

DARIUSZ WOJDYGA

Collection of Curiosities



KHiO

Dariusz Wojdyga
MFA in Medium- and Material Based Art
Art and Craft department
Oslo National Academy of the Arts
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Introduction

Throughout history, nature has served as a primary source for art materials. In my own practice, I turn to nature particularly for sourcing materials from the Akerselva river. I engage in fishing out discarded waste, which I refer to as "sub-natural" elements. What fascinates me most is their potential for transformation through artistic processes. While I strive for nature-friendly approach in my work, I am confronted with the dichotomy of sustainability - I straggle with the environmental implications of production processes that demand energy and generate waste. In this thesis, my aim is to explore the conceptual and practical approaches that have influenced my understanding of medium- and material based art.

Integral to my artistic practice is the act of collecting – a ritualistic endeavour that transcends accumulation to become a coherent part of the artistic process itself. Much like a curator I'm trying to find the right relations in the set and view my collection as a repository of wonders, with each item imbued with its own narrative and significance. In contemplating my collection, I envision its potential as a storage of transformative materials being an accessible source for crafting in its full value.

Central to the collection is also the documentation of every artefact in a catalog that serves as a testament to its inherent value.

In my work I use fieldwork method that serves as a powerful tool for transformation on personal, social, and environmental levels. My installation embodies the idea of bringing the river into the exhibition space, bridging the divide between nature and artifice. Embracing a philosophy of process-based art, I engage in a dialogue with the materials, experimenting with techniques that blur the boundaries between form and function, to create jewellery that reflects the relationship between the natural world and our society.

Due to the quite extensive amount of material related to this project, both physical and substantive, I decided to introduce some numerical values that would close the project into a coherent framework.

For purely formalistic reasons, I chose the number 3 and its repetition within 33 and 333, where the latter means total perfection. This numerical value has nothing directly to do with the topic of the project, but it serves as a regulatory tool for me. This is my artistic system of sorting, organising and defining. In brief: we live in the world of constructed values. We do not see things as they are, but as we named them. We do not see the real value of reality, of the tangible surroundings that we actually depend on.

Jewellery from natural materials

Going back in time to the prehistory of humanity, there is ample evidence that jewellery making was one of the oldest forms of human expression. „Current research supports an extremely long history dating back tens of millennia. In 2005, three ancient shell beads were found in two different locations; two at the Skull Cave in Israel and one at a site in Oued Djebbana, Algeria. Each of the mollusc shells was pierced with a small hole to enable them, it is supposed, to be threaded into a necklace or bracelet. Analysis of fossils found in the same rock strata indicates a chronology of between 100,000 and 135,000 years BC”, Italian jeweller Roberta Bernabei writes in the foreword to her series of interviews with jewellery makers.¹ The latest archaeological research (2021) conducted in a cave in western Morocco „have discovered a set of shell beads (33 shells, D.W.), dated from 142,000 and 150,000 years ago”² as we can read on Artnetwebsite. It is not only the fact that such activities have accompanied humanity since the dawn of time that captivate my attention, but in the context of my studies, the materials utilised to express the human need for transformation. Even before humanity was able to create pottery or clothes „they used natural objects such as shells, stones or flowers to decorate themselves, recognising how such ornaments could transform the wearer and invest him or her with power and, often, magical status.”³ Wearing a shell necklace today would not be a sensation but I imagine the impact of symbolic weight carried by the act in that historical times, with its potential to evoke profound shifts in consciousness for both the wearer and those who saw it.

„If nature was once the primary source of tools, materials and inspiration, and jewellery was the primary form of human expression, then the complete history of creativity lies at our feet.” - argues Scottish jeweller Beth Legg in the introduction to her book *Jewellery From Natural Materials*⁴. Including silver and other metals alongside natural materials, and she ponders the intrinsic "naturalness" inherent in these materials. Ultimately, all metals are also composed of mixtures of raw materials in the form of minerals extracted from nature. „Is there a level of processing that negates the natural qualities of the material?”⁵, she asks. My way of acquiring materials refers very closely to the prehistory of jewellery. Just like ancient people, I collect my materials in nature. Similar to Legg, I share the belief that despite the often complex processes involved in their formation, all materials ultimately originate from basic elements extracted from nature. This perspective leads me to consider them, in essence, as natural substances. I find my raw materials in the river bordering the territory of The Oslo National Academy of the Arts. My ambition in this project is to cleanse the river of waste, along a 333-meter stretch. For this thesis I will call this area Section 333.

¹ Roberta Bernabei, *Contemporary Jewellers. Interviews with European Artists*, (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 2.

² Sarah Cascone, „Archaeologists Just Discovered the World’s Oldest Jewelry: This Set of 150,000-Year-Old Snail-Shell Beads in Morocco”, Artnet, November 19, 2021.
<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/worlds-oldest-jewelry-morocco-2037635>

³ Amanda Game and Elizabeth Goring, *Jewellery moves: ornament for the 21st century*, (Edinburg: NMS Publishing, 1998), 5.

⁴ Beth Legg, *Jewellery from natural materials*, (London: A&C Black Publishers Limited, 2008), 7.

⁵ Ibid.

Materials from nature



33 glass and ceramic objects from Akerselva



33 shells of *Cardiidae* from Oslofjord



33 rusty steel objects from Akerselva



33 shells of *Tritia reticulata* from Oslofjord



33 mixed materials objects from Akerselva



33 shells of *Littorina littorea* from Oslofjord

Dolphins in Akerselva

One of three blankets that I fished out of Akerselva is decorated with images of dolphins. The colour range is dominated by quite deep blues, which gives it, contrary to its intended function, a rather cold mood. It is difficult to tell clearly from the expression on the dolphins' faces whether they are doing well in the fresh water of the river.

Heather Diack in her lecture in Venice in 2022 describes a situation of raised - fake at that time, real after all - alarms about the appearance of various types of animal species in inappropriate areas of the world as an effect of global ecological crises.⁶ I understand all the objects I find in the river as creatures that, due to human activity, found themselves in an inadequate, inappropriate environment - just like the dolphins in Venice. Knowing their artificiality, but believing in their vitality, following the Object-Oriented Ontology movement, I'm using the linguistic construct "*sub-natural*", which allows me to place my subjects of collection on the border between nature and culture.

According to The Britannica Dictionary the prefix "*sub-*" has three meanings, and are well suited to my use.⁷

1. „*below, beneath*” - my objects come from under water, they are pulled out from under the surface of "another world", another environment;
2. „*at a lower rank or secondary level*” - the objects ended up as trash and their economic and cultural value become significantly reduced;
3. „*division or smaller part of*” - I clean up only a short river section, so all the objects gathered by me are only a little part of what still remains in the whole length of the river;

The "naturalness" of the objects is based on fact that they are actually obtained from nature, where they seem to be inseparable part of the underwater world - they seamlessly integrate into the landscape, merging with their surroundings and providing habitats for various forms of life. Secondly, although they are the result of often complex processes, their basic components are raw materials of natural origin. Thirdly, their liveliness lies in constant change of form and everlasting movement. From extracted natural raw materials that undergo industrial transformation to a functional elements. They travel further to some specific locations to fulfil their functions until worn out and thrown away. In some cases ending up in water, in a river. In the new environment they might settle in, but the river's changing currents root them out and send them again migrating further down the riverbed. The 9,8 kilometre section (length of Akerselva) might take years to complete. Or just few hours. Depending on the mood of the river.

I am not concerned with the historical background of the objects and I skip the archaeological approach. I am not looking for past meanings, previous functions, origins and temporality. I am intrigued by their inherent existence within a specific environment — not their primary domain. I am interested in their forms, colours, volumes, surfaces - in the conditions in which they were found. Deformed, corroded, covered with dirt or perhaps with some organic organisms that have engraved the texture of surfaces changing their original appearance. I am interested in the potential of transformation and what story they might they say in future forms.

⁶ „Toward a sustainable attitude. Aesthetics, the Arts, and the Environment”, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, April 17, 2024.

<https://www.unive.it/pag/44083/>

⁷ „sub-”, The Britannica Dictionary, March 25, 2024.

<https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/sub->

Dolphins from Akerselva



Local raw materials source

As I see it, sustainable art represents an open, dynamic and flexible approach to creation, needing thoughtfulness, reflection and conscious choices. In the outmost extreme interpretation of sustainability, the optimal course might be to abstain from creating anything further. The world is already overwhelmed with human-made products, and only a sort of mystical form of utilisation could aid in breaking down these amassed materials into their fundamental components. Yet, despite the conscious of destructive impact of our activities, an inner compulsion drives you to take action, a longing for expression compels you to create. Could this perhaps encapsulate the essence of humanity?

I am in favour of incorporating this specific material knowledge into curricula of art teaching - emphasising aspects of extraction, production technologies and their ecological implications. During an era where the ecological crisis is at the forefront of socio-political discourse, understanding the origins of materials, their production processes, and the environmental impacts should become a foundation of art education. Awareness is essential for authenticity.

I hope my material sourcing methods exert minimal negative impact on the environment, but at times, I find myself facing dilemmas when it comes to removing objects from the river, as they have evolved into habitats for various organisms. I choose to believe that I contribute to enhancing the natural conditions of the river, although garbage removal in urban agglomerations seems like a never-ending story. Due to the close proximity of the river to the production site at academy, there is indeed no detrimental impact from material transportation. So materials sourcing and transport are checked in the sustainable practice test. Nevertheless, problems appear at the production level. Certain techniques and processes involved in creation inherently require external energy sources, such as electricity or flames. I strive to select processes that rely solely on the internal energy of my hands, minimising the use of machines whenever possible. The British jeweller Julia Manheim argues „*The choice of materials used to make jewellery is important, allied with the way in which they are used. It is worth nothing that all making uses energy and materials of some description, but it is the degree of damage caused which has to be weighted up. It is difficult to get accurate information on this and to judge the seriousness of the impact made. If jewellery has been made from discarded materials, but put together with non-ecological glue, can it still be called sustainable?*”⁸ While the extraction of my materials may not directly harm the environment, I acknowledge that production processes often require external energy input and can generate unwanted waste. For instance, working with plastic may result in the creation of micro-plastics, albeit not in significant quantities. Despite my efforts to manage waste responsibly, the reality persists. And I feel uncomfortable anodising aluminium in a long, power-demanding process. This leads me to question where the line should be drawn. Assessing the harm and striking a balance to ease feelings of guilt can be challenging. But all in all, I am sharing my dilemmas and doubts with my friend Italian/British artist Lieta Marziali that says: „*What I do know is that, even after I turn them into something else, they will not be disappearing. Reuse is just not a viable and sustainable option if we do not stop or at least heavily curb our consuming and dumping habits in the first place.*”⁹

⁸ Julia Manheim, *Sustainable jewellery*, (London: A&C Black, 2009), 12.

⁹ Lieta Marziali, „Jewellery in the Age of Cataclysm. A review of the exhibition A Waste Land by Dauvit Alexander and Dan Russell”, Klimt02, May 23, 2019. <https://klimt02.net/forum/articles/jewellery-age-cataclysm-lieta-marziali>

Short-distance delivery materials - objects from Akerselva



Deep storage

„Everybody collects. Something. Anything. Again and again. Sometimes consciously and with a long-term strategy, other times without thinking much.” - German art historian Matthias Winzen opens with this statement his article in *Deep Storage*.¹⁰ Objects. Possessions. Systematising. The relationship we have to objects. What do they mean to us? Are they created to improve our existence, make our lives easier? Things speak about who we are. Things are communication, signals. Things represent "goods", prosperity, material wellness. Collecting has a kind of nostalgia to it. It is like a personal history book filled with emotional treasures. In extreme cases, it can replace self-esteem. It may also be a kind of substitution, filling a sense of lack, or fulfilling an unfulfilled desire related to the unattainable possession of something. It is through collecting, sorting and arranging things that we try to understand reality and establish some unchanging constants. Fighting against time and process, collected artefacts place us in a specific temporality. Even if it's just garbage, mundane, unnecessary waste, it is an evidence of what our personal history is actually made of. They are a record of a given moment and state. They are also a source of information, both about the owner and about the world. Each element of such collection, individually but also in combination with others, may also be a source of deeper interest and research beyond a given specific element. It can be a contribution to reflections on the past, an overview of the present and predictions of the future. The collector, in the selection process, decides how this individual story will be constructed. Decides what will be remembered.

The main physical body of my project is an extensive collection of objects caught from the river. It is a bizarre collection of rare or unusual specimens. At the exhibition, they serve as displays inviting the audience to lower their heads, contemplate, and appreciate. To me, however, it is also a form of storing potential artistic materials. From some of these previously disqualified items, I crafted objects with elevated aesthetic, practical, and potentially economic worth. I will use this resource many times in the near future, and I will be happy to share it with other artists.

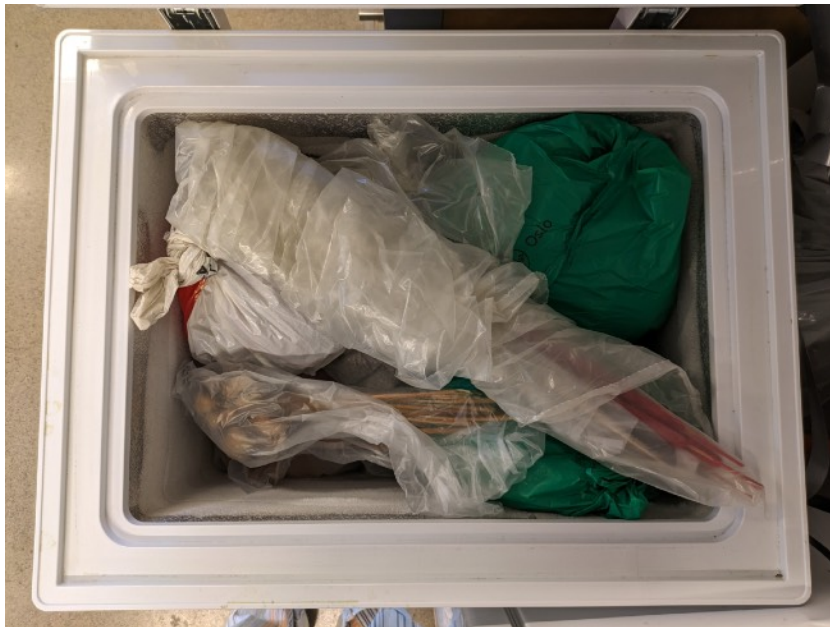
There's a common thread among artists, even if they don't directly consider sustainability. Many of my fellow students work with "worthless" materials. Mitra Shamloo creates her bachelor's project from a massive collection of wooden blocks found in a container, leftovers from a wood workshop. Thisbe Stadler, MA1 student stores her materials found in nature - seeds, plant fragments, animal bones, minerals - in the freezer, carefully packed in foil. Anne Walin Oven, also MA1, sources her materials from building sites, where the new replaces the old.

We accumulate countless amounts of endlessly discarded resources because we see potential in every single piece. It happens, however, that before these materials are used, they are stored in a way which evokes a form of aesthetic experiences resulting from relations between shapes, colours, accumulation, exposure and - what is important - our own personal valuation. An art form in itself. My material storage, due to the origin of its items, the way they were obtained, the type and purpose of their use, it became a form of expression for me and hence, part of the exhibition.

¹⁰ Matthias Winzen, „Collecting-so normal, so paradoxical”, in *Deep storage : collecting, storing, and archiving in art*, Geoffrey Batchen, ed. Ingrid Schaffner and Matthias Winzen. (Munich: Prestel 198), 22.



Mitra Sahlmoo, material collection



Thisbe Stadler, material collection



Anne Walin Oven, material collection

Cabinet of curiosities

For the display of my project I incorporate the concept of collections of curiosities which emerged in 15th century and gained popularity among wealthy individuals and scholars throughout the following centuries. Wonder rooms and cabinets of curiosities served as precursors to museums, offering a glimpse into the expanding horizons of knowledge during an era marked by the discovery of new lands and colonisation. The collections varied in size and opulence, from a more compact format of cabinets to separate rooms filled with the objects. These collections comprised *naturalia* – items of natural origin such as preserved animal bodies or parts, insect specimens, crustaceans, shells, stones, or *artificialia* – manmade artefacts crafted in the *New World*, peculiar or mysterious objects of specific purpose. Depending on their status, position, and interests, each collector assigned a distinct value to their collection, rendering it personal and one-of-a-kind.

The primary aim was to acquire items that were unique and rare, reflecting a desire for ownership of the extraordinary. Moreover, it was a human longing to segregate, define, classify, hierarchise. These artefacts sparked curiosity and ignited discussions about the mysteries of the world - „*Something of the atmosphere of the supernatural that belonged to them passed to cabinets of curiosities, so that alchemy, the occult and magic were never very far away*”¹¹ says the French collector and writer Patrick Mauriès. They laid the groundwork for the systematic approach to science, marking the inception of organised inquiry into the natural world. From the other side Wunderkammern (German) served as a means of displaying wealth and exerting power, showcasing the owner's influential connections and prominence in the world. Drawing from the ideas above, for me, diving in the river represents an exploration of a new realm and an expansion of horizons. However, my objectives diverge from exploiting the area for its natural resources. Instead, I view it as a process of decolonizing the natural space from the dominance of civilisation. In my room of wonders the collection gets a horizontal perspective. Objects sorted according to similar forms, arranged on a floor with a gentle but clearly noticeable slope, stretch between the walls of Katedralen - gallery space at academy in Oslo, as if the viewers were walking along the river bank and looking at its bottom covered with waste. To invite a direct association with the Akerselva flowing nearby I avoid the display cases and drawers that dominated the classic Wunderkammer - segregating, boxing, trapping.

I gather these objects to fulfil my innate desire for accumulation. Each item, no matter how seemingly mundane, possesses a uniqueness and rarity of its own. Pâté cans, unrecognised fragment of steel plate, torn plastic bag - each one bears distinct markings, shaped by the interactions of previous users and the forces of nature within the river. I collect these objects, I collect these objects and perform my own, less dominating, form of classification and try to find the meaning they have in relation between man and nature. I also delve into the substantial aspect of these objects, exploring their potential for transformation and evaluating their suitability for crafting purposes.

My collection is also a demonstration of my wealth and power. If we take into account the economic outlays related to the extraction of raw materials, processing and manufacturing, the cost of scientific research, the work of designers, transportation and past market value of each individual item, we can imagine the price that was paid for it just to be dumped in the river.

¹¹ Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets of Curiosities*, (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2002),7.



Woodcut from *Imperato's Dell'istoria naturale*. Photo of the book Patrick Mauriès, *Cabinets Of Curiosities*, 10-11.



Work in progress. Reconstruction of Kai's office, KHiO Library.



My collection of curiosities in January 2024. Byggetårget, KHiO

Akerselva catalogue 2024

Albertus Seba (1665-1736) was the owner of one of the richest collections of curiosities in the 17th century. A German pharmacist and scientist who settled in Amsterdam, he expanded his medical profession with a passion for biological research and, therefore, a collection of natural specimens. Seba collected things "from the 4 corners of the Earth"¹², had many valuable contacts in various continents, and cleverly dealt with carriers. He would routinely trade his medicines with crew members from ships arriving in Amsterdam from all over the globe, swapping them for unique "souvenirs" from foreign lands. Additionally, he used to exchange duplicates with fellow collectors hailing from other countries. Thanks to his good reputation and resourcefulness, he managed to persuade the Russian Tsar, Peter the Great, traveling in the Netherlands, to visit his humble home (1717). Seba's entire first collection was purchased by the ruler: "Among other things, it included no less than 72 drawers full of sheets, 32 drawers displaying 1,000 European insects, and 400 jars of animals specimens preserved in alcohol."¹³ Seba quickly managed to create an even larger collection that became well known and utilised in the world of science.

Among other documented collections, Seba's *Thesaurus* stands out for its quality and extensive content. In four volumes it contains numerous, high-quality illustrations depicting a wide range of species of organisms, along with notes and descriptions. Volume III is the chapter that piques my interest and serves as a source of inspiration for the jewellery series in this project. Primarily because of its content - „it devoted to marine life. The imposing variety of sea creatures includes scallops, starfish, squid, sea urchins and fish.”¹⁴ I draw parallels to the underwater life. In accordance with the *Thesaurus*, I've created a catalog showcasing items and rarities retrieved from the river, meticulously organised based on their shapes like the traditional cabinets of curiosities. While Seba utilised the media available in his time for documentation - graphics - I've employed the modern medium of photography that offers the advantages of being easily accessible, fast, and accurate, allowing for efficient documentation. The photographs faithfully reflect the current condition of the objects, serving as a visual narrative scripted by time itself and showing their voyage. Some images are re-sized to an arbitrary scale, reducing larger ones or magnifying smaller ones to reach the visual balance. The title for the catalogue is *Collection of Sub-Natural Curiosities. Endangered species of Akerselva*. The *sub-natural* term has already been explained and they are endangered species because I extract them from the river, which causes their total extinction - from that environment.

Although the primary intention of both publications - Seba's and mine - may be of a documentary nature, it is hard to ignore the intriguing impression that they resemble a contemporary supermarket catalogue. The only elements missing are the prices and special offer advertisements. Ultimately, everything we produce becomes an object of commercialisation. Or so we wish..

¹² Irmgard Müsch, „Albertus Seba's Collection of Natural Specimens and its Pictorial Inventory”, in Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities : locupletissimi rerum naturalium thesauri 1734-1765; based on the copy in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague = Das Naturalienkabinett*, Hong Kong: Taschen, 2005 7.

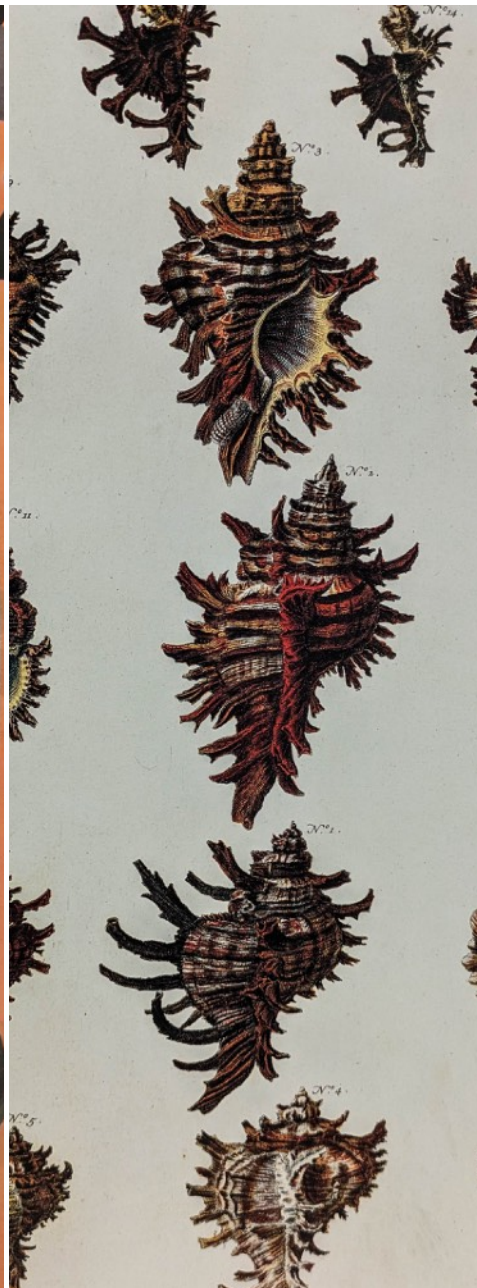
¹³ Irmgard Müsch, Albertus Seba's Collection, 13.

¹⁴ Irmgard Müsch, Albertus Seba's Collection, 11.

Photo of supermarked catalog, XXL, September 2023, 16.



Photo of Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities*, 389.



Collection of Sub-Natural Curiosities. Endangered species of Akerselva.



Transition - field work

A river embodies dynamism, in constant motion symbolising transition, change, and the fluidity of existence within an infinite flow. It can symbolize personal growth, spiritual evolution, seeking knowledge, or discovering oneself. From a broader viewpoint, rivers are catalysts for the transformation of the surrounding world - they are the reason for the emergence of settlements, cities and metropolises. Furthermore, they are an indispensable element for life - no fresh water, no life.

Spanish curator Carla Acevedo-Yates describes work of Carolina Caycedo as a „*working method that would eventually inform a much larger artistic project, which has developed across time, media, and geography, and comprises an ever-widening array of social and environmental networks*”¹⁵. I found my practice sticking to the idea of fieldwork that serves not only as a method for collecting materials to create my artworks, but also as a vehicle for understanding a location and to connect to its residents. Central to it is establishing relations with the elements of the chosen location to get the perspective allowing for recognition and understanding.¹⁶ To truly comprehend or feel how a phenomenon works, one must adopt alternative perspectives; attune oneself to the viewpoints of non-human subjects, animate and inanimate entities; establish a connection with a particular environment, immerse oneself in its essence, and become an integral part of it. Diving into the waters of Akerselva has profoundly altered my perception of the other world and the intrinsic value of our relation. Extracting materials from the river has evolved into a means of experiencing a form of personal transformation each time I enter the water. The distinct substance of water necessitates a physical transformation within me, further deepening my connection to the river and its surroundings. Without my diving suit, I wouldn't endure the low water temperature for extended periods. Without the tube, I couldn't breathe underwater. Were it not for the mask, my vision would be limited to blurred outlines. Sounds received under the surface of the liquid environment require a new system of perception and verbal communication becomes impossible. The entire body must adjust to the prevailing conditions, including altered gravity and the continuous flow of the river. It feels akin to landing on an alien planet and transforming into a different type of creature altogether.

Akerselva is a natural environment located in the heart of urban agglomeration but crossing its water surface can induce a sensation of isolation, as if the outside world fades away into insignificance. The environmental conditions, the perpetual flow, and the presence of newfound companions such as fish, crayfish, and small organisms captivate the attention. The interplay of plants, branches, stones, and sediment particles carried by the water constantly draws the focus. Rays of light scattered in the liquid create a spiritual atmosphere. The temptation never to come back strong. Yet the limitations of human physiology quickly force me to. The process of transformation and adaptation to these conditions would likely span centuries. I do not have this time. It is technology that helps me to adjust.

¹⁵ Carla Acevedo-Yates, *Carolina Caycedo : from the bottom of the river*, (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art DelMonico Books, 2020), 27.

¹⁶ Ibid, 24 and 28.

Transformation, companionship, spirituality



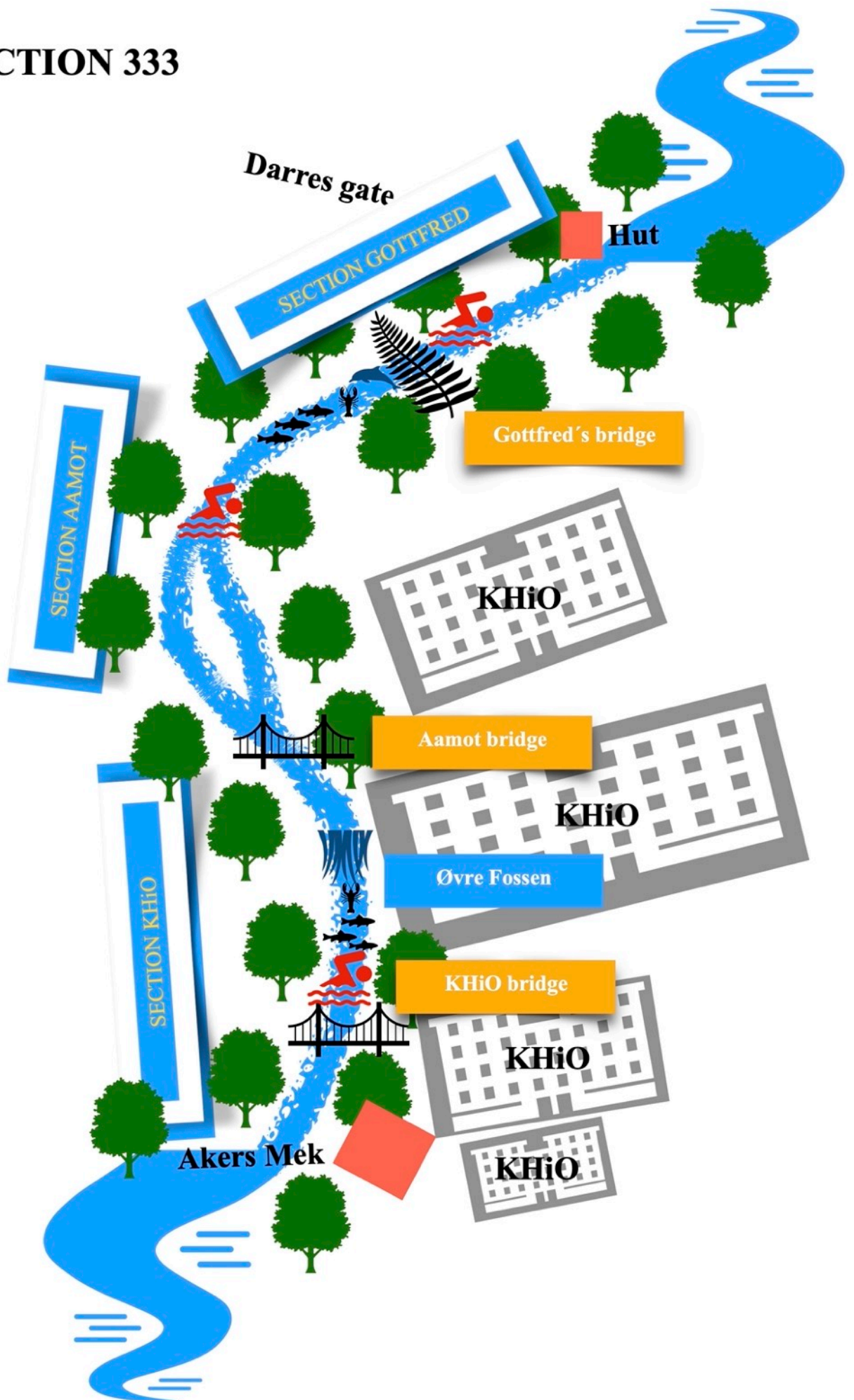
SECTION 333

The section of the river on which I operate borders the territory of KHiO and is 333 meters long. For better orientation I divided it into three parts. The first part is defined as the KHiO Section, with the KHiO Bridge, which connects the banks of the river, and is the lowest part - from Akers mek to Øvre Fossen. The next section of the river, called the Aamot Section, after the historic Aamot bridge, stretches between the waterfall to the end of the bend, just beyond a small island. The final section, the Gottfried Section, continues upstream to a small hut that, like a guard tower, marks the boundary. There is no bridge in this section, however, in its upper part a tree hanging above the water surface connects both banks. One time, when I emerged from the water, I found performing artist Gottfred's Forest Fantasy (nickname) hanging and spinning upside down. Hence the name of this natural bridge and section of the river. So these three parts make up Section 333 and this is where I source my materials.

The exhibition items are spread out on the floor, on aluminum plates, in the Katedralen - exhibition room at KHiO, over a distance of 33 meters, ending with a „waterfall” in the recess of the corridor. Aluminium pates are a mirror-like surface, like a flipside view giving a feeling as if we were looking from the other side of the water. It is not an authentic representation of the Akerselva shape, it is only a symbolic reference to any river. The whole length is divided into 3 sequences, each containing 333 objects caught from the river lying on the floor or standing on a light table encapsulated in a glass container filled with water from Akerselva (demonstration of the oxidation process and impact on water quality). Jewellery pieces are elevated, standing out from the mass, but at the same time remaining in the waste zone - created from waste, and probably turning into waste again in an unpredictable future. It is a collection of 33 objects, some in smaller groups of 3 or single, small or larger pieces. Objects on the floor are sorted according to similarity of form to create an aesthetic mosaic. They are in their raw form, just as they were found, not cleaned, showing their nature: corroded, torn, dirty, smelling unpleasant. There is specific scent easily detectable in a closed space. To strengthen it, some elements of the exhibition are sprayed with water from the river. The exhibition is complemented by 333 photo-prints presenting the poetics and drama of the underwater world. These are also images of the landscape of a selected section of the river on both sides of its water surface. There is also documentation of my work process and events directly related to the project. 3 stands with screens show videos, 3 on each in a loop, in 3 categories: underwater world, surface and process documentation. There is 3 soundtracks encompassing the installation. One, the sound of a waterfall in the hollow of the corridor, the second, the calm river current in the central area of the installation, and the third, dominating the entire space of Katedralen, the sound from under the water. I use direct, tangible means of expression. Materiality is the base and starting point for activating the senses here. The world of objects, known to us but transformed by the force of nature, triggers our tactile imagination. Without touching, we feel these structures. My intention is for the viewer to be able to feel the world and the process in a multi-sensory way, without entering the water. This is our world. These items represent us as a community. This is how we treat the common good.

This is a site-specific installation and its shape and extent depend on the room in which it is displayed, which also changes its tone and impact. This is a very concrete visual metaphor, directly referring to the topic. I think that our everyday life, no matter how tangible or brutal, has a huge amount of poetry in it. This is what I would like to share.

SECTION 333



Jewellery from the trash

Jewellery making is generally thought as a studio-based work with the outcome in form of an object. To me, it is much more than a product. It is continued state of acting, interacting and making, it is rather a set of non-linearly connected activities, interactions and approaches - not only hands on, but also the-whole-body on. It is a state of continuous process, where each stage is the result of the previous action and the source of the next phase. It may happen that there is no logical or well-thought-out relationship between them, but each subsequent micro-action expands the field of knowledge, skills and resources of the selected field of interest. My teacher, Jorge Manilla, during the opening of this year's jewellery festival JELO6 in Athens, used a short, accurate statement in his speech: „*Jewelery is made of fragments*”. This simple truth translates into every area of our lives, and all our actions are nothing more than a set of micro movements in specific, unknown or inappropriate directions. This project is very much based on this philosophy and fits into the framework of process art: „*the gathering, sorting, collecting, associating, patterning, and moreover the initiation of actions and proceedings*”¹⁷. Everything is in a process, even if there are patterns and rhythms, everything changes, everything passes.

„*When discussing a highly-political and economic issue like trash, and an anthropologically-divisive subject like dirt, jewellery makes for a fine medium, requiring a high level of engagement in terms of both much direct hand manipulation from the maker but also much direct body contact from the wearer.*”¹⁸ - Lieta Marziali refers to the importance of craft and skills in jewellery making, especially when we talk about material based art sourcing from discarded materials, it connects us immediately with art concepts such as trash art, found objects art (object 'objet trouvé), readymades. I treat the objects primarily as raw materials, of the same value as those purchased in a store. In most cases, I process these materials into forms that do not refer to the raw material in any way. My intention is to give it a new existence. I do not feel that my jewellery could or should be described simply or solely as found objects or trash art. We can use this term to cover the entire installation. The very fact of material sourcing in this specific way can, of course, refer to the area of environmental art, ecological art, or Arte Povera, but this is a matter of personal identification. I do not consider myself a self-proclaimed representative of these trends, or an activist. However I am open to combining different approaches.

The jewellery collection comprises 33 pieces crafted from a blend of river-sourced materials and supplementary elements like thread, clasps, and piano wire. The eclectic array of materials encompasses plastic, rubber, glass, textiles, steel, aluminum, lead, and copper. Throughout production, I employed a diverse metalworking techniques, including welding, soldering, casting, embossing, predominantly riveting, a cold joining method that skip external energy sources or extra materials. Working with materials like glass, plastic, and textiles challenged me to expand my skillset beyond conventional metalworking techniques: manual and machine sewing, thermoforming, piercing, carving as well as boiling. It allowed me to experiment widely and gave rise to new working methods. The forms are inspired by Albertus Seba's "Thesaurus" (Volume 3, Tab I-CXVI)¹⁹. This is a reference to the water world, with the indication that the species presented in the drawings do not belong to the world of the Akerselva river, just like the sub-natural species that I fish out for jewellery production.

¹⁷ „Process art”, Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia, January 27, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_art

¹⁸ Lieta Marziali, „Jewellery in the Age of Cataclysm”.

¹⁹ Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities*, 301-435.

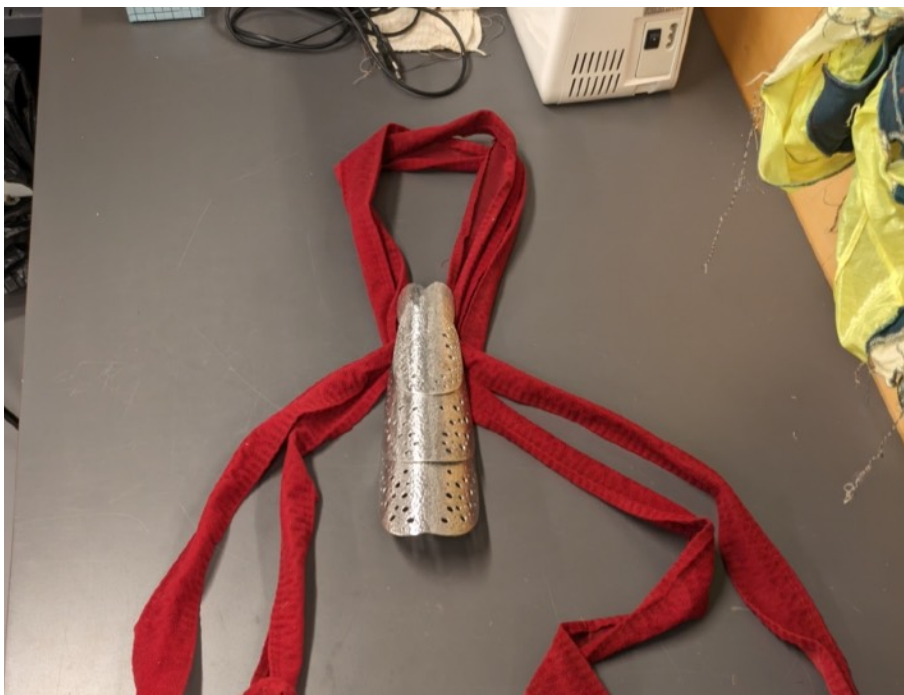
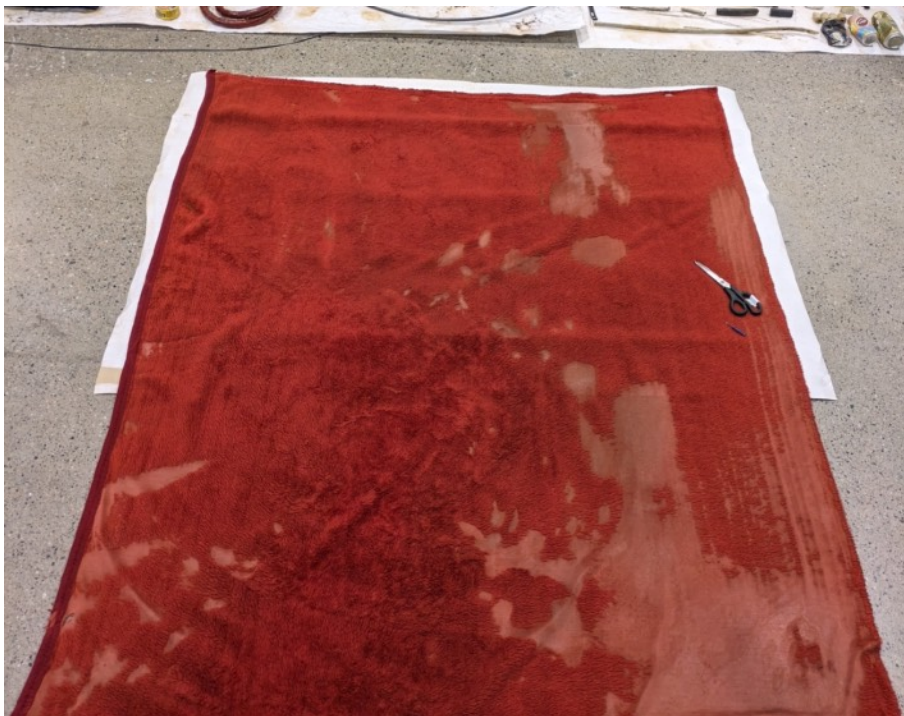
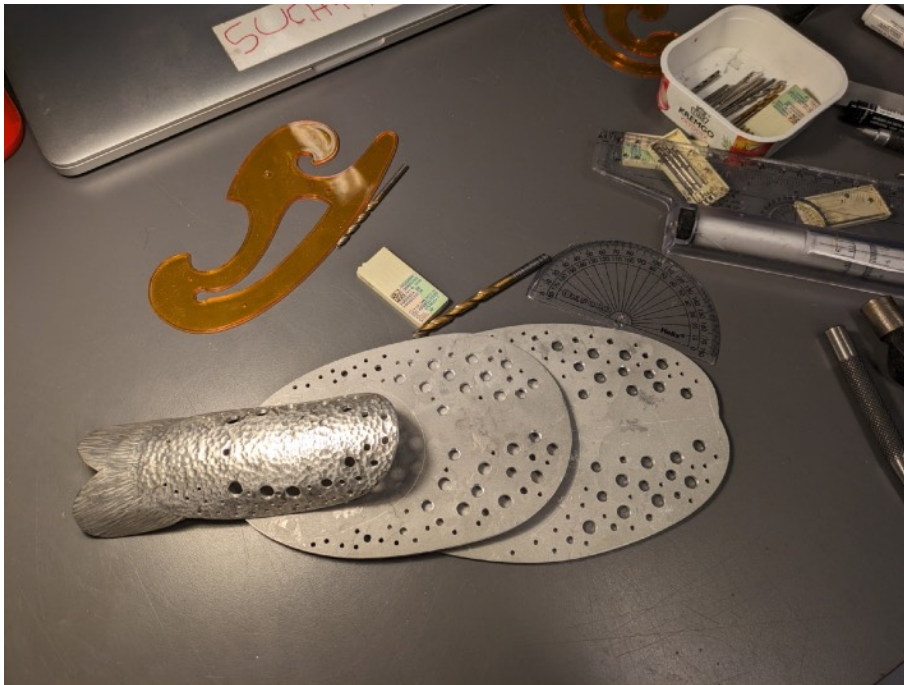


In background illustrations from the book
Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities*,
430-431



In background illustrations from the book
Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities*,
424-425







In background illustrations from the book
Albertus Seba, *Cabinet of natural curiosities*, 388



Conclusion

Through this exhibition I am looking for entries and field reconnaissance, asking questions to myself and to those who have some curiosity about the topic. I don't know everything and I'm not here to give all the answers, but I want to know as much as possible and see things and phenomena with different eyes. I want to hear what questions arise in the viewers' minds. How do we treat contemporality, why do we do what we do? Why there is garbage in the river and no one to pick it up? Why is the world, how it is, or why is it the way we make it be? It is about establishing bonds and relationships with objects, people, non-human entities, known and unknown phenomena. This is an opportunity to slow down, see, listen, take a closer look, smell and think. I use simple, one might even say trivial, means of expression because my intention is directness, physicality, materiality and capturing the unnoticed transience. Simple actions that anyone can do. I learn by exploring, by experiencing, by discussing and arguing. I would love the public to ask questions, make me uncomfortable in not having the answers.

This project is my concerns deepening both my theoretical and practical application of the idea of sustainability in art. Spreading a network of collaborations allowing for further activities, development and contribution to ecology and environmental protection, through art jewellery.

A physical edition of my master's thesis is an artist book composed of three parts: text, catalogue and a little piece of material sourced from Akerselva. All printed on recycled paper, on separate A3 format sheets.

Among many other topics that were not touched upon in this work, although they are also an integral part of the entire process in this project (such as the importance of drinking water, or the global problem of water ecology, or issues regarding the divisions between arts and crafts and fine arts, etc.), there is one that is crucial to me and I strongly wish to formalise it in this thesis in a very brief way. Since the focus of my work is on matter and the processes and dilemmas related to it, I leave this part of the thesis in the structure presented above, giving myself the right to install an additional chapter in the final part of the writing.

Additional chapter. Ways of seeing, ways of thinking, ways of doing

What I do not know, other people know, or they know people that know. Collaboration is a conversation with a different points of view. It's seeing the same topic from a different perspectives. It's about expanding the horizon of knowledge, skills and relationships. It's about creating a network of opportunities. If I'm good at something and someone is good at something else - together we gain wider room for manoeuvre.

Performative action in public space triggers the interactive aspect of my work and often leads to encounters with other individuals who are also engaged with the river in various capacities. Among them is Jessica Ullevål, who affectionately refers to herself as the "daughter of the river." An artist and activist who initiated the fundraising efforts to support the establishment of legal rights for the river and working closely with many local and international eco-activistic organisations. Ullevålseter works to promote circles of complex encounters and promote dialogue between these and nature - making visible and embodying our belief in mutual dependence and dialogue with nature.

On March 22, World Water Day is celebrated globally: „*The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/47/193 of 22 December 1992 by which 22 March of each year was declared World Day for Water; to be observed starting in 1993*”²⁰. In collaboration with Ullevålseter, we orchestrated a public event on that day in Oslo, involving artists, activists, representatives from various cultures, religions, organisations and institutions. We conceived the *Performative Procession for the Spirit of Os-Lo* as an artistic and activist endeavour, designed to engage and include the audience. The documentation and development of the event got a chance to be shown at Kunstakademie, Kunsternes Hus in Oslo. We aspire to bring together individuals, groups, and institutions to engage in collective environmental efforts focused on the well-being of the river.

Miljøforeningen Akerselvas Venner (MAV) is an organisation that „work to preserve, restore and further develop a varied, living and natural environment for people, flora and fauna in Akerselva and the area along the river, as well as stimulate people's interest in Akerselva”²¹. After an unexpected meeting with one of the board members, one day when I was just entering the water, I applied for membership and was invited to present my project at the annual meeting. I took part in cleansing another part of the river and in May we are planning cleanup at Section 333 together.

A special relationship has also developed with Gottfred's Forest Fantasy, a performer artist who I „found” suspending from a tree leaning over the river, once I emerged from under the water. While wandering along the river, you may come across a strange creature hanging from one of the numerous bridges, often in an elaborate costume, spinning upside down.

Already in 2022, teaming up with Caroline Bach, a renowned jewellery maker from France, we initiated a project called *Rivers' Downfall*, that utilises jewellery as a medium to raise awareness about the critical issue of freshwater pollution. Through our exhibitions we would like to advocate for the rivers, highlight their power and raise awareness on their fragile balance as ecosystems.

I could make a long list of friends and co-students involved in the project, photographing, filming, carrying finds, helping in different ways, but this would take up too much space of this thesis.

²⁰ „World Water Day”, Unesco, March 25, 2024. <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/world-water>

²¹ „Purpose and action plan”, The environmental association Akerselva's Friends, March 20, 2024. https://www.akerselvasvenner.no/om-oss__trashed/formal/



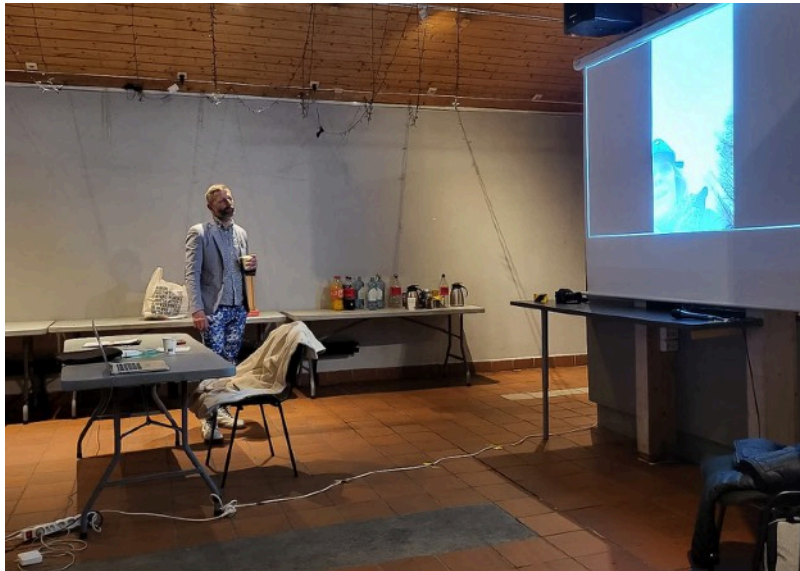
Performative Procession for the Spirit of Os-Lo, water ceremony led by Jesica Ullevål. Photo by Rajat Mondal



Performative Procession for the Spirit of Os-Lo, walking along the river up to KHiO, photo by Torbjørn Moen



Performative Procession for the Spirit of Os-Lo. Discussion panel at KHiO. From the left Erik Myrhaug Partapuoli, Odin Lysaker, me, Jesica Ullevålseter, Jonas Kittelsen Photo by Rajat Mondal



Presentation for Miljøforeningen Akerselvas Venner. Photo by Erik Østlyngen, the Chairman of the board



Gottfred's Forest Fantasy. Photo by Gottfred's Forest Fantasy.



Rivers' Downfall, exhibition in A-Galerii, Tallinn, 2023; Caroline Bach on the left. Photo by Sile Luik;

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