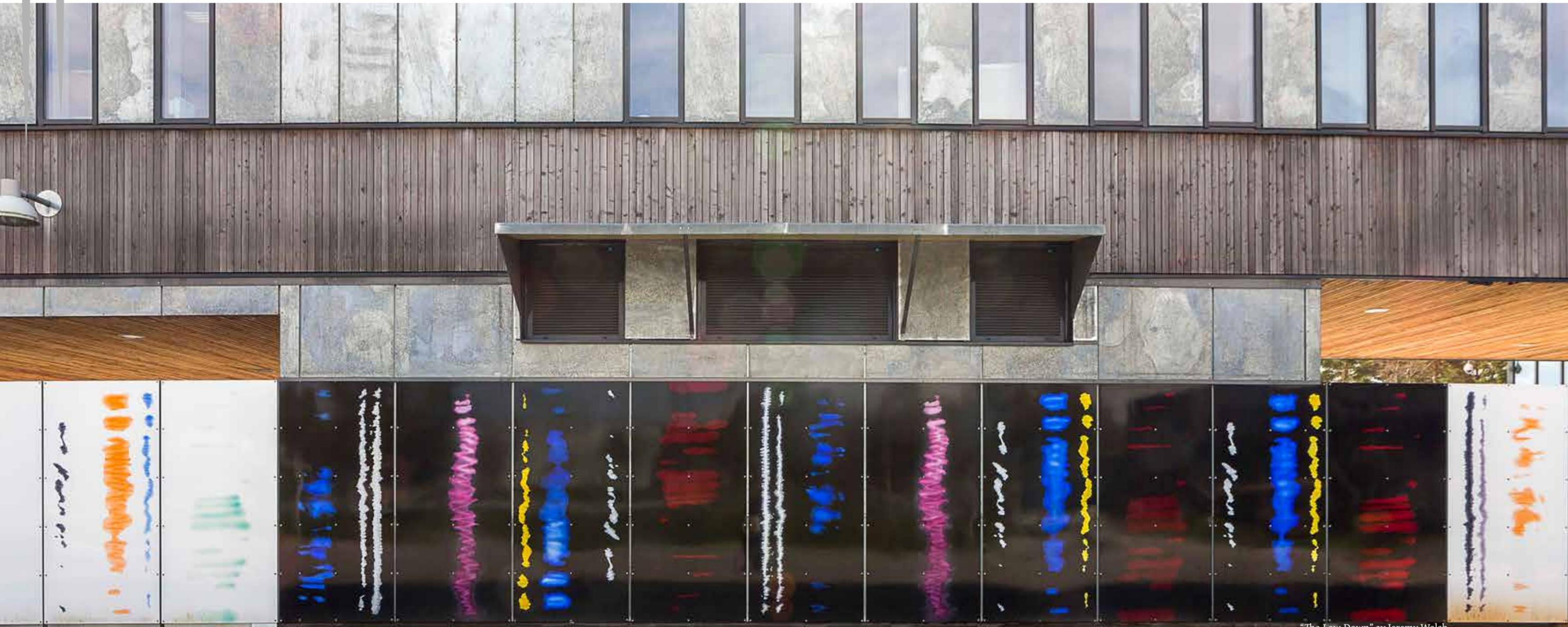


# ART THAT COMMUNICATES

**“Art that is part of a humanistic tradition, and that represents care and enables dialogue between inmates and employees.”**

This was the basis for the comprehensive art plan at Halden Prison.



"The Low Down" av Jeremy Welsh.

**KORO (Public Art Norway) has been responsible for the project, and has been in close dialogue with Halden Prison's Operations Manager and Head of Art, Mette Marion Fredriksen.**

**KORO is the state agency for art in public buildings and environments, and country's largest producer of art. With a budget of NOK 6.1 million and the ambitions and initiatives of the art committee, this was the most extensive art project in a Norwegian prison to date.**

#### Communication

How to find art that is in dialogue with its users - whether they are inmates, employees or their relatives?

The committee invited a former inmate to participate in conversations about these issues and the full selection process.

An emphasis was placed on artists and artistic expressions that could contribute new experiences and recognition on several levels without being too obtrusive or assertive.

The aim is that the art should be a constructive contribution to the prison atmosphere, and provide inmates with a sense that they are being taken seriously.

#### Wide range

12 artists were invited to participate in the project, which has delivered almost 40 installations

inside and outside, customised to the various environments and rooms in which they are found.

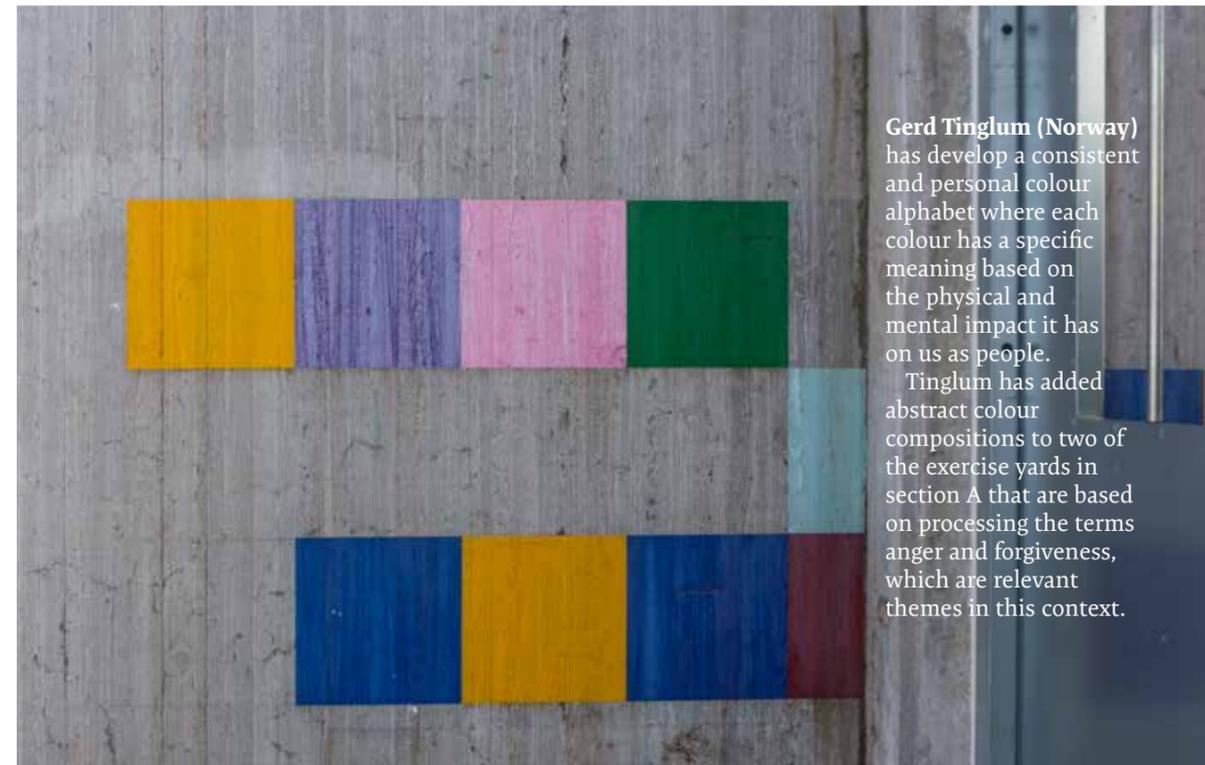
The art ranges from formal and sensual works to those that are conceptual and idea-based.

Additionally, two of the artists have worked experimentally, procedurally and relationally over a longer period of time, and have carried out different workshops in close collaboration with inmates.

#### Enrichment

Fredriksen is satisfied with the result, and believes they have lived up to the original intention.

'Naturally, there are different views about individual installations, and we have also had to move some for practical reasons. But the consistent feedback we have had from employees and inmates is that the art enriches them and the prison,' she says.



**Gerd Tinglum (Norway)** has developed a consistent and personal colour alphabet where each colour has a specific meaning based on the physical and mental impact it has on us as people.

Tinglum has added abstract colour compositions to two of the exercise yards in section A that are based on processing the terms anger and forgiveness, which are relevant themes in this context.

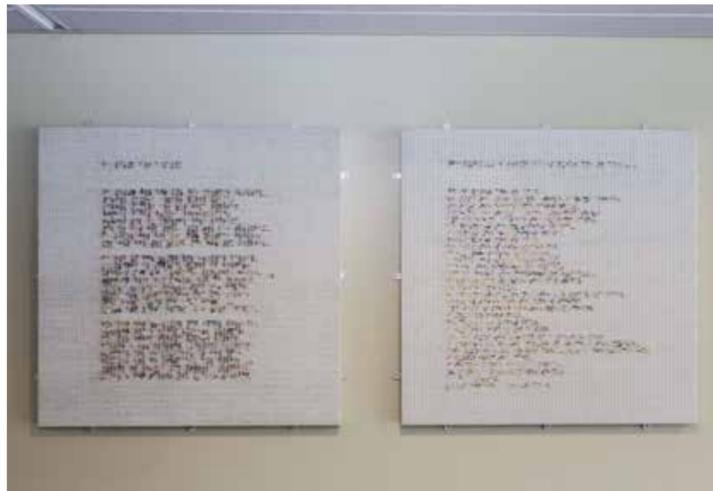


**Dolk (Norway)** has created large graffiti paintings in three of the prison's exercise yards in section A. The motifs problematise the relationship between identity, punishment and control in a playful and unpretentious manner, giving these areas which are initially very much characterised by control a touch of humour.



**Margareta Bergman (Sweden)** is represented by a photo installation on the feature wall in section A, which is a central point in the building where several corridors intersect. The installation comprises colour photographs in different formats. The motifs are everyday objects and details that describe proximity and seek to give the viewer a sense of wonder.

**Alexander Grüner** (Norway/Sweden/Guatemala) has produced woven textiles that emphasise tactility and are inspired by ideas relating to protection. They are based on poems by Karin Boye, Pablo Neruda, Wystab Hugh Auden and Mahmoud Darwish, and have been translated to Braille and then worked into visually rhythmic dot systems. The installation is hanging at the AF crossroads (the entrance to the health section).



**Irene Nordli** (Norway) has worked on the family visitor centre and has created a large sculpture that invites dialogue, play and wonder in the visitor centre's outdoor area/garden. She has also created small 'shadow pictures' of the sculpture in the form of moulded pegs that are positioned around the visitor centre.



**Jeremy Welsh** and **Jon Arne Mogstad** (Norway) have each worked on one side of the inner lock gate, an 18 metre long wall with a sliding gate with two completely different expressions. Inside, the steel plates have been spray painted with a vertical pattern comprising abstract pictures based on the play of light on water. On the outside, the work consists of a mixture of silk-screen prints, high gloss painted sheets in blue and untreated galvanised sheets. The work addresses the duality of the architect's motto through the dichotomy of hard-soft and static-dynamic.

**Astrid Krogh** (Denmark) has produced a light installation called 'Myriad', which consists of a perforated wooden wall with fiberoptic lights in an ornamental form in the life-neutral ceremony room 'The sacred room'. The fiberoptics are programmed to change colour and intensity at rapid or slow intervals. The interplay between nature outside and the pulsing light in the installation gives the room a contemplative atmosphere. The motive is flexible, philosophically neutral and universal, and functions optimally in terms of diversity.



**Kenneth Balfelt** (Denmark) has carried out a process-oriented art project in which he has, in dialogue and collaboration with prison management, personnel and inmates, planned and implemented two social projects. Balfelt's overall intention has been to focus on inmates' opportunities (looking ahead) ahead of their problems (looking back). The project has resulted in a life development garden that can be used for everything from recreation and occupational therapy to courses and meetings, as well as a photo project in section A of the prison.

**Astrid Nondal** (Norway) is represented by two oil paintings with the titles 'Before or Since' and 'Desire Mountain'. Both works of art are hanging in the corridor to the health section in the prison. Astrid Nondal uses nature and recognisable elements in nature as ingredients. She uses these expressions to say something that cannot be said clearly and directly, but which must be suggested and hinted at in a subtle and vague manner. It is important for the artist that the expressions in the pictures can be understood, noticed and understood, rather than that they are read.

The intention is to give the pictures a formal and clear character, and a diffuse content, hinting at something that can be perceived as both good and terrible, underpinning this perception through the colours, composition, light/dark. This is why Astrid Nondal uses titles that imply more than they describe ('always', 'around', 'anywhere', 'beside', etc.).

**Unn Kristin Laberg** (Norway) has photographed traces and details in coffee grounds during conversations with inmates at Tromsø Prison. She has then interpreted the patterns in the coffee cups using a kind of numerological methods, not unlike reading the coffee grounds. These 'readings' take place in dialogue with inmates, and photographs and notes from the conversations and readings are combined into one expression. The result is four pieces of work installed on walls in four living rooms in section B.

**Lotte Konow Lund** (Norway) has been running free drawing courses for inmates in Bretveit women's prison for several years. Inmates are given drawing tasks relating to themes like 'Who are you?' and 'What is beautiful?'. Lund works together with the inmates to approach these tasks, and dialogue is created in the process. She has then drawn new versions of the inmates' drawings and solutions, and these are installed on the walls in four living rooms in section C.



**'It's important that the art isn't perceived as an "additional punishment" for the inmates, but instead is a positive feature,'** says Mette Marion Fredriksen, Operations Manager and Head of Art at Halden Prison.