

Wadden Tide 2023: Nine artists create works about sand on Blåvandshuk Beach

A fleeting phenomenon. In 2023, the recurring art exhibition Wadden Tide on Blåvandshuk Beach is about sand as a habitat, resource and material. With the title *First There is a Mountain*, Varde Municipality and the curators Empathic Environments present nine Danish artists who have developed new site-specific sculptures, installations and performances. The exhibition opens on 31 August 2023.

In August, the art exhibition Wadden Tide returns with magnificent sculptures and installations on Blåvandshuk Beach. The title of this year's Wadden Tide is *First There Is A Mountain*, which presents new, site-specific works by nine Danish artists.

The participating artists are Hanne Nielsen & Birgit Johnsen, Kåre Frang, Kasper Hesselbjerg, Kirstine Roepstorff, Molly Haslund, Rasmus Myrup, Rikke Luther, Spacegirls and Tue Greenfort.

The nine works include magnificent sculptures, poetic installations, in-depth research, sensuous videos and breathtaking performances on Blåvandshuk Beach.

The exhibition is for everyone and all ages. During the exhibition period, families, school pupils, tourists and locals will take part in workshops, performances, walks and dinners, where the subject of sand will be explored anew.

An ambitious venture

"Wadden Tide is an ambitious investment in cultural tourism, and it is one of the central elements in Varde Municipality's art strategy. We are happy to see that Wadden Tide is an event that attracts a national and international audience because it is an exhibition that presents innovative art and puts the biggest questions of the time on the agenda in a local context," says Sandie Eis Ravn (A), who is chairman of the Committee for Culture and Leisure in Varde Municipality.

In 2023, Wadden Tide will be curated by Empathic Environments, which consists of art historian Stenka Hellfach and architect Tyra Dokkedahl. The curatorial team is also behind the municipality's art strategy and has developed the exhibition *First there is a mountain* together with Varde Municipality's cultural consultant, Varde Municipality's Art Committee and partners.

An exhibition about sand

"Our wish is to create a very special exhibition here at the westernmost point in Denmark. Sand is essential for the creation of Blåvand and the experience of the place. On Blåvandshuk Beach, sand appears as an inexhaustible resource, even though it is a volatile material that we humans only immediately understand," says Stenka Hellfach.

The ambition is that *First there is a mountain* gives visitors new experiences of the mudflats through art. Blåvandshuk, which borders the world heritage landscape to the north, was created by sea currents and sand from the islands of Langli, Fanø and Rømø to the south.



**Varde
Kommune**

The exhibition's title is inspired by the Buddhist text *First there is a mountain, then there is no mountain, then there is* (Qingyuan Weixin, 9th century). The expression points to how we humans perceive and understand our habitat and the world around us. Sand in particular is characteristic of the experience of Blåvandshuk Beach and the West Coast, but also a volatile material that connects places over time.

In late summer 2022, nine artists with very different practices were invited to develop works that relate to sand as material, history and resource. In addition to the nine artists, four artists exhibit in Blåvand city.

In August, young and old, Danish and foreign guests, local school students and citizens can experience eight sculptures and installations on the beach, a video work in Blåvandshuk Lighthouse and take part in a performance at the Høfde4 restaurant with sand on the menu.

The program

The art exhibition in 2023 goes across artistic genres. It is not only art installations on the beach that can be experienced. There is also an ambitious program with, among other things, performance art, food art, walks, talks, workshops, meditative evening presentations that can be experienced by all visitors. The program is regularly published on the website waddentide.dk.

FACTS: *First There is A Mountain*

[Web](http://waddentide.dk) waddentide.dk
[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/waddentideofficial) @waddentideofficial
[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WaddenTide) @WaddenTide

Photos

Photos of curators and artists can be used with proper crediting of the artist and photographer.

Photos and credits can be downloaded at waddentide.dk/press

Hashtags

#firstthereisamountain
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#waddentide
#waddentide2023
#empathicenvironments
#blåvand
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**Contact person**

Kulturkonsulent Anna Ankerstjerne

Email aann@varde.dk

Phone 20 35 82 58

Empathic Environments

[Web](http://www.empathicenvironments.org/) www.empathicenvironments.org/

[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/empathicenvironments) @empathicenvironments

ORGANIZATION**Who is behind Wadden Tide?**

Varde Municipality is the host and owner of the recurring exhibition Wadden Tide. Collaborating partners include the Varde Museums, Wadden Sea National Park, Destination North Sea and Blåvand-Ho Business and Blåvand-Ho Citizens' Association.

What is First There Is a Mountain?

In 2023, the exhibition will focus on sand under the title *First There Is a Mountain*. Empathic Environments by Stenka Hellfach and Tyra Dokkedahl curates *First There Is a Mountain*, which presents nine Danish artists with eight works on Blåvandshuk Beach and a performative dinner at the gourmet restaurant Høfde4. The participating artists are Hanne Nielsen & Birgit Johnsen, Kåre Frang, Kasper Hesselbjerg, Kirstine Roepstorff, Molly Haslund, Rasmus Myrup, Rikke Luther, Spacegirls and Tue Greenfort.

How is Wadden Tide financed?

Wadden Tide is financed by The Jutland Art Fund, Augustinus Foundation, Wadden Sea National Park, Statens Artfond, Region Southern Denmark, 15 Juni Fondnen, Kulturregion Midt- og West Jutland, Varde City Council's Art Committee, Blåvand activity center and Varde Municipality. Varde Municipality has achieved fundraising for around DKK 2 million.

BACKGROUND



An exhibition about sand

In three themes, the exhibition *First There's A Mountain* examines the significance of sand locally for the culture and nature of the Wadden Sea, historically and in the future, and globally as a dwindling natural resource.

A historical marker.

Blåvandshuk, which is the northernmost part of the Wadden Sea, arose 2000-3500 years ago, when the islands of Langli, Fanø and Rømø disappear. Since then, people have lived by the coast and arranged themselves according to the whims of the tides and the wind. Plantations are planted to keep the sand away from the agricultural land, while the sandy bottom a few kilometers away is protected.

A sensual material.

Most have played with sand. It can be white, grey, brown and black, but up close it contains all colours. The Danish beach sand contains 95% quartz, which was brought here with the Ice Age. Sand is constantly moving, yet it never disappears and becomes a habitat - above water for seaweed fleas and insects, in the mudflats for sand worms, crabs, mussels and fish.

An invaluable resource.

Some sand is mined for building materials, while others are used in sand claims locally and globally. And while the precious sand is dwindling, it is spreading in drought-stricken areas. As an ingredient in concrete, coastal protection and natural power, sand is quickly swirling into political agendas, locally and globally.

About Wadden Tide

Wadden Tide was held in 2014, 2016 and 2019 as part of the Wadden Sea Cultural Region. In 2019, tourists from Denmark and Europe came specifically to experience the exhibition, which had 90-110,000 visitors.

In 2021, Varde Municipality took over Wadden Tide as part of the municipality's investment in cultural tourism. Wadden Tide is to become a recurring art event every 3 years.

The goal is for Wadden Tide to become known locally, nationally and internationally as a free open-air exhibition with innovative art that puts the biggest questions of the time on the agenda in a local context.

