

*"eating or opening a window or just walking dully along"* is a major solo exhibition by Ane Hjort Guttu, presenting a series of new works, including the premiere of her new film *Time Passes* (2015). Accompanying the exhibition is a new book co-published by Bergen Kunsthall and Sternberg Press.

Ane Hjort Guttu is the 2015 Bergen International Festival artist. This exhibition will present a new body of work, commissioned by Bergen Kunsthall, which investigates issues of power, freedom, the role and responsibility of the artist, and the possibilities and limitations of so called "political art."

The centerpiece of the exhibition is a major new film, shot on location in Bergen, about a young art student who assumes the role of a beggar on the streets of the city. This action begins as a performative artwork, but soon develops into an existential crisis for the student, who struggles to justify to herself how she can continue to make art in the face of the social inequality and injustice that she encounters each day outside the privileged and controlled environment of the art school. Eventually the question of whether or not this action is "art" becomes meaningless for her, and the "project" is absorbed into her everyday life.

*Time Passes* takes up a challenging position amidst the current debate on the prohibition of begging in Norway and the authorities' treatment of the Romanian Roma. At the same time it gathers together a number of themes to which Guttu constantly returns in her works: the use of and access to public space; the scope of action for art and artists in the face of a politically sensitive situation; how we can or should position ourselves in relation to poverty and inequality; or whether effective political action is best achieved outside of the frame of art?

These themes are further explored through a number of other works in the exhibition, which investigate the way in which the visual space of the city is changing. The privatization and commercialization of public space is another current issue in Bergen, where the municipality has recently opened up for a significant increase in urban advertising. Set against the debate around begging, it highlights a contradictory and complex debate around the use of and rights to public space, and the way these different activities and demands also infringe on our personal space and psyche.

Curated by Martin Clark and Steinar Sekkingstad.

Ane Hjort Guttu (b. 1971) lives and works in Oslo. *Time Passes* is commissioned by Bergen Kunsthall and co-commissioned by South London Gallery. The work will be included in a solo exhibition opening 25 June at South London Gallery.

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