

Welcome to students, the Consumer Council (our collaborative partner), and guests!

Welcome to *The Greenwashers of the Year*. What you see to on the left slope towards the exit, are 24 student contributions to a lineup. We do this in English, since our students are from Colombia, Ghana, Kenya, the Philippines, China, Iran, Turkey, France, Estonia, Shetland, Russia, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Multiple. They are each making their Greenwasher poster with a pitch.

The posters have been strung up on a wire—a bit low, to give them weight as a body, a written pitch above as a head. Before and after the line-up are two texts by the course-leader, about the project and the course. You will find an empty bin at the beginning of the line, and one full of plastic trash, at the end. We are not exempt from, or above, the problem. We are in it. And it is physical.

At this juncture—Friday 17th June 2022—we are in a process of taking back the school. From having settled our work-spaces at home, and operating our social lives on remote video-conference platforms, to recreating and reimagining work-conditions and social relationships in the school-space. It is not like we are returning and everything works. There is confusion, waywardness, stray anger.

We have grown new habits, and are expected to grow new ones as the lockdown is over. But perhaps this a “second chance”: given that we have to create society and life-ways anew, everything we do counts. It is a choice for how things will be. It creates precedents and has a shaping impact on the road ahead. This is the larger context of this project: awarding the Greenwashers of the year.

The students' selection of enterprises are both from the *private* and *public* sectors. The posters have been organised according to 4 categories: 1) SOBRIETY; 2) EROSION; 3) AWARENESS; 4) CIRCULARITY. Each of the posters is pitched by a text, with each their keyword. The keywords range across a number of topics, and reflect the students interest and research. Some of which are:

NFT (Non Fungible Tokens), Norwegian oil and gas industry, Food talk, IKEA #Buy Back, Clocks, Disposable cups and lids, Burger-semiotics, Landscaping environments, Volvic, Voss, Tise, A greener future, Ocean plastic, H&M, Ecolabeling, Packaging, Circularity, Recycling, Consuming, Patagonia, Greenwashing, Virtue-signalling Bingo. You will go see for yourselves!

The point of doing this *lineup* is to conduct an investigation in public. It is not an exhibit. In Norwegian lineup is *oppstilling*. It means that what you see as on its way *toward* something, and by interacting with the works and the students you contribute to making that happen. The point of making a point of *visual* thinking in reflecting on greenwashing is to have people *stop* and think.

Visuals can tangle with texts, this is obviously clear to the advertisement business. But why not consider this option in establishing a *critique* of how enterprises in the private and public sector tango with information. Maybe you have well-informed ideas on who deserve to be called greenwashers—and also knowledge to support it—but perhaps that given the *time* you would change?

So, we are asking 1 hour of your time from you. And by coming here you have likely agreed. The students are here. Post-its are disposed along the green ropes. You can write or talk, or both. Students at our school do not write much, compared to other universities. My experience, however, is that they put a lot of thought into their texts. Here they have written to trigger the visuals.

It is a pleasure to see this happen, after a long term, many turns and discussions on why we are doing this in the scope of theory-development. These discussions have been distilled into two text-posters: one is a preface, the other a postface. This event, and your presence to help us with it, is bringing up a valuable material: the public stuff that makes design convertible in a *political culture*.

A *democratic* political culture to be sure, *pledged* to the liberty of expression. We are in Norway, where the oil wealth provides us with the space to do many good things on a *local* scale. We rank

the 8th *oil & gas* producer of the world, in *shipping*—in the vernacular called the 90% of everything—we rank 5th. This is not to say that there is a dark and global Norway, but we talk little about it.

That is, in our sector; which is the art education. Our partners in this project—the **Consumer Council**—are here to see the lineup, interact with the students, and to share some impressions and plans. The Greenwashers of the year is part of an award giving process supporting the work of the council for *consumer rights* on their information platforms and lobbying for green legislation.

We will hear more about this from the Council—featuring Gunstein Instefjord, who is the head of *consumer politics* at the Council—and the larger context in which the council sees the work that we are doing here today. We will also hear some words from our new dean Peter Løchstøer who has been partnering with the project, along with prof. Kirsti Bræin, to do the jury work in this project.

Thank you Gunstein Instefjord and Kiti from the Consumer Council for pitching and initiating the process of the Greenwasher of the year. Thank you Peter Løchstøer and Kirsti Bræin for having joined into a practice theory collaboration. Thank you Nikolai Handeland and Stein Stoknes for the tango with the tangle along the way. It was refreshing to hear voices from the private sector too.

Thank you Ursula Münster for facilitating our reaching out to your newsletter network. And thank you Atle Faye at KHiO. And thank you students in MA1 design for your efforts. Including those who have helped with the lineup. Thank you Ali Onat Türker, Ingrid Pettersson, Julia Ranzenberger, Marte Nestby Zarina Saidova and Tobias Bay Bang for helping with large and small things.

And for the audience, thank you for attending. Our hopes for this event is to further the topic—Greenwashing—opening it by the *question* (rather than catering to the old problem-solution template): a good question is a *conversation-starter*; an improved question is a *decision-maker*. If we are part of the problem then this approach likely opens the path of responsibility/ability to respond.

So, who will be the *Greenwashers of the year*? In the first run, we hope to get some help from you to deepen the work in the lineup. In appreciation of water as a scarce resource—sometimes even here in Norway—this is what we serve as refreshment at this particular occasions. You will find it in 3 small industrial style tanks on the table. Clear water. Or, if you prefer, black water (w/squid ink).

This is the structure of this event: 20 minutes from now is to allow everyone to get acquainted with the work. Then our Dean Peter Løchstøer will say a few words. After which Gunstein Instefjord from the Consumer Council is going to say a few words more. After their address we continue to mingle with the works, with the students, with other guests. The *exit* is at the top of the corridor.

Please use that exit, even if you—as we recommend—stay for the *fashion-show* after this event. At KHiO we are, as in society at large, in the middle of a human energy-transition. From lockdown to inventing society and environment anew. Doing is believing. Seeing is taking time to think. Or, it can be. With these words I invite our guests to interact with the works lined up, and with the students.

Theodor Barth

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