

Bergen/Copenhagen Papers

RSS Press 2019

no. 1

Syvende etasje, Synkront

by Gitte Sætre

Birdfly

by Kent Klich



Dagen vi sto forent på hushjørnene og kikket ut over landskapet, kjente vi det på kroppen. Vi visste hvor, og hva vi skulle. Med jevne mellomrom blåste vinden gjennom alt. Vinden må ha sett det som sin oppgave å holde den menneskelige bedervelsen i sjakk.

Menneskets natur kan ikke bli etterlatt til seg selv, det er ikke engang nok å gi ansvaret over til verken Gud eller Profeten.

Folkemengden gikk opp syv etasjer, låste seg inn en dør til venstre i gangen. Døren åpnet seg med syv åndedrett og effekten av eros. Den dype, og så uendelig lange sorgen, forente oss. Den gjorde oss i stand til å utføre noe i en overveldende størrelsesorden. Et helt unikt øyeblikk, best beskrevet som en kollektiv transcendent dimensjon. Den sosiale omveltning transformerte virkeligheten, veggene flyttet seg og gav plass til alle de titusener som hadde samlet seg.

Det sies at eros-effekten oppstår i øyeblikk når de grunnleggende forutsetningene i et system forsvinner<sup>1</sup>.

Eros-effekten spredte seg synkront og ble til en helbredende kraft. En kraft som fikk oss til å handle på noe større enn oss selv. Vi skrittet ut i økologiske verdier og overbevisninger. Vi var bærere av jordens historie i kroppen. Celleminne ble et begrep, og på en og samme tid, ble vi lærere og elever av et gammelt, men nytt system. Den fjerne fremtid var nå mulig å fornemme, denne bevisstheten åndet av en felles lykke. Et momentum lå mellom oss. Menneskene fortsatte å strømme opp etasjene. Et reelt demokrati ble normen. Selv dem som fremdeles stod på hjørnet, og enda ikke hadde gått opp, lyttet til den nye virkeligheten. Selv de var klar over at tiden eksisterte i en ny politisk størrelse.

Frykten sitter enda dypt i kroppene, alt må gjetes til enhver tid.

Et mørkere mørke enn lyset kunne tillate, hadde gjennomsyret individ og samfunn så lenge at det krevde en rekke dyptgående grep. Til enhver tid var vi i skole, vi lyttet og delte kunnskap mellom oss. Kraftjobben ble å kvitte oss med mønstre fra den gamle verdensordenen. Ulike performative grep gjorde det mulig å navigere i det ukjente. Våre ritualer hadde ulike formål, noen hadde til hensikt å gi oss erkjennelse gjennom sanseapparatet, andre hjalp oss til å fremkalle bilder på hvordan komme i kontakt med den beste utgaven av oss selv.

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1. THE EROS EFFECT by George N. Katsiaficas, Wentworth Institute of Technology  
<http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF>

På slutten av dagen var vi klok nok til å ikke søke etter en felles sannhet, eller en forenklet versjon av vår sammensatte kompleksitet. Vi gikk et skritt av gangen, videreutviklet et påbegynt språk som ikke bare gjorde det mulig å bevege seg fremover, språket var med på å øke lidenskapen for det vi hadde begitt oss ut på. En kraftanstrengelse av dimensjoner med tanke på hvor lenge menneskeheten hadde pustet i et system hvor kjærligheten ofres på markedsliberalismens alter. Øvelse på øvelse, og slik lærte vi oss å lytte. Selv for dem som hadde vært lenge i politikken lærte seg denne kunsten, men det skulle ta lang tid før de fikk lov å delta i noe form for politisk arbeid. Bare slik kunne vi klare å gjennomføre vårt redningsprosjekt.

Spørsmålet om hva som hadde gjort gjennombruddet mulig fascinerte oss. Hadde bevegelsen oppstått som ren flaks? Hvorfor hadde ikke gjennombruddet kommet før? Kunne det ha kommet lenge før? Det var umulig å forutsi, faktum var at det kom. Noen snakket om at det hadde vært noe som hadde jobbet i kulissene. Det ble snakket om noen som var i besittelse av en teft, en egenskap til å vite hvor det lønner seg å grave, dytte og gi. Uansett, det vil vel alltid finnes et punkt hvor ting tipper. Tidspunktet kom, jeg var der, du var der, vi var der. Intuitivt visste vi alle hva vi skulle gjøre. Verden var klar, synkront.

Ulike hendelser fant sted uavhengig av hverandre. Helt intuitivt visste vi alle hva vi måtte gjøre. Det hele skjedde synkront. Virkeligheten utvidet seg og det eneste vi måtte gjøre var å følge med i utvidelsen.

1. Store deler av verdens statsledere, bedriftsledere og enkeltpersoner har lest boken Drawdown, det reageres globalt på de 100 konkrete tiltakene som best reverserer planetens oppvarming. Pavebrevet Laudato Si, av pave Frans skaper mye omtale. Sammen med de politiske bindinger som Paris-avtalen fører med seg, er verden klar for å tenke og handle, på en helt annen måte enn vi tidligere har sett i vår moderne historie. Det som kommer frem er innenfor vår forståelse og teknologiske rekkevidde og ting skjer i den kollektive bevisstheten.
2. Greta Thunberg startet sin egen private skolestreik for klima, den sprer seg over hele verden. For hver uke som går, får den 16 år gamle svenske jenten, tusenvis av unge mennesker til å engasjere seg i klimadebatten. Fredager for Fremtiden. De unge skolestreikerne stopper ikke der, de krever at verden lytter. De finner seg ikke i et system av reaksjonære ledere som ikke tenker på dem.
3. I Etiopia, etter årtier med politisk undertrykkelse, får de en ny regjering. Statsminister Abiy Ahmed inviterer alle etiopiere til å komme hjem igjen, politiske fanger slippes fri og en rekke reformer skaper fred, infrastruktur og ytringsfrihet. Regjeringen består nå av 50% kvinnelige ministre og landet får sin første kvinnelige president. Ikke bare Etiopia, men hele Afrikas Horn fylles med optimisme.
4. De forente nasjoner tar aktivt grep for å regulere befolkningstilveksten i overbefolkede områder i verden. Tiltaket fører raskt til økt bærekraft i Afrika og Asia. Inspirert av sin egen handlekraft beslutter verdenslederne seg for å innføre poengsystem for land som jobber aktivt for at alle borgere skal ha et verdig liv. I den undertegnede erklæringen står det at et menneske har rett på et godt liv, glade mennesker bidrar til dyp fred og demokratier. Nasjoner mennesker flykter fra oppnår ingen poeng og rett til verken handelsavtaler eller økonomisk statlig støtte.
5. Great Sahara Forest Plan forvandler store ørkenområder til dyrkbar jord. Energilagre dannes og resulterer i en sikring av områdets biologiske mangfold.
6. I USA går president Donald Trump konkurs og hans forretningsimperium kolliderer. Dette fører til at han må trekke seg fra sin post i Det Hvite Hus. Den unge politikeren Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez overrasker verden med en overlegen seier. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez blir den første kvinnelige og den yngste presidenten noen gang i USAs politiske historie.
7. Netflix serien 'Are You Ready?' produsert av kunstnere fra Skandinavia skaper revolusjon i individets bevissthet om vår dype historie og hvordan mennesket forstår seg selv som både pådrivere og responsmottakere i de dynamiske systemer menneskeheten er en del av. Seriens analytiske og følelsesmessige innvirkning på seerne gjør det umulig å fortsette sine liv som før. Are You Ready? klarer å dissekere dagens maktapparat, til og med det internasjonale finanssystemet påvirkes kraftig.



We already felt it as we stood there, hanging out in the streets. We felt it in our bodies and we knew exactly what to do. We looked to the horizon and felt the wind blow. Today, the wind seemed to oppose all human deprivation. Human nature can't be left to the individual, and it isn't even enough to leave responsibility to God or any of his Prophets.

Now, it was obvious. We entered the building on the other side of the street and went up seven floors. Then we moved along a corridor and unlocked a door to the left. The door opened with a sigh of relief and we went in. It was an amazing sight to behold – we felt how our unending sorrow unified us and made us capable of acting on an immense scale. A transcendental quality of being together spread among us, and this new social collectivity changed reality; the walls expanded and made space for all of us who were now gathered up there.

The Eros Effect is said to occur when the basic conditions of one system disappear, and another system becomes tangible<sup>1</sup>.

The Eros Effect spread through us simultaneously and became a healing force, a force which made us act as one for a greater cause. We experienced a new awareness and we outlined far-reaching ecological values. Cell memory became a concept. We became both students and teachers of the new system. The distant future was graspable and gave us a common goal. A new now existed among us. A happiness. People were still climbing the stairs and we grew plentiful. Real democracy was the new norm.

Even those still standing in the streets, waiting to proceed upwards, listened to this new reality; they knew that everything was changing, that we had now entered another political realm.

Fear is still embedded in our bodies, and cleansing them of it is a long process. A darkness, darker than light could conquer, had absorbed individuals and societies as long as we could remember. Very deep therapeutic measures had to be taken, both on an individual level and in society at large. It became like a school – we listened and learned from each other. The difficult revolution was to quit the patterns of our old lifestyles, to identify and leave these consuming patterns behind. Various performative rituals were initiated to drive out the demons and to navigate the new unknown social territories. The rituals had different functions; some were aimed at gaining direct knowledge through our forgotten senses, others helped us get in contact with our better selves.

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Fortunately, we were wise enough to resist a common truth or a simplistic version of the new complexity. We had to take one step at a time, and re-invent a language of becoming. This new language was not only necessary for moving forward; we needed it to stimulate passion for our tasks. It was an incredible endeavour, since we had lived for so long in a system where love was sacrificed on the altar of the free market.

Exercise by exercise, that is how we learned to listen. Even those who had been in the old system of politics had to learn this fundamental art, but it would be a very long time until any of them were allowed to take part in any kind of politics again. Only in this way were we able to rescue our ability to act as a democratic collective.

Of course, we were fascinated by the question of what had made the paradigmatic shift possible. We wondered if the movement had started as pure luck, an improbable coincidence. Why hadn't the change come before? Might it have happened much later? It had been impossible to predict. The fact was that it happened. Was it prepared by somebody somehow? Somebody must have known how to plant a seed, how to nurture an emerging readiness. Various unrelated events occurred and then all of a sudden, the ball started rolling. A tipping point. All of a sudden, intuitively, we all knew what to do. It happened in synchronicity all over the world. We all went up those seven floors and reality expanded. All we had to do was to learn and follow the expansion.

## Notes

1. The Paris Agreement in 2015 creates a plan to reverse global warming. Along with Pope Francis' public letter, *Laudato Si*, a strong agenda to save the planet from unbearable conditions is put forward.

2. In Sweden 16-year-old Greta Thunberg starts her own school strike. Each Friday she stands in front of the parliament, demonstrating for climate action. In a few months the Fridays for Future spread across the entire globe. Greta engages the youth in thousands; together they demand that the grown-ups listen, but it doesn't stop there: The youth oppose a system of reactionary leadership that doesn't care about their future. Our future. It is time to act!

3. In Ethiopia, after decades of political oppression, a new government led by prime minister Abiy Ahmed opens up the country. A massive series of reforms foster peace, equal rights and newfound freedom of speech. His new government is constituted with 50% women ministers and the country's first female president, Sahle-Work Zewde. All of a sudden Ethiopians see an end to the diaspora, and hope flourishes on all levels of society.

4. In the USA Donald Trump goes bankrupt, and as his business empire collapses he has to resign as president in an immense political scandal. The young politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez surprises political commentators by winning an overwhelming victory in the hastily organized elections following Trump's impeachment. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez becomes the first female and the youngest president ever in the history of the USA.

5. The rapid implementation of the Great Sahara Forest Plan starts to give results incredibly fast. Large areas of desert are turned into fertile soils. Photosynthetically stored energy is increasing, and as if by miracle a rainy season takes hold and biodiversity is secured.

6. A new international platform, The Global Pride Forum, is created by world leaders to ensure a dignified future for all citizens in their own countries. The human right to live a joyful life is what makes people contribute to sustainable democracies.

7. An Eritrean artist makes the most important performance in the history of art, outside the European parliament in Brussels. The artist manages to dissect the global power structures and the international financial system with such analytical and emotional impact, that it becomes impossible to ever again base geopolitical agreements on inequality.

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BIRDFLY  
SERIES OF 9 PHOTOS, 2018



















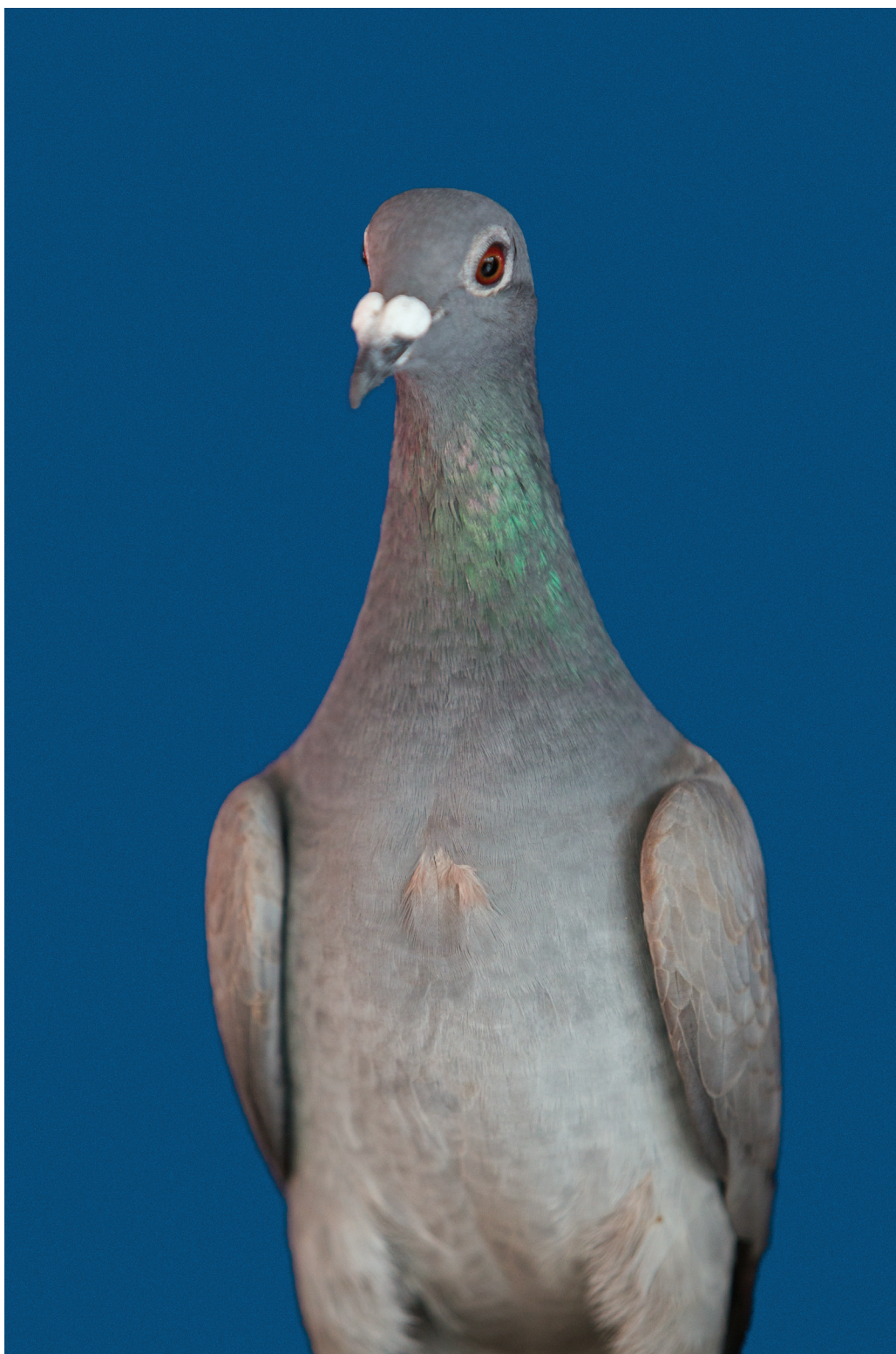
















*Fear is still embedded in our bodies, and cleansing them of it is a long process.*

Bergen/Copenhagen Papers is a low-tech artistic research magazine, made fast and directly without a long and expensive process of design and printing. The magazine will be published in small print runs, measured to the circumstances. It will arrive at irregular intervals, whenever a relevant need to publish arises.

The name Bergen/Copenhagen Papers is to be taken quite literally; the publication springs from an already ongoing process of travelling and thinking in and out of these two cities. Through a mutual interest, the editor Frans Jacobi and the publishers Hugo Hopping and Christopher Sand-Iversen from RSS Press have set out to facilitate a certain strand of artistic/political thinking. How can art engage in a politically-charged horizon, scorched by apocalyptic abysses and systemic entanglements? How can art add creativity and vision to societal debate?

As an additional feature the Bergen/Copenhagen Papers will include an open peer review. In each issue two independent peer reviewers will be asked to make a short statement that reviews the content at hand. These two statements will be printed on the last page, including the names of the peer reviewers. This last page will work as a combined review of and afterword to the issue. In order to establish a transparent structure, we have chosen the open peer review model instead of the closed peer review that is the norm in academic research.

#### Circles

The Bergen/Copenhagen Papers is intended to reach and create a small circle of engaged and committed persons who will be able to relate to the output in a direct, informal manner. The Papers are produced in collaboration between Kunstakademiet – institutt for samtidskunst, Kunsthall 3.14 and Lydgalleriet in Bergen, and RSS Press and SixtyEight Art Institute in Copenhagen. For each issue these institutions will host a social circle where the issues at hand can be discussed.

#### Fables

This first issue contains two artworks that each provide an entry point into the hyper-complex political spaces from which the discussions of Bergen/Copenhagen might take off.

In *Syvende etasje, Synkront* by Gitte Sætre, a movement takes place and a new space widens towards a future horizon. This futuristic fable contains a political hope, that seems appropriate for opening this new series of politically related artistic research.

In *Birdfly*, a series of 9 photos by Kent Klich, Palestinian pigeons are depicted on a middle-blue background. The format of these portraits is that of the Palestinian passport. The pigeons thus become substitutes for the Palestinians who are not able to escape the deadlock of Israeli occupation. Here, the pigeons have a passport and the pigeons are able to fly. Away.

*Birdfly* and *Syvende etasje, Synkront* share the format of the fable. Instead of describing the political issues in a direct, journalistic manner, both artworks use an allegory to describe urgent political issues, thus opening a poetic entry into a potential discussion.

Frans Jacobi, April 2019

**Gitte Sætre**

(born 1975) is a multidisciplinary artist, living and working in Bergen. She works with dialogue-based art, performance, photography, video and sound. Her work has been shown at Bomuldsfabriken, Oslo Kunstforening; House of Foundation; Media Impact, Moscow; Arctic Art Forum, Arkhangelsk; Komunitas Salihara, Jakarta; XXI Gallery, Warsaw; Pristine Galerie, Mexico; the WhiteBox in New York; Kunsthall 3.14 in Bergen, Bergen Kunsthall; KODE; Fylkingen, Stockholm; The National Theater in Bergen and Guramayne Art Center in Addis Ababa.

Gitte Sætre's body of work is characterized by the weight of contemporary society, yet makes room for humour and quiet reflection. Her work investigates roles and positions through the generations, related to philosophical questions like forgiveness, guilt and freedom within the close family sphere, and into the sphere of national and international politics.

Gitte Sætre initiated the art group Soups & Stories together with Katrine Meisfjord, and the Green Hijab Movement together with Frans Jacobi.

[www.gittesatre.com](http://www.gittesatre.com)

**Kent Klich**

(born 1952) is a Swedish photographer living in Copenhagen. Klich studied psychology at the University of Gothenburg and worked with adolescent children before turning to photography. He joined Magnum Photos in 1998 and left in 2002.

His work is noted for a strong commitment to social issues; he has worked with street children in Mexico and drug addicts in Denmark. In 2001 he collaborated with the author Herta Müller on a project and book *Children of Ceausescu*, detailing the HIV crisis among Romanian children. He has produced numerous books, films and exhibitions, as well as having received numerous prestigious prizes.

The Birdfly series is part of the GZA project (Gaza Airport which opened 1998 and closed 2000). Kent Klich has worked extensively in Gaza since 2001 and produced four books until now, *Gaza Photo Album*, *Killing Time*, *Black Friday* and *Kent Klich Gaza Works*.

His latest solo exhibition *Gaza Works*, dealing with the Israeli occupation of Gaza, was shown at The National Museum of Photography, The Black Diamond, Copenhagen, Denmark and at Hasselblad Center, Gothenburg, Sweden. The book *Gaza Works* has been selected as one of Germany's Most Beautiful Books (*Die Schönsten Deutschen Bücher*) by the Stiftung Buchkunst, 2018.

[www.kentklich.com](http://www.kentklich.com)

## Contributors

## Ane Hjort Guttu

(born 1971) is a Norwegian artist and filmmaker based in Oslo. She works with a number of media, but has in recent years concentrated on film and video works which range from exploratory documentaries to poetic fiction. Recurrent themes in her work are the relationship between freedom and power, economy and public space, social memory and the ability to take action. Guttu is also an active writer and curator, as well as a professor at the National Academy of the Arts in Oslo

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## Stine Marie Jacobsen

is a conceptual artist working to decode violence and law both individually and collectively through participatory means. She lives and works in Copenhagen and Berlin, and graduated from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts with an MFA in 2009, and a BFA from CalArts, the California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, USA in 2007.

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## OPEN PEER REVIEWS

En fabel er alltid moralsk og allegorisk. Derfor er Gitte Sætres tekst «Syvende etasje, Synkront» neppe en fabel, men heller et eventyr, beslektet med viseslageren «I natt jag drömde» og med Portal, det sagnomsuste first person puzzle-spillet fra midten av 00-tallet. Og som alle portalbaserte eventyr, en fortelling der det som representerer det ultimate håpet også kan leses som selve dødsriket. Kan det bety at venstreside-idealsamfunnet som skisseres, på samme tid er den endelige slutten?

Uansett passer det fint at Kent Klich's duer får posere for passbilder i denne publikasjonens andre del; som i Brødrene Løvehjerte er duene motstandskjempere og de eneste som kan fly fritt mellom ellers lukkede land. Jeg er imidlertid tvilende til at imperialistiske oppfinnelser som FN og passkontroller skulle kunne fungere demokratisk, om de bare – forandret seg fullstendig.

– Ane Hjort Guttu, Oslo maj 2019

Did you know that History is hard to predict?

Well, according to Seventh Floor, Synchronicity, a text by Gitte Sætre, it has been decided globally that words may no longer be abused, and a new language of love and transgenerational knowledge has appeared to show us the way to a more equal and CO2-free future. Her text is so uplifting that I felt ashamed of my pessimism. Fable or not, her text should be read with care because it can still become real.

I'm innocent! I look at Kent Klich's headshots of pigeons, Birdfly, and can't get the word "difference" out of my head. They remind me of the time when a 10-year-old child asked me, during a police anti-violence training session, whether I was also a police officer. And I answered, shocked, "No, I'm an artist!", whereupon the child said "same same". Yes, children can definitely change our views.

– Stine Marie Jacobsen, Berlin, May 2019.