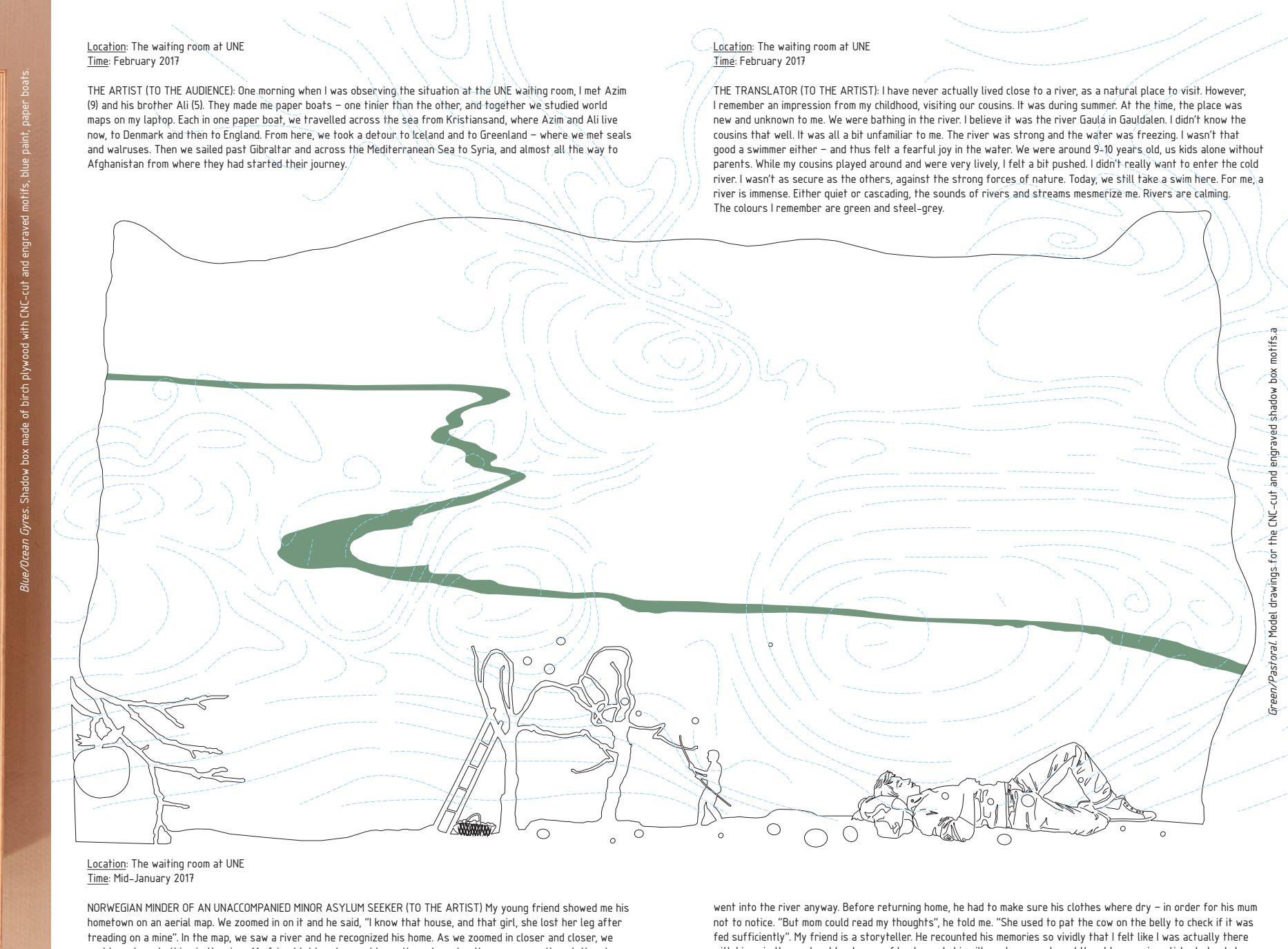




*All the World's Rivers Interior, October 2018.*



*Blue/Green Gyres. Shadow box made of birch plywood with CNC-cut and engraved motifs, blue paint, paper boats.*



Location: The waiting room at UNE  
Time: February 2017

THE ARTIST (TO THE AUDIENCE): One morning when I was observing the situation at the UNE waiting room, I met Azim (9) and his brother Ali (5). They made me paper boats – one finer than the other, and together we studied world maps on my laptop. Each in one paper boat, we travelled across the sea from Kristiansand, where Azim and Ali live now, to Denmark and then to England. From here, we took a detour to Iceland and to Greenland – where we met seals and walruses. Then we sailed past Gibraltar and across the Mediterranean Sea to Syria, and almost all the way to Afghanistan from where they had started their journey.

Location: The waiting room at UNE  
Time: Mid-January 2017

NORWEGIAN MINDER OF AN UNACCOMPANIED MINOR ASYLUM SEEKER (TO THE ARTIST) My young friend showed me his hometown on an aerial map. We zoomed in on it and he said, "I know that house, and that girl, she lost her leg after treading on a mine". In the map, we saw a river and he recognized his home. As we zoomed in closer and closer, we could see boys bathing in the river. My friend told me he used to go there to water the cows, even though the strong currents made it dangerous. The water in the river was dirty, and they could not drink it. Few could swim, but they

Location: The waiting room at UNE  
Time: February 2017

THE TRANSLATOR (TO THE ARTIST): I have never actually lived close to a river, as a natural place to visit. However, I remember an impression from my childhood, visiting our cousins. It was during summer. At the time, the place was new and unknown to me. We were bathing in the river. I believe it was the river Gaulå in Gauldalen. I didn't know the cousins that well. It was all a bit unfamiliar to me. The river was strong and the water was freezing. I wasn't that good a swimmer either – and thus felt a fearful joy in the water. We were around 9-10 years old, us kids alone without parents. While my cousins played around and were very lively, I felt a bit pushed. I didn't really want to enter the cold river. I wasn't as secure as the others, against the strong forces of nature. Today, we still take a swim here. For me, a river is immense. Either quiet or cascading, the sounds of rivers and streams mesmerize me. Rivers are calming. The colours I remember are green and steel-grey.

went into the river anyway. Before returning home, he had to make sure his clothes were dry – in order for his mum not to notice. "But mom could read my thoughts", he told me. "She used to pat the cow on the belly to check if it was fed sufficiently". My friend is a storyteller. He recounted his memories so vividly that I felt like I was actually there with him – in the pastoral landscape of Laghman. In his village, he remembered the old men using sticks to beat down the apples from the fruit trees.

*Green/Pastoral. Model drawings for the CNC-cut and engraved shadow box motifs, a*



*All the World's Rivers*  
Title in Arabic on window pane with letters in frosted window film.

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*All the World's Rivers* is an artwork adapted for Immigration Appeals Board (UNE)

Elin T. Sørensen © 2018  
Produced by KORO – Public Art Norway's Art Programme for Government Agencies in Rented Properties and for Older Government Buildings (LES)

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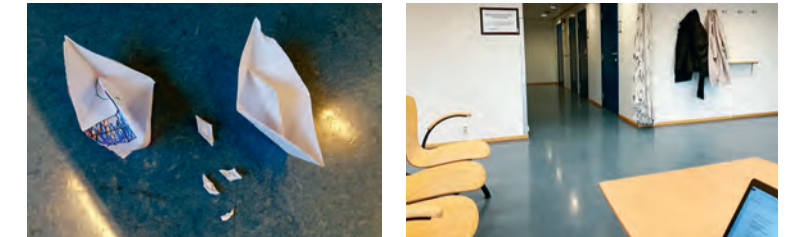
## – INTRO –

*All the World's Rivers* is a collaborative project headed by artist Elin Tandring Sørensen, working closely with interior architect and furniture designer Mads Pålstrud and cabinetmaker Henning Linaker. The team has transformed the waiting room at the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) with careful attention to the situation of people spending time here. At the start of the project, the artist spent several long periods in the waiting room, initiating conversations with appellants and their companions, interpreters, and lawyers. The precarious position of the users of the waiting room was the starting point for the immersive installation *All the World's Rivers*.

The artist chose riverscapes as the basic motif for the artwork in order to communicate independently of language and refer to shared experiences. A river can be a metaphor for movement, purification and change. Moreover, territorial borders often follow the paths of rivers. Thus the personal stories of riverscapes provided by people in the waiting room, as well as by employees at the Appeals Board, became the source of inspiration for the transformation of the waiting room.

The riverscape stories are presented visually in three shadow boxes on the wall, where various motifs are combined to form poetic tableaux. One story became the starting point for the rock garden – in the form of a dry riverbed – on the roof ledge outside the waiting room. Some of the stories you can find in this leaflet.

All the furnishings have been custom-made for the specific situation: And the team has transformed the rather impersonal and sterile environment into a more welcoming space by means of using earthen colours inspired by spices, tactile surfaces, and natural materials such as coconut fibre matting and wooden furniture upholstered with woollen cloth. The design is informed by a concern for the visitors' well-being and a holistic environmental approach that involved the re-use of high-quality materials that otherwise would have been thrown away.



The waiting room at the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE), January 2017.

Location: The waiting room at UNE  
Time: Mid-January 2017

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR ASYLUM SEEKER (TO THE ARTIST): My home is in Uzbekistan. Right now, it's difficult to answer – I'm worrying so much about my case. Many ideas come into my mind, but I cannot think of anything. Forgive me; I need to be left in peace.



Work in progress, May–September 2017.

Recalled location: Somewhere in Pakistan  
Time: The mid-1970s

FORMER POLITICAL REFUGEE (TO THE ARTIST): Fleeing is two-sided – like two opposing poles. On the one side, you are driven forward by high hopes for a better life and a curiosity about the unknown. On the other, you are in a deep state of pain from leaving behind everything you love; it's like moving along in a psychological "no man's land", where everything is unpredictable. After crossing the frontier out of my homeland, I was ill for a week, as a physical reaction from psychological stress. Even though I was safe, I felt completely numb on the inside – it was like being in a vacuum. I couldn't think, really. First after a week I started noticing my surroundings again: experiencing new colours and smells – and a new hemisphere.



Yellow/Industry  
Shadow box made of birch plywood with CNC-cut and engraved motifs, yellow paint.

Recalled location: The UNHCR office in Pakistan  
Time: The mid-January 2017

THE FORMER POLITICAL REFUGEE (TO THE ARTIST): When arriving we had no idea what we were facing. What caught my attention back then – during long waiting hours in between the interviews – was the marks left by the people that had been there before us. Writings on the walls – signatures, dates, stories. It was like getting to know lots of people without ever meeting them. People's names or phrases like "I've been here", "it is going to be all right", make you realise that many others have been in a similar situation before you. It gives hope and you actually feel less abandoned.

Location: The waiting room at UNE  
Time: Mid-January 2017

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR ASYLUM SEEKER (TO THE ARTIST): Close to my hometown there is a waterfall – here cows drink water and eat grasses on the plains. We are bathing, me and my friends. Swimming. Diving into the water. It is so much heat, and we bathed a lot. Not good river, not nice colour. All the people throw garbage into the river, like garbage from the house and sewer – everything goes into the river. I had to walk through a forest to get there. How long time from village to river – maybe 20 minutes? My village is surrounded by mountains. But in the mountains there are Taliban. I have travelled through Pakistan, Turkey, Hungary ... to get away from Afghanistan.



The Rock Garden  
River gravel, mosses, willow weaving model houses (rock garden roof top area: 55.5 m²).

Location: The Immigration Appeals Board work cafeteria  
Time: Mid-January 2017

THE JUDGE (TO THE ARTIST): I remember a story told by a Somalian asylum seeker. We didn't consider him trustworthy, as the place where he claimed to have grown up was impossible to find on the aerial map. Nevertheless, the man continued to describe his home – a village on the banks of the great Jubba River. He described how important this place was to him and his kin. They collected water from the river for their livestock. When the Jubba was full of water, the families cultivated vegetables and fruit, and in periods of drought, the people drew water from large nearby wells. The man highlighted the importance of water for life and prosperity in the Jubaland region in Somalia.

As we reexamined the map more closely, we discovered a river completely dried up, and the dry riverbed developed with housing, cafes and commercial premises. Whilst his place of upbringing had been transformed due to drought, the map revisited finally confirmed the man's description of his home town.