

**1814  
REVISITED**

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**THE PAST  
IS STILL  
PRESENT**



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GRUNNLOVSJUBILEET  
1814-2014

AKERSHUS KUNSTSENTER PRESENTS:



**1814  
REVISITED  
—  
THE PAST  
IS STILL  
PRESENT**

MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>  
—  
SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>  
—  
2014

1814 REVISITED – THE PAST IS STILL PRESENT

EXHIBITION

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Project Coordinator: Monica Holmen

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HOEL OG RUSTAN ANDERSSON / LARS Ø. RAMBERG  
MORTEN SLETTE MEÅS

# §

## 110c

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**It is the responsibility  
of the authorities of the State  
to respect and ensure human rights.  
Specific provisions for  
the implementation of treaties  
thereon shall be  
determined by law.**

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# THE TROUBLE WITH A CONSTITUTION

RIKKE G. KOMISSAR

CURATOR 1814 REVISITED – THE PAST IS STILL PRESENT

DIRECTOR, AKERSHUS KUNSTSENTER

## A QUICK GLANCE AROUND

The year is 2010; the country is Tunisia. Long-standing dissatisfaction with the president Ben Ali has escalated over the past few years and the regime has been perceived as authoritarian and corrupt. On 17 December the young vegetable seller Mohamed Bouaziz poured petrol over himself and set fire to it as a reaction to being deprived of the right to sell at the market. Many Tunisians shared the frustration felt by Bouaziz, and this became the start of a large-scale uprising. This tragic event is now viewed as the beginning of what is termed “the Arab Spring”, an uprising that spread subsequently to Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, and during the course of 2011 to countries such as Syria, Yemen and Bahrain. In 2013 we could follow large-scale public protests in the Ukraine and Thailand, countries that also faced demands for social change and greater democracy.

The causes of the Arab Spring vary from country to country, depending on various historical, religious and political backgrounds, but a common thread is a desire for greater democracy, freedom of speech and a better standard of living. Not all revolutions have ended up with the intended goal, but nevertheless they illustrate something important: the people have a great power to initiate social change.

## DEMANDING DEMOCRACY

— *Democracy is neither a society to be governed nor a government of society, it is specifically this ungovernable on which every government must ultimately find its own fundament.*

Jaques Rancière

Norway is a master of celebrating its national day in a democratic way. Instead of military parades and canon salutes, the children are made centre of attention: every town has parades of children waving flags and shouting hurrah! We still do this in 2014, two hundred years after the writing of the Constitution, and we have good grounds to celebrate.

In 2012 Norway was named as the world's best country in which to live. The survey was conducted by the British Legatum Institute, which had studied 142 countries. Norway can boast of low unemployment, a solid economy and a well-run welfare state: all good parameters for enjoyment and security.

However, another survey showed another reality. Norway was ranked number 49 in the world in terms of voting in elections.<sup>1</sup> A functional democracy demands participation and a low voter turnout can be seen as a symptom of a generally weakened social engagement.

In Aschehoug & Gyldendal's *Lille norske leksikon* [tr. Little Norwegian Encyclopaedia] democracy is defined as: «[...] a form of state in which the will of the majority exercises the decisive influence on the running of the state». The essence is that each individual should be able to influence the decisions that are taken. When voter turnout is low, representation is in danger of getting out of step with reality. We are also in danger of developing governance by an elite, in which a small group of people gain great influence over the development of society.

Today, only 5% of the population are members of a political party. Voter turnout to both national and local elections has sunk by about 20% between the mid-60s and the present day; in the 2011 local elections as few as 64.5% of the population took part.<sup>2</sup>

So the question we should ask is whether we have become so anaesthetised by our own welfare that we do not understand the duty that is consequent on the right to freedom of speech. Or has politics become so complex that it has distanced itself from the people? Is it possible that the differences between the parties are so miniscule that the voters are unable to identify with one or the other? Have the great ideological divides vanished?

We can speculate about the causes of the low voter turnout, and to what extent it is due to an absence of major ideological differences, contempt for politicians or a belief that society can cope without our vote. Either way, the goal should be to increase voter participation.

The American philosopher John Dewey pointed out in his book *The Public and Its Problems* (1927) that the prerequisite for democratic politics is the

very complexity of a society, and that no society is in greater need of democracy than a complex one. Dewey looked for a technology that could improve the communication situation and thus improve the people's opportunity to promote their political interests.

Nowadays, the internet and social media serve precisely the function that Dewey was looking for in his time, and many of the political and social debates are played out in exchanges of opinions between people who never meet each other. Nevertheless, technological innovation is not enough to drive democracy forward in an overall sense. What needs to be promoted is an engagement for everyday democracy, an engagement that has to be constantly maintained by caring about the community in which we live.

The big question is therefore how we can stimulate engagement in both local and national politics, thus ensuring a political socialising in which young people take part in social debate.

An increased media focus on the meaning of democracy may be one of the answers. The *Min Stemme* [tr. my vote] campaign initiated by the Norwegian broadcasting corporation NRK in collaboration with 19 newspapers prior to the 2013 general election shows that this works. Voting amongst the youngest increased by as much as 10% compared with 2009; last year's participation was the highest in 24 years.<sup>3</sup>

Researchers attribute two explanations to this positive increase: the tragic events of 22 July, when our democratic values were attacked, and the media's voting campaign directed towards young people. It is difficult to predict which factors had the greatest impact, but an increased focus on the value of every vote has undoubtedly had a positive effect.

A desire to stimulate social engagement is also recognisable in two of the projects in the exhibition: those of the artists Alex White Mazzarella and Hilde Maisey.

The American artist Alex White Mazzarella, together with his artist group Artefacting, will occupy Lillestrøm during the exhibition period with the goal of establishing a dialogue with the town's residents. Mazzarella wishes to encourage reflection around questions relating to our values and our way of life, and ask questions about what expectations we have of democracy.

Awareness concerning participation and political influence is at the heart of Hilde Maisey's project, and the publication *An Activist's Guidebook for Political Influence* presents various strategies for influencing politicians and those in power. Maisey will also hold workshops during the exhibition period where participants themselves can learn how they can raise awareness of individual matters that concern them.

## THE SCHOOL AS AN ARENA FOR DEMOCRACY STUDIES

Despite depressing figures in former years, it appears that we are heading in

the right direction in terms of strengthening Norwegian democracy. In this constitution jubilee year, the elective subject "Democracy studies" has been introduced into schools in several parts of Norway and it is hoped that the government will make this a part of the core curriculum. An extension of democracy studies to include topics such as freedom of speech and the responsibility to express an opinion would strengthen the nation for the future, which is vital if we are to maintain and build further upon a living democracy for the future.

A free exchange of opinions and tolerance for different viewpoints is still a challenge in large parts of the world, including Norway. The author and activist for democratic socialism George Orwell declared that *Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear*. This sounds simple, but even though freedom of speech is enshrined in the Constitution's §100, we constantly see examples of this not being a reality in today's Norway.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH UNDER THREAT

The young leader of Youth Against Racism, Florence Aryanik, received a death threat when she was to speak at the 75th anniversary of the Kristallnacht in Oslo in 2013, and the speech was never held.

The author Amal Aden has to live with a panic alarm and receives daily death threats for her free speaking. The late Pakistani politician Rubina Rana also received death threats when she, as the first non-western immigrant, led the 17th May Committee in 1999. Rana attended the Constitution-Day celebrations dressed in a costume inspired by Norwegian national dress, which in itself sparked off an angry debate about who had the right to call themselves Norwegian and assume a Norwegian identity, and to what extent immigrants can have both a multi-cultural and a Norwegian identity.

The above examples feature aspects of racism, but we also find countless examples of politicians and free-speaking controversial ethnic Norwegians being threatened for speaking out in public. Freedom of speech can thus be regarded as a broad and complex problem; as perhaps the greatest challenge of our time.

In the exhibition, the Polish artist Artur Zmijewski illustrates the fragile nature of freedom of speech. In his video installation *Democracies*, Zmijewski has observed countless demonstrations in which the distance between self-control and the outbreak of violence is seen to be a short one. The balance between democracy and anarchy may rest on a knife edge; an observation that was also made by the French philosopher Jacques Rancière when he pointed out that a superpower is a state that manages to master democratic disorder.

Other artists in the exhibition also deal with freedom of speech. Gelawesh Waledkhani takes as a starting point the Kurdish human-rights activist

Farzad Kamangar who was executed in 2010, while Merete Røstad visualises and discusses the concept of freedom of speech through collages and text. Both illustrate the fact that freedom of speech is not self-evident and reminds us that different ways of living and being are also a matter of freedom of expression and democracy. Charlotte Thiis-Evensen draws this perspective into her video work *The Bathtub* in which human compassion, thoughtfulness and equality are core components. This work may evoke the feeling of a dream-like utopia, some distance from the reality of today's Norway.

## WHO IS NORWAY FOR?

The first version of the Constitution contained the so-called “Jew paragraph” and until 1851 the Jews as a people were refused entry to Norway. After as many as three rounds in Parliament and pressure from the poet Henrik Wergeland, amongst others, the paragraph was repealed. Today, 200 years later, it sounds absurd, but an active discussion is still going on about who the country of Norway should be for. Questions regarding immigration are at the heart of today's politics, something that the artist Ayman Alazraq visualises in his work *Utreisefrist*. [tr. *Deadline to Leave*]

Pierre Lionel Matte takes on a different perspective in his installation *I Have a Passport Therefore I am*. The work encompasses a number of reconstructed Norwegian passports, and when we open the small passports, we can read his thoughts about identity set against fear of foreigners. The Romany people are mentioned as a group and Matte highlights both our own and the state's treatment of a people no-one wants. At the same time he points out the danger of generalising a group or a people on the basis of our experience of individuals.

Another project that highlights discussions around divisions into racial groupings is «*The Mission*» by Frithjof Hoel and Rustan Andersson. This archive-like installation provides an insight into 19th-century research in eugenics and physical anthropology. Hoel and Andersson's project illustrates – despite its premise of liberal ideas – how the Norwegian Constitution also has its roots in racial thinking.

## HISTORY MADE RELEVANT

One objective of the exhibition is to serve as historical commentary, using a variety of projects to bring historical events to life and subject them to critical examination. Various projects provide insights into historical events with which we may be familiar, but which for one reason or another are omitted from our collective memory when we narrate the history of Norway.

Lars Ø. Ramberg personifies an important black mark in newer Norwegian history. The “German sluts” were the women who chose to have a rela-

tionship with a German soldier during the Second World War. After the war came a time of revenge and the women were victims of abuse and shaven heads. Under the cover of protecting the women, over 10 000 of them were interned in various camps, but this measure was considered just as much as a collective punishment of women, who were regarded as having behaved promiscuously.

Although many of these women had only chatted with German soldiers, they were nevertheless given the same treatment as those who had had a serious relationship. A more severe side of this case was the deportations from Norway, where some women were faced with the difficult ultimatum: remain in Norway and give up their German boyfriend or move to Germany, surrendering their Norwegian passports “in exchange”. Being deprived of one's own citizenship can be seen as a form of life-long punishment, and a quick and illegal change to the Constitution was required in order to carry out this deportation.<sup>4</sup> These events have subsequently been hushed up and have remained a silent part of Norwegian post-war history.

Another historical subject brought to our attention in the exhibition is the treatment of communists during the Cold War in Norway. In this country the Cold War was primarily a political-ideological fight against the communists. False suspicion and misleading information were employed and information has subsequently emerged about extensive state surveillance of left-wing radicals.<sup>5</sup>

In her video installation *Cold Cluster* Lene Berg seeks to find out what really happened in Norway after the Cold War. By means of research, conversations and interviews with various individuals she intends to track down party history, battles for interests and not least our own history of surveillance.

Surveillance as a phenomenon is a hot topic in our time as well, as illustrated by international whistle-blowers such as Julian Assange (Wikileaks) and Edward Snowden (NSA). A democratic state should build on its inhabitants' trust, but with the forthcoming entry of the Data Retention Directive into Norway it would appear that we are now establishing surveillance as part of the normal state of things.<sup>6</sup> But will this allow us to lead safer lives?

In my opinion, if freedom is confused with security, we have misunderstood a significant side of democracy and overlooked the fundamental rights of individuals. Our very right to personal autonomy may be at risk if the Constitution moves away from protecting the individual towards protecting society.

There is also reason to react when it is permissible to punish the act of preparing for a punishable action rather than the action in itself. Allowing a person the right to change his or her own mind should be an important aspect of moral development rather than being a part of the public legal system.

## AN EXHIBITION WITH AGENDA

As curator of the exhibition, my own social involvement is at the heart of my work with the exhibition. The goal has been to create an alternative space for reflection, a space that also serves to supplement the media and historical narratives in the constitutional jubilee year.

A jubilee celebration of a constitution provides an opportunity to look more closely at the connection between past and present; an opportunity to remind ourselves of events from the beginning of the 19th century that still impact on our lives today; an opportunity to history afresh. Is it possible that other versions or angles should be brought out?

We should also examine the Constitution and see whether it protects us well enough from the real challenges facing us. Several of the works in the exhibition suggests that the Constitution yields a false sense of security and that it does not provide the intended protection.

The exhibition can be regarded almost as a little art festival, spreading over three exhibition venues.<sup>7</sup> The different venues are not arranged thematically, but rather by feel, energy or by how the works create a dialogue with each other.

Through the 25 works, different perspectives are presented, and as many as 18 of the projects in the exhibition are new productions. The wish is that each work and each artistic project should be read as an independent contribution.

In this introductory text I have highlighted just a few of the works in the exhibition, but in the artist presentations you can read about all 25 different projects. The catalogue also contains a separate essay section under the editorial leadership of Kjetil Røed. Here you will find texts by Kjetil Røed, Arve Kleiva, Vanessa Place and Espen Stueland, which supplement the works in the exhibition. The essay section thus offers reflections around art and the law, society and constitution.

## EPILOGUE

The Constitution has contributed to forming both our history and our society as it exists today. It all started at Eidsvoll, and the past is still present. How we will develop in the future has to be a joint discussion, built on existing democratic premises.

Finally, we would like to thank all the artists who have taken part with energy and determination to bring to fruition their work and projects for *1814 Revisited – The Past is Still Present!* We would also like to thank our financial contributors who made it possible for the exhibition to become a reality. Without you there would be no exhibition!

Akershus Kunstsenter wishes you a happy jubilee celebration!

Rikke Komissar, December 2013

—

*Democracy is the worst  
form of government,  
except for all  
those other forms  
that have been tried  
from time to time.*

—

(Sir Winston Churchill, in a speech to the House of Commons in 1947, after Holocaust)

### BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Statistics Norway in 2002 examined voter turnout in world democracies, which placed Norway in 49th place.
- <sup>2</sup> The 2013 general election ended up with a total voter turnout of 78%, which is actually two percent more than the previous general election.
- <sup>3</sup> Among first-time voters (aged 18–21), turnout increased from 56.2% in 2009, to 66.5% in 2013. Source: “Kraftig hopp i valgdeltakelsen hos de yngste”, VG web, 18.12.2013
- <sup>4</sup> As long as the women were Norwegian citizens the state could not expel them from the country, but the Gerhardsen government put forward a change to the law. According to section § 97 of the Constitution, no law is to apply retrospectively, but the authorities overlooked this important regulation, giving the reason that an occupation is so serious that a general sense of legal propriety required the expulsion of the women. (The practice only applied to women; there were no legal consequences for men with German girlfriends).
- <sup>5</sup> Extensive surveillance was confirmed in the report of the Lund Commission in 1996. The issue was also discussed in open hearings in the Norwegian parliament in 1996/97.
- <sup>6</sup> The Data Retention Directive is an EU directive compelling telecom and internet providers to store traffic data, locality data and subscriber data in connection with telephony, mobile telephony, broadband, email and internet access. The stored data includes details of who has communicated with whom, when the communication took place, where the parties were located and what form of communication was employed. The purpose of the directive is to ensure access to these data “for the purpose of the investigation, detection and prosecution of serious crime”. The Directive requires that data be stored for at least six months and a maximum of two years.
- <sup>7</sup> The exhibition premises are Akershus Kunstsenter in Lillestrøm, while at Eidsvoll Verk we are filling the Mago A factory hall and Stallgården.



**VENUES**

## AKERSHUS KUNSTSENTER



Akershus Kunstsenter [tr. Art centre] is an institution for exhibiting and communicating visual art, located in Storgata 4, in the centre of Lillestrøm. This wooden building was constructed in 1892 and was originally built as housing for teachers. In Lillestrøm it is nevertheless best known from the period 1949–1991 in which it served as a police station. Akershus Kunstsenter took over the building in 1998.

The functions of the arts centre include producing and providing information about the exhibitions displayed in the centre, exhibitions connected to Den kulturelle skolesekken [tr. The Cultural Rucksack] programme in Akershus, and to productions shown in various health and social institutions in Akershus. The arts centre also runs the display areas at Oslo bus terminal, in the canteen at the Akershus county council building (Galleri Oslo), as well as the exhibition project Kunst på vandring [tr. Art on the move]. In addition to galleries, the arts centre also includes an art shop and reading lounge.

Akershus Kunstsenter has become noted as an innovative platform for young contemporary art with national and international artists. Akershus Kunstsenter is supported by Akershus County Council.






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## MAGO A



Mago A is one of four power stations located by the Andelva river at Eidsvoll, built during the period 1960–1990. The power stations Mago A, B, C and D are named after Mago, a 17th-century coal burner who lived at the Siktemelsfossen waterfalls, where Mago A was built. The falls had formerly been used for wood pulping, cellulose and other power-consuming production. As the need for electrical power increased, the Mago power stations were built. The premises are now empty.

Mago A is now owned by Mathiesen Eidsvold Værk ANS.

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## STALLGÅRDEN



The Stallgården stable complex at Eidsvoll was built in 1909 and designed by the architect Finn Knutsen. It was chamberlain Haaken Larpent Mathiesen who was responsible for the stables complex being built. Stallgården occupies some 1300 square feet and is divided into Ridehuset (riding hall), Stallen (stables), Ungstallen (foal stables), Vognskjulet (carriage shed) and Automobilstallen (motor vehicle building). Stallgården is now used as exhibition premises and for events such as concerts and Christmas market.

Stallgården is now owned by Mathiesen Eidsvold Værk ANS.



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### OPENING HOURS:

MAY–JUNE

Monday–Tuesday: closed

Wednesday–Sunday: 12–5pm

Thursday: 12–7pm

Same opening hours apply at all exhibition venues.

JULY–SEPTEMBER

Monday–Tuesday: closed

Wednesday–Sunday: 12–5pm

Thursday: 12–6pm

Same opening hours apply at all exhibition venues.

Entry: free

## HOW TO GET TO THERE:

### TO AKERSHUS KUNSTSENTER

FROM OSLO:

Train from Oslo Central Station to Lillestrøm is only 11 minutes.

Take line L14 towards Kongsvinger, L13 towards Dal, R10 towards Lillehammer, L12 towards Eidsvoll. The trains leave Oslo Central Station at respectively 04, 14, 34 and 54 minutes past each hour.

FROM EIDSVOLL VERK:

Train from Eidsvoll Verk to Lillestrøm is only 20 minutes.

Take line L12 towards Kongsberg. The train leaves Eidsvoll Verk at 36 minutes past each hour.

ADRESS:

Akershus Kunstsenter, Storgata 4, Lillestrøm

### TO MAGO A AND STALLGÅRDEN, EIDSVOLL VERK

FROM OSLO:

Train from Oslo S to Eidsvoll Verk is only 30 minutes

Take line L12 towards Eidsvoll. The train leaves Oslo Central Station at 54 minutes past each hour.

FROM LILLESTRØM:

Train from Lillestrøm to Eidsvoll Verk is only 20 minutes.

Take line L12 towards Eidsvoll. The train leaves Lillestrøm at 5 minutes past each hour.

GET OFF AT: EIDSVOLL VERK

From the station it is about 15 minutes walk to Eidsvoll Verk, the area in which both the Eidsvoll Building, Stallgården and Mago A are located – see map.

ADRESS:

Mago A, Magoveien 63, Eidsvoll Verk

Stallgården, Carsten Ankervei 15, Eidsvoll Verk

For up-to-date information about the general programme and activities, see [www.akershuskunstsender.no](http://www.akershuskunstsender.no) or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/1814revisited?fref=ts>

### TOURS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The exhibition is to be presented for children via the Norwegian educational scheme Den kulturelle skolesekken [tr. The cultural rucksack].

We also offer presentations for children and young people from other institutions. Contact [koordinator@akershuskunstsender.no](mailto:koordinator@akershuskunstsender.no) for information and booking.

### TOURS AND PRIVATE EVENTS

How about a private evening event? We invite commercial and larger private groups to private events with refreshments and guided tours.

Contact [koordinator@akershuskunstsender.no](mailto:koordinator@akershuskunstsender.no) for information and booking.



**AKERSHUS  
KUNSTSENTER**

Ayman Alazraq  
Born 1979, Jerusalem, Palestina  
Resident in Oslo

## AYMAN ALAZRAQ

*UTREISEFRIST*  
2012, SCULPTURE



Utreisefrist, 2012. Molten wax. Photo: Ayman Alazraq

*Utreisefrist* [tr. *Deadline to Leave*] is a sculpture cast in wax, consisting of as many letters as the word itself. Each letter can be lit like a candle. The work is purple, creating apparent associations with Advent.

The artist is referring to the period of waiting experienced by asylum seekers after their application for residency has been refused and they have been allocated a deadline to leave the country. While they wait for their departure, they do not belong to anywhere, they are without rights and from their perspective they do not have a safe country to which to return.

Another aspect of the work is how it can be seen to represent an image of the processing time experienced by an asylum seeker, which on average is somewhere between 52 and 220 days. In some cases, a residence permit is not issued until after several years.

*Utreisefrist* stands as a quiet and contemplative, but at the same time explicit visualisation of the almost intolerable period of waiting experienced by many asylum seekers. Through *Utreisefrist*, Alazraq sheds light on a relevant and important topic,

which repeatedly leads to emotional and difficult debates, but which nevertheless needs to be discussed.

*Ayman Alazraq has a Master's degree from the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2012). Apart from his artistic practice, Alazraq is Director of Idiom Films, Ramallah. Alazraq has held several solo exhibitions in Norway and internationally, including Between the self and its true home, One Night only, Oslo (2011); She was capable of flying but did not, Podium gallery, Oslo (2011); You, From now on, are not yourself, Barchalona in Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània (IEMed), (2010); You, From now on, are not yourself, Gallery BOA, Oslo, (2010). He has also participated in a number of group exhibitions, including UNIDESCO, Art at the Centre of a Responsible Transformation of Society, Italy (2012); The people want & The candle clock Performances, Performance festival in Kunstbanken, Hamar, Norway (2011); You, From now on, are not yourself, Windows from Gaza for contemporary art. Gaza, Palestine (2011); The Spring Exhibition, Charlottenborg Fonden, København, Danmark (2011).*

# JUAN ANDRES MILANES BENITO

*ANALYZING SANITY OR THE EXTRACTION OF THE STONE OF MADNESS*  
2014, INSTALLATION

The church is one of the oldest symbols in our society, and has the potential to trigger a series of associations like dogmatism, the standardisation of ideas and feelings, oppression, fellowship, exclusion, and more.

As the constitution for a Christian state, the Norwegian constitution has a religious foundation, but how true is that today? Milanes Benito's piece *Analyzing Sanity or The Extraction of the Stone of Madness* invites reflection on the topic.

Part of the front of a church has been torn away from its building and has lost its function as an entryway. Is this a case of lost face, a building stripped of power, or is there another way to interpret the piece? Is the church today more concerned with its facade, than dealing with its own issues? Or can we take this in a more positive light, where the church in the year 2014 opens its doors to the people, or is it a top-down reference to Kirkeforliket, the 2008 legislative compromise that took effect in 2012, which officially separated church and state in Norway? The ambiguous nature of this piece invites numerous discussions.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstcenter.

*Juan Andres Milanes Benito holds a master's degree from the Nation Academy of Art in Oslo (2009), as well as a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Escuela Wifredo Lam Isla de la Juventud, Cuba (1998). His installation The Route caused a stir at the Norwegian National Exhibition 2008, and he has since participated in a number of exhibitions in Scandinavia and Latin America, with, amongst others: Speed is Directly Proportional to Forgetfulness, Gallery Riis, Oslo (2011), Water Tower Art Fest, Sofia, Bulgaria (2011), American Dream, Hå Gamle Prestegard, Stavanger, Norway (2009) og The windmills of Minds, Örebro Konsthall, Open Art, Sverige (2009).*

*Milanes works primarily with installation and sculpture, and several of his pieces have been illusionary recreations of an original. By taking everyday objects and events out of their traditional context, he appeals to our collective consciousness. He encourages social association and reflection, which, in turn, offer the chance to see our daily lives and objects from a fresh perspective.*

Juan Andres Milanes Benito  
Born in 1975, on Isla de la Juventud, Cuba  
Lives in Oslo



Analyzing Sanity or The extraction of the Stone of Madness, 2014.

Ane Hjort Guttu  
Born 1971 in Oslo  
Resident in Oslo



This Place is Every Place, 2014. HD video, 19 min. Photo: Cecilie Semec.

## ANE HJORT GUTTU

*THIS PLACE IS EVERY PLACE*

2014, VIDEO

How long have we been living here?  
What happened in all those years?  
Were we happy when we came here for the first time? (When was that?  
And what was it like back then?)  
Or are we happier now?  
What can we do?  
What can we believe in?  
Will it all just stay the same?  
If so, how can we endure it?  
Or maybe that's what we really want: that everything should be the way it  
is now?

*This Place is Every Place* is a film by Ane Hjort Guttu,  
commissioned by Tensta konsthall.

Director/producer:	Ane Hjort Guttu
Photography:	Cecilie Semec
Editing:	Karen Gravås
Sound:	Edvard Saare
Actors:	Damla Kilickiran, Gülay Kilickiran
Sound editing:	Sigrun Merete Mongstad
Music:	Ebba Grön/ Samling

Produced with the support of Tensta konsthall, Fritt Ord, Billedkunst-  
nernes Vederlagsfond and Akershus Kunstsenter.

*Ane Hjort Guttu is a graphic artist, author and curator. In recent years she has contributed to a number of exhibitions and projects, including In These Great Times, Kunstnernes hus, Oslo (2014); Les Ateliers de Rennes, France (2014); Bergen Assembly (2013); Society Without Qualities, Tensta konsthall, Stockholm (2013); Lære for livet ("learning for life"), Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Bærum (2012); and De rike bør bli enda rikere ("the rich should be even richer"), Kunsthall Oslo (2012). In 2014 she is also currently taking part in the Sydney biennial. During the period 2009–2013, Guttu was a Fellow at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, with her project Kunst og frihet ("Art and freedom") in which she examined the relationship between artistic practice, liberation and equality.*

Alex White Mazzarella  
Born 1979 in Boston, USA  
Resident in Brooklyn, NY, USA

# ARTEFACTING V/ ALEX WHITE MAZZARELLA

CONNECT

2014, SOCIAL PROJECT

What is considered important in a society? Can we agree on one or multiple truths? What ties us together as human beings? What values do the people of Lillestrøm stand for?

CONNECT is a relational art project that reconstitutes a local community through the creation of a democratic and welcoming space of dialogue. The objective is to tie citizens together and allow for their activation of an inclusive and socially constructive culture which facilitates and encourages open connection and interchange of civic values and society.

Lillestrøm inhabitants of various generations and differing social and ethnical backgrounds will be drawn into forums spread across multiple public spaces. The forum discussions will develop over the course of three days using sculptural communication towers, manned and facilitated by project assistants, to attract audiences and signify the activation of the spaces. The goal? To inspire city inhabitants to participate, express and connect through a democratic process. Public discussion will be sent from tower to tower via mobile phone conversation and sms, allowing the dialogue to

span and combine several locations simultaneously.

CONNECT starts in the reading lounge at Akershus Art Centre. On the wall in the reading lounge, White-Mazzarella asks a number of questions related to democracy, and throughout the exhibition period the visitors are invited to write down their reflections on the issue directly on the wall.

The project is produced by Akershus Kunstsenster with support from the Sparebankstiftelsen DNB and Skedsmo municipality.

*Alex White Mazzarella is the Founder of Artefacting, a global art initiative dedicated to the stimulation of dialogue and social justice in the public arena. White Mazzarella has shown projects at the Queens Museum of Art, the India Design Forum, Boston Architecture X, and the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Centre. As the Director of Artefacting, he has carried out social projects in Oaxaca (Mexico), Kohima (Nagaland, India), Cologne (Germany), Long Island City (New York, USA), Detroit (USA), Dharavi (Mumbai, India), Gurgaon (New Dehli, India), and Rome (Italy).*



Artefacting: Change.

Ebba Moi  
Born 1971 in Örebro, Sweden  
Resident in Oslo and Berlin

## EBBA MOI

VI ER ALLE LIKE (FRIHET, LIKHET OG FELLESSKAP)  
2014, SOCIAL PROJECT



In 1814, the Norwegian constitution was one of the most radical in Europe, inspired by enlightenment ideals, which culminated in the French Revolution at the close of the 18th century. The most important concept of the time was belief in human rationality. Striving for cooperation between equal human beings, with the Revolution motto *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* (Liberty, equality, fraternity), was a key social force. According to the dictionary, the word fraternity or brotherhood means “feelings of friendship, trust, and support between people” (*Macmillan Dictionary*, which refers also to the slogan of the French Revolution) rather than a family relationship.

Even though “fraternity” is regarded as a neutral word, it originally referred to actual brothers. “Sistership” or its equivalents in other languages is not generally regarded as a real word. It is nevertheless well known that women played a large role in the French Revolution and that it was, for instance, a unified procession of protesting women that eventually brought down the King.

If we turn our attention towards Norway, history shows that to a large extent men have been dominant and that it was, for instance, men alone who composed the Constitution in 1814.

Against this backdrop, Moi wishes to look at today's gender structures in Norway. In her project *Vi er alle like (Frihet, likhet og felleskap)* [tr. *We are all equal (Freedom, equality and community)*] she aims to research what significance our use of language have for our perception of gender? How does language influence our behaviour? How much equality is there in Norway? Not least – are men and women equally represented in public life?

Prior to the exhibition, Ebba Moi and Class 9c from Stalsberg School will reflect on these questions. By means of lectures and discussion, the pupils will be challenged to carry out their own surveys, examination and reflection. The processes and results will be presented in Akershus Kunstsenter as a visual representation of the meetings.

### INVITED LECTURERS:

Marianne Solberg, lives and works in Telemark County, Norway. Solberg is an academic-literary author and journalist who primarily works in the field of elite and female culture in Norway 1730–1830.

Lin Prøitz lives and works in Oslo. Prøitz is visiting researcher at the University of Oslo's Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Research and holds a doctorate in media studies. She researches youth and social media with a gender and communication perspective.

The project is produced by Akershus Kunstsenter with support from the Sparebankstiftelsen DNB bank fund and Skedsmo municipality.

*Ebba Moi studied at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. She made her name with process-oriented works with a social profile, in which children and youth contribute to shaping the project through intervention and collaboration. Moi has also worked with art in public spaces and has provided consultancy via KORØ. She is responsible for artistic decoration at Frydenberg School in Oslo, and has had exhibitions including *Ten-thaus Oslo* (2012); *Kristiansand Kunsthall* (2012); *Skulpturarena øst, Oslo* (2011).*

Roghieh Asgari Torvund  
Born 1960, Azerbadjan  
Resident in Oslo

## ROGHIEH ASGARI TORVUND

MOYNA 15 ÅR  
2013, VIDEO



Moyna 15 år. Videostill, 6:31 min.

*Moyna 15 år* [tr. 15-year-old Moyna] is one of five documentary films from the project *The Origin and Loss of Meaning* by Roghieh Asgari Torvund.

The film invites the viewer into a conversation between the artist and the young boy Moyna, where questions regarding religion, confirmation, self-discovery and not least being true to personal ideals, are being discussed.

In a descriptive and sensitive way we gain great sympathy with the young boy's reflections around the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Roghieh Asgari Torvund studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2007) and has a background in both journalism and art. She investigates current topics through various forms of expression such as video, performance, painting and drawing, and she is responsible for several powerful video works and performances in which an observing view presents different point of view.

Torvund's solo exhibitions have included *Bodø kunstforening* (2012); *Galleri 69, Oslo* (2012); *Galleri BOA, Oslo* (2010); *Akershus Kunstsenter* (2008). She has also taken part in a number of group exhibitions, including at *Gallery.NO, New York* (2012); *One Night Only, UKS, Oslo* (2012); *Performance tour in Hedmark County (Norway)* (2011); the *Autumn Exhibition* (2011); the performance festival at *Kunstbanken Hedmark Kunstsenter* (2004, 2005, 2007, 2011); the *Spring Exhibition at Norway's Fotogalleriet* (2009); *Gallery Aferro, New York* (2008); *Kunsthau Dresden* (2008), and *Secession in Vienna* (2007).

Gelawesh Waledkhani  
Born 1982, Xaneqîn, Kurdistan  
Resident in Oslo

## GELAWESH WALEDKHANI

*LET MY HEART BEAT*  
2014, INSTALLATION

— (...) as soon as I said «Kurd» they flogged me all over my body (...) Because of my religion, I had to endure profanities, insults and beating.

Farzad Kamangar

In her project *Let My Heart Beat*, Gelawesh Waledkhani takes as her starting point diary notes and letters by the Kurdish human-rights activist, journalist and teacher Farzad Kamangar. He was arrested in 2006 while travelling to Teheran, and after a 33-month spell in prison during which he was repeatedly tortured, he was executed in 2010.

As a teacher, Kamangar was regarded as a threat because he was able to spread “false” information. As such, he was an influence greatly disliked by the authorities. Kamangar was also involved in PJAK (Party of Free Life Kurdistan), an activist group fighting for a free Kurdistan. PJAK is one of several groups who are regarded as militant and who – by their opponents – are regarded as terrorists.

With neat embroidery, using her own hair as thread, Waledkhani reproduces extracts from Kamangar's diaries from his prison stay, providing an insight into the pain and the consequences that free speech can have in store for individuals.

In addition to the embroidery, Waledkhani presents sound recordings in which Kamangar himself reads his own letters from the prison.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstsenter.

*Gelawesh Waledkhani has a Master's degree from Oslo National Academy of the Arts (2013). She has been featured in several group exhibitions, including Abstraction and Performance at the OSL Contemporary, Oslo, 2013 and Tegnebiennalen, 2012. In addition to her participation in 1814 Revisited – The Past is Still Present she is during 2014 holding an exhibition at the Trafo kunsthall in Asker.*



Be Strong Comrades, 2014. (Text from *Be Strong Comrades* av Farzad Kamangar, Evin Prison, April 2010). Embroidery with hair on aquarell paper, 24x32cm. Photo: Gelawesh Waledkhani.



**MAGO A**

Kjersti G. Andvig  
Born 1978 in Oslo  
Resident in Brussels

Lars Laumann  
Born 1975 in Brønnøysund  
Resident in Brussels

## KJERSTI G. ANDVIG AND LARS LAUMANN

*PRIMA, SEKUNDA, AFRIKA!*  
2014, VIDEO INSTALLATION



Prima, Sekunda, Afrika!. HD video. Video stills

The work explores Norwegian colonial history, both as a colony and as colonisers, from the perspective of the cod.

The seasonal fishing on the Lofoten islands is the world's oldest documented commercial fishing and has formed the basis of industry and livelihood for the residents of coastal northern Norway. Stockfish in particular has an important history; as food provision for the Vikings, it kept slaves alive in Danish-Norwegian slave ships, and it was sent as emergency aid during the Biafra crisis in the 1970s.

Today stockfish is divided into three categories: *Prima*; considered to be the best quality, and from an historical perspective the most valuable. Today it's mostly exported to Italy. *Sekunda*; it is still good quality, but with some cosmetic damages, and mainly sold in Italy and Portugal. *Afrika* is a category that has its origin in the fish you would normally discard, but is now exported to Nigeria, one of the biggest markets for dried cod.

In following the story of the Atlantic cod and looking at other coastal communities the work draws parallels between other young nations and our own history. Were does a nation begin and were does it end?

The work is produced by Akershus Kunstsender with financial support from KORO/URO. Many thanks to Eidsvoll High school for the timber work on the outdoor pavilion!

*Kjersti G. Andvig and Lars Laumann has previously worked together on the project Casino Karasjok, were they among other things won the prize for the most important piece at The Annual Autumn Exhibition, for the work The Sámi People's Flag in Neon (2005). The recent years, Andvig has mainly worked with sculpture and sound, while Laumann's focus has been on video. Both has exhibited widely, separately, and all though not on direct collaborations they have exhibited together at Galuzin Gallery, Oslo; Le Commissariat, Paris; Kunsthall Oslo, Oslo; Grand Union, Birmingham, UK; Crime in Art, Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow.*

Lene Berg  
Born 1965 in Oslo  
Lives in Berlin and New York

## LENE BERG

*COLD CLUSTER*

2014, VIDEO INSTALLATION



Cold Cluster. Photo: Lene Berg

Currently, surveillance is a hot topic of discussion connected to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In *Cold Cluster*, Lene Berg examines this issue from the perspective of the State's surveillance of dissidents during the Cold War in Norway.

As the Lund-Report determined in 1996<sup>1</sup>, a significant number of Norwegian citizens were continuously monitored during the post-war era including from a surveillance post on the eighth floor of Folkets Hus (the People's House) in Oslo. Many of those surveilled were communists or suspected communists but other groups were also registered and monitored because of their political beliefs.

What does political surveillance entail? What does it mean to spy on someone? What effect does surveillance have on a group or an individual? How was Norway's political climate affected?

Berg's project is based on comprehensive research: the goal being to collect stories from those who were monitored as well as from those who were part of the surveillance

teams. *Cold Cluster* is the first of a series of works based on this research. This work will be followed by *Tales of Surveillance in Norway 1948–1989* during the autumn of 2014.

The project was produced by Studio Fjordholm AS in collaboration with Akershus Kunstsenter, with support from KORO/URO (Art in Public Spaces), Fritt Ord and Atelier Nord.

Lene Berg studied film at the Dramatiska Institutet in Stockholm and has since worked as an artist and filmmaker. Berg represented Norway at the Venice Biennial 2013 with the film *Dirty Young Loose*; she has participated in the Manifesta Biennial (2010), the Sydney Biennial (2008) and Transmediale Berlin (2008). Her project, *Stalin by Picasso* or *Portrait of Woman with Moustache*, planned to be shown on the façade of Folketeateret, Oslo was blocked for political reasons in 2008. Her 2012 exhibition at the Henie Onstad Kunstsenter included the premiere of the film *Kopfkino*.

<sup>1</sup>Report to the Storting (Parliament) from the commission, which was appointed in order to investigate allegations of illegal surveillance of Norwegian citizens.

Ahmad Gossein  
Born 1981 in Beirut, Lebanon  
Lives between Beirut and Oslo

## AHMAD GHOSSEIN

*MY FATHER IS STILL A COMMUNIST –  
INTIMATE MEMORIES TO BE PUBLISHED*  
2011, VIDEO

— *When I was a kid I created imaginative stories about a war hero father fighting with the communist Party.*

Ahmad Ghossein

A nation's political climate can have serious repercussion on the day to day lives of ordinary people. In an aching and poetic fashion, Ahmad Ghossein illustrates the love between his parents during the Lebanese Civil War era, 1978–1988. How does one stand living apart? How does one live together when communication is impossible?

Maream is the mother of four. For more than 10 years, her husband Rashid worked abroad, and while the civil war raged, Maream communicated with her husband through tape recordings. She would pass them to people who would courier them to her husband. The tapes reveal intimate and personal details of a relationship evolving over time, and how the relationship grows challenging over time. The tapes also pro-

vide an impression of the political climate in Beirut at the time, and its effects on Maream's daily life. Resolutely, she tries to preserve her memories while seeing her children grow up without a father present.

*Ahmad Ghossein is a filmmaker and video artist, educated at the Lebanese University and the National Academy of Art in Oslo. In 2004, he won the prize for best director at the Beirut International Film Festival for his short Operation Nb. The piece My father is Still a Communist was awarded Best Short at the Tribeca Doha Film Festival 2011. Ghossein had participated in several exhibitions and has directed a number of documentaries, shorts, and videos. His work has been shown at numerous film festivals, museums, and galleries — among them the Berlin Film Festival, MoMA and the New Museum in New York, Oslo Art Hall and Kunstforening in Oslo, Beirut and Dubai Film Festivals.*



My Father is Still a Communist. Videostill.

Trond Hugo Haugen  
Born 1975 in Kristiansand  
Resident in Oslo

## TROND HUGO HAUGEN

*ET RIKSPORTRETT*  
PHOTOGRAPHY, 2014



Trond Hugo Haugen, *Et Riksportrett*, 2014. 300x213cm, photography.

Visual icons often provide an insight into period characteristics and can say something about the social context in which the icon was created. A picture can trigger several associations and can be a reference point around which a whole nation can come together.

The Norwegian parliament hall houses the painting *Eidsvold 1814* by Oscar Wergeland, which has come to be seen as a visual symbol of the Constitution. It is the only painting we know of that depicts the meeting of the national assembly at the time the constitution was written. In that respect, the painting also functions as a kind of document of its time, and since the events took place long before the introduction of photography the picture assumes the role of portraying reality.

This historical painting depicts a particular day in 1814, but also reflects its epoch. The painting was made 70 years after the constitution; as a gift to the Norwegian parliament in 1885 it also served as a contribution to the political debate of that period: the introduction of parliamentarianism. It is precisely the history of the painting that functions as backdrop when Trond Hugo

Haugen, 200 years after the signing of the constitution, creates a new national portrait at Eidsvoll. By reflecting our times, Haugen creates an updated reality.

In his photograph *Et Riksportrett* [tr. *National Portrait*], Norway is scaled down to 112 representatives. The representation in the picture thus equates to the country in which we live today.

*Et Riksportrett* is produced by KORO/URO in association with Akershus Kunstsenter, with support from Fritt Ord and Folk & Film.

*Trond Hugo Haugen studied at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. He works with drawing, artists' books and project-based work in a social, historical and political context. Haugen has had exhibitions in Norway and Sweden, including Galleri Gann, Tegnerforbundet and Sørlandets kunstmuseum, but has primarily worked with the art project Stavanger2018/KA DÅ ITTPÅ (2005–2011). Here he investigated, amongst other things, the role of the artist as an active participant in social debate. Haugen runs the noCUBE publishing house and has been engaged in several artist-run initiatives and institutions.*

Siri Hermansen  
Born 1969 in Geneva, Switzerland.  
Resident in Oslo

## SIRI HERMANSEN

### ADDET ÀNDAGASSII / UNNSKYLD

#### 2014, VIDEO

The conflict between the indigenous Sami people's right to land on the one hand, and commercial interests on the other is subject to scrutiny in Siri Hermansen's project *Addet Àndagassii / Unnskyld* [tr. *Apology*]. The project draws on King Harald's apology from the Norwegian people to the Sami people at the third opening of the Sameting parliament in 1997. In his speech he stated: *The Norwegian state is built on the territory of two national groups [...] Today we must apologise for the wrongs previously inflicted on the Sami people by the Norwegian state through policies of hard 'Norwegianification'*.

Paragraph 110a of the Norwegian Constitution states that "The state authorities are required to make provision to ensure that the Sami peoples can retain and develop their language, their culture and their social life". This paragraph, which was added to the constitution as recently as in 1987, is regarded as an important security for the preservation of the culture of the Sami people.

Despite the protection of the constitution, we still find examples of the northern areas being threatened by different economic interests. To what extent does para-

graph 110a protect Sami culture? The Sami have lived in these areas for hundreds of years and their rights and values are very different to capitalistic interests, including those of mining companies who wish to establish operations on Sami territory.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstsenter and Bildende Kunstneres Hjelpefond.

Siri Hermansen studied at the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris* and *Parsons School of Design, Paris*. During the period 2009–2014 she had a fellowship at the *Oslo National Academy of Arts*. Hermansen works with video and photography focusing on adoption and survival strategies in places that undergo deep social, ecological or political change. Hermansen took part in the *19th Biennale of Sydney* in 2014. She has had a number of solo exhibitions, including at *Oslo Kunstforening* (2013) and the *Stenersenmuseet, Oslo* (2012–13, 2006). In 2013 she took part in group exhibitions including the *Benin Biennale, Careof Gallery* (Italia), *Proartibus Foundation* (Finland) and *Silverlens Gallery* (Singapore).



*Addet Àndagassii / Unnskyld* [tr. *Apology*], 2014. Video still. Photo: Truls Brekke.



Top: Children are singing on 17 May.  
 Under: From the inauguration of Eilert Sundts orphanage, 17 November 1918.

## FRITHJOF HOEL AND RUSTAN ANDERSSON

«THE MISSION»  
2014, INSTALLATION

Frithjof Hoel  
Born 1953  
Resident in Oslo

Rustan Andersson  
Born 1958  
Resident in Heggedal

The «*The Mission*» project attempts to illuminate the relationship between race-biological theory, the project of constructing the Norwegian nation and the significance of this in relation to national identity, the national state and its political institutions. The experiences of 1814 build on the establishment of a distinct state, a constitutional understanding that guarantees the rights of the individual and as such was Europe's most democratic system at that time. At the same time, a new science – physical anthropology was established, which was used to legitimate the national state. This racial thinking served as an important ideological backdrop at the close of the 19th century.

Even though the Norwegian Constitution in principle propagates liberal ideas, it does contain elements inherited from racial thinking that became relevant far later. The Sami and gypsy people suffered considerable discrimination, the Tater people were directly persecuted and in 1934 the Norwegian Parliament passed a sterilisation law that gave the state the right to sterilise individuals who were regarded as "weak minded" and other unwanted peoples such as Taters. This law was repealed as recently as 1977. The question that Hoel and Andersson wish to ask is whether there are links between the building of the nation, nationalism, ethnicity, racial thinking and current political debate.

*Frithjof Hoel studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. His background also includes studies in archeology and Nordic languages. Several of Hoel's projects take as their starting point issues that arise in the interaction between art, history, science and ethics. In several of his projects, Hoel attempts to investigate people's longing for purity which has led to countless genocides and which can be regarded not least as a kind of utopia. Hoel has been exhibited at Oslo Kunstforening (2004), the Holocaust Centre, Oslo (2009), and the Modern Art Museum, Yerevan, Armenia (2013).*

*Rustan Andersson studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and has been working together with Frithjof Hoel for a number of years in the Norske Folketyper [tr. Norwegian population types] project, which looks into such issues as national identity, race and idealism in art. Andersson works with painting, photography, video and graphics, often making references to art history and to the contemporary cultural-political situation. Amongst other places, Andersson has exhibited work at Momentum (2004); the Holocaust Centre, Oslo (2009); Kristinehamns Konstmuseum (2010) and at Kunst rett vest (2013).*

Ane Mette Hol  
Born 1979 in Bodø  
Resident in Oslo

## ANE METTE HOL

### IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ORIGINAL

2014, DRAWING

Hol takes as a starting point for her drawing *In the Absence of the Original* a copy of the copyright law. From there on, she leads our thoughts onwards around creativity and the process of artistic creation.

**— If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.**

George Bernard Shaw

The visual arts will always have a connection with freedom of speech. The quote by George Bernard Shaw is often used as an important point in the discussion around copyright and non-commercial rights. By exploring the relationship between an original and a reproduction, Hol comments on our common cultural heritage in which everything is a result of a continual recycling of things that already exist. Like painstaking hand-made replicas, Hol's drawings also

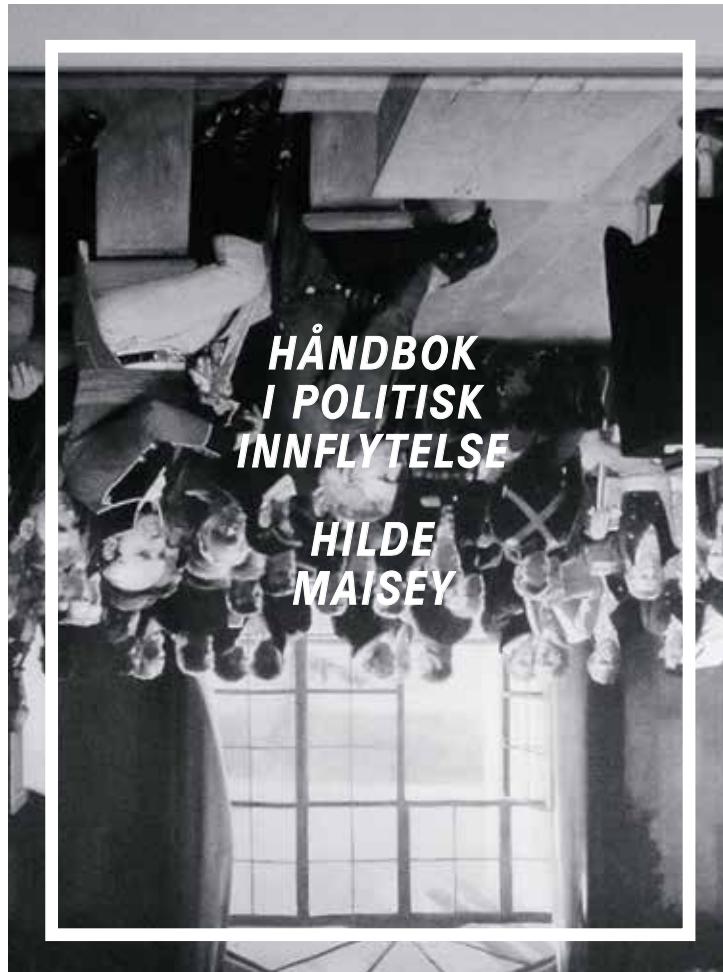
form a commentary on the originals and on the terms of reference represented by the originals. As such, the work offers a reflection around artistic freedom, freedom of speech and copyright.

Ane Mette Hol studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and at Stockholm's University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. She has had a number of exhibitions, both in Norway and overseas. Her most recent exhibitions include *For a Length of Time* at the Motive Gallery, Brussels (Belgium); *Dare 2 Love Yourself, Momentum Biennial in Moss (Norge)*; *Copy, Paste, Add Layer* at Galleri Sinne, Helsinki (Finland), *Ab in die Ecke!* at Städtische Galerie Delmenhorst (Germany); *Prisme* at Oslo's National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design; and *Art Statements in Basel (Switzerland)*. In 2011, Hol was awarded the Statoil Art Award. Her work has been purchased by Oslo's National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design and Sørlandets Kunstmuseum in Kristiansand.



*In the Absence of the Original*, 2014. Pencil, color pencil, pen on paper. 21 x 15 x 0,5 cm. Photo: Ingrid Eggen.

Hilde Maisey  
Born 1968 in Bergen  
Resident in Oslo



Hilde Maisey, *An Activist's Guidebook For Political Influence*, 2014. Book.

## HILDE MAISEY

AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDEBOOK FOR POLITICAL INFLUENCE  
2014, PRINTED PUBLICATION

The greatest changes in Norwegian history have been brought about by massive mobilisation. The labour movement and the women's rights movement are two examples that have led to great changes in how we live in Norway today. A glance at other countries, such as the Ukraine, Libya, Iraq, Syria and Egypt also show the potential influence of the people towards social change. These changes are difficult to reverse: once you have given the people freedom, it is not easily taken away from them.

Democracy depends on a constant challenge of our elected rulers. It is vital that people stand for political office and vote in elections. But how can such mobilisation be achieved in today's society? How should a form of action be chosen and a message communicated?

In her project *An Activist's Guidebook for Political Influence* Maisey aims to examine various factors for mobilisation and lobbying. As such, the book can be regarded as a tool for participation in democracy.

The artist will also hold a workshop during the exhibition period.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstsenter.

*Hilde Maisey holds a Bachelor's degree in photography from the West Surrey College of Art and Design (England). She has taught photography at the Bergen Academy of Art and Design and she is now photography teacher at Elvebakken sixth-form college. Her work has been purchased by, amongst others, the Preus Museum and Arts Council Norway. Maisey works primarily with video and photography. Alongside her artistic practice she is a politician and in recent times she has dedicated her attention to issues of political power and social structures.*

Pierre Lionel Matte  
Born 1961 in Tønsberg  
Resident in Oslo

## PIERRE LIONEL MATTE

*I HAVE A PASSPORT THEREFORE I AM, VERSION II*  
2014, INSTALLATION

The project *I Have a Passport Therefore I am, version II* takes as its starting point a diary kept by the artist during the period 1997–2003, in which he challenged himself to write down his uncensored thoughts on events related to the phenomenon of fear of foreigners.

The exhibition presents a further developed version of the work, based on diary notes from 2013/14, where the artist's encounters with Romany people forms the basis of an observation of his own reactions. How to treat Romany people is a national and international challenge that ultimately concerns each one of us.

Through personal narratives in reconstructed Norwegian passports, the experience of personal identity is related to nationality, fear of foreigners and immigration.

In this work, a passport – which is supposed to guarantee the holder's safety and rights in a country – becomes a carrier of subjugated uncertainty connected to a sense of "us and them".

*Pierre Lionel Matte studied at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, and has also studied in Poland and Chile. His artistic work is characterised by a closer examination of identity; by means of various media and often with a satirical voice he discusses nationalism and fear of foreigners. Matte has had a number of group and solo exhibitions, including Kunstbanken Hamar (2009); Tromsø Kunstforening (2008); Oslo Kunstforening (2007), Trøndelag Senter for Samtidskunst (2007); Prisme, Museet for Samtidskunst, Oslo (2012); The Norwegian Sculpture Biennial (2011), Fantastic Politics, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (2006); Autumn Exhibition (2007, 2005). His work has been purchased by the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Arts Council Norway, Trondheim local authority, Oslo local authority and Gardermoen Airport.*



*I Have a Passport Therefore I am*, 2014.  
Installation view. Photo: Pierre Lionel Matte.

Lars Ø. Ramberg  
Born 1964 in Oslo  
Resident in Berlin and Oslo

## LARS Ø. RAMBERG

*FREMDGEHEN*

2004–ONGOING, INSTALLATION



FREMDGEHEN, 2004–ongoing. Video still.

“Fremdgehen” is an everyday German expression for sexual unfaithfulness. Unlike the Norwegian word “utro” and the corresponding Norwegian word “unfaithful”, which are negatives of faithfulness, the word “Fremdgehen” denotes the actual activity: going (gehen) with a stranger (fremd).

Ramberg puts this term into a larger national context by presenting it as the logo and title for his art project *FREMDGEHEN*. The project deals with the fate of the Norwegian women best known as “German sluts” – the women who had, or were suspected of having, relationships with German soldiers during the 1940–45 occupation.

As part of his research, Ramberg sought out the women who were still living in Berlin and interviewed some of them. In the video shown in the installation, we hear the story of one of those women. She and other women were the victims of extensive revenge attacks, serious assaults, hair shaving and deportation. Thousands were deprived of their Norwegian citizenship, interned in camps and then deported to Germany.

It was the Norwegian exile government in England that had ordered the deportation of the women, which also required a rushed change to the constitution in order to provide legislation to justify the deportations. None of the women were given a trial in a court and as such they were deprived of their basic human rights. The installation shows documents that until recently were classified, showing that women were regarded as the property of the state.

In her analysis, the Canadian art critic Jennifer Allen has placed *FREMDGEHEN* in connection with what the French philosopher Michel Foucaults terms “bio-politics”. In using this term, Foucault draws a distinction between policies primarily concerned with crime and punishment and those that

also take into account population health, vaccination programmes, birth rates and so on. In Allen's eyes, Ramberg's artistry is seen as a reflection around bio-politics, but Ramberg also has another focus: on the basis of collective experience he is investigating the laws that shape the disciplinary structures. Ramberg uncovers and questions the Norwegian nation's lack of self-questioning in the post-war years, right through to the present day. None of these women have received any compensation or been offered their citizenship back. This should be a matter of concern in the constitutional jubilee year 2014.

*Lars Ø. Ramberg works with art projects including installations, photography and video. He has participated in a number of exhibitions, including Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2005); the Sao Paulo Biennial (2006); the Venice Biennial (2007); as well as the group exhibition Big Prison, Kunstpalais Erlangen, Germany (2013). He is responsible for the lighting installation Zweifel (“Doubt”) on the roof of the Palast der Republik in Berlin (2005) and is also the artist responsible for the installation Liberté, which consists of three public toilets shown at, amongst others, the National Museum of Art, Design and Architecture, Oslo, and at the Venice Biennial (2007).*

*FREMDGEHEN was first shown at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, in 2004; at that time as a neon installation with a flag mounted on the museum roof. Since then, the project has been further developed and now also includes a video with accompanying text documents under the same title and performance art with the stamping of passports. The project is ongoing.*

Merete Røstad  
Born 1975 in Narvik  
Resident in Berlin

## MERETE RØSTAD

### VOCABULARY OF THOUGHT

#### 2014, INSTALLATION AND COLLAGE

*Vocabulary of Thought* investigates our freedom of speech, examining the different relations between the state and the individual.

With a collection of collages Røstad invites us into a poetic and visual dialogue, exploring our relationships with power and freedom of expression. Røstad's project *Vocabulary of Thought* takes an exploratory approach, in which an illumination of formal relationships and mechanisms between the state and the people is centre of attention.

Section §100 in the Norwegian Constitution is intended to secure all individuals the right to freedom of speech. This is the point of departure for Røstad's project. By breaking down the definition of §100, Røstad questions how one single law can influence ways of defining structures within our society.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstsenter.

*Røstad works with sculpture, installation and intervention, frequently engaging within public spaces. She studied at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany and at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA) in Liverpool, England, specialising in Art in the public sphere. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally in public space, festivals, galleries and museums. Røstad also practises as a curator, producer and lecturer in the field of Public Art.*



Tolerance, 2014. Collage.

Sten Are Sandbeck  
Born 1969 in Oslo  
Resident at Modum

## STEN ARE SANDBECK

(BEYOND) THE LAW  
2014, OUTDOOR WORK



"It's becoming a good few years now, since me and my nephew were sitting on the train on the long way home from our summerhouse. We'd been down to sail our boat on its maiden voyage from the factory. He may have been around six at the time, I'd guess. And it was there, on the last stretch of our journey, on our way through the woods somewhere unfamiliar to us both - while carelessly chit chatting on this and that - that the inscrutable question arose. I think it was he who first led me to understand that there was something he knew about me; that he in fact knew who I was. At least that's what I assumed he meant. Instantly I became infinitely curious! Without noticing I had attached so many subjective implications to our conversation that I now foresaw an insight of mystical proportions. I had long believed children to be somewhat closer to our origins than grown-ups; time-wise and every other-wise nearer to where we come from, a place both before and beyond our present existence. Consequently I imagined they could also remember more, that they simply were given a more direct insight into the innermost mysteries of our existence! So - he knew who I was! Or should I say - what I essentially was, from the very beginning. Naturally, I immediately demanded him to speak out. He hesitated, - Surely I knew this already? - But no, I said, - you tell me (please...). And while we kept on a little back and forth like this, I became increasingly excited, anticipating his reply, and accordingly insistent on getting it out of him. He giggled a little embarrassed. What kind of strange question was this? Obviously he was worried I was pulling his leg and didn't want to be left the fool. This made him uneasy and the situation a little tense. But my intention was quite the contrary: I was the silly one, just as ignorant as he was enlight-

ened. Of course he was unable to grasp this. And in my eagerness to get in touch with an inaccessible truth, I took his resistance as evidence of the secret being so obvious to him, that he did not realize this was not the case for everyone. That he did not understand I had grown up and forgotten it all, and in the end - so would he. No wonder it was crucial for me to make him speak there and then, at that very moment, while the answer still was hanging in the air, on the tip of the tongue, within the reach of our communication: Who I truly was! I could not give in and pushed him as subtly as I could, so as not to scare him off. I begged, I pleaded, I tempted him. Finally I went so far as to pull the old trick assuring him that - certainly, since I already knew the answer, he might as well say it too. Yes, that was a spineless lie. But I reckoned it would make it less a big deal for him (as it was to me!). For God knows I did not know! And I would give anything for an answer! You will already have guessed it undoubtedly, but at the time it came as a complete surprise to me and something I have had to seriously ponder on later. But right there and then it surely generated a long and releasing laugh... Of course! For still with a little astonished expression of suspicion on his face, finally my little nephew replied, hesitantly and a little questioning, but nevertheless firmly categorical: "You - you are Sten Are" . "

*Sten Are Sandbeck received his education at Bergen Academy of Art and Design and the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Sandbeck's latest projects include solo exhibitions at Trondheim Museum of Art, the Vigeland Museum and Akershus Kunstcenter, as well as participation in the Norwegian Sculpture Biennial and the National Art Exhibition (all 2012/13).*

Charlotte Thiis-Evensen  
Born 1968 in Nyköping, Sweden  
Resident in Oslo

## CHARLOTTE THIIIS-EVENSEN

### THE BATHTUB

2013, TWO CHANNEL VIDEO

A core element of the Norwegian Constitution is human rights, which ultimately are concerned with equality of worth and opportunity across boundaries of gender, age, ethnicity and religion.

*The Bathtub* is a dual-screen video work that represents friendship and tenderness between different people. However, the work also raises questions about the way we perceive different roles and constellations of power. By means of a meditative and peaceful action – carefully pouring water over another person – intimate scenes are played out in a white, neutral room. An African boy pours water over a white European girl, a little boy pours water over an older girl, a dark-skinned girl pours water over a white girl, etc. Through the seemingly every-day and simple action of washing each other, they represent mutual consideration and reconciliation. *The Bathtub* portrays ideas of equality and respect, and affects our preconceptions about them.

Director: Charlotte Thiis-Evensen  
Photo: Marte Vold  
Editing: Bjørn Frode Holmgren  
Actors: Mohammed and Faduma Muhamud,  
Gustav and Andrea Thiis-Evensen

*Charlotte Thiis-Evensen studied literature at the University of Oslo and art at the Academy of Fine Art in Oslo. She has long experience as a journalist and her work is in the borderland between art and media. The boundaries between biography and fiction, art and reality, have always been fluid, and Thiis-Evensen consciously operates within the uncertainties created by this tension. Several of her works, including several documentary films, are concerned with how stated positions of power affect the individual's freedom of action. Thiis-Evensen has participated in a number of exhibitions, including at Kunsternes Hus, Akershus Kunstcenter, Lillehammer Kunstmuseum and OSL Contemporary.*



The Bathtub, 2013. HD video, 8 min. loop. Video still.

Artur Zmijewski  
Born 1966 in Warsaw, Poland  
Lives in Warsaw, Poland

## ARTUR ZMIJEWSKI

*DEMOCRACIES*

2009-ONGOING, 12 CHANNEL VIDEO INSTALLATION



*Democracies*, 2009-ongoing. 12 channel video installation. Courtesy of the artist, Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw and Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich.

*Democracies* is a video installation comprising various documentation of public political events centred on crowds of people. Segments have been filmed in Israel, Poland, Germany, France, Northern Ireland, Austria, and the West Bank, amongst others. The series is the result of Zmijewski's ongoing exploration of the diverse political utilisation of the public space. The videos document a series of events, for example the burial of radical right-wing politician Jürg Haider in Vienna, anti-NATO protests in Strasbourg, protests by The Way of Cross for the Working People in Warsaw, loyalty marches by Irish Protestants in Belfast, Palestinian protests against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Israeli counter-protests.

Zmijewski is interested in the rhetoric and language used in the societal split that often follows public and political events like protests. He takes no sides, but uncovers the problematic nature of democratic processes in the public arena, which, in turn, show serious signs of the possibility that political potential could collapse. In this way, the masses represent the sway of power and the might of the people. Looking at his

historical revolutions, the people occupy a pivotal role, and any representation of power will be contingent upon taming the masses. Control and freedom of expression are left as two key points, an aspect *Democracies* illustrates in a fascinating way.

*Democracies* is produced by Gallery Foksal, Warsaw. For *1814 Revisited – The Past is Still Present* the installation has been realised with support from Bildende Kunstneres Hjelpefond and Hifi-klubben.

Artur Zmijewski is a filmmaker, author, and curator, as well as an active member of the political movement Political Critique in Poland. Several of his pieces explore the human ability to influence one's surroundings, and vice versa: how surroundings give basis for thought and action. Zmijewski has worked with historical trauma, disabilities, and taboos as a way of getting in touch with our collective memory. Zmijewski has participated in *Manifesta* (2002), the Venice Biennale (2005), *Documenta* (2007), and the Istanbul Biennial (2010). In 2012, he curated the Berlin Biennale.



**STALLGÅRDEN**

Lise Bjørne Linnert  
Born 1964 in Oslo  
Resident in Oslo

## LISE BJØRNE LINNERT

### CRUELTY HAS A HUMAN HEART

#### 2013–ONGOING, INSTALLATION



Cruelty Has a Human Heart. Detail. Photo: Lise Bjørne Linnert.

— *The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never make up their minds to be good or evil.*

Hannah Arendt

*Cruelty Has a Human Heart* investigates evil through text, colours, embroidery and dialogue. In this project, Lise Bjørne Linnert collaborates with the philosopher Lars Fredrik Svendsen, author of the book *Ondskapens filosofi* [tr. *The Philosophy of Evil*] in order to explore what lies behind the term and phenomenon of evil.

The project is based on a comprehensive collection of textual material in which a large number of quotes about evil, collected from philosophy, literature, religion and politics, form the basis of dialogue. Through conversations and workshops with different groups of people, the artist and philosopher invite reflection whilst the quotations are being hand written by the participants onto pieces of canvas. The texts are then embroidered.

The work is formed as a site-specific textile installation. The participation of the various individuals is reflected in the embroidered patches of textile with the quotes, installed in layers. In order to access partially concealed quotes, the observer is also invited to physically touch the work.

Linnert is concerned with the opportu-

nity of art to be a voice that can bring challenging or unpalatable questions closer, not to provide definitive answers but in order to enable reflection. Her projects often take place over a longer period of time, in which investigating materials and topics are core elements.

During *1814 Revisited – The Past is Still Present*, the artist and philosopher invite the public to workshops at Stallgården, so that the observer can take part in the ongoing project.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstsenter.

*Lise Bjørne Linnert studied at the Glassell School of Art, Museum of Fine Arts MFAH, Houston, USA. Linnert has given a number of solo exhibitions in Norway and overseas. The Desconocida Unknown project is her best-known work, shown in amongst others the Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool, UK (2013), Visual Centre for Contemporary Art, Carlow, Ireland (2012); Musée Bernadotte/Fine Arts Museum, Pau, Frankrike (2011); Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, UK (2010); Hå gamle Prestegard, Jæren, Norway (2010); The Gallery at University for the Creative Arts, Epsom, UK (2009); Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, USA (2006).*

Pierre Lionel Matte  
Born 1961 in Tønsberg  
Resident in Oslo

## PIERRE LIONEL MATTE

NORWAY 2.0

2006–2007/2014, WALL OBJECT

In his artistic work, Pierre Lionel Matte has dealt with issues related to nationality, belonging and identity. Through his project *Norway 2.0*, Matte comments on Norway's self-image as a prosperous nation.

A passport represents an authoritative categorisation of people, and certain criteria need to be fulfilled in order for a passport to be issued. At the same time, we may ask what a passport really says about a nation's identity. Can the design of the passport tell us anything about how the country will be regarded? Since the 1970s, the Norwegian passport has undergone great changes, both in terms of design and material quality.

The work *Norway 2.0* consists of a processed version of the artist's old passport from the 1970s. By means of a physical "facelift" of the original passport, layer upon layer of filler, base, oil painting, silk-screen printing and finally varnish, Matte illustrates the process of change that Norway and the Norwegian self-image have undergone during the past 40 years. At the same time, the old document has been

transformed into a unique work of art, with its craft-based re-working. A photograph of the original passport is displayed next to the processed version.

*Pierre Lionel Matte studied at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, and has also studied in Poland and Chile. His artistic work is characterised by a closer examination of identity; by means of various media and often with a satirical voice he discusses nationalism and fear of foreigners. Matte has had a number of group and solo exhibitions, including Kunstbanken Hamar (2009); Tromsø Kunstforening (2008); Oslo Kunstforening (2007), Trøndelag Senter for Samtidskunst (2007); Prisme, Museet for Samtidskunst, Oslo (2012); The Norwegian Sculpture Biennial (2011), Fantastic Politics, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (2006); Autumn Exhibition (2007, 2005). His work has been purchased by the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Arts Council Norway, Trondheim local authority, Oslo local authority and Gardermoen Airport.*



Norway 2.0, 2006–2007/2014 Photo: Pierre Lionel Matte.

Victor Mutelekeshu  
 Born 1976 in Chililabombwe, Zambia  
 Resident in Oslo



The City on the Mount, 2014, detail. Photo: Victor Mutelekeshu.

## VICTOR MUTELEKESHA

*THE CITY ON THE MOUNT*  
 2014, WALL INSTALLATION

When the Norwegian constitution was written in 1814 it was among the most liberal and radical democratic constitutions in the world. Today's version has been revised a number of times, and in its present form the constitution is intended to guarantee equal rights for all, universal suffrage and the recognition of minority groups.

These values form the basis of Victor Mutelekeshu's work; a topographic Norwegian map with Eidsvoll as the highest point. The relief has been made on the basis of interviews that Mutelekeshu has carried out with the law professor Eivind Smith about the Norwegian constitution and the changes it has undergone during its 200-year-long history.

Against a gloomy backdrop, Mutelekeshu counterpoints the democratic values represented by the constitution with the moral and ethical issues relating to the pillar of the welfare state: the Norwegian Oil Fund.

By emphasising the place where the constitution was written, Mutelekeshu opens for interpretations around democratic values and the Norwegian welfare state. The work illuminates the duality between democracy and constitution on the one hand and wealth, welfare and ethics on the other; inviting reflection on these issues.

The work is produced with support from Akershus Kunstcenter.

*Victor Mutelekeshu studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts and Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce, Lusaka, Zambia. Mutelekeshu has exhibited at BOA, Oslo (2012); Small Projects, Tromsø (2012); Gallery Palazzo Tito, Venice (2010). Mutelekeshu has also participated in a number of group exhibitions, including OpenArt, Malmø (2013); the Dhakar Biennial (2012); Focus 10, Art Basel (2009) and the Havana Biennial (2010).*

Morten Slettemeås  
Born 1975 in Telemark, Norway  
Resident in Oslo

## MORTEN SLETTEMEÅS

ROCKERY

2014, PAINTINGS

In today's media-based society we encounter a mass of visual impressions. Where all the information comes from is often not clear, and what remains in our consciousness is difficult to predict. Morten Slettemeås draws inspiration from and appropriates fragments from different topics which he incorporates into his work.

At the same time, this is not a matter of pure appropriation; his work is funded in a critical attitude to the reference material. Through conscious "destruction" of his points of reference and the addition of more subjective elements, Slettemeås forms fragmented themes and unexpressed narratives which invite an understanding of society in the light of history.

Slettemeås' project consists of paintings and collages, and the project is produced with support from Akershus Kunstcenter.

*Morten Slettemeås studied at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. His solo exhibitions have included Luis Adelantado, Mexico City (2013); Museo de la Ciudad Querétaro, Santiago, México (2011); Galleri Trafo, Asker, Norway (2010); Bomuldsfabrikken Kunsthall, Arendal, Norway (2006); Transit Art Space, Stavanger (2008). Slettemeås has participated in a number of group exhibitions including the Stenersenmuseet Museum, Oslo; Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Kristiansand; Rogaland Kunstmuseum, Stavanger; Haugar Vestfold Kunstmuseum, Tønsberg; Lillehammer Kunstmuseum and Trondheim Kunstmuseum.*

*Slettemeås' work is represented at the Galeria Luis Adelantado in Valencia, Spain and México City, México. He was also represented at Galleri GAD, Oslo, between 2007 and 2012, before the gallery closed down and at Transit in Stavanger during the period 2006–2009. Slettemeås' work has been purchased by Sørlandets Kunstmuseum, Malmö Konstmuseum, Statoil, RCCL, SIC (Stavanger International Collection) and Arts Council Norway, as well as a number of private collections in Norway and overseas.*



Untitled (Blue, Pink & Idiot), 2014. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300 cm. Photo: Morten Slettemeås.



**OTHER VENUES**

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**OUTSIDE MAGO A, EIDSVOLL VERK**  
**KJERSTI G. ANDVIG <sup>AND</sup> LARS LAUMANN**  
*PRIMA, SEKUNDA, AFRIKA!*  
 2014, VIDEO INSTALLATION

In a wooden pavilion outside Mago A at Eidsvoll Verk, the film *Prima, Sekunda, Afrika!* will be shown, made by Kjersti G. Andvig and Lars Laumann. The audience will thus be invited to come into a work that is a commentary on Norway from the Viking era to the present day.

The work is produced by Akershus Kunstsenter with support from KORO/URO. The pavilion was built by pupils from the carpentry course at Eidsvoll High school.

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**FAÇADE OF OSLO CENTRAL STATION**  
**TROND HUGO HAUGEN**  
*ET RIKSPORTRETT*  
 2014, PHOTOGRAPHY ON A BANNER

On the basis of the painting *Eidsvold 1814* by Oskar Wergeland, Trond Hugo Haugen will discuss the iconic image that we all have of the Constitution. What does this picture tell us and how can we today visualise Norway? The photograph *Et Riksportrett* [tr. *A National Portrait*], Haugen's visualisation of Norway in 2014, will be shown on the façade of Oslo Central Station. The original will also be presented in the exhibition at Mago A in Eidsvoll Verk.

*Et Riksportrett* is produced by KORO/URO in collaboration with Akershus Kunstsenter, and with support from Fritt Ord and Folk & Film.

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**ON THE RIVER BY MAGO A**  
**STEN ARE SANDBECK**  
*(BEYOND) THE LAW*  
 2014

On the river below the Eidsvoll Building floats a large, amorphous mass, moored to an artificial islet. A net keeps a jumble of things, large and small, together in a bundle, loosely held in place between the tug of its mooring and the pull of the stream...

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**LILLESTRØM TOWN CENTRE**  
**ALEX WHITE MAZZARELLA <sup>AND</sup> ARTEFACTING**  
*CONNECT*  
 2014, SOCIAL PROJECT

Alex White Mazzarella, founder and leader of the Artefacting group, is concerned with social dialogue. Mazzarella will be staying in Lillestrøm in August and together with artists, students and youth from the town he will establish communication and conversation with the town's population at large concerning our democratic values and about the local community in Lillestrøm. The project will consist of communication towers distributed around the town, with the towers serving as visualised meeting points for dialogue.

The project is produced by Akershus Kunstsenter, with support from the Sparebankstiftelsen DNB [DNB savings-bank foundation] and Skedsmo municipality.

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**STALSBERG SCHOOL, CLASS 9C**  
**EBBA MOI**  
*VI ER ALLE LIKE (FRIHET, LIKHET OG FELLESKAP)*  
 2014, SOCIAL PROJECT

By means of dialogue over a period with school pupils at Stalsberg school, Ebba Moi wishes to challenge the pupils to reflect over gender and social structures. The project *Vi er alle like (frihet, likhet og felleskap)* [tr. *We are all equal (freedom, equality and community)*] draws lines from the composing of the Constitution at Eidsvoll in 1814, a process in which only men were permitted to take part, and examines equality in a historical perspective. What is the position of power and representation today? What structures lie behind our choices and views on gender? Parts of the project will be documented and presented in Akershus Kunstsenter as part of the exhibition.

The project is produced by Akershus Kunstsenter, with support from the Sparebankstiftelsen DNB [DNB savings-bank foundation] and Skedsmo municipality.

## ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

Welcome to the opening party, debates, artist talks, workshops, and not least the Constitution jubilee celebration "Grunnlovsfest"!

GRUNNLOVSFEST is a collaboration with Akershus County Council, which in turn is collaborating with various bodies. The events are concentrated around the opening weekend of the exhibition (10 and 11 May) and its final weekend (13 and 14 September). For a detailed program for these two weekends, see [www.akershus.no](http://www.akershus.no).

### OPENING PARTY

On Saturday 10 May we invite you to an opening party for *1814 Revisited – The Past is Still Present*. There will be shuttle buses to and from Oslo, with stops in Lillestrøm and Akershus Kunstsenter. The opening party will be held in Mago A. This will include opening speeches, light refreshments and a mini-concert with the project TRE, which includes the musicians Bjarne Kvinnsland, Eirik Raude and Markus Hernes.

**TIME:** Saturday 10 May 3pm

**WHERE:** Meet up at Oslo Central Station, side facing the sea

**WHAT:** Bus to the opening party from Oslo Central Station at 3pm

Showing at Akershus Kunstsenter 3.30–4.30pm

Bus Akershus Kunstsenter to Eidsvoll Verk at 4.30pm

Showing at Stallgården 5.15pm

Opening speeches at Mago A at 6pm by political editor Marie

Simonsen and Vice Chair of the County Council Lars Salvesen

Barbeque and refreshments. Free food and drinks.

Concert with TRE 8.15–8.30pm

Buses return to Oslo at 10 and 11pm

There are also regular trains leaving between Eidsvoll Verk and Oslo Central Station. See [www.ruter.no](http://www.ruter.no) for timetables.

### TRE – DEMOCRACY THROUGH MUSIC

In 2012, five Lime trees by the Eidsvoll Building were felled. The trees have now been turned into percussion instruments by the woodwork artist Trond Solberg. The instruments create the conceptual framework for the TRE exhibition, inspired by the ternary principle of the division of power (the word "tre" in Norwegian means both "tree"/"wood" and "three") The musicians responsible for the concert are Bjarne Kvinnsland, Eirik Raude and Markus Hernes. The opening event is a collaboration with Akershus County Council.



Illustration of TRE

## DEBATES

### THE "GERMAN SLUTS" – A BLACK MARK IN OUR POST-WAR HISTORY

In Norway the expression "German slut" is a familiar one, but what does the term really mean and who were the girls who were given this unflattering designation? What was the role of the Norwegian state in the post-war treatment of these women and are there traces of gender discrimination in the state's actions?

Through various lectures we will attempt to understand how over 10 000 women could have been interned in various camps in Norway after the Second World War, and how many of them ended up being deported to Germany with a one-way ticket in their suitcase.

Various angles will be presented in the debate and a broadly-based team of speakers will guarantee an exciting evening, whether you are interested in the historical, legal or gender-related aspects of the treatment of the "German sluts".

The exhibition derives from the work *FREMDGEHEN* by Lars Ø. Ramberg, which is being shown in Mago A at Eidsvoll Verk.

For date, place and more detailed programme, see [www.akershuskunstsentener.no](http://www.akershuskunstsentener.no), or on Facebook under 1814 Revisited. The debate is sponsored by Fritt Ord.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF SURVEILLANCE

Through the seminar *The Consequences of Surveillance* we wish to focus on one of the great challenges in society: the phenomenon of surveillance and the consequences this entails for us as individuals.

Surveillance is a feature of our modern age, as we see illustrated in a tragic-comic way in the Chaplain film *Modern Times* from 1936. Here we are shown a scenario from the life of a factory worker, in which the director follows the employees' work by means of countless surveillance cameras. The goal of the leadership is naturally the greatest possible productivity from the workers.

Another person who has treated surveillance in art is George Orwell. In his famous novel *1984* from 1948, he describes a future scenario in which the 'thought police' constantly keep watch over the people. Behind the surveillance is a non-personified Big Brother, a party that governs the country, the people and all their movements.

Surveillance as a phenomenon is often regarded as a security and anti-criminal measure, but a clear sense of power also rests behind it. In the seminar we will attempt to shed light on various aspects of surveillance, from matters of changes in personal behaviour to broader social structures. How does it affect us as people when others can observe our behaviour, whether it be through storing traffic data or video cameras in public spaces. Do we find changes in behaviour? And what becomes of personal liberty when all citizens are defined as a potential threat to society?

For date, location and more detailed programme, see [www.akershuskunstsentener.no](http://www.akershuskunstsentener.no), or on Facebook under 1814 Revisited. The debate is sponsored by Fritt Ord.

## ARTIST TALKS



### EBBA MOI

Ebba Moi invites us to discussion and lecture about her project *Vi er alle like*, which was carried out in collaboration with class 9C at Stalsberg School during the period March-May 2014. The talk will be accompanied with a lecture by the feminist online magazine *Under Arbeid* [tr. *Under Construction*]. Based on women's challenges during 1814, *Under Arbeid* will discuss the situation for the youth today, and how the future of women's rights will look like.

DATE: THURSDAY 22 MAY 6-7PM  
IN AKERSHUS KUNSTSENTER



### TROND HUGO HAUGEN

Trond Hugo Haugen has taken as a starting point Oscar Wergeland's famous painting *Eidsvold 1814*, which stands as a visualisation of the Norwegian Constitution. In his presentation, Haugen will talk about the starting point for his project *Et Riksportrett* [tr. *A National Portrait*], in which he has brought together a cross section of the Norwegian population for a picture of Norway in the year 2014.

DATE: SATURDAY 6 JULY 1-2PM IN MAGO A



### PIERRE LIONEL MATTE

The project *I Have a Passport Therefore I am* takes as its starting point a diary kept by Matte during the period 1997-2003, in which he challenged himself to write down his uncensored thoughts relating to events connected to the phenomenon of fear of foreigners.

The work that will be displayed at Mago A is a new version based on diary notes from 2013/14, where the artist's encounters with Romany people form the basis of an observation of his own reactions. The treatment of Romany people is a national and international challenge that ultimately concerns every one of us. Through personal stories in reconstructed Norwegian passports, a sense of one's own identity is coupled to issues of nationality, fear of foreigners and immigration.

DATE: SUNDAY 31 AUGUST 1-2PM IN MAGO A

For more information about the events, see [www.akershuskunstsender.no](http://www.akershuskunstsender.no).

## WORKSHOP



### LISE BJØRNE LINNERT

In this project, Lise Bjørne Linnert collaborates with the philosopher Lars Fredrik Svendsen, author of the book *Ondskapens filosofi* [tr. *The Philosophy of Evil*]. Together they examine what lies behind the concept and phenomenon of evil. In this event, Bjørne Linnert tells us more about the background for her project, how it has been carried out and her thoughts about the process and future work with the ongoing project *Cruelty Has a Human Heart*. There will also be a lecture with the philosopher Svendsen, and the event will end with a workshop in which the participants themselves will be given the opportunity to write quotes for the work.



DATE: SUNDAY 15 JUNE AT 1-3PM IN STALLGÅRDEN



### HILDE MAISEY

Politics is governed by people, and all aspects of politics are influenced by different mobilisations. The workers' movement and the women's movement are two examples, but society consists of countless small mobilisations such as parents fighting for a safer route to the school, youngsters fighting for the provision of leisure activities, cultural organisations seeking culture funds, etc.

In her political activities, the artist Hilde Maisey has learned and experienced a great deal in terms of what means to employ to promote a case. Through her book *An Activist's Guidebook for Political Influence*, which is presented in the exhibition, she shares her knowledge with the readers.

In the workshop, Maisey will talk about the involvement that lies behind the handbook, and by means of tasks and discussions with the participants, the event will be a mixture of artist presentation and workshop. The goal is to engage people in political activity and to reinforce participants' knowledge about how to successfully promote a cause.

DATE: SATURDAY 6 SEPTEMBER AT 2-5PM IN MAGO A

All the events are free of charge. For information about further events, follow [www.akershuskunstcenter.no](http://www.akershuskunstcenter.no) or on Facebook. There will be up-to-date information about all events during the entire exhibition period.



# ESSAYS

EDITED BY KJETIL RØED

# ON SPEAKING WITH TWO TONGUES: THE LAW AND ART



KJETIL RØED

## 1.

We are almost half-way through 2014. As I write, the year has only just begun, but by now there has certainly been any number of acts of praise and celebrations – exhibitions, books, speeches – speaking of how fantastic are the 200-year-old Norwegian constitution and Norway itself. We Norwegians are a self-satisfied race. We like to present ourselves as “the best country in the world” and as champions of justice and a futuristic climate policy. Such rose-tinted stories – which seldom tell the whole truth – are not what we are concerned with here.

The essays in this catalogue, by Arve Kleiva, Vanessa Place, Espen Stueland and myself, are therefore not a homogeneous and well-meant body of writing but are idiosyncratic writings, full of gaps and pauses for thought. *Dot* rather than *study*. Dissents rather than consensus.

In Ahmad Ghossein’s video *My Father is Still a Communist. Intimate Memories to be Published* (2011), we hear the story of the artist’s parents who, even though they were separated in space, still communicated with each other through messengers and the exchange of letters. In this way the connection, love, even, between them was kept alive.

It is perhaps not the direct and self-evident fellowship that we find, or use, in art’s celebration of the law, but rather the by-ways that lead onwards to other alliances, other laws, other coordinates for reality, for what we can see, taste, hear, touch and speak about.

“Politics begins by creating space for people and things that are in the shadows, those or that who end up in a blind zone”, as the philosopher Jaques Rancière (b.1940) says in his *Hatred of Democracy* (2007). Politics begins

when the workers – who are set to work and to allow politicians and intellectuals to do the job for them – begin to talk and to take their places. When the subjects and objects that have not formerly been visible began to take their places and demand visibility. Democracy is measured, according to Rancière, by the degree of visibility that the invisible one(s) can achieve. Democracy is not about agreement but about disagreement – genuine disagreement. That is why alliances are so important: through friendship and love – and even fear, if Arve Kleiva is to be believed – we can think and act contrary to the sleepy majority and the realities of ruling.

## 2.

What sort of connection is there between *The Laws of Norway* and art? What kind of relationship exists between law and art? What is an artist allowed to do and what sort of art can the law accommodate? What is made visible by the combination of these fields, and what is obscured?

The space between law and art: an unstable, paradoxical, unmanageable space. If we look at the history of art, it is as a rule those aspects of a work of art that are considered to be immoral or an attack on what is established that are measured against, and gain a formative relationship with, the law. A groundbreaking event thus occurred when Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) in 1573 painted *The Last Supper*, a picture that was supposed to replace a canvas by Titian, destroyed in a fire in 1571. Veronese’s painting, however, contained so many realistic and every-day details – large quantities of food, enthusiastic diners, playful animals – that he was summoned to appear

before an inquisition court.

He was told that such a sacred subject could not contain such worldly elements. His whole career, or in the worst case his life, was at stake. The work had to be re-done and “translated” to correspond with the letter of the law. Veronese ended up by turning the picture into a feast, *without* Christ, a popularistic and happy theme, and he was not charged again. *The Feast in the House of Levi* was the new title. However, it was more than the subject that had changed.

The modified subject carried with it the letter of the law, as a secret gift from the ruling powers, invisible, written in an empty space, like the *Erased Christ*. This painting now hangs in the Gallerie dell’Accademia in Venice. Something vanished, but what went made something else visible: the very command of the law. The difference between the original and final work speaks of the force to which Veronese was subjected. Force came to view in the threat of loosing everything. The law showed its real face: it has the last word. If this is not borne in mind then it can no longer defend you – and your property, status, life and freedom can be taken from you.

It is in those moments when art appears to challenge the established order that it is brought in before the law. It is often quite simply a question of censorship, but also of the power of definition: the power of holding the rights to the coordinates of reality. The key to life. If art flexes its elbows, if it puts spokes in the wheels of the monopoly of power over what is real and what is not, then it needs to be corrected. The question is how the correction is to be put into practice.

The law hauled art over the coals in another way when in 1929 George Grosz (1893–1959) drew Christ on the Cross with military

boots and gas mask, under the title “Shut up and keep serving the cause!” The court at the time regarded this noble theme as having been blasphemously treated, but the work was eventually recognised as satirical and a “critical commentary on the war”. An updated legal body had been given greater room for judgement, a more flexible framework for power, more ways of defining truth. The law had acquired more languages and what formerly had been regarded as a threat was now, idiomatically, included in the repressive tolerance of the state, if we can use Herbert Marcuse’s terms. The thing that was visible through its absence in Veronese’s painting, had in the hands of Grosz become an institutional invisibility.

A particularly interesting example of the relationship between law and art arose when the photographer Edward Steichen (1879–1973) wanted to import to the United States a sculpture by Constantin Brâncuși (1876–1957) called *Bird in Flight* (1928). The normal tax dispensation for a work of art was not accepted in Brâncuși’s case. The customs officials regarded the object to be imported not as a sculpture but as a disguised machinery part (or similar), which was under all circumstances taxable. Steichen took the customs service to court to challenge their description of the work of art as “an object of utility”, as their lawyer described it during the court case. In other words, the question was not whether something was legal or illegal but to what extent a court of law could determine whether or not something was a work of art. A judge is not a judge of taste, but could he in this instance *avoid* being so? What happens when a court of law *has to* judge on aesthetic matters? The case is noteworthy since Steichen’s lawyers proposed one view, arguing that a sculp-

ture does not need to imitate nature, whilst the opposing lawyer argued that the absence of figuration also meant the absence of art and thus of artistic quality. When the judge found in favour of Steichen, this created precedence. By trying an abstract sculpture in court, art in itself had undergone a symbolic revolution.

What was the significance of this question, and of the result of the case, for the general state of art? Is there a more general connection along the same lines between aesthetics and law?

### 3.

The French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard’s (1924–1998) term *le Différend* is of interest in this respect: the term denotes non-comparable methods of understanding reality which nevertheless *have to* be determined in a legal or other framework. Lyotard’s starting point is also the court of law. A main example is the court cases in which Aborigines took the Australian state to court without having the ability to present their case in a language that applicable for legal discourse: for the Aborigines the country was occupied by the spirits of their ancestors, while for the colonists this kind of mythical talk was legally irrelevant. The former group believed that their land had been taken from them, while the colonists, whose syntax defined the applicable legal language, believed that the country rightfully belonged to *them*. It did not help matters that the aborigines did not have a functional or modern concept of property: they were not capitalists.

In such a situation there is no common platform that enables the one language to be translated to the other. The example could just

as well have been taken from another colony and another colonist. The point is that a *Différend* is formed when the situation demands the resolution of something that cannot be resolved. A legal judgement is just such a reduction of the complexity of reality into an executive final word: judgement. Force is exercised by the party that decides and the language that prevails. It is no secret that money, property and power often have a finger in the pie. A victim, therefore, is not, as Lyotard reminds us, the losing party *per se*, but the one who has lost the ability of articulation such that a judging authority has to listen, to be a worthwhile legal subject.

Another example, which radicalises the first, is the historian Robert Faurisson (b. 1929), who refused to accept any evidence of the Holocaust other than testimony from individuals who were actually gassed to death in concentration camps. The truth, the credible witness, is here localised not only in a non-translatable, a language that does not correspond to that of the court, but outside of biological life as such. In this way, Faurisson shuts the mouth of a possible witness – if we are to follow his logic, that is – since the only people who could have convinced him are in fact dead. The overlord defines not only the terms of truth, but truth itself. Force is complete.

As such, the law is concerned with upbringing, but also with being well brought-up. Obeying a law is concerned with keeping a steady course, with doing what is expected in the place that you are. What happens when someone does something else? What happens when one is *out of place*? Is it still possible to be heard, even though one’s language falls outside of the law?

## 4.

Back to the start, to 1814. Because what is a constitution?

A Norwegian encyclopaedia states that “A constitution is a law containing fundamental rules about the way a country is governed and its political system, and which regulates particularly important aspects of how its political system operates. A constitution also regulates how ordinary laws are created. Constitutions are regarded as laws of a ‘higher order’. They are intended to create stability and predictability in the rule of state and also to regulate the way in which ordinary laws are agreed and amended”. The constitution is thus a meta-law, or a collection of meta-laws.

A law is a text that expresses not only one’s rights, but also the things to which one *does not* have a right. The things that are forbidden or compulsory. Even though the Norwegian constitution was radical in its time and more liberal than most other laws of its period, it was not a democratic body of text that was composed. It is well known, but needs repeating, if only in order to think once more through its wording. When the worthy gentlemen at Eidsvoll put pen to paper with the constitution, it was not only women who were disbarred from voting but also all people without property. The constitution in 1814 gave voting rights to state officials, city gentlemen and farmers, which meant that around 40% of all men over the age of 25 could vote the following year. It was the gentry and landed farmers who were able to take part in public life, in democracy. Which therefore by definition was not a democracy. Even worse, Jews were disbarred from the kingdom until Henrik Wergeland got the law repealed in 1860 through his pamphlets *Jøden* [tr. *The Jew*]

(1842) and *Jødinden* [tr. *The Jewess*] (1844).

The law has an apparently subject-less and neutral meta-language, but this does not stop it from expressing power and self-interest. On the contrary, a number of people – including Walter Benjamin – have pointed out that the basis and origin of the law is irrational and anything but democratic. Arve Kleiva claims in *Ruin* that the law has an essential connection with force: with the threat of being deprived of property or freedom. Those who do not obey will be punished. They are deprived of property or the right of speech, like the Aborigines in Australia. It is not only the body that is locked away, but also language. “The law exists only through the language of the law”, as Vanessa Place writes in her text *Constitution = Conception*.

For Place, it is not a matter of how art behaves or what it turns into when it is confronted by the law, but rather the reverse: what the law is when it is confronted by art. In a sense we can say that she presents art as the judge and the law as art. She turns relationships on their head. Is, she asks, a constitution a *performative* concept which *creates* that very reality that it is supposed to regulate? Can it not be regarded and considered as conceptual art? The question is an interesting one. To put it at an extreme, a situation arises in which art and the law discover the same rhythm, without the one oppressing the other.

In the same way as contextual art discusses and dramatises the idea of art, the constitution stages the citizen within a framework of a democratic, national collective. The constitution, Place suggests, is a writing that is both the beginning and the end, a writing that gathers the citizens together into an imagined community.

Nevertheless, the relationship between

the law and art is never concerned only with law and art, but also with the expanded context of the visible relationship. In his book *Grundsætninger fra Grunnlovens § 110b — Sorgsang i anledning grunnlovsjubileet*, Espen Stueland takes the celebration literally in this sense, in drawing aspects of the constitution and its failings forward to our time. He goes back to the letter of the constitution and deals with how the original wording is imitated in order to give new added paragraphs a similarity with the literary style of 1814 – in other words, a kind of styled, reverse revisionism. He also deals with the elementary function of the constitution as a design for living.

A jubilee is not primarily an opportunity to rest on one’s laurels, if Stueland is to be believed, but to investigate the conditions for the object of celebration. He refers to section § 110b of the Constitution, where we find that “All people have a right to an environment that ensures health and to nature in which production ability and diversity is retained. Resources are to be disposed on the basis of a long-term and broad view, which will also take care of this right for future generations”. Does this paragraph refer to something that outranks the constitution itself? To something higher than our national rules – even to something higher than art and all living things? Stueland’s text is thought-provoking here too, because he takes force seriously: the force that we exert against nature and against ourselves as a species.

This kind of questioning of the law touches on the very core of art, in that art too has a responsibility to the world in which we live and cannot divorce itself from universal environmental catastrophe. The fundamental force, which according to the constitution we have a right to know about, is of concern to

everyone. Towards the end of his essay, Stueland writes about environmental art, by which he means a strategic use of art and literature to nuance and build up our awareness of the destruction of nature. Visual art and written word can, he believes, contribute to draw us in the right direction. Because it is here, with our ability to imagine the world in new ways, that action and dynamic thinking begin.

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), who has a key position in Place’s thinking, devoted his whole literary output to explaining the difference between what is symbolic and what is real. Whilst symbolism incorporates the whole aggregate of institutions, laws, customs and narratives – in short, everything that makes us into ourselves – nature’s decay is the decay of symbolism itself. Without nature there is no culture. Without culture there is no nation, no citizens. In this sense, the acute condition in which we find ourselves, and which Stueland describes so passionately, is the reality that can be seen through the cracks of symbolism.

The overriding question concerning the relationship between *The laws of Norway* and art is therefore not only what is art and what is law, but what other relationships are created by the connections between them, what reality is concealed and what is made visible. In addition, which paradoxes art can explain in the law and which cracks in democracy are made visible when art frames reality’s various regimes of incompatible language in a self-contradictory picture. Because even though the law threatens with force, there is always a place in art for alliances with those voices that are not included when the law is to be determined. In art there is space for a voice from outside the law that may perhaps infect the law if we make it audible.

If there be one thing we should wish for art when we are celebrating the law, it is that we should attain a better dialogue with the other part in the *Différend*. Voices that are willing to build bridges across the hegemonic coordinates of reality, to form alliances, friendship and the bonds of love for which the language of governance has no room. If there become enough people, or they form the right connections, then it may be possible to form a precedence as Edward Steichen did when he – with Brâncuși as a tool – took issue with the sculpture views of the American customs service.

## 5.

So what happens then, when the texts are read and the art has been viewed?

We could take seriously the assessment of the historian and politician Ernst Sars (1835–1917) in his *Historisk indledning til Grundloven* (1882): “one has long ago acknowledged that it was not so much external as internal reasons that made the national and spiritual life of the Norwegian people perish, paralysing their ability and determination to maintain their independence. The blame for Norway’s fall is no longer laid at the feet of others: the people themselves can now receive this”.

He continues: “Freedom and independence are a commodity that must always be at a high price; it is no use haggling for them; if it sometimes appears that these advantages are to be had at what is termed a bargain price then this is merely an illusion; what has not been paid for in advance must so absolutely be paid for retrospectively”.

Dear reader, Dear Norway, Dear Norwegian men and women: Best wishes. And happy reading.

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*In art there is space  
for a voice  
from outside the law  
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if we make it audible.*

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Kjetil Røed

# DEBRIS

ARVE KLEIVA

TRANSLATION BY HAARNACK-ARCHIV

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*The laws of fate – misfortune and  
guilt – are elevated by law to measures of  
the person; it would be false to assume that  
only guilt is present in a legal context; it is  
demonstrable that all legal guilt  
is nothing other than misfortune.*

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Walter Benjamin

The law relates directly to violence. Indirectly, this is confirmed by the courts, the sentence, the penalty.

The law appropriates violence. You may change the law and legal practice, the nature and extent of punishment. The state's claim to a monopoly on violence will not change.

Can art relate directly to violence, just as the law relates directly to violence?

Art relates to the law; as equity art is related to the law, thus to violence. The question will be whether art can relate to the law in other respects than as property.

As property, art relates directly to the law. The law protects property by violence. Violence delineates property boundaries, establishes and maintains the connection between a signature (or several) and the living body of a natural person (or several), in short a legal person.

Whoever breaks the law will also relate directly to violence. Under the law legislator, court, and offender all will relate directly to violence.

Violence is exercised by someone, upon someone. If this trait of violence is described as a grid of signatures (one is writing upon another, etc), the description of civil (legal) society – the monopoly of violence – is simplified as a comprehensible link between the living, and (actually) the dead.

Violence is regulating ownership, along the lines drawn by the law. For a bystander with no property other than his or her own body and the debt attached to it, the outcome is simultaneously obvious and flickering.

1814, 1914, 2014. The outbreak of revolutions at the turn of the 18th century, establishing constitutions based on natural law, broke down with World War I in the communist & fascist revolutions following. Hence

the 20th century was a state of war concluding in high concentrations of property – in short, our time & age. As these constitutions celebrate their bicentenaries, like so many pearls on a string, they also celebrate a centenary of obsolescence; not replaced by a new and different law but by the regime that law opened up and now serves: the violence-property relation – the rule of property, if you like, or that of violence.\*

The field of politics is in fact the economy. Economic actions are regulated by the law; property has priority in the law and is ultimately synonymous with violence. Violence establishes property. The economy distributes property and in this sense violence. Access to violence is access to property & vice versa.

The constitution throws it all into high relief when the bulk of important decisions are made outside its remit; that goes for political & artistic decision too. The accumulation of money – that is to say, the ability to determine what is said and done in a culture – is currently more important than other parliamentary and legal processes.

Money regulates behaviour within the systems of property and poverty, and is a measure of violence. Large sums of money represent a large debit in the monopoly of violence, even violence that is not governed by the monopoly, but floats about in the open and is guaranteed by that monopoly.

To put it simply, any articulation of the current situation is an art work, if and when it remains in the intellectual, moral and social awareness of the beholder beyond the time spent beholding. Everything over and above the situation as it was articulated, will have produced something that did not previously exist, thus changing the situation. This change is both political and artistic in an acute and

tense sense of the terms politics and art.

Viewed in terms of inheritance, archival value, etc., art is of almost inexhaustible wealth. Its actual situation is one of poverty. The concept of van Gogh's sunflowers in a bank vault is a gift from the stock market to the uprising. The owner may have thrown away his natural rights to the society of others but wins something back through an exemplary demonstration of the link between art, the law and violence. It is without doubt possible to regard this action as a work of art.

Another measure (of ones relation to violence) is the conscious and enlightened provocation, which relates directly to violence in releasing it and becoming its target. Jesus of Nazareth is the exemplum for this policy, art, study: the reading of and intervention in violence i.e. the law.

Sooner or later, the owners of art will be the same as those of all other equity. One can choose any kind of certificate, any shares, and draw the line from there to one's own feet and shoes. By the way, where was it made – the shoe – by whom, and what was he & she paid for their work?

Society is made simpler in the course of thirty-forty years past; to an ever-accelerating degree. All transactions are simplified into one transaction, always the same, or exchangeable and translatable into the same: money.

There will of course always be something beyond the reach of violence; verging on but neither regulated by nor identical to it. Death is like that.

Within the framework of natural law, the owner in a sense has lost his right to life in carelessly taking that (right) of others away from them. The monopoly of violence allows an owner to do this. We can also say that these classes have relinquished the right to life, i.e.

natural law. In making a societal decision – that is a political, even constitutional, decision – to allow them to live, the source of justice for that ruling is found outside natural law.

Under the law, a monopoly of property is a monopoly of violence. A revolution will easily drown in the blood it spills, transform into what it does (when) doing it. The common standards of fairness would hardly suffer much if the owners life, their property – a monopoly on violence – was taken away from them. The revolt can be lost in this action.

The law relates directly to violence and provides it with form. Art studies the forms of violence, as in commerce, hence production, and of course transport, financing, marketing: all activity – in short, the culture.

A high concentration of property, protected by the monopoly on violence, is a police state – or a military state, depending on the mood in the streets, what those filling them own and do.

The question posed here was whether art could also be delineated as a difference from equity – of the signature, the catalogue, authorisation and certificate.

In an apolitical society, dominated by marketing, sales and its financial conditions, the law and thus the monopoly of violence will play a slightly different part from that in which the terms of a monopoly on violence were negotiated and established in its constitution.

If the law protects systems of ownership that undermines the law, it is at war with its own terms. If property undermine the right to life, freedom, equal opportunities, equality under the law, etc, then the law will either have to renounce these systems of ownership or abandon legitimacy of the monopoly on violence. This is a revolutionary legal state.

Our age, too, is one of revolution: it's nodding to the 19th century, nodding back.

It is worth investigating whether shame over the conditions of ownership, in other words over the appropriation of violence by equity – the renunciation, not of the span of life but of the life that might have been accommodated in that span – it is worth investigating whether shame over the conditions of property might just as well be a threshold to fear, and fear to fury. The coward's sense of danger recognises violence long before it's manifest as loss of income, general surveillance and incapacitation. The cowards shame can turn to fury when all hope is lost, all exits are closed. In fear, the coward takes hold of his or her shame, like a weapon, and puts it to use, with nothing to loose, nothing to win, except this moment – without hope, with unqualified force. In the final analysis one takes hold of ones death.

The law seems to dissolve in property, or in the direct relation of property to violence. Or just property; just violence; as two expressions of the same concept – possession. Legal, military and economic aspects of the matter are the same in the final instance: the relationship between property and the law is the same – a relationship with violence. In this case, the law is possession. The political realm is reduced to possession – violence regulated in, with and by conditions of ownership.

Is this the case? Does it match the anatomy, so to speak, of fear, shame, and cowardice? Ownership, the concentration of power in general, creates new feelings. The law is not the same for the person of vast wealth and the one of none at all, relatively. The owner has quite different feelings than the society that protects property. According to natural law the owner probably will have forfeited his or

her life. What then, in this sense, can save him, save her?

You don't need to follow the news at length nor all that closely, to see that the most important individual feature of democracy, as it is in fact played, is the ability to have people vote against their own interests. In a political sense, this exemplary and ritual action is the mould for all societal actions in the said democracy.

Obviously, one can envisage a new constitution, one which protects the citizens against the amassment of capital and violence. Or can one?

It is comical to imagine that the person who owns and the person who is owned will enjoy the same political and legal status. They are part of the same economic system and have no common interests there.

What date to choose – 1945, 1939, 1789? The outbreak of the World War III is not dated with a declaration and a signature; in very simple ways the war is making itself felt in the workings of the law. Metaphorically, one might say that property conquered. A revolution needs only take tactical account of the outcome of a war; who was the winner, what was surrendered there.

The law will be guilty by way of property, which it protects by violence in the same manner as it's protecting itself, the law will be culpable under a rule different from its own. The law will be guilty of violence against the one who does not own, operating on part of the one who does own or quite simply on the part of property. This guilt is – if analyzed – a source of law and revolutionary.

Protection of property is, both in the individual instance and in an ultimate sense, the same as protection of the law.

The guilt of the law corresponds on the

one hand to democratic disgrace; on the other, to mythical-legal disgrace and guilt.

The law relates directly to violence. To put it another way: legal guilt has a direct relationship to violence. Violence relates to the guilty party. The guilty relate intimately to violence, the closest relation.

Is it possible to find a different relation of art to the law, in which art relates directly to violence, like the law relates directly to violence?

Is it desirable, or indeed possible, for art to move from shame to fear?

In fear lies ruthlessness as a possible liberation and source of law.

Fear seizes its object poetically – finely woven, schematic. Fear sets no sharp boundary between itself and the feared. The feared is everything, the fearful next to nothing – vanishing, devoid of power. The frightening (object, or indeed, subject) is a function of the ability to fear and this ability's manifestation in fear; it unfolds with terrible power.

Fear can match the threat and exceed it. Through fear, one takes onto oneself the power of the threatening and turns it upon one's enemy. The enemy is whoever appropriates your life – including the lives of the ones you love, even when you have no-one and for that very reason, on the basis of that threat. The threat is recognised by the shame of acquiescence, such as voting (in the elections). In its kind, shame is just as precise as fear.

The step from shame to ruthlessness is narrow. One has to tolerate a shattering fear that mediates from submission to revolt.

Fear is the privilege of the frightened. The frightened produces and acquires the power of the frightening when he or she remains standing: awake, afraid, and tense. Fear is producing this force, as long as the fearful

has access to fear, a power the frightening only knows as an effect: in the submission of the fearful. The terrified person is handing over a feeling quite new to the terrifying one; this they share in and by the revolt.

Stand close to the terror, naked and outraged. Where it makes itself felt. One who waits for something or someone has captured his & her death in this bond, and allowed himself, herself, to be caught. Allow yourself to be caught.

Mythical shame or legal shame – i.e. guilt under the law – has a simpler, brighter opposite number in democratic shame: a leftover from political existence makes itself known where the violence-property equation sets aside the utopia of a law-based civil society, the constitution and natural law. The shame of having renounced so much power to the monopolies of violence and money is well deserved. Democracies elect their legislatures and thus assume the political and existential responsibility for the rules of possession, the exercise of power, for power as it actually works. The elector signs away responsibility, electing shame.

Is it desirable or at all possible to move, for instance from shame, to fear?

The law is barely noticed before violence arrives on the scene. Fear is not felt until the desires reach out towards areas that the law protects by violence. Desire retreats at this border, anticipates the violence surrounding the coveted object, a hinder or consequence, an open possibility, money.

To some extent, the law, violence, provides security for life and property.

Beyond the reach of the law, violence is always an open possibility. If the property is vague and ill-defined, violence will already act vaguely and indirectly in the eyes of the

law, as the echo of another law, opposed for instance to property.

And one could imagine (or at least make an attempt to that effect) that fear substitutes law in the latter's absence. The dissolution of the law provides opportunity, less for the bully and the state (forcing the naked life to yield or vanish), more for the ever-present possibility of violence; naked violence. One must learn to deal with it. The possibility of violence is the possibility of property.

Political life is this relation to violence; violence is the field of politics. This is not immediately evident in the every-day aspects regulated by the constitution, or for that matter, breaches of the constitution.

Let's say that the owned are fed up and beat the owners to death, not so much in order to profit as because nothing is profitable for anyone else but the owner, besides, just for a change. Who knows, it might be that against all odds some alteration followed from this simple and relatively small interventions in the order of life and property.

Shame takes a radical hold upon the moment through its links with the past, an unalterable past, in what has taken place. Fear takes radical hold upon the moment by relating to what's coming. Being is in a certain sense the arrival of the coming.

A revolution is waiting at the door, and is already here, even if it's not expressed in the reflections of the present day. Art is such an expression, if nothing else, as equity.

Is it possible to discover another relationship of art and law, in which art relates directly to violence just as the law relates directly to violence?

\* Property will here of course not refer to the results of one's own work, cooperation, saving or other sensible dispositions in the practical world.

# CONSTITUTION ≡ CONCEPTION

VANESSA PLACE

Conceptual art, like conceptual writing, is always allegorical. There is a narrative outside the work that explains the work: the piece that you are looking at is already part of a larger work: a work about art, at least, about production, at minimum, about objects, at first, and about subjects, at last. The larger work is not that of any particular artist, but rather the work of its time. Like the medieval artisan, the conceptualist assumes that the viewer understands the universe in which the art object exists. And how this object participates in and furthers that universe. If it was the curse (or honor) of the original conceptualists that they felt obligated to identify and explain the allegories their works engaged, it is the honor (or curse) of contemporary conceptualism that it can refuse to articulate its allegories. It can be allegorical *of* without specifying the predicate of the sentence. So it is with a country's constitution: a living constitution is one that nominates without being denominative. Its language tells us something *of* rights, *of* language, *of* subject hood—that uniform that makes the man—without telling us in fixed fashion how the uniform will hang.

In 1916, Wittgenstein wrote that aesthetics and ethics were the same because both were written *sub specie aeternitatis*, under the aspect of the eternal. In 1921, he said they were one as they participated in the unsayable, and were thus transcendental.<sup>1</sup> But what today cannot aesthetically be said, and what can we ethically call enduring?

According to a 2013 article in *Le Monde*, American scientists discovered that “*L'expérience de mort imminente*” *s'expliquerait par un phénomène cérébral*. (*A cerebral phenomenon may explain the “experience of imminent death.”*)<sup>2</sup> The studies reported showed that the deprivation of oxygen in laboratory rats creat-

ed a spike in cerebral activity just before the onset of brain death, a neuronal *ultime hourra* that could explain those stories of seeing one's life flash before one's eyes and the accounts of bright white light at the threshold of the hereafter. Of course, with all due respect to Wittgenstein and Kant, transcendence is generally understood as just another cut of consciousness. Whether it is a cut above ordinary emotions is simply a matter of personal taste. (There is as yet no emoticon for transcendence, though one could argue that the idea of an emoticon itself is a transcendent gesture.) And yet this neurological news seemed to carry with it a tincture of disappointment. As if we secretly hoped that there's more than meat in our minds and bodies, that there's more to us than meets the eye. That in some significant way, the singular self is ultimately connected to something greater than mere physical matter, that there's more to me than meets the *I*. Which I cognize *visually* as I lie at death's door—imagining myself as I will have been in the face of my no longer being. A kind of last look back while looking forward, like Walter Benjamin's reading of Klee's drawing *Angelus Novus* as the image of the angel of history: “His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling up wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, what may be unsayable, or transcendental, is the desire for the aspect of the eternal, not the eternal itself.

To leap from the particular to the general, or from the individual to the political, is more than an allegorical card-trick in this context. For all official purposes, I exist both corporally and textually through the inscription of an embodied “I” that I literally, figuratively, and legally sign on to as inhabitation and assertion

of a self. For example with my signature. Which is seen as a visual certification that I am who and when I say *I am* by the sign that makes me *me*. Understood as such (as “Vanessa Place”) by myself and others. A sign which is always subject to interpretation, that is to say, to revision. And so we have, in Pierre Lionel Matte’s *Norway 2.0*, the artist’s passport. The passport, the most basic sign and proof of citizenship, is given an upgrade to reflect the bearer’s improved global standing as an oil-enriched Norwegian. Gold paint and fake leather create a luxurious façade that is also the real thing: the addition of aesthetic value by the artist reflects the aggregation of economic value by the nation. Both based on speculation, both based on trade. It is important to remember here that the passport is always based on two signatures: the Government that issues what we could call a certificate of nationality, and the person so certified. Additional signs in the form of other nation’s stamps and/or the signature on a visa are to be added. The artist is also never a single signature, as the artist’s signature must be ratified by others in order to permit the artist to move from the realm of the Real (this is paint) to the realm of Art (this is a painting). To provide, as it were, a *passé-port* for artist and art object.

Here we could think about the way the signature and the stamp are visual-lingual signs, signs that are visual objects that speak. What do they speak of? What, in other words, is their allegory? This depends, as *Norway 2.0* demonstrates, on the fate of the issuing nation, the entity that speaks first. The Norwegian passport is now thickened with the affluence of oil and the luster of high art; a Third Reich Reisepass now exists as a torturer’s bone, obscenely stripped of flesh.

In *I have a Passport Therefore I am, version*

*II* Matte negotiates this oscillation between what is permitted by the citizen-self in relation to the other. *I have a Passport Therefore I am, version II* is a series of home-made passports in various languages in which Matte records his private concerns about Romani immigrants. One of the interior covers states: *I have a passport therefore I am*. Here, I use “states” purposefully: like citizenship, statehood is a speech act, that which comes into being as a fact with its utterance. A “constitution” in English has five meanings: the way a thing is composed; the character of a body; the sum of a body’s physical and psychological characteristics; the act of establishing; and the state of being formed. A constitution thus “constitutes” the country that makes the constitution a Constitution. It is interesting that the most common example of a speech act—pronouncing a couple “married”—is also a way of turning language into law, a way that sets both language and law as real-world facts, as objects. Like the passport, which constitutes its bearer as an object of and for statehood (what is a state without its objects); like a piece of conceptual art, which constitutes its viewer as a subject of and for art.

Unlike the *sans papiers*, the illegal immigrants, I am because I can as easily not be: a passport registers me not as a citizen within my country, but as a citizen outside my country. I am an American. My proof is that I can leave America and continue to be American. As long as I have my passport, and it is kept properly stamped. My sign (signature) and the sign of my statehood (stamp) keep body and soul intact. Our nation-state selves perform their fusions of ontology and epistemology most elegantly via the written constitution. For although a country can tat itself together by way of a constellation of law-enacting and

-abiding, a written constitution is the highest form of positivism. The law that *is* the embodied inscription of Law itself, and *is* therefore above all other law and laws. Our constitutions exist as a text, which is a spatial object, often seen in a museum. They exist as a text, which is a language concept, whose meaning is subject to ongoing determination. So they are seen—whether through a glass case or in the mind’s eye—as having a visionary and factual existence outside and over the mere meat-matter of its constituent citizenry. Too, note that constitutions are always *signed* into being, affixed with the signatures of those who had the (retroactive) authority to enter into a social contract that is written under the aspect of the eternal. We ratify constitutions by signing them, like the artist ratifies art by sticking it with his signature. Simply put, our constitutions are constitutional, the sign that keeps us *us*, the *Heilige Geist* which weds body temporarily yet cohesively to soul. Though, again, as a historical vision that can only be seen in retrospect while going forward. Because constitutions are settled only when they are the objects of interpretation: what a clause means now is determined by an argument about what it has meant in the past. The angel of history, again, imagining a continuous narrative, one that makes some kind of sense.

The text of the 1814 Norwegian Constitution begins with an articulation of its animus, then fashions its corpus from the crown down, from capital (king) to common (citizen). This is followed by the establishment of the juridical body, which is of course neither spirit nor physic but Word as Flesh. For what Law is (and all that it is) is always only the interpretation of law by other lawyers: even the foundational act of codification betrays a fundamental lack of essence. To put it plainly,

laws are called into being because there is no Law. If there were a true transcendental metaphysic, there would be no need for an ever-expanding series of state dictates. This lack of essence is often denied and displayed at the same time, as in the oxymoronic claim in the Preamble to the United States Constitution that “we hold these truths to be self-evident.” That which is self-evident does not have to be articulated in order to be. But Law, like Art, does not have an independent existence. Law exists only through the language of the law: it is a work of ventriloquism, a matter of throwing one’s voice in time. To rework Descartes’ famous line: *Dico ergo sum dico ergo lex (I am, therefore I speak the law)* This, like our basic grasp of our own neurology, is at once well understood and roundly rejected: just as my consciousness must have its transcendent drive in order to sustain itself as *me*, in order for the State to actually *be*, it must be somehow beyond its flat assertion of being. This existence manifests itself in the law through the current application of the interpreted law. A constitution is therefore the end product of constitutionalism, a thing that must “speak for itself” as if the articulation and its object were inevitable or “self-evident.” An intellectual feat that is duplicated when we stand in a gallery and identify the Broodthaers sign as Art, the Exit sign as not-Art.

Again, this is how all subjects are constituted: the decision, which feels like a realization, that one exists apart from another one is embedded in the articulation of identity. And, as underscored by Matte’s *I have a Passport Therefore I am, version II*, the anxiety of this identity as often a matter of denomination. If another (or the Other) can easily become Norwegian, what does that make me, the native-born son? Because we are linguistically consti-

tuted, we are born from a lack that language fills. In order for me to be, I must be spoken through you—via you. Just as conceptual art must often be completed by its viewer. Whether this constitutive dependency springs from conceptual art practice or Lacanian psychoanalysis, is perhaps immaterial. Because, as Duchamp might say, it is a process that is “im-mensurate,” incapable of being measured. In other words, I must constantly confess that *I am* not enough—in other words. Rendering both you and me contextually incomplete, and thus, amenable to textual interpretation, or, in other words, application of the text. And this is always a matter of context. I show you my passport. You show me yours. We know where we stand, at least for now, or, more accurately, at least for then. We go forward only as we look back, for that is all that is knowable, or at least sayable. How word-signs play as a form of constitutional (as in constituting) history is illustrated by Lars Ramberg’s *Fremdgehen*. “*Fremdgehen*” is German for “go foreign,” idiomatically meaning to cheat on a sex partner. Ramberg’s work is an installation documenting the state imprisonment and expulsion of Norwegian women who became involved with German soldiers during World War II, who were deemed “*Fremdgehen*”. *Fremdgehen* was originally configured as a rubber stamp, suitable for marking state passports and human skins, and a neon sign, suitable for border walls or prostitutes’ windows. *Fremdgehen* revisited is a video interview with one of the women, combined with her letters and official documentation, passing from the abstract to the particular. In this sense, it is important that we understand we are working idiomatically, because that is also how we know who “we” are—you are part of a culture when you know what signs mean (how they apply to you) beyond the

laws of their language. Remembering here that every ethics has its aesthetics and every aesthetics its ethics.

On its face, a constitution is an aesthetic object of an ethical narrative, the tale a nation tells *of* itself, *to* itself, and *as* itself, the image of itself as recognized *by* others. There are two tricks here: the first lies in the concept of “others” in my last sentence, for part of work of constitutionalism is to denote who is subject (and as Hannah Arendt argued relative to citizenship, who is thereby granted subjectivity, or subjectified and who is not (who may be objectified). As demonstrated by Matte, the subject must self-identify as such, must ask to be a subject; as demonstrated by Ramberg, the subject can be reclassified by the demands of others. This twin gesture permits the juridical creation of what I call the “subject,”<sup>24</sup> that indivisible amalgam of subject and object that each one of us most indisputably is. Just as testimony is language that becomes fact by virtue of being sworn to (of saying) by someone whom the law recognizes as capable of testifying (of swearing). Just as art is an object that becomes art by virtue of being regarded as art by someone whom art recognizes as capable of regarding art. If this sounds like a circular argument, it is.

Because the second trick, as previously suggested, is that the narrative is always (and must always be) told in reverse, both in its initiation and in its persistent retelling: first, *as if* the Norwegian subject was called into final being in 1814, in the manner of a Roman bear licking her cub into shape; second, *as if* the Norwegian subject of 1814 is constitutionally similar to the Norwegian subject of today, as if the citizen is as transcendently iterable as the crown. Of course, in order for the crown to maintain its fixed position, the citizen must be

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*We ratify constitutions  
by signing them,  
like the artist ratifies  
art by sticking it with  
his signature.*

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Vanessa Place

similarly ever-changing and yet ever the same as the psychoanalytic subject. Where head goes, feet must follow. Unless you are a cartoon. A cartoon, of course, is quite able to go in different directions at once, to fly to pieces and reconfigure. A cartoon participates in the sign of the eternal: if a bomb (which always looks like “a bomb,” meaning it is round and black and has a burning fuse, quite unlike a real bomb) blows my head from my shoulders in the cartoon, my head will naturally plop itself back onto my neck, leaving only some soot on my cheeks and surprise in my eyes. I cannot be blown up permanently—the rules of mortality and finitude, of cause and effect, do not really apply. I will go on, my essential form impervious to passing transformations. Thus the second trick of the constitution is like the cartoon as the constitutional narrative, like the cartoon, imagines a frictionless copulation of form and content—running legs spin into buzzsaws, bright yellow stars appear when someone is hit on the head. The cartoon must be cartoony. Duchamp’s ready-mades must now be considered as if Duchamp’s ready-mades were always art because they are the very matter of art history. And so we stare at our constitutions and conceptualisms in museums, looking to the thing itself as proof of the thing itself.

We live in a conceptualist age. By this I mean that no longer are we engaged in the either the modernist project of casting our ruins before the angel of history, or the postmodern exegesis of the social spectacle. In the conceptualist age, our things *are* and are variously and duly rendered *by* us, *for* us, *to* us and, eventually, *as* us. We are as our Facebook friends know us, we Tweet through a network of Vines. The imagistic metaphor at play today is neither the lead-foiled mirror nor the silver screen, but digital interfaces, where we barter

our semiotic symbolism, signifying and code-switching as needed, where we are the hedge fund managers of ourselves, cultivating an absolute return of attention as investment and profit. Whether by way of YouTube, Tumblr, or the NSA, I am of interest insofar as I serve as a node in a web of significance in which I am thoroughly in play just as I play others. So you interest me insofar as you give me the same kind of return on my investment: through your attention, I am present. As I am present, I exchange my attention for yours, which renders you present. We are each other’s happy contingency. For the point here is not the object, the point here is not the subject. Neither you nor I matter, not particularly. Like the passport, the point is the platform. The platform is the medium and material of how we constitute ourselves, which are necessarily artifactual, necessarily individuated. Not as allegorical subjects, or subjects that work this allegory or that allegory, but as “subjects” who produce allegory. Who cannot help but produce allegory, because allegory, that narrative that tells us that there is some point to our pointlessness, is the first conceptual project. Because it is our stock in trade. Allegory is the way that *I* am. The story that makes me, if just for a minute, me. And us, we. To be Norwegian is to be able to carry a Norwegian passport. To be Norwegian is to be able to say who is not yet or no longer Norwegian. To be Norwegian is to be constituted by the Norwegian constitution. To be Norwegian is to be able to say, in the end, “I am Norwegian.” As you agree.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Notebooks, 1914–1916*. Ed. G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 83e; Wittgenstein. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. C. K. Ogden. (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Le Monde*, 13 August 2013. [http://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2013/08/13/la-mort-imminente-s-explique-rait-par-un-phenomene-cerebral\\_3460932\\_1650684.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2013/08/13/la-mort-imminente-s-explique-rait-par-un-phenomene-cerebral_3460932_1650684.html)

<sup>3</sup> Walter Benjamin. “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn. (New York: Schocken Books, 2007). p. 257.

<sup>4</sup> Vanessa Place and Robert Fitterman. *Notes on Conceptualisms*. (New York: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2009).

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**THE CONSTITUTION'S § 110B  
AND ITS AMBITION  
TO PROTECT NATURE  
IN ALL ITS DIVERSITY  
ALSO FOR POSTERITY**

**VERSUS**

**THE OIL FUND'S INVESTMENTS  
IN OIL-SANDS EXTRACTION**

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**ESPEN STUELAND**

In 1942 Albert Camus published his *Myth of Sisyphus*, with its thesis that “There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest — whether or not the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories — comes afterwards. These are games; one must first answer.” (Camus 1955, p.3) Anyone who finds life to be worth living will regard this formulation as reductionistic to the point of being meaningless. Nevertheless, we can still feel that this hypothesis has something to say, if it is put within a different framework. It is no longer a question of an individual contemplating Camus’ essential question, but that humanity as a whole is faced with a climate crisis. Failing to do anything to prevent the destruction of the climate can be regarded as an active contribution to the collective suicide of humanity. What are we doing to stop the development to which the term “climate crisis” refers? Do we care about future generations? Are we doing enough to secure their quality of life? And “we” in what sense, incidentally?

The analogy between “not acting to stop the destruction of the climate” and “suicide” will be met with scepticism and resistance. I’m taking this for granted. People will object: are the consequences of not doing anything really so drastic that the term collective suicide is justified? Can we be sure that there really is a crisis? Have we not fulfilled our civic duty when we have voted in an election, relying on the political system to do what is best for the people at large, in line with the parliament’s obligation to maintain sustainable development? Is working within the political system not the primary way in

which we should be creating and maintaining the collective “we”?

This autumn the UN’s climate panel published its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), which documents the climate crisis that is being played out. After this report, only the most obstinate are still able to put forward climate-sceptical arguments. But what about all those people who do not deny the reality of the climate crisis, but who nevertheless doubt whether they, as individuals, can make any difference? Many people think in this way. From this position of doubt the road is dangerously short to a form of denial that consists of surrendering to our resistance against changing anything in our every-day life. For as long as Statoil is such a large part of the global problem it is responsible not to “do something, locally” to work against the company. If even the knowledge of the urgency of the situation is not enough to prompt action and initiative by individuals, the earth’s average temperature will rise with fatal consequences. Given that *business as usual* is the recipe for the earth becoming uninhabitable for our successors, a lack of action is nihilistic. It is no longer possible to say “we weren’t sure that there were solid grounds for the scenarios put forward by researchers”. The inbuilt scepticism and doubt amongst western individuals towards everything and everyone that claims to have the answers is well founded, but the climate crisis is such a serious matter that doubting the researchers in this instance is counter-productive. Doubt is the cornerstone of thought and as such something of a holy dogma, an axiom not subject to doubt. Perhaps we could put it like this: it is dangerous to stop doubting, but the climate crisis is even more dangerous? Doubt that is playing with the lives of future humans

has raised the level of doubt to a cerebral, disloyal and deadly instrument.

The climate report confirms earlier indications that the climate system is warming up. According to the climate panel, this warming process is beyond doubt (Alfsen et al. 2013, p. 49) Each decade during the past 50 years has been warmer than the preceding one and the rise in temperature has been registered down to a depth of several thousand metres in the oceans. The consequences of this for biological life are substantial. The rise in temperature reduces the ability of the sea to absorb carbon (the carbon cycle), the sea becomes less alkaline, which in turn creates problems in marine ecosystems. The Arctic ice is vanishing. The increase in carbon emissions has accelerated during the past few years by almost 3% per year and is now 37% higher than in 1990. For the first time in history, CO<sub>2</sub> levels in parts of the atmosphere reach the clouds. The only little bright spot amidst all these facts is that researchers are documenting them and thus increasing understanding of the seriousness. Better and more reliable climate models mean that we know more than enough about the changes to understand that action is required (Alfsen et al. 2013, s. 73–81). Research can give weight to demands for action. What remains to be done is to turn research and knowledge into concrete policy. However, politicians need to take drastic measures now.

### STOPPING THE OIL FUND'S INVESTMENTS IN OIL SANDS USING § 110B

A little-known paragraph in the Constitution is § 110b. It reads as follows:

*All people have a right to an environment that ensures health and to a nature in which productivity and diversity are preserved. Resources should be used on the basis of long-term and broadly-based considerations which will preserve this right also for posterity.*

*In order to maintain their rights in respect of the preceding section, citizens have a right to knowledge about the state of the natural environment and the effects of planned and initiated encroachment into nature.*

*The state authorities will provide further regulations in order to put these principles into practice.*

The law establishes that the right to a sustainable regulation of natural resources applies collectively to “everyone”. In addition, the law indicates further regulation touching on the right to information and principles relating to biodiversity and environmental and resource management. The legal extracts from the environmental information report “Retten til miljøopplysninger” (“right to environmental information”) establish that that the paragraph “is not intended simply as a political statement of principles without legal significance. Constitutional principles outrank laws and regulations (‘lex superior’)”. Ole Kristian Fauchald, Professor at the University of Oslo's Department of Public and International Law, writes in an article that the paragraph provides an independent legal foundation for demands upon the authorities. Pål W. Lorentzen, lawyer and chairman of Norsk Klimastiftelse (the Norwegian climate foundation), has called the paragraph “the environment's main clause”. The paragraph is a promise to forthcoming generations, a tool for holding politicians to account and a means for laying down rules

for a sustainable management of resources. In the Constitution's jubilee year, it is worth enhancing the position of this environmental paragraph greater room in our collective consciousness, for example by putting its contents into context.

Irrespective of the fact that 2014 is the Constitution's jubilee year, bad news about the earth's climate will dominate the news. 2013 was a year that broke a number of critical records. A monsoon in India took 5748 lives. A typhoon in the Philippines took more than 5680 lives. It has never before been as hot in Australia as it was last year. Never before has so much ice melted in Greenland, where on 30 July a record high temperature of 25.9 degrees was measured.

The Norwegian oil fund is the largest government fund in the world and as such a substantial influence. The fund's policies are supervised by the government-appointed Ethics Council. The Oil Fund (or The Government Pension Fund – Global as it is officially known) was set up in 1990 with capital from North-Sea petroleum extraction. The Ministry of Finance owns the fund “on behalf of the Norwegian people”. This last, on behalf of, is the reason why the Norwegian press constantly tempts its readers with accounts of how much “each and every one of us” owns within this fund. This fiction illustrates the values that anyone who might decide to knock on the door of the Ministry of Finance in order to get their share would not find there. “The fund, however, is not earmarked for pensions or other purposes”, as the website of the fund's managers, Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), points out. The Bank of Norway has received a mandate to administer the fund, which is thus a bank deposit. The mandate says that

the bank is to “take investment decisions independently of the Ministry”. A nominated Ethics Council is tasked with ensuring that the Oil Fund's investments adheres to certain guidelines and with maintaining the fund's profile as a “socially-responsible investor”. Reading the list of companies in which investments have been made might make anyone wonder whether the Ethics Council has had any say in the matter.

### THE ETHICS OF THE GOVERNMENT PENSION FUND – GLOBAL

The Fund has its Ethics Council, but we are overdue a closer look at what sorts of “ethics” this council deals with. What does it say in the Fund's guidelines about the environment and the climate?

It is stated in § 2.3.c that “serious environmental damage” forms grounds to exclude a company from “the Fund's investment universe”. The Ethics Council is to “supervise the Fund's portfolio with the intention of determining whether companies contribute to, or are themselves responsible for, unethical behaviour” (§ 4.1) and the Council “collects necessary information however it sees fit” in order to give advice regarding such exclusion. The ways in which the Council collects information about the companies include the use of “an external consultancy company which regularly searches on the internet for news stories about all the companies in the portfolio. The Council receives monthly reports from the consultant” (White Paper 27, 2012–2013, p. 76). The White Paper's chapter “Observation and exclusion of companies” states that in order to document what is termed “breaches of standards” (that is to say, breaches of the

Ethics Council's standards) "consultancy companies, researchers and voluntary organisations in the country in which the alleged breaches of standards occur" will be used (White Paper 27, p. 76). It is stated in the same place that the Council has "looked more closely into" oil production "with substantial local pollution problems, certain types of mining activity in which waste disposal involves particular risk, illegal timber felling and other particularly-destructive felling". Ten companies have apparently been removed from the Fund's portfolio as a result of offences against the environment, but which companies these are is not mentioned, despite this contravening § 8 in the Guidelines for observation and exclusion: "The Ministry will maintain a public list of the companies that have been excluded from the Fund's investment universe or placed under official observation". It may be that they were companies making tobacco and palm oil. In a letter to the Norwegian Climate Foundation on 17 June 2013 the Ethics Council writes that high emissions of climate gasses are not in themselves unethical and therefore do not contravene the ethical rules (Hambro 2013, p. 16). Here the Ethics Council is relying on the Graver Committee's report "Forvaltning for framtiden" ("management for the future") which, in line with the Climate Convention, recognises that it is "up to national authorities to determine" how those producers that release large quantities of climate gases can avoid doing so. The continuation of the reasoning in the report is a short-circuit: in that it is up to the national authorities it is also "difficult to argue that production processes with high emissions of climate gases are in themselves so unethical that the Oil Fund should not contribute to this". So many factors are taken

into consideration here that the thinking has to be described as something other than ethical.

This logic means that if China's authorities do not regard emissions as a sufficient problem that they will put cleansing systems in place, then the emissions are thus not an ethical problem. This kind of relativistic guideline can explain why it is profitable to buy in to oil production in countries in which the political leaders can be bribed or where responsibility is completely pulverised through trade agreements and free market forces. It should be self-evident that the Ethics Council should have expected higher standards from Norway's Oil Fund.

Many of the Oil Fund's investments clearly run counter to the Constitution's § 110b and to Norway's inter-party climate agreement. The Ministry of Finance cannot claim exemption from the Constitution. In a letter dated 19 December 2003, the Bank of Norway replied to the Ministry of Finance during a hearing in connection with the Graver Committee that they are "in agreement with the Committee that the Oil Fund is not a suitable instrument for looking after all types of ethical responsibilities. The Fund was established in order to take care of the interests of future generations and is a good instrument for this purpose. For many other purposes, the Fund is a less effective instrument".

That the Ethics Committee is most concerned with shooting itself in the foot may remain its own little dark secret. Two examples of this are the investments in coal-fired energy in Indonesia and investments in the extraction of oil from oil sands in Canada. At the close of 2012, the Oil Fund had invested in 20 out of the 47 oil-sands companies operating in

Alberta, Canada. Altogether, more than 55 thousand million kroner had been invested here. Investments in oil and gas (according to the Fund's third-quarter report) account for 8.6 % of share holdings, whilst renewable energy and water supplies account for less than half of this sum, 3.5 %. The Fund's second-largest holding is in Royal Dutch Shell, a company that has caused enormous environmental destruction in the Niger Delta. If the Oil Fund's investments in Shell do not contravene the ethical guidelines, this must mean that the Fund is so little bound by the Ethics Committee that there is hardly any point in having such a council at all.

#### **WHAT IF OUR OWN BODY TEMPERATURE INCREASED BY A CONSTANT TWO DEGREES?**

In the climate effort, the "two-degrees goal" is a target supported by around 200 countries. Even though energy from coal power and oil-sands extraction 1) harm the climate and the environment and 2) are fundamentally on a collision course with the goal of avoiding a rise of more than two degrees in the global temperature, the threshold for excluding petroleum companies and coal companies from investments is in practice a high one. Cathrine Hambro writes this in the Norwegian Climate Foundation's innovative report "Er oljefondets tjæresandinvesteringer ulovlige?" ("Are the Oil Fund's oil-sands investments illegal?") Hambro is a lawyer in the Wahl-Larsens law firm. The report explores the question in the title from a number of legal perspectives and principles. She believes that the guidelines for the Oil Fund can and should be re-worked, taking account of long-term considerations when we use natural resources. This must

occur through a change in the rules governing the Oil Fund. According to Hambro, the Oil Fund's investments in Canadian oil sands are in conflict with the Norwegian legal rules. It is therefore "possible to prosecute a viable case against the state as represented by the Ministry of Finance, in which problems concerning the investments [in companies that produce oil from Canadian oil sands] are identified and a charge is laid that satisfies the process requirements [in the Norwegian Dispute Act]". She also writes that "the IEA's World Energy Outlook states that parts of the Canadian oil-sands resources must remain unexploited if (the political) 2-degree goal is to be reached" (Hambro 2013, p. 25).

An important question is whether Norwegian law may apply to local environmental and climate problems abroad; or, more precisely, whether the Ministry of Finance's Government Pension Fund – Global, the overseas funds, are subject to Norwegian jurisdiction. The Fund's administrators must surely be subject to the Constitution's paragraphs regarding sustainability? Lawyers who have examined the Oil Fund in the light of 110b believe that if Norwegian legislation (including the Pollution Control Act of 1981) would in such an instance have prevented concessions being given for the extraction of oil sands in Norway, then this should also prevent the Oil Fund from buying in to oil companies that cause equivalent damage. A bill from the Norwegian Odelsting (Upper House) 2001–2002 (no. 116) proposes that public-sector activity "is regulated by environmental information in respect of overseas conditions if this relates to matters relevant to the public body's tasks and duties". But only caring about issues that impinge on administration is too

limited in this instance. What happens when the matter concerns the continuing existence of life?

Let us contemplate a different example. The reactors in the Chernobyl nuclear power station explode and quantities of radioactive dust, with radiation levels 400 times more powerful than the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, drift up into the atmosphere and blow in over Sweden and Norway. It is registered by Norway's radiation commission, but the Norwegian authorities choose to do the same as the Russians and report nothing. Radiation procedures are not implemented.

We take certain standards of information and action for granted, even, of course, when the matter concerns something as serious as energy production that damages the climate. The damage is no longer invisible: it has been fully documented in the UN's fifth climate report.

Climatic considerations alone cannot serve as grounds for excluding anyone from the Fund's investment universe. According to Hambro, it is apparent "that the Ethics Committee primarily takes account of local environmental problems as well as whether the individual company operates legally in relation to activities in the country in question" (Hambro 2013, p. 8). If we look at which companies are excluded from the Oil Fund's investments it is primarily weapon and tobacco companies. Climate and climate issues are not mentioned in the guidelines of the Ethics Committee. This is a critical omission, given the extremely dangerous extent of the climate crisis. Nevertheless it was decided in 2009 to establish "special mandates for environment-related investments in the Government Pension Fund – Global" (White

Paper 27, p. 55) The ownership of the Bank of Norway practises "climate change" as one of six "strategic areas" and states that the UN's "Global Compact" is to be taken into account. (White Paper. 27, p. 68) These demands are primarily financial, in the requirements regarding returns.

Even though the climate is not mentioned in the *ethical* guidelines for the Oil Fund, it is evident from perspective of the Constitution's paragraph 110b that non-sustainable companies, whose activities are harmful to the climate, contravene the long-term and broad-based "considerations". Companies that cause harm to the climate must be removed from the Fund's so called investment universe; what use will an "investment universe" be once the companies in which we have invested have made the earth uninhabitable? If "the Oil Fund is a means of ensuring that future generations have a reasonable share of the country's oil wealth" (Nou 2003:22, p. 40), then it is not just the fortune that must be intact but also the world in which one is to use the gigantic value of the Oil Fund. The Graver Committee's suggestion for ethical guidelines were implemented in the guidelines that were introduced in 2004, the same year that the Ethics Committee was established. The most important tools were "exclusion and exercise of ownership interest" (White Paper 27, p. 67). The ethical guidelines have undergone several stages of evaluation and in 2010 a text was published by the Ministry of Finance, the Ethics Committee and the Bank of Norway's Oil Fund administration. The newest guidelines state that investments are to be "environmentally related", so there is nothing wrong with the guidelines as such. But, as Hambro observes, "they do not have the character of regulations" but are rather a

form of instructions (Hambro 2013, p. 17). Are the conditions nevertheless not in place to coordinate the Oil Fund's ethics with § 110b? After all, it seems that something is heading in the right direction: in *Forvaltningen av Statens Pensjonsfond* ["the administration of the Norwegian Government's Pension Fund"] 2012–2013, "climate change" is one of the six strategic areas on which the work of ownership should be concentrated, and "climate change" has been awarded its own chapter on responsible investment practice in the Government Pension Fund – Global. This can be a beginning.

Can a paragraph (110b) have any positive or negative role to play in a global perspective? If the administration of the Oil Fund does contravene the paragraph, which I believe it does, then the answer is yes. The paragraph places us under an obligation in a broader context. At the same time, the petroleum sector emerges more and more clearly as the greatest threat to future generations on earth. Climate change is in the process of changing the conditions for all biological life on earth. For humanity and other species, possibilities of development are being affected.

At the same time, Statoil has invested great sums of money in winning the sympathies of the kingdom through mottoes such as "heroes of tomorrow" directed towards sports, culture and education. Even though skiing is high on the list of things that form Norwegian identity, and as such is a good thing with which to be associated, it is self-contradictory that Statoil, which is contributing to the "wetter, wilder, warmer" weather of the climate crisis, supports for national skiing team, for instance. It is possible that in the long term we will need to find a new national sport, since there is a

lack of such a future for those of us who love all the varied opportunities for self-realisation provided by snow.

In an international context, Statoil is viewed with anything but sympathetic eyes. Norway is now regarded as a climate offender. In the middle of November, *The Guardian* published a list of the companies that have been responsible for the biggest emissions of climate gasses since the industrial revolution (1751). Statoil is responsible for greater CO2 emissions than the world could recycle during a whole year and for as much as 0.3 percent of *the world's total climate gas emissions since 1751!* This qualifies Statoil for 34th place on the list of history's worst climate offenders. It is to say the least self-contradictory that the Norwegian Oil Fund (Pension Fund), which is intended to secure the future of coming generations, should invest in oil extraction from oil sands. Norway has a responsibility for man-made climate change and for the damage this causes to biological life. The Oil Fund has invested money in 44 of the 90 worst companies, according to Friends of the Earth Norway. This despite the guidelines of the Oil Fund which, as already mentioned, provide an opportunity to exclude companies where there is a suspicion that they contribute to serious environmental damage. It is evident that the guidelines have not been followed.

## THE RATIONALE OF THE PETROLEUM IDEOLOGY

The rationale of the petroleum ideology suggests that the answer to the climate problem lies in multiplying the causes of the problem. Or, as it is often put by those who defend the *polluting business as usual*;

*Failing to invest in coal companies will not bring us any close to the goal of keeping global warming under two degrees. Other investors would in that case be ready to take up the [shares] that we might sell.*

The words are those of Secretary of State Paal Bjørnstad. This Frp politician is justifying his view that it would not be a good idea for the Oil Fund to withdraw from coal power.

A core concept in the Graver Committee, which was used as an argument for a continued investment in petroleum and coal, was “negative filtration”. The meaning of this term is expressed in the Graver Committee’s chapter regarding coal power and petroleum. This suggests that there

*is no basis for negative filtration from the Fund of companies producing coal power or petroleum. The Committee considers that the exercise of ownership rights and influence will be a more effective strategy than exclusion for addressing climate issues and creating change* (Nou 2003, p. 22, p. 157)

The justification for this recommendation is tragic-comic. In the same part of the report the Graver Committee confirms that energy production from fossil fuels “indisputably” is environmentally damaging, but it regards it as difficult to claim that such production is therefore unethical – for as long as “the Norwegian State has large ownership stakes in two Norwegian oil companies and owns significant oil and gas resources and infrastructure in Norwegian offshore waters”!

The moral is thus that whatever is the Norwegian State’s source of income, is in our ownership, can thereby not be unethical. It is one thing to acknowledge that there is a

dilemma here, but can a public report allow itself to advance such inconsistent arguments? Ethical rules are supposed to serve to establish norms, not to break them. If this argument were turned into a universal rule rather than being regarded as an exception, the same reasoning regarding moral immunity would apply to the active ownership of all countries: North-Korea, China, Russia. In other words it is not only the autonomy of national states that is acknowledged; complete dispensation is also awarded to them from any moral basis laid down in the UN’s declaration of human rights. For an individual to take a state to court under such a basis would by definition be meaningless. To suggest such a post-modern basis for the Constitution as that proposed by the Graver Committee must lead to it also being termed something other than democratic.

In addition, according to the Graver Committee, it is difficult to claim that coal and petroleum are unethical because it is difficult to “conduct a consistent argument for not contributing to the production of coal power while accepting petroleum production”. It is true enough in isolation, but is so near-sighted that there is an evident need for a white stick and guide dog. We only need to look up a little to see that it is petroleum production with which there is a problem. If the greatest fear is to be caught out in a breach of logic, then one has not only poor judgement but also sleeps a little too easily at night. The underlying thinking suggests that the ways of the Norwegian state are by definition regarded as irreproachable on the basis of an idea of “consistent argumentation”. This is a dangerous myth which produces ideological faults.

The Graver Committee appears to have

adapted ethics on the basis of a tacit premise: ethics should not be allowed to get in the way of Norwegian overseas interests. Perspectives relating to climate policy concerning the use of fossil energy should not be allowed to place restrictions on Norwegian negotiating positions and strategies. The Fund’s ethics are flexible such that commercial and foreign policy should avoid meeting itself in the door if anyone were to suggest that we are operating double standards in terms of oil morality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to avoid having its elbow room restricted by rules from the Ministry of Finance. This may be in line with the exceptions allowed for by the Freedom of Information Act (§ 20). If the Oil Fund were to become a permanent legal exception because we cannot afford to maintain overriding ethical principles for it, then this is a fallacy. To prevent this, an ethics committee could have drawn on § 110b. This would have enabled it to interpret its mandate more freely.

In a section regarding “the effects of the Fund” in the report’s section on ethics (5.2.1.), we read:

*The Oil Fund is a large fund. This gives the fund a degree of influence both directly and indirectly. The Oil Fund has an opportunity to influence the activities of companies directly through the use of its ownership rights. So far, the Fund has chosen to make very little use of such rights. This however does not mean that the Fund has not influenced the development of companies. Not doing something can have just as great an effect as doing something* (Nou 2003, p. 22, p. 54).

I am unable to read this last sentence without a chuckle. There are so many companies that operate in a manner that makes it comical to

think that not doing anything could have just as great an effect as doing something. The climate report documents that temperatures are rising on all continents apart from the Antarctic, sea levels are rising and becoming more acidic, glaciers are melting, the Arctic is thawing out, Australia is being cooked, extreme precipitation is creating great problems including for food production, insect, bird and animal species are being driven from their natural habitats and are vanishing for ever – and whilst all this takes place we are determined that maintaining our share rights in companies is the way to go, even though it is documented that the companies are a contributory cause of the damage.

The problem is that the powers creating the climate crisis definitely are doing something. They are creating energy in a manner that is beneficial neither to the climate nor to the people of the future. It must be regarded as self-evident that it is more effective to put out a fire that is just taking hold in your house, rather than allowing it to burn down to the foundations by the next day.

The thinking exemplified here by Bjørnstad and the Graver Committee is what Slavoj Žižek terms a “direct will to ignorance”. (Žižek uses this term in *Living in the End Times*, p. 327, in relation to our collective denial of the climate catastrophe and its implications). The ethical framework that is suggested can be used to amputate opportunities for action. A willingness to make an effort in the best interests of future generations is not given sufficient weight. The ethics of the Oil Fund collapse in the instant that they are to be transferred to a reasoning that turn them into an action plan that involves abstaining from something, on the basis that this can have just as great an effect

as doing something.

It is inherent in the same rationale that the petroleum industry is in denial that we will need to find something to live off “after oil”. We will not be able to live off tidying up and paying the bills after the great global oil party, will we? Handling the global consequences of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be a major job. The petroleum industry justifies a *business as usual* practice as though climate change were not man-made. Official Norwegian policy, too, consists of producing more of the very things that create the problems. Statoil’s own advertisement for its oil-sands extraction in Canada is based on presenting it as the second-worst alternative. As though that were good enough. The politics are consolidated in parliament whilst the Oil Fund grows.

#### § 110B IN 2014

§ 110b was inserted into the Constitution in 1992 after unanimous parliamentary approval. In the Constitution’s jubilee year, the environmental paragraph needs to be awarded a key place in our corporate awareness, in the same way as the bad news about the earth’s climate is beginning to be apparent in the news. It has already begun: Adelaide in Southern Australia had record-high temperatures in January 2014. Air temperature was measured at 45.1 degrees. The tarmac on the island of Tasmania was apparently starting to melt.

What can climate-aware citizens and authors do about it? Both § 110b and the Biodiversity Act of 2009 lay down guidelines which make our politicians responsible and attack the nihilism that suggests that the problem is too great and complex for anything useful to be done. Last year, the Norwegian

Climate Foundation published a report called “Are the Oil Fund’s oil-sand investments illegal?” in which it was discussed whether it is possible to take the Norwegian State as represented by the Ministry of Finance to court. We can quite reasonably be critical about ever-growing number of areas that are being subjected to legal processes, such as taking the Ministry of Finance to court because the Government Pension Fund – Global contravenes the Constitution. However the lack of democratic participation in the policies governing the Oil Fund justifies the use of further mechanisms. The state of the world demands that every possible mechanism should be employed.

Literary variants of the J’accuse formulation seem to us today as hackneyed and trite rhetoric. But as skilled users of language, formal writers, poets, children’s-book authors, translators, critics and artists, curators, etc can contribute by making future climate damage more apparent, in the hope that this may awaken an engagement that can slow down this fatal development. This may perhaps take the form of an “inter-generational solidarity”, as it is expressed in a document full of wisdom, the UN General Assembly’s “Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations”. This document indicates all the traditions and practices by means of which different cultures around the world take care of future generations, sustainability, looking towards the future. These traditions are laid down in everything from religious conventions to household and family planning. This demands an understanding of the concept that an individual stands in a tradition that reaches far back in time and that “those living in a society reap the sacrifices and investments made by former generations”. The people of

the future have no voting rights today, while we who are shaping present reality and thereby the future are in every way putting the desires of present-day people (including the “needs” of shareholders in petroleum companies to draw ever-higher dividends) at the top of the agenda. How can the needs of future generations be addressed? How can we put weight behind the demand that their needs must be taken into account? To stop people’s thoughtless destruction of nature and biodiversity demands a great deal of work through visual, spoken and written messages, because this is where consciousness, philosophical norms and perceptions of reality begin.

#### PRECURSORS TO THE THINKING IN § 110B

The culture for the thinking expressed in § 110b has a long tradition. Our greatest authors in the 19th century were preoccupied with problem areas that could be said to be precursors to those with which the world is currently struggling. Eilert Sundt knocked on strangers’ doors and was an educational project in himself. Henrik Ibsen wrote *An Enemy of the People*, about Dr Stockmann’s warning that the town’s municipal baths were causing illness. And Henrik Wergeland’s understanding of what we today would call biodiversity expressed a deeply democratic philosophy. In 1845 he was dying. Illness was ravaging his body and gave little hope of avoiding death. All the spring he wrote, in the awareness that his measure of time was running out. The poems “Til Foraaret” (“To the Spring”) and “Til min Gyldenlak” (“To my wallflower”) are his best known from this period. It took less than a week from his writing them until their publication in the

newspaper *Morgenbladet*. After they were published, they went straight into our national cultural heritage. In “Til Foraaret” Wergeland expresses himself with a desperation that pushes all triviality aside:

O Spring! Spring! Save me!  
No-one has loved you more tenderly than I.

The heartfelt prayer in “Til Foraaret” still makes an impression. The poem is an Orpheic appeal to the renewal of creation, the spring flowers: liverwort and dandelion. Coltsfoot and grass. The poem appeals to nature with a prayer that the pain in his chest should cease. He writes with an intense desire that the spring sunshine, the warmth and the dry air might work wonders, after neither doctors nor religion have shown that they could save him from death.

The poem “Til min Gyldenlak” also expresses his acute feeling for life. In this poem he has found greater reconciliation towards death, and the first strophe reads:

Wallflower, ere you have lost your glory,  
I will have become that of which  
everything is made;  
Yes, before you loose your crown of gold,  
I will have become earth.

We can conduct an experiment: remove Wergeland’s two most famous poems from their all-consuming interpretative point of reference – the poet’s death bed and biography. We will turn the topic of the poems on its head! In this way we can read life in the light of the poems rather than the poems in the light of life. We can imagine a transposed version of the poems; the poems located in the heated world of the future. Nature’s cyclic

renewal forces have there been torn out of their rhythm. Average temperatures have increased and created a different climatic dynamic. Higher sea levels, stronger hurricanes, more precipitation, with consequences for food production. It has already caused suffering on an enormous scale and will drive people to flight. Read the poems in the light of this!

These imagined Wergeland carbon poems also deal with human separation from the familiar and loved nature, from life itself. These imagined poems also deal with a death, an abandonment, with belief in the here and now. The theme of the poems is intact, but in these alternative versions it is not the individual person who is dying. It is nature that is passing away. The constant cycle of the seasons fails and unknown forces take over. Research reports show that species vanish, that biodiversity is reduced. The fate of species changes when the world's climate changes, glaciers melt, sea levels rise. Drought and fires ruin areas that provided food for countless species. Poverty, illness, starvation and insecurity are the consequences of our carbon emissions. This is what eco-literature is about.

The greatest classic in the eco-literature genre is Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. It may be worth reminding ourselves of this work, which is still regarded as a classic and which can be an example of how modern Wergelandesque eco-literature can appear.

For Carson it is man's turn to "save" the spring. She describes a town in the heart of America where all life seems to live in harmony with its surroundings. Travellers could enjoy looking at the great diversity of plants and ferns by the roadside. Then the idyll was broken:

*Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change... mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chickens; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths ... There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example where had they gone? ... On the mornings that had once throbbed with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens, and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.* (Carson 1962, p.2)

Carson tells of a white powder that has fallen from the skies and lain in the gutters and between the roof slates. The work is factual prose, but is introduced by an allegory based on the fearful effects of new weed killers. The *Silent Spring* was an attack on agriculture in the USA and had great consequences. She describes the chemical insecticide DDT, which was regarded as a miracle cure for agriculture, but which did not merely kill insects. The poison spread from insects to birds and fish that fed off the insects. It became bio-accumulated in the food chain until it reached humans. Carson's literary recipe was to collect the many small stories that spoke of nature being changed unrecognisably; a silent and sick nature. None of the facts in her book were unknown, but no-one before her had presented the complete image. People lacked knowledge about the deadly consequences. With *Silent Spring*, a heavy burden of evidence was laid on the shoulders of the poison manufacturers. Research on

insecticides came from the same laboratories that had produced mustard gas, she wrote. Carson presented research showing the effects of the poisons in the body, believing that this would be for the benefit of all:

A Who's Who of pesticides is therefore of concern to us all. If we are going to live so intimately with these chemicals eating and drinking them, taking them into the very marrow of our bones - we had better know something about their nature and their power. (Carson 1962, p.17)

Today, measurements of many women's breast milk shows it to be full of dioxins. Some mothers choose to give their children artificial milk rather than breast milk. People are protecting themselves against that which is most natural.

American DDT manufacturers put all their professional weight behind disproving Carson's book and labelling her a hysterical alarmist. Nevertheless she achieved a discussion of poison use in Congress. She was invited to speak in a Committee hearing to advise the politicians. Slowly but surely, pollution became a matter of general awareness. As an activist, Carson insisted that we have a choice. We can remain in ignorance or we can insist on what she terms "our right to know".

A relevant contemporary enlightenment Kantism involves taking the leap from the right to know, via our duty to know, to taking the consequences of it. In this way we empower ourselves, to put it in Immanuel Kant's terms. The right to information about the environment is laid down in the second part of § 110b. The paragraph's formulation regarding our right to knowledge depends on the flow of information, which in turn has to

be met with clarification of language. While a climate researcher or report writer may, on the basis of agreements with their employer or of their employer's obligations, have limited opportunities to criticise politicians, there is little to stop autonomous authors from, for instance, criticising Statoil for a lack of sustainability.

In terms of genre, *Silent Spring* is a rudimentary precursor to the climate reports issued by the UN's climate panel (IPPC) and to the area of research that is now termed bio-monitoring, which is concerned with identifying chemicals in the body, metabolism and metabolic processes. The research used by Carson already existed, but was spread. What was new and striking with the book was the way in which she collected and presented the research. The overall picture clearly presented the seriousness of the consequences.

In conclusion I would like to remind the reader of a literary work that has been regarded as a pendant to Carson's work. The book to which I am referring, *alfabet* (1981), is regarded as the pinnacle of the output of a northern-European poet, the Danish Inger Christensen. The book begins with the constantly re-written line of verse "apricot trees exist, apricot trees exist". The work combines political and natural-science motifs and is highly regarded amongst other things for its eco-political awareness, often called apocalyptic. Christensen writes about a type of poisonous chemicals called defoliant:

defoliant exist  
dioxin for instance  
denuding trees and  
shrubs and destroying  
people and animals

by spraying  
fields and forests  
we achieve fall and death  
in the middle of the most  
luxuriant summer;r

this shifting of sorrow  
this light-filled morning  
was otherwise happily fair  
but the grass is all gone  
and a canopy's spun  
not out of threads but of poisonous air  
over forest and shore  
over mouse and man

now the sky is a cavern  
where withered birds  
will rot like fallen fruit  
[...]  
see a morningpale star  
gleams above like a brain  
that is almost used up and burned out  
too diffuse to recall  
a man's and a woman's  
union in their wingless flight  
in a sweet-scented meadow  
a summerwarm bed  
(Christensen 2000, p. 54-55)

This eco-political long poem is striking because it creates an awareness of what it is that we risk losing. This thereby creates an awareness of the irreplaceable nature of all that is found in the the biological and vegetable world. *alfabet* provides a platform for the sense of loss, intensifying our awareness of it. In the same way as research, eco-literature can make us aware of the difference between the world of a butterfly or amphibious creature that can select its partner and the world of a red-listed butterfly

or amphibious creature that is the last of its sort. It is a part of the same reality. Worship of life is implicit in paragraph 110b: a desire to preserve life as we know it, in its wonderful diversity. The paragraph does not explain why this is necessary or worth fighting for. It is therefore somewhat un-rooted and abstract. This is where literature and the graphic arts need to create images and narratives that will mobilise our solidarity and empathy with those who will inherit the earth (remember that it is perhaps the only inhabitable world in the universe). Literature and the graphic arts will thus be able to elevate justification from that of the self-evident (which needs no justification) to something that will make people think, yes, the means of life and life as we know it are worth preserving – we should not use burned-earth tactics.

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