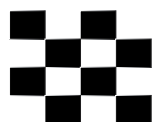
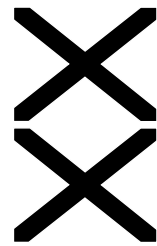
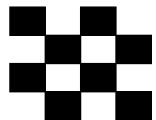
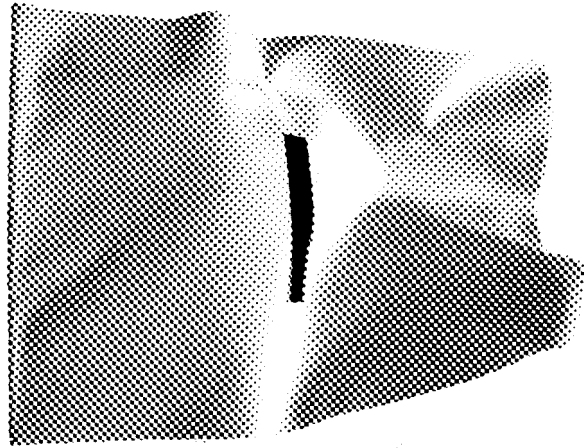


12 MAY 2009

# Art as Protagonist?



COMMON

LANDS

12 MARCH 2010

## Contents

### **INTRODUCTION 3**

Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere

### **REPORT ON A MEETING 7**

Michael Baers

### **ART AND PUBLIC SPACE IN BJØRVIKA 21**

Anne Beate Hovind

### **WHEN CULTURE FINDS ITS HARBOUR – DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS TO THE CITY 24**

Heidi Bergsli

COMMON

### **THE ARTIST AS DECORATOR 34**

Marcus Degerman

LANDS

### **Biographies 36**

# INTRODUCTION

Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere

“The raison d’être of any art project in public space is to create a contrast, unfold a conflict and even add more conflict to make it visible.”

– Fulya Erdemci, director of SKOR – Foundation for Art and Public Space, the Netherlands in metropolism.com

When we were creating the proposal for a temporary art project in Bjørvika, it was natural to ask ourselves what role we, the artists and the works of art would have in the development of this part of the city. What were the desires of the commissioners when they included a programme for art and to what degree could we create an independent space to manoeuvre within such a commission? How would we relate to the risk of being instrumentalised within such a large economic and political machinery? Can art move beyond the role of witnessing to become part of or influence the political and economic forces that shape a city or a community? Can art aim to become a constructive force that does more than comment on or intervene in existing scenarios?

In relation to the work with *Common Lands* we have taken a closer look at the art projects and institutions that had already figured in the context of Bjørvika, which have been important elements in the increasing motivation to develop the role of art in the area. Oslo Kunsthall moved from Hegdehaugsveien in uptown Oslo into warehouse 55 in Bjørvika, where they, over four months in 2002, initiated exhibitions and held events that reflected their role as art- and cultural practitioners. As part of *Where Am I Now 2*, the Museum of Contemporary Art facilitated projects that were created specifically for the empty warehouses in Bjørvika (later demolished to make way for the new opera building). One could perhaps say that the interest and intention behind the earlier artistic presence in the area came from the art- and cultural producers themselves. The difference now, seven years later, is that art has been incorporated and actively invited in by the developers and others with interests in the area.

To kick-start the discussion of the issues set out above, we invited selected artists and project managers to participate in the workshop *Art As Protagonist?* held in the summer of 2008 at the artist-run space Sparwasser HQ in Berlin. The participants included Tone Hansen (artist and curator at the Henie Onstad Art Centre), Anne Beate Hovind (project leader at Bjørvika Utvikling AS), Michael Baers (artist), Markus Degerman (artist), Lise Nellemann (director of Sparwasser HQ) and artists behind the project Skulpturenpark Berlin\_Zentrum: Matthias Einhoff, Philip Horst and Harry Sachs.

This publication consists partly of texts that developed specifically from the workshop and partly a product of later discussions between the various participants and us. In addition, the social geographer Heidi Bergsli has contributed an essay that discusses the use of art in waterfront development projects.

## ACTIVE AGENTS

In addition to the question of the role of art, it has been natural for us to investigate Bjørvika as a context. Unsurprisingly, we found a site in the process of development, which was created by many layers and structures where different, powerful interests were at play: from politics and finance to culture, urban history and architecture. It became impossible to look at art interventions in Bjørvika without considering the wider political and social perspective.

The artist Michael Baers was commissioned to be an eyewitness and to write a report from the workshop for this anthology. In his report, Baers critiques a number of the assertions that were articulated in the group discussions and puts them in a wider, political context. He looks at how *New Public Management* also affects the thinking around the development of Bjørvika and how ownership is structured among the different companies with

## Art as Protagonist?

a stake there. Baers queries the potential for different approaches that art projects may have within this specific framework and to what extent art projects can aim to change or highlight urban- and property development processes through an activist approach.

Within the exhibition project *Common Lands* it has been important for us to query the extent to which artistic activities and critical approaches merely become an expression of an ornamental openness and self-reflexivity on the part of the developers. An important issue has, in other words, been the scope artists have to work critically. The art theorist Chantal Mouffe describes four potential approaches:

“... [W]e can distinguish four distinct ways of making critical art. There is the kind of work that more or less directly engages critically with political reality (...). Then there are artworks exploring subject positions or identities defined by otherness, marginality, oppression by victimization. (...) Thirdly, there is the type of critical art, which investigates its own political condition of production and circulation (...). We can also distinguish art as utopian experimentation, attempts to imagine alternative ways of living.”

– Chantal Mouffe, “Art as Agnostic Intervention in Public Space”, *Open*, 2008

Bjørsvika Utvikling AS (BU) commissioned us and has a comprehensive programme for art. It has been important for us to investigate the expectations that the developers had towards the art projects in the area, and what had already been completed during the planning process in relation to the cultural programme. Had they sought advice from experts in the professional art world? In which case, how had this expertise been integrated into the planning and thinking around the cultural programme?

In her text “Art and Public Space in Bjørsvika” Anne Beate Hovind gives an account of BU’s programme for art and how it will take shape. She is project leader for the art programme and has held a number of positions working with art and culture in the area since 2001. BU builds the infrastructure in the area and focuses on the public spaces and the waterfront promenade, which will be accessible to the public.

BU has a programme for both permanent and temporary art projects in the public realm. *Common Lands* is a pilot project taking place prior to the permanent and temporary programmes being implemented so it is a project that will take place during the building process and the development of the area. There is currently not much in place in Bjørsvika, but the development is going ahead at high speed and new provisions are being implemented on a continuous basis. How can we, as cultural producers, negotiate this situation and what possibilities lie here? The role of artists and the potential within the different markets artists operate in is something Markus Degerman discusses in his text “The Artist as Decorator”. What opportunities are there for working critically in a pre-defined situation and what are the possibilities for creating an autonomous space for art within such a framework?

### THE PUBLIC

Since our commissioner BU is building the infrastructure in the area, the projected public spaces in Bjørsvika became a natural starting point for our thinking.

In a political scenario where social groups appear fragmented and alienated in relation to the idea of the collective interest, we believe that it is not possible or desirable to seek unambiguous answers to who makes up, or should make up, the public interest in a given public space. Nevertheless, to encircle the issue of the public it is helpful to investigate what sort of public we are talking about in relation to the planning of Bjørsvika. Who participates in this public arena and how is its nature made visible in the regulation of the area? In the planned regulations consumer and recreational needs, in addition to diversity, are promoted as common interests to be focused on for the public spaces. Is diversity an aim in itself or just a tool for making the area more attractive in terms of consumption? What devices are being employed to facilitate diversity? Has a defined area or a symbolic space been demarcated so that different groups can create their own spaces or have their respective identities merely been borrowed for an already over-designed and symbolically laden urban setting?

## Art as Protagonist?

In her essay, *When culture finds its harbour - discussion of social rights to the city*, Heidi Bergsli discusses how culture has become the “wow factor” for urban policymakers and problematizes the political staging of cultural practitioners. Bergsli employs an international perspective, where she examines several examples of waterfront developments and the extent to which these have allowed for public access. Access is often an expressed aim of developments that, nevertheless, “ignore the symbolism inherent in the built environment” as she writes in her text. She points out how there are not merely physical, but also symbolic boundaries that need to be considered in relation to openness and access to the waterfront.

The formulated objectives for Bjørvika are based on fulfilling specific common interests. When examining these objectives, we need to see how they are to be met, which political tools exist to manifest the vision of the real future of Bjørvika. Formulated as a more general hypothesis: what political devices exist within urban development and how does urban development operate as a political device in itself?

The planning of Bjørvika has reflected a clear cultural focus through the relocation of cultural institutions from the old city to the new site. “The Cultural Axis” is a concept that is already well integrated into the language employed in the development of Oslo, where Richard Florida’s notion of the creative class and Michael Porter’s theory on clusters and their synergy effects are sources of inspiration. Florida emphasises creativity as an economic force that creates growth:

“Why, then, should promoting creativity everywhere be a main theme of our policies and our lives? Why not focus on promoting some attribute that seems to be more universally positive and beneficial - say, spiritual growth or, civility? Wouldn’t that, over the long run, make us better people who can more wisely direct the creative impulse that flows so naturally? My answer is that of course, we should cultivate both of those virtues. But neither of them is an economic force that increases the resources with which we may do good in the world. Creativity is.”

– Richard Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, 2002, Basic Books

In our thinking around Common Lands, it has been important to assess the extent to which art can be seen as a political and economic tool and how this has applied to both BU in its art programme and the overall planning of Bjørvika where the relocation of large cultural institutions is central.

### COMMON LANDS

In the planning of Bjørvika there has been a strong emphasis on *commons*. This is an historical term and its Norwegian equivalent *allmenning* is rarely used in the context of contemporary Oslo. The term gives rise to associations to open spaces, available to all and an egalitarian mindset evocative of historical towns and villages. Other symbols of the Middle Ages in Norway have also been noted in the redevelopment of Bjørvika: Middelalderparken with its 14<sup>th</sup> century ruins is an emphasised part of the area; the main street in Bjørvika has been given the name Dronning Eufemia gate, who was a Norwegian queen of German origin in the years 1299-1312 and who was instrumental in relocating the capital from Bergen to Oslo; and there is an emphasis on preserving the view towards Akershus fortress and the monastery ruins at Hovedøya. The more recent history of shipping and industrial activity, on the other hand, will have no direct visibility in the new Bjørvika, despite the fact that most of its foundations would not have existed in the Middle Ages, but were built into the Fjord in more recent times, as a product of industrialisation. Industry, with its working class identity, is absent, while the symbols of the Middle Ages provide roots and identity for the highly modern international centre for culture and finance. Why have these specific symbols become so important and employed in the planning of Bjørvika?

The Norwegian term *allmenning* is often translated as “commons”. The term “common lands” is closely related to “commons”, but bears closer resemblance to the Norwegian *allmannaretten* (“the rights of everyman”). The term *allmenning* is used for different purposes, which share the element of an institutionalised right to use land. In an agricultural context the term

## Art as Protagonist?

refers to the collective use of farmland, for example in the UK where it determines an area where livestock may graze. Bergen is renowned for its *allmenninger*, which today refer to larger open spaces, but were historically used to denote land, which was earmarked for public purposes or broad roads that made it possible to transport goods from the seafront to the market.

In Norway the term *allmenning* shares with *allmannaretten* the right to cross and temporarily use uncultivated land (similar to “the right to ramble” in the UK). For instance, one can pitch a tent for shorter periods on unused land. The right to coastal access is also associated with this concept, where there are grave restrictions on how close to the coastline landowners can erect buildings or limit public access to the sea. In principle, people should be able to walk along the entire coastline of Norway, including across private property. *Allmannaretten* operates in parallel with property rights, and the two oscillate between being given primacy.

### ART THAT MAKES CONFLICT VISIBLE

The quote from Fuliya Erdemci that introduces this text emphasises art as something that can make conflict visible. Art is often allocated such an antagonistic role, relating to an already existing situation, as a commentary or an intervention. In this way, art seems able to avoid instrumentalisation because it inhabits a contrary position. However, what happens when art is expected to play this role? When it is both the aim of the artist and a political and economic objective to implement this critical voice is there any room for real conflict? Or will the critical voice drown in self-reflexivity as the co-producer of a desired image that conveys creativity, innovation and challenge?

In classical Greek tragedies, which carried over into modern literary- and film theory, the leading character was called the protagonist. The antagonist is pitted against this protagonist as a representative of difficulties that the lead character must overcome so that he or she can undergo some kind of development or reach a goal. The protagonist is the main fighter while the antagonist creates resistance. When we pose the question of whether art can be a protagonist, we do not mean that it should forsake its attempts to resist; we wish to underline the potential for art to avoid playing an instrumentalised role – as internalised critique – and instead create its own agenda.

Will art or the artist dare to make their “hands dirty” in a context where it assumes responsibility and does not see its own role as purely subversive in a binary setting? Will art dare to become a protagonist? A timely interjection is of course whether it is possible for art to be a protagonist where it comes up against bulldozing economic and political interests. Among the powerful forces at play in such a comprehensive urban development project, art may seem to have little impact. Bjørvika is a new part of the city where everything is to be demolished and built from scratch, so as to seemingly create a completely new identity. The parts of history selected for this new journey are heavily edited. Can art assume a co-producing role in the creation of a new identity here?

Through this publication, we would like to highlight severe issues associated with art and the use of art in urban development processes. Bjørvika is a development in Oslo, but it is not a Norwegian phenomenon, rather it forms part of a long line of international waterfront developments, which appear to be founded on similar logic and preconditions. Local character is added in the form of a superstructure with weak ties to historical elements, which are difficult to relate to - on a personal, economic and political level. In this regard, we hope that the publication will be relevant beyond the specific context of Bjørvika and can be tied in with other similar situations and places.

*“Society often takes the artist for a shaman, demiurge, or painted bird – a bit of a mad-man, someone consumed by an incurable ailment. Obviously, this is just a fabricated phantasm that protects society from real encounters with art, at the same time it protects the artist from any real responsibility for his or her actions.”*

– Artur Zmijewski in conversation Sebastian Cichocki, *Artforum*, April 2009

# REPORT ON A MEETING

Michael Baers



"Who has emotional ownership to that area and what will be developed there? Who has the power over these decisions? What can you imagine is going to be there?"

COMMON

In July, I attended a workshop at Sparwasser HQ in Berlin concerning a pilot art project in Bjørvika, a harbor-front development underway in central Oslo, to be curated by Karolin Tampere and Åse Løvgren. Besides the curators, a representative of "the owners" was there – Project Manager Anne Beate Hovind, as was Tone Hansen, who I know through her essay in *European Cultural Policies 2015*. Members of Skulpturenpark, a public art initiative in Berlin, were also in attendance, along with the Swedish artist Markus Degerman, Director of Sparwasser Lise Nellemann, and myself, attending as chronicler of what would ensue.\*

The curators had formulated four questions they wished to address to the gathering:

1. How is the understanding of quality developed and implemented in urban developments?
2. In what ways can art be part of and influence the political and economic processes that form a city or a society?
3. Can art be the protagonist in this kind of development, a constructive agent that works beyond commenting or intervening in already existing structures?
4. How can art engage critically with a local audience/public, and can art offer resistance from such a position?

Such questions pose a substantial challenge given that, at first glance, a structure as monolithic and cued to macroeconomic cycles and hard financial realities as a large-scale urban development appears resistant to artistic intervention – let alone humanization. After all, one is being asked to intervene, not only in a physical site with clear parameters, but also in an administrative apparatus, accreted over many years.\*\*

\* I want to make it clear from the outset that I have written this report taking into account my own views on the matters discussed, and thus this report is not intended to be impartial, well-balanced or fair.

\*\*The problem one faces in first encountering something as complex and unwieldy as a large-scale urban development is that to grasp even its most basic organizational and operational components takes a great deal of time. With such enterprises, the devil, as they say, is in the detail. An account restricted to those

salient details time allowed for during the workshop proper would probably make for unsatisfying reading, especially for Oslo residents, who are no doubt far more knowledgeable than myself regarding the political and economic transformations, of which Bjørvika is one outcome. Thus, some of the things I will discuss in this report were broached during the workshop, other details I learned later. To distinguish between these two orders of fact, I have resorted to that trope of post-modern literature, the footnote.

LANDS



*"This was a big industry area. And then it quieted down extremely. Nothing really happened for a long time, just some industrial things...and then it started to change... This whole place will change...into what? That's a good question."*

Anne Beate Hovind was the first to present. Before her present position, she had founded a theatre/bed and breakfast on a boat anchored in the area, and thus has had a privileged view of the transformation the area has undergone. Bjørvika, she tells us, is part of an overall transformation of Oslo's waterfront. The narrative she recounts is familiar to me from other port cities, detailing a 75-year cycle common throughout the developed world in which the older industrial economy, having experienced a series of abrupt expansions and contractions, reached a point where it entered a slow, near terminal, decline (both as a point of identification among the working class and as a motive force within society), finally to be supplanted by newer, more speculative ways of generating capital - real estate development, for instance.\*

In its redevelopment as an upscale residential neighborhood, Bjørvika is one more instance of the general trend in the developed West of a transformation from industrial to "life style" usage, furthering Oslo's brand as the "Fjord City" – a name designating the entire breadth of the coastal development, of which Bjørvika is the figurative jewel in the crown. With the recently completed Opera building as a focal point, Oslo seems well positioned to capitalize on the "Bilbao Effect", a situation augmented by the agreement negotiated over the summer to relocate several big Norwegian cultural institutions to adjacent sites. All the pieces are in place to produce a vibrant and commercially successful neighborhood, with ample public space and sensitive urban design, privileging what Gehl Architects, the Danish firm who won a competition to produce guidelines for the public spaces, describes as the "the good-life effect".\*\*

\* That the exigencies of the market will impose a certain type of development is one feature of the project, which several participants have misgivings about. Tone Hansen later confessed to me during a Skype conversation she fears Bjørvika will end up like Aker Brygge - a neighborhood Hansen described as "glorified condominiums and a shopping mall." She compared this paradigm unfavorably to a development she lived in for a while, Enerhaugen, a 1960s era housing estate designed around the principle of equality of aesthetic experience (every apartment has a view of the ocean). The values of a society are clearly indicated by the way spatial functions are privileged and organized or, as geographer David Harvey writes, "Spatial form is a container of social processes and an expression of moral order."

\*\* The collapse of the global financial system, which, as I write this, has entered an extremely volatile period, is, of course, the result of protracted attempts by different states to dismantle their regulatory frameworks, and has introduced a gaping aporia into the question of how the further development of globalization will proceed. The effects of the crisis can no longer be gauged with any certainty, even in a rich nation like Norway (has anyone noticed the drastic fall in the price of oil?), and one can imagine Bjørvika's future being impacted, since new limitations on the availability of capital could effect the financial health of the big developers necessary for its realization. As David Harvey puts it, "The more free-market utopianism converges on the inequalities and unfreedoms of actually existing capitalism, the harder it becomes to change or even maintain its own trajectory."



## Art as Protagonist?

Who will be disenfranchised by the ensuing development? It is noted in passing that junkies will be deprived of their customary haunts. Presently they constitute the site's principal habitués.

Understanding the intricacies of new public management, even if one is familiar with its effects, is not so simple. In the case of Bjørvika, the network of relationships comprising its developmental apparatus could be described something like this: the owner of the harbor – the port authority – is in reality the state. However, it's a particularly powerful and relatively autonomous entity for a state authority (to quote Hovind: "Having worked in shipping, I can state with some authority that harbor people are small kings all over the world"). The port authority itself is not selling the land. This is being done by a separate company – Hav Eiendom AS – organized and owned by the port authority and with port authority administrators on its board. A second company – Bjørvika Utvikling\* – is responsible for the overall coordination of the project. Anne Beate works for Bjørvika Utvikling, which will be funding the art project.\*\* Hav Eiendom AS is selling the land to multiple developers, who will develop their individual projects in accordance with the master plan. The state, meanwhile, will underwrite the construction of the public space and the new tunnel. Now that a cultural hub will also be sited in the area, the different tendrils of the public-private partnership are proliferating in an ever-more complex web.

To take one aspect of this public/private nexus as an example: a large surface road separates the Bjørvika area from the center of Oslo. Part of the proceeds from selling the land will fund a tunnel beneath the Fjord to replace this traffic artery. Responsibility for its construction rests with the state. Here is a typical instance of the logic of new public management: the state sells the land for development to pay for the tunnel to replace the road, which, in turn, is made necessary by the development. This level of conceptual/administrative complexity is further magnified by multiple shifts of ownership and responsibility, from one party to another, over time, and for many different reasons.\*\*\* But this aside, it is not so much the manner of Bjørvika's development, which is unfamiliar to me, as the way different functions have been separated and compartmentalized within the development's administrative apparatus. The state is continually oscillating between entrepreneurial and custodial functions assigned to a proliferating group of autonomous companies that has split off, protozoa-like, from the port authority. These interact, in turn, with other public-private hybrids, along with the totally private companies at work in the area.

COMMON

LANDS

\* Owned by Hav Eiendom AS (66%) and Oslo S Utvikling AS (34%).

\*\* I received this email recently from Åse Løvgren in response to an early draft of this report: "Regarding the structuring of the different companies. I think it's quite important to note that it is not only the former port authority that owns Bjørvika Utvikling: they own 66% and Oslo S Utvikling owns the rest. Also, regarding where you write, "The state will underwrite the tunnel and the public spaces." The public spaces will be built by Bjørvika Infrastruktur, which is 100% owned by Bjørvika Utvikling. The tunnel, I think, will be built by Mesta, which is owned by the state. Anyway it is a labyrinth.

\*\*\* During the workshop, while we discussed Bjørvika's administrative organization I was thinking of the different models of public-private partnership with which I am familiar, at least so far as real estate development is concerned. In the US, the model most familiar to me involves the private sector wringing the maximum number of dispensations in the form of subsidies and tax reductions from a state or municipality. This often pits municipality against municipality in a zero-sum contest over who can offer the most generous inducements, hoping, as they do, that sacrificing revenue in the short-term will be compensated for over time by increased sales, income, and payroll taxes. In California, this has led to an era of "Big Box Development", mega-retail

outlets that municipalities are eager to subsidize and, with them, the irredeemable suburban developments sprouting like mushrooms in Southern California's remaining open spaces.

In the UK, the way National Health Service (NHS) trusts now operate (I had recently heard a story about this on the BBC World Service) has shifted from an emphasis on general practitioner-run clinics to – as you might have guessed – large medical complexes built by private contractors where all non-medical activities from janitorial services to food preparation to the gift shop are concessions contracted out to private companies. This has led, so the program I heard alleged, to hospitals with entire floors left empty because the state no longer has the budget to staff them with doctors and nurses, having exhausted its operating budget on construction and rents.



*"You can feel it already that they are having more and more a longterm perspective on what they're doing. That's why now they have agreed on an art strategy they never would have agreed to before."*

COMMON

A further level of conceptual complexity involves the ideological subject-position of the owners. Presumably they act on behalf of the public trust, but what this means in the context of new public management is less easily identified. "The Harbor Authority has politicians on its board, but Hav Eiendom AS's mandate directs them to act like businessmen," Anne Beate tells us. Coming from the US, it is almost impossible for me to imagine these owners not profiting from their positions or that the bidding process will be conducted in less than transparent conditions. This may well be a cultural bias. In any case, the above is mainly conjecture since I have no evidence of either the altruism or avariciousness of these politicians, only suspicions based on a very different national context.

Initially, the mandate of Hav Eiendom AS was to identify plots of land, sell them off and step out of the way. But over the summer, with the agreement mentioned previously to create a new cultural hub adjacent to the Opera, the owners' perspective, according to Hovind, began to change.\* They have now become interested in developing Bjørvika as a place rather than merely as a vehicle for capital accumulation, to the extent of getting involved in developing property themselves. They might (it has not been decided) build a new Munch Museum, for instance, and, if they do so, become its landlord.

This recent development has changed the owner's attitude about such things as pilot art projects, which have gone from being a peripheral concern to being granted a prominent place as part of a cogent strategy of integrating culture into the fabric of the development.

\* In general, narrative accounts of Bjørvika's development vary widely, and it is easy to quibble over details, because they, in fact, mean a great deal. For instance, another section of the notes Åse sent reads: "Where you write: 'The owner's perspective, according to Hovind, began to change.' I think the change Anne Beate was mentioning involves a longer time-span than a summer. This process has a longer history and I think this is one of the reasons why Bjørvika Utvikling AS was founded in the first place." With this email as a caution for what follows, let me state that the narratives recounted at the workshop have been retold to me by different parties, with varying degrees of emphasis and inflection, but in general they cast Hav Eiendom AS in a slightly different light. Tone Hansen, during the Skype conversation mentioned previously, reiterated her grave reservations about what Bjørvika would become, citing

its overdetermination by market forces and the business-minded ideology that currently pervades Norway. I didn't record this conversation, but a portion of the notes I took read as follows: "Setting up a situation for profit making – all financial calculations geared towards the market – it's all about market value – parallel bureaucracies – Hav Eiendom AS: no longer public, works on behalf of the state – Norway is a company – Property is now being sold off – PriceWaterhouseCooper – ideological/aesthetic impulse to sanitize and museumify the city – shouldn't be a sterile place – total planning – machine vs. organism; Gehl – total planning – lack of soul – no messy urbanism – not providing something we actually need—a nouveau riche area – no social wrong, but a lot of institutions – urge to maximize profit – no control over building processes – all about profit – higher density.

LANDS

## Art as Protagonist?

Neo-Victorianism – an ideology of consensus – still expressed politically, but no longer visible in the public space; developers have been allowed to do what they like.”

An alternative scenario, which intuition tells me is perhaps the most accurate reflection of the social and political realities on the ground, was sketched by Oliver Schulze, who recounted part of Gehl Architects’ history in Bjørvika (who are presently part of a team of firms working on development guidelines for the private sector portion of the development), and those details of the area plan’s evolution with which he was familiar:

OS: In 2004, we won a competition together with a Danish landscape architecture firm for the public spaces. Since then, the development authorities have gone about selling it. The way they were approaching the project was that they had identified parcels of land and they were trying to bring them to market. But then I think there was publicly some kind of concern about whether there *is* a concern for what the buildings are trying to do around the Opera: the Opera was finished, and people were starting to say, ‘you must be able to see the Opera from the train station, and how are you responding to the buildings?’

MB: So that’s why people were upset that there were high-rises built here [next to the train station]?

OS: Partly that. And the high-rises...these didn’t go down too well. The ‘Barcode’ has been finished – the first phases – and people are realizing that the idea on the ground is not as complex and as rich as it promised in its design proposal. It’s actually a series of fairly clumsy office buildings, hitting the ground and not providing anything to the environment. So I think people were really concerned about the full thing being built out, and [questioning] what is otherwise being built out around the Opera? So, the development said, “Ok, we’ll stand back for a minute. We won’t sell these two pieces of land. We’ll commission a parallel commission to ask four teams of architects to look at how they propose the volumes and masses to be distributed around the Opera. And we were one of those teams together with Behnisch Architects from Stuttgart, who are a very good company...”

The local area plan at that moment was a series of big plots. We said: “you shouldn’t just build out big bulky things around a big landmark building.” We thought the Opera should be maintained in its monumentality, and it should not conflict with other big monumental masses, but something of a much finer grain. Much more verticality, much more rhythm should be built around it so the monumentality of the Opera is accentuated. To create what we call “a beautiful contrast”.

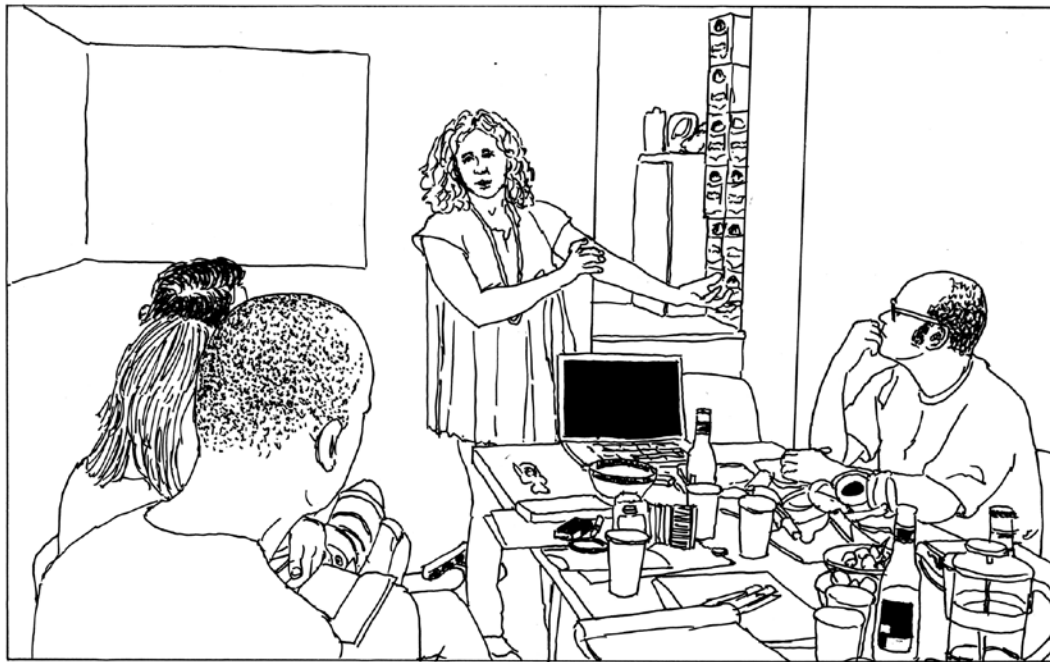
...There was an initial proposal by Richard Rogers that would create a new urban enclave, and we said: “No, we think the urban structure of Oslo should be continuing also in this part of Bjørvika.” We should be building a coherent waterfront that can be experienced by people rather than preventing public access to water, and we want to...one of the key ideas was that we wanted to make sure the hinterland – the communities that are somewhat detached from the waterfront today – have meaningful reasons to come to the waterfront.

MB: As I understand it, you were responsible for an overall design scheme for the public space, and also recommendations for how to decide the size of the individual plots.

OS: The size of them is clear, it’s just not clear how you actually build the kind of square meters that they expect. There is a huge amount of infrastructure that they have to build, a lot of landscaping and it will cost them a lot of money. To be able to afford that they have to build and sell these pieces of land at a certain return, and to do that they have to achieve a certain number of square meters, and that was what was given to us at the beginning [as a directive]: (when I talk now I really talk only about this last half year) they were asking us how can we achieve these kinds of densities, but result in some quality environment? And that’s where we were saying, “Well, you shouldn’t build big boxes like what you’ve been drawing so far. You should be breaking down building blocks into far more differentiated block structures with varying heights – to create more views, to create a better climate response, and more variety.” Because today the problem is often that big areas are often developed on a kind of industrial scale.

COMMON

LANDS



*"You had the arm's length distance [between politics and the administration of State funded institutions], now you have a longer arm, but still this arm is very flexible."*

In Norway, the effect of neo-liberal policies has had far-reaching consequences for the cultural sphere. The Bjørvika Pilot Art Project is perhaps a benign, even progressive, example of art under the new public management. But it needs to be seen within the context of Norway's overall restructuring of art and its institutions. Tone Hansen was given the task of presenting this administrative history.

"I've mentioned new public management, and I guess we've had it here as well," she began dryly. The Norwegian gloss on this consolidate-and-expand model, according to Hansen, goes as follows: in Norway the state split itself up into a lot of different systems. The assets of these various systems could be sold off at a profit, while institutions could be merged to rationalize administration for reasons of efficiency. For instance, in the space of a few years, Norway went from having 800 different museums to having 97. Public institutions were transformed into private foundations that got their money from the state, but could also solicit private donors.

By now, the strategy is not so unfamiliar, even if Marx's description of capitalism's two principle tendencies (to consolidate economic power and to expand its range), have been given a neo-liberal twist through focusing on the public sector as a source of expansion and profit. Which is what is initially to blame for my difficulty in thinking about Bjørvika in anything but pejorative terms. Since the public sector was once the place where the laws of capitalism did not hold exclusive sway or where redress could be directed against their more pernicious effects, what possibilities will exist for the agora when the agora is a Starbucks?\*

Overall, one can say the state is changing its perspective from that of a proprietor to one of a renter.

\* During the symposium's conclusion Anne Beate said the following:

"My experience is that the state-owned and run institutions are no more noble than the private: the private are more honest about what they want, but actually their aims are the same so when you discuss this you really have to get into that, too. Because my experience is that the most interesting people to discuss with are the private people and that they are the most responsible about developing an area. For me this is a dilemma, that a totally privately owned company can be the most responsible towards society."

The apparatus administering these 97 museums has also changed: it has increased. Bureaucracies, like cancer, follow their own inexorable script: they tend to grow, as do their operating budgets.\*

Returning to this question of identity I seem preoccupied with, we see, in the emergent world of public/private partnerships, that the question of who is public and who is private becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain. And once barriers to deacquisition have been further weakened, identities will become increasingly fluid. The difference between an old model like Statsbygg, the government's authority on public building and land, and Entra, a state-owned but publicly traded company, which owns, develops, and/or manages public land and buildings, and which – because of its access to government money – is able to buy public buildings relatively cheaply, has to do with its status relative to speculation in the marketplace. Who will own what in five years time will be affected by this speculation and, with it, the composition of the state.

This is especially worrying when it comes to the construction and ownership of new cultural buildings by such entities. "A company like Entra," Hansen tells us, "if it were to be sold, all its public buildings would be sold with it, so you could have a situation where the National Gallery or the National Museum – something that you really thought was public property – being totally privatized, and the state has to rent it back."\*\*

Because the developers of Bjørvika have, to some extent, employed best practices and because, after the fiasco of the Barcode, they have become increasingly mindful of public sentiment, what Bjørvika will become is still in flux. "Bjørvika is still a utopian idea," Tone Hansen stated. "It's still evolving as we speak...we don't really know how it will be to be there."

The above, however, was offered with a proviso: "Utopian ideas tend to turn into your own enemy," she cautioned.\*\*\*

\* In *European Cultural Policies 2015*, Hansen wrote the following: "The arm's length principle has become a two-edged problem for institutions and artists, because, paradoxically, independence is offered in return for obeying orders. Rather than letting go of its institutions, the State is more determined in its use of them."

\*\* Yet another portion of Åse Løvgren's very thorough notes about this report and it's accounting of the facts: "Concerning Statsbygg: it is not very old (founded in 1993) as a reorganization of the state's building and property directory. It is not on the stock market, but it is competing with other development firms to do the building and developing of state-initiated enterprises. In 2000, some of the property-renting etc., was separated from Statsbygg to create a company later called Entra Eiendom. They are operating as a commercial actor and they will not have cheaper access to state property than what they had initially (as I understand it).

I did some quick research on the Internet, and I think that Statsbygg is renting the buildings of most state-run institutions like the National Gallery. At least I couldn't find these on Entra's list. Here is the list:

<http://www.statsbygg.no/eiendom/liste?sort=navn&region=1428-1&type=2008>

Statsbygg is still state-owned, so it can't be sold. However, there is another story concerning what will happen in Bjørvika. As you see, the state owns the property of the Opera in Bjørvika; the Munch Museum I don't know who owns it now (it is still situated on the east side of Oslo, in what kind of is or used to be an immigrant neighborhood), and I don't know who will end up owning the plot of land in Bjørvika where it will be relocated to."

\*\*\* Utopias of the left and right will affect Bjørvika. The free market is both an idea of how to organize

commerce as much as it is a concrete thing. Equally, the architects and the developers in the project, work from the idea back to reality. While there is much that is prudent in this cautionary advice, it is not, perhaps, that we can do away with the utopian as such, but learn to differentiate between failed totalitarian models of utopia and think of utopia, rather, as an inevitable part of social processes. As David Harvey writes, "The supposedly endlessly open and benevolent qualities of some utopian social process, like market exchange, have to crystallize into a spatially ordered and institutionalized material world somewhere and somehow. Social, institutional, and material structures (walls, highways, territorial subdivisions, institutions of governance, social inequalities) are either made or not made. The dialectic of either/or is omnipresent. Once such structures are built they are often hard to change...Struggle as we might to create flexible landscapes and institutions, the fixity of structures tends to increase with time making the conditions of change more rather than less sclerotic."



*"One of the characteristics of this space, and that's why it is what it is today, is it's always been like a border zone, it's always been in-between—in this case, the Old City and the land surrounding the Old City."*

I cannot say this report is exhaustive - or even that it's comprehensive, recounting everything that happened during the workshop. A recording does exist, and I have listened to large parts of it, but in the end there were several presentations and much interesting material I had to leave out. Mea culpa.

One group of practitioners I wish to mention are the members of Skulpturenpark, the Berlin project that inhabits a network of vacant lots on the border between Kreuzberg and Mitte. Historically, this area has been a nebulous border-zone, and the organizers of Skulpturenpark have played on the site's ambiguity, exhibiting site-specific works that intervene and call into question its nature and history in a variety of ways. One artist constructed a hotel room built onto the rear of a billboard. Others have instituted security patrols, interactive lighting systems, and an action for dog walkers.

Describing its origins, Markus Lohmann was able to succinctly draw an important distinction between sanctioned projects such as the Bjørvika Pilot Art Project and quasi-legal projects like Skulpturenpark: "In the beginning, we had a long discussion about what we would call it. We said, 'Ok, let's call it 'Sculpture Park.'" Because it's not a park at all. You're not allowed to go there, and secondly, we don't want to place any traditional drop sculptures or anything like that, so therefore we thought maybe it's interesting to call it Sculpture Park, and redefine it: it could be a sculpture park in this urban wasteland that for ten years no one's been able to use. Why not pretend that, ok, now this is a sculpture park. This was the initial intention, and this is what makes it different from [Bjørvika] where you'll start to develop something together, and become a protagonist if something goes wrong. But here, nobody ever asked us, and still today [with] all the owners, we don't tell them that we're called Sculpture Park. We just tell them we want to do a project."

The curators have been able to maintain this juridical tightrope act, skirting the issues of private property and land rents by exploiting a loophole, not in the law, but in established spatial relations. Most of the owners are speculators from outside Berlin. Like many other examples of *zwischen benutzung* (in-between use) abounding in Berlin, Skulpturenpark is an actualized versions of de Certeau's famous description of the difference between strategies and tactics - that the latter "insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety." A tactic never has a place proper to it, but is "always on the watch for opportunities that can be seized on the wing." Were they to become fully institutionalized, the project would cease to function.

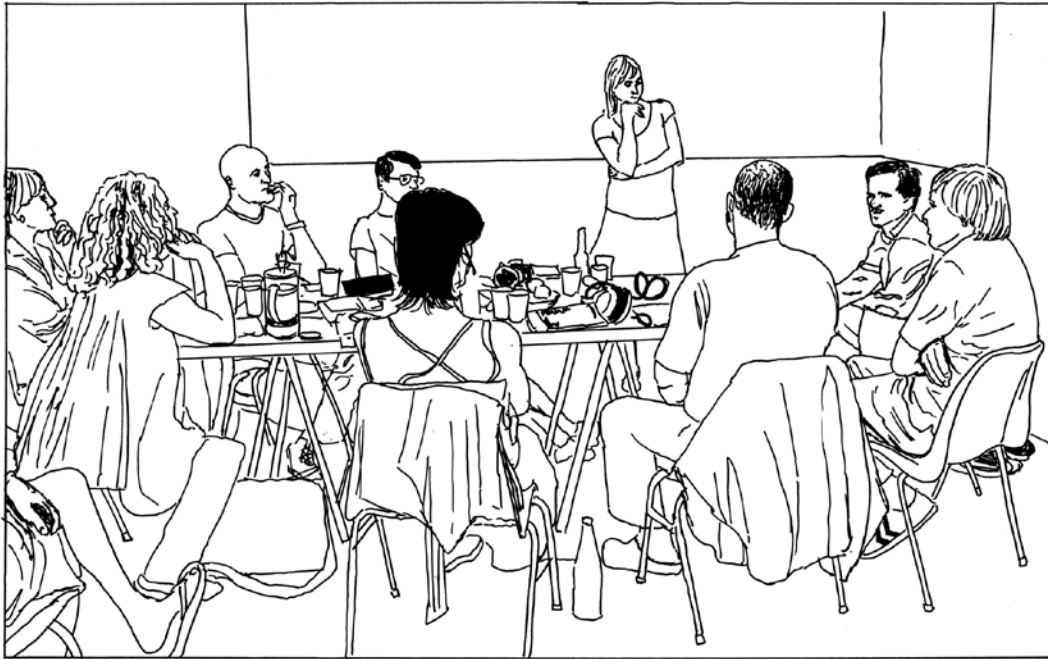
## Art as Protagonist?

On some level, Skulpturenpark confronts the same issue around closure Harvey refers to in the previous footnote, and which the curators of the pilot project will also have to face.

Something will be built, and this will inevitably affect the historical reading of what the participating artists do in the end. David Harvey writes that: “The history of all realized utopias points to this issue of closure as both fundamental and unavoidable, even if disillusionment through foreclosure is the inevitable consequence. If, therefore, alternatives are to be realized, the problem of closure (and the authority it presupposes) cannot be endlessly evaded. To do so is to embrace an agonistic romanticism of perpetually unfulfilled longing and desire.

COMMON

LANDS



Anne Beate Hovind: "Personally I would really like the artists to be watchers of the democratic process...and that would make art the protagonist, a constructive agent to keep reminding us what the vision of the area is. That would be the proactive role, in a way."

COMMON

Enter our curators and artists. How might they interact in the context of this large-scale development with all its various cogs and wheels and accompanying bureaucracies? Not only will our hypothetical culture workers encounter a new urban microclimate whose formation will impact the city as a whole, but with it, an administrative apparatus, remote and forbidding. Now, we can ask what the goals of the art project might be, and how might art interact with and effect the development process? One hope expressed is that the art project's program might disarticulate the linear thinking that inevitably accompanies large-scale developments. In effect, we are being asked about how to administer a cranial massage to the politicians of Hav Eiendom AS, who will make the big decisions.

Can one create an interstice where the types of administrative and ownership strategies discussed previously could interact with those of critical artists? How might we view the work of such an artist? Might we view it as a vehicle for surplus value production, or as a necessary index of the transparency of the owners and their "openness" to critique? What other positions are there?

To confess a matter about which I am not proud, in truth, I have found it difficult to listen to the concluding section of the recording. In retrospect, I attribute this to an irrational irritation that the practice of Skulpterenpark, whose presentation immediately preceded the "summing up" period, exerted too strong a gravitational pull on our ability to think through the problematics of Bjørvika itself. The workshop succumbed – briefly – to homologizing these two very different urban contexts. At least that is my recollection.

\* The following account gives some indication of the possibility for art works that intervene in the bureaucratic structures, which condition private property:

– Maria Eichhorn, *Purchase of the Plot at Corner Tibusstraße/Breul, Province Münster, Hall 5, No. 672* (1997), contribution to the exhibition *Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997*

The piece consisted of the bureaucratic steps required to obtain a plot of land – from selection, to purchase, to entry into the land-registry. Its descriptive title, *Erwerb des Grundstückes Ecke Tibusstraße/Breul, Gemarkung Münster, Flur 5, No. 672* (Acquisition of the Plot at Corner Tibusstraße/Breul, Province Münster, Hall

5, No. 672; 1997), indicated this focus on process and dryly stated its designated title in the land registry. Purchase funds included the project budget and a contribution from the Landesmuseum, the institution sponsoring the exhibition. As with her *Public Limited Company*, the work's presentation was dispersed throughout the city: the plot of land that marked her physical contribution could only be understood in light of documents displayed at the land registry and the Landesmuseum. Eichhorn appropriately sold the property after the temporary exhibition.

Of course, Eichhorn did not simply replicate a standard real-estate transaction, collect the profit, and go on her merry way. Similar to her *Public Limited Company*, she manipulated the form to divert the normal

LANDS



## Art as Protagonist?

process and yield subversive results. She stipulated in the mortgage agreement that the entire resale value would go to a local tenant's association, Verein zum Erhalt Preiswerten Wohnraums e.V. (Association for the Preservation of Affordable Housing), rather than the joint-owners, the Landesmuseum and herself. The Association formed in 1989 to protest the demolition and replacement with luxury condominiums of houses at Breul 31-38 and Tibusstraße 30a-c - precisely the terrain to which Eichhorn returned. This development scheme was symptomatic of real-estate trends in the inner city where property remains scarce. Rising property values were driving many long-term residents to the less expensive outskirts in the typical pattern of gentrification. The Association successfully thwarted the development by rallying public support. Today, the city owns the building and the Association acts as its tenant and administrator. [...]

By creating a public sculpture through the machinations of private property, Eichhorn foregrounded the, by now widely known, fact that ostensibly community-oriented exhibitions like Münster's also serve elite economic interests. The empty plot dumbly materialized the project funds, calling attention to the exhibition's material conditions. Her casting of the sponsoring institution in the role of real-estate speculator hinted that those conditions are deeply enmeshed in late capitalism.

The piece in fact drew considerable attention to Münster's impacted real-estate market and the demographic shifts it spurred. Because the city owned

the plot, its sale required the approval of the municipal real-estate department. The mayor supported the transaction, but the department balked at the idea of transforming the controversial site into an art piece. The debate moved into the city council where many members were also reluctant to draw attention to the area's dubious history especially since the issues were still highly pertinent. The final vote divided the council along ideological lines, the larger liberal contingent winning by a slim margin.

The controversy surrounding Eichhorn's piece attested to its political potency. It also evidenced the political and economic interests undergirding the exhibition that the piece merely implied. Most likely, the final vote did not merely reflect the council's solid liberal conscience, but its recognition that both the exhibition and the sculptures it leaves behind bolster the city's property values. Eichhorn's transitory "sculpture" drew attention to this conflicted nexus of community and private, economic and artistic interests without contributing to it. It avoided the inadvertent violence of much public sculpture by refusing to physically impose on the surrounding community, foregoing aesthetics to benefit local inhabitants financially.

EXCERPT FROM Elizabeth Ferrell, "The lack of interest in Maria Eichhorn's work", in *Art After Conceptual Art*, ed. by A. Alberro, S. Buchmann, The MIT Press, Cambridge/Mass, London/England, 2006, pp. 196-211



*"The point of all this is to go back to asking what is art? What is the function of art?"*

Anne Beate Hovind: You can't do that beforehand, I think. You have to have this with you. For me, it's like running a newspaper: you have the editorial team and you have the owners. The owners should not interfere in the newspaper's journalism...but there are always discussions. You have to acknowledge that there are certain limits and that you have to discuss specifically where these limits lie. There are obvious things, but then there are these grey zones and then you have to be very specific and have an open discussion, I think.

Michael Baers: It seems to me, in some ways, that if the people in power – in this case the port authority politicians – are not willing to consider what artists would do as something other than an ornament, as a project happening in space that would be temporary, possibly offering a critique or possibly acting as an amenity, but not serving as a suggestion in some way of how to transform the space. If they're not willing to take these ideas seriously, then the artists, curators and culture workers involved in this kind of interaction have very limited options.

ABH: That's why I ask: what is your mission in that project? Does it have to be the artist's mission to have the owner's take the consequences of the art project? What's the mission?

Matthias Einhoff: Maybe the mission is more, as I've said, to make these things visible. Visibility for these problematics.

ML: The owners aren't there. They buy and they sell again. Actually, they aren't interested in this whole process. [I believe Markus is referring to the situation of Skulpturenpark, but I include this as an example of the difficulty in maintaining a common frame of reference in discussions such as these.] None of these people would change their mind or do something different or think about more than making money.

ME: I think it's really a power thing, because I don't think we could ever change the thinking of these people who own this place. They are people from the market, they want to get the maximum out of their money. I can understand this. I don't think we can change them...but one can have a discussion with other people and, through this, get more people involved and through this discourse get more power in a democratic way, and one can use this democratic power in other ways...It's very old school...

ABH: Idealistic?

ME: Very idealistic, I believe, but as Michael said, the other option is very limited agency.

## Art as Protagonist?

Despite the many laudable aspects of Bjørvika – the attention to the public space, the possibility that its developers will attempt to create a genuine sense of place, the responsiveness they have displayed towards public opinion – clearly it will also conform to normative social articulations of space: business, family, retail. It is unlikely that what David Harvey describes below would come into being:

“The idea of imaginative spatial play to achieve specific social and moral goals can be converted into the idea of potentially endlessly open experimentation with the possibilities of spatial forms. This permits the exploration of a wide range of human potentialities (different modes of collective living, of gender relations, of production-consumption styles, in the relation to nature, etc.).”

So, I am, in the final analysis, uncertain of what will come to fruition if artists begin to collaborate with developers in working on large-scale urban renewal/development schemes. One aspect of my uncertainty stems from a too-strong recollection of the history of minimalist public sculpture situated in public space. They exemplify, with the exception of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, cases of art becoming an ornament for buildings and the ideological functions they represent, hence, cases of the artist's instrumentalization by these ideological forces.

A further question, and one that to my mind remains unanswered, is whether the property relations upon which Bjørvika is predicated will promote innovations in spatial use or something else. New public management, for all its emphasis on flexibility, is Cartesian, an absolute conception of space, and Harvey like Lefebvre before him is a critic “of the political absolutism that flows from absolute conceptions of space, of the oppressions visited upon the world by a rationalized, bureaucratized, technocratically and capitalistically-defined spatiality.”

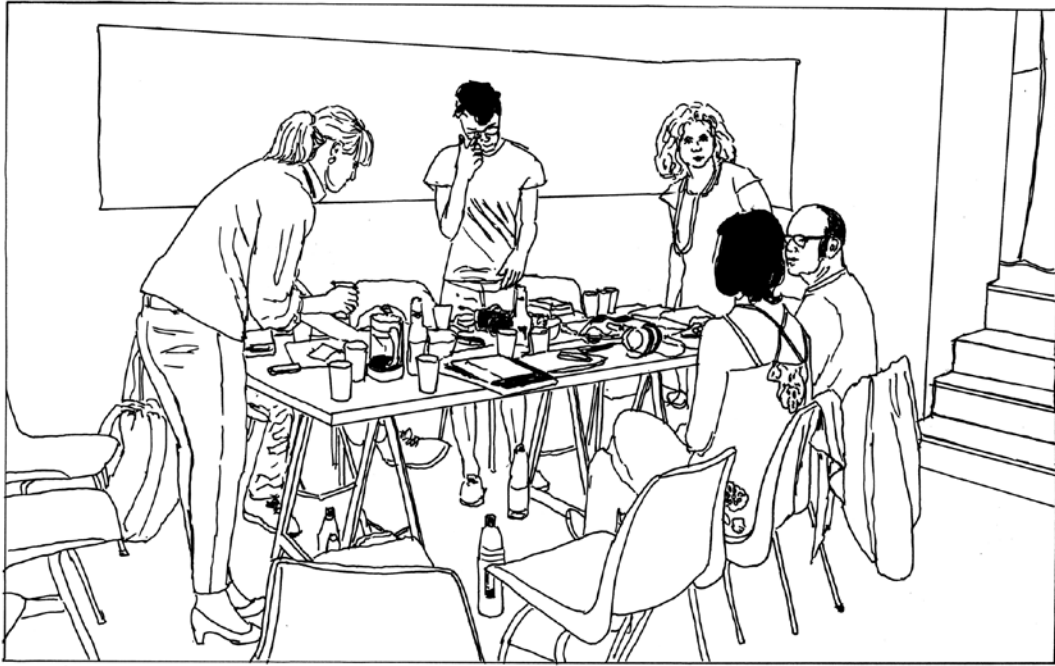
Herein lies an important contradiction in the ideology of art's use by new public management. The realization of neo-liberal space is to a great extent equally an act of closure and an annexation. We are asked, however, to envision intervening, perhaps even altering the overly linear planning process by which the development will be realized. But the fundamental economic logic that enables Bjørvika in the first place - is this also up for questioning? Is the logic and organizational model favored by neo-liberalism open to question? Or perhaps it's not a contradiction, but a delimitation. We, as artists, are meant to question the effects of the market, but only up to a point: its essential logic, like that of new public management, remains unchallenged. Thus, for me, a central problem for Bjørvika is precisely the danger represented in its employing a single economic paradigm, which leaves no space for alternative models for creating innovative, efficient cities that still allow for a messy, organic urbanism to exist.\*

The situation may not be quite as bleak as that. The likelihood that one of the artists invited will figure out a way of intervening in Bjørvika that I have not foreseen, and could not anticipate makes me hesitate before offering an analysis that supposes the total foreclosure of all options. So I wish to conclude on a note of hope rather than cynicism.

\* The following quote from an interview with Alexander Kluge (in *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Action* [a project by Martha Rosler]) gives some indication of what the stakes are in the transformation of the public sphere under new public management: “The public sphere is in this scene, what one might call the factory of politics - its site of production. When this site of production – the space in which politics is first made possible at all and communicable – is caught in a scissors-grip between appropriation (which is no longer public in the authentic sense and the self-eliminating classical public sphere (its mechanisms of subtraction and exclusion), when this public sphere threatens to disappear, its loss would be as grave today as the loss of the common land was for the farmer in the Middle Ages. In that period the economy was based on the three-acre system: one acre belonged to everyone, one belonged to the lord, and one belonged to the farmer. This system can only function as long as there is this common land, the public ground, which is the first

thing that the lord appropriates. If he owns both the common land and his own acre, then he has superiority. No longer dependent on the sword, the lord can now also control the third acre and will soon have serfs. The loss of land also means a loss of community because, if there is no land on which farmers may assemble, it is no longer possible to develop a community.”

## Art as Protagonist?



COMMON

LANDS

# ART AND PUBLIC SPACE IN BJØRVIKA

Anne Beate Hovind

The redevelopment and building expansion in Bjørvika is one of the most comprehensive urban development processes Norway has ever seen. Art has historically been highly significant – and has been used consciously – in the development of cities. This has led to much investment and resources being spent on art in relation to larger building projects.

The landowners in Bjørvika have created a joint company called Bjørvika Development Ltd. (BU). BU has adopted an art strategy for its areas of responsibility in the following public spaces: seven commons and one promenade along the waterfront, which is intended to be three kilometres long. BU has also taken on the task of creating a booklet on art in for this context. The booklet will function as a tool for understanding and handling issues for everyone involved in the field of art.

The regulations in the plan for Bjørvika make it a requirement that art projects feature in the commons and on the promenade. Through its building expansion company Bjørvika Infrastructure Ltd. (BI), BU is responsible for meeting these requirements. Through its art strategy, BU has set out its ambitions and aims for the sites so that they will display the most interesting works of art.

## AMBITION

BU would like to make Bjørvika a place where different artistic expressions have a strong presence, and where audiences will see and experience works of art of a high, international standard.

BU is focusing on art in the public sphere to create a lively and multi-faceted urban environment. The works of art will give Bjørvika an identity and create a cultural content that will give sense of co-ownership to the diverse groups of people who will be using the site. Not least, art is supported for its own intrinsic value.

BU will play both an independent role as the initiator and commissioner of the art projects, as well as functioning as a coordinator and offering support and encouragement to the art endeavours of others in Bjørvika.

## STRATEGIC APPROACH

BU has settled on the following strategic approach:

- ✗ BU will promote both permanent and temporary art projects.
- ✗ BU will initiate and establish “Kunsthall Bjørvika”, an organisation and a platform for art programmes.
- ✗ BU will spend a total of 20 million NOK on art, a little more than 1 % of BI's investment budget.

## PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY ART PROJECTS

Permanent works of art have a lasting character and are often integrated, or partly so, in things like buildings, fixed constructions or urban spaces. Temporary art works are limited in terms of time and consist of program-based art projects, which can include installations and events, temporary exhibitions, film programmes, concerts at various venues, as well as other types of activities.

BU believes that it is important to include both permanent and temporary art projects because they fulfil different roles and functions, and have distinct qualities. While permanent works are produced, installed and have a lasting form, the temporary projects involve changes, developments and new events. This will contribute to creating an urban life in Bjørvika with art projects and experiences that will also appeal to audiences that are less engaged

## Art as Protagonist?

by traditional artistic approaches. This is particularly important in an environment that will be characterised by heavy cultural institutions, in close proximity.

By spring/autumn 2009, BU will bring in professional art-related expertise to develop an overall artistic concept for the permanent works of art for the commons in Bjørvika. Their mandate will also include suggesting where and how art can be integrated into the area and which artists should be invited.

### INITIATING AND ESTABLISHING "KUNSTHALL BJØRVIKA"

BU will initiate and establish the permanent organisation, which for the time being is entitled "Kunsthall Bjørvika". The *Kunsthall* will be a mobile display arena for alternating exhibitions and temporary art activities in different places and hosted by a various interested parties in Bjørvika. It can also function as a production site for specially invited Norwegian and international artists. One of the *Kunsthall's* tasks could include being a centre for the promotion and presentation of art in Bjørvika, and a knowledge hub for art activities in the area.

Bjørvika is facing a long process of development, where BU represents stability, with a presence throughout the development and expansion. Part of why BU has taken this initiative is to secure the existence of temporary artistic expressions and a permanent organisation and continuity in the work on art activities in the area. The *Kunsthall* will also coordinate the various participants' work on art and contribute to a synergy between the developers' endeavours in relation to art and those of the various art- and cultural organisations that will establish themselves in the area.

The functions, tasks and, not least, the organisation of "Kunsthall Bjørvika" will be discussed further and will be decided by the end of 2009. The organisation will reflect the fact that BU is merely initiating and establishing the *Kunsthall*. All the various interested parties in Bjørvika (tenants, developers, owners, public authorities and institutions, and others) will be invited to collaborate with and participate in the *Kunsthall's* activities.

BU is contributing a one-off sum, corresponding to 25 % of its entire art budget, as start-up capital for the *Kunsthall*.

### BU IS ALLOCATING OVER 1% OF THE INVESTMENT BUDGET TO ART

BU has decided to allocate over 1% of Bjørvika Infrastructure Ltd.'s investment budget to art. 75% of the art budget will, as previously mentioned, be used on permanent works of art, while 25% will be spent on temporary art projects.

In addition to this, BU will, as a rule, assume responsibility for the production of all permanent works of art to ensure satisfactory integration and utilisation of resources. This includes BU funding all expenses in relation to the realisation of the works. Artists will receive a set fee.

### BOOKLET ON ART

A handbook on design was developed as an appendix to the regulatory plan for the areas of Bjørvika, Bispevika and Lohavn. The design handbook develops the quality requirements in relation to urban development set out in the regulations. It was a prerequisite that five booklets, expanding on some of the main themes of the design handbook, would be produced. The five thematic booklets were on: lighting; urban space; buildings; city furniture and equipment; and, finally, art. Bjørvika will be developed according to overall guidelines based on the design handbook and the thematic booklets. The aim is to give such a large area of development an overall urban design and ensure good aesthetic results.

The field of art is different and more complex than the areas covered by the other thematic booklets. The *Art Booklet*<sup>1</sup>, therefore, takes a different form, where the aim is not to establish a set of aesthetic norms and quality requirements.

The art booklet has two aims: firstly, it should function as a practical handbook for commissioning art works; secondly, the booklet is intended to generate interest in art and encourage reflections over the role of art in the development of new urban areas. It should

1. Edited by Tone Hansen, Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk, Marius Grønning, Therese Staal Brekke and Anne Beate Hovind, Bjørvika Development Ltd., 2009

## Art as Protagonist?

function as a tool that makes it easier to understand and handle issues relating to art in such contexts. Part 1 deals with practical aspects of realising art and is directed at developers and art professionals. Part 2 describes Bjørvika as a site and provides a general basis for understanding the roles that art can play in public spaces.

### ENCOURAGING SIMILAR APPROACHES

Through its art strategy, BU is encouraging all parties in Bjørvika to select a solid level of ambition for their art endeavours, and to allocate a corresponding part of their investment budgets for art, as BU has done. In addition, we suggest that all parties promote permanent and temporary works of art, and they participate in the collaborative project “Kunsthall Bjørvika”.

# WHEN CULTURE FINDS ITS HARBOUR – DISCUSSION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS TO THE CITY

Heidi Bergsli



COMMON

Most large European cities are in the process of redeveloping their riverbanks or seafronts in what has become known as waterfront projects. A common feature of these projects is that cultural strategies have become allied to the development of attractive and multifunctional cityscapes. Culture has become the ‘wow factor’ of urban redevelopment policies.<sup>1</sup> While it is a positive development that large areas of the city are liberated – no longer cordoned off for industry or storage – and that these areas often have wonderful cultural, environmental or social elements, I believe that it is important to investigate certain aspects of the trends of contemporary urban regeneration. In this article I would, therefore, like to discuss some of the ways in which culture has been used strategically in relation to certain aims of urban redevelopment projects. These strategies are tied to the fact that cities are now competing for capital assets such as investment and business location. Market-based approaches are, therefore, selected to promote economic growth. The consequences of such urban policies have led to the question of whose city and whose culture benefits when the city is being re-developed? (Zukin, 1995; Mitchell 2003; Sæter & Ekne Ruud, 2005.)

LANDS

## THE WATERFRONT AS PUBLIC SPACE

Waterfront projects often combine modern apartments, business premises, shops, bars and cafes to create an area that is alive 24 hours a day. As part of the development of waterfronts, it has become commonplace for artists to be commissioned to create a sense of belonging and enthusiasm over the liberation of areas that have previously been inaccessible due to port- and industrial activity. The areas provide opportunities for the development of large, public art projects, but the artists are seldom reciprocated in the form of studio space, reasonable viewing spaces or other projects once the waterfront has been completed.

1. The term ‘wow factor’ refers to Anne Bamford’s book, which highlights the role of art education in schools. The wow factor: global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education (Münster: Waxmann, 2006)



## Art as Protagonist?



*Alle kan bruke havnen.* A temporary art project by the art collective Parfyme, who have their harbour laboratory at Bryghusgrunden during *U-turn*, the Quadrennial for Contemporary Art in Copenhagen, held in September and October 2008. (Photography: H. Bergsli)

COMMON



LANDS

Water activities are available in the canal. (Photography: H. Bergsli)

In Copenhagen, the harbour area *Island Brygge* has been developed with accessible public areas such as parks, play areas and several swimming facilities by and in the canal. In addition, the city council and the private developers have co-financed the temporary art project *Alle kan bruke havnen* (*Everyone can use the harbour*).<sup>2</sup>

The website of those behind the project, the art collective Parfyme, does not present the principles of 'alternative' or 'free' use of the harbour as a public space, which are the

2. [http://www.parfyme.dk/2008/harbor\\_lab.html](http://www.parfyme.dk/2008/harbor_lab.html)

designated aims of the work. Their description instead highlights how their project is intended to generate entrepreneurship:

We will avoid lengthy and formal planning sessions, and instead go straight on constructing in an atmosphere of entrepreneurship and creativity. As we see it, the harbor has a great potential to be a cultural, and inspirational area for the residents of Copenhagen. We will do our best to facilitate and realize this goal using the Harbor Laboratory as a platform/catalyst for innovative change.

The project thereby locates itself at the heart of the policies behind the 'entrepreneurial city' by providing for activities that can generate synergy effects and contribute to innovation in other sectors of society, either as an ironic comment or as a direct entry into entrepreneurial politics. The intention of developing public spaces along democratic principles is not mentioned in their presentation, even though the art project primarily highlights this potential for the alternative and free use of the riverbank. Perhaps the project's aim is visually evident, and thus the entrepreneurial statement becomes a comment on the place of art projects in regeneration strategies?

Entrepreneurialism has become an important notion in the reconfiguration of urban policymaking, where the goal is to promote a facilitating and proactive political strategy that provides for the enhancement of the city's competitive edge (see Harvey 1989, OECD 2007). Such a model of urban policymaking seeks to release the city's joint creative capabilities through network collaboration and support for leading financial enterprises. The background for this is that creative industries, high-tech businesses and educational institutions can form a central part of the city's economic growth potential (Scott, 2000). In this context, the input of "intellectual capital" is emphasised, where actors are supposed to collaborate and inspire each other across innovating sectors to contribute to economic growth. In this way, "the creative city" has become an inspiration for politicians, city planners and businesses that work on their city's capacity for innovation and on image building.

### THE CREATIVE CITY

The development of the culture industries and the economic impact of new consumer and lifestyle preferences have led to cities seeking to offer a greater cultural scene including festivals, cultural events, markets and other festivities. The cities are intent on presenting themselves as creative, lively and youthful. At the same time, the material landscape is developed as a framework for the creative city, through public art, street furniture and architecture that enhances, creates or produces a local distinctive character (Knox, 1993). This character then becomes the object of intensive image building. Urban design becomes a central part of a hierarchical positioning among cities on a global basis. The territorial competition can be compared to how businesses compete, where specialisation and marketing are important factors in enhancing profit and growth (Gold & Ward, 1994). This is how a lot of today's city politicians view their plan of action. The cities compete for the leading businesses, the sharpest minds and the urban tourists. The "entrepreneurial city" includes this backdrop of a market approach that provides the highest return and the most prestige, where specialised cultural programmes and architectural and design interventions contribute to an expression of exclusivity and innovation.

The reasons why cities choose such cultural policies can seem to be short-term strategies allied to neo-liberal principles that are used to fuel the city's economy. The role of city policymakers becomes to provide for private businesses at the same time as the city itself is operating as a market player (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Socio-political aims are subservient to ideas that market growth will have the trickle-down effects of greater employment and private investment in infrastructure. Positive socio-economic effects of such policies have, nevertheless, been lacking in certain cities where economic growth strategies have been prioritised (Hambleton, 1990). The process of social exclusion leading to unemployment and housing shortages is seen as a problem for individuals, while the structural causes are often neglected. This amounts to an increasing tendency of displacing redistributive policies and long-term, overall planning in favour of an area-based investment drive that is part of what

François Ruffin calls "planning of the city so that the rich can live there happily" (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 2007, French edition).

Waterfront projects have met local resistance in several cities; the argument is that it is the needs of tourists and investors that are being satisfied and that the projects are not integrated into the cityscape (Mayer, 2007). The urban redevelopment project Paris Rive Gauche on the east bank of the Seine was characterised by a number of battles over the cultural content of the regeneration project in the 1990s and 2000s. Local organisations fought for local anchoring and the incorporation of the waterfront project in the surrounding urban district (Bergsli, 2004). The public development agency Semapa built a "typical" waterfront consisting of modern flats, high-tech office blocks and exclusive retail and cultural attractions. Magda Danysz's gallery, which moved into the area at an early stage, was marketed as a proponent and contributor to general creative processes: *"Discussions are lively, the atmosphere is completely unstrained...artists, commercial actors and residents often meet in this great gallery, which is very welcoming towards its neighbours"*. Moreover, it was highlighted that she had "learnt her lesson" during a stay at Leo Castelli and the Marlborough Gallery in New York: "to look to the private sector rather than the public, and to pursue sales rather than subsidies". The artist is portrayed as a symbol of entrepreneurial politics, not only as a creative agent, but also in economic terms. In the same area, the artists' collective le Frigo, consisting of around 250 artists, musicians and others were fighting to avoid the demolition of the old cold-store building where they were staying; they won a conservation resolution in 1997. Following the resolution, the building – a workplace without public access – was promoted as part of the area's "cultural cluster". A le Frigo artist expressed his dissatisfaction over the collective being portrayed as part of a cultural cluster along with other cultural institutions:

COMMON

'[They] place Bateaufar [a restaurant and entertainment boat] alongside the great National Library. These are on different levels. And the School of Architecture is different from us, the Jussieu University, the art galleries...and for them this is culture! Le Frigo is a production site, a workplace, Bateaufar is something else, and the Library is something else again, but they call it a cultural network, it doesn't make any sense. I don't want us to be in a cultural cluster. I don't want audiences to come here. This is a workplace, we need peace and quiet to work. But it is evident that we appear more interesting to the city council if we arrange parties instead of working. The city council says: look! There's money in the picture, and especially when offices are being built they [the developers] want somebody to provide entertainment.'

LANDS

The criticism was directed at the political staging of cultural actors as part of a network – a "cultural cluster" – regardless of their functions or cultural approaches. When city councils become too focused on their city's competitiveness and image, the result is often a marketing strategy that includes or excludes segments of the cultural landscape for instrumental reasons. The concept of culture becomes at once diffuse and specific: specific in relation to high culture and certain elements of popular culture; diffuse in relation to the synergy effects that will be generated by creative sources within art, design and the knowledge economy. In this way, cultural strategies in urban redevelopment schemes often seem random with a lack of focus in their overall and long-term formulation.

### DESIGNING SYMBOLIC URBAN SPACES

The creative city, as highlighted by a number of researchers, lets creativity reflect the city's localisation of businesses specialising in information and communications technology, general innovative abilities and the capacity for creative organisation (see for example Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Landry, 2000; and Scott, 2000). The primary advocate for tailored urban area-based development is the now renowned social scientist Richard Florida (2002, 2007 & 2008). One of his most widespread theories argues that it is not primarily the businesses, but the highly qualified labour force that generates economic growth. Instead of creating facilities to accommodate commerce, one should focus on the qualified workers that are attractive

3. Interview 25 November 2002.

## Art as Protagonist?

to leading businesses. This “creative class”, which includes everyone from “bohemians” and knowledge producers to people who work with art and design, has location and lifestyle preferences that should influence the design of the city. Cities better, therefore, offer central urban areas with specific consumption facilities and landscape formations. Even if the empirical and theoretical foundations of Florida’s recommendations have been called into question by a number of researchers (for an overview of the criticism see Zimmermann, 2008), his theories are still widely embraced by politicians and planners. These kinds of developments received greater attention because certain cities, for example Glasgow, Barcelona and Bilbao, have displayed particularly successful cultural strategies. At the same time the continuing – in some cases increasing – socio-economic problems in these cities have received less attention (see for example Rodriguez et al., 2001 on Bilbao; Mac Leod, 2002 on Glasgow). The geographer Jamie Peck (2005) is one researcher who has argued against what he sees as Florida’s unsubstantiated theories being used indiscriminately to achieve economic growth. Policies based on designed area-based development have also created losers that are not able to participate in the party and the growth, partly because of lack of provisions for more deprived areas outside the city centre or other strategies targeting social cohesion.

COMMON



LANDS

The waterfront area, Havneholmen in Copenhagen, is predominantly a business district that also has exclusive flats and eateries, and is representative of how waterfronts are often developed in European cities. (Photography: H. Bergsli)

However, “the winner” of symbolic urban spatial redevelopment strategies is the waterfront itself, which has become an image-bearing site created to enhance cities’ international status. The landscape is designed to offer a package to transnational enterprises and their employees (Gottdiener, 2000). Modern apartments and offices, retail and culture, nightlife and publicly facilitated infrastructure should create a good quality of life for the city. In this context, the state becomes an eager seller of exclusivity to people who have the best prerequisites for attaining it by themselves. Exclusivity is also represented by the cultural institutions situated on the aesthetised waterfront, which, along with financial institutions and high-tech business, unite high commerce and high culture (Zukin, 1995). These are symbolic landscapes as described by Zukin as well as Sæter and Ekne Ruud (2005). Prestige architecture has taken various forms throughout history and is today characterised by playful and spectacular approaches, such as the well-known Guggenheim museum in Bilbao or perhaps the earliest example of our time, the Sydney Opera House. Cultural buildings are the icons of contemporary cities.

## Art as Protagonist?

Public access to the water is a recurrent objective in many waterfront projects. However, these projects often ignore the symbolism inherent in the built environment, which the architecture and design contributes to presenting. The landscape can be “read” by individuals and groups through signs and symbols. It is, therefore, not only physical barriers that exclude certain social groups from urban spaces (Madanipour, 1998). Urban redevelopment strategies involve balancing what should be visible and not and different concepts of order and disarray, as well as strategic connections between aesthetics and function (Zukin, 1996). Many housing developments on the waterfront close their doors and employ a form of surveillance aesthetic where security measures become both a symbol of prestige as well as generating their own paranoid demand, as Mike Davis (1996) expresses it. Roads and parks in these areas are not necessarily part of the neighbourhood’s street grid or its open spaces. Nevertheless, private parks can be included in the overall definition of green areas. In the housing project M5 in Marseilles, the waterfront project Euroméditerranée is currently developing a principle for green areas that has been termed “public space with a visual continuity” (as shown on the image below). This means that “you can see the trees, but you cannot touch them”.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, one might ask whether physically accessible green areas allied to a housing complex involve a more ambiguous notion of public space. As discussed above, there are symbolic barriers that may prevent public use of the parks.

COMMON



LANDS

The housing project M5, Euroméditerranée, Marseille. Photography: H. Bergsli

### MARSEILLE: THE DREAM OF BECOMING SOMEONE ELSE ...

Marseille, France’s historical *enfant terrible*, with its former large proportion of poor people, strong popular- and underground culture, a high unemployment rate and a long history of immigration, is now attempting to change its status from a port city to a city of culture, like a number of other places (see for example Avery, 2006). Marseille has a poor and rundown city centre, despite plans and efforts throughout the 1900s to redevelop it. Since the 1990s, efforts have been stepped up through the explicit desire to gentrify, where the aim has been to ‘reconquer’ the centre (see for example Peraldi & Simpson, 2005). This is not just about the middle classes, the gentry, re-entering the city centre, but also about moderating the

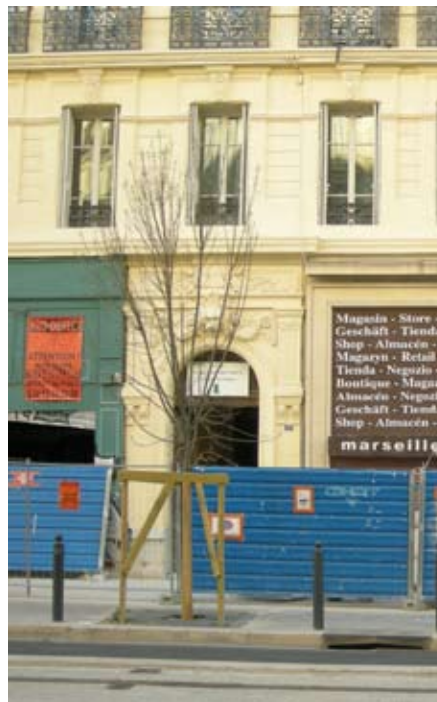
4. An expression borrowed from a member of the local organisation Centre Ville Pour Tous. Interview 19 March 2008



## Art as Protagonist?

visual presence of the immigrant population here. The desire for renewal seriously materialised when the harbour area in the central Northern part of the city was to be recast as a modern waterfront through the mega-project Euroméditerranée. The project has a number of expressed aims that correspond with the ambitions of the entrepreneurial city: firstly, the project is intended to contribute to Marseille's image by utilising the necessary means of culture, economics and education and by ensuring architectural and urban quality. Secondly, the project should create employment opportunities. Finally, Euroméditerranée should facilitate the city's housing policies, through the building of both public and private housing. Unsuitable apartments are being renovated. Ambitions beyond these aims include that Euroméditerranée, as its name indicates, should make Marseille an important centre for economic and cultural exchange between Europe and the Mediterranean region. Marseille sees Barcelona and Genoa as both competition and inspiration, and wishes to become *the* metropolis of the Mediterranean. This position is intended to be won by playing on the city's close historical role and relationships to the whole Mediterranean region. However, as the plans are now being realised, it is evident that Marseille's seafront primarily faces north, towards Europe and not towards Northern Africa and the eastern parts of the Mediterranean. The development of the aesthetised landscape is intended to give the city "a new horizon" with prestigious high-rise buildings and a designed business and residential area. Efforts are mainly being directed towards getting investment and leading businesses to the area to strengthen Marseille as the centre of a Mediterranean *Arc Latin* between Barcelona, Lyon and Genoa. The immigrant entrepreneurs that have previously dominated economic activity in the zone do not fit with this image or the part of the economy that will dominate the waterfront: high-tech, globally oriented business, and a consumer landscape with the appropriate provisions.

COMMON



LANDS

Rehabilitation involves strategies around which consumer provisions will be established in the waterfront zone. An exclusive range of specialised and designer shops is often desirable. In the recently renovated rue de la République in Marseille (pictured) we do not yet know which shops will be located there, but a number of languages on the designed façade announce the imminent completion of a consumer landscape. (Photography: H. Bergsli)

In 2008, Marseille was made European Capital of Culture for 2013. In the preliminary national competition with Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nice and others, the choice of Marseille as the

French candidate can be seen as natural in relation to how the status of Capital of Culture has developed. It is now a renowned and desirable tool, a crowbar in the transformation from industrial city to city of culture among Europe's urban strugglers. Marseille openly plays on its working class culture, its problems and its potential to show the necessity for redeveloping the city. Renovation can show itself to be social as well as material, if the expressed "reconquering" of the city centre is carried out.

### MIMETIC PRACTICES AND CREATIVE POVERTY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATERFRONT ZONES

The liberation of large areas along riverbanks and seafronts has created the opportunity for new building blocks in 21<sup>st</sup> century cities, the potential to provide something novel and different that the cities have not properly utilised before. Overall development and integration into the rest of the cityscape are problems that have arisen in several European waterfront projects. These designated areas are reminiscent of historical ideals and the realisation of the zoned city. They often appear like packaged landscapes with a high entry fee (Harvey, 1989). Neo-liberal influences and mimetic practices on European waterfronts can colonise urban spaces through uniform developments of privatised areas with material and symbolic barriers. When the culture sector becomes a device used merely to enhance the market value of properties or to generate the flow of tourists whose presence should lead to commercial success, the autonomy of cultural actors is reduced, as is their ability to reach more diverse social groups with different cultural needs, preferences and tastes. At the same time, it is necessary to query whether tying the cultural content in the development of waterfronts and allied commerce to notions of the "cultural city" will create synergy effects that reflect the market's mantra in relation to culture. Coherent strategies and qualitative emphasis are necessary if the content will have the same impact as architectural and aesthetic forms. The exhibition *Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (18/6–14/9 2008) in Denmark highlighted the new role of museums: "Today we build museums, where we in the past would have built palaces and cathedrals. These are often spectacular buildings that put cities, regions and countries on the international map of cultural tourism".<sup>5</sup> The question, which was also posed in this exhibition, is how the museum's core activities and content can be developed when the building's surfaces – as indicative of innovative urban redevelopment – are considered more important. Cultural institutions that are relocated as part of waterfront projects must have suitable conditions to develop their activities if they are to play a qualitative role in a redeveloped urban district. A well-functioning collaboration will not be achieved solely by being located in the same area.

Innovative activity is allied to the creative industries' impact on economic growth. As quantifiable entities, they create the premises for city councils' desire for local development. The creative city cannot, according to Allen J. Scott (2006, 32), be developed through singular strategies, such as the design of specialised urban landscapes. In Scott's view, satisfying the consumer needs of the creative classes does not lead to greater creativity in today's cities, as he states, "with an apology to Richard Florida":

[C]reativity is not something that can be simply imported into the city on the backs of peripatetic computer hackers, skateboarders, gays, and assorted bohemians, but must be organically developed through the complex interweaving of relations of production, work and social life in specific urban contexts.

While cultural strategies may contribute to aesthetisation and commercial exclusivity and be a creative source for businesses, they do not constitute a magic wand that can just be waved at urban development projects. A narrow instrumentalisation of culture with little focus on social improvement indicates a lack of overall thinking around democratic urban development, where concerns for the welfare of the entire urban population and their quality of life is taken into account. The many waterfront projects undertaken in European cities show little sign of creativity and diversity in this respect.

5. <http://www.louisiana.dk/dk/Menu/Udstillinger/Museer+i+det+21.+%E5rhundrede>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ✕ Avery, P (2006). Born Again: From Dock Cities to Cities of Culture. In M. K. Smith (Ed.), *Tourism, Culture and Regeneration*. Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing.
- ✕ Bergsli, H. (2004). *The Concrete is blossoming. A study of urban regeneration strategies and local resistance in Paris Rive Gauche*. Oslo: MA Thesis ISS, UiO.
- ✕ Bianchini, F., & Parkinson, M. (1993). *Cultural policy and urban regeneration: the West European experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- ✕ Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and Geographies of Actually Existing Neoliberalism. In N. Brenner & N. Theodore (Eds.), *Spaces of Neoliberalism. Urban Reconstructing in North America and Western Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- ✕ Davis, M. (1996). Fortress L.A. In R. T. Legates & F. Stout (Eds.), *The City Reader*. London: Routledge
- ✕ Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- ✕ Florida, R. (2007). *The flight of the creative class: the new global competition for talent*. New York: Collins.
- ✕ Florida, R. (2008). *Who's your city?: how the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life*. New York: Basic Books.
- ✕ Gold, J. R., & Ward, S. V. (Eds.). (1994). *Place Promotion: The Use of Publicity and Marketing to Sell Towns and Regions*: John Wiley & Sons.
- ✕ Gottdiener, M. (2000). Approches to Consumption. Classical and Contemporary Perspectives. In M. Gottdiener (Ed.), *New Forms of Consumption*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield
- ✕ Hambleton, R. (1990). *Urban Government in the 1990s. Lessons from the USA*. Bristol: SAUS.
- ✕ Harvey, D. (1989). From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism *Geografiske Annaler*, 71(1), 3-17.
- ✕ Knox, P. L. (1993). The Postmodern Urban Matrix. In P. L. Knox (Ed.), *The Restless Urban Landscape*. Englewoods Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- ✕ Landry, C. (2000). *The creative city: a toolkit for urban innovators*. London: Earthscan.
- ✕ MacLeod, G. (2002). From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a Revanchist City? On the Spatial Injustices of Glasgow's Renaissance. *Antipode*, 34(3), 602-624.
- ✕ Madanipour, A. (1998). Social exclusion and space. In A. Madanipour, G. Cars & J. Allen (Eds.), *Exclusion in European Cities. Experiences and Responses*. London: Kingsley.
- ✕ Mayer, M. (2007). Contesting the Neoliberalization of Urban Governance. In Leitner, H., Peck, J. & E. S. Sheppard (eds.), *Contesting Neoliberalism. Urban Frontiers*. New York: Guilford Press.
- ✕ Mitchell, D. (2003). *The right to the city: social justice and the fight for public space*. New York: Guilford Press.
- ✕ OECD. (2007). *Competitive Cities: A New Entrepreneurial Paradigm in Spatial Development*: OECD Publishing.
- ✕ Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the Creative Class. *International Journal of Urban & Regional Research*, 29(4), 740-770.
- ✕ Peraldi M. & M. Simpson (2005). *Gouverner Marseille*. Paris: La Découverte.
- ✕ Rodriguez, A., Martinez, E., & Guenaga, G. (2001). Uneven redevelopment, new urban policies and socio-spatial fragmentation in Metropolitan Bilbao. *European Urban & Regional Studies*, 8(2), 161.
- ✕ Scott, A. J. (2000). *The cultural economy of cities: essays on the geography of image-producing industries*. London: Sage.
- ✕ Scott, A. J. (2006). Creative Cities: Conceptual Issues and Political Questions [Electronic Version] from: <http://www.ur-plaza.osaka-cu.ac.jp/symposium/200612pdf/061221KNspeech.pdf>
- ✕ Sæter, O., & Ekne Ruud, M. (2005). *Byen som symbolsk rom. Bypolitikk, stedsdiskurser og gentrifying i gamle Oslo*. Oslo.

COMMON

LANDS



### Art as Protagonist?

- ✕ Zukin. (1995). *The Cultures of Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- ✕ Zukin. (1996). Space and Symbols in an Age of Decline. In A. D. King (Ed.), *Re-representing the City. Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the Twenty-First Century* Houndsmill: Macmillan Press LTd.
- ✕ Zimmermann, J. (2008). From brew town to cool town: Neoliberalism and the creative city development strategy in Milwaukee. *Cities*, 4(25), 230-242.

COMMON

LANDS

# THE ARTIST AS DECORATOR

Marcus Degerman

In discussions about art in relation to architecture and urban development, it is often pointed out that artists should be included at an earlier stage in the building process. Participation already in the planning and building phases would mean greater potential for artists in their work. Especially if we compare this to the traditional role where the artist is expected to begin working when everything is already completed. Traditionally, the purpose of art in this context is to decorate the areas and buildings that have already been constructed. In Swedish, for instance, we have the phrase *offentlig utsmyckning*, “public embellishment”, to describe the genre. Naturally, it would be preferable if the artist could find new tasks and be involved at an earlier stage in planning the spaces where they will be engaged. But the question of embellishment, and the debate on how and when the work is to be carried out, is more complex than it may at first seem. I will attempt to explain why, and also to give a few explanations to why a greater degree of pragmatism is necessary in these issues.

In attempting to understand and discuss the potential roles of art in various contexts such as urban development, one possible starting point is an analysis of the primary markets that are available to art. The market aspect is interesting for two crucial reasons. Firstly, since the use of the term market has paradoxically not been compatible with the marketing of art as something entirely different from other commodities. But it is also interesting since the traditional businesses where concrete art objects are produced and sold has gradually been complemented by an increasingly important service sector. In general, therefore, we can now say that there are two main arenas on which an artist can sell his or her products. One consists of galleries and the other of institutions such as schools, art museums, studio programmes and grant schemes. Since the gallery business of selling objects or images is fairly well-known, it is more interesting, here, to focus on the mechanisms in the institutional category – a category that is mainly service-based and either wholly or partially financed by public funding, even though there is a discernible tendency towards change in this respect.

Although many people would refuse to define the service-based art market as commercial, it is nevertheless essential to acknowledge that it is based on similar conditions. The difference, above all, is in the participants and their demands. Instead of gallery owners, we have studio programmes, institutions and schools, for instance. Since the participants have other preferences, the demand situation is different. These differences in demand have today become so great that there are few artists who can operate without difficulty in both the gallery and service segments. The differentiation between artistic orientations has also led to more distinct disparity between the artists working in the respective contexts. In short, the conflict can be said to exist on two levels. The underlying causes concern status, money and influence, while the reasons that are more frequently debated concern definitions of content, quality and aesthetics. This, in turn, has contributed towards creating differences in the language used to describe activities and their objectives. Within the more service-oriented art sector, the key concepts are generally more academic compared to those of the gallery scene. It can be interesting to bear this in mind in discussions on the role of art in, say, urban development. In the same way as when dichotomies are set up between aesthetics and discursive content, there is reason to be wary when embellishment is mentioned as being in a contradictory position to content.

In a similar way to how we speak of public embellishment, there is also a form of internal embellishment. Where public embellishment, i.e., the finished work of art, is traditionally intended to be for practically anyone, the internal embellishment is more concerned with a beauty for the initiated. In order to be considered for such commissions, someone has to be convinced of the quality of one's work. A vital element in convincing people consists of the language in which the artist chooses to explain, or package, the product. Even the earliest conceptual art demonstrated that the emphasis need not be primarily on the concrete object itself, but in the circumstances around its idea. In other words, this communication has come

COMMON

LANDS

## Art as Protagonist?

to take place mainly on an aesthetic level where content and form are merged. Instead of asking whether something is an embellishment or not, we should perhaps ask ourselves today what this embellishment means in itself. This is a question that needs to be based much more on a holistic perspective, where all references are taken into account, rather than taking individual statements too literally.

If the packaging has thus become such an obvious part of the product, the question is whether it is even possible to work critically. For what happens if also the design surrounding whatever we want to launch has to have an appealing beauty in order to succeed? Would works that challenge the prevailing order even stand a chance? Within service-oriented art that operates in relation to urban development, the current situation is that concepts such as concentration, gentrification, diversity or segregation have their specific aesthetic values that can both spoil and beautify, depending on how they are used. Since critical works should, by virtue of their nature, be hard to consolidate with normative attitudes, they are hard to sell to the various players on the field. For a self-employed entrepreneur such as an artist, this constitutes a limitation on the language or references that are possible to use.

Consequently, to return to the introduction, what would be interesting would be a more pragmatic approach to what we wish to achieve. An emphasis on the way, that is, on how something should be performed to achieve a desired result, has led to stagnation, where too much attention is given to how this way should be decorated. This is true not least for the art that is considered to lie beyond the aesthetic field. A pragmatic-aesthetic approach would, in this case, involve looking for alternatives to the normative values. Art that wants to formulate alternatives or a critique of the established market should not, therefore, be packaged in something that is too obviously designed to sell easily in the prevailing system. This, in effect, means that the work should neither be too appealing, nor too repulsive, since these criteria, in all certainty, already have their given value. If art is to comprise more than just confirmed agreements, that potential will be found beyond the extremes.

COMMON

LANDS

# Biographies

COMMON

Michael Baers (February 23, 1968, Los Angeles), American, based in Berlin, Germany. Baers attended the California College of the Arts as an undergraduate and, a decade later, completed an MFA in Studio Art and Critical Writing at the California Institute of the Arts. In 2004/05 he attended the Whitney Independent Study Program. He has participated in exhibitions principally in North America and Europe, where he has exhibited publication works and conceptual drawing projects. Baers has exhibited at Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, Tallinn Art Hall, Nikolaj Center for Contemporary Art in Copenhagen, Ellen de Bruijn Projects in Amsterdam, and the Center for Book Arts in New York, among other venues. He has participated in residencies in Sapporo, Helsinki, Worpswede. With his comics and other graphical works he is a frequent collaborator to publication initiatives, including *Fucking Good Art*, the *e-flux* journal, *Chto delat*, and *SUM*. He has been a guest instructor in Denmark and Norway, conducting seminars that mix theory and artistic praxis. Currently he teaches at Det Fynske Kunsthøjskole in Denmark. He also occasionally writes catalogue essays, articles, and reviews.

Anne Beate Hovind is project manager for the Art Project in Bjørvika Development Ltd. During the last five years she has been Director of Public Relations for the construction project responsible for the new university hospital for the Oslo region (A-hus). She has also lead the hospital's project for building-integrated art. She has initiated and lead several temporary art projects in Bjørvika. She is a member of Oslo's council for city architecture (Byarkitekturrådet).

Heidi Bergsli is research fellow at Oslo University College (2007-2010). Her project's working title is "Commodification of culture and space. An investigation of the search for creative buzz through European urban redevelopment strategies". The PhD-project is an investigation of the aims, visions and strategies of the waterfront projects Euroméditerranée in Marseille and the Fjord City project in Oslo, discussed in light of international trends in waterfront developments and urban "entrepreneurial" policies. Bergsli has a master degree in human geography at the

University of Oslo, discussing the redevelopment project Paris Rive Gauche in Paris. She also worked at the project "Cities' attractiveness" at the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research in 2005. Her main research interests are new urban policies, the social and material aspects and effects of urban regeneration strategies, the use of culture in place marketing and local-global dynamics of urban change.  
Heidi.bergsli@est.hio.no

Markus Degerman was born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972; he lives in Stockholm and Berlin. He studied sculpture at Konstfack University College of Arts, Craft and Design, Stockholm and at University College of Fine Arts, Umeå (MFA), and architecture at the Royal University College of Fine Arts, Stockholm. Exhibitions incl.: No matter how hard you work to bring things up, there is always someone out there working just as hard to bring them down..., Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin 2008, Undersöka Form, Stockholm 2008; Home Cinema, Maribel López Gallery Berlin 2008; Multiple Choices, Oslo Kunstforening 2008; *E x t e r i o r s*, CCA, Kiev 2007. Degerman also works together with the artist Jonas Nobel, the architect Fredrik Stenberg, and the designer Andreas Nobel in the group Uglycute.

In his works, Markus Degerman experiments with elements of architecture and design in different surroundings; his interventions reprocess public, urban or institutional space. By changing or adding to these environments, he directs attention to the social and political implications that are inscribed into the architecture of the space. Markus Degerman uses different examples of style to draw the viewer's attention to the fact that architecture and design always interrelate with current political and social discourse.

Åse Løvgren is an artist and independent curator.

Løvgren's works focus on photography and video, often with a documentative narrative. Solo exhibitions include: *Bataille Exercises* at Bodø Kunstforening 2009, *Dissident* at By the way – Gallery for Contemporary Art, 2007.

She has been working with the artist unions, focusing on artists' rights and

LANDS

position in society at large. She is on the board of Artists' association of Hordaland 2006–2010, vice chairman 2005–2007, and on the board of UKS, Young Artists' Society 2008–2010.

Løvgren is chair at Flaggfabrikken – Centre for Photography and Contemporary Art in Bergen, running an international artist in residency-program. [www.flaggfabrikken.net](http://www.flaggfabrikken.net) She holds a diploma of fine arts from Bergen National Academy of the Arts from 2004 where she also followed the master course in Creative Curatorial Practice in 2006–2008. She holds a bachelor degree of art history, and has taught at the Bergen National Academy of the Arts.

Karolin Tampere has been curating independently since 2002. In 2006 she started 'I LoveYourWork' at Landmark, Bergen Kunsthall. This project is a curated series of performances focusing on co-producing new works with artists working in a hybride formate within performance. Recently presented artists are Mom&Jerry, D.O.R, upcoming artists are Jos de Gruyter & Harald Theuys. Other projects recently curated is 'The Go-Between' at de Appel art centre 2007, 'Life is All About Taking Things in And Putting Things Out' together with Camila Marambio and Stefan Mitterer at Salon Tudor, Santiago de Chile 2008 and 'Wall to Wall', a solo presentation and new installation in collaboration with Egill Sæbjörnsson, at HISK, Ghent, 2008. Karolin Tampere has an training in Visual Arts from Bergen National Academy of Arts including exchange periods at Contemporary Art Centre in Moscow and Interdisciplinary Studies at Estonian Art Academy (EKA) in Tallinn. In 06/07 she took part in the Curatorial Training Program at de Appel art centre in Amsterdam. [www.karolintampere.com](http://www.karolintampere.com)

and explicitly, the projects touch on a range of questions around (co)authorship, (im)material production, the role of artist and curator, and the potential of mobile and changeable platforms in the institutional infrastructure for art. Rakett was curators in residence at ISCP in New York during Fall 2008. [www.rakett.biz](http://www.rakett.biz)

Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere initiated the ongoing collaboration Rakett (2003– ) which is a mobile platform for various activities ranging from curatorial practice to initiating their own artistic collaborative production and projects. The Rakett projects often function as lively, temporary platforms for collaborative, often interdisciplinary, production; where the role of the initiator/curator is to not only to create a framework and a stage but also to bring together different cultural producers, to create a moment of potentiality. Implicitly

# Colophon

*Art as Protagonist?* is a collection of texts and the first of three publications that form part of the exhibition project Common Lands.

The development of waterfronts is a current trend in post-industrial cities where previously industrial harbour areas are being transformed into new urban spaces that emphasise mercantile, residential and recreational purposes. The exhibition project Common Lands uses the process of redevelopment around Bjørvika in Oslo to highlight a number of issues associated with urban development, democracy, access and the distribution of power. The project is in process and follows this specific development and relates it to other urban developments around the world.

Karolin Tampere and Åse Løvgren are the curators for this temporary exhibition project. Through seminars, text production and art projects they will, in collaboration with the artist duos Bik Van der Pol, Dellbrügge & de Moll and Geir Tore Holm and Søsna Jørgensen, investigate, comment on and intervene in this extensive urban redevelopment. The temporary art project will take place in 2009 and 2010.

The project is initiated and supported by Bjørvika Utvikling AS. Supported by City of Oslo, Agency for Planning and Building Services (City of Oslo), Nordic Black Theatre and MS Innvik.



*Art as Protagonist?* includes texts by Michael Baers, Heidi Bergsli, Markus Degerman, Anne Beate Hovind and an introduction by Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere.

[www.commonlands.net](http://www.commonlands.net)

Editors:  
Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere

Proof reader:  
Eivind Slettemås

Norwegian/English translation:  
Natalie Hope O'Donnell

Swedish/English translation:  
Gabiella Berggren

Design:  
Jaan Evart

The copyright to the images is owned by the respective photographer.

# Notes

COMMON

LANDS

# Notes

COMMON

LANDS



Notes

COMMON

LANDS

# Notes

COMMON

LANDS