

Opening workshop Sunday June 9th:

## Art Therapy meets “Shinrin Yoku”

### Nature as therapist - to bathe and create in the atmosphere of the forest.

Astrid Hovengen & Karin Jacobsen, Norway

The modern man increasingly lives in separation from nature and its rhythms. The Japanese tradition “Shinrin Yoku” invites you to bathe in the atmosphere of the forest, and thereby experience a reunion with the forest and nature through various invitations to sensory presence and experiences. Inspired by your experiences, from the simple version of forest bathing, you will be invited to make your own expression and creations. It may be an installation, a sculpture or something else of your liking made from available natural materials. We will walk together to look at - and share the various expressions before the workshop ends with a tea ceremony in true “Shinrin Yoku” fashion.

Generations before us lived with a strong connection and relationship to nature's changes and rhythms. These days presence of nature and slow living have become rare. In Japan, in the eighties, citizens experienced increasing stress-related health problems. To meet this, parks were developed, and forest areas arranged to experience presence in nature. The methodology called “Shinrin Yoku” was developed and investigated. The metropolitan population was offered nature experiences with sensory presence. It proved to have great health benefits with reduced anxiety and depression as well as increased well-being. The Scandinavian-developed scientifically based method is called “Eco Forest Therapy”. This method inspired by “Shinrin Yoku” has also been shown to produce many health and well-being effects.

The forest bathe is your experience with your senses. The invitations direct attention to being aware, - and also to notice what you are noticing. We want to create a movement from thought and reflection to a sensory experience - a disconnection of the autopilot to the mindful presence with all senses. Presence of nature, sensory experiences and creative expression woven together might represent one of the avenues of hope in our modern world.

**Astrid Hovengen** has worked for many years in mental healthcare for adults.

*In recent years also with children, young people and families. She is trained as an art therapist from OsloMet and from the Institute for Art Therapy (Vibeke Skov) in Denmark. She has recently been approved as a certified forest bath guide from the Scandinavian Nature and Forest Therapy Institute.*

**Karin Jacobsen** has her background from art school at the University of Bergen and in pedagogy and art therapy at OsloMet. The last eight years she has been working as an art therapist in the municipalities mental health service, with adults - individual and with groups, in Indre Østfold, Norway.