

## BIOGRAPHY OF ÅSA LIE AND JADRAN STURM

**Åsa Lie (1959-)** was born in Stockholm, Sweden, with Norwegian nationality. She grew up in Egypt, the Netherlands, Venezuela, England, Sweden, and Norway. She studied political and social sciences in Tønsberg, Norway. Between 1983 and 1985, she trained as a goldsmith in Oslo, Norway. In 1985, Åsa moved to Stockholm, Sweden, to study sculpture at Konstfack, University of Arts, Crafts, and Design. Graduating with a Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in 1990.

**Jadran Sturm (1957-2019)** was born in Idrija, Yugoslavia (later Slovenia). He grew up in the mining town of Idrija and moved to Ljubljana in 1973 to study as a technical engineer. From 1975 he traveled extensively through Europe and moved to Sweden in 1981, where he began his art studies at Ålsta Art School. Between 1985 and 1990, he studied painting (Bachelor and Master) at Konstfack, University of Arts, Crafts, and Design in Stockholm.

Åsa Lie and Jadran Sturm met in 1988 while studying at Konstfack. They were both experimenting with multiple media, performance, installation, video, text, and art in public space. Together they organized film screenings, philosophy lectures, and collective performances.

Their first solo exhibition as a duo took place in 1989 at Galleri Project, Stockholm, presenting the piece [\*Arbete \(Work\) – Consulting on Mathematics, Time & Space\*](#), with super-8 film, sculptures and an artist book. Visitors were invited to reflect on mathematical concepts, such as geometry and algebra, and to consider the role of work in life. This was their first key work and marked the start of their multidisciplinary and conceptual collaboration.

In 1990, their second key work was [\*Researching the Visibility of Invisible Matter\*](#), consisting of a text outlining their intentions. It was printed in the catalogue and hung in the exhibition at Liberty Park Art Center, Athens (Greece). The same year they created the installation [\*Politics, The Sun and Noise\*](#) at Overgaden Art Center, Copenhagen (Denmark), a site-specific work of criss-crossing cables between sculptural islands mixing projections, screens and sound sources recorded and shot in Athens, Stockholm and Copenhagen. One sound source described migrating birds as a metaphor for migration as a whole, symbolizing the movement of people, goods and the exchange of ideas. The exhibition included a poster searching to swap their rented Stockholm apartment for one in Copenhagen, and as a result Åsa & Jadran moved to Denmark in 1990. This work exemplifies how the duo intertwined their personal and domestic life with external, political, and historical aspects.

In 1991, they went to Kalaallit Nuunat (Greenland) for a two-month residency in Qaqortoq, via the Nordic Arts Exchange Programme. An experience resulting in the photographic/text collage [\*61 days proceeding, sociological performance\*](#). Upon returning to Copenhagen, their daughter was born in November 1991.

From 1991 to 1993, they travelled multiple times to Athens, Greece while working on the art project and book [\*Panagia Gorgeopikoos\*](#). It was exhibited and published for the first time in 2021 - 28 years later - with support from Flanders, Department of Culture, Youth and Media. *Panagia Gorgeopikoos* is a small 12th-century Byzantine church in central Athens, featuring stone reliefs spanning 1500 years from various periods and cultures. Åsa Lie and Jadran Sturm researched the church's history and context, gathering material by recording sound, filming, photographing and conducting interviews. In one of their texts, they compare the Byzantine Empire to the European Union, both multilingual and multi-ethnic entities. When ready this book was sent to, and rejected by, publishers as "not being scientific enough" for the academic world and not "arty enough" for the art world.

In 1992, they visited Brussels for the first time, settling permanently in 1994. During the 1990s and early 2000s, they connected with the Belgian art-scene, artists, artist-run spaces, curators, and gallerists. This period saw collaborations and exhibitions in venues such as Beursschouwburg, Établissement d'en face / Commitment bkSM, L'Observatoire-Galerie, Moving Art Studio, ExtraCity, Factor44, Le Bureau du port / Patacyclistes, Café Dolle Mol, BRXL Bravo. They participated in *Het Boudewijn Experiment* (2001, Atomium) with a handout on

official versus unofficial performances, and in *68 IT'S REVOLUTION* (2008, Bozar) with *POLITIX + BUSINESS = NO* in response to the 2007-2008 global financial crisis.

Their first solo exhibition in Belgium (1996) was at Galerie OH! - Stichting Kunstbevordering v.z.w., Brussels (curated by Philippe Braem), titled [E42, E.U.R. Vita Elementari](#). This installation is a portrait of the southern suburb EUR in Rome, Italy. It explored this residential, business and administrative part of the city as it was in the 1990s.

### **Public Intimacy: Advertisements-Posters Project (1990–2002)**

In the early 1990s, they started their *Public Intimacy* advertisement project, publishing conceptual and personal invitations and artworks in newspapers and magazines such as *La Voix de Luxembourg*, *Financial Times*, and *De Witte Raaf*. This allowed them to exhibit autonomously and reach a wider audience beyond traditional art institutions. In 1997, they published the conceptual invitation [Information Curve](#) in *De Witte Raaf*, inviting readers to choose works from a list of seven titles, which they presented in their living room.

### **Public Intimacy: Interview Talks Project (1999–2004)**

The second part of *Public Intimacy* consisted of interview talks with practitioners that intrigued them, such as Norwegian painter Odd Nerdrum, Spanish actress and filmmaker Lina Romay, Spanish filmmaker, composer and actor Jesús Franco, Jewish theatre director Tuvia Tenenbom, and Italian architect Massimiliano Fuksas. Each interview explored 3 topics central to the duo's own practice.

### **Public Intimacy: UPP – Unofficial Performance Project (1994–2014)**

As of 1994, Åsa and Jadran did a series of visible or invisible, planned or improvised interventions / performances in public spaces, exhibitions and art fairs, without formal invitation or approval. In 2001 they published a satirical statement on UPP given as a handout at *Het Boudewijn Experiment* (Atomium, Brussels). Over the years, they performed UPPs in public space and venues such as Café Europa (Copenhagen), Manifesta 2 (Luxembourg), ArtBrussels 2002, Gallery Torch (Amsterdam), Gallery Jay Jopling/White Cube (London), and Gallery Mot & Van Den Boogaard (Brussels). An example is the performance [In art dogs eat dogs or Mr. Clean knows how to fight dirty](#) which questions the exclusivity and competition of the art world.

In 2001, Åsa Lie created the website [www.sturm-lie.be](http://www.sturm-lie.be) to provide an online archive of their work, independent of the art market. This website is currently (2025) being reconstructed and will move to [www.asaliejadransturm.com](http://www.asaliejadransturm.com).

The *Jadran Sturm & Åsa Lie Private Foundation* was founded in 2016 to preserve their joint oeuvre. In 2017, the exhibition *1989–2017* at Galerie Stephanie Jaax, Brussels, marked the transition from their duo practice to individual work, showing documentation of *Arbete* (1989) and *Northern Light* (2006), along with new works by each artist.

Jadran Sturm passed away in 2019 after struggling many years with cancer. In 2020, the exhibition *Did you kiss the spot to make it well, A tribute to Jadran Sturm (1957–2019)* was organised by Åsa, Mercedes and Lotte Beckwé and hosted by *Des Esseintes*, Hoeilaart, BE. It presented Jadrans final works.

In 2024 the *Jadran Sturm & Åsa Lie Foundation* was awarded a generous subsidy by the Flemish Department of Culture within the *Pilotprojects Heritage Legacies in Art (Pilotprojecten Nalatenschappen Kunstenerfgoed)*. [Here is a link to more info about the project](#). Partners within this project are [M HKA – CKV Flemish Centre for Art Archives](#), [AMVB – Archive and Museum for Flemish life in Brussels](#) and [Jubilee – platform for artistic research](#).

*Together with her daughter and artist Mercedes Sturm-Lie, Åsa Lie continues as co-founder of the foundation, preserving the archive and oeuvre while pursuing her own artistic practice.*