

KAROLIN TAMPERE

Oslo

Flatbread Society Grain Field and Bakehouse: a common in the making

Text by Karolin Tampere

This text is baked with ingredients derived from conversations I have conducted with a few of the many members of Flatbread Society Grain Field and Flatbread Society Bakehouse, who have contributed to the 'commoning' of Losætra, an urban farm embedded in the waterfront development of Bjørvika in Oslo, Norway's capital city.

Bjørvika – a former container port located beside the main train station, directly on the Oslofjord – is currently being transformed into a new and central area for housing, commerce and culture. As an illustration of one of Oslo's branding mottoes, 'The Blue, the Green and the City in Between'¹, Bjørvika could hardly be bettered. It is said that this housing development is the biggest (and most expensive) of its kind in the country. The most recent activity in the area was day-to-day harbour-related industrial work involving containers, ships and transport. This part of its history, which is related to the actual physical foundation on which Bjørvika now lies – and which, indeed, was the reason for building that foundation in the first place – has been wiped out, and swapped for a new identity.

Bjørvika rests on well-edited narratives, collected from as far back as the Middle Ages. Medieval ruins still standing nearby are focal points for sight lines, drawing views from the city centre to specific locations of select historical relevance. On the way, the sightlines guide spotlights onto the past, and as if with a magic wand, they 'caress' Bjørvika, giving it historical weight. Dronning Eufemias gate,² the main street that runs through the whole area, and the monastery ruins far out on Hovedøya island, are two examples of such anchor points for the mediaeval narrative.



Flatbread Society Soil Procession, 2015. Photograph by Svein Kjøde.



Losæter was initially known as Loallmenningen, the Low-common, one of the seven commons that were part of the overall urban plan. At this spot, a web of intricate social structures intertwines with the highway infrastructure along the coast of the Oslofjord. New layers of soil and stories now cover the land, and a polyphonic choir of voices gathers: insects, people, soil, sea, birds, buried Viking ships, cars, mycelia, microorganisms, plants, and seeds. They are all kneaded together, contributing to the emerging narratives and goings-on on the land at large: Bjørvika, and locally at Losæter. It is a "porous world always in the making"³, transforming the public space of Loallmenningen into the common space of Losæter. Stavros Stavrides's definitions can be offered as guidelines for looking into and reflecting on this land and the art project at large. He writes that. "Public Spaces are primarily created by a specific authority (local, regional or state), which controls them and establishes the rules under which people may use them"4 and, "Common Spaces are those spaces produced by people in their effort to establish a common world that houses, supports and expresses the community they participate in."5

The conjuring call that brings all of these agents together at Losæter originates with Flatbread Society⁶, a durational public art project consisting of two interconnected parts: Flatbread Society Grain Field and Flatbread Society Bakehouse. Amy Franceschini of Futurefarmers and Flatbread Society introduces the diverse activities:

Losæter has become a nexus of many different working groups. Each has their own program on the land with the employed urban farmer Andreas Capjon as a guide and flag post. On any given day the site is bustling with immigrant teens, adults with dementia, recovering drug users, forest students, enthusiasts, beekeepers, fruit tree specialists, a man who donated Pinot Noir grapes to re-establish the historic flora of the monks who once occupied Hovedøya, and many more. The Bakehouse serves multiple functions. Of course with three types of ovens at the heart of the boat shaped structure, it is a space of transformation – raising and spreading of flour into flatbreads or high sourdough

loaves. A long wooden table hosts organised meetings, but most often an informal gathering of people speak there, and ideas flow, new projects emerge, 'problems' get ad-hoc solutions and collaborations form.⁷

The project was initiated in 2012 by Futurefarmers, an international collective of artists, designers and architects, as part of Slow Space⁸, the public art programme conceived by Situations and commissioned by Bjørvika Utvikling AS (BU)⁹. BU, which consists of the owners and developers of Bjørvika, have agreed on a common ambition for this area, a strategy including implementing both permanent and temporary art projects in conjunction with the ongoing city development. "With the aim to make Bjørvika a place where different art-related expressions are clearly present and where the public can experience projects at an international level"."



Flatbread Society Soil Procession (Signing of Declaration of Land Use), 2015. Photograph by Svein Kjøde.



Flatbread Society Soil Procession, 2015. Video Still, Futurefarmers.

BU has set itself the task of imagining and realising the projects. giving them and their processes a minimum of 20 years to evolve. With such a long timeframe anything can happen, and the ongoing art projects are "regularly negotiated backstage" with the different owners and developers of Bjørvika, as Anne Beate Hovind, the project manager of BU's art projects, told me. The context for this slow development of art projects lies in the overall urban planning of Bjørvika. The built environment is to include a cluster of seven areas that have the word allmenning (common) in their name, probably to underline an 'access for all' policy.11 These areas are (like other public space in Norway) open to everyone and include, amongst others, public swimming spots, canals, sports places, small parks and premises for commercial activity. All seven commons have streets that run from the fjord across Bjørvika and towards different areas of the city centre. In addition to the commons, there is a Harbour Promenade, which also aims to create more public access between the city and the fjord. The urban plan was made by the Danish firm Gehl Architects. Their aim

was to generate a plan that gave opportunity for a more diverse and perhaps more lively structure for buildings of different size and use, giving high priority to supporting a good quality of life in the city by opening up space in close proximity to the fjord and allowing for outdoor activities. Bjørvika has one landmark that is internationally well known: the Opera House, designed by Snøhetta Architects, which lies like an stranded iceberg on the shores of the city, covered in white Italian marble, glimmering from afar. This building has gained huge popularity amongst city dwellers and tourists. One reason for this – aside from the spectacular architecture – might be that it is possible, for no admission fee, to stroll safely around and linger on the roof top. Next door the new public library, Deichmanske Bibliotek, is in construction, and the new Munch Museum¹² is also on its way. Both buildings highlight the presence of this cultural axis set side-by-side with Oslo's new commercial district.

It is on the seventh common that you will find Losæter, and this is where the Flatbread Society Grain Field is set to play out with its Bakehouse and ten years of artistic programming.

Gather: on the commons

With the establishment of Losæter at Loallmenningen, we mark our commitment to support and highlight agriculture as a central part of the Bjørvika cultural landscape. We hereby declare Losæter a cultural commons.... 'The Flatbread Society Grain Field' is an expression for this agreement. Unlike museums that collect and preserve works of art, 'The Flatbread Society Grain Field' is a museum without walls that preserves through sharing and distribution.

Excerpt from the Land Declaration¹³

Loallmenningen was officially renamed Losæter in 2014 to reflect the nature of the ongoing activities and the conceptual framework of the durational art project. The name comprises 'Lo', from Loallmenningen, and sæter, which refers to a house, or a collection of houses, traditionally used as a summer dairy farm in the high mountains. The right to a sæter implies that one can put animals to pasture and erect a mountain pasture house. The Norwegian word for the English 'common' or 'common lands' is all menning, which defines an area of land put aside by the state for recreational activities. It also defines a privately owned parcel of land where individuals apart from the owner have rights to graze livestock, or for other activities. In Norway, the common is connected to allemanns retten or all mannaretten, which allows citizens free access and camping on the waterfront, and on non-cultivated land, everywhere in the country. Allmannaretten has a strong grounding in the general population of both Norway and Sweden. The right to access and use our common assets - nature at large - is considered part of our cultural heritage. Long before outdoor life became a concept, there was active practice of free roaming in Norway. To wander in the mountains, to swim in lakes and fjords, or to pick berries in the autumn forests, are all part of a commons which many inhabitants still practice. At its best, the law prevents individuals from building gated communities around common resources such as views, coastlines, lakes and forests, Access for all and access for free has a strong foundation in collective awareness. The combination of sæter and allmenning is, therefore, what conceptually roots the Flatbread Society Grain Field activities to this land.

Losætra sits as if on a mountain top, peculiarly above one of the country's busiest highways. With cars speeding through the tunnel directly below it, the Grain Field stands in stark contrast, culturally and physically, to the rigid rationality of the new mixed-use development in surrounding Bjørvika. It connects Norway's agricultural heritage to the present, and lends the metaphor of cultivation to larger ideas of self-determination. The Flatbread Society Grain Field foregrounds organic processes in the development of land use, social relations and cultural forms. It brings forth important aspects of the potential of commoning, giving examples whilst openly and inclusively practicing on site with the aim of not letting common rights to land, water, access and knowledge be privatised or forgotten.

Just as water runs under a glacier, the flow of cars, trucks and buses steadily streams underneath the daily activities at Losæter.



o Father Productions, 2017



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Mix: new neighbours by the shore

On June 13, 2015 a procession of farmers carried soil from their farms through the city of Oslo to its new home at Losæter. Soil Procession was a ground-building ceremony that used the soil collected from over fifty ecologically run farms as far north as Tromsø and as far south as Stokke to build the foundation of Flatbread Society Grain Field and Bakehouse. A procession of soil and people through Oslo drew attention to the historical, symbolic moment of the transition of a piece of land into a permanent stage for art and action related to food production.

Website of Flatbread Society¹⁵

Through a collaboration between the Losæter Association and the Norwegian Farmers Union, Andreas Capjon has been employed as the caretaker and farmer at Losætra. On Wednesdays, during dugnad, the public is invited to join the farm work, contributing their labour and partaking as active agents in presentations, talks or workshops. These workdays have expanded, and now end with participants visiting a floating



Flatbread Society Declaration of Land Use, Soil as Witness, 2015. Photograph by Svein Kjøde.

sauna on the fjord nearby. Through this collaboration with the Norwegian Farmers Union, Flatbread Society Grain Field is also visible as an active space that is not only symbolically but also politically grounded. The Union's first ever urban farmers local group has also been established as result of the art project. By representing agriculture in this way, the project points a finger to national and global politics, which are rapidly replacing smallholdings in rural areas with agriculture that is industrialised and rooted in large-scale monoculture. Locating a day-to-day activity funded by the Farmers Union next to the power centre of the country's decision makers is a strong statement.

From a bird's-eye point of view, Losæter could look like an island in the city – a rural environment entangled in an urban landscape, which is not only a place for growing crops, but also a space for bodies being present, and critical reflection through practical work. The parallel art programme of Flatbread Society Grain Field incorporates other perspectives through the poetics of art and music, as well as discussions that bridge the complexities of shaping and producing the realities of the public realm.

We don't need a museum for conserving varieties, what we want is to grow them.

Johan Swärd of Vestre Aschim Farm, the only farm/gene bank in Norway

The ancient grains grown at the Grain Field are made available in a seed library located in Flatbread Society Bakehouse. This library is more than an archive for storage. It emphasises use, re-distribution and knowledge through practice. It is situated at a junction where the inhabitants of the former working-class neighbourhood meet their new neighbours in the more upscale development. In its hybrid form, the function of this building is extended. The Bakehouse is both a sculpture and a gathering space that facilitates artistic production and exchange between communities. The building itself is a common, and 'commoning' is a process.¹8 For the Bakehouse to exist, it needs to be nurtured and activated over time. In this space both people and seeds, with inherited knowledge and need for care, interact.



© Father Productions, 2017



Knead and rise: heterogeneous, uncontrolled and unstable

The balance between the production that gives a so-called profit, and the production of thoughts which gives room for visionary ideas, critical analysis and speculations, are all in need to have equal attention and care in this place. There is always a risk of discrepancy between what we aim for, what we do, and how it is perceived.

Mads Pålsrud of Growlab Oslo¹⁹

In order for a plant to be registered in the System of Plant Variety Protection, it must be "distinct, uniform and stable". In contrast, the grains in the Bakehouse express resistance, resilience and cultural heritage. Social relations and togetherness can, like these ancient grains, be defined as heterogeneous, uncontrolled and unstable. This urban common can be seen as a pre-figuration, enabling inclusion by promoting sharing and listening. These initiatives are geographically inclusive, as they are happening outdoors and centre-stage in Oslo.



Flatbread Society Bakehouse, (Interior), 2015. Photograph by Monica Løvdahl.

According to some, Losæter is a successful urban development tool, and its transition has been managed cleverly. What happens with the continuity of a place that is multi-layered —conceptually, practically and politically — as well as diverse in terms of its use and users? Is it too complex to communicate on a large scale to the general public? Is the actual work of art reduced when it risks potentially becoming a stand-in for green city branding? Futurefarmers' Flatbread Society has initiated a place where several interests are put into play — some ignited by the artists and their collaborators, and some out of their control. The multi-layered narratives of this place and the diverse goings-on might both confuse and unite. It is a porous space with multifaceted transmitters and receivers: shaping, producing, connecting and mixing. The narrative is in flux, it is non-linear. It is a constant trial and error, experimenting with being in the world in this ever-changing micro society.

What would happen if this project were communicated in a distinct and outspoken way? Perhaps it is the porousness of the narrative that attracts and protects this project artistically. Which narratives, amongst the many, are the ones that are being kept alive, the ones that give foundation to the project, publicly and at large? By tapping into the narrative of ecological farming to promote sustainable food production and slow movements, there is always a risk that Losæter could be used to 'green wash' the development. Then the question is, who wants which kind of attention, and for what purpose?

The Losæter Association (LA)²¹ was established in March 2016 and consists of stakeholders, artists and other users of the place. The main purpose of their being organised is to negotiate and secure the diversity of activities at Losæter, and its actual permission to exist in this location. LA is historically grounded in the narration of having been initiated by the artists involved in Flatbread Society, but it already has a life of its own.

The on-going activities of the project are maintained by a growing web of people and other living beings, cross-pollinating through activities and meetings in this multi-use space. Continued grassroots activity at this

common space is a mode of resistance to the ways in which developments often get to take advantage of similar projects, both in the cultural or social policy field. Losæter has multiple voices and several narratives. The meaning of the place is generated by each and every agent who finds their way across the fjord or the highway to create its soundscape, with tones and tunes stretching across the whole spectrum of sounds and frequencies. The metaphor of a polyphonic choir can be useful. In such a constellation, all voices are heard united, but also individually. The strength of each voice depends on who is present. This is also the case at Losæter: the presence of the daily farming activities is from time to time more visible than the investigative, critical and experimental in form – the artists' initiatives.

Form: a new cultural institution was established

Losætra shall contribute to the free and open exchange of seeds, knowledge and relations growing out of this place. By signing the document, these living traditions will be protected from laws that could potentially interfere with this activity and could hinder distribution and future use of the biological material that is being cultivated on this land.

From the Flatbread Society Land Declaration²²

A central aspect of this project is that a declaration has been prepared and symbolically agreed on. The declaration states the goal of securing the rights of the soil and microbes therein. Are such legal acts the only way to secure the commons for times after ours? Futurefarmers works with strategies that can be thought of as soft guerrilla techniques. They slink through small cracks and holes, and in this way establish, from the inside, a place with the potential to last. In this case, they have found invisible entrance points within an urban development process, which is determined by capital and city politics. The act of shining the spotlight on something as basic as soil (remember, the word human derives from humus), the common matter that we depend on for our nutrition, life and death, is to be found in one of those invisible cracks.

Rest: places that last

How can we adapt to people we don't know? What is interesting about Losætra is the ongoing non-eventful happenings at the place, such as the allotment gardening²³ alongside subtle or sparkling celebrations of the seasons and workshops. It is all tested out here, entangled with tight human-plant-critter interactions. We cannot avoid each other and therefore are able to learn by doing. It is like a Utopian island where we try out future systems of survival. Perhaps it is so that the general public might be more perceptive of this place and the overall project when there is a farmer being the front person? It creates sort of a trust. This is a cultural and green space, answering to several challenges in a capital city today. The overlapping identities are very rich.

Hanan Benammar, visual artist in the core group of Flatbread Society



Flatbread Society Grainfield and Allotment Garden Community, 2013.

After the first ancient seeds had been planted in the form of the navigational constellation known as the Shepherd, ²⁴ Hanan staged 'The Human Scarecrows', a ritual performance during which the birds were asked to let the seeds grow. A week-long series of live music and sound happenings ensued, dedicated to the birds and other living organisms as their core audience. After eight days of human scarecrowing, the seeds grew strong enough to repel the birds on their own. The live acts were anchored in electronic arts and music, some of them streamed through Radio Ramona.

She is the radio of the town. Since the beginning she is the voice, a voice, a tune, interviews, concert, field recordings, compositions... dealing with strange affairs between bread, astronomy, migration ... a character which witnesses, interacts, tells stories; a constant collective becoming in Flatbread Society. Radio Ramona is a living archive in lots of different languages, ages, gender, a hybrid between a body and a living organism intra-action.²⁵

Radio Ramona

The Flatbread Society project points to the fact that artists often arrive early to work on social issues, sometimes too early for people to understand the message. Artists trigger the imagination and instigate the important conversations that must take place before permanent changes occur. In this way, the processes developing at Flatbread Society Grain Field reflect on future possibilities – following the seed into the soil, travelling through the life of a plant, and giving the grain which becomes the flatbread to be shared.

Bake and eat: the whole body is engaged

The social network of Flatbread Society has been created over a long period of time, and today one can see concrete results in the diverse activities that take place at the Bakehouse and Flatbread Society Grain Field. One fruitful example is the workshop at the temporary bakehouse, conducted in collaboration with Tenthaus Oslo²⁶ and their long-term youth group.



Human Scarecrows by Oslo Apiary and Aviary, 2015. Photograph by Sarin Nhek.

The whole body is engaged by Flatbread Society, not only the intellect. Baking flatbread was actually connecting people[...] This workshop was part of our long-term work with Hersleb School of adult education and especially young people from different countries, such as India, Eritrea and Somalia. Many came to Norway alone as refugees. In the process of baking, these youngsters became specialists in their different local varieties of flatbread, and whilst sharing the meal afterwards, the comparison of bread and discussions around it was very fulfilling... Memories that are created through such a project where the whole aspect of human life is present, are potentially as strong as encounters with landmark monuments.

Artists Ebba Moi and Stefan Schröder, Tenthaus Oslo co-directors²⁷

During the Summer of 2017 Tenthaus Oslo hosted a new workshop with Kunstkantina, two artists from Trondheim. They worked with a group of immigrant teens from Hersleb High School over the summer to seed, cultivate and harvest vegetables to pickle in August. By sharing their ideas at Losæter the youth made contact with UNG.no,²⁸ who also work with immigrant teens to instructing how to sail and fish. With their four traditional wooden sail boats, Ung.no are now located next door to the Bakehouse. Cross-pollination of these two initiatives culminated in a collective sailing and fishing trip, which ties back to the boat architecture of the Bakehouse.

The aforementioned baking workshop highlights the elegant and precise methods of Futurefarmers, where people find potential in flatbread, letting it becoming a 'guide' to moments of sharing knowledge, previous memories and rich experience: a thin piece of bread that makes possible vital connections between society, body and mind.

How does one communicate that this place is long-term and that one's contribution makes a real impact? How can you reassure sceptical voices and state, in a trustworthy manner, that it is not a branding tool utilised by developers and other interests? Would it make sense to engage



Flatbread Society Bakehouse, 2015. Photograph by Monica Loevdahl.

in-depth research to include a moment of empirical evaluation?

Does one need academic proof that such a project has succeeded in being an open space for diverse activities, or can one come up with other forms of documentation allowing for future planners or artists to learn from this project?

Distribute

The idea of 'rescue' in relation to the Bakehouse is of utmost significance. Fashioned after a 19th-century rescue sailboat, her form connects the ideas of exploration and loss to new ideas

of rescue and findings. Sitting upon a piece of common land surrounded by a sea of ancient grains that have been 'rescued' from various locations in the Northern Hemisphere – from the very formal to the informal – she becomes a lighthouse, a functioning symbol of resilience.²⁹

Amy Franceschini, Futurefarmers

Flatbread Society Grain Field is, like the soil, made up of several layers of meaning. Over time more sediment will accumulate, allowing the common, planted with care in the soil with well-travelled microorganisms, to grow strong roots. Today's actions will leave marks that can be read in the future. The soil already conceals the remains of the labour, failures and successes of former generations. In what form will our presence and labour be visible in, let's say, 50 years? We can only speculate, but for this reason the inclusion of legislative policies to secure the future of Losæter is wise.



Losæter, 2015. Photograph by Vibeke Hermanrud.

The foundation of a new common space requires in-depth attention and care. Flatbread Society Grain Field and Bakehouse show us that the way out of today's industrialised food production and uneven distribution of wealth begins by changing attitudes and going against the grain. We must reintegrate agriculture into our lives if we want to create a sustainable and non-exploitive society. An awareness linked to the cultivation of soil is now slowly pulsating straight into the heart of our cities. In a world governed by extractivism, attempting to exploit all available natural and human resources, we must raise awareness through daily practice. The Grain Field carries multiple seeds for growing and nurturing communities, knowledge, and direct action, a common in the making, for now and for the times to come. 30

Footnotes

- ¹ See www.norwayexports.no/sectors/articles/blue-green-and-the-city-in-between
- ² Dronning Eufemia was a queen of Norway from 1299–1312. She was of German descent, and played a part in moving the capital of Norway from Bergen to Oslo.
- ³ Stavrides, Stavros (2015) 'Common Space as Threshold Space: Urban Commoning in Struggles to Re-appropriate Public Space', FOOTPRINT, 16, Communing as Differentiated Publicness (Spring), 11
- 4 Stavrides, op. cit., 11
- 5 Stavrides, op. cit., 10
- ⁶ Flatbread Society uses grain as a prismatic impetus to consider the interrelationship between food production and realms of knowledge sharing, cultural production, socio-political formations and everyday life. See www.flatbreadsociety.net/about [Accessed on 16.05.17]
- ⁷ Email from Amy Franceschini to the author Sunday June 11, 2017.
- 8 The initial title Slow Time was, due to copyright issues, renamed Slow Space, which was the official title of the art pro-gramme of Biørvika Utvikling AS.
- ⁹ Bjørvika Utvikling AS has overall responsibility for all public space construction in Bjørvika and is owned by HAV Eiendom AS and Oslo S Utvikling AS. Bjørvika Utvikling has established Bjørvika Infrastruktur (BI), a 100% owned subsidiary of BU, and is formed with the purpose of having the overall responsibility of all technical infrastructure in relation to the development of Bjørvika. They commission and produce temporary and permanent art projects in the area. Part of this initiative was to publish thematic 'guidebooks' aimed at being learning books for other developers, and which introduce art and public space at large, and how to produce and commission it (available in Norwegian only at www.bjørvikautvikling.no/ kunst/temaheftekunst). The first temporary art project was Common Lands-Allmannaretten, curated by Åse Lavgren and Karolin Tampere. It was a temporary exhibition project taking place from 2008–2010 in conjunction with the seven commons (see www.commonlands.net). Kunsthall Oslo (www.kunsthalloslo.no) has been established as part of the art programme of BU, and Slow Space is the title of the long-term art projects commissioned by BU. This programme also includes Katie Paterson's Future Library (see www.futurelibrary.no).
- ¹⁰ Bjørvika Utvikling AS (BU) sattser på kunst i utviklingen av Bjørvika og har følgende ambisjon i sin kunststrategi: Å gjøre Bjørvika til et sted der ulike kunstuttrykk er tydelig tilstede og der publikum vil se og oppleve kunst på et internasjonalt nivå. See www.bjørvikautvikling.no/kunst/ulike-kunstuttrykk [Accessed 25.05.17; author's translation]
- ¹¹ For a map highlighting the commons in the urban plan see www.bjorvikautvikling.no/allmenningene/bakgrunn [Accessed 20.06.17]
- 12 See /www.kulturbyggene.no/munch
- ¹³ Tampere, Karolin (2015) 'People, Seeds, Belonging Together'. Available at www.flatbreadsociety.net/stories/ view/31 [Accessed 12.04.17]
- ¹⁴ Quote by Elizabeth Thomas from www.flatbreadsociety.net/about
- ¹⁵ Available at www.flatbreadsociety.net/actions/29/soil-procession
- 16 Capjon has been employed since 2015, and the collaboration with the Farmers Union is currently a three-year project. The employment is funded 50% by NorgesGruppen and 50% by the Farmers Union.
- 17 Dugnad is the Norwegian word for voluntary communal work, and is especially common within small sports organisations, kin-dergartens, schools, neighbourhoods and so forth.
- ¹⁸ See www.onthecommons.org/work/what-commoning-anyway [Accessed on 06.08.17]

- ¹⁹ Mads Pålsrud has been part of the Flatbread Society collaboration from the beginning and is a user of the allotment gordens on a daily basis. Growlab Oslo is a design studio he was part of establishing in 2012 in Oslo, Norway. See www.growlab.no
- ²⁰ As defined in the UPOV System of Plant Variety, available at www.upov.int/about/en/upov_system.html#iv_a [Accessed on 10.04.17]
- ²¹ See www.biorvikautvikling.no/loseter
- ²² Tampere, op. cit., [Accessed 12.04.17]
- ²² HERLIGHETEN (THE GLORY) is an ecological initiative and project about urban food production initiated in April 2012, and consists of 100 allotments which are free for use by the inhabitants of Oslo. It is a project initiated by Bigrvika Development, see www.loallmenningen.blogspot.de/p/info-in-english.html
- ²⁴ Flatbread Society Grain Field was replanted in the form of the navigational constellation Boötes, also known as the Shepherd. Each star in the constellation was represented as a circle on the field, with Arcturus as the central navigational star. Heritage grain seeds were sown by members of the core group: Growlab, Jørund Aase Falkenberg, Herbanists, Food Studio, Emmanuel Rang, Oslo Apiany, Herligheten and Northern Company. Nine circles lay in the field at Losæter, each hosted by one of the core members and surrounded by one variety of ancient grains. Three of the stars in this constellation are located at host farms outside of Oslo. These three farms are part of the Circle of Grains project initiated by Johan Swärd. See www.flatbreadsociety.net/actions/33/into-the-ground-and-up-to-the-sky
- ²⁵ From an email conversation in April 2017 with Marthe Van Dessel. See www.flatbreadsociety.net/ramona
- ²⁶ Tenthaus Oslo is a project space initiated by artists Helen Eriksen, Ebba Moi, Stefan Schröder and Mechu Rapela. Tenthaus Oslo's profile is characterised by an open, process-oriented form of participation from an internationally orientated group of artists. The context of contemporary art practice is re-examined through a broader field of activity with exhibitions, workshops, artist's talks and live performances. See www.tenthaus.no/workshops/19-flatbread-society
- ²⁷ Interview with the artists Ebba Moi and Stefan Schröder, co-directors of Tenthaus Oslo by the author on Wednesday 29 February 2017. Tenthaus Oslo is a project space initiated by Oslobased artists Helen Eriksen, Ebba Moi and Stefan Schrö-der. From spring 2016, Mechu Rapela joined the Tenthaus team. Tenthaus Oslo's profile is characterized by an open, pro-cess-oriented form of participation from an internationally orientated group of artists.
- ²⁸ Ung.no is an official information channel for youth. The website is run by the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir). See www.ung.no/om
- ²⁹ From an email conversation, March 2017
- 30 This section has been partly reworked from Tampere, Karolin (2015) 'People, Seeds, Belonging Together'.
 Available at www.flatbreadsociety.net/stories/view/31. This is also available as a booklet from published by Flatbread Society.







Karolin Tampere

Karolin Tampere is an artist and curator based in Lofoten, Norway. She is currently engaged as a curator at the North Norwegian Art Centre in Svolvær, and has a particular interest in interdisciplinary collaborative practices, sound and listening. Since 2004 she has regularly contributed to the 'forever lasting' art project Sørfinnset Skole/the nord land of Søssa Jorgensen and Geir Tore Holm, together with Ase Løvgren she initiated the ongoing collaboration Rakett in 2003. Tampere is part of Ensayos, a feminist research program through which artists, scientists and local agents contemplate and engage in matters related to the political ecology of Tierra del Fuego, Chile. Together with Hilde Mehti, Neal Cahoon and Torill Østby Haaland, she is co-curator of LIAF2019 (Lofoten International Art Festival).

Karolin Tampere would like to thank Amy Franceschini of Futurefarmers for the graceful advice to let this text be guided by a flatbread baking recipe: Gather, Mix, Knead and Rise, Form, Rest, Bake and Eat, Distribute.

Claire Doherty (Editor)

Claire Doherty is an arts director, producer and writer.

Previously, Claire Doherty was Director at Arnolfini (2017-19) and was the founding Director of Situations. Over the past decade, Situations emerged as one of the UK's most innovative and pioneering arts producers, commissioning and producing temporary and long-term public arts projects, creating public art strategies and visions for city-wide initiatives and leading publishing and research initiatives to improve the conditions for, and skills to produce, new forms of public art worldwide. Claire has developed an international reputation as a leading thinker in new approaches to public art policy and planning, and is dedicated to engaging those for whom the arts might have seemed irrelevant or inaccessible through transformative art and cultural experiences; advocating for the social value of the arts, and finding ways to catalyse positive change in specific places.

Claire was awarded a Paul Hamlyn Foundation Breakthrough Award for outstanding cultural entrepreneurs, 2009, and appointed MBE for Services to the Arts in the New Year's Honours List 2016.

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with — changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society.

Each year we reach over 20 million people face-to-face and more than 500 million people online, via broadcasts and publications.

Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.



British Council 2018 The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

Where Strangers Meet

An international collection of essays on arts in the public realm.

The urbanist Richard Sennett has written that 'the public realm can simply be defined as a place where strangers meet'. As the number of us living in cities rises, the pressures on the shared spaces of a city will increase; the places in which our future relationships to one another are negotiated. This is particularly resonant for the British Council, an international organisation that brings people together from different cultures, countries and continents through arts, education, science and the English language. Building on its multifocal work in cities, the British Council commissioned a collection of essays to explore different perspectives on how artistic and cultural experiences affect individual and collective participation and action in the public realm.

For 80 years the British Council has worked in cities in over 100 countries worldwide. The British Council is now responding through research and programmes to the changing urban dynamics affecting citizens and institutions globally, including the impact of globalisation and technological and political change. Work in cities also forms part of our response to some of the world's current challenges including migration and security. This collection is intended to strengthen our global offer to collaborators and audiences by demonstrating how the power of the arts and creative exchange can be harnessed to make cities more open, dynamic, inclusive and fit for the future.

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