

Bobrikova & de Carmen

1000 bottles
of tap water

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FEED

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**Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen,
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The White Elephant**

FEED is a platform for performance and intervention in public spaces. The platform asks you to consider the concept of feeding as a political and cultural action, questioning what it means to feed, and who as individuals we support and give to. The platform aims to touch upon important issues about the people and places we live in, reflecting upon our own positions in society and that of those around us. The project starts with the act of giving; thinking about your own personal borders; it asks you to get personal, political and angry.

Kunst Vardo is a nomadic art platform with a focus on performance. The platform takes its name from the nomadic Romani gypsy wagon which acts as both a home and a vehicle, carrying its inhabitants from place to place developing new connections and exchanges. Following this ethos Kunst Vardo is a platform for exchange, production and dissemination without borders. Kunst Vardo looks to create opportunities for artists to create new work in response to a thematic or as part of an exchange process. The platform works predominantly with performance as a way to generate lived experiences for both the artists and audience.

Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen

1000 bottles of tap water

At the end of every tap

Perhaps the most offensive form of capitalism is to exploit the earth's freely available natural resources and to profit from them. Air purity incurs tax incentives, land has been taken by colonisers, jungles depleted by international fast food giants and water is bottled and sold as a quick take away product. After the end of the Second World War bottled water began to have wide commercial success, exploiting mineral richness as a health benefit to conscious consumers. This growing industry profits from resources that in some countries have been privatised, and in others such as Norway is provided freely to citizens.

Bottled water is the marketing trick of the century, writes John Jewell in The Week. Later in the article he quotes Richard Wilk; We're buying choice, we're buying freedom. That's the only thing that can explain why you would pay money for a bottle of something that you can otherwise get for free.

Commenting on the growth of the luxury consumer market for bottled water Martinka Bobrikova and Oscar de Carmen created a limited time intervention within the shopping streets of Oslo that aimed to challenge the supply and demand structure invested in the sale of bottled drinks. Early one April morning the artists peddled a bicycle driven wooden cart into the heart of Oslo, stored in the cart were 1000 bottles of hand filled water taken from the tap in Bobrikova's apartment. Neatly packaged and mimicking the hundreds of other shop bought drinks the bottles were labelled 'Oslo Tap Water'.

Over the course of the day the wooden cart slowly began to empty of the 1000 bottles. Some people read the label intensely taking in the information, but for most people the bottle was glanced at then consumed. Others simply piled the bottles into their tote bags, saving them for another time.

To give away a resource that is already freely available is absurd, in a capitalist society this would never work as a business model. But, as a statement and an intervention it highlights the absurdity of capitalism

and our consumption of what is already freely available, rather than the act itself. Bobrikova and de Carmen particularly aimed to comment on the luxury bottled water brand Voss with their glass cylinder shaped bottles that have become a sought after fashion item. The water brands it's self as being for the ultimate purist with a clean and fresh taste, but has been reported as coming from the urban network that supplies water to the city of Iveland. Unlike the artwork Voss is a brand created for capital gain, it bottles a resource that can be found at the end of any tap within an object that can be sold. Bobrikova and de Carmen instead aimed to create a social ecosystem outside of capital consumption that relied on transparency and giving to the populous opposed to taking from, and exploiting what is already available to citizens.

Through the privatisation of space, particularly within the many urban development programmes within the centre of Oslo, it has been possible to reduce access to basic resources such as water outside of the home. This allows for capitalism to find micro moments to exploit people through their basic needs, in this case providing quick access to hydration with the urban jungle. Bobrikova and de Carmen are able to un-do this exploitation in one simple gesture, by giving away what is already free, but in a space where access to this free resource is limited and controlled.

1000 Bottles of Tap Water was commissioned as a part of Kunst Vardo's FEED festival 2016. The festival asked artists to take space, within the public environment, and to consider the concept of feeding as a political and social action.

Amelia Beavis-Harrison, Kunst Vardo









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Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen have been working together as an artistic duo since 2005. They have participated in several residencies such as Arctic Art Institute in Arkhangelsk, Seoul Art Space_Geumcheon, HomeBase Saitama, KulturKontakt Austria, Nida art Colony or MeetFactory. Their works have been presented in venues and projects such as Galerie 35M2 in Prague, Oksasenkatu 11 in Helsinki and Galleri BOA in Oslo (2018), Gallery RAM in Oslo, 5th Odessa Biennale, Fotogalleriet in Oslo, Agrikultura Triennial in Malmo, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon (2017); the Saitama Triennial, Nitra Gallery, Akershus Kunstnersenter, Tranzit.sk (2016); 2nd Tbilisi Triennial, Prague Quadrennial, Babel Art Space, Entrance Gallery (2015); Centre Contemporary Art in Singapore, Høstutstillingen, Kunstnerneshus, ANX/Atelier Nord, Skånes Konstforening, City Gallery Bratislava (2014); Karlin Studio, Rake (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art Roskilde, KURANT, (2012); Singuhr (2011); Center of Contemporary Art-Tbilisi, Röda Sten, City Museum of Gothenburg, Space Gallery (2010).