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I'll talk about The Kintsugi Project and the new work I'm presenting in this exhibition. I'll start with the latest photographic work I did in the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Just to tell you a little bit about my intentions and struggles working with photography as art. I'll share my screen and I'll show you an actual physically book in the end. A real object.

(1) During the Covid-19 pandemic, in May 2020 I did the photographic series titled Frontline Cleaning Workers. I met female employees at different work places in Trondheim who cleaned the common areas including men's and women's toilets, disinfecting gripping points, door handles and surfaces. Not once a week but many times a day.

If you remember the coronavirus showed us which profession performs a socially critical task. And cleaning became one of them. Suddenly cleaning workers could raise their head and they became everyday heroes and received well-deserved attention.

But now we have forgotten them again. Now it's the doctors and nurses who gets the most attention. Something they deserve, but for a while a typical woman-low-status profession was appreciated by the society. A profession with large physical burdens, requirements for accuracy and knowledge and with a high percentage of immigrants.

I've tried through the years to see the ones who deserves attention. Women and migrant women in particular. To give them a voice and to tell stories about a social issue that needs attention.

I've struggled with How to photograph people. How to approach unknown people. How to make a connection. I was shy. It was hard in the beginning but in time my development grew, I developed a sensibility and techniques to create instant intimacy.

In this work I find myself attracted to certain types of pictures. The ones with a credible energy, with no posing no staging no manipulation, with layers of stories in one single picture. Picture as a truth witness. Pictures that tells a story according to journalistic principles. A bit old-fashioned but it has some values for me.

The picture has a kind of clarity, it's a descriptive picture, I like her pose, she is like a dancer about to say something but the picture are a bit simple, and not expansive enough.

(2) I also like to present art in an alternative public space, to meet people outside the white gallery cube, that is appealing to me, like in this slide The series Frontline Cleaning Workers in the windows of my home. There is also a political activist element in that by challenging the concept of who is allowed to tell stories in a public space.

So there is always this photography thing going on. It never stops. Or did it? The pandemic has for sure affected my artistic practice in terms of taking other kinds of photographs. I've been shooting a lot of my husband. Not so much of unknown people of obvious reasons.

To come close enough to my subjects I started in 2006 to invite people to participate. To become participants in my projects. I started working directly with members of the public.

I did photo workshops. I've been teaching photography for a long time. I'm graduated as a teacher. Using this kind of participatory methodologies made my work easier in a way. Easier to build trust, easier to get access and quite frankly several stories are better than one story. My story.

(3) So this was my background before starting with the Kintsugi Project during in the Covid-19 pandemic. A group of women came together to discuss, investigate and share experiences of being 'Next of Kin'. They approached me after a meeting where they discussed what do you do when life crumbles? How can we start over? How can we cope in critical stages of our lives.

I was curious and unsure about how to work with my core questions. I wondered; How to engage with the participants in a useful way, a user-friendly way? Do participants have real influence or is it a pseudo influence? To what extent should I direct during the creative process? In all parts or a few parts? What kind of documentary methods as in different ways of collecting a material could I use? What elements exist and what form do they take? And a big question was how can I work with social photography during a pandemic?

A lot of questions.... and the answer to the last one was; No. Because of the pandemic I did not take any photographs of the participants which I normally do. With a few exceptions. (4) Here's four of us planning the project. Outside.

(5) We began with a mobile photography workshop, which became the basis for further research and exhibitions. The participants was asked to use their voice through photography. The method is called Photo voice. By telling stories from their lives through the camera lens. It's not a new thing to use photography in social projects. Wendy Ewald did this in the 60'. Today there is perhaps more co-directing.

It's quite fulfilling to be a teacher when you see the development amongst the participants. From learning basic skills to in the end visual communication. The participants made mind maps about being next of kin and chose six words to use in a visual story from their lived reality.

(6) The first iteration of The Kintsugi Project was exhibited in Trondheim in the summer 2021. Outdoor in the market square.

When artist works with other people outside, or in a community. The public side of art if you like, intangible elements becomes important. Like;

How to be humble

How to explain

How to be clear

How to build relations

How to help each other

How to create energy

How to encourage and guide each participant, many whom never exhibited before, to be a part of a very public exhibition.

(7) In a secondary exhibition at Studio 44 in Stockholm I used the material in my artistic work.

Kasia invited us to be part of the Kluven exhibition. The theme of the exhibition, "being divided" was easy to transfer to my own practice. I thought of the tension between photography and participation in my practice. Two parts. Divided but not separate.

(8) I found myself attracted to a way of editing photographs with written comments and arrows. I saw this on the Fb-page titled Reminders Photographers Stronghold, a curated membership gallery in Tokyo. (9) So I printed the participants photographs and wrote my comments directly on the prints. This was a way to show the different parts or different elements of The Kintsugi Project if you like. I was testing an idea.

"Pencil scrawls in the margin", 12 photos and 12 writings, 193x84 cm, 2021.

(10) The only photographs I did was some portraits of the participants. A photographic portrait is always a result of a conscious collaboration between two people, on either side of a camera. (11) What matters to me is showing what lies below the surface, capturing the essence of people through my lens. Searching for a genuine facial expression. The work felt a little gimmicky, maybe the weakest part of the work I presented in Stockholm but it's ok to try things. The series became a metaphor of the connection

between me and the participants titled: *"A point of exchange", 7 photos and 7 drawings, each 5x5 cm, 2021.*

(12) Talking about authenticity or a genuine expression. I really like the new video I made for the Kluven exhibition. (13) I interviewed one of the participants who talked about her anxiety of infecting someone else. She opened up, she was not afraid of showing parts of her reality in the pandemic. She also wrote a text from the reality of being a public worker within mental health. Participating demands courage and this participants was not in shortage of that. *"I'm terrified of infecting someone else", video, 11 min, 2021.*

(14) And now I'll show you the last work of art from the Kluven exhibition. I made an artist book. I've tangled with questions about how to make a book for some time. Books as an art object. Not as information or non-fiction books but as art. Trying to navigate, edit and find an order from the first page to the last page. In this book I've tried to make the project available but not in a non-fiction way but as a kind of photo album. With contributions from the participants and me. I'll browse through the book. *"The Kintsugi Project", prototype artist's book, 25x30 cm, 2021.*

(15) My latest artistic work is: *"Three Articles", are three single webpages linked together through related stories, published today.*

Again I'm trying to reinvent the material. Making new connections to my narrative work and journalism. Telling three different stories from the Kintsugi Project. In another format this time. I've chosen to present art in an editorial article format. Using reporting as a techniques to address social issues. This time the topic next of kin during a pandemic.