Kristyna and Marek Milde are interdisciplinary artists working together as a collaborative tandem, based in Brooklyn, originally from Prague, Czech Republic. Their work explores cultural mechanism, conventions, and codes of the modern lifestyle while investigating its connection to the context of environment and nature. Mildes projects have a variety of forms that include interactive installations, site-interventions, and socially engaged actions.

Mildes exhibited and presented their work nationally and internationally including at MoMA Studio, Queens Museum, NURTURE art, EFA Project Space; Wave Hill Sunroom Project Space, Smack Mellon Gallery, Anna Wallace Gallery, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA), Temple Contemporary, Space Gallery Pittsburg, Dumbo Street Festival, Knockdown Center, Abrons Art Center, Silent Barn, DOX Center for Contemporary Art in Prague; Futura Center for Contemporary Art; Meet Factory; Karlin Studios, Galerie Califia. They gave presentations and participated in panel discussions in venues such as Tranzitdisplay, Pratt Institute, Bohemian National Hall and Mildred's Lane.

Their work has been featured and reviewed in the New York Times, Brooklyn Rail, Flashart, Hyperallergic, Artribune, NYFA current, WG News, ArtClue, Artycok TV, and Czech National Television among others. Their work is part of private and public collections including the permanent public installation at Chateau Trebesice, Czech Republic and Manitoga, Russell Wright Design Center, Garrison, NY. They are recipients of the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) Residency in 2017, Studio in the Park at the Queens Museum in 2016, LMCC Process Space Residency 2016 at Governors Island, A-Z West Residency in California in 2015, and Shift EFA Residency 2014 – 2015. From 2008 till 2015 they both worked at the Czech Center NY, the Czech cultural institute on the Upper East Side, where they curated and organized a wide range of international programs, events, exhibitions, and residencies. They received their MFAs from the Queens College, New York in 2007.
Our art practice is a continuous dialogue with people, places, and ourselves, in which we engage issues of contemporary culture, in variety of narratives and forms of the modern lifestyle. We investigate themes such as alienation of culture and nature, loss of context and states of passivity in consumerism, looking for ways, how art can address fragmentation and virtualization of life. We explore themes of identity developed through interaction with sites and places, and engage complexity of common situations, everyday rituals, and traditions, studying the integral role they play in binding together the social, natural and cultural order.

Our projects often start with questioning nature of seemingly obvious things such as food, shelter, home etc. for example: If we are what we eat, who are we if don’t know the process and origin of our food? - If a house is not a home, can the feeling of home be created through personal objects, we own and collect? While responding to the initial questions and triggers in our personal life, our projects engage concepts of architecture, design and home, revisiting methods and domestic practices that include furnishing, decorating, cleaning, dining, gardening, and food to explore the role they play in the environmental estrangement.

In our art, we are interested in generating direct experience and activating sensitivity to nature, a vanishing skill, while promoting self-awareness and understanding one's position in the world. We often look at nature through the lens of domesticity using the culture of dwelling as a focal point to access the theme of the environment at large. We believe that the microcosm of the personal space is a great platform to engage ecology, as the home is the place people care about the most. On one hand, today’s home represents an environmental bubble with distorted perspective and limits of the interior point of view, on the other it can function as a solid ground a laboratory, allowing to explore and learn sustainable management and responsibility to natural resources, while developing awareness of its far-reaching context.

Our art practice is not defined by unified formal style, but we rather employ diverse and multidisciplinary forms, materials and strategies specific to the subject matter. Our projects often take the form of site-specific installations, workshops and in-situ interventions functioning as interactive environments for exploration and experience. In our process, we study and revisit cultural phenomena, conventions and established norms, and explore possibilities for transformative action – both as symbolic gestures and constructive solutions.

Many of our projects are based on a reenactment of common situations, functioning as metaphorical models, in which we often use humor and irony as a tool. We often involve everyday situations and utilize formative process driven by naturally occurring circumstances as a strategy to shape the form of the work itself. Our methodology crystallizes from the process, which includes a collection of data and materials, researching, and engagement with specific places and social interactions. Many of our projects are developed in collaboration with the audience, in series of individual and collective participatory actions structured to allow exploration and active experience of the subject matter.

Our perspective is informed by the experience of wilderness and nature at our frequent walks, hikes, and backpacking trips. These experiences represent our parallel practice providing us with resource and inspiration to engage themes of culture and perception of limits of the interior based lifestyle. While we challenge the established comfort zones, confronting myths and cultural fantasies about the world and ourselves, we seek to recognize identity in the infinite extent of our relations. In our art practice, we are interested in seeding new memes, to bring awareness of context, fostering integrity of the self in the culture, environment, and nature.
“Home in a Home” is an ongoing research project since 2012, based on a questionnaire, where Mildes ask participants to list their nonfunctional collections and favorite objects they own, which represents for them the personal layer of a home. This project started as part of Mildes workshop Thoughts on the Living Room at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2012. Over the last 4 years several hundreds participants from around the world responded to the project’s survey, sharing the narratives of personal objects they own and collect. In 2016 the artists transformed these statements at Hudson Valley Contemporary Art Center (HVCCA) into a room of stories in which the words became patterns of the wallpaper, revealing the intangible layers of the fabric of a Home inside the physical space we live in.
Home in a Home, 2016, detail of a wallpaper pattern, digital print on vinyl, dimensions variable
Home in a Home, 2016, installation view at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art (HVCCA), wallpaper – digital print on vinyl, molding, furniture, project’s survey, 12’ x 10’ x 9’

Home in a Home explores the identity and significance of collectible objects important in transforming the anonymity of the white, blank boxes of architecture into a personal space identified as home. It takes the form of a furnished living room functioning as a lounge and laboratory for exploring the concepts of domesticity. The walls of the installation are covered with organic diamond-patterned wallpaper, designed by the artists, created entirely with text of stories people shared with Mildes through survey since 2012. The stories describe objects and things of symbolic value they collect and bring into their homes to personalize the space. The visitors can use the installation as a lounge to contemplate what constitutes their personal space, while further actively contribute to the project’s research by completing a questionnaire about the unique non-functional objects in their homes.
Home in a Home, 2016, installation detail, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, wallpaper – digital print on vinyl, molding, furniture, project’s survey, 12’ x 10’ x 9’
Home in a Home, 2017, installation view, digital print on vinyl, drywall, metal studs
Home in a Home, 2017, detail, digital print on vinyl, drywall, metal studs
Home in a Home, 2017, installation view, digital print on vinyl, drywall, metal studs, dimensions variable
Home in a Home, 2012 – 2017, drawings from the questioner conducted by Milde about things people own and collect
Home in a Home, 2017, work in progress, hand embroider tablecloth with drawings of the favorite objects from the questionnaires, table, 8’ x 6’ x 4’
Home in a Home, work in progress (2017), detail, hand embroidered tablecloth depicting drawings of people’s favorite objects from the questionnaires, 60”x 82”
Looking for a Home, 2011, site specific installation; Queens College Art Center, NYC, Exhibition Express Local
found household objects, furniture, palm plant, 7 wooden panels, map of NYC, photos, records of the finds, twine, pins; 12’x 15’x 7’; Work-in-progress installation functioning as a lounge environment designed by Mildes using discarded furniture, which they found in the garbage on the streets of New York. Over a period of one month, the artists gradually developed a fully functional living environment, serving the visitors of the Queens College Library as a place to gather, rest and study. The project addresses the issue of a fast-paced cycle of consumerism and the impermanence and the interchangeability of things, where actual ownership often represents a short-lived affair before rejection. It focuses on the story of the object its live and use, while it contrasts to the constructed narratives of advertisement, it brings out its real story connecting it to specific people and their environments.
Looking for a Home, 2011, Queens College Art Center, installation views – visitors using the space as a lounge, comment from the “Guest Book”
Looking for a Home – Map of the Finds, 2011  
Queens College Art Center, NYC  
Wooden panel, map of Manhattan, photos of the found objects, red pins, colored twines,  
4’x7’x 1’

The locations of the finds are documented on the map displayed in the installation on one of the wooden panels. Photograph of each of the objects is placed around the map of Manhattan and is connected by colored cotton twine to its finding place.
Looking for a Home - Catalog, 2011
Queens College Art Center, NY
Front page of the “Home” magazine, digital print on paper; 10”x 8”

The catalog “Home” printed as part of the project, provides information about the individual found objects and their stories, utilizing the aesthetics of advertisement common in the home furnishing and decorating industry.
Homescape, installation view from the exhibition “Hills and Valleys of the Sofa Wilderness” at Sunroom Project Space Residency, Wave Hill, Bronx, 2014, 4’x3’x4’; 4’x3’x9’, aluminum frame, insulation material, wheels, soil, moss, grass, ferns, stones. The interactive installation Homescape is a lounge environment, investigating connection of domestic comforts to the context of landscape and nature. Homescape is a transplant of the forest intended to be used as furniture alternating between indoors and outdoors.
Now on long term loan at the Russell Wright Design Center in Garrison, NY.
Homescape, Manitoga, Russell Wright Design Center, Garrison NY, on loan since 2014, 4’x 3’x 4’; 4’x 3’x 9’, aluminum frame, isolation material, wheels, soil, moss, grass, ferns, stones.

Homescape is a lounge environment created with moss and ferns transplanted from the woods at Manitoga, NY.
**Homescape**, installation detail, Manitoga, Russell Wright Design Center, Garrison NY, on loan since 2014

4’x3’x4”; 4’x3’x9’, aluminum frame, isolation material, wheels, soil, moss, grass, ferns, stones
Sitings, 2016, work in progress, documentation of domestication of the public space in Lower Manhattan
Sittings, 2016, work in progress, documentation of domestication of the public space in Lower Manhattan
Based on the research and documentation of domestication of public space Mildes sculpted models in clay, which will further serve for the production of sculptural objects representing architectural fragments such as street corners and stairs made to the original scale functioning as furniture. (The figures serve as a scale reference and will not be part of the final piece.) Made from building materials such as the stone or concrete Stings will function both as a site-responsive sculpture and public lounge, amplifying the simple gesture of creating personal space, which Mildes interpret as a creative act, a powerful performative, transforming the alienated and highly defined urban environment.
À La Cart - Restaurant, wooden table, 4 plates, 4 glasses, 4 menus, two benches, black board, gardening tools, photo documentation from the process of growing food outside in the shopping carts, dimensions variable.

View from the installation at the exhibition FOODshed: Art and Agriculture in Action at the Smack Mellon Gallery, curated by Amy Lipton, DUMBO, Brooklyn, June – July 2014

Farm to Table restaurant “serving dishes” grown outside in the shopping carts gardens by the participants, its menu instead of prices lists number of days needed till the food can be harvested.
À la cart, installation at the Old Fulton Plaza in DUMBO, Brooklyn, May – October 2014, 6 shopping carts, soil, vegetable plants, tarp, information signs, take out menus, 10’x 5’x 4’

Participatory edible workshop experiment engaging the contextualization of the food production. Artists invited local participants to grow ingredients for their favorite recipes in the shopping carts, and then prepare the dish out of the ingredients they are able to harvest. As part of the Dumbo Street Festival 2014 and the exhibition FOODshed: Art and Agriculture in Action at the Smack Mellon Gallery, curated by Amy Lipton, where the project continued in a form of a farm to table restaurant.
À la cart, site specific installation at Old Fulton Plaza in DUMBO, Brooklyn, NYC May – October 2014, 6 shopping carts, soil, vegetable plants, tarp, Information signs, take out menus on paper.

Participatory edible workshop experiment engaging the contextualization of the food production. Artists invited local participants to try to grow ingredients for their favorite recipes in the shopping carts, and then prepare the dish out of the ingredients they are able to harvest.

As part of the Dumbo Street festival 2014 and group exhibition FOODshed: Art and Agriculture in Action at the Smack Mellon Gallery, curated by Amy Lipton, where the project continued in a form of a farm to table restaurant.
Gone Wild, documentation of the wild plants and weeds foraging in the postindustrial site along the Flushing River in Queens, August – October 2016
Gone Wild: Wild Flower Boutique, Flushing River/ Dyberry Creek, 2016, Studio in the Park at the Queens Museum, NYC; Wild Flower Boutique is an installation in a form of a street flower stand, which hosted public workshop on wild flower bouquet making; assortment of foraged wild flowers, vases and metal buckets, wooden display, table, florist supply
Wild Flower Boutique: Flushing River/ Dyberry Creek, 2016, Studio in the Park at the Queens Museum

Documentation of a public event, assortment of wild flowers, vases and metal buckets, wooden display, dimensions variable

Participatory event and workshop on wild flowers and bouquet making open to the public at the Chance Ecologies Studio in the Park located at the Queens Museum. The installation had a form of a street florist stand, similar to the common flower displays that can be found on the sidewalks or subway stations in the New York City. However, the bouquets in vases and buckets were exclusively filled with wild flowers foraged by the artists. The participants were invited to utilize them to create their own wild flower bouquets and arrangements. In return the participants were asked to share an image of the bouquets once used for decorative display at home or given away as gift.
Gone Wild: Wildflower Boutique - Flushing River/ Dyberry Creek, 2016, Studio in the Park at the Queens Museum

Documentation from the workshop; participants proudly holding their finished flower bouquets.
Gone Wild: Wild Flower Boutique, 2016, Queens Museum

Photos of the bouquets made by the participants during the workshop as utilized in their festivities and home decorations. Photo credit: workshop participants
In the series of actions and intervention Mildes give individuals and communities wild flower bouquets to adopt them in festivities and rituals such as weddings, birthdays etc.
Gone Wild, 2016, installation view from the exhibition Chance Ecologies: Queens at the Queens Museum of Art, NYC; weekly foraged local wild flowers, vase, table, molding, framed photographs documenting actions and interventions, in which the artists offered wild flower bouquets to individuals for their celebrations and rituals; photo album documenting residency research and the public workshop “Gone Wild: Wild Flower Boutique, Flushing River/ Dyberry Creek”, 2016, 8’ x 8’ x 3’
Plantarium – Garden for Weeds, Bees and Teas, a developing site-specific project at Mildred’s Lane, 2017
wild flower meadow designed with transplanted uncultivated local plants and weeds
Plantarium – Garden for Weeds, Bees and Teas, drawing on paper, a developing site-specific project at Mildred’s Lane, 2017

wild flower meadow designed with transplanted uncultivated local plants and weeds
Plantarium – Garden for Weeds, Bees and Teas, Mildred’s Lane, a developing site-specific project, 2017 - wildflower meadow designed with 14 different transplanted uncultivated local plants and weeds
Plantarium – Garden for Weeds, Bees and Teas, details, a developing site-specific project at Mildred’s Lane, 2017
wild flower meadow designed with transplanted uncultivated local plants and weeds
Plantarium – Garden for Weeds, Bees and Teas, a developing site-specific project at Mildred’s Lane, 2017
wild flower meadow designed with transplanted uncultivated local plants and weeds
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