

## Mobile Kultur Byrå

Kirsten Dufour (artist, Copenhagen), Hilde Methi (curator, Kirkenes) and Ulrike Solbrig (artist, Berlin) have been working together in the art project Mobile Kultur Byrå since 2006. Mobile Kultur Byrå is a flexible small-scale art platform that fosters modest cultural endeavours while at the same time contemplating our own situation as cultural producers.

We take the difficult working conditions of Russian Market traders, who travel from Murmansk (Russia) to Kirkenes (Norway) once a month to trade at the town square, as a departure point for interventions and investigations into small scale, cross-border trading realities, in order to create increased awareness and interaction between all the parties involved.

On a web site we present the schedule for the market - <http://www.russianmarket.info>. We want to highlight this limited trading venture as cultural activity.

### MKB timeline of activities going from 2011 back to the beginning in 2006:

#### **russianmarket.info - Taking Inventory**

August 2011, and continuing throughout the year. For this series of shows, in Kirkenes, Berlin and Tromsø, Mobile Kultur Byrå takes inventory of the collaboration with the Russian Market that unfolded over the last 5 years.

*While nowadays the terms 'market' and 'capitalism' seem to be interchangeable, in reality markets date back long before capitalism existed, even long before a monetary exchange systems came into being.*

- *November 24, and throughout 2011. Tromsø Kunstforening, Tromsø. We re-locate the Russian Market from the Kirkenes town square to Tromsø Kunstforening for 3 Christmas Sales days!*





Focusing on the regulation of the Russian Market in Kirkenes, we invite the traders to skip their November sales day in Kirkenes and join MKB at Tromsø Kunstforening for a 3 days market in the gallery.



Sales bureaucracy at the Kunstforening is orchestrated by sales restrictions. The Russian traders are restricted to one single sales day per month, therefore we have to create a scheme that allows the market to take place for 3 days. The market traders turn into performers in the art piece. Like in Soviet times the customers must go to a cashier for the purchase. With a stamped 'receipt' and a certificate stating that their intended purchase is a piece of art by MKB, they go back to the "market trader" to redeem their sales.



During the Russian Market days, lectures by Aileen A. Espiritu, Peter Stuart Robinson and Unni Gjertsen are held, an interview video with Jamie Stapleton by MKB is screened and we show the documentary Jarmark Europa by Minze Tummerscheit at Verdensteateret. When the Russian Market will be ended an exhibition will remain, including *LUJA shop* and art pieces by Yvette Brackman. The marketing for this event is based on a market analysis conducted by Tromsø Bedriftsrådgivning, which results will be displayed on the walls.

• *October 9 – November 7, uqbar, projectroom, Berlin.* Within the exhibition *Market Update* (Michel Chevalier/Rahel Puffert and MKB) curated by Jole Wilke, MKB presents videos, textwork and photographs documenting the previous exhibition in the series. Sunday, October 9, on the pavement in front of uqbar, we organize *Discursive Picnic\_Fleamarket* with UNWETTER: everyone is invited to be customer and seller.



• *August 27 – October 19, 2011, Grenselandmuseet, Kirkenes.* Literally taking inventory of the market, the core material of the Russian Market, boxes of stored goods, find their way into the museum stacked up against the walls of the exhibition space. The truck-hanger used for storing the goods is placed in front of the museum, a special selection of items is on sale, either displayed in glass cases in the exhibition space or sold in the museum-shop. After one month, on the next market day, the re-location of the goods is suspended. The goods are transported to the market, because the market must go on! In the exhibition space the packaged goods were replaced by photographs on the wall and the glass cases remained empty.



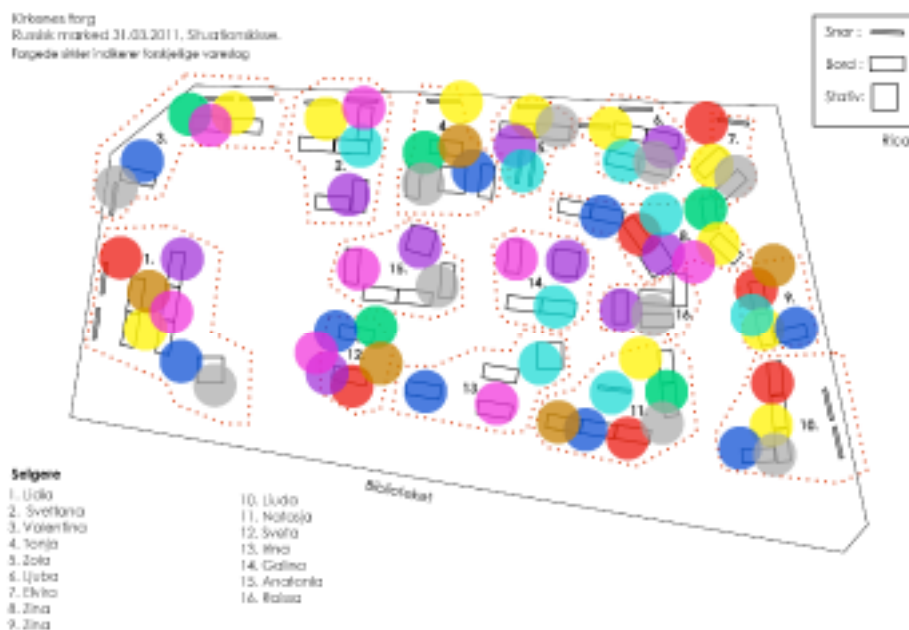


The storage-installation was complemented by a market stall as a manifestation of our vision of a more comfortable sales situation. The market stall that was built for us by Finn Thybo Andersen, is easy to take apart, equipped with a big table, roof and protective cover for snow and rain. The cover design shows the mapping of the Russian Market created by Kåre Grundvåg and Linnea Sjöberg at the Mapping Exercise.



## Mapping Exercise

March 30-31, 2011, Kirkenes. Linnea Sjöberg and Kåre Grundvåg complete a mapping exercise of the Russian Market, as part of the one-week workshop, *Lessons In Sustainability – Global Tension And The Micro Level*, organized by the art academies of Tromsø, Umeå and Stockholm in collaboration with Hilde Methi.



## Sketching An Exhibition On Small Scale Trade



*May 22 –31, 2011, YNKB, Copenhagen.*  
A work-in-progress exhibition, including a one-day discussion with a particular focus on indigenous and cross-border trade in the North explored in the artistic initiatives of LUJA ([www.luja.nu](http://www.luja.nu)) and MKB. Architect Hans Peter Hagens from the The Architectural Workshop and anthropologist Claus Oreskov from Infonor present their experiences.

## Peoples Day of Understanding Part II



*November 25, 2010, Kirkenes.* MKB provides a free language interpretation service for customers and the sellers on the Russian Market.

## Peoples Day of Understanding Part I



*November 24, 2010, Basen, Kirkenes.* Along with representatives of the Russian Market women we invite local politicians, trade organizations, and interested citizens for a public discussion about the market situation.

To present a positive example, we show a video interview with the Danish architect Hans Hagens who describes the development of a local initiative, the Københavns Torvelaug, an association of citizens and specialists working together as an interest group developing and advocating for the market in Copenhagen.

A general interest in the Russian Market is voiced. The local shop owners come to understand the market as a means to bring prospective customers to the city. As a result of this meeting, we write a *Report on the Condition of the Russian Market* that is distributed to the authorities and others.

## Mayday Breakfast with the Women of the Russian Market



*May 1, 2009, the Seamen's Club, Kirkenes.* We invite the market women to a Mayday Breakfast showing a compilation of all the interviews made so far. We use video interviews as a tool for communication. These concentrated interview-situations are a means to focus more intently on the subjects. We play back the edited interviews to those involved to give them a compact overview on their shared subject activities as a tool for further actions.

*April 30, 2009, Basen, Kirkenes.* We invite the women to Basen for soup and tea. Basen, a youth club that is situated right at the market square, has agreed to serve as a base for the women during market times, offering free hot drinks and access to the toilets.

## Getting Involved and Other Quirky Behavior

*November 2008, Berlin.* Participating in *pöpp68 privat, persönlich, öffentlich, politisch* at NGBK (Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst) and at *pöpp68*, Berlin.



*“The unpretentious working methods of the collaborative project of Solbrig/Dufour/Methi perhaps allows conclusions about how it was possible to instill the deferential closeness and solidarity that was present, as the encounters shown between those involved bears witness. But it also contains clues to the persistent, prolonged difficulty that exists, if one wants to produce with a “minimum of art” (Jean-Claude Moineau), a maximum of sociopolitical effect and especially, to assert oneself actively in an art context.”* Rahel Puffert, *What you see, is only a part.* (pöpp68 – participation objections anyhow).

*Discursive Picnic\_10th Anniversary of the Russian Market. In Memory of Ellisif Wessel*

# SØR-VARANGER AVIS

LORDAG 27. SEPTEMBER 2008 • Nr. 112 • Årgang 99 • Lesetid 18,-

## Russetorget forsvinner



I ti år har de russiske torghandlerne inntatt Kirkenes den siste torsdagen i måneden. Om et par måneder er russetorget over for godt. Dårlig lagringsplass for varene samt kostbart byråkrati tvinger forseglerne bort. En månedlig dag på torget i Kirkenes blir et tapsprosjekt.

SE SIDE 4 OG 5

September 25, 2008, Kirkenes. We put up a *lavvu* – a traditional Sámi tent, and invite people to the square in Kirkenes for a picnic to celebrate a fictional 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Market, in the name of the local workers' rights pioneer, Ellisif Wessel (1866-1949). We discuss the conditions of the Russian Market women. It receives attention from the newspaper. **Headline: The Russian Market Disappears.**



*Facsimile from the newspaper Sør-Varanger Avis*

Barentsregion Mobile Kultur Byrå/ Kunngjøring:

*Diskursiv Piknik<sup>2</sup>\_10års jubileum for Russemarkedet. Til minne om Ellisif Wessel<sup>3</sup> torsdag 25. 09. 08 fra klokken 14 til 17 på torget i Kirkenes*



Du/vi er invitert – Alle er både gjest og vert på samme tid  
Ta med ideer, mat/drikke, ting/tang

Ta med markedsførings- og arbeidsideer – Ta med piknikk utstyret  
Vær med å utveksle og dele, lytte og snakke – Ta med en favoritt-gjenstand som du har kjøpt på Russemarkedet

Vi feirer 10-års jubileet for Russemarkedet. I Ellisif Wessels ånd kan vi starte støttegruppen "kvinner av Russemarkedets kvinner". Vi vil ta tid til å se nærmere på arbeidsforholdene og markedets struktur. Som kunder på markedet føler vi oss forpliktet til deltagende engasjement, for å sikre at markedet er en fruktbar foretning for både kunder og selgere.

**Fremtidsutsiktene for Russemarkedet**

Hva er dine personlige erfaringer med Russemarkedet?

Hvilke fortellere har Russemarkedet gitt til byen?

Kan vi starte en vennforening for Russemarkedets kvinner i Kirkenes som kan assistere disse arbeidene?

Ser vi nye midler som kan forbedre arbeidsforholdene?

De nåværende produkt tilbud har tilfredstil lokale konsumenters behov, hvilket utvider vareutvalg vil forbedre den lokale handelen?

Hvilke typer varer er viktigste for deg? Trengs det pris og kvalitet justeringer? Er det hysske endringer ved selve plassen som kunne forbedret opplevelsen?

Hvilke type varer og tjenester vil være en et godt tillegg på markedet?

Vi ser fram til å møtes for gjensidig utveksling av ideer, informasjon og inspirasjon!

Kristen Duhaug, Ulrika Sølling og Hilde Methi.

Barentsregion Mobile Kultur Byrå er et åpent forum for kulturutvikling innenfor:

Discursive Picnic er hovedformålet til DISCURSIVE www.discursive.net

Ellisif Wessel er fotograf, skribent og pioner for organisering av arbeiderbevegelsen i Kirkenes

Takk til Barentsregionen og Pirene på Bæver og

KUNSTEN

*February, 2006: Barents Mobile Kultur Byrå, Kirkenes, is organized as a platform for discussions, held for three days during the exhibition Translation which took place at “Samfunnshuset”, a building located next to the market square. The traders could use this space to have a cup of tea and to warm themselves in the cold weather (-23C). Along with the organizers of Translation, we invite women residents of Kirkenes for a round-table discussion on the market situation, seeking to form a support group for the market women. The market women do not participating, as they need to prioritize to be outside selling their goods. They are represented in the discussion by an interpreter from the Russian company Sputnik that was administering their trade. Translation was part of the Barents Spektakel Festival, organized by Pikene på Broen (The Girls on the Bridge).*

### **Video-interviews – ‘Custom Made’**

*Since February, 2006: We are video-interviewing traders, academics and parties associated with the Russian Market; Jamie Stapleton (Writer, Copenhagen), Hans Hagens (Architect, Copenhagen), May Griff Bye, (International Advisor, Sør-Varanger Municipality), Aileen Espiritu (Researcher, the Barents Institute, Kirkenes), Valentina Krasnoshchechenko (market trader, Murmansk), Bente Larsen (Head of Administration, Sør-Varanger Municipality), Talja Nabiullina (Sputnik Tourist Agency, Murmansk), Helge Dahl Pettersen (Privjet Tourist Agency, Kirkenes), Larissa Riabova (Kola Science Center, Apatite), Simon Tivilov (Manager, Seamen’s Club, Kirkenes) and others providing market perspectives.*



*Videostills: Helge Dahl Pettersen Privjet Tourist Agency (2006), Rimma Kuruch, Pensionery Murmana, (2008), Valentina Krasnoshechenko, past trader and pensioner (2007).*

