

Abstract for presentation at spring forum – Trygve Ohren

The project builds on my practice as a curator and architect. It explores how I define and apply open frameworks as a method for developing projects collaboratively with other involved actors. A critical reflection on, and understanding of, this method is central to the work.

The world is facing challenges that require radical changes. If we are to move toward more sustainable and credible future scenarios, the exciting systems and frameworks must change. To develop new systems, we must experiment and test a myriad of different approaches. We need a multitude of examples that test alternative processes - processes that break with established structures. Here, the architectural field carries a particular responsibility. With greater room for experimentation and a stronger willingness to challenge conventions, architects can help change established practices in an industry that still believes that we can build ourselves out of the crisis.

A central concept in my work is «spaces of opportunity». Through the various roles I take on - as architect, curator, organizer, and researcher - I explore how and where such spaces can be identified, constructed, and activated. This has led me to examine the existing infrastructure around experimental architectural practices. In Norway today, there is limited infrastructure to support a non-commercial and experimental architectural field. The profession is increasingly dominated by large firms, and the smaller practices are being absorbed by the larger ones, leaving us with a few powerful actors who dominate the field (Morgenbladet 22.08.23).

A key insight from my explorations is the need to strengthen the infrastructure for an independent architectural field. This need has become particularly visible through the crisis in the construction industry in recent years. A large proportion of architects are unemployed and an increasing number are seeking other paths into an architectural practice. This is a type of crisis that we have not seen in a very long time.

One might speculate whether such instability could open possibilities for practices that embrace risk and uncertainty. If so, how might we facilitate the flourishing of small, independent initiatives?

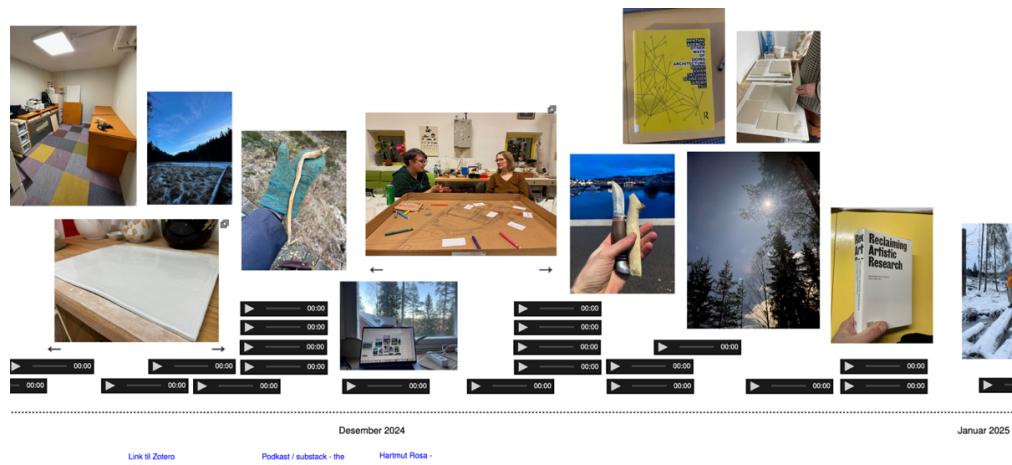


(workshop with architecture students, foto: Trygve Ohren)

During the economic boom we have experienced over the past 20-30 years, the infrastructure for the independent field has gradually been built down. Therefore, we need to rebuild the infrastructure that can ensure the experimentation and development of the field. The large firms will never be the ones to take risks, push the boundaries and create new understanding. However, operating between architecture and art offers concrete opportunities to test new methods and generate alternative forms of knowledge and practice. At the moment I am testing different approaches to create a better understanding of the infrastructure needed to support an experimental and independent field of architecture.

Documentation

I have, from the beginning of my PhD period, set up a Research Catalogue page where I share reflections in the form of recordings and images. This is a form of field diary, with a mixture of notes and personal reflections. This has become an important tool for me as both documentation and an opportunity for reflection.



(Screenshot from research catalogue)

Some of the recordings are short note-to-self type, while others are longer conversations where I either go for a walk, drive a car, or do wood carving. The objects I carve have eventually taken on a central place in my practice as tools for reflection and bearers of the conversations with myself.



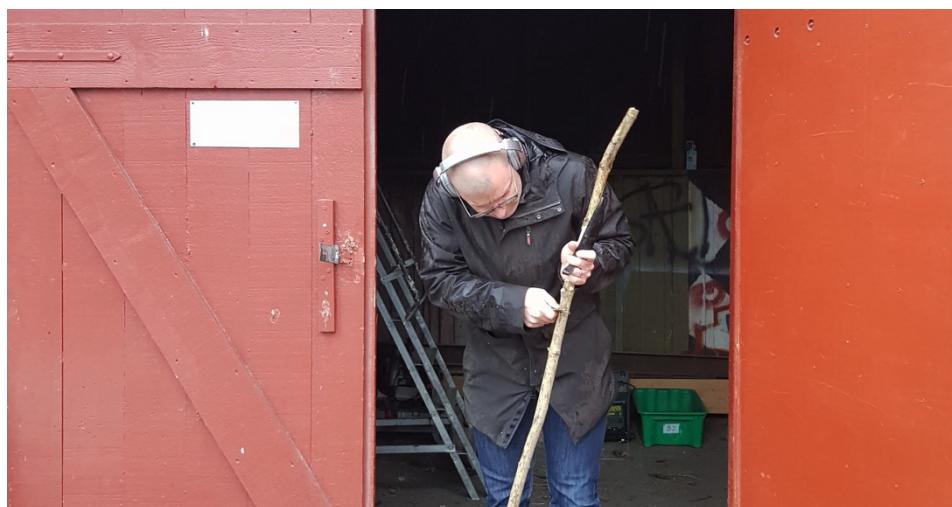
(wood carving, foto: Trygve Ohren)

My plan for the presentation at spring forum 2026:

After a short introduction, I would like to test a method for listening and sharing that I have been developing. I call it “lytte & spikke” – and it consists of listening to an edit of recorded conversations while carving a piece of wood.

15-20min – a short session of “lytte & spikke” – **(only in Norwegian)**. A rough edit from different recorded conversations with myself and collaborators forms the basis of the conversation afterwards. Bring your own headset if possible - I have a few spares.

Going further, I would like to test the recorded conversations and reflections as a part of the framework in a project. Can the recordings be part of creating a shared understanding of the project?



(from midterm, spikke&lytte, foto: Trygve Ohren)