

PRESS RELEASE
UTOPIA



Bilde: Linda Soh Trengereid. "The Garden Edge #2", 2020, charcoal and acrylic on canvas, 110 x 100 cm.

Between the 19th of August and the 9th of October, Tegnerforbundet presents the exhibition *Utopia*, featuring drawing, painting, video, installation and sculpture. The exhibition presents work by seven artists who in various ways touch on the notion of a utopia. The works shown reflect on our present and future, by raising questions related to climate, identity and architecture. The exhibition is curated by Mari Kanstad Johnsen, Marit Victoria Wulff Andreassen and Viktor Pedersen.

Participating artists in the exhibition: Andreas Lærum, Hedvig Lien Rytter, Ingrid Torvund, Jin-Bin Chen Tianyi, Linda Soh Trengereid, Ottar Karlsen and Qi Tan.

The Utopian as an antithesis to contemporary challenges

Faced with the challenges of our time, such as war, the threat of nuclear incidents, a pandemic, the mass extinction of species and climate crisis, we may dive wifly into dystopian thinking. The apocalypse is no longer just a concept from the world of sci-fi, it is something we feel on our bodies. The chasm of economic, political and environmental discrepancies in the global community differentiate us and breed disagreement, but conflicts can also give rise to change. Faced with a bleak situation, what should be changed becomes apparent. It clarifies what kind of society would be the most favorable, what improvements could be carried out or how we want to exist. We are led to the antithesis of dystopia; Utopia.

Utopia: between Eutopia and Outopia

Utopia is a term used to define an idealistic society, which provides essentially perfect living conditions for those included in it. The word Utopia is made up of two Greek words and is in itself an ambiguous term. Eutopia refers to a pleasant place we would want to go to, while outopia refers to a place that does not exist. We most often find utopias within fiction, especially in sci-fi, where the narrative centers around futuristic societies trying to overcome the issues that afflict the world today. Historically, the term is associated with political attempts to found new social systems based on equality, common property and social harmony.

The Utopian in art

Utopias are often written off as naive fantasies. Nevertheless, the notion of the utopian is central to the work of many artists, writers, philosophers and architects. Trying to visualize the future is fundamentally human. We build experience, make plans and strive to prevent unfortunate events from reoccurring. Through art, humans try to capture the incomprehensible, to establish points of contact with what is invisible, but can still be intuited. Art can demonstrate not only what we are, but also what we potentially should be.

By using utopian thinking as a tool, in spite of social and individual differences, we may be able to create, assess and visualize the idea of a future, ideal world.