

The Storting (parliament) building on Løvebakken is Norway's most important building, according to Peter Butenschøn, whose 2016 book celebrated the building's 150th anniversary. Butenschøn describes the building, scene of many of the most important events in modern Norwegian history, as a living symbol of Norwegian democracy. The main building on Løvebakken was designed by the young architect Emil Victor Langlet in 1860. Gradually the Storting has expanded into the surrounding streets, taking over plots on Prinsens gate (1972), Akersgaten (1988), and Nedre Vollgate (1993). The works in the Storting's art collection are associated with the actual Storting buildings to varying degrees, and the collection has come into existence under distinctive circumstances. If one is given the opportunity to study this collection, one gains access not only to iconic works of art, but also to the less well-known stories that are the gateway to understanding the history and politics of the artistic decorations in public buildings in Norway. So-called «public» art is often linked to a national decorative tradition whereby a work's specific location and physical context determine its starting point to a greater or lesser extent. In such cases, an artwork's «meaning» can depend on where it is placed, and when a work is positioned in a well-known public space, the public space may almost become an integral part of the work. One example is one of Norway's most famous history paintings, *Eidsvold 1814* by Oscar Wergeland, which hangs behind the President's podium in the Storting Chamber. Another is Sissel Blystad's *Landscape*, which hangs in the Storting's Central Hall. These works have a strong presence in the public consciousness thanks to the debates and political decisions that take place every day in their presence.

But the Storting's collection also represents a departure from the idea of site-specific artistic decoration, and at different times represents different views of art, as well as always the sometimes difficult, and ever-present, relationship between art and politics. Among the Storting's collection of 800 works of art, we also find lesser-known works by

major artists, due to an explicit collecting strategy adopted in the 1990s, which was followed increasingly by an institutional determination that artistic criteria should be decisive in acquisition processes. Becoming part of the Storting's art collection should mean something, and the primary goal when acquiring works from the 1990s onwards has been for the works to «provide the Storting with a representative collection of Norwegian art»<sup>1</sup>

In 1994, Else Marie Jakobsen completed her tapestry *The Dromedaries and Textile Art*. The tapestry's central motif is the Peder Balke painting *Lighthouse on the Norwegian Coast* (1885). The painting is divided up into a grid, which according to Jakobsen symbolizes a reductive, analytical and «dissecting» approach to art that has been traditionally adopted by art historians.<sup>2</sup> Balke is incorporated into art history, and in polemical fashion Jakobsen incorporates Emile Zola's famous accusation «J'accuse» (French: I accuse), made in the context of the Dreyfus affair, and also her own initials EMJ, into the tapestry, four and five times respectively. Zola's words are taken from his open letter to the French newspaper *L'Aurore*, in which the author defended the Jewish army captain Alfred Dreyfus. In the letter, which was addressed to the French president, Zola also strongly attacked the French army and French national pride.<sup>3</sup> Is this insistence, combined the accusation, a necessary tactic to bring about change in the approach taken by art historians towards women artists, and textile art? Is it something that is needed in order for the material- and craft-based art to take its place as one of the central fields of the visual arts? The towering dromedaries in the tapestry apparently represent (male) art historians – the gatekeepers who are supervising and literally trampling on the beautiful tapestries under their hooves.

In 2014, when I was appointed curator for this project, 20 years had elapsed since Jacobsen completed her tapestry, and the situation was quite different. A change was underway in the status of textile art within the visual arts as a whole. Two years previously, works by Hannah Ryggen had been exhibited at Documenta, the world's most prestigious art

exhibition, and in the years that followed, important exhibitions opened at the major museums in Norway: *Soft Monuments* at KODE in Bergen (2015), which examined textile art from the past 25 years; *Hannah Ryggen – Weaving the World* at the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo (2015); and a major Frida Hansen exhibition at Stavanger Art Museum (2015). As early as 2011, however, Kunsthall Oslo had put on the exhibition *Human Patterns*, with works by Hannah Ryggen and other artists, curated by Marit Paasche. This exhibition can be said to have sparked an interest in looking with new eyes at – re-curating, or more accurately, *correctively curating* – often overlooked artists from recent art history. Two years later came the exhibition that remains a powerful symbol of this trend: *Hold stein- hårdt fast på greia di. Norsk kunst- og kvinnekamp 1968-89* opened on 8 March 2013 and included works by artists such as Brit Fuglevaag and Elisabeth Haarr.<sup>4</sup> In other words, one can safely say that textile art has made a massive incursion into art institutions in recent years. But what kind of breakthrough is this?

When developing the curatorial concept for the art to be displayed at Prinsens gate 26, *The Dromedaries and Textile Art*, which was already in the Storting's art collection, was of particular significance. In this work, Jakobsen directly considers not only the status – or lack of status – assigned to textile art in Norway's history and art history, but also the close relationship between art and politics. *The Dromedaries and Textile Art* also has direct links to the work widely considered to be Jakobsen's masterpiece, *Den røde tråd*, a commission undertaken in 1981/82 for the lobby of the Natural Sciences Building at the University of Bergen. *Den røde tråd* (a Norwegian expression meaning a recurring theme or leitmotif) is in three parts. Believed to be the largest textile artwork in Norway, it was produced by Utsmykkingsfondet Public Art Norway's (KORO) predecessor. While a reading of the work can start from any point, it does have an underlying chronological structure. The first section is

based on early Norwegian Viking textiles, including references to fragments of woven textiles found during the excavation of the Oseberg Ship and fragments of the Baldishol tapestry from the mid-12th century. The second section refers to works by Frida Hansen, Hannah Ryggen and Gerhard Munthe, while the third section is dedicated to Jakobsen's contemporaries, with woven quotations from textile artists including Brit Fuglevaag, Synnøve Anker Aurdal, Kjellaug Hølaas, and an original contribution by Jakobsen. In an interview, Jakobsen characterized her own contribution as a «polemic in shades of red».<sup>5</sup>

Jakobsen's most important works comprise a woven historical narrative about the textile art that hangs in public spaces in institutions all over Norway. In the absence of galleries dedicated to textile art, and limited interest from the museums, public spaces became the venues where we could experience this important field of art. With their inherently institutional critique, Jakobsen's works represent – in a spirit of solidarity with other textile artists – an attempt to double the display opportunities for textile art. Her own works become sites and expressive opportunities for this overlooked area of art.

### Weaving within the visual arts.

In Norway, textile art can be said to have had several minor «breakthroughs», with each heyday taking its own unique form. From the monumentally scaled (often figurative) textile works of the 1950s, pioneered by Hannah Ryggen,<sup>6</sup> to the experimental works of the 1960s, when Brit Fuglevaag and Synnøve Anker Aurdal were highly influential, and texture became as important as the image. The 1960s were also characterized by influences from Poland, partly as a result of Fuglevaag's exchange visit to the Academy of Fine Art in Warsaw in 1963. In Poland, unlike in Norway, textile art was viewed as an independent form of art, on a par with painting, printmaking and sculpture. Several exhibitions in the 1960s and 70s by Polish artists highlighted the autonomous status achieved by textile art in Poland,

which in turn helped to boost its recognition in Norway.<sup>7</sup>

But it was in the 1970s that textile art, including weaving as an independent art form, gained recognition, while at the same time becoming a medium for political agitation in the work of artists such as Elisabeth Haarr and Else Marie Jakobsen. Expressions of political agitation recur in Jakobsen's *Dromedary tapestries* of the 1980s and 90s, at a time when there were many major public art commissions available for textile artists. The polemic form is maintained.

One would have to read very selectively not to realize that the history of textile art in Norway has been influenced strongly by its exclusion from what are traditionally considered the «fine arts», and its struggle for recognition as an art form. From the 1970s onwards, this exclusion was highlighted and articulated very clearly through the establishment in 1972 of the Textile Group within the UKS (Young Artists' Society). In many ways, the Textile Group was the forerunner of Norwegian Textile Artists, a professional organization that was founded five years later. Among other things, the Textile Group played a key role in ensuring that the jury for the annual Autumn Exhibition encompassed expertise in textile art. Nonetheless, the status of textiles in contemporary art is characterized by many interconnecting narratives of the impacts of individual artists, the trends embraced by educational institutions, the role professional associations, the availability of places to display works, and new providers of commissions. It is outside the scope of this project to discuss this complex history – or, more accurately, these histories – which are just beginning to take shape with several significant exhibitions and book publications.<sup>8</sup> This project poses a different set of questions: what roles do textiles play as a material component for artists today? What is it that artists today find interesting about incorporating these materials as a significant element in their work? What kinds of artistic possibilities lie in the current trend towards the material and the tactile?

### New materialism

The recent «turn» in the visual arts towards the tactile and the material, and a renewed interest in the materiality aspect of art, has emerged after a long period of dominance by conceptual art. New materialism is a theoretical movement that has made an impact in the art world in various contexts internationally. Of these, the most influential have been documenta 13 in 2012, curated by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, and the exhibition conceived by the Italian curator Massimiliano Gioni for the Venice Biennale 2013, where the main theme was the conceptual status of materials. New materialism is characterized by an interest in the material and the tactile, and by poetic yet scientific investigations where the object is re-introduced, while at the same time the relationship – and the dualism – between the subject and the object is challenged.

It is difficult to categorize artistic movements that are close to us and still current, and perhaps it is no longer even desirable to search for evidence of minor and major paradigm shifts within an active field. Even so, it is reasonably obvious that minor and major artistic manifestations and exhibitions have articulated this interest in the material in artistic practice over the past five-ten years. But how is the influence of new materialism expressed in art? Haven't artists always experimented with materials as well as with form? This project follows the lines of this inquiry: what does it look like when the artist allows the actual activity of investigating the materialism of art to become the main ingredient in – or the basic component of – a work.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of new materialism – also known as «neo-materialism» – was not born in a vacuum, but emerged in the 1990s in the social sciences to describe the theoretical move away from the so-called dualism underlying modern humanist traditions. If one were to undertake to explain the significance of the «new» in new materialism in relation to the movement's influence in the visual arts, one would obviously point to the rejection of the idea that the primary function of art is one of representation – the idea that an

artwork should depict something else. In contrast, new materialist theory suggests that the material that a work of art is made from has its own effect, and this effect is not necessarily something that can be subsumed by, or subordinated to, the concept that is also attached to the work. Art produces its own form of knowledge. The «language» of the materials is accommodated, precisely in order to avoid continuing the dualist approach that divides the subject (the observer) from the object (the observed).

From the perspective of new materialism, the object is viewed as being on a par with – rather than subordinated to – the subject. New materialist theory emphasizes that the object embodies its own experience, its own time and history that exist independently of the subject. Accordingly, new materialist theory can see an artwork as an independent reflective entity alongside – not superior to – a subject that is engaged in reflection. In philosophy this is viewed as a form of «posthumanism», or the idea that the human is no longer at the centre of experience, and this concept has been explored in several fields of study. Relevant philosophical movements here include object-oriented ontology (OOO), a school of thought whose proponents include Graham Harman, among others.<sup>10</sup> If what one might call the «meaning» of art now lies in the material from which it is made, rather than in the abstract thinking of the subject experiencing it, this triggers a hierarchical change. But what does this mean for our experience of a work of art? What kinds of questions are being posed in these works? As we will see in the relevant works, they are characterized by multi-faceted approaches and interests.

### Environment and climate

Many commentators have suggested that the current move towards materialism represents the necessary critical engagement we need to tackle today's environmental and climate challenges. That we must quite simply look at the world anew, in order to look after it better. Stepping down from the sovereign status that humans have enjoyed over their surroundings, including over animals,

would seem to be a start. In Goshka Macuga's textile work *The Fable of the Wolf, the Polar Bear, the Reindeer and the Cosmonaut* (2018), which was recently produced for the Storting, we are witnesses to a complex scene in an ancient, unmistakably Norwegian, forest, where a group of people dressed as animals (a wolf, a reindeer and a polar bear) seem to have gathered after participating in a political action or demonstration. Banners bearing environmental and political slogans stand and lie around the group. In the landscape behind the forest we can see the ocean with two 1980s-style oil rigs, and a coastline where we can glimpse Eidsvoll Manor and the Sámi Parliament. An abandoned space capsule has a central place in the composition, and a cosmonaut appears to be leaving the scene. The lofty pine trees in the ancient forest divide the composition vertically, while dead, fallen tree trunks act as framing devices. Nevertheless, younger pine trees mitigate the dystopian atmosphere – some things are still growing.

People in animal costumes, some more realistic than others, look far more two- than four-legged. The «Wolf» lies casually on an old turf hut with a banner bearing a quotation that originates from the author James Bovard: «Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.»<sup>11</sup> Democracy cannot only be about voting, it should also be about recognizing rights, and it should be more than the rights of the strongest, or the majority. The Arne Næss quotation on the other banner seems to enlarge on Bovard's: «The differences between us and animals do not give us more rights, but more obligations», while the polar bear, representing a species at risk of extinction, holds a banner with the slogan «It's hot in here».

The juxtaposition of symbols of technological progress, protest banners, nature, and humans dressed as animals, injects some confusion into the scene, undermining the clarity of the message. It is also unclear whether the scene is happening in the present, past or future. Often the familiar and traditional strategy of depicting animals to convey desirable or less

desirable human traits has a comical effect. In this assemblage of images, absurdity is also an active ingredient, but with a serious, political intent. By dressing themselves as animals, the demonstrators have identified themselves as animals, and in doing so have distanced themselves from the destruction and animal suffering caused by humans.

Macuga was born, and grew up in, Poland, but has lived in London for the past 25 years. In 2016, Macuga was commissioned to create a new work specifically for the outer reception area of Prinsens gate. Due to its location, the work is also seen easily from the street. Over the course of several meetings during 2016 and 2017 we discussed what directions this kind of work could take, and it gradually became clear that Macuga wanted to address issues to do with nature, the climate and sustainability. At the artist's request, visual materials were supplied from the Storting's picture archive, including photographs of demonstrations in Eidsvoll's plass, the square in front of the main Storting building. We also supplied more general images of Norwegian nature, with a particular focus on forests, animals, and the sculptural forms of oil rigs. In autumn 2017, Macuga met the Storting's art committee to present her underlying theme and early photo-collages for the work she wanted to realize for Prinsens gate. The presentation aroused unanimous enthusiasm from everyone present. It's important to note that the meeting was not arranged in order to approve Macuga's project, as the artist had already been given her mandate in the form of the commission. The meeting took the form of an initiation into the artistic processes and thinking that lie behind the development of this kind of work.

Aurora Passero consistently develops a non-figurative visual language in her artistic practice, with materials often consisting of hand-dyed and handwoven nylon. In her work *Coral Visions* (2018), which was created especially for this art project, it is once again this material that dominates an 16-metre-high interior space at Prinsens gate. The work is Passero's most monumental so far, and as always with Passero, it relates actively to the

architectonic context. The colours are sky blue with shades of coral and rose pink, evoking thoughts of sunsets, clouds and the sky. The work dominates the otherwise sober space, which is characterized by subdued, contrasting colours. The handwoven material is uneven with an organic appearance, thicker in some places and thinner in others, rather like the colours, of which several coats were sprayed onto the woven nylon. The 50-square-metre textile is divided into six woven panels, which are suspended in two vertical rows from the top of the wall and down five storeys. The work can be seen from the adjacent inner meeting rooms and the walkways on each floor.

In *Coral Visions*, Passero has woven her own canvas, which she has allowed to form the starting point for her painterly decisions. In her earlier works, her painterly choices were often influenced by an organic and process-driven approach to colour composition. This is also the case here, but the woven fabric seems also to have become more sculptural and varied. Nylon, a form of plastic, is a cheap material that is often associated with pollution, overproduction and excessive consumption. In our own time plastics are also linked to catastrophic environmental problems, as the world's oceans have become the final destination for this non-biodegradable material. The linking of nylon to the historical tradition of handweaving puts our usual priorities in jeopardy. The cheap becomes strikingly beautiful, elevated and valuable.

Like several of the works in this project, *Coral Visions* breaks with a homogeneous view of genre. *Coral Visions* can be interpreted both as a sculpture and as an installation, and also as a textile work that challenges the distinction between painting and textile art. The work's active relationship to the space is the dominant feature, nonetheless, and it is this spatial composition that is Passero's signature. In its expansive physicality, the work represents the precise total of all the artistic decisions that have been made. Like Macuga, Passero was invited to create a new work for Prinsens gate. For an artist who is accustomed to working almost up

to the deadline, and actually in the space where the work will be realized, this commission was a somewhat different process. When Passero was invited to produce a new work, the building in Prinsens gate was a construction site, so there was for a long time no or limited access to the actual space that could inform the artistic process. In an interview, Passero has said that whatever work she is working on incorporates the seeds of her next work; that is, the distinctions between her completed works are perhaps not as great as they seem when they are realized in different spaces. In the period before the realization of *Coral Visions*, Passero was working on her exhibition *Silvery Actions*, which opened at the Vigeland Museums in May 2018. Here the artist exhibited new, sculptural works within the museum's very characteristic architecture. One of the works was drawn out into the gallery, hanging from the ceiling, a device that was also long under consideration for this project. In *Coral Visions*, the decision was made to hang the textile surface along the wall, in order to emphasize the work's surface rather than its sculptural quality.

#### Subject, object, thing

According to Ane Graff, visualizing how all materials exist in complex relationships is a primary objective of her artistic practice. From this perspective, Graff is perhaps the artist in the Prinsens gate art project who is closest to the project's primary concept. The investigation of materiality through science, art and philosophy is not only the subject of Graff's research fellowship project at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, titled «Why Matter Matters», but also the shared starting point for her works purchased for Prinsens gate, *Throw, Soft Outer Cover and Through Stone* (all 2015). In particular, Graff is interested in the interwoven relationship between materials and humans, that is, the relational and processual reciprocity between materials and humans. Can human beings be understood differently if they are read as non-distinct and processual? Can an understanding of materiality be re-articulated as deeply entangled with humans, where the latter do not have control? Graff's artistic practice seems to challenge human-material

dualism by emphasizing interaction and mutual dependency.

How humans and non-humans co-exist is ultimately a political question, and a growing solidarity with the non-human seems to be the answer's political expression. Graff often uses multidisciplinary methods that include perspectives from the human and natural sciences, as well as the visual arts. Many people will be familiar with her beautiful and highly detailed pencil studies of animals and materials. The works acquired for Prinsens gate are so-called textile paintings, where the textile – hand-painted silk – is draped over, and sewn onto, canvas. The different patterns emerge through the use of different printing techniques, such as woodcut and screenprint. Chemicals are also applied to the fragile material, which is dipped, painted and printed on multiple times, a process that can result in something that is more like traces than patterns. Traces of actions and activities. Each of the three works is the same height as a person, a characteristic that emphasizes the theme of Graff's investigations.

#### A new material relationship

Like Graff, the Sámi-Finnish artist Outi Pieski investigates the status of materiality in artistic practice, but an emphasis on the significance of textiles as the carriers of references may best characterize Pieski's four works at Prinsens gate. The paintings are framed by knotted silk threads that clearly refer to the threads edging the shawls that are part of Sámi women's traditional dress. The paintings can be seen as either abstract or figurative, while the titles of the work draw us in: they are Sámi place names. Pieski has also used montages of Sámi symbols in other works, often in the bottom part of her paintings.

In her article «On the Substance of Matter» Milja Liimatainen suggests that adopting the kind of relationship that indigenous peoples have with materiality and nature, along with a more holistic world view, could be the start of a change of course from our current situation.<sup>12</sup> For this artist, the idea that a new relationship with materials can be both liberating and enlightening is a constant theme. She

often combines powerful defences of Sámi materials, traditions and places with a performative element. Pieski's work *Leagi vuoigna/Spirit of the Valley* (2015) is installed at the Sámi Parliament in Karasjok.<sup>15</sup> Pieski engaged 12 Sámi women, all experts in *duodji* to make the materials for the textile installation. They spent several months knotting silk threads, an important cultural activity associated with Sámi traditional dress. The assembling and positioning of materials can also be linked to the idea of repatriation, of moving «home» materials that have been exiled or relocated against their will. Pieski's artistic practice also has links with «craftivism», a form of activism centred on the practice of «domestic crafts» and associated with anti-capitalism, feminism and environmentalism. The central idea of this political movement is that domestic crafts represent a form of empowerment that has cultural, social and historical value. Several of Pieski's works involve associations with activities and kinds of work that can strengthen Sámi culture. Pieski's four works in Prinsens gate have a powerful sense of place. Places and geography play a major role in her artistic practice, and are often combined with studies of details that, according to the artist, are intended to evoke the atmosphere or awaken memories of the relevant place. This is the case with the four paintings at Prinsens gate: but they create a constant displacement of the geographical detail, the micro-object, and the unobstructed views that are only experienced in the artist's home landscape around Utsjoki. With her fringed frames that are loaded with cultural references, Pieski creates a unique form of aesthetic expression.

Ida Ekblad, Aurora Passero and Ann Cathrin November Høibo share a free and non-hierarchical relationship with historical and contemporary materials. Ekblad's individual artistic investigations over the past 10 years in many ways constitute a narrative that can be translated to a wider area of art. The trend towards sensitivity to materials and the tactile can be detected in any number of artists' work in this period, but for Ekblad this change was discussed and assessed in public at an early stage, becoming part of the artist's biography. «Too little,

almost nothing, to see,» wrote Ina Blom about the introversion of works that drew their inspiration from a trendy and often obscure subcultural visual. Blom's concern was to find new, more productive platforms for interpreting early works by Gardar Eide Einarsson. In this text from 2004, written in connection with Einarsson's solo exhibition at UKS Young Artists' Society in Oslo, Blom articulates the often contradictory expectations for «good artworks»: that they should offer something to *experience*, something more to see, than, in Einarsson's case, replicas of prison benches. Works carrying multiple references, including subcultural appropriations, have formed an active backdrop for the generation of artists to which Ida Ekblad belongs, and to view Ekblad as at the vanguard of a still ongoing turn towards the tactile is both risky and indicative. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that Ekblad's material-oriented expressionism was early and influential. «*Just Audio*» was produced especially for the inner reception of Prinsens gate. The artist's response to the invitation to participate in this project was to create two new works. The visually «wildest» of the two, «*Just Audio*» was chosen. The central motif is a kind of lotus flower surrounded by ornamental and repetitive flower motifs and suspended, or arranged, textile fragments – cotton and linen – covered in a characteristically Ekblad-esque material, puff paint. Her brush strokes emphasize and accompany the ornamental, creating a rich and intense visual expression. In her new three-metre-by-two-metre work for the Storting, this material almost grows out across the traditionally restricted shape of the canvas. Hands are another shape repeated in this work, as in Else Marie Jakobsen's *The Dromedaries and Textile Art*, which is displayed in the same room.

In the same year that she created «*Just Audio*», 2018, Ekblad created several large-scale works that were shown later in the year at Karma International and Kunstverein Braunschweig. Here there is a new finely-tuned, thoughtful quality to the possibilities offered by painting, combined with the playfulness that presenting a painting in a non-conventional fashion can entail. Ekblad's

new paintings accomplish and accentuate this direction in her artistic practice. It will be exciting to see whether this distinction becomes an enduring and central feature of her art.

Else Marie Jakobsen was a student of Hannah Ryggen, and Ann Cathrin November Høibo had Jakobsen as her mentor. Jakobsen's articulate political engagement is incorporated in her works both through the inclusion of signs (quotations, repetitions of her own initials), and of woven fields depicting her own and other artists' sidelined practices. This institutional critical attitude emerges in different ways in her tapestries, but is never far from Jakobsen's work. In the work of her student Høibo, this critical attitude emerges somewhat differently. The materials available to Høibo are individually manipulated before being assembled in new combinations, where so-called «contemporary materials» (yellow Dr. Marten's shoelaces, plastic rails) are combined with wool dyed in colours that give a nod to Hannah Ryggen's home-dyed woollen threads. The work that has been acquired for the Storting *Untitled (Diptych)* (2017) consists of two woven panels, hung from two plastic rails. The work was made especially for the exhibition *Entangled: Threads and Making* at the Turner Contemporary, where Høibo's work was exhibited alongside works by Sidsel Paaske and Marianne Heske, as well as Hannah Ryggen's textile work *6 October 1942*. Høibo's *Untitled (Diptych)* was created as a direct response to Ryggen's political textile work.

It was never the intention to develop a curatorial concept for the artworks at Prinsensgate that would attach importance to an artist's gender. The fact that all the artists in the project are women was not a curatorial starting point, but a result of the investigative processes around materialism that took place in the dialogue with the art committee, where other components also manifested themselves: the works' envisaged reciprocal dialogues and situations

in the building. This does not mean that gender is an insignificant factor in curating, and acquiring works for important public collections. If the project *The Materials Speak*, which includes works by Ida Ekblad, Ann Cathrin November Høibo, Aurora Passero, Ane Graff, Outi Pieski, Goshka Macuga and Else Marie Jakobsen, performs a corrective function in a collection which is overly dominated by works by male artists, this is a positive result. The main objective for this project has been to give an opportunity for different artistic practices that right now are investigating material sensibility to be seen alongside each other, with their own operative investigating intact and open for the audience and visitors who will have the pleasure of seeing the new art project in Prinsens gate 26.

## Notes

**1** From the art plan adopted in 1991. In 1990, the Praesidium established an «advisory committee for artistic decoration in the Storting». See *Stortinget og kunsten* (Thiis Evensen/Solem Winge/Aamold), 2000.

**2** See e.g. Frank Falch's article «Billedvev og engasjement» in Else Marie Jakobsen *Billedvev og engasjement*, page 58.

**3** Emile Zola's open letter was an attack on the prosecution of the Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus, who three years earlier had been sentenced to life imprisonment for allegedly spying for Germany and deported to the infamous prison colony of Devil's Island off the coast of French Guiana in South America. From the start the case caused deep divisions in France, with Dreyfus enjoying only limited support initially. With the help of investigations conducted by Zola and other supporters, however, it gradually became clear that the Dreyfus affair was a miscarriage of justice, motivated largely by anti-Semitism, and that the actual spy was a different officer.

**4** «Hold stenhårdt fast på greia di. Norwegian art and feminism 1968-89», curated by Eline Mugaas and Elise Storsveen, Oslo Kunsthall. Artists: Synnøve Anker Aurdal, Siri Anker Aurdal, Anne Breivik, Ingegjerd Dillan, Jeannette Christensen, Lill-Ann Chepstow-Lusty, Brit Fuglevaag, Elisabeth Haarr, Morten Juvet, Per Kleiva, Berit Soot Kløvig, Sonja Krohn, Eva Lange, Wencke Mühleisen, Sidsel Paaske, Elsebet Rahlff, Terje Roalkvam, Zdenka Rusova, Willibald Storn, and others.

**5** See e.g. Frank Falch's article «Billed-vev og engasjement» in Else Marie Jakobsen *Billedvev og engasjement*.

**6** In 1953, the National Gallery purchased Hannah Ryggen's *The Use of Hands* (1949), from the solo exhibition «Hannah Ryggen» held at Kunstnerens Hus in Oslo earlier the same year. This was the first textile work acquired by the National Gallery, and Ryggen viewed the purchase as important affirmation of her status as an artist. See Marit Paasche's PhD thesis *Forhandlingen med historien. Hvordan en arkivstudie over Hannah Ryggens kunstnerskap ga grunnlag for kritikk av det normative i kunsthistorien* (2018).

**7** See e.g. Runa Boger *Magdalena Abakanowicz og Norge: Stilskaper eller frigjørende effekt. En drøftelse av Abakanowicz' betydning for norsk tekstilkunst 1960-1980*.

**8** In connection with the 40th anniversary of the founding of Norwegian Textile Artists (NTK), *Ode til en vaskeklut, hymne til en tiger* was published 2017. The publication provides a very useful introduction to understanding the role of textiles as both method and material in the art world today. Edited by Ingvill Henmo, Lise Linnert and Sidsel Palmstrøm.

**9** It was an interest in neo-materialism in contemporary art that characterized the curatorial approach, and this investigation also structured our dialogue and professional discussions with the Storting's Art Committee. This does not mean that the artists selected for Prinsens gate 26 are «new materialists». Such a categorization would be

too narrow and restrictive, and pigeon-holing artistic practices is not the aim of this project.

**10** The term «object-oriented philosophy» was coined by Graham Harman, the movement's founder, in his 1999 doctoral dissertation *Tool-Being: Elements in a Theory of Objects*.

**11** The quotation from Bovard refers to an older quote from Benjamin Franklin, «Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote!»

**12** Milja Liimatainen's article «On the Substance of Matter» in the book Outi Pieski, edited by Liimatainen, Lilja, Miller, Wiik, 2018.

**13** Outi Pieski's work *Leagi vuoigná/Spirit of the Valley* (2015), was realised in connection with the construction of an extension to the Sámi Parliament building, designed by the architect Stein Halvorsen. Halvorsen also designed the prizewinning original Sámi Parliament building, completed in 1996. The author of this article was curator of the art project, which included newly produced work by Pieski.