

## Cold Morning Baths



The way we are living in the environment have a direct impact on the way the forest evolves. How we as humans see meaning and take care of the forest, will be the way generations to come, is looking and using the forest's resources. I would like to give the small birds of the world some needed attention. The small birds that live here are shrinking in population and they need to be taken care of by humans. The research of Burns (et al., 2021) describes how Europe has lost 560 million birds over the last 50 years. It is down by 17-19%, and it is clear that humans are the reason for this reduction of species in the birdlife. We must take a look at ourselves to stop taking the landscape around us for granted, and in that way forcing other species who live here to vanish. Burns (et al., 2021) point out that the house sparrow is one of the species that has gone down the most in numbers since the 1980s. The house sparrow is down by 50 %, with about 247 million fewer house sparrows in the world now, than in the 1980's.

### Taking Form

In my artistic project, I have made a concrete birdbath. I have used rhubarb leaf for the shape and the pattern. It

*Figure 1. The rhubarb in my garden.  
Image: Emmelin Øwre Lyngås, 2023*

was a messy and meaningful experience. The process was not too hard, the hardest part in this has been getting to the point where I had a good enough project. I had a hard time letting my mind accept a way of expressing what Living in the Landscape is for me from a forest perspective. I was looking for a meaning and substance



like Stöckell (2017) had in his article so that the art craft could have a deeper meaning than to be pretty. This made me think of the bird-bath and I had to do resources. Maybe this can be a tradition I can give back to my children and other generations to come, in a handcraft sustainable way of looking at art and the forest.

In Ingold (2002) the landscape is described as something else than 'land', 'nature' and 'space', but as something that is a part of us who use, feel and interact with the landscape. In the birdbath, I have added something

*Figure 2. The start. Image: Emmelin Øwre Lyngås, 2023.*

*Figure 3. The uncovering. Image: Tony Øwre Lyngås, 2023*



to the landscape, which has this connection to the landscape in itself. I have taken pieces from nature, and used them in a different way, to make something new and different. It is not the prettiest birdbath, but the use is the same, and the users do not seem to mind. I have never seen myself as an artist, but more as a helper and a creative person. I have used the leaves of rhubarb in a creative way and given the pattern a new life. I have also used the concrete in a different way, not to make a foundation or a sculpture. The shape and the color are not something that pops out when I have placed it in

*Figure 4. Peeling of the rhubarb. Image: Tony Øwre Lyngås, 2023*



the forest, it blends really well in the landscape. When leaving the birdbath in the forest, I did not see it as a sculpture or art piece, in fact, I did not see it at all. It was for me a part of the landscape.

“Like organism and environment, body and landscape are complementary terms: each implies the other, alternately as figure and ground.” Ingold (2002, p. 5)

The quote from Ingold in the way I am interpreting it, is a way to look at the world and the landscape in a gentle and humble way. To see the forest for more than what you think you see and find a deeper meaning in the environment. To live in this world is always to be living in the landscape, whether you acknowledge it or not. The way you are living in the landscape may or may not be in a good and balanced way, but you are an impact either way.

### **Finding Meaning**

Eventually this birdbath became the Bird Spa. When placing the bath in the forest, I did first consider putting the spa in a tall tree, but it did not fit right and could not hold the water. It was tipping over, so it was better to put the spa in a place where the birds had easy access to higher branches if other animals were coming to drink the water. What I wanted to do in this art project was in a way that could be a good role model for the younger generation. To make a birdbath will not change the world and all the problems we are facing from a climatic perspective. The birdbath may not even have any impact on the children who are passing by it in the woods. They may not see it or think about what the grey bowl of water is made for. But what I do hope is that it will be in a good place for some small birds, over many years. It is sustainable and will last as long as it doesn't break. The life of birds in the harsh weather of Helgeland is not for everyone.



The house sparrow is a good example of a species that I hope will have good use of the Bird Spa. The idea that I made the birdbath is not to save all the birds, but to welcome them to the landscape and to give them the opportunity for a break from everything they need to be doing. It is a small gesture from me to the landscape, and to do this handcraft was a learning opportunity for me as well. My plan is to visit the spot in the forest where I have left the bird spa during the different seasons to embrace the landscape that I'm visiting. I want to see which bird species are living around and hopefully are using the Bird Spa when they have the need for a cold bath or drink water. I hope that the Bird Spa will provide a clean water source, a good spot for bathing and a social place for the birds to interact with each other.

#### References:

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*Figure 5. In the landscape. Image: Emmelin Øvre Lyngås, 2023.*