

THE LANDSCAPE WE ARE TO TAKE SERIOUSLY.

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When environment is threatened, we become more attentive. All of a sudden, we notice details in the landscape, often before unnoticed. As qualities develop, they generate feelings in us. These very feelings create the foundation for our engagement in the environment, which promotes curiosity and gradually the awareness which finally strengthens our involvement.

We will, however, often postpone our reactions as regards the threats it might represent. Perhaps it might be a sum of the numerous reminders that at last wakens us to react, or an unexpected and different angle that is freeing us from formed patterns. This unexpected angle can be contributed works of art and the different expressions in art. When therefore, Herdis Maria Siegert is battling with the environment through her camera, she is yet once again playing an active part in the challenge we all will have to relate to, which is a globe threatened and our environments exposed.

We will have to relate to a care for environment, based upon facts. Through knowledge we will have to found our argumentation, a reasoning which often will have to brake with myths about habitual concepts concerning proper care of environment. When myth-makers approach us telling us to turn the clock back, do they indeed take into consideration a great deal of the earth's population claiming quite righteously to have their conditions in life improved? When the economic growth in China threatens their own and that of the world's foundation of life through gigantic emissions, the aim must be that this economic growth can proceed without a damaging discharge. Moreover, as workers in India are demolishing SS Norway, the former grand cruise-liner, they should be able to undertake this job without any severe risk to their life and health, and additionally, the poisonous elements should be destroyed, while the useful elements should be recycled.

Being one of the world's richest countries, as inhabitants we administer a responsibility for changes in the climate which are already about to change the landscapes near and afar. No more than three years ago the inhabitants of the districts surrounding the town of Tønsberg struggled to obtain access to the islands of Bolærene. They struggled because they are so closely linked to the landscape and the fjord where these islands are situated. When the changes in the climate are threatening our environment, will we then react just as eagerly? Will we, who quite righteously are engaged in such local events be touched by the fact that our country's gas- and oil-production amounts to 3% of the global CO₂ emissions, whereas we, who enrich ourselves from these very oil-and gas-resources amount to a mere 0,7 promille of the world's population? At the same time we know that we are unable to sustain our international commitments as regards nitrogenoxides, and also that electricity from countries compensating for the oil-platforms' polluting gas-turbines will actually give the final contribution. It is, therefore, incomprehensible that those who make profit on CO₂-emissions, are never to be responsible for the consequences of their own agency and, additionally, obtaining governmental blessings at the same time.

Politics are often described as the art of that which is possible. As an engaged activist for the environment over many years, it is tempting, however, to redefine this term and describe politics as the art of omitting that which is possible. The increase of already known poisons as well as new ones to the environment is formidable. Through some of the last decades we have challenged the living-conditions for children and adults alike on our planet with the greatest matter of cause; therefore, when shall we indeed challenge ourselves in a way that makes the planet survive us? We are producing increasingly more waste, however, we also recycle more than ever. Our local fjord, which, a few years back was filled up of sewage and industrial emissions, exposes itself today with much clearer waters for the many keen sea-bathers. These examples demonstrate how matters concerning environment can become matters of success, as well as important examples in the battle for solving the enormous amounts of the whole world's challenges, which we will have to overcome. We cannot, indeed, omit our responsibility any longer. We must commit ourselves to such a way of living with a purpose to amend the miseries already created by man. This being a long-term labour, where the politicians will have to be evaluated in a larger perspective than what the weekly gallups can offer. Polluting should never become a profitable enterprise. The investments concerning environment must be the guide-line to such an extent that we will amend afflictions from the past as well as securing a new sustainable globe for the future.

In the greater picture many images exist, constituting our day-to-day references. The information that the sea will rise as a consequence of the poles as well as the glaziers melting, can lead us to look at a familiar rock, asking ourselves if this very view will disappear for future generations. We can continue in our own world of references looking at a five years old photograph of a glazier we know well, comparing it to a photograph of to-day: The melting of the ice has changed the landscape. Our contribution, consequently, we must take seriously.

Translated from Norwegian by Hilde Raastad O'Hanlon.