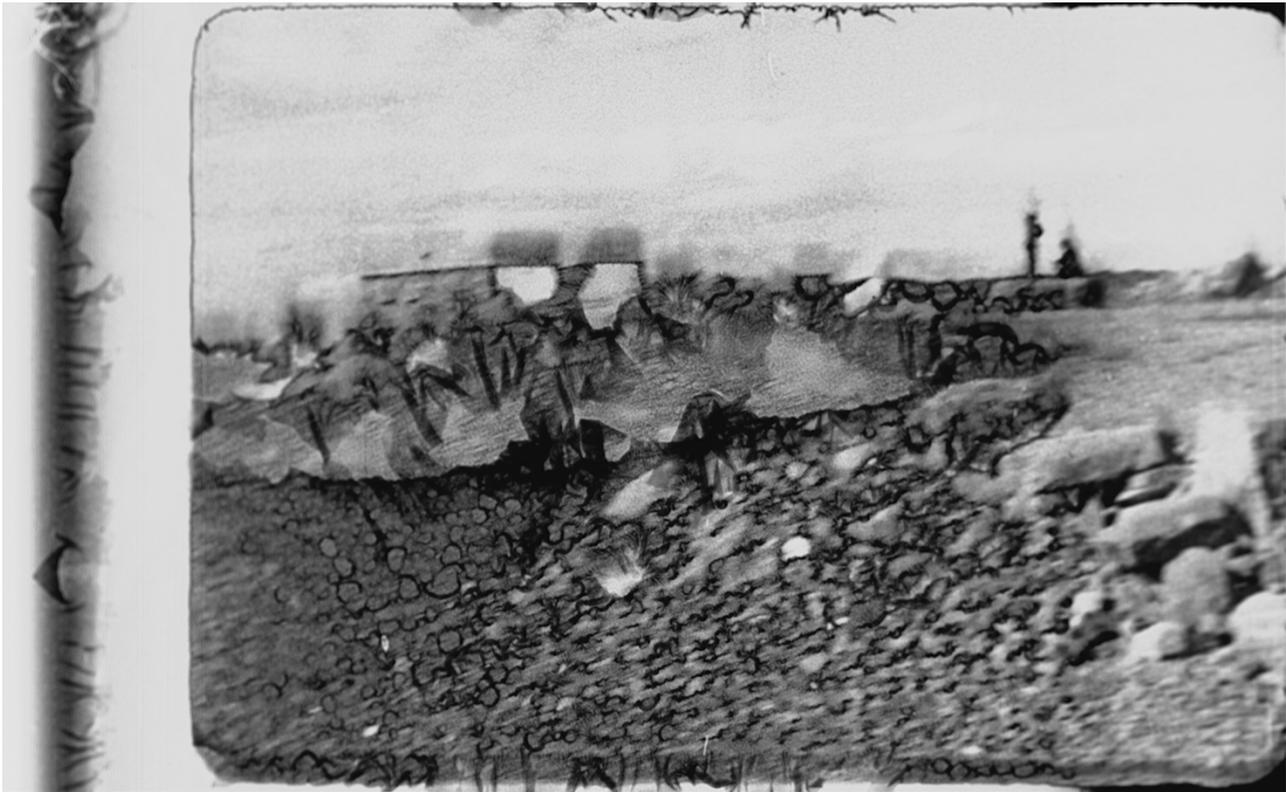


Open Call for experimental essays – deadline 11 May 2026

What if Waste

By Metode + The Oslo Architecture Triennale



Langøya Waste Management Facility, Norway. By Taylor Alaina Liebenstein Smith © ADAGP, 2025

Waste of time, waste of money, valuing waste. Your wasted ideas, the discarded projects. The emails in 'junk,' the documents in the 'trash' folder. Wasted food scraped off plates, wasted potential, being 'wasted' through late nights. Wasted energy, wasted resources, nuclear waste as fuel? Wasted opportunities—opportunities for waste.

Out of Sight

Waste is often kept at a distance—sent to landfills, recycling plants, storage sites, or left to accumulate on margins—so it can slip out of sight, out of time, and out of mind. Waste is buried and concealed in the ground; it floats in space orbits. The relationship between humans and waste is always more than material: it reveals what we value, what we discard, what we find beautiful and without beauty. Yet this invisibility is uneven: for some, waste largely disappears, for others, it remains a daily landscape and form of labor.

What if waste were nothing but value out of place, or out of time? What if waste were not an ending, but a beginning? What if waste were the ground on which we design, remember, and imagine otherwise?

On Display

While waste is typically kept out of sight, display does the opposite. Where disposal conceals, exhibition exposes and circulates. In architecture, waste and reuse has a long history of being displayed. The ancient practice of *spolia*—reusing building elements and ornaments from earlier structures—was at once destructive and generative, undoing one order to construct another. Fragments of dismantled structures were given ornamental status in new contexts, reclaimed and transformed, acquiring new values.

In the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2026, titled *What if Nature Comes First?*, such a value exchange will be quite literally displayed. Taking place in the Sofienberg Church in Oslo—a building currently in transition from sacred to secular use, the program and exhibition of *What if Nature Comes First?* is divided into four scales: materials, transformation, planning, and system. The question asked through all these scales is what our built environment would look like if we took the planetary boundaries seriously and made decisions based on this. First comes longer use, then reuse, then recycling. And then what?

In the Oslo Architecture Triennale exhibition in Sofienberg church, decay will become design, waste will become bricks; transformative ideas in a transformed church. How does waste change once it acquires what Walter Benjamin calls “exhibition value”—once it becomes a medium of future-making rather than something to be hidden away? How might ritual be reimaged when a church is no longer consecrated but still holds collective memory?

Transformative Site-Writing

What if writers came together to transform their wasted ideas, abandoned projects, or discarded drafts into a new context; a collaborative ‘waste-writing’ project unfolding over time in which the Oslo Architectural Triennale 2026 exhibition in the Sofienberg church becomes a site of creativeness?

We seek participants who 1) wish to speculate on waste as a regenerative force in design and thought, 2) aim to explore waste and writing also in a methodological sense, and 3) want to develop their writing in the context of the *What if Nature Comes First* exhibition. We are looking for open-minded participants who are willing to take risks and thrive in dialogue with others.

Working Process

Participants in *What if Waste* will develop their experimental essay over nine months through an in-depth, transparent, and stimulating writing process with peer-review feedback from the editorial board and affiliated researchers and scholars. This development will be supported by a series of full-day or half-day workshops. The emphasis is on collective thinking and slow development as an experimental practice in itself. Before each session, participants will submit drafts, read each other’s work, and prepare written and oral feedback.

The **first workshop** will be held on Friday 26 June 2026 12:00 – 15:00 CET (hybrid event in Oslo and online).

The **second workshop** will be held on Wednesday 26 August 2026 12:00 – 15:00 CET (online).

The **third workshop** (a two-days' workshop) will be held on Wednesday 23 and Thursday 24 September 2026 at the Oslo Architecture Triennale and ROM in Oslo. Travel support will be arranged in dialogue with Metode.

The **fourth workshop** will be held on Friday 23 October 2026 12:00 – 15:00 CET (online).

Attendance at the physical workshop in Oslo on 23-24 September 2026 is mandatory for participation, a grant for travel support will be arranged in dialogue with Metode.

The final essays will be published at [Metode's website](#) in February 2027.

Application

Apply with a short pitch that is methodologically intriguing, intellectually surprising, and visually compelling.

In your written pitch (max 500 words), tell us:

- How will you write about, think about, and make sense of waste through your artistic, academic, curatorial, or architectural practice?
- How will you write about waste in the context of an exhibition that displays transformed waste materials, ruins, and residues?
- Which methods will you use to creatively engage with the topic?
- Why are you motivated to develop your writing in the context of Metode?

You are welcome to also include a visual pitch (max one PDF page).

We encourage:

- Cohesive research frameworks driven by co-creation
- Close collaboration between theorists and practitioners in the conceptualization, writing, and visual experimentation
- Experimental working methods

In order to apply to be a participant in *What if Waste*, submit your application by **11 May 2026** to Metode's submission platform:

[Apply here](#)

Online information meeting

If you're interested in applying and would like to learn more about the writing process, we are hosting a digital information meeting on Friday 10 April 2026 at 14:00 - 14:30 CET.

Zoom-link: <https://aarhusuniversity.zoom.us/j/61100069963>

Selection process

All applications will be evaluated by Metode's Editorial Board. We aim to curate a group of writers with diverse backgrounds, levels of experience, and methodological approaches.

People involved

What if Waste is a collaboration project between Metode and the Oslo Architectural Triennial, the members of the editorial board are: Armelle Breuil (architect, activist and founder of ACT!), Nick Walkley (architectural historian and researcher, PhD), Andrea Pinochet (architect and researcher), Andreas Ervik (media theorist and artist, PhD), Line Ramstad (Director of the Oslo Architecture Triennale), Thomas Cook (Head of Development at the Oslo Architecture Triennale), Karen Pinkus (writer and critic, Professor Emerita), and Victoria Bugge Øye (Senior Curator of architecture at the National Museum, PhD). Editor of *What if Waste* is Ingrid Halland (Metode).

Essays written for Metode + Oslo Architecture Triennale by Karen Pinkus, Daniel A. Barber, Hans Baumann, Julia Andersson, Jomy Joseph, and Samanta Kajenaite will be published ahead of the Triennale and will serve as a shared reading list and conceptual grounding for *What if Waste*.

About Metode

The online journal platform *Metode* publishes essays in the fields of art, design, and architecture. The essays are developed through experimental, intellectual co-creation, and collaborative methods. The journal's open, in-depth peer review method aims to offer theorists and practitioners a discursive platform for generating original and compelling critical thinking on art, architecture, design, and aesthetics that challenge conventional academic publication formats and disseminations. We invite artists, designers, and architects to unite with scholars from the humanities to explore creative and risky ways of assembling knowledge through words and works.

Metode was founded in 2022 with generous support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is run by ROM for kunst og arkitektur: Ingrid Halland (founder and editor-in-chief), Gjertrud Steinsvåg (Director of ROM for kunst og arkitektur), and Solveig Tjetland and Edwina Francis as editorial assistants.

About the Oslo Architecture Triennale

The Oslo Architecture Triennale is a festival and arena for exploration, development and dissemination of sustainable architecture and urban development. The Oslo Architecture Triennale seeks to challenge and inspire the field of architecture and planning, addressing urgent societal issues. The Triennale engages both the international community of architects, urban professionals and a local audience, working through exhibitions, conferences, conversations, open calls, publications and events across different formats and media.

As a knowledge-driven organization, we develop and produce content beyond the Triennale festival itself: We create networks, events and knowledge dissemination, bridging decision makers and the public across borders, social layers, sectors and professions.

Established in 2000, the Oslo Architecture Triennale is organized every third autumn in Oslo. The 9th edition of the Oslo Architecture Triennale, titled *What if Nature Comes First?*, opens 17 September 2026.