

ART + FOLK project



Abstract:

For this application, ART + FOLK will be applying for funding for two specific projects, both running from 2017-2020:

- The blog: "Home and Studio visits" where I will introduce a new artist in their home and in their studio once a month. It will be an interview to get to know how the artists work but also how they live. This will create a more personal approach to the viewer showing from within how art is made and produced from idea to final result.
- Programme of four annual sales exhibitions: This will showcase works of artists living and producing work in Bergen. The exhibitions will be held in different venues around the city of Bergen and in collaboration with different artist run spaces, galleries or curators living and working in Bergen. This with the aim to stimulate the art market in Bergen and help artists live from their own resources.

What is ART + FOLK

ART + FOLK is a platform that aims to make our artist community more accessible to the general public. It is thought as an outreach project and the intention is to become a resource to both the artistic community (artists, institutions, galleries, artist run spaces, collectives, etc) and to the people that would like to get closer or are looking to buy art, but find the art scene either intimidating or difficult to navigate.

How to spark an interest in people to invest and care about the local art production?

Together with the rest of the local art community, I would like to use my time to find ways to open up to the public. I will work together with local artists, artist run galleries, collectives, and other resources such as VISP, Kunstguide and B-Open, to find ways of communicating, selling and pricing art work through creating events that are aimed at the general public and by reaching out to different communication outlets (newspapers, radio, blogs, social media, etc) to show what our art community has to offer.

I see ART + FOLK as a long term project that will settle into the community and that will function because of its collaborative nature.

Why does Bergen need ART + FOLK

In Norway we are among the people in the world who spend most money refurbishing our homes. We can easily spend hundreds of thousands on giving one of the rooms in our house a facelift, but even so, many people end up with posters from Ikea decorating their walls. I do not believe that this is because people are unwilling to spend money on art; I think it is because people think art is “difficult”, particularly contemporary art.

Bergen has a vibrant and active art community both nationally and internationally. There is a range of artist run galleries that spread around the different areas of the city but there is little in terms of an art market. ART + FOLK's aim is to create a collector base in Bergen and for that to happen, the art community needs to be more accessible. I believe that this project can be a way of opening up this communication and accessibility and that with my already existing network and knowledge of how the artist community works, I can be the facilitator for such a process.

If local art becomes more accessible, the art scene might become less perceived as “making art only for other artists”, meaning that their message will reach a wider audience. Furthermore, if this can increase the total demand for local art, it will become easier for more local artists to live from their art and work as full-time artists, which will again enrich the art scene in Bergen.

ART + FOLK

start-up supported by Bergen Kommune.

In the spring of 2017 ART + FOLK received a project stipend from Bergen Kommune, Kunst og Næring. With this project stipend of 50 000, ART + FOLK did a first project to test the interest for this kind of initiative, and to see how the idea was received in the community. It has been an essential part of the process and it has made it possible to decide to make this a permanent resource in Bergen.

ART + FOLK start-up phase:

- **Visual identity:** ART + FOLK was given a visual identity and created social media outlets (Facebook and Instagram). The visual identity includes a Logo and a simple web-site with information about the project. The design of the logo was based on the request that it should be flexible, simple and direct. The Logo keeps changing, maintaining its core identity but not fixed to one idea, as that is how we are as people. Art and ideas are fluid just as social interactions. I wanted to represent this visually. This was all created by designer Anette L'Orange.
- **Networking:** ART + FOLK has been in touch with artists, galleries, curators, producers and other members of the art community to tell them about the idea and hear feedback from them and also to think of ways of collaborating in the future with different activities that can reach out to the public.
The feedback has been very positive and has already resulted in several cooperation initiatives, among others, with VISP, B-Open, Bergen Kjøtt, Tag Team, Trykkeriet and the design magazine TENDENS.
- **KUNSTMARKED:** ART + FOLK, in collaboration with B-Open and Kunstguide.no hosted *KUNSTMARKED* during this year's B-Open. This was an art show with the aim to sell work from local professional artists, with a price limit of maximum 5 000,-. The event was a success and showed works from 35 artists. It had over 250 visitors through the weekend and sales of over 45 000,-. After this first edition and the resulted success, *KUNSTMARKED* will become a permanent part of the program for B-Open each year.



- **Reaching out to the press:** For *KUNSTMARKED*, ART + FOLK reached out to the press to tell them about the project. The result was a visit from Bergen's Tidende Art critic and video blogger for KUNST, Silje M. Engja Sigurdson, who made a reportage on B-Open and Art + Folk's *KUNSTMARKED*. This event was also mentioned in Bergens Tidende and Bergensavisen as one of the activities to visit during the weekend. As it is very difficult to get the press involved and interested in the different art activities in town, I see this as a great start for opening up to the public through different media outlets.
- **CM7 collective:** From the 15th of May, ART + FOLK has moved into an office space shared with B-Open, VISP and Kunstguide.no at Christian Michelsensgate 7. By joining forces with like-minded platforms, ART + FOLK has taken a step into settling into the community and being visible, creating opportunities of collaboration, sharing ideas and resources and opening up a space where both artists and people outside the art community can find us. CM7 will host different activities throughout the year. There will be a window exhibition each month curated by the different members of CM7 as well as guest curators. There will be space for artist talks, tutorials, consultation, meetings, and conversation.

Why is ART + FOLK applying for KUP midler?

So far, ART + FOLK has shown that there is a great necessity within our art community for a more open approach to the public and for more activities that create interest in people to invest in art.

ART + FOLK would like to establish two key projects in the coming years: A program of exhibitions with the aim to sell art, and a blog where our artist community will be presented in a more intimate and grounded setting called, "Home and Studio Visits", this blog will also include a podcast which will be based on meetings between two people that look at an exhibition together. One is an artist or a person educated in art, and the other one is not.

The money applied for will go to the production and development of each of these projects.

- **Exhibitions with aim to sell art:** The plan is to have a total of four larger exhibitions with the aim to sell art. This will showcase works of artists living and producing work in Bergen. The exhibitions will be held in different venues around the city of Bergen and in collaboration with different artist run spaces, galleries or curators living and working in Bergen. For 2017, the first show to come up will be held in the August/September of 2017 and it will be in collaboration with Trykkeriet at their show room. The works selected will be carefully curated and they will have a wide price range so that the possibility to acquire them is there for different members of the public depending on their budget. The second and last show of the year will be in collaboration with Bergen Kjøtt,

and it will follow the same process of selection of works. This being a larger space, gives the chance to experiment and try out different possibilities.

- **ART + FOLK, the blog (autumn 2017):** This is a blog where I will introduce a new artist in their home and in their studio once a month. It will be an interview to get to know how the artists work but also how they live. I believe this is a very effective way to identify ourselves with the people we are reading about, understand how they develop their ideas and how they combine their home life with their creative process. This is also a way to sneak into their homes and see how they think in terms of having art on their own walls. The blog is a meeting point between two people having a chat and sitting on the same level, talking about work and everyday stuff, such as kids, food, music, plans and of course art. So it is where a lifestyle blog meets an art blog.

Artists to be interviewed in 2017 (all confirmed):

- August: Annine Birkeland (artist and director of Bergen Kjøtt)
- September: Kiyoshi Yamamoto (visual artist)
- October: Mirjam Raen Thomassen & Martin Woll Godall
- November: Manuel Portioli
- December: Jane Sverdrupsen

*The production of the five home/studio visits for 2017 will be developed and produced during the summer of 2017 and they will be released once a month starting in August.

A blog is a very flexible, spontaneous and accessible outlet and it gives room to experimentation and improvisation. For example, some of the ideas for it are to have guest writers, to publish video reportages from current exhibitions, interviews with gallery owners and studio visits.