

Harpefoss hotell

WHAT IS HARPEFOSS HOTELL?

Harpefoss Hotel was established in 2014 as an art centre with facilities for artist residencies. This former railway hotel, dating from the late 19th century, now hosts exhibitions, both outdoors and in the outbuildings, and provides accommodation for visiting artists. Our goal is to use art, architecture and design as a framework for the exploration of the natural environment and knowledge about it, with new projects being developed on site and in collaboration with other institutions. Harpefoss Hotel also hosts various annual events, seminars, concert series and the Harpefoss Hardcore Festival.

Initially, I attempt to identify a thematic outline. A free-standing art project may then involve collaboration with an author or a composer. Alternatively, it may start as a broader, curated program that continues over several years. Time is an essential factor in all of the projects, as collaboration should both influence and determine the contours of the project and open it up to the unexpected. It is demanding to go through such lengthy processes, and they necessitate the existence of a strong enough sense of excitement to last the course. On the other hand, I think every book is created in order to have a certain level of enduring interest and value.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START A PUBLISHING PRACTICE AND WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A BOOK PROJECT?

I wanted to create a series of books that reflected our multifaceted practice and the growing number of interdisciplinary projects that had emerged over time. We started the TILT book series in 2016 with a small publication titled *Ex fluvio opes*, based on a lecture by Olav Brostrup Müller about the Gudbrandsdalslågen river, Norway's second longest watercourse, which in fact runs through the property. The book evolved into a kind of poetic biography, consisting of apparently absurd anecdotes about the river that were based on true situations. This gave rise to the idea that the site-specific could serve as a starting point for a publication as much as for an art project.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF PUBLISHING A BOOK?

Our initial plan was to adopt a uniform format for the whole series, which would streamline production and allow the adoption of a methodical approach for each publication. Earlier experiences from art book publishing (Torpedo Press) suggested however that it would be problematic not to allow the form and content of each artwork to take shape independently. The artist or author will always draw the longest straw when it comes to the development of the concept and content, but the advantage of the publisher's – or my – less obtrusive role is its distance from the material and form. Accordingly, my contribution consists mainly

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of the understanding and support I can lend to the process of composing the final product. The optimal situation is to refine an individual voice, juxtapose it with another, and achieve successful, critical transitions between different contributions that initially may be quite different in nature. It is important to be open to unexpected influences that initially may seem wrong, but in fact bring one closer to a kind of perfection.

Apart from the editorial role, production work is an omnipresent feature of self-publishing. My impression is that most people value a relatively predictable sharing of work between the artist, the editorial group, the designer and the printer, with additional tasks relating to technical and linguistic improvements. As publisher I sometimes take on all responsibility for the administrative and financial aspects of a project, while in other cases these burdens are shared with, or even mainly shouldered by, the artist.

WHO ARE THE AUDIENCES FOR YOUR PUBLICATIONS? HOW ARE YOUR BOOKS DISTRIBUTED?

Often a small press will expend most of its energy and funding in completing a project that lives up to its standards and goals. One puts an enormous amount of faith in the product in devoting oneself completely to something that can be experienced as an almost perfect artistic expression, whether it is a book or

a work in another medium. Accordingly, the success of different sorts of books – like a project for future-oriented thinking, a visionary comic strip, a contribution to social movements, or a celebration of Utopian models – will also depend on them reaching a public in what may be experienced as mutually exclusive circles. The common denominator for all these publishing practices is a blind belief that something new can emerge in the areas of intersection between knowledge and experience, while perhaps at the same time there is an underlying provocative, punk mentality. 'Beautiful books' often draw attention, but books are just as individual as their creators. Beautiful things may of course be enormously interesting, but that is a narrow criterion on which to base an experience!

We also try to assist this precarious area of publishing practice by stocking a selection of books, vinyl records, and posters in our own bookshop. The selection may not be large, but we are eager to spread the word as widely as possible while sustaining that slightly dizzying sensation of secret pleasures, discretion and discovery that has always characterized the cultural underground.

HOW DOES 2019 LOOK FOR HARPEFOSS HOTELL? AND WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

This year we are initiating several new collective projects, workshops and seminars. At the same time, we need to draw together the threads

of our diverse existing projects and activities. Books, and particularly art books, are particularly useful prisms for investigating, studying, criticizing, creating dialogue and putting into context things that are otherwise difficult to grasp. We are living in complex times! Just as with film, painting, underground music, and folk music, the medium of the book is such that even after periods of apparent stagnation and waning interest, due to new innovations, it doesn't take long before

a new flock of artists begins to seek out the focus and resonance that is achievable in media with a greater temporal span. I believe that a publication, whether it is in production or being received by its audience, demands a particular kind of presence and prioritization of time – that ever rarer and more sought-after commodity. I hope we can contribute to this approach to using resources in a culture that waters down time and values transience above longevity.