

## Utøya Memorial

Never Again July 22? Conference, Litteraturhuset, Oslo

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Jørgen Watne Frydnes, Utøya

Dear all,

First I would like to thank you for inviting me to tell the story here today of how we created the memorial on Utøya. My name is Jørgen Watne Frydnes, I am the managing director of Utøya, and have been responsible for the rebuilding for the last three years. Those of you coming to Utøya tomorrow, will hear more about the entire process of rebuilding Utøya – including the work on Hegnhuset, the planned memorial- and learning centre. But let me very briefly sum up the last four years.

When the plans for Utøya were first presented in September 2012, the important balance between memory and new life was not taken enough into consideration. And they came too early. The labour youth quickly realized this, and took the decision to listen to the support group and the bereaved families and postponed the process by two years. We then started a very thorough work to contact all the families that lost their loved ones, in an effort to get their feedback and opinions about the future of the island. Lengthy discussions and conversations ensued. Slowly the plans have changed during the process, little by little. We have listened and we have learned.

In 2013 we gathered a group of experts to contribute to the discussions about the dilemmas and overarching questions we had to deal with. In addition to Tor Einar Fagerland from NTNU, we invited in James Young, Ed Linenthal and Alice Greenwald. This resource group has contributed with important advice and input, and has also been a great partner for discussions. We will afterwards hear more from James and his view of the process. I will go into more detail of this tomorrow, so let me now focus on the process for the creation of the memorial.

We wanted to create a calm and worthy memorial to honour those killed, those who survived and those who were marked for life. While the national memorials at Sørbråten and in Oslo should reach out the general public, the memorial on the island itself should be for those directly affected - a more private space.

And let me just stop here for a second. Most people visiting Utoya, and I would think most people in general, wonders what part of the island is planned to be cut in two. So to be clear

to all of you, Jonas Dahlbergs Memory Wound lies at Sørbråten, 1 km north of Utøya on the mainland. The plan has never been to cut the island in two, even though most journalists have portrayed it as such, resulting in a major confusing among most people and being a real obstacle and damaging part of the process I am about to tell you more about, namely the memorial on the island itself.

Since it was clear for us from the start that these public functions was not part of our goal for the memorial, they were supposed to be taken care of elsewhere, we decided that the most important aspect was to create a place that could facilitate the range of experiences and thoughts by those this memorial is for: those most affected by 22nd of July. A place for all those directly affected, where no matter what social, cultural or religious affiliation you have, you should feel welcome. We wanted a place, not a thing or an artist interpreting the incident or the feelings of those involved. Part of the key to success was thus in many ways the process itself: an open, inclusive and transparent process in close cooperation with as many of the affected people as possible.

During the summer of 2013 we put together a group of people that were asked to work specifically with the creation of the memorial. The group included two survivors of the attacks, two parents that lost loved ones, a mother of a survivor, a landscape architect, a Utøya-veteran, and a leader of the group – and me. During that winter we put together the strategy of our work, with a particular focus on the inclusiveness of all parts of the process.

Early spring of 2014 we put forward two questions we wanted feedback on: whether or not the names of those killed should be part of the memorial, and where on the island the memorial should be located. Almost all were positive to the criteria's suggested for the placement, while every single one wanted the names being a part of the design. Some families also suggested that the age of the person killed, also should be included, and thus we included this in the following work. Of the criteria's we suggested for the placement of the memorial, two were particularly important to most: it should be situated in a place that was not subject to any of the events that occurred on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and specifically not a place of murder, and it should not be in the area where Breivik was arrested.

Kolbein Fridtun, member of the memorial group and father of Hanne Kristine that was killed on Utøya on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, found the place where the memorial is now placed. It is a clearing in the woods on the north side of the island, above the Love Path with a view out between the trees towards the Tyrifjord. It is a central part of the island, but still a bit seclude from the main activity areas. It is like a miniature Utøya, with all the beautiful characteristics of the island compressed into a small place. During the summer we then invited architects and artists in for a design competition. 21 teams were selected, while four of them went to the final round of the competition. In august these four teams presented their suggestions for the design. This was the start of the most work-intensive part of the

process. In the following weeks and months the memorial group, and myself in particular, travelled the country – from the south to the north, west and east – to present the four different proposals, and to get feedback. We met almost all the local branches of the support group, we held presentations for the labour youth, we travelled across the country to meet the bereaved families in their homes. As well traveling to their homes, we talked to the rest of them on the phone at several occasions, spending hundreds of hours listening to their thoughts and opinions. The feedback we received was passed on to the four architect teams, which handed in their final proposals on the 1st of November. People were once again asked for their thoughts and we spent another three weeks actively asking for feedback. In total we received over 600 suggestions and inputs on the four proposals, almost all from people directly affected. In November last year, the design for the memorial was chosen. The task was given to the architectural firm 3RW.

The idea was to develop the memorial on Utøya as a clearing; forming a clear spot and highlight all the beautiful landscape qualities that were already in place and in contact with the surrounding environment. We wanted to shape the open space between the big pine trees in this area into a major unifying circle.

Throughout the ages, one of the society's clearest social forms is to express ourselves in circles, for fellowship and protection. Especially in the face of nature, the circle is in many ways a basic social form. To give victims' names and ages a central and worthy place in the clearing, we wanted this to be the central highlights of the memorial. We cut the names out in a thick metal plate shaped like a ring.

The ring is suspended from the large pine trees with wire cables, so that it hovers above the ground at eye level. As all other parts of the process creating this memorial, even the construction work itself was an inclusive collaboration, and we invited those affected to join in if they wanted.

The response was overwhelming. During a weekend in June over 20 bereaved families travelled from different parts all over the country to be part of this work. For two days the volunteer group worked at laying slate, clearing forest and making a new path to the memorial site. We had a wonderful time together these days – doing a piece of work that means so much to them, to Utøya and to many, many others.

Inside the circle we have created a wild garden with specially selected plants that attract many species of butterflies found on Utøya. The varied and rich vegetation on the island gives a special ecological opportunity for the memorial. The bushes and herbs that are planted around the memorial site contain flowers that attract the adult butterflies from all over the island. At the bottom of the area you can sit facing out of the circle, facing the view and the sunset. This part of the circle allows withdrawing slightly, while the upper part of the

circle facing inwards and will serve as gathering place that invites community. The ring is made in stainless steel with a sandblasted surface. The ring will therefore not be like a mirror, but still reflect the colours and ambient light. In this way, the ring will absorb the unique character of the site through the day and throughout the year. The light shines through the cutouts and make sure the names are visually unique. When the sun shines through the names, it casts light and shadows on the ground. If it is necessary to add more names later, this can be done by removing a section and transporting it to the workshop for the modification. When it has been raining, or when the thick mist we have often have in Tyrifjorden lets go and leaves the ring wet, the falling water drop makes the ring appear as if it is crying.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July four years after the atrocities took place, the memorial was officially opened in a beautiful quiet ceremony. Two weeks later the memorial was also a very important place for the new generations of youth coming to Utøya on the first labour youth summer camp back on Utøya since 2011.

As many of you that will join us tomorrow at Utøya will see, we now have a beautiful place for remembrance on Utøya. A place created together with those affected. A place that honours the 69 persons brutally taken away from us. A place offering comfort. And a place for new generations to make sure we never forget.

Thank you for your attention.