

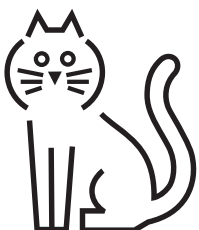
Oddvar I.N. Daren
Local Land
February 10 – April 6, 2018

Could art be an action of seeing? Not an object, not even an idea, but the sole action of observing and acknowledging. This question is at the core of the practise of the Norwegian artist Oddvar I.N. Daren. In this spring's major exhibition, Kunsthall Trondheim presents a generous selection of works, some of which are made in collaboration with Lars Paalgard (Norway), of Daren's rich and special oeuvre.

Oddvar I.N. Daren, who has been active since the late 1970s, works within a wide range of genres – installation, sculpture, public art – but in this exhibition, we have chosen to focus on the works that connects to land art, performance and film. These works aim to make visible situations that in themselves already exist, to observe a moment in an ongoing process – often in nature and with a sense of unpretentious humour. When something is added, as the artist's body (in *Måling av snødybde* [Measuring the Depth of the Snow], 1981) or the labour of polishing a circle on a mountainside (in *Opus for himmel og jord* [Opus for Heaven and Earth], 1993) it is done in order to make visible what can otherwise not be seen. When the artist's body is gradually sinking in the snow, the depth of the snow becomes visible. The polished surface of the circle reflects the sunlight's meeting with the mountain, which can now actually be seen from space.

In September 1983 Oddvar I.N. Daren, together with his colleague Lars Paalgard, wrote the *1 st. Manifesto Ars Situare*. In the manifesto they stated the ground for their common practise, under the name Gruppen [the group], as "the act and the manifestation of human creativity, springing from the desire to point out the ambiguity of everything which surrounds us (...) Ars Situare is a philosophy of perception which aim is to (...) make possible an active communication between subject and object". By then, they had practised similar ideas, as students at Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, as individual artists as well as in the earlier group Nye Alle Fem [New All Five], for a few years already. In 1983 Lars Paalgard came to join Oddvar I.N. Daren at Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, The Netherlands, and on their walks they found an old factory, which would be the base for a number of projects under the title *Ars Situare*. *Ars Situare* could be to observe the movement of light, marking the moving shadows with chalk. Or it could be to gently lay bare a 140 meters long line of dust, gravel, straw, glass and wood along the factory floor. These actions which altered very little in the existing situation, were often marked with an *Ars Situare* stencil or stamp, and audience were invited to join the artists for a common moment of observation. *Ars Situare* could also take place in public space, for instance in the format of group walks, and at one point an effort was made to propose an alternative kind of public art – or an alternative national park if one wishes – a former sawmill and the land surrounding it. Not interesting enough as nature, and not worth preserving as culture (which would have contradicted the purpose), the project failed since the idea did not fit into the bureaucratic norms – the thought that traces of human activity and the slow process of decay could be a valuable experience. And still, is not this exactly what gives us a sense of history and continuation, more so than the monument and the forever preserved?

What remains of these art works are mainly documentations. The 140 meters long *Humus Line* now consists of real size photographic documenta-



tions and a downscaled photographic multiple book in leporello format (of which the exhibition presents approximately 16 meters). The dust and gravel collected in bags at the original scene after the thorough documentation meter by meter, still awaits the arrival in its final destination at Svalbard in the Arctic. The artists want to complete the process initiated in The Netherlands in the 1980s by reconstructing the line on a glacier in the former Dutch colony, now a part of Norway. The project is ongoing and the artists hope to complete the transfer within the next few years.

Oddvar I.N. Daren's films, of which we have included five works in the exhibition, have a similar logic as his works in nature. Rather than originating from the desire to produce film, they seem to be found situations of flowing moments and images. From *Rytmer i vann* [Rhythms in Water] (1978) there is a clear line to *Drift* (2016). Not surprisingly, water and landscape play the main role, but in *Carpe Diem* (2001), it is the stream of humans in a shopping mall escalator that flows, caught in a moment of contemplation. *Rytmer i vann* (1978) as well as a new film with the same title, produced for the exhibition, is filmed at Nidelven, the river that flows through Trondheim. The river was once the reason for the town's establishment, in 997, and still defines much of its identity – an emblematic image of the running water and the centuries old warehouses. In these works, making use of the tools of two different media ages, Oddvar I.N. Daren insists on seeing the river anew, and thus redefining the local landscape.

Kunsthall Trondheim wishes to thank Lars Paalgard for invaluable help with the exhibition.

Oddvar I.N. Daren (b. 1953, Vesterålen, Norway) lives and works in Trondheim. He received his education from the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, Norway (1977–81) and the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, The Netherlands (1982–84). His works has been shown at Museum of Contemporary art – The National Museum, Galleri F15, Henie Onstad Art Center and Trondheim Art Museum. Daren has previously been festival artist of Artic Arts Festival, and is represented in the international art project Artscape Nordland (Skulpturlandskap Nordland).

