

SERENDIPITY

Winking man finding his Winking house

Jad El Khoury

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Last year at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Art and public space program, we were asked to propose a project for Nitja art center in Lillestrom, which just moved to this new shiny building, leaving behind their humble wooden art center.

I see this move as part of the urban development marketing plan, as well as a good example of consumerism mentality of dumping the old and buying new.

The transformation from town to city is taking place now and it is easy to notice.

By looking on the map we can see this gray organ, which is growing fast taking over more wooden houses and gardens, replacing them with gated residential Highrise, privatizing emotions, dulling the senses and erasing diversity as Richard sennet describe them in Flesh and stone.

Walking the periphery, we see the strong contrasts from town to city.

For Nitja my research was based on serendipities that happened by walking around, meeting things and people.

The highlight of all is when my close friend Danielle joined one of my walks, and found the WINKING HOUSE.

Although it was abandoned and under destruction, it kept being sassy, winking through the same type of curtains that i have been installing on empty windows of vacant buildings for the past 3 years in different places around the world.

I contacted the company demolishing the house, collected the debris, cleaned it from nails and stored it in nature to heal.

Second semester the rescued wood arrives to Khio, where I rebuilt the wink to be exhibited at Nitja New art center.

On a personal level the walks, the sassy wink, the need to rebuild what was destroyed, being in nature to heal are all part of my healing process from the traumatic experience of Beirut explosion which I luckily survived just two days before moving to Oslo last year.

However, I couldn't find a direct link between the urban development effect on Lillestrom and the trauma/pain of Lebanon.

Until I met Jarle.

On the exam day, my classmate Yildiz, who worked on her project in collaboration with Morgenstellet a rehab center in Lillestrom, invites the patients to come see the exhibition, and one of them recognized the wink.

“This is my house’ he says. Jarle recognized his house from the curtain pattern (85000 is the population of Lillestrom, 1/85000 chance for this to happen)

The big opening was that Jarle is the Winking Man, since he has one paralyzed eye caused by the trauma and pain after his army service with the united nation in Lebanon.

Suddenly the loop was closed, the personal vs contextual link was found and it all made sense.