

Haukeland University Hospital, Glass Blocks

Closed competition, art project in the gardens

The following artists were invited to the competition:

- A Kassen (Morten Steen Hebsgaard, Søren Petersen, Tommy Petersen and Christian Bretton-Meyer)
- Christine Aspelund
- INGES IDEE (Georg Zey, Axel Lieber, Hans Hemmert and Thomas Schmidt)
- Annika Oskarsson and Thomas Nordström

Competition jury members:

Jørgen Blitzner	Art Consultant at KORO (Leader)
Harald Fenn	Art Consultant at KORO
Helge Vidar Bergman	User Representative and Moderator
Marte Christine Jettestad	User Representative and Chief Physician at the Women's Clinic
Anne-Jorunn Langeland	User Representative and Consultant at the Children and Youth Clinic
Lars-Petter Smidt	User Representative and Project Manager at the Project Office
Siri Rørholt	Architect at Rambøll
Knut H. P. Opheim	User Representative and Consultant
Torben Schønherr	Landscape Architect at Schønherr
Siri Larsen	User Representative and Head of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit

Jørgen Blitzner is the jury secretary.

Jury's assessment and conclusion

The art plan defines the three gardens between the buildings as particularly well suited for art projects. For the second construction phase, we have chosen the garden between buildings 052 and 053 as the location for a major art project, selecting the artwork through an open international prequalification stage, followed by a closed competition. The project is to be one of the major artworks at the new hospital. During the prequalification process, no fewer than 75 artists expressed an interest in participating in the competition.

In the competition programme, we emphasised that we wanted an artwork that would be visually striking and invite interaction, something that would capture the premises of the architecture, while at the same time challenging them. The work of art should enhance and challenge the understanding of the garden space and the interface between the exterior and interior environment.

This particular garden space will be widely used by patients of all ages, as well as relatives and staff. It offers unobstructed views of Bergen. The gardens have varied designs based on the themes of mountains, water and woods. The jury allowed the possibility that the artwork could reflect the landscape architecture. The work of art will primarily be experienced from inside the buildings and outside the hospital grounds.

All participants complied with the conditions set out in the competition invitation. The entries address the issues and challenges satisfactorily and relate and respond quite differently to the space in terms of form, content, choice of materials and conceptual approach.

The coronavirus pandemic has made the process demanding, both for the participants and the jury.

The following points were central in the jury's assessment:

- Artistic quality and relevance to the art plan
- Innovative approach to the project
- Documented understanding of complex spatial situations
- Execution ability
- Technical and financial feasibility

The jury selected INGES IDEE and their entry entitled NICE TO SEE YOU as the winner. They will be invited to a meeting to discuss their proposal.

The project has a financial framework of NOK 1,750,000.

A Kassen (Morten Steen Hebsgaard, Søren Petersen, Tommy Petersen and Christian Bretton-Meyer)

submitted two proposals:

ØYE is a monumental sculpture comprising three elements, assembled in such a way that the word ØYE (EYE) can be viewed from above. It is made of lacquered metal on a steel frame. This specific material was chosen so that “the word would appear simple and clear – with the lightness of delicate, white curved paper”. From the ground, the shapes of the artwork resemble crumbled or wavy paper. They create space and openings that can be entered – a maze and room to explore.

ØYE is perceived differently, depending on the angle from which it is viewed. According to the proposer, the sculpture will “appear monumental and powerful, yet abstract, playful and labyrinthine”. As the viewer moves from one floor to the next in the buildings, the sculpture will transform from an abstract shape to a readable drawing of a familiar word.

Dimensions: H = 2.5 m, L = 10 m, D = 4 m.

Jury’s assessment:

The proposer plays with language and perception. The typography of ØYE is inspired by the children’s world and contrasts with the architectural forms and lines. The proposer has succeeded in the ambition to create a work of art with an interactive component that appeals to perception and invites interaction, both with the sculpture and other visitors. The maze formed by the sculptural elements invites exploration, movement and play.

The shape depicted in the proposal has a sketched quality and may appear to be insufficiently stringent compared to, for example, the work of Richard Serra, to which the piece refers. The success of the project depends on the rigidity of the shape, but A Kassen has proven such proficiency in the past. ØYE will contrast with the open architecture and it will be an exciting experience to discover the work from the various floors of the building.

From the ground, ØYE will block sight lines from the hospital foyer through the garden and down towards the city. The proposal may appear to be massive, making it essential that it have a solid visual expression. The jury also expressed concern about maintenance and cleaning, which will have to be clarified if the proposal is to be developed further.

Certain aspects about the foundation are also of concern. A Kassen proposes “anchoring the work in the concrete floor of the terrace”. This requires further clarification. It will not be allowed to drive bolts into the floor, as this would perforate the moisture barrier. The sculpture must have its own foundation of steel plates, concrete or other suitable material. This issue can be resolved.

After making an overall assessment, the jury has decided not to proceed with this proposal.

STJERNE OVER HAUKELAND (Star over Haukeland) (Endless Lamppost) consists of two elements: a 35 metre-high lamppost with a light at the top – a star – and 'Mother and child', comprising two fixed binoculars that visitors can use to look out over Bergen.

The star is a playful reference to traditional children's stories like 'I Want! I Want!' by William Blake and 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. The star will be elevated above the other light sources in the area, appearing as a shining star. With a bit of imagination, the artwork can be perceived as a poetic connection between Bergen and the hospital. The proposal hints at children's imaginary world and scale – and that anything is possible. It can also symbolise hope and give patients and their families a source of interest and reflection.

'Mother and child' consists of two fixed binoculars that offer views of Bergen. The idea is for children to use the binoculars together with their parents or other family members. The installation is a paraphrase of an existing sculpture by Ivar Johnson, 'Mother and Child', to be relocated to the hospital grounds.

Jury's assessment:

STJERNE OVER HAUKELAND is a likeable and playful idea with references to literary classics. The artwork will draw attention to the location and render the surroundings more accessible. For visitors to experience it as art, they must be familiar with the references, which requires that they are clearly communicated visually.

The idea has potential. In Aarhus, Denmark, a tubular bell has been installed in the library that rings every time a baby is born. STJERNE OVER HAUKELAND could perhaps serve a similar function.

However, at close range during the daytime, there will be little to experience other than a tall steel mast and two fixed binoculars. The concept has not been sufficiently visualised. The 'Mother and child' connection is not clear enough and the light mast has little aesthetic appeal. The concept seems to be somewhat unfinished.

Haukeland University Hospital sees frequent helicopter traffic and the helipad is close by. An installation like STJERNE OVER HAUKELAND requires approval from the aviation authority and would probably also require a marker, i.e. a red navigation light.

After making an overall assessment, the jury has decided not to proceed with this proposal.

Christine Aspelund

DET GYLNE EGGET (The Golden Egg) is an egg-shaped bronze sculpture with a golden, reflective surface. The egg is open, with small pieces of eggshell lying on the ground. Inside the egg is a foetus – a bear cub – and outside three small fledgelings with distinct personal features. The egg invites the viewer to enter, offering plenty of space for visitors.

It tells the story of where life begins – who we are and where we come from. "The bear cub can be interpreted as a symbol of consolation, as children often take teddy bears with them when hospitalised." The simple round shape of the egg is intended as a contrast to the angles and rectangular shapes of the architecture and will also contrast with the garden's vegetation. "Marshes are breeding grounds for many species of birds, so marshes are also connected to the first phase of life."

Egg: H = 2 m, W = 2 m, L = 2.5 m. Height of the figures: 80–100 cm, as well as three pieces of eggshell of varying sizes.

Jury's assessment:

DET GYLNE EGGET is a lovely concept with references to life and life's beginning. It offers warm and appealing associations. The sculpture has a direct and distinct design language that is appropriate for the theme of the garden space. Its expression is life-affirming, honest and straightforward, but perhaps a bit too concrete and limited in its symbolism. The proposal stimulates children's imagination, though perhaps primarily the youngest ones. It offers the possibility to enter a small, private and protective space.

Aspelund's proposal requires a strong and sensitive design, of which she is clearly capable. We can expect a subtle artistic expression in the little fledgelings, stringent yet with unique personalities in each one. The 'bear cub with placenta' figure may add unintended connotations for some groups of patients and the proposal would have to be adapted with this in mind. It would be radiant when illuminated and Aspelund also proposes special lighting.

The proposal would benefit from clarification of its relationship to the other sculptures in the garden. DET GYLNE EGGET can be viewed as a statement about or paraphrase of the work PERLER (Pearls), to be installed in the same area. The visual resemblance to PERLER is obvious and requires clarification.

After making an overall assessment, the jury has decided not to proceed with this proposal.

Annika Oskarsson and Thomas Nordström

Oskarsson and Nordström submitted a proposal for VANNPYTTTER OG SPREKKER I SKYDEKKET (Puddles and cracks in the clouds), consisting of various elements arranged in groups in the garden area. The elements are reminiscent of plants, large leaves and unusual vegetation. The proposal makes reference to such landscapes as the one in the film Avatar, where everyone and everything is spiritually connected – visualised in the film through the 'Tree of Life'.

There are two main groups of elements. The first comprises five elements that resemble rhubarb or tree crowns, with seats under the leaves. Coloured glass in the tree crowns allow light to shine through the leaves.

The other group is made up of light emitters, consisting of straw-like plants of various heights with lights at the tips. The lights are shaped like berries or plants and might very well be found in a marsh landscape.

Large leaf: H = varying from 2,400 to 3,000 mm, W/L = varying from 1,900 × 1800 to 2,500 × 2,800 mm.

Light: H = varying from 800 to 5,300 mm.

Jury's assessment:

Oskarsson and Nordström's proposal makes clear reference to the garden themes. The work of art covers Myrshagen like organic vegetation and is rich in visual references. It inspires and invites, with a low threshold for interaction. The sculptures are of a good scale and use the space in a positive way, but the tallest 'light plants' could be made a little lower to avoid damage from wind.

The proposal would create its own world, a special scenery like the landscape in Avatar to which it refers. This in turn would create a unique place where both children and adults would feel welcome. The jury is somewhat concerned about maintenance and cleaning, which would need to be clarified.

Oskarsson and Nordström demonstrate an understanding of context, also with a view to other artwork to be displayed in the area. In the proposal, light forms part of the visual expression. This will make it possible for the artwork to offer a different experience in harmony with the changing seasons and light conditions.

VANNPYTTER OG SPREKKER I SKYDEKKET is an aesthetically pleasing and well thought-out proposal, but there is the risk that the work of art will appear more as a good design than a clearly independent signature work. The jury is also concerned about significant installation costs, considering the extensiveness of the artwork, though this is also an aspect that can be adapted.

After making an overall assessment, the jury has decided not to proceed with this proposal.

INGES IDEE (Georg Zey, Axel Lieber, Hans Hemmert and Thomas Schmidt)

The proposal entitled NICE TO SEE YOU consists of two elements in lacquered bronze and EPS. A pair of gigantic glasses with large rubber boots on the ends of the frames are making their way towards a friend (or stranger?). The second element is a rabbit-like figure sticking its head out of the ground. Both are painted in strong colours: the glasses in blue and green and the rabbit in orange with green ears – a playful reference to carrots, a rabbit's favourite food.

The glasses are moving towards the rabbit, with one 'foot' in the marshland and one on the path. "The glasses can be perceived as a metaphor for a possible perspective, whether scientific or conscientious, while also representing a wandering visitor, gardener or hospital employee."

The rabbit views the glasses from below, from a child's perspective. The proposal refers to the underground universe of the rabbit, hidden and mysterious, as well as growth and the organic world.

The figures are positioned so that they have eye contact: an encounter between two cartoon-like characters that can spur interaction. The size and colours of the figures make them easily visible from a distance.

Glasses: H = 380 cm, W = 150 cm, L = 208 cm.

Rabbit: H = 230 cm (with ears), W = 130 cm, L = 83 cm.

Jury's assessment:

INGES IDEE has submitted a very well thought-out project. The proposal is resilient, innovative and visually striking – a distinct signal piece. It has a playful and humorous expression and will constitute a monumental landmark that will illicit a wide range of views among the public. It includes references to mid-20th century pop art, in which everyday objects are sometimes removed from their familiar context or combined with unrelated objects or phenomena.

The dialogue with the architecture is subtle. The towering glasses refer to the massive glass windows, while the rabbit, with its head only barely poking out of the ground, makes playful reference to the base of the building, which is without windows. The artwork effortlessly relates to the architecture and touches on the themes in the garden space. The sight lines from the hospital towards the city remain unobstructed. The jury appreciates the fact that the artistic expression is liberated from the hospital activities, while at the same time concerned about how the proposal will communicate with adult viewers. This is a matter that will have to be discussed and possibly incorporated into a revised version of the proposal.

NICE TO SEE YOU is strange and corny in a positive way, providing a low threshold for interaction. The jury considers the proposal to be both bold and playful. In the proposal, the artwork appears to be lighthearted and humorous, an easily accessible and unpretentious invitation – a conversation opener.

The jury would like to go ahead with the entry from INGES IDEE and has therefore chosen their proposal NICE TO SEE YOU as the winner.

Bergen, 8 April 2021

Jørgen Blitzner, Head of the Art Committee and Jury