

## A brief guide to the art collection at Halden Prison

**Kenneth Balfelt (DK):** *Livsudviklingshagen [Life Development Garden]*, 2011–2014

The *Life Development Garden* is an art project that is designed to assist in the prison's efforts to advance the inmates' personal development. Kenneth Balfelt interviewed over 40 inmates to learn what they hoped to have achieved by the ends of their sentences. He discovered that the inmates were particularly eager to rediscover a sense of motivation, self-confidence and inner peace, and to take control of their own destinies. These findings inspired Balfelt to adapt the concept of an anti-stress garden by focusing more on personal development than on combatting stress. The result is the *Life Development Garden*. You can [read more about the project](#) on the artist's website. Balfelt is well known for his socio-political projects that derive from his social engagement and interest in urban development. His practice is process-driven and involves collaborations with drug addicts, homeless people, immigrants in difficult situations, and other vulnerable people, in an effort to create spaces where his collaborators can feel at home.

**Jeremy Welsh / Jon Arne Mogstad (N):** *The Low Down*, 2009

Jeremy Welsh and Jon Arne Mogstad won a closed competition to create a work for the sally port at the entrance to the prison. Each artist has created a work for one side of the 18-metre-long system of steel walls/sliding steel gates at the inner end of the sally port. Their works are the products of very different artistic expressions. On the inner side, Jon Arne Mogstad has spray-painted the steel panels with vertical patterns reminiscent of coloured lights reflected in water. On the outer side, Jeremy Welsh has screen-printed images of palm trees and clouds onto a combination of untreated galvanized steel panels and panels coated with a blue high-gloss lacquer. Seen from close up, the coarse halftone dots used in the digitally manipulated and abstracted photographic images have a vibrant optical effect. From further away, however, the images are easily read. *The Low Down* relates to the ambiguity of the main architectural features of the sally port: the reciprocal contrasts between hard and soft, and static and dynamic.

**Astrid Krogh (DK):** *Myriad*, 2009

Astrid Krogh's light installation in the prison's religiously neutral ceremony room consists of a wooden wall that has been perforated in a decorative pattern. The perforations house fibre-optic lights that are programmed to vary in colour and intensity at changing intervals. The play between the natural light flooding through the window behind the installation and the pulsing light emitted by the installation itself gives the room a contemplative ambience. In accordance with the concept of religious neutrality, the pattern of the perforations in the wood is open to many different interpretations and does not refer to any particular religion or philosophy. Krogh won the commission to create the work following a closed competition. Click here to view the [artist's website](#).

**Øyvind Grønlie (N):** *Boksen Gård [The Box Farm]*, 2011–2013

Artist and industrial designer Øyvind Grønlie has engaged in a process-driven collaboration with inmates and workshop staff to develop *Boksen Gård*, a sensory children's toy in a box. When folded out, the box makes a toy farm that has various interactive features designed to encourage sensory exploration. The simple act of opening the box produces a waft of scents from different types of wood and leather. Once the farm is set up, the logs in the "forest"

can be used as drumsticks. In addition, the seashore is in the shape of “tongue drums”, the barn can be opened to reveal a small xylophone, and the roof of the farmhouse can be removed and used as a kind of thumb piano that produces a range of evocative sounds. The design and craft programme at the prison’s own upper-secondary school was involved in the early stages of the project. Originally the idea was to include the toy in the range of prison products sold through its workshop outlet. Practical problems have arisen, however, when putting the toy into production, so this stage of the project has not so far been realized. Click here to [read the artist’s report on the project](#).

**Unn Kristin Laberg (N):** *Cup 1, Cup 2, Cup 3 and Cup 4*, 2010

Unn Kristin Laberg has taken close-up photographs to document coffee grounds left in cups. The cups were used during Laberg’s conversations with inmates in Tromsø Prison. Laberg interpreted the patterns of the grounds in the coffee cups using a kind of numerological method similar to the fortune-telling practice of reading tea leaves. These “readings” were made as part of a dialogue with each of the inmates concerned, and the photographs and notes from the conversations were later combined to form a series of photographic works. Four of these works are displayed in dayrooms in B Section.

**Lotte Konow Lund (N):** *Images from the inside*, 2010

For several years, Lotte Konow Lund has held free drawing courses for inmates in Bredtveit Women’s Prison. Each of the courses lasts for several weeks, and the inmates are asked to make drawings in response to questions such as “Who are you?”, “What is beautiful?”, and “What do you miss?” Konow Lund works with the inmates to develop visual responses to these questions. Following the courses, Konow Lund has made her own drawings based on the inmates’ drawings and writing. The result is a series of 26 ink drawings on paper that are now displayed on the walls of four dayrooms in C Section.

**Irene Nordli (N):** *Månelyst [Moonlight]*, 2010

The visitors’ house allows inmates to spend time with their families while serving their sentences. In the garden, a large sculpture of an anthropomorphic rabbit-like figure created by Irene Nordli invites onlookers to engage in a playful and inquisitive dialogue. The sculpture was cast in grey cement and then covered with glass, ceramic and mirror mosaic. Inside the house, Nordli has created several small “shadow images” of the sculpture – cut-outs that also function as coat hooks. Painted in various colours, these have been installed on several walls within the house. [www.magimix.net](http://www.magimix.net)

**Margareta Bergman (S):** *Sommerfuglen flyr gjennom tinningene og inn i hodet [The butterfly flies through my temples and into my head]*, 2010

Several corridors in A Section lead to a large blank wall at the back of the building, on which Bergman has installed eight colour photographs in several different formats. The photographs are of simple everyday objects and details. They are intended to provoke the onlooker’s curiosity, while at the same time evoking feelings of closeness, empathy and intimacy.

**Alexander Grüner (N/S/Guatemala):** *Fire dikt [Four poems]*, 2010

Alexander Grüner is responsible for four woven-textile pieces displayed in two group rooms in A Section. Each work is based on a poem: *Ja visst gör det ont/Yes, of course it hurts* by

Karin Boye; *I like it when you're quiet* by Pablo Neruda; *Funeral Blues* by WH Auden; and *He is quiet and so am I...* by Mahmoud Darwish. Each poem has been transcribed into braille and then reproduced in the form of a woven textile using a system of loops to represent the braille dots. These tactile works subtly provoke one to reflect on issues concerning sensitivity and protection. The poems can be "read" by running one's hands over the tactile surfaces, and the poem on which each work is based is also displayed alongside the relevant piece. From a distance the works appear monochrome, but closer inspection reveals them to be surprisingly colourful.

**DOLK (N):** *Prisoner, Police Line and Stripes*, 2010

Norwegian graffiti artist Dolk has used a stencil technique to create three large works on the walls of three of the prison's five exercise yards. The most well known, *Prisoner*, depicts a convict hurling his ball and chain over the prison wall. This image has appeared many times in media reports about the prison. The other two works are *Police Line* and *Stripes*. *Police Line* shows a marathon runner who is about to cross a finishing line made of yellow crime scene tape, while *Stripes* depicts a man painting prison stripes on his own overalls. All three images question received ideas about identity, punishment, and control in a playful manner, adding a touch of humour to the prison environment.

**Gerd Tinglum (N):** *Om sinne [About anger]* and *Om tilgivelse [About forgiveness]*, 2010

Gerd Tinglum is responsible for two abstract artworks in one of the prison's fan-shaped exercise yards. Each colour composition extends on either side of one of the locked doors leading from the common area into the exercise yard. The effect is to establish a visual link between areas that are separated by physical barrier. The works, which consist of fields of colour assembled into asymmetric abstract patterns, are intended to have an intuitive effect on passers-by.

During her long career as an artist, Tinglum has developed a personal colour "alphabet". Each colour in this "alphabet" has a specific significance based on its physical and psychological effect on the onlooker. Her compositions for the two exercise yards are based on the concepts of anger and forgiveness – both of which are highly relevant to the prison environment.