



PROJECT INFORMATION

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<GIPT> will create a series of public interventions and exchanges that explore the transmission of information and ideas through place, time, trade and culture using the analogy of seeds. The project will also investigate methods of sharing such as gifting, generosity and Open Source. The work develops over a period of three weeks and responds to the history of the site; a medieval church and monastery that contained a garden of culinary and medicinal plants and herbs.

Key concepts:

Sharing : Gifting and exchange

Ideas : How they are shared, evolve and travel

Open Source : A way of sharing ideas that is open to all

Seeds : A shared human resource

'Seeding' new terrains : Creation and sharing of a new garden for community use

Contemplation: Sharing how we think about contemporary issues

Background

At the core of <GIPT> is an attempt to provide a counter narrative to the embedded processes of current cultural and economic systems. The driving force of the free market system is to expand and grow in order to maximize profit and to control access to ideas and resources through patenting and copyrighting. Does this economic drive, while providing material comforts and wealth for some of the world's population, mean that we have lost ways of relating that may be vital to adapting to rapid change in the world? Do we need to revive old ways or find new ways of being and acting? Do we need to rethink our relationships with each other in order to survive and thrive? <GIPT> explores other systems that value community and generosity over individualism and personal financial gain. Through experiments inviting generosity and participation that draw from ideas and practices such as Open Source and dugnad, Gipt gently critiques both historical and contemporary systems and asks if and how things could be different.

Drawing from Tønsbergs past, <GIPT> uses the Rundkirkeruinen as context as well as the history of the site as a crossroad of two important pilgrimage routes. The project also works with the current Tønsberg library as a public site of information and knowledge exchange.

Do the monastery ruins retain relevance in contemporary Tønsberg? The public library physically contains the monastery ruins and retains some of the functions of the monastery library (storing knowledge and culture) however unlike St Olav's monastery which restricted learning to a privileged few, the Tønsberg public library has open access at its very core; collecting, storing and disseminating knowledge and information to a wide public. The <GIPT> project considers if traces from the medieval monastery system still resonate today; are there elements from the past that should be kept, and should some things be left behind? Is there value in creating new links between Tønsberg and its past or do we need new ideas, systems and processes in contemporary life to help us face an uncertain future?

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<GIPT> Continued

Medieval monasteries such as St Olav's were holders of knowledge and power and were places of spiritual contemplation. Beautiful gardens were created to aid in the spiritual journeys of the canons (monks), herbs were cultivated for culinary and medicinal use and crops were grown for food. Seeds were of prime importance to the canons as well as to the surrounding community and seeds were stored and widely shared and traded. During the recent history of the 20th and 21st centuries however, we have seen the expansion of intellectual property rights over crop genetic resources (privately owned, patented and legally restricted seeds) by large conglomerates, which has created uncertainty for the future of global agriculture. Rising awareness of reduction in the genetic diversity of crop seeds and the debate over ownership of these resources has led to the establishment of the Open Source Seed Initiative and seed banks eg. Svalbard Global Seed Vault which see seeds as the common heritage of humanity. <Gipt> uses the context of the site and the plants that were cultivated there in medieval times as a basis for the creation of a series of public interventions and exchanges that use seeds as a metaphor to experiment with ideas; how they move, evolve and how they are shared. By creating open source processes and outputs, <Gipt> offers a counter-narrative to current economic models that have allowed seed privatisation and patenting.

The project will culminate the opening of the garden and planting and exchange of seeds on June 15th that will leave behind a 'Garden of Contemporary Contemplation' that will grow over the following months. The structure itself has a seated place within which becomes a place of peace and thoughtfulness. This creates a space for contemporary contemplation on a historical site of place of reflection. The garden will also act as a 'seed' for ideas that include planting the Rundkirkeruinen with a monastery garden as part a series of civic developments planned for Tønsberg. The open source design of the <GIPT> garden and its use as a shared resource aim to provide a space for open conversations about future uses of the site.

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