of "Life-boats" at the Utzon centre in the Norwegian National newspaper VG, 16 July 2010, by Lars Elton

Aalborg (VG). Some people dream bigger and differently to others. When these dreams become reality, they can move the world.

Marit Benthe Norheim (50) is amongst those artists who do not allow themselves to be restricted by received truths. She has worked in concrete as her artistic material for a long time and produced "Campingwomen" in 2008 – the art project that will probably be remembered best from the year that Stavanger was the European Capital of Culture.

"Campingwomen" were goddess sculptures moulded in cement onto caravans and they made people smile and engage themselves everywhere that they went.

River journey

Now she has moved from land to water and launched the "Life-boats"; three cement women formed over a lifeboat shell which will sail around Europe's waterways, rivers and canals.

Large and small

The project has been exhibited at the Utzon Centre in Aalborg, the last building the great Danish Architect Jørn Utzon built before he died. The place is symbolic because both the building and the "Life-boats" are beautiful, but also because the centre is engaged and unites the creative disciplines that Norheim is working with.

The exhibition marks the fact that all the artistic and construction choices have been made and that the boats can be built to scale in accordance with all the safety requirements. In the exhibition, Norheim shows the boats on a smaller scale in bronze and as larger models on a scale of 1:5. In addition, animations of the project in different European cities is shown, working sketches and technical

calculations as well as an overview of earlier projects. She has also gotten children to contribute with figures in clay which decorate one of the boats, an example of how she would like to involve people that the boats sail to on their long voyage. It is, in other words, possible to get a good idea of how this will look when the boats are finished on the full scale. And it is easy to become enthusiastic.

This enthusiasm is due to Marit Benthe Norheim's realism combined with her narrative ability. The boat women's poetic qualities are obvious and the models are so large and so detailed that they are artworks in themselves. There is also something about the project's basic ideas that make it a reminder of what is important to protect in life.

Life-affirming lifeboats

"Life-boats" are something as simple as an optimistic and life-affirming project. Each boat has its own identity based on the device of "my ship is loaded with..." and the boats carry with them, and will be filled along the way with, longing, life and memories. The three mottoes are mirrored in the shapes of the boat women ("Life", for example is a pregnant woman who sails on her back), but the motto will also function on another level, e.g. as future, present and past. The foundation of the project is an affirmation of the feminine powers and women's abilities to bear and foster life. This makes the "Life-boats" both a life-affirming and awareness-raising project at the same time. And because it also has a clear stance on the environment and energy as well as a willingness to bind cultures together, then the possibilities of this project are huge.

Thank heavens that someone wants to move the world.

Financing plan for production and what the project can give to sponsors as a visible form of thanks.

Applications for funding for the production and the journey have been sent out to both public and private funds and companies. The journey itself and its budget will be shown before the applications to the EU are delivered.

The bookkeeper Jette Dybdahl Jensen from Modern Danish, the business service, is responsible for the bookkeeping of the project. She is also a part of the budgeting. RGD Revision and DSILB are responsible for the accounts.

The budget, preliminary bookkeeping and financing plan has been produced as a separate document and can be supplied.

What can the project give to sponsors as a visible form of thanks?

- In the work towards finding private sponsors, we will also work at providing following boats, which in addition to carrying an assortment of practical equipment for the journey, will also contain advertising/informational material about the sponsors. This can be shown and sail with, visible on the boat, e.g. as flags or banners. But can also be packed down for showing at the harbours that we dock a
- The sponsors will also get their logo printed on all materials relating to the project, We are planning a documentary film and a book about the production and the journey.
- Press in several countries have already shown an interest in following the journeys.
- There will also be an opportunity to make an exhibition about the project at the respective companies that have shown an interest in supporting the "Life-Boats."
- I will also give presentations at companies, or tours in the workshop during the production process.
- Lithographies – I have made one of each sculptural ship. They are printed by Det Grafiske Værksted, Hjørring.
- It will also be possible to travel in the boats for a part of the journey. Each ship can carry about 6 passengers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

JORUNN VEITEBERG

ELSE MARIE BUKDAHL

NORWEGIAN MARITIMT MUSEUM

HOLGER KOEFOED

JØRN SIMEN ØVERLI

RUTH WILHELMINE MEYER

ELSEBETH GERNER NIELSEN

INGER GRUND PETERSEN

MARY MILLER



Bronze models on a scale of 1:40 digitally manipulated into an image of a canal in Ghent, Belgium.

Recommendation of the "Life-boats" project, by Mary Miller, August 2009

Marit Bente Norheim's contribution to Stavanger2008, European Capital of Culture was critically important.

- Her Caravan Women / Campingwomen, commissioned by Stavanger2008 - were emblematic of our vision, to bring international, national and regional artists together with the community to create exceptional and lasting projects.

Her new project Life Boats, presents a natural progression from the beautiful Rolling Angels, work which I also took to the UK in 2000, through the Caravan Women / Campingwomen, to a new and vibrant exploration of the moving and iconic female form.

We are currently working on building an important international collaboration to present these works, possibly involving future European Capitals of Culture.

I recommend without hesitation Marit Bente Norheim's new work, and personally, feel privileged to be able to be involved in her work and creative process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide further information.

Mary Miller
Director, Stavanger2008
European Capital of Culture

trumpetmiller@yahoo.com
Mobile: 0047 9650 2008



Recommendation by Jorunn Veiteberg, Art historian, curator, writer and Professor at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts

Recommendation of Marit Benthe Norheim

As the exhibition manager at Hordadaland Art Center in Bergen in the 80's, I had the pleasure of organising Marit Benthe Norheim's first solo exhibition, *Between Fighting and Dancing* in 1986. Since then, I have followed her art career very closely. At the time, she was still a student at the Royal Academy of Arts in London and she was a new and different "voice" in Norwegian sculpture. Her figures made references to stylistic traditions other than the classical tradition which was still cultivated by many Norwegian sculptors at the time. This was noted positively in the academic community by critics such as Harald Flor in *Dagbladet*. But the thing that made this exhibition unforgettable for me was the audience who came to see it. People who had never been to an exhibition before, but who had met the artist in a train or lived in her neighbourhood, streamed to the exhibition. It told of a rare ability to communicate with all kinds of people, and this ability to create contact is something Marit Benthe Norheim has used actively in her art. Several of her largest public commissions like the Rat Maiden sculpture in Skien (2006) and *Campingwomen*, which was created for the European City of Culture Stavanger (2008) directly involved children, young people, refugee women and friends. They contributed photos, stories and figures in glass and ceramics which she used as collage elements. I have been both moved and contemplative to see the pride and ownership in her sculptures that this has created amongst her audience, and it represents one dimension that I think is an important aspect of discussions about art in the public space.

Many of Marit Benthe Norheim's monumental sculptures are mobile. *Campingwomen* is built on top of caravans and they have thus driven far and wide from Finnmark in the North to Iceland in the West and Denmark in the South. It is art that appeals to people in the places where they are, and which tackles existential and humanistic themes which never go out of fashion. Now she is producing a new series of mobile sculptures, this time in the form of sailing figures (Life-boats), which represent a technical and artistic challenge of monumental proportions. I am in no doubt that Marit Benthe Norheim will be able to realise this task. It represents the type of dreams that one wants to see realised and thus I hope that she will get the financial support that she is applying for.

Bergen, den 24. august 2011



Jorunn Veiteberg

Professor, at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts

Extract from a recommendation for the Life Boats project, by Else Marie Bukdahl, February 2009

At the end of 2008 Marit Benthe Norheim has drawn up a project description to a new, large and original project, which in a qualified and wonderful way will create new connections between the North and several European cities. She has called this project "Livbåter/Life Boats". In this project she has found new solutions to the relationship between sculpture, movement and music in order to be able to appeal to the viewers' feelings and fantasy and draw them into the magic circle of the artwork. The project will comprise three boats, made in concrete and shaped as female figures. Again it will be the Norwegian composer, Geir Johnson, who will compose the music. He will compose music for the interiors of each boat in order to enhance the character of each individual character of the women. The intention is for the "Life Boats" to sail from Sæby towards Copenhagen and thereafter across the canals of Europe, and create a network of new contacts between North and South. They invite the viewers to experience something new and unexpected, which they will not have experienced in either the artistic world or in their everyday lives. These "Life Boats" can enhance new lines of movement in the environment and institute new directions of seeing. And they will contain a special sensory experience, which will promote sides of our inner and outer reality, which we often overlook and possibly don't know at all. The art creates meaning in the public space, but does so in a special way.

In a world where there are often contradictions between population groups and nationalities, the "Life Boats" will create new life-affirming relations between people and symbolise the desire for fellowship and respect for one another, which is always at the top of our agenda, but which we often have had problems with realising.

"The Camping Women" showed with all possible clarity, that Marit Benthe Norheim can solve the artistic and technical problems, which a large, feasible project requires. I am therefore certain that she will also realise the "Life Boats" project in an artistic and professionally qualified manner.

I can therefore warmly recommend, that she obtain support for this project.



Else Marie Bukdahl

Dr. phil. Tidligere rektor for Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi.

Recommendation from Skien Municipality, Department of Culture

Marit Benthe Norheim
Houenvej 52
Mygdal
DK-9800 Hjørring

Office address: **Langbrygga 5b**
Postal address: **Postboks 4, Sentrum**
3701 SKIEN
Telephone : **35 58 10 00**

Skien, 29.11.2010

THE LIFE-BOATS ART PROJECT

Skien is a canal city in Norway, and Skien Municipality is very positive about an art project that wants to make use of the waterways and canals in Scandinavia and Europe.

The Telemark canal, with Skien as the port of entry, celebrates its 150 year jubilee in 2011 and is therefore one of the region's strongest brands and bearers of culture. It is in the interests of Skien Municipality that the canals become the focus of attention, debate and renewed interest. This is what we believe will be the case with the completion of the Life-boats project, which also includes a voyage on the Telemark canal.

An art project based on the canal will also harmonise well with Skien Municipality's commitment to Art Town Skien, where drawing attention to art production, the promotion of art and artists and improving their working conditions is essential. Work is underway to establish the Telemark Canal as a regional park. The purpose of the regional park is to increase the attractiveness of the area as a destination and place of residence and to bring about growth and development in business through refining of the distinctive resources that are associated with the Telemark Canal and the canal landscape. In line with this project, "Life-boats" could also help to highlight the Telemark canal as an attractive destination and place to live as well as supporting objectives for the region.

As an artist, Marit Benthe Norheim has roots in Skien, both in terms of her familiar ties as well as an artistic association. One of her major projects, The "Rat Maiden", is a landmark in Skien. Both the "Rat Maiden" as well as her other great work in Skien, Reinforced women, are in close proximity to the canal and will thus be able to welcome the "Life-boats" as they sail up the Telemark canal.

Based on this, Skien Municipality is very positive about the "Life-boats" project based on the project information that Marit Benthe Norheim has sent to us and we look forward to further collaboration around the project.

Yours sincerely,


Ragnar Nilssen,
Head of Culture, Skien
Municipality


Tom-Erik Lønnerød
project leader, Art town Skien



Oslo, 14 oktober 2011

Support for the project “Life-Boats” of Marit Benthe Norheim

A summary of the project “Life-Boats” was presented to the museum, and the museum has had a meeting with Geir Johnson, a composer and contributor to the project. We have evaluated the project in light of our exhibitions and plans for artistic and interpretive activity at the Norwegian Maritime Museum in the coming years. Both the staff and management of the museum have expressed interest and enthusiasm for the “Life-Boat” project. In our view, the project will provide a new way to convey and interpret the intangible, mythical aspects of seafaring in the form of both exhibitions and activities on the fjord.

The Norwegian Maritime Museum would like to express our interest in participating in this project as a harbor area and as a co-arranger of the project in Oslo in the summer of 2013. At this point, no formal written contract has been made between the interested parties, nor have any financial aspects been discussed. This letter is therefore an expression of the museum’s interest in participating in the project in principle.

For the Norwegian Maritime Museum

Espen Wæhle
Director

Recommendation by Holger Koefoed, Art Historian and writer and principal of the Oslo National Academy of Arts,

Ever since I first heard the artist Marit Benthe Norheim speak about her new art project Life-boats, I have been fascinated and spellbound: Would it be possible in our financially controlled world to accomplish such an imaginative and adventurous art project?

Now that I can see that the realisation of this concept is within reach, it is simply a matter of congratulating the artist and all other parties involved - and there are many - that they really have succeeded in getting it launched in a manner which means that the idea will become reality. There is systematic and carefully considered work behind all the different components that this project comprises. It has become a Nordic contemporary art project of which we can be proud and of which much will be said and written.

I see the local involvement at the locations that are on the route of the journey of these female figure boats, as extremely important. It is a different vision of how the imagination in art can function in relation to local communities, collaboration between the arts and what it could become at the start of our millennium!

There is an optimism and an energy here that we desperately need after economic crises and cultural depression.

I think of the dragon ship of the Vikings, which struck fear into the hearts of people along the coasts and canals of Europe. Now, a different and more modest fleet of women are coming, with an entirely different message - take care of the environment, travel sustainably, imagination is our greatest resource, etc. There are so many dimensions to this art project that are important and positive on their own - and which, collectively approach fairytale proportions! This is just what we need!

Nordic wanderlust has led to other ways of experiencing than by hoarding and this art project can become an image of the Nordic contribution to our common European culture which could create society and culture according to the Nordic model - politically, socially and artistically. This project is not ideology in solid form, but will function in a more open and inspirational way. There *are* alternatives, even in this day and age, which is so desperately in need of them.

Regards and best of luck

Holger Kofoed

Recommendation of “Life-boats” in relation to Poland, by Jørn Simen Øverli, singer.

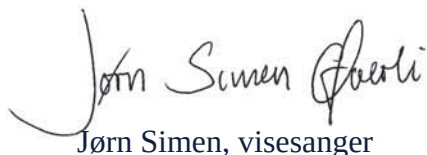
Marit Benthe Norheim’s “Life-boats” is a magnificent project which is about fundamental and universal aspects of our human existence. It can encompass an enormous amount whilst it is in the process of being realised. Communication is the key word.

In my view, it would be natural to attach songs to the boats. The boats will cross borders and create contacts and it is thus important and natural that they be filled with many different kinds of artistic expression. Songs are one of the best shortcuts to creating an understanding of each others’ cultures, which is what the boats meant to do.

Starting the journey of “Longing”, “Life” and “Memories” in Poland will send out important signals. Poland is on its own perilous, fragile journey towards a modern, peaceful democracy and many new and exciting things are happening on this journey all the time. Opinions, mentality and attitudes towards one another change all the time. The belief in a bright future increases and songs are and have been an important source of inspiration along the way. Today, Poland has already become one of the most important new collaborative countries for Norway and Scandinavia and they communicate more and better with other European countries.

Poland was a country with a central European culture and long and important traditions in sculpture, painting, literature, performing arts, architecture and last, but not least, music, long before these disciplines underwent a modern development in Northern Europe, where our modern culture historically and fundamentally built upon impulses from Central Europe, including Poland. We need to learn more about Poland in many fields here in the North. The boats should be loaded with Norwegian, Nordic and Polish singers and musicians in union. This is currently being planned in the places that the boats will visit on their journey and the boats will continue to gather new friends before they are launched.

I have worked a lot in Poland in recent years and have had tours and concerts with my Polish/Norwegian band Karuzela, (www.karuzela.no) which performs the songs in both languages. Key cultural authorities in the country have asked me to continue. A collaboration with Marit Benthe Norheim is underway and she has been in Poland and given talks about the Life-boats which have resulted in great interest from the cultural authorities. We are now in the process of organising a tour for “Longing”, “Life” and “Memories” along Poland’s largest river Wis_a (Vistula). The historic traffic artery in the country. Most of the larger cities lie on the Wis_a and we are planning to anchor in 10 - 12 harbours and have contacted local artists for collaborations. Karuzela and other Polish and Norwegian musicians will be on the voyage.



Jørn Simen, visesanger

Recommendation by Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer, Singer / Vocal performer

Lifeboats become Lifesounds

three ships.....three sculptures....three women....three stages

Women in three stages.

It radiates so powerfully from the boats to Marit Benthe Norheim that they must get answers from living women on land.

The boat sculptures must be transformed into social sound sculptures: Lifesounds

The boats - “Longing”, “Life”, and “Memories” must meet children, pregnant women and women over 70 when they dock.

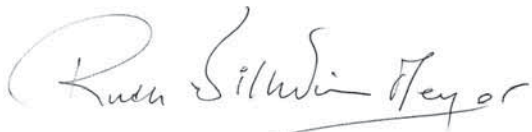
We must hear the sound of this meeting. We must hear children’s voices of the most peculiar varieties, elderly people humming an old song from their shared musical heritage and very importantly, we must hear the sound of unborn life: many pregnant women gathered with contact microphones on their bellies so that we can all hear it together.

That is how we become bound together in a communal sound sculpture.

This is universal, indivisibly connected to the life cycle and life experiences. Powerful and inviolable.

More specifically, I can see how this sound composition, which is directly inspired and connected to Life-boats, could form a kind of core in the diverse cultural exchange that will take place when the boats arrive at various locations. This core is so powerful that it can enter into an artistic unity with other expressions of both visual as well as performance art.

This is how Marit Benthe Norheim starts a wave of new visions in the world with her highly visionary, but very concrete sculptures.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ruth Wilhelmine Meyer, Singer/vocal performer.



Education and Research within Design

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Date: 28. march 2010

"Lifeboats" and the climate

Life-boats aims to show how life can be lived and how one can be transported without causing irreversible consequences for future life. Lifeboats are CO2 neutral. The motors are battery driven electrical motors, which can be recharged with energy that is produced by sustainable energy sources. The batteries can be recharged at the times when it is most advantageous with regard to production and the economy. One of the biggest challenges facing the use of sustainable energy is, as we well know, the lack of opportunities to store it in an appropriate manner. There is not always a need for energy when the wind blows or the sun is shining.

In recent years, work has been done to develop battery technology for applications like transport. The battery can be charged when there is an excess of energy production, thereby functioning as a flexible energy buffer. The Life-boats want to demonstrate that it is possible - both in everyday life as well as on a holiday - to move around in a CO2-neutral manner. Life-boats can also create a backdrop for local debates and local educational projects about energy, in the places that they travel to. There will also be an opportunity for cross-border discussions and comparisons of energy solutions.

At Kolding School of Design in Denmark, we are, in collaboration with a series of companies (including Dong Energy, Falck, Peugeot and Statoil), in the process of investigating how battery powered cars can become viable. The project is called etrans (www.etrans.dk) and is generally concerned with what can be done to move the transport sector into a greener future. Life-boats will draw on the experiences of etrans and will also be used to present its results in a European context. Life-boats will be living proof of the fact that it is possible to travel in a CO2-neutral manner and will hopefully help to convince us that a future without coal, oil and atomic power is a realistic possibility. Art can be an eye opener. Even in the context of climate.

Elsebeth Gerner Nielsen
 Rector, Kolding School of Design.
www.dskd.dk

Recommendation by Inger Grund Petersen, Head of tourism Sæby, Denmark

SÆBY TURISTBUREAU

 LysetsLand.dk
 Toppen af Danmark


Marit Benthe Norheim - an artist who creates meaning

As the local promoter and project manager on the cultural project "Between Heaven and the Sea. Angels, Mermaids and other Travellers", I had the pleasure of working closely with the artist Marit Benthe Norheim for more than two years. This was partly in connection with her sculptural project "Rolling Angels" in Oslo, Wick and Sæby and partly in connection with work on a 6m tall, double-sided figurehead, Sæby's new landmark, "The Lady of the Sea". The sculptural project "The Lady of the Sea" inspired a twin sculpture in Norway with a different motif from Henrik Ibsen's plays, namely "The Rat Maiden" in Skien – a project which, with the help of Marit Benthe Norheim, led to a wonderful and fruitful cultural collaboration between the Ibsen towns of Skien and Sæby. Finally, in Sæby we had the pleasure of being visited by the rolling caravans of the "Campingwomen", which aroused a great deal of interest in the town.

The focal point of the cultural project in Sæby was Marit Benthe Norheim's idea of connecting four historic, strategically important harbour towns, based on the "spirit of place", because today we have a "periphery" in Denmark, Norway, Scotland and England respectively. "The spirit of place" or what is unique to the local identity, was to find its expression through each town's unique figureheads. And an inspiring, cultural exchange of experiences and stories was set in motion across national borders.

In Sæby, we chose to involve schools and kindergartens in the project and as something entirely new, Benthe went out to schools and kindergartens and told the children about the meaning of figureheads and guardian angels and kick-started the children's work in creating each of their "guardian angels" for inclusion in the figurehead "The Lady of the Sea". More than 1500 children took part in the project, of which 900 children made protective figures in ceramics and glass, whilst others created art and sculpture on the same theme which were exhibited at several locations in the municipality.

Throughout the project, Marit Benthe Norheim displayed a great deal of enthusi-

asm as a promoter of her art and also as an artist who masters the very large scale and simply grows in relation to the challenges. "The Lady of the Sea" has become a national treasure and is a landmark which attracts many visitors.

Marit Benthe Norheim has a singular ability to involve both children and adults in her huge projects. With great seriousness and commitment, she manages to both communicate her visions as well as being completely open and unbiased in her approach to the people that she includes in her work. She has, as an artist, a unique respect for the expressiveness that children contribute, and she succeeds in creating enthusiasm, ownership – and above all else, meaning in the artworks that she creates.

With financial support from farsighted cultural funds and visionary companies, Marit Benthe Norheim will undoubtedly, both artistically as well as technically and with a great deal of personal clout, be capable of carrying out her largest ever project "Life-boats" – for the benefit and delight of both audiences and investors.

With this amazing and spectacular project, Marit Benthe Norheim will be able to awaken an unusual amount of attention in all the countries and towns that she sails through. Because Marit Benthe Norheim's sculptural projects are always communicative cultural projects in the broadest sense, and nobody who comes into contact with Marit Benthe Norheim's "Life-boats" will remain untouched by the meeting, just as "Life-boats" will become infused with meaning from all the people, who go on board the "Life-boats" on the journey through Europe, and contribute to the artwork.

"Life-boats" could be a unique platform for a Norwegian-Danish cultural campaign in Europe, if we seize the opportunity and have a vision. At a time of huge divisions in the European project, it is precisely this cross-border cultural exchange and powerful artistic projects like "Life-boats" that are capable of creating cohesion and cultural understanding. We need this – both politically and in commercial terms.

Med venlig hilsen

 Turistchef Inger Grund Petersen
 LysetsLand.dk
 Toppen af Danmark

APPENDICES

OF ROUTES AND ROOTS

POWERFUL FRONTAL FIGURES
BY JORUNN VEITEBERG

MARIT BENTHE NORHEIM
CURRICULUM VITAE

"LIFE-BOATS" IS SUPPORTED BY

CONTACT DETAILS

OF ROUTES AND ROOTS

a dialogue between mobility research and art

Utzon Center 23 June 2010

Coordinator: Professor Antje Gimmler, gimmler@socsci.aau.dk

Mobility is one of the central characteristics of our globalised era. We are virtually mobile - with new communications media. We move geographically when we travel and commute or move. We use products that have been transported all over the world. But we also travel mentally, we develop as individuals and create a new narrative about our identity as we relate to our future and past. When we move down routes, we also create roots to the places, the people and the symbols that are meaningful for our identity and existence. People's roots are not - as Salman Rushdie already pointed out - established, but are actually flexible. They are like networks or rhizomes, where shifting connections and new attachments are made possible. Living in Aalborg can, for example, mean to identify oneself as someone from Northern Jutland or as a Somalian Northern Jutlander with roots in Somalia and England, where a part of the family and friends live. Routes and roots are attached to each other and new and unexpected connections come into being in the world of mobility.

In the workshop we will be combining a sociological perspective with an artistic vision of mobility and attachment to place. The artist Marit Benthe Norheim has, with her project "Life-boats", created a unique access to the journey as a symbol of the human longing for both continuity and change. In the project, the boats invite a sensual experience of the different sides of our inner and outer realities in the daily life of mobility.

With the titles: "My Ship is Loaded with Longing", "My Ship is Loaded with Life", "My Ship is Loaded with Memories", the boats visualise for the first time in three dimensions the past, the present and the future - which are constituted in each identity narrative. They also symbolise with their actual travels on the European canals, relations between human beings, cultures and nations that create new identities and fellowships. In this way, Marit Benthe Norheim's project goes into a dialogue with our individual experiences and with the current political agenda in the name of mobility.

*The Life-boat project is about meeting
– about exchange – about receiving a foreign expression
– about daring to move
into unknown territory and opening up into
the intimate sphere."*

Marit Benthe Norheim

www.utzoncenter.dk - www.life-boats.com



PROGRAM



- 10:00 Welcome and introduction by Professor dr.phil. Antje Gimmler, Aalborg University og C-MUS.
- 10:30 – 11.00 About the Life-boats (in the exhibition hall) by Artist Marit Benthe Norheim
- 11.00 – 11:15 Pause
- 11:15 – 12:15 Lines of Q and A in Social Aesthetics. Social Activism in Contemporary Art. v. videoartist Khalid D. Ramadan, (Copenhagen, Berlin, Beirut)
- 12:15 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 14:30 Of Routes and roots – tales of transnational identities by proff Ann-Dorte Christensen, Aalborg University
- 14:30 – 15.00 House boat topologies - dreams of place by Ph.d. candidate Hanne Louise Jensen, Roskilde University
- 15.00 – 15.30 Time: Aalborg / Place: 2033 - a performative "space journey" by artist Katrine Dickinck-Holmfeld (Denmark)
- 15:30 – 15:45 Break
- 15:45 – 16:45 Business travel by Associate Professor Claus Lassen, Aalborg University and C-MUS
- 16:45 – 17.45 The sculptor's conquest of new territories and forms of expression by former Rector of the Danish Royal Academy of Art Dr. phil. Else Marie Bukdahl
- 18:00 – 20:00 Reception at the Utzon Centre in the Spidsgatterhallen

"Powerful frontal figures", extracts from the article, by Dr. Phil, Art Historian; Jorunn Veiteberg, 1996

Figureheads are not usually a part of the sculptor's repertory. These grandiose wooden figures mounted on ships' prows have always been hand-crafted products with no status in an artistic context, and as a craft they blossomed first and foremost in the days of sailing ships. Figureheads could represent renowned warriors or captains, but were often women. In the beginning they were upstanding women holding bibles, but as time passed they became more scantily dressed, more voluptuous and frivolous. Nevertheless, they were always strong and powerful women, because the function of the figurehead was to protect ship and crew from the dangers of the sea. They were the guarantee for a successful journey and the goal achieved.

The use of women as allegorical figures was also customary in art until the 1800s. Based on thorough studies of Christianity, on the myths of antiquity and philosophy as well, handbooks were printed giving directions on how various virtues, ideas and qualities could be expressed by means of allegories and personifications. It appears that the figurehead is related to the traditional way of personifying the concept of trust, in one of the most frequently used handbooks from the 1600s and 1700s, Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, trust is personified as a woman with long flowing hair and loosely-hanging clothing. She holds a ship in her arms and gazes trustily towards heaven. In Ripa's definition, trust is to admit that one is in danger, but at the same time retaining the belief that one can be rescued. It is a quality needed by seafarers setting out on dangerous waters – that is why the woman holds a ship in her arms. This world of symbolism signifies the meaning in several of Marit Benthe Norheim's female figures.

They are sensual and vigorous, these women in concrete that Norheim has created, and she enters into a dialogue with a long art history tradition. The half-naked figurehead may belong in a low cultural sphere, but references for choosing her as a subject are also found in so-called "fine" art. Both the half clad and the wholly naked female figures have deep roots in art history. It is, in fact, considered a separate art genre, introduced by the Greeks in the fifth century B.C. Thus, it is not merely a question of an artistic subject, but of an art form – the nude. Almost all art students are trained in this genre, and very many artists, painters as well as sculptors, have created their interpretations. Therefore, to a greater degree than any other motif, the nude denotes "Art" in Christian iconography there is, a more ambivalent attitude to nakedness. The nude body often symbolizes sin and shame, and the most loathsome of all is Eve, who in her nakedness, personifies sexual temptation. Only the Virgin Mary is guilt free. When she bares her breast to nurse Jesus, there is no negative undertone. As mother and virgin, she has become the ideal icon of The Good Mother.

Norheim's figures conform with this equivocal tradition. As is customary in the tradition, the figures are idealized and not portraits of specific women. - The bared upper body which signals immediately that we are facing mythological creatures or allegorical figures. Nor is it merely incidental that it is the upper body that is unclad and the breast that is emphasized. The area of the bosom is the seat of the heart. At the same time, Norheim plays on the many implications associated with the breast. The breast is seen as both a natural and a sexual attribute, and as a source of nourishment it implies security and protection. By proudly and shamelessly showing

this soft and feminine part of her body, Norheim's female figures convey strength and freedom. But there is no emphasis on the emotional bond between mother and child. Although one is obviously happy, the two mother figures show no active solicitude, even though their bodies provide protective cover.

The huge dimensions of the figures and the constant touching on sensuality and fertility, nourishment and protection, lead one's thoughts to depictions of female deities in pre-Christian religions. These early mothers symbolized fertility and life-giving, and in primitive cultures where man lives in harmony with earth and nature's cycles, fertility is always sacred. The new feminist movement search for new and positive pictures with which to identify. Many women artists have created anti-pictures in opposition to the stereotype female picture which prevails in art advertising and films, and similarly, the so-called Goddess Movement has rebelled against Jewish-Christian God symbolism. Norheim's figures can be interpreted in the light of both these "strategies". Sensual desire is depicted without automatically being tied to sin and shame, as in traditional Christian iconography, while at the same time there is a spiritual dimension related to the picture of God which the Goddess Movement stands for. Some have maintained that the most important contribution from this movement is the picture of the God of creation as Mother and Goddess. A much-used symbol in this context – although open to many interpretations – is the spiral which can be stretched and retracted, and is a symbol of birth and death. Just as the whirl, it can represent creative strength, femininity and fertility. All these interpretations are evident in Norheim's sculptures. The vital force and the feminine Eros which radiate from these female figures are closely tied to their life-giving capabilities.

Many feminists object to what they perceive as essentialism in the Goddess-Movement. In western philosophy women have always been connected with material nature, not matters of the soul and spirit, and this kind of thinking can be traced back to precisely those myths in which nature and earth were associated with a feminine mother god. By attaching women's identity and their very being so closely to their life-giving potential, women are once again reduced to biology and body. At the same time, however, it would be wrong, if women were to underestimate and disclaim the knowledge they receive through menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth. Although pregnancy and motherhood have not meant the same for women at all times, they are inescapable realities. It is, therefore, important that art takes up such experiences for examination and Norheim's sculptures also deal with these questions. We cannot avoid the fact that to bring forth human life is a condition for the perpetuation of the human race. Today this fact contains a huge challenge as we face the abundance of reproduction technologies which may be used in the future to degrade pregnancy and childbirth, to commercialize child-bearing and in the long run to make the female body totally superfluous.

Norheim's sculptures bear witness to faith in the body's experience and women's strength. And the most important aspect of Marit Benthe Norheim's figureheads, is their function as protective symbols and signposts.

Excerpt from a letter to schools in Stavanger regarding the involvement of school pupils and refugee women for the creation of the “Refugee woman” from the project “Campingwomen.”

This is a letter to the schools in Stavanger wanting to participate in the creation of the interior of the Campingwoman: The Refugee

The concept of the Refugee woman and the involvement of schoolchildren and refugees

This caravan is intended to be a woman in flight with full speed ahead, underscored by diagonals in relief on her dress. At the same time, she turns her head and looks behind her. She will have two faces, one on each side, both of which keep watch. The Janus symbol fits well in this context.

The Janus definition

“Gods and other creatures with two heads, like the Roman Janus, symbolise the beginning and the end, the past and the present, yesterday and today, the power of the sun and the moon, the power of the rising and setting sun, the choices at the crossroads, fate, the beginning of a journey or a task, departure and return, opening and closing of doors – the two heads also represent judgement and good estimation, cause and effect, the ability to see inward and outward.”

(Symbol lex, Cooper)

Inside the Campingwomen’s skirt, I will fill the ceiling, walls and floor with reliefs in ceramics.

This is where I want to collaborate with schools, where the pupils must imagine a situation where they suddenly have to flee from everything and perhaps never get the opportunity to come back again. What would they take with them? They must write about it, draw it and model it.

At the same time, I would also like to collaborate with the refugee center and involve people who have experienced this flight. What did they take with them and what do they miss? Their work must also result in ceramic reliefs, which together with the others will constitute the mosaics inside the caravan.

We have made a vault inside the woman’s body, which will make the room appear sacred, with associations to different religious buildings, e.g. mosques, synagogues or churches.

Experience from earlier collaborations with children and young people

I have good experiences from similar projects where children and young people have participated in awareness raising processes, with palpable results: in the form of objects in clay, glass and porcelain.

In Sæby, Denmark, 905 children and young people produced protection symbols in glass and clay, after working for a period with the theme, according to tasks created by me initially and then expanded on by their teachers. Afterwards I modelled these reliefs into a mosaic in a large female figure in cement. The Lady of the Sea (photos on my website www.norheim.dk)

The same thing happened in Skien with the Rat Maiden project, where I produced a project in connection with the National Ibsen Celebration in 2006, with 2318 children and young people involved with the themes in Ibsen’s play, *Little Eyolf*, where I focused on seeing and being seen, or being overlooked and children made their own unique eye in porcelain, where Prosgrunn Porcelain provided the expertise and the materials (Photos on the websites www.norheim.dk and www.rottejomfruen.no)

Practical/actual completion of the collaboration with schools and refugee centers

1) First I will introduce the project in Powerpoint for the schools and refugee centers that are interested in a collaboration

2) Afterwards we will find literature and possibly films which highlight what it is to be a refugee and enter into a dialogue between the refugee centers and the schools. Refugees who have experienced the situation should be seen as a great resource with the experiences that they have.

(In Stavanger I would like the schools that participate in the Campingwomen project to decide themselves how much time they want to apportion to this. In earlier projects, some schools have worked with this theme for a prolonged period where they have used it in subjects including history, Norwegian, geography, music, art and made their own projects alongside these, which have resulted in theatre, books, exhibitions, etc.)

3) Then we will find a day at each school and also Refugee centres if possible in fellowship where they will model in clay.

The size of the reliefs will be decided in relation to how many participants are part of the project.

I have measured the interior of the caravan it can take at most 2000 reliefs, but if it is just 100, then we will increase the size of the reliefs.

The reliefs will be modelled according to a previous theme which can be expanded upon in relation to the dialogue between the schools and the refugees

Most schools have pottery workshops and kilns for firing.

Because the reliefs need to be in the caravan, ordinary glazes can be used.

We will come back to the size and thickness of the reliefs.

4) When the reliefs have been fired, I will fetch them and glue them into the interior of the Refugee woman.

I would also like the preparatory exercises that are done in writing and drawing to be collected in a portfolio, which will be available for people to look at.

"We can argue over how many refugees we can accept. But there should be no argument over the fact that it is both more humane and better for our lives together if we use the knowledge that is available today. Of the wounds on the souls, which is the secret suffering of the refugees."

Jørgen Flindt Pedersen, journalist and writer, Jyllands Posten

Yours sincerely, Marit Benthe Norheim

www.norheim.dk



MARIT BENTHE NORHEIM, *Curriculum Vitae*, Born 1960, Norway

EDUCATION:

- 1984–87 Royal Academy of Art, (MA) London, England
1983–84 The travelling Art Academy, throughout Europe
1981–83 Norwegian Fine Art Academy in Bergen, Norway

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS:

- New Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen, Denmark
Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway
National Gallery, Oslo, Norway
Riksgalleriet, Norway
Bergen Art museum, Norway
Norwegian Arts council, Norway
The Skien Arts collection, Norway
Vendsyssel Art Museum, Denmark
The region of Northern Jutland, Denmark
Godfrey Bradman Collection, London, England
The National gallery, Gaborone, Botswana

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS:

- 2012 Victoriacourt, Hjellabrygga, Skien, Norway
2011 Tjørring school, Denmark
2008 Hospice Djursland, Rønne, Denmark
2007 Winged, Skovsgård, Brovst, Denmark
2006 Arrivals, 8 figures in Tårs, Denmark
2003-2006 The Rat Maiden projects, for the 100th anniversary celebration of Henrik Ibsen Skien, Norway
2004 4 stone sculptures for Paradplatsen, Leksand, Sweden
2004-2005 Strollers, Bratsberg Harbour, Porsgrunn, Norway
2003-2004 Cable tapestry, AVV, (Recycling Plant Vendsyssel) Hjørring, Denmark
2003 Lifeboat, Tveten School, Porsgrunn, Norway
2002-2003 The front of the medal, Frisk-liv senteret, Porsgrunn, Norway
2002 Entry/Exit, Kopervik videregående school, Karmøy, Norway
2001 Relief, Kensington Europe Hotel, London, UK
2000-2001 The Lady of the Sea, Sæby harbour, Denmark
2000 Baptismal font for church in Vestmannaeyr, Iceland
1999 The Three Graces, Helgerud School, Ringerike, Norway
1999 The ear on the shore, Nordic Stone Symposium, Vestmannaeyr, Iceland
1998 Hiding in the skirts, Grønnåsen School, Bodø, Norway
1995-1996 Figureheads/Women in the Wind UNION/Norske Skogs biological purification plant, Skien, Norway
1995 Relief, Carriers, Shepherdesses, Flying, Folkets hus, Bergen, Norway

- 1994 Fountain, Shadow, Øyrane Videregående, Førde, Norway
1993-1994 Love bench, A place to rest, with Sys Svinding, Nordic stonesymposium, Qaqortoq, Greenland
1993 Journey, NSB, Sandnes, Norway
1992 Journey, Trainload Freight Headquarters, British Rail, London, UK
1990 Flying, Stavanger Heliport, Norway
1989 Thoughtsharers farewell, Bergen Airport, Flesland, Norway
1988 Thoughtsharers, Lofsrudhøgda School, Oslo, Norway
1987 Touch, Os Distriktsheim, Bergen, Norway

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2013 Campingwomen, Recreate, Aalborg University Sydhavnen, Copenhagen DK
2013 Campingwomen, Church days, Aalborg, Denmark
2013 Campingwomen, Easter exhibition, Herregården Bratskov, Brovst Dk
2013 Campingwomen, Randers Art Museum, Denmark
2012 Life-boats, Womens Museum, Århus Denmark
2011 Hirtshals Lighthouse, Denmark
2010 Life-Boats – Rolling Angels – Campingwomen, Skagens Odde Nature Centre, Denmark
2010 Life-Boats artistic and ship technical preparations, Utzon Center Aalborg, DK
2009 Campingwomen, Reykjavik Arts Festival, Iceland
2009 Campingwomen, Århus 2017, v. Aros, at the Art museum Heart, Herning
2006-2008 Project Campingwomen, for the European Capital of Culture Stavanger 2008 Exhibition at 9 churches in Bogense, By Gallery M, DK
2008 Gallery M, Bogense
2006 Gallery Falkum, Skien, Norway
2005 Vendsyssel Art museum, DK
2001 Rolling Angels, the Loading Bay Gallery, (FAC) London, England
2001 Rolling Angels, Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury Festival, England
2001 Rolling Angels, Sæby Church, Denmark
2001 Norheim and Ørntoft, Banegården, Aabenraa, Denmark
2000 Rolling Angels, Trafalgar Square, St. Martin in the Fields, London, UK
2000 Rolling Angels, The Northlands festival, Wick, Scotland
2000 Rolling Angels, Jakob Culture Church, Oslo, Norway
1997 Hjørring Art Association, Denmark
1997 Shepherdesses, Skagen Art Association, Denmark
1996 Norheim and Berge, Speculum-festival, Rogaland Art Centre, Stavanger, N
1995 London, Gallery F 15, Moss, Norway
1995 Knifewomen, Bunkers, International Project, Lista Lighthouse, Norway
1994 Shepherdesses, Traquair House, Scotland
1994 Shepherdesses, Sverresborg, Bergen, Norway

1994 Shepherdesses, Shad Thames Gallery, (FAC) Tower Bridge, London, England
 1994 Shepherdesses, Oslo Art Association, Norway
 1993 Gallery Langedården, Bergen, Norway
 1993 Trondheim Art Association, Norway
 1992 Sandnes Art Association, Norway
 1992 Gallery Marie Louise Wirth, Zürich, Switzerland (2 person)
 1992 Clove 11 Gallery, Fine Art Consultancy (FAC) London, England
 1991 Fine Art Consultancy, London, England
 1989 Gallery Wang, Oslo, Norway
 1989 The Crypt Gallery, St. Johns Church, London, England
 1987 Gallery F15, Moss, Norway
 1987 Bergen Art Association, Norway
 1986 Gallery Wang, Oslo, Norway
 1986 Gallery 1, Hordaland Art centre, Bergen, Norway
 1984 Scot. Agnes Gallery, Roskilde, Denmark

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS:

2010 Port 2010, Art Festival, North Jutland, Denmark
 2010 Goddesses, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, N
 2010 Summer Exhibition 2010, Seljord Art Association, Norway
 2009 Installation, National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, N
 2009 Exile, Art centre Silkeborg Bad, DK
 2009 Kulturdugnad Gamvik, Finnmark, Norway
 2009 Gallery Augustiana, Sønderborg, Dk
 2009 Kunst NU, Hobro, DK
 2009 Art in Northern Jutland, Hjørring, DK
 2008-2009 Vrå exhibitions, DK
 2007 Kontra, Finnish-Norwegian Culture Centre, Kontraskjæret, Oslo, Norway
 2007 Guest at Vrå Exhibition, Vrå, Denmark
 2006 European reflections, guest at Pro Copenhagen, Denmark
 2006 Ongoing conversations, Christianssands Art Association, Norway
 2005 Far East, Drawing exhibition, Kristiansand Art Association, Norway
 2003 Relations, Frednes Culture centre, Porsgrunn Art Association/TBK, Norway
 2002 Agerholm Sculpture Park, Denmark
 2001 Mother and Daughters, Sandnes Art Association, Norway
 2001 Agerholm Sculpture Park, Denmark
 2000 Gallery Heer, Oslo, Norway
 2000 Aalborg Triennale, Nordjyllands Art museum, Denmark
 2000 Agerholm Sculpture Park, Sjælland, Denmark
 2000 Nordenfjords, Hjørring Art museum, Denmark

1999 Female Nordic Contemporary Artists, Trondheim Art Association, Norway
 1999 Summer Exhibition, Ørje brug, Norway
 1999 Rosa, Installation in a silo, Summer Exhibition, Seljord Art Association, Norway
 1997–1998 Jeanne D'Arc. Sørlandets Art museum, travelling exhibition, Norway
 1997–1998 Kroppsnær. Nordic travelling exhibition arranged by Henie Onstad Art Centre, Oslo
 1996 Norwegian Sculpture Association, Oslo – Bergen, Norway
 1996 Voluptas, (Foundation 3,14) Norwegian show in Slovakia's National Gallery
 1996 National Gallery in Amman, (Foundation 3,14) Jordan
 1995 M.K. Curliones State Museum of Art, (Foundation 3,14) Litauen
 1995 Prints, London – Tokyo, Japan
 1994 Gallery Gerulata, Bratislava, Slovakia
 1994 Lista Lighthouse, Lista, Norway
 1993 Gallery Langas, (Foundation 3,14), Litauen,
 1992 The Stables Gallery, London, England
 1992 Aurora-Biennale, Finland
 1991 Royal Academy Summer Show, London, England
 1989 Royal Academy Summer Show, London, England
 1989 London Contemporary Art Market, London, England
 1988 Stockholm Art fair, Sweden
 1988 Kettles Yard Gallery, Cambridge, England
 1987 Gallery Garmer, Gothenburg, Sweden
 1986 National Gallery in Gaborone Botswana,
 1986 Brandt's Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark

OTHER ARTISTIC PRACTICE:

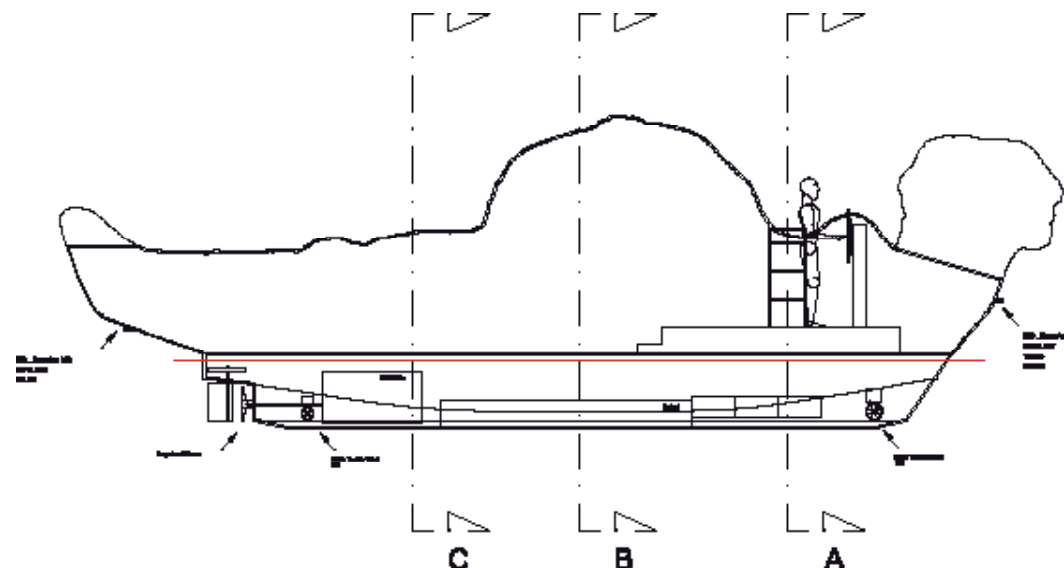
2011 Rolling Angels dances with pensioners in regi by Odin Teater, Holstebro festival
 2006-2011 Project "Campingwomen", European Capital of Culture Stavanger 2008.
 A travelling sculptural installation with music by Geir Johnson incorporated. It has travelled in Denmark, Norway and Iceland.
 2004 Nordic Stone Symposium, Orsa, Sweden, KKV, Bohuslän, Sweden
 1999 Nordic Stone Symposium "Lava & Folk", Vestmannaeyr, Iceland
 1993–94 Nordic Stone Symposium "Stone & People", Qaqortoq, Greenland
 1987 Installation at St. Johns Hospice, Artist in Residence, Lancaster, England

Part time teaching and lecturing at various art academies, including:

Royal Academy of Arts, (M.A.), London, UK, and Chelsea College of Art (Found.) London, Central / St. Martins School of Art (B.A), London, Wimbledon School of Art (M.A. Site Specific), London, UK, Liverpool Polytechnic (B.A.), Liverpool, UK
 Lecture at the National museum, Copenhagen. DK Lecture at Scandinavian Events Conference, Aalborg, 2005, DK

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