

John K. Raustein
Facilitated Truths
(The New World)

24.06 – 07.08 2022

**Curated by Rikke Komissar
and Tor Arne Samuelsen**

John K. Raustein has made a name for himself with his large-scale sculptural textile installations. While addressing themes concerning gender roles and traditional male stereotypes, Raustein's art often has an autobiographical starting point. Viewed in this way, his works can be seen as a processing of memory, as well as sociological analysis.

Raustein's exhibition at Nitja brings together a range of abstracted scenarios. We have a sense of the young Raustein's first encounter with a fabric shop, its floor-to-ceiling shelves laden with rolls of textiles. We also gain insight into his more current concerns, such as his fascination with building sites, where plaster, rebar and other materials lie strewn on the ground. The typical lack of gender diversity in both these scenarios renders each in its own way a stereotypically gendered space.

As we enter the exhibition, the towering shelving may remind us of the German artist Anselm Kiefer's iconic shelves of lead books (*High Priestess / Zweistromland*, 1985–91), but we also see round textile rocks, an homage to textile artist Sheila Hicks. For Raustein, the rocks and their soft blue colour are reminiscent of the expansive landscapes around his childhood home in Jæren, southwestern Norway.

The exhibition is divided into zones determined by colour, a decision inspired by the 1989 film *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*, in which the director Peter Greenaway used colour to heighten atmospheres and signify dramatic transitions. Raustein deploys a similar device, although for him each colour has a particular personal significance and, like the materials he uses, also hints at underlying narratives: mint green refers to a boys' outfit, in which turquoise shorts and top were accompanied by a belt of the same colour. The young Raustein associated this design (positively) with a belted dress. The colour terracotta is an homage to the artist's late father, because the last roll of film containing images of his father was accidentally processed to produce sepia tones.

The exhibition *Facilitated Truths (The New World)* consists of several large, and a multitude of smaller, individual works that together make up an immersive installation. The installation also includes three sculptural costumes created by the costume designer Antti Bjørn, who is Raustein's husband and collaborator. The costumes were designed for a performance staged by the director Maria Drangeid, which took place inside the exhibition during the opening weekend. In this performance, Drangeid brought life to some of Raustein's works, animating them as fictional characters.

For this installation, Raustein has provided ten 'subtitles' that suggest possible starting points for visitors' own interpretations of the works. Visitors are free to choose which subtitle to apply while viewing the exhibition, and in doing so determine which narrative(s) are told.



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BILLEDKUNSTNERNES VEDERLAGSFOND

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John K. Raustein (b. 1972, Norway) graduated from Bergen Academy of Art and Design (2000) and the Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation in Copenhagen (1997). His work has been purchased by the National Museum, Oslo; Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum (NKIM), Trondheim; KODE Art Museums, Bergen; and SKMU Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Kristiansand.

This exhibition has been realised with the support of the Regional Project Funds for Visual Arts, the Norwegian Visual Artists' Fund (BKV), and Arts Council Norway's Artist Assistant Scheme (Kulturrådet Kunstnerassistentordningen).

Exhibition subtitles

Facilitated Truths (a new world)

Facilitated Truths (suppressed screams)

Facilitated Truths (unstoppable forces)

Facilitated Truths (run away, turn away)

Facilitated Truths (until we run out of breath)

Facilitated Truths (numbing repetition)

Facilitated Truths (momentary paralysis)

Facilitated Truths (a kind of peace of mind)

Facilitated Truths (a yearning nobody knows about)

Facilitated Truths (to recognize oneself)

The artist wishes to address special thanks to Nitja's fantastic team – Rikke Komissar, Tor Arne Samuelsen, Monica Holmen, Martin White, Åsmund Solberg, Sindre Hustveit, Martina Petrelli – to his partner in art and in life Antti Bjørn, and to his dear and tireless assistants Fritjof Helle Brevig, Line Solberg Dolmen, Linn Svennson and Espen Cook.