

## Press release



Nearly 800m<sup>2</sup> of the square between the Høyblokka building and Akersgata in Oslo's new Government Quarter will be used for art. The artwork will be integrated next to the historic alley of linden trees in the middle of the square. This illustration shows the rough placement of the artwork. Illustration: Jumana Manna/Silvia Diaconu Fly-Collective AS/Team Urbis/Norwegian Directorate of Public Construction and Property

**Even the floor of the new Government Quarter will be a work of art!**

**A symbolic composition of reclaimed stone from across the country.**

**Oslo's new Government Quarter is rising up from the ground. KORO has commissioned an 800m<sup>2</sup> collage of stone in that very ground, in Johan Nygaardsvolds plass.**

Jumana Manna, a Berlin-based Palestinian artist (36 years old) has been chosen to develop the artwork which will become the *city floor* of the new quarter. Initially, 10 artists were invited by KORO to develop proposals for the city floor. The jury finally decided on Jumana Manna's proposal, *Substitute* (working title).

The city floor of Johan Nygaardsvolds plass, facing Akersgata, will be one of the biggest publicly accessible areas for art in the new Government Quarter. The square marks one of the primary entrances to the quarter. This will be a space for large and small public events, as well as for general everyday city life.

### **The whole country is invited**

Central to Jumana Manna's proposal is the reuse of stone taken from existing buildings, infrastructure, reconstructions and landfills in municipalities across all of Norway. Stone will be donated from pavements, bridges, fences, walls, dams, power stations, factories, town halls, schools, churches.

The different stones will add an element of irregularity and spontaneity to the area, which is otherwise characterized by strict planning and architecture.

- *My proposal explores Norway's material history in relation to nature and the extraction of resources, economy and identity. Through this work, I will explore recycling or reuse as a conceptual and infrastructural ethic, and highlight the idea that something must be given up in order for the collective to continue to live and grow sustainably together.*

### **Jumana Manna**

The artwork is an invitation to all areas of the country to take part in the rebuilding, the retelling and the re-composition of the Government Quarter through a non-monumental work embedded into the ground itself.

**Minister of Culture and Equality Anette Trettebergstuen praises the winning proposal's inviting character:**

- *It is great that art is given such a prominent and visible place in the cityscape. This is truly a work that invites people in! The artwork emphasises the work done in the Government Quarter. Policy is made here, and it has consequences for every single one of us. This artwork also emphasises that our society is made up of many unique individuals. I look forward to seeing people here!*

**KORO's director, Sigurd Sverdrup Sandmo, is responsible for arranging the competition and appointing the jury:**

- *I congratulate Jumana Manna on her commission, and I thank the jury for their good work. Manna's project shows a great understanding of the public space of which this work is a part. The process itself and the finished result will both create space for conversations about and reflections on the country in which we live, and on power, democracy, the government and the individual. I believe that many people will see warmth and humanity in this work. KORO looks forward to the creation of this artwork, along with the artist, the Norwegian Directorate of Public Construction and Property, and Agaia.*



Recycled stone from all over the country will be turned into a work of art embedded into Johan Nygaardsvolds plass. This illustration shows how the different stones might add an element of irregularity and spontaneity to the city floor, as well as marking a break with the strict architecture and the design of the rest of the square.

**Jury members.** Luis Callejas (architect, director of LCLA and professor in Landscape Architecture at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design), A K Dolven (artist), Marianne Skjulhaug (civil architect, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Design at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology), Ihra Lill Scharning (artist, advisor to Uloba Independent Living), Elisabeth Byre, Nora C. Nerdrum and Drew Snyder (from KORO).

### **The jury's justification**

- *“Substitute (working title) is an ambitious proposal which enables the participation of the public throughout the whole country, and can create huge engagement. The visual expression breaks with the architecture and will help to make the area appear inviting,”* the jury highlights in its justification.

**The curatorial team** for the art project is made up of Ana María Bresciani, Nora C. Nerdrum and Drew Snyder. **The project leader** is Elise Cosme da Silva, **co-researcher** Eystein Talleraas and **producer** Liv Brissach. The team will work closely with Jumana Manna in the development and completion of the work.

**About the artist.** Jumana Manna (born 1987, USA) grew up in Jerusalem, lives and works in Berlin and has a strong connection with Norway. She studied at the Academy of Fine Art in Oslo. For the artwork *Government Quarter Study* (2014), Manna took full-size casts of the columns from the interior of the Høyblokka government building. The work was first part of Henie Onstad Art Centre's widely discussed exhibition in 2014, *We Live on a Star*, which discussed the events in the Government Quarter during the attacks of 22nd July, 2011. The work later became part of the exhibition in the Nordic Pavilion during the Venice Biennale in 2017. Jumana Manna has also recently released her new and critically acclaimed film, *Foragers* (2022). The film is currently being shown in her first museum exhibition in the US, at MoMA PS1 in New York (September 2022 – April 2023). Through film, sculpture and installations, she investigates storytelling linked to power, language and memories.

**The city floor is scheduled to be completed in 2025.** The city floor, with its integrated artwork, will be complete when stone has been obtained from all over the country and has been composed into a larger whole by Jumana Manna, in collaboration with experts from Agaia.

**Art in the new Government Quarter.** Jumana Manna's art project for the city floor of Johan Nygaardsvolds plass is an important part of a larger art plan for the new Government Quarter. This also includes ["AAhka", Outi Pieski's monumental work in the Pyramid Room in the A-blokken building](#). The preservation and continuation of existing works from the old Government Quarter and other ministry buildings is also an important part of the plan. Work on the projects will continue until 2025.

KORO is responsible for all art projects in the new Government Quarter. It is KORO's biggest ever commission.

**News about art in the new Government Quarter** is frequently published [on our website](#).

### **Want to know more?**

Questions about the art project may be directed to Maria C. Havstam, KORO's Head of Education and Communication. Email: [mch@koro.no](mailto:mch@koro.no)

Questions about the building project may be directed to Pål Weiby in the Norwegian Directorate of Public Construction and Property. Email: [pal.weiby@statsbygg.no](mailto:pal.weiby@statsbygg.no)