

PRINT IN REAL TIME 2019-24

Rita Marhaug

BACKGROUND

It is a great pleasure to present *Trykk i sanntid*, "Print in Real Time", a five-year art project born in Lofoten in Northern Norway, which has now reached its halfway point. The project started due to the need to showcase Lofoten's new printmaking workshop, in a way rooted in something important to us.

Over several years, with limited funds and great enthusiasm, my colleague Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde has built up the printmaking workshop *KK-trykk*, "KK-print", which was inaugurated in 2019. The workshop is a part of the joint studio complex and residency centre *Kunstkvarteret*, located in the middle of Lofoten, established in 2008. Here, four artists have permanent studio spaces while others rent or apply for residency stays for varying durations. In the spring of 2019, Hatlen Lunde contacted our experienced colleague Åse Anda and me with the vague idea of developing some kind of event to promote the new workshop.

Our trio first met in Haugesund in Southern Norway in May 2019 during the city's International Woodcut Festival. Åse Anda had been a guest artist at *Kunstkvarteret* in Lofoten the previous year. I have a holiday home in Lofoten and have had the pleasure of using *KK-trykk* for two years already. Åse Anda lives in Stavanger in southwestern Norway, where she often uses the new, beautiful, well-equipped workshop *Tou-Trykk*, located in the heart of Tou Culture House, a former brewery. My background includes a role as a freelance artist and the chair of the board of *Foreningen Trykkeriet*, a production place for printmaking in Bergen, a workshop that offers, among other things, fantastic opportunities for large-format prints with skilled master printers who create work for our customers.

The rationale behind *Print in Real Time* was to create a framework that could promote *KK-trykk* and provide us with artistic development and joy. Early on, we agreed that this framework needed to have a fixed duration, and we decided on five years

as a suitable amount of time. We also agreed on a type of activity that could include more people, but at the same time maintain a clear thematic focus. We wanted a project centred on our subject, our connection to printmaking, and Lofoten.

Midsummer in Lofoten is a special moment. Given that Lofoten is situated north of the Arctic Circle, there is midnight sun from the 27th of May until the 19th of July. On the longest day of the year, it is broad daylight round the clock! The Nordic countries also have a deep-rooted tradition of celebrating St John's Day on June 23rd. However, the northern hemisphere's day of maximum



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure Titles and information

Figure 1: *KK-trykk*, photo: Marhaug

Figure 2: View to Kleivan, photo: Marhaug

daylight falls on June 21st. These magical midsummer hours became a focal point for the project – the real time, where we, as artists, could join in at the same time in different places, “gathered” in our respective workshops. respective workshops.

Another important aspect of Lofoten and the surrounding area is the national political struggle over the use and protection of the natural environment that has been ongoing for more than 20 years. The sea around Lofoten has supported a seasonal cod fishing industry for over 1000 years and is a very nutrient-rich environment. However, as a major producer and exporter of oil and gas, now supplying over 30% of gas consumption to the EU and 40% to the UK, Norway has developed what has been described as a “petroholic economy.” There are also likely oil and gas reserves in the seabed. So far, nature here has been protected from exploration drilling.

In Norwegian, “sanntid” means real-time, a term often used to describe traffic flow. For us, it was important to emphasise the fact that we genuinely got together in different locations simultaneously and that our shared theme was connected to the important issues of the present moment, of real time.

In the Nordic languages, the word “sverte” is derived from the word “black”. More specifically, carbon black or lamp black is the foundational pigment for both draughtsmen and women, painters, and printmakers alike. Focusing on this material on the brightest day of the year adds an extra twist.

Science precisely determines the exact moment of the brightest hour and minute! This can fluctuate significantly from one year to the next, as this overview shows:

- 2020: June 20 at 11:43 p.m.
- 2021: June 21 at 5:32 p.m.
- 2022: June 21 at 11.13 p.m.
- 2023: June 21 at 4:58 p.m.
- 2024: June 20 at 10:51 p.m.

Artists, like many others, frequently travel to attend conferences, exhibit their work, and view the exhibitions of others. For instance, I have come here by plane from Norway. I wonder how many of those attending Impact 12 have been to Venice or Kassel this year? In the face of the earth’s climate crisis, many people are increasingly concerned about the need to reduce their resource consumption. We have many colleagues who have stopped using aircraft to reduce their carbon footprint.

PRINTING EVENT 2020

We think that the way we chose to organise decentralised printing events is an effective response to the experience of “flight shame”. At the same time, we acknowledge that the sense of belonging to a



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figure 3: KARBONAVTRYKK, photo: Marhaug

Figure 4: Print in real time 01: KARBON IMPRINT

Figure 5: Art by: Lunde, Stenberg, Tangrand and Berge

community is maintained by the results being immediately posted on social media as part of our program.

The intention behind our first printing event was for it to be characterised by abundance and play and for those who wanted as a next step as participants, to develop an individual contribution to a joint book entitled "KARBONAVTRYKK", CARBON IMPRINT. Everyone who participated during the print night in 2020 also contributed to the book! At first, I thought that each individual should receive their own copy, in addition to each workshop. Luckily, we listened to other opinions and reconsidered. Finally, we concluded that each workshop should have two copies each; in other words, six books in total. (If anyone is interested, they can take a look afterwards, as I have brought a book).

All artists' contributions, including an essay and three poems, were collected during August, and by October the book was shaped and bound, ready to be included in the first artist book fair, the Arctic Art Book Fair, that took place in Tromsø in November 2020. By then, we felt that we had a successful piece of work in progress and were looking forward to the next chapter. By the summer of 2020, we were well into the Covid-19 pandemic – but given our decentralised model, this was no obstacle for us. On the contrary: it seemed tailor-made for it! The printing event on the 21st of June last year was titled CARBON CAPTURE. From the outset, we had applied for funding and received some support from the county. Through this, we could cover material expenses and provide a symbolic fee to all 19 participants. Like many others, we also became skilled at video conferencing.

PRINTING EVENT AND EXHIBITION 2021

Nevertheless, before the start of 2021, we felt that our concept was so compelling that we wanted to transform it into an exhibition. Thus, we applied for additional funding and began rapid planning. The heart of our first exhibition was our joint book. We reached an agreement with Meieriet Kultursenter, located in the middle of Lofoten, and set the exhibition date for the 11th of September 2021. We received financial support for the project and during the winter of 20/21, we invited eight artists to contribute new pieces to the exhibition «print in real time 01: CARBON PRINTS». The venue, as you can see from the pictures, was a large hall measuring 9 x 18 x 8 metres. Here is an overview of the exhibition, which featured prints, books, objects, installations, and performances. "01" clearly indicates a series of shows.

Returning to the printing event that took place in June 2021, we invited many of the same artists as before, but also some new ones. We also expanded the number of workshops involved, resulting in workshops in Stavanger, Bergen, Ålesund, Lofoten, and Snefjord in Finnmark, all participating, along with a total of 19 artists. The framework was clearer, as we had all experienced it once with the book serving as a tangible outcome.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Figure 6: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)

Figure 7: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)

Figure 8: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)

However, we wanted to introduce a new angle to our next collective object: this time a portfolio, a wooden box where the prints were not physically bound together. Otherwise, we kept the same size and type of paper: Somerset Satin White 300 grams, 28 x 56 cm. Given that our carbon theme had shown impressive productivity in the first round, we did not think it necessary to make any major changes. Together, we have outlined all five years, although we have not fully prepared for the final year, 2024.

Each artist has worked within the clear material framework and the open theme we had defined:

«... Focus on issues we find relevant to our subject area, in combination with general contemporary trends. Carbon is the “original pigment”, whether used in drawing, painting, and printing. CARBON CAPTURE focuses on the connection between printmaking, carbon, and climate change awareness, and the artists will provide their poetic, visual expression captured in a shared portfolio, consisting of 8 copies »

Here are three examples from the portfolio, accompanied by the artist’s brief description of her/his contribution:

Helle Mellemstrand

The marsh is a good site for carbon capture, but other stuff can also be trapped and hidden in the swamp. I wanted to investigate what colours the bog on Øvre Undheim would yield. Since textiles are usually my medium, I chose to treat the bog as a colour soup and the paper as a textile. I boiled the paper for an hour in the muddy colour dye.

Bent Erik Myrvoll

The materiality and uniqueness of colours form the core of my artistic practice. For several years, I have collected Norwegian soil and minerals, which I process by crushing and sieving. The pigment is then burned in open barrels to absorb the extra carbon that is released during the firing process. This carbon capture gives the pigment an extra physical dimension and results in unprecedented, beautiful colour tones.

The motif in the picture is from the same areas where I extract soil and minerals, hence the direct connection between the motive and the colour.

Rita Marhaug

Fossil fuels are a product of photosynthesis over long geological periods. Carbon sediment, in the forms of coal, lignite and anthracite, is found in all layers from the Devonian period onwards. Coal from these sediments is created by vascular plants that grow all year round in a suitable climate. The plant material, covered under sediments and subjected to high pressure and temperature, developed anaerobically

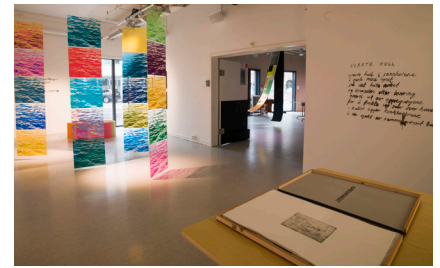


Figure 9



Figure 10

into coal. The upheaving of the land also brought to the surface those coal sediments that we can find today in the Ruhr area in Germany and the north of England.

In the beautiful city of Ålesund, located in the northern part of Norway's west coast, you will find the artist community Aggregat. This place has great printmaking facilities right in the heart of the city, housed in a former shopping mall. They also run the interdisciplinary space Mottaket, The Reception. In May of this year, we displayed the exhibition «print in real time 02: CARBON CAPTURE». As with our first show, we presented the book CARBON PRINTS from 2020, and the new portfolio CARBON CAPTURE received its premiere here. In addition, we invited five of the participating artists to contribute individual material. Two of the exhibitors were from the 01-show, and three new projects were specially developed for Mottaket. I would like to highlight Hilde Rosenberg Bamarni's installation Seamotion, which is a screen printing on acrylic plates.

FURTHER PLANS

I have maintained a very tangible and grounded narrative about the project Print in Real Time. This has also been the intention of the project, to initiate creative expressions that bring colleagues together, focus on our local production places, and communicate with the audience through the objects and the exhibition.

We anticipate that by early June this year, six print workshops will be up and running from the early hours of the 21st of June. This time, our common object will be a series of nine scrolls in a suitable box. With 22 artists in total, this will result in a scroll exceeding 13 metres in length. According to previous experience, this will be just fine; amongst other things, we have made both large printed paper rolls and long accordion books! We also know that the three joint results will be shown at Norske Grafikeres Gallery (Norwegian Printmakers), in Oslo on the 5th of January 2023.

Of course, I also see many opportunities for theorising about what we have done. However, it may be best left to others to follow that thread. A relatively simple starting point among three colleagues, namely creating a buzz and generating professional activity around a newly established graphics workshop, developed into something more comprehensive than our initial simple sketches. Regardless, we quickly recognised the potential, allowing us to work organically with the project and include a broader perspective with more artists.

Our theme immediately engaged our colleagues. We believe it is linked to the physical reality of carbon, which connects to art production from the dawn of time, the mystery of life itself, and not least, the existential situation of our time related to global warming. This wide spectrum elicits both joy and worry in each artist and has resulted in a great diversity of expressions and statements.

Print in Real Time has also served as an opportunity for many during the period of the pandemic, enabling them to continue working together physically in small groups, fostering networks and a sense of a larger community among all participants. In our two exhibitions, we have also strived to challenge the invited artists in terms of both format and materials, as is the case with Hilde's *Seamotions* which we have previously referred to. Without the specific large hall at Leknes, it is uncertain whether Lise Anita Stenberg would have made her large objects and prints of the willow she collected from her family's remote farm. She had it cut into slices, which she later printed on paper as seen in the picture from the exhibition. The prints are 3.75 metres long.

The same situation likely applies to Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde's "book-animal", the popular name of this large sculpture. "I do not have Words", as it is officially titled, is composed of different papers and plywood, while the structure supporting this large 10-kilo book, measuring 125 x 90 cm, is constructed from plywood, leather, and beech.

ENDING

The fact that we now also have had the opportunity to present some of our results here at Impact 12 has been a great bonus and a source of inspiration for what is to come. We have not yet planned the finale in detail, but we think it should be something rather spectacular. In 2024, the neighbouring municipality to Lofoten, the city of Bodø, which is also the regional capital of the county, is one of three European cultural capitals. We have started a dialogue with "Bodø 2024" and hope to participate during the year with our CARBON PULSE.

Up to this point in the project, we have engaged 45 artists, including two writers. We have held two exhibitions and carried out three printing events on the brightest day of the year. Two joint works have been completed, and the third is now in production. Ahead of us are three more contracted exhibition venues, located in Oslo, Stavanger, and Bergen. We have received support from the Visual Artists' Fund, the Norwegian Arts Council, Nordland County, and the Norwegian Printmakers Fund.

<https://kunstkvarteretlofoten.no/>
<https://www.trykkisanntid.no/>
<https://www.kjellaughatlenlunde.com/>
<http://www.aaseanda.no/>
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IMAGE GALLERY



Figure 1: KK-trykk, photo: Marhaug
Figure 2: View to Kleivan, photo: Marhaug



Figure 3: KARBONAVTRYKK, photo: Marhaug
Figure 4: Print in real time 01: KARBON IMPRINT



Figure 5: Art by: Lunde, Stenberg, Tangrand and Berge
Figure 6: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)



Figure 7: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)
Figure 8: KARBONFANGST (carbon capture)



Figure 9: Bamarni: Seamotions, common work CARBON CAPTURE
Figure 10: Sjørdalselja (from Print in real time 01: KARBON IMPRINT)