

Marte Eknæs  
*Infraaktiv*  
10.05 – 25.05.2025

Collaborating artists  
Michael Amstad  
Nicolau Vergueiro

Poster design  
HIT

Curated by  
Monica Holmen  
Kathrine Wilson

Technical team  
Tor Arne Samuelsen  
Sindre Hustveit  
Ane Kvåle  
Øystein Wyller Odden  
Saman Kamyab

Thank you  
HIT  
Agnar Gundersen  
Julie Forchhammer  
Bjørn Midtflø  
Halvor Koster  
Extinction Rebellion Norway

**Marte Eknæs** (b. 1978) explores the boundaries between art and its surroundings. She uses art as a tool to investigate, disrupt, and influence the world around us – both inside and outside traditional art spaces.

Her work is context-responsive. It refers not only to the physical spaces where art is shown but also to the social and political systems that shape how art functions. At a time when resources are not just being extracted but completely depleted, she draws attention to the visible and invisible infrastructures that underpin society.

The word *infra* means “below” or “beneath”. *Infraactive* isn’t about infrastructure as such – it’s an invitation to shift perspective, to look beneath the surface and notice what often goes unseen. By engaging with the frameworks of art institutions, public spaces, and local bureaucracy, Eknæs makes hidden systems more visible.

This exhibition aims to raise awareness of how our surroundings are shaped and to share ideas for how we can make change – starting from within the art space and reaching out into the wider world, especially in the face of the climate crisis.

The exhibition is part of Marte Eknæs’ artistic research project *Active Forms – The Artwork and Its Infrastructures* at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

#### About the works

#### **Public Hygiene**

Street cleaning, like garbage collection, is a never-ending maintenance process. The bristles of the brush sweep the streets and the pavements. They collect the residue of all the journeys, meetings, pacing, littering, and losing of stuff that take place on the streets. They touch all the surfaces in their efficient, but caring way until they are worn down and no longer fit for purpose. These used and discarded brushes contain dirt and debris from Oslo, Lillestrøm and Potsdam in Germany.

*Public Hygiene (used, Oslo), 2023*

Used street cleaning brushes donated by Malleus Maskin As, Lier.

*Public Hygiene (used, Potsdam), 2024*

Used street cleaning brushes donated by STEP, Potsdam.

*Public Hygiene (used, Lillestrøm), 2025*

Used street cleaning brushes donated by the municipality of Lillestrøm.

Marte Eknæs  
*Infraaktiv*  
10.05–25.05.2025

Collaborating artists  
Michael Amstad  
Nicolau Vergueiro

## Circulation

Plumbing predates the word infrastructure by thousands of years, but now it is one of the most rudimentary and literal kinds of infrastructure. Pipe systems facilitate the flow of drinking water and the drainage of wastewater underground, inside walls and under the floors we stand on. Here this part is brought to the surface where new connections can be drawn. It is a diagram, which illustrates function. But it is also functional with all its potential for errors and leaks.

*Circulation* is a continuation of Marte Eknæs' permanent fountain sculpture *Vekselvirkning* in Sandvika. The sculpture consists of one part above ground that most visitors perceive as the artwork, and an invisible, technical part below ground that keeps the fountain running.

*Circulation (vertical)*, 2025  
PVC pipes, pump, MDPE tanks, approx 300l water, metal plates, brackets, and threaded rods.

## Inflatable

This inflatable sculpture was produced in China in 2017, in a factory that makes boat fenders. The colours are based on the maritime flag that signals "I want to communicate with you," which was also its original title. In 2021 the object was taken out of circulation as a sculpture. With the simplified title *Inflatable*, the sculpture was given the new role as an aid to explore the city. The encounters with the city's many hard and soft surfaces have left dirt and scratches on the object's surface. At the same time, it has acquired a new wealth of experiences – as if *Inflatable* has found its own lifeworld.

*I want to communicate with you / Inflatable*, 2017 / 2021  
Inflatable HDPVC fender, air, rope, wear and tear.

## Lifeworld

The concept "lifeworld" describes conscious beings' immediate experiences of the shared world that we inhabit, and our individual presence in the world that we live in together. A lifeworld can contract or expand. In this video, the artwork *Inflatable* is given an inner and outer life – and its own voice. *Inflatable* doubts its own ability to contribute to social change and dreams of a way out of its existence as an exhibition object. Along the way, it seeks advice from artist and collaborator Nicolau Vergueiro, and architect and author Keller Easterling.

*Lifeworld*, 2025  
Michael Amstad and Marte Eknæs  
Video with sound, 13 mins.

Marte Eknæs

*Infraaktiv*

10.05–25.05.2025

Collaborating artists

Michael Amstad

Nicolau Vergueiro

## Lock-on

A lock-on is a tool used by protesters to lock themselves together or to structures to create blockades in non-violent direct actions. Those exhibited here consist of welded pipes, of which the blue ones are leftovers from the production of Eknæs' fountain sculpture *Vekselvirkning*.

Towards the middle of the inside of each pipe is a crossbar, to which the protesters can lock their hands using a chain around the wrist and carabiner hook attached to the crossbar. Because the arm blocks the access to the cross bar, it is only the protester who can unhinge the hook. A lock-on is a tool intended to make it difficult to remove protesters without causing harm. Additionally, it is a true non-violent tactic, as someone with one or both arms stuck in a metal pipe hardly can engage in violent behaviour.

The design of these three is done in collaboration with Simon James-Eide from Extinction Rebellion Norway. After the exhibition, Extinction Rebellion will take over the lock-ons for use in campaigns for climate justice and a livable planet.

*Lock-on 1 (to XR), 2025*

Steel pipe, steel pipe recycled from the production of the sculpture *Vekselvirkning*, steel rods.

*Lock-on 2 (to XR), 2025*

Steel pipe, steel pipe recycled from the production of the sculpture *Vekselvirkning*, steel rods.

*Lock-on 3 (to XR), 2025*

Steel pipe, steel pipe recycled from the production of the sculpture *Vekselvirkning*, steel rods.

## Temperature

Infrared thermography is a process in which an IR camera captures and creates images of an object using the infrared radiation emitted by that object. Through a chosen color scale, living beings and objects are displayed as warm or cold. A landscape or a situation is expressed through temperature levels. Infrared imaging technology thus reveals what humans otherwise cannot see – a view into an invisible spectrum.

*IR: Lock-on, 2025*

Michael Amstad and Marte Eknæs

Inkjet print.