

**Government
Quarter
Study**



**For Those Who Like
the Smell
of Burning Tires**

—

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Bo Krister Wallström:

Sites of Rebellion and Destruction

This publication presents two major works by Jumana Manna. Maria Moseng looks at *Government Quarter Study* to reflect on our collective memory regarding remarkable contemporary events, while Mattias Ekman considers the concept of a *memorial site* and the implications of creating permanent markers of the crimes of the past. Stian Gabrielsen's text connects the work *For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires* with various literary and cinematic narratives that merge human with insect, sparking negotiations between two states of being; crawling and upright.

Manna's two projects are both affiliated with Public Art Norway's URO programme in separate ways. URO assists in the process of art productions in public space. "Public space" here means both physical, publicly accessible space and the phenomenon of "the public": the social space that emerges in the interactions and exchanges between groups or individuals. URO offers production support to projects initiated by artists, curators or other free-lance art producers. In recent years there has been a sharp rise in the number of applications received by URO. One explanation for this could be the fact that most art works created for public space are commissioned by art institutions or government agencies on a national or municipal level. URO on the other hand represents a platform within Public Art Norway that has an open call; specifically aimed at facilitating a more transparent production process that is as free as possible from contextual and pragmatic constraints. In the last years contemporary art has displayed an increased interest in specific sites that

KORO / URO
1/2016
Government Quarter Study, 2014
Jumana Manna

Producers: URO (Bo Krister Wallström),
Henie Onstad Kunstsenter
Curators: "Vi lever på en stjerne"
(We are living on a star):
Tone Hansen, Marit Paasche

For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires, 2009

Editor: Line Ulekleiv

Design: Ulf Carlsson
Repro: John Nelander
Printing: Litografia

www.koro.no

Thank you:
Bo Bisgaard
Fredrik Qvale
Andreas Amble

KORO
KUNST I OFFENTLIGE ROM

HENIE ONSTAD
KUNSTSENTER



KULTURRÅDET
Arts Council
Norway

are bestowed with social significance; a movement that URO can help visualize and develop further. The site becomes an arena for continuous developments, implicating a variety of interests and sparking debates.

For URO, as a producer representing the state, it can be a balancing act to consider the many levels of involvement and the various working methods that exist within this field. Our goal then is to provide the many self-initiated art projects and different expressions of contemporary art unrestricted access to the public, thereby challenging preconceived structures of governing and thinking.

Several of URO's completed projects were previously rejected by other potential producers. Looking at how these various rejections were justified can provide insight into conditions that directly or indirectly prevent certain artistic expressions from reaching the public arena. Often the cause of rejection is related to content and subject matter; sometimes it can be potential financial risk, technical regulations or safety concerns.

Common for both art works presented in this publication is that URO did not assist with production from beginning to end. *Government Quarter Study* was co-produced by Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in 2014 for the exhibition "Vi lever på en stjerne" (We are living on a star). The work itself was made on site in the entrance of the H-Block office building in Oslo's government quarter, only a few meters from where a terrorist bomb detonated on 22nd of July 2011, devastating the area. Following a prolonged period of negotiations we were allowed to carry out a major on-site casting process inside the building. As part of a larger project, Manna made a cast of one of the embellished columns that form part of the building's central load-bearing system. Thanks to these massive pillars the explosion could not destabilize the core construction of the building itself. Manna's project refers to the symbolic significance of these columns – to the aesthetic and functional role of one of the load-bearing columns before, during, and after the attack. In that regard she also shows respects for the seminal 1950s architecture of Erling Viksjø. In addition to the pillars the installation of *Government Quarter Study* includes four photographic works by Mark Boyle. For Manna, these microscopic

photographs, titled *Secretions: Blood, Sweat, Piss and Tears* (1978), from the Henie Onstad Collection, emphasize the abject materiality of bodies, in counterpoint to the concrete architecture of Viksjø's Brutalism.

In the case of *For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires*, URO's involvement began after the work itself had been completed and Manna was looking for a new public site for it. At the moment of writing we are still looking for the place that can give the project new political and cultural relevance.

The work itself is made up of flagpoles that were once standing outside Norwegian cabins, now lined up in a row, bent and twisted. When first exhibited in 2009 at Gallery Maria Veie in Oslo, the length of the poles battled the low-hanging ceiling of the gallery, forcing the patriotic, deformed flag-bearers to gravitate towards the floor. Thus the physical limitations of the gallery helped create a poignant iteration of the work, where the pole's upright national rigor was bent into more organic shapes shifting the posture and function of the poles into a more ambiguous one. In 2010, the work was re-installed in a parking lot by Kunsthall Oslo under a bridge in the new neighborhood of Bjørvika. The poles took a slightly different form outdoors, with one of them curving upwards again, towards the bridge.

The title's allusion to images of desperate street fighting literally clashes with an icon of Norwegian identity: the flag-flying serenity of idyllic life at the cabin. Incidentally, for anyone who does in fact like the smell of burning tires, there is now an organized "riot tourism" where interested parties can travel to other countries to participate in protests and displays of civil disobedience. Some are drawn to social rebellion as potentially life-altering experience, similar to the inherently transcendental potential of art.

Roland Barthes claimed that myths are created when culture takes on the appearance of nature, in other words when something that is constructed and dynamic is presented as static and absolute. A nation asserts emotional power through its potential for approximating kinship and family: you are metaphorically related to millions of people you

will never know. The problem is that this concept is both inclusive and exclusionary at the same time. While promoting a radical egalitarianism by claiming that all members of a cultural group are equal, it simultaneously defines who is allowed into the group and who is to be kept out.

Jumana Manna investigates how power is constructed through relationships, between bodies, in history and national imaginaries. In both of the projects featured here, she manipulates national symbols to draw attention to sites of rebellion and destruction – in its most extreme manifestation, terror. This challenges the national community, pointing at its fundamental nature as abstract and constructed.

Exterior of Høyblokka in the Government Quarter seen from Grubbegata, 1959.

Photo: Teigens Fotoatelier.





Interior from Høyblokka in the Government Quarter, 1958–59.

Photo: Teigens Fotoatelier.



Maria Moseng:

Pebbles and the Archaeology of the Present

At a time when photo-sharing services and social media permit even the most insignificant evening swim or meal to be multiplied in a premature and evanescent historicization, the distinction between preserving and forgetting, remembering and deleting, is no longer as absolute as one might think. Conserving or representing a recent memory is also a question of producing contemporaneity, a contemporaneity that is increasingly vanishing as a common reference as we share images more and more. Some memories, however, are more collective than others, but even these must be produced and maintained in some material form.

Jumana Manna's casts of the pillars in Høyblokka in the work *Government Quarter Study*, is a repetitive, almost photographic gesture. It is a laboriously made technology of memory which, like the smartphone, fragments things – lifts them out of context. But an alienating duplication also takes place when these solid, symbolically charged construction elements suddenly appear as hollow and mobile, almost with a non-committal lightness in their monumentality. This is an articulation of vulnerability that refuses sentimental content, and which at the same time points to itself more as gesture than as object. At the time when this work was finished, for the exhibition "Vi lever på en stjerne" (We are living on a star) at the art museum Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, the future

fate of the building Høyblokka was still uncertain. The robust building, which had preserved its form despite 950 kilos of explosives, had stood for over two years both as a steadfast monument and as a partly bandaged wound. Manna's reproduction of the central pillars can thus be regarded as a death mask – the protophotographic method of immortalization that became particularly widespread with the zeal of the Renaissance for the timeless and eternal. Like the photograph, the death mask is a substitute for memory. It is a witness that replaces the original with the copy. It thus points towards the unrepresentable, death itself, through an articulation of negative space, absence, and becomes a direct illustration of the paradoxical relationship between the moment and the eternal future.

At a certain level this gesture points back towards the institution-critical operations of the avant-garde, as when Bruce Nauman produced the imprint in concrete *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair* in 1965, and Richard Serra made the lead castings of the point where the wall and floor met (*Castings*, 1969). However, what is challenged in these acts is the logic by which the aesthetic object is produced, and the idea of a privileged relationship between original and copy. Manna's pillar studies, on the other hand, are perhaps above all an investigation of the materialization of ideas in cultural and collective memory – these complex and often politicized operations that are governed both by structural mechanisms and by conscious ideas of what is worth preserving.

On 25 May 2014 the Norwegian Government decided that Høyblokka was to be preserved. In the debate about this process it was not only the national value of the building as a symbol of the modern Norwegian welfare state that was a weighty argument. It was also important that Høyblokka had acquired added symbolic value and meaning after the terror attack. The mnemotechnic value of the building itself, as a witness, thus became an argument that trumped socioeconomic calculations (which are to a certain extent accommodated by the decision, for safety reasons, to demolish the Y-block from 1969, similar testimony to a wounded nation.) In this way Høyblokka has remained standing as a temporary modern ruin, with increasingly charged connotations,

influenced not least by the way the destruction has contributed an ambivalence to its monumentality.

Modern ruins

Part of the strength and impact of Manna's work is that it combines reference with a modelling in space – a recognition from minimalism that actual space can be more powerful and specific than representation, as the artist Donald Judd put it. At the same time the idea of the ruin, as a contemporary metaphor and materialization of time, becomes an insistent aspect through the fragmented presentations of the pillars. In one sense the pillars can be regarded as a reference to a generic idea of classical ruins: collapsed temples and lone columns from antiquity which so to speak represent ruins in their normal state. In these cases the original form of the building structure is no longer accessible to us, but has been hollowed out by time such that only the most solid coordinates remain. When modern ruins, on the other hand, affect us at a more personal level, it is perhaps, as the archaeologist Mats Burström has pointed out, because we have a more intimate relationship with these buildings. The transformation is therefore to a greater extent related to our bodily experience. It is felt more brutally.

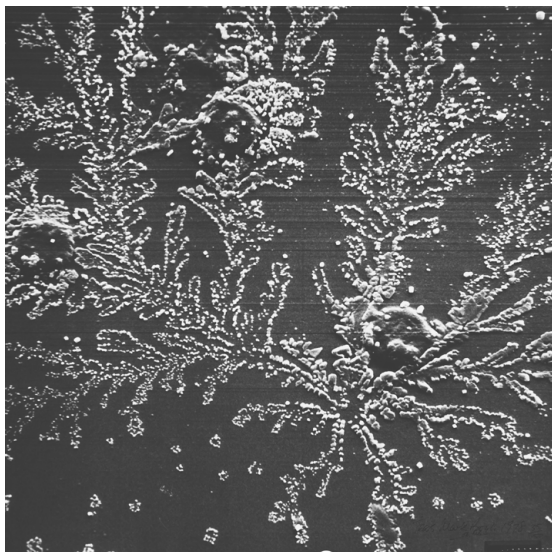
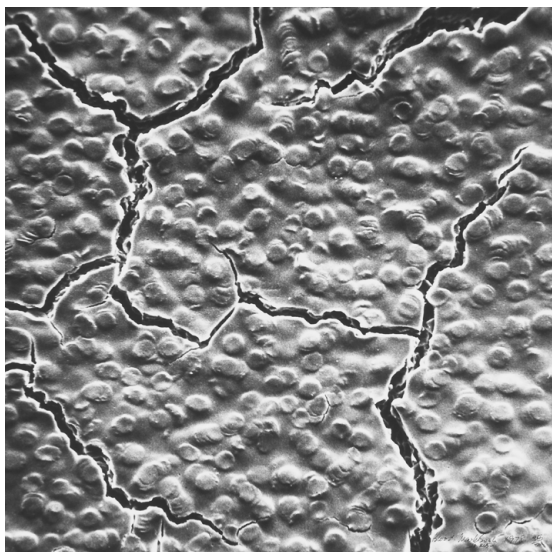
The modern represents the new and forward-looking. Therefore nothing goes out of fashion faster than what is most fashionable, and a modern ruin is in many ways a torpedoing of modernity. It is thus extra expressive – just think of the iconic scene in *Planet of the Apes* (1968), when the last surviving space traveller first realizes the scope of his fate when he finds the rusted skeleton of the Statue of Liberty buried deep in the beach. It was perhaps also this awareness that prompted the German Nazi architect Albert Speer to develop his famous “theory of ruin value”, a statement that insisted that buildings should be constructed such that they would remain majestic even in a state of ruin. The buildings that were in fact built according to this principle have thus left posterity with a profound culture-historical dilemma – should one restore and maintain the ideologically tainted colossi, or let them become expressive ruins, in keeping with Speer's theory of the majestic?



The installation *Government Quarter Study* from the exhibition “Vi lever på en stjerne” (We are living on a star), Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, 2014. See pages 10 and 21.

Despite everything, the symbolic heritage that Høyblokka represents has not become so tainted. When Erling Viksjø designed Høyblokka at the end of the forties, it was one of the foremost Norwegian examples of monumental modernism. The concept of new monumentality had been central to architectural debate in the 1940s and 1950s, when among others the Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion argued that the monument should be a link between past and future: it should reflect mankind’s highest ideals. In the true spirit of modernism a collaboration between architect and artists was urged, such that integrated facade art could ensure that people’s fundamental need for symbols was also met. In the encounter with social democracy and the new spirit of solidarity in the post-war era this was channeled into a tall, slender concrete figure which was commonly said at the time to be inspired by the spartan Einar Gerhardsen himself. The similarity to the Ministry of Health and Education in Rio de Janeiro, designed by Le Corbusier, is however also more than striking.

Viksjø’s rough-hewn formal idiom was also decidedly inspired by Le Corbusier’s sculptural modernism, in which pillars among other things are highly defining elements of the architecture. When they sustain the structure, the outside walls can be freely formed in ranks and rows of ribbon windows, which give these buildings a characteristic ‘control room look’ – for many people the symbol of a technocratic machine from which society can safely be controlled and where the grid of the facade seems like the subconscious echo of bureaucracy. In this mechanism of control the pillars express the literal sustainability of the state, and Manna’s duplications of them therefore create a number of paradoxical impressions. Some of these are related to a play on the ethos of modernism, thanks to the actual absence of functionality. Most striking, however, is the articulation of materiality. The cast in the plaster-like acrylic-based material Jesmonite has been done with clear reference to itself as a copy, with visible seams where the casts from the moulds have been joined.



Mark Boyle, *Secretions*, 1978.

Mark Boyle's photographs – part of the installation *Government Quarter Study* in the exhibition “Vi lever på en stjerne” (We are living on a star), Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, 2014.

Photo: Øystein Thorvaldsen/HOK. Mark Boyle/BONO 2016.

Bodily surfaces

In Viksjø's originals the concrete surfaces are imprinted with a pattern of his own design, and are thus representative of the architect's experiments with surface. This was a meticulous process where sandblasting made part of the concrete aggregate visible, while parts of the concrete outer skin were left to form ornamental reliefs. In contrast to Le Corbusier's raw concrete Viksjø had developed his own “natural concrete” – a material with a strikingly different character where small pebbles were mixed in the cement. In this way the technical properties of the concrete could be maintained while at the same time parts of the surface were in natural stone instead of a homogenous mass. The actual ornamentation – the sandblasting – thus helps to express the compactness and strength of the pillars, its ‘muscles’, at the same time inviting touching, running one's fingers over it. The gesture with which Manna reproduces the tactility of the ornamentation is an intimate act. But in the transfer it is not first and foremost the inherent character of the material that is kept intact (normally an important ethos in modernism); it is the surface (as in postmodernism). At Henie Onstad Kunstsenter the pillars were presented alongside Mark Boyle's photographs, *Secretions: Blood, Sweat, Piss and Tears*, from 1978. These microscopic studies of human secretions, reduced to abstract compositions, were part of Boyle's various registrations of the physical materializations of the body and the surrounding world in what he called a “contemporary archaeology”. This attempt to transcend the subjectivity of the production of memory, to democratize history, of course contrasts starkly with the highly charged emphasis on witnessing, one of the aspects that has typified the rhetoric around Høyblokka as a monument.

The shell that remains in Manna's pillars can also be regarded as a literal hollowing-out of the symbolism of modernism. It goes a long way towards undermining its own capacity for representation, and in this sense is a theatrical gesture that introduces a scepticism towards any form's potential for ideological content. This scepticism about ideology, and not least historical representation, is easily recognizable from

Manna's earlier works, all of which are influenced by a keen eye for physical manifestations and metaphors of power. After an interest in gestures, sexual undertones and manifestations of masculinity constructions, for example in the videos *The Umpire Whispers* (2010) and *Blessed Oblivion* (2010), this gaze has perhaps turned more towards ideological narration and the construction of history. All the same, her sculptural works are dominated by the impulse to continue relating these discourses to the body; as for example in the confrontation with the control of public space in the sculpture *Come to Rest* from 2010, modelled on the carousel-like barriers that must be passed to cross between Israel and Gaza or the West Bank. In Manna's model, produced in a pink silicon-like material, the authoritative steel construction is reduced to a dysfunctional, melting fetish object. A more direct manipulation of solid (and what some would call masculine) objects is *For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires* (2009), where flagpoles taken from Norwegian chalets are bent and treated pneumatically so that they curl up like steel wire or beanstalks. The effect of seeing these forced into the dimensions of the gallery space is an overwhelming physical sensation of power where the symbolic straightness of the flagpole has met with a violence that is not only about making reality fit inside the framework of the art institution, but also about the resistance that arises when established symbols meet a flexible perspective.

History and mythology

There are grounds for believing that this perspective is influenced by the fact that Manna has a background embracing the USA, Israel/Palestine and Norway, as expressed not least in the video essay *The Goodness Regime* from 2013 (a collaboration with Silje Storihle), which in the course of a deconstructive journey, historical and geographical, through national mythologies, comments on the way Norway fabricates and understands its role in the world. At the centre of this fantastical narrative stand the Oslo Accords, which despite their obvious failure when it comes to improving the situation of the Palestinians, have remained as a

victorious symbol of Norwegian diplomacy and international altruism-branding. Archive material, including shots from speeches by Bill Clinton, the then Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, is juxtaposed with caricatures where Norwegian and Palestinian children play the role of history's witnesses. A subtle undertone of unease accompanies the demonstrative juxtaposing of historic speeches and caricatured history classes, not least the staging of the iconic moment when the accords were signed in front of the White House in Washington in 1993 – a carefully directed photo-op which was in itself an effective production of history through the attempt to create a forced reset.

Here Manna and Storihle pick at the blind spots of Norwegian identity formation, but they do so by activating an existing debate. The very concept of the Goodness Regime, for example, is taken from Terje Tvedt, the political scientist who used it in his review of the altruistic foreign-aid field ten years ago, as a concept for a distinctive Norwegian kind of moral thinking that legitimizes a huge apparatus of humanitarian organizations and research institutions without problematizing the role they play in the formation of the Norwegian national self-image (in which for example arms exports are rarely mentioned). Another model for *The Goodness Regime* is Nina Witoszek's book from 2011, *The Origins of the Regime of Goodness*, where the roots of the regime in cultural history are traced back to heroic figures like Nansen and Bjørnson, who stand for a distinctive combination of Protestant self-control and the affirmation of technological progress. According to Witoszek this has not only inscribed goodness in the Norwegian national self-image, but has also made the Norwegian success a modernity without hubris.

This is one of the many narratives about the unique Norwegian model which actively shake up the continuous self-mythologizing in which one assumes every modern state engages, but which in Norway has perhaps come to have an exaggerated focus on moral superiority. As in Manna's other works, the strength of *The Goodness Regime* is that critical reflection is made the viewer's own responsibility.

The posthumous reputation of the Gerhardsen state is of course not without its controversies either. While it has been acclaimed for the regeneration of Norway and the spread of fundamental social rights, it has also been associated with an exaggerated zeal for control and rationalism. For the philosopher Hans Skjervheim and like-minded commentators who have united in criticism of technocracy and an alleged tendency to think in terms of scientific regularities, the architecture of the Government District in particular was a symbol of the cementing of the state administration in an apolitical model. When one runs one's fingers over the casts of Viksjø's pebbled surface, however, one is confronted first and foremost with a culture which is now perhaps obsessed more with preservation than with renewal.

References

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From the casting process in Høyblokka, 2013. Photo: Alette Schei Rørvik.



Mattias Ekman:

The Artwork as Monument After 22 July 2011

Jumana Manna, pillars from Høyblokka and the cast as memorial art

After the bombing in the Government District and the massacre on Utøya on 22 July 2011 Norwegian society has felt strong ties to these two places and their materiality. The debate on the rebuilding of the government headquarters and the establishment of memorials shows the strength of the feelings associated with the *topography of terror*, to borrow an expression used of some of the sites of the Nazi regime. The proposed relocation of stone from the vicinity of Utøya to the Government District in Jonas Dahlberg's winning entry in the competition for national July 22 memorials plays on such emotions. The proposal creates a cult object, a relic of the material of the place on display in the middle of the capital.

Society's use of places as instruments for directing the collective memory of groups towards selected aspects of the past is a familiar device in human history, whether it involves the construction of monuments – obelisks, statues, sepulchral tablets, architectural and sculptural forms etc. – or the monumental use of places where important events have been played out. Place-names such as Thermopylae, Auschwitz and Ground Zero show how the monumentalization processes not only, if at all, transform the material place, but fossilize as

memorials in culture and language. They ‘take place’ in our memory as collective concepts. We can think about or discuss them even when we are far from them, because we can evoke objects of remembrance that we have patched together from impressions from tourist visits to the places, our school history books or images in the media and literature.

The memorial and the art of memory

In the process of establishing national memorials after 22 July 2011, the Norwegian word *minnsted* (literally ‘place of memory’) has been proposed as a translation of the English word *memorial*.¹ However, *minnsted* can also be used as a literal translation of the French *lieu de mémoire*, a concept that the historian Pierre Nora established in the 1980s while working on his influential anthology about the symbolic places of France.² With regard to the French sense of a national collectivity Nora emphasizes the places’ character of symbolic crystallization points in people’s memory, and therefore includes in the study, alongside topographical places like the Louvre, the Bastille and Verdun, entities like the Marseillaise and the tricolour, or historical figures like Joan of Arc. These and many, many more are ‘places’ in the mnemotechnical sense, and stand as normative monuments in Frenchmen’s memory map of their culture. With its selected history, every such memorial effectively summarizes accepted or disputed values, attitudes and emotions. Together they make up the foundations of the nation’s art of memory.

1 *Minnested* is understood in this context as something less normative in its interpretation of the past than the Norw. terms *minnesmerke* or *monument*, which are equated with the Eng. *monument*. Å. Kleveland, et al., *Steder for å minnes og påminnes – innstilling vedrørende minnsteder etter 22. juli* (Oslo, Department of Culture 2012), 8; Art Committee for Commemorations of 22 July, *Kunstplan for Minnsteder etter 22. juli* (Oslo, KORO, 2013), 9, 33 n. 1.

2 In English, it has been translated as “place of memory”, “site of memory” and “realm of memory”. P. Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris, Gallimard, 1984–1992). Eng. transl. *Realms of Memory*, 3 vols. (New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1996–1998). For the theoretical superstructure of the anthology see P. Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”, *Representations*, 26/1 (Apr. 1989) [Fr. orig. 1984]. The Norwegian *minnsted* as a translation of *lieu de mémoire* can be found for example in C. Plocinski Nilsen, “Middelalderparken som kollektiv erindring”, *Ask Kulturhistorisk tidskrift*/2 (2012); H. Stavseth, “Hamningberg – fra fiskevær til minnsted”, master’s thesis, University of Tromsø, 2008; and I. Ruhaven, “Minnesmerker som vår tids avtrykk i historien”, *Fedrelandsvennen*, 2 Nov. 2012.

In this context I want to propose to apply Nora’s *lieu de mémoire* to a smaller cultural scale, which may well be inscribed in a national framework, but which has not taken on the all-embracing symbolic character typical of the French places of memory and their counterparts in Norway: Stiklestad, the Eidsvoll Building and the 17 May celebrations, in the future perhaps also 22 July, Utøya and the Government District.³ I want to offer some reflections on an artwork made by the Palestinian artist Jumana Manna. Her work appears as part of a memorial or part of a concept. The aim here is to see how the artwork becomes inscribed in a cultural context – that is the sequel to 22 July. The idea of the artwork, as it is presented by the artist and the curators, is to remind us of something else. I will argue that it may thus come to take the form of a crystallization point for a selection of the memories of the community.

Using the concept of the ‘art of memory’ I want to describe an art object whose purpose is to support memory. In addition I use the concept as a reference to the ancient and Early Modern mnemonic technique *ars memoriae*, to indicate how the artwork is established as a tool of memory. This uses ‘art’ (*ars*) in the sense of ‘skill’. It would seem that the artist very much has the intention with the work of preparing the ground for the memory work of the public.

The method of the classic art of memory is based on the recognition of the cognitive benefit of using places to remember things. Public buildings, dwellings or streets were carefully stored in the memory, where they came to form a mental topography in which associative images could be placed.⁴ Using it for example during a speech in the Senate or

3 In my doctoral thesis I argue that the Government District is becoming a *minnsted*, a *lieu de mémoire*. M. Ekman, “Edifices. Architecture and the Spatial Frameworks of Memory”, doctoral thesis, School of Architecture and Design in Oslo, 2013, 278–81.

4 The standard works in English on the art of memory include F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); L. Bolzoni, “The Play of Images. The Art of Memory from Its Origins to the Seventeenth Century” [Ital. orig. (1989)], in P. Corsi (ed.), *The Enchanted Loom. Chapters in the History of Neuroscience* (Oxford, OUP, 1991); P. Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, transl. S. Clucas (London, Athlone Press, 2000) [Ital. orig., *Clavis universalis* (1960); 2nd ed. (1983)]. For a summary of the rules for the ancient art of memory’s use of architecture and associative images, see M. Ekman, “Edifices of Memory. Topical Ordering in Cabinets and Museums”, in J. Hegardt (ed.), *The Museum Beyond the Nation* (Stockholm, Historiska Museet, 2012), 66–68.

before a court, the speaker could move mentally through the spaces and allow the images to evoke associations for parts of the speech. It is no coincidence that Nora's places of memory exhibit features in common with the mental topography of the art of memory. He was well aware of the technique when he developed his theory of *lieux de mémoire*.⁵

Monuments from Høyblokka

On 30 January 2014 the art museum Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (HOK) opened the exhibition "Vi lever på en stjerne" (We are living on a star), the institution's contribution to the anniversary of the passing of the Norwegian Constitution. The name comes from Hannah Ryggen's tapestry, which hung in the entrance to Høyblokka, the high-rise in the Government District, and which was damaged in the explosion of 22 July 2011. The recently restored tapestry was the main work in the exhibition.

According to a brochure for the exhibition, the artists' works revolve around "issues related to history, the contemporary, normality and expression" against a backdrop of the events of 22 July, and the changes in normality and predictability that followed.⁶ Jumana Manna is one of the artists represented, and with the work *Government Quarter Study* she directs our attention to the bearing concrete pillars in the foyer of the main government building by making three casts on a scale of 1:1. She uses Jesmonite, a two-component acrylic polymer and mineral resin material, for the final cast, and the form and texture of the originals is transferred with the aid of silicon moulds. In the exhibition the very true-to-life but hollow pillars are placed in one of HOK's exhibition spaces. Alongside the pillars Manna shows four photographs by the British artist Mark Boyle, taken from the collections of the art centre. The series shows microscopic studies of body fluids.

The word *monument* comes from the Latin *monumentum*, which can be translated as 'reminder'. In order to think about Manna's pillars as a monument, we can take our point of departure in the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl. In his text *Der moderne Denkmalkultus: Sein Wesen und seine Entstehung* (*The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin*) he suggests as the earliest and most original understanding of the monument a "a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations".⁷ This is an *intentional monument* (*gewolltes Denkmal*), which Riegl distinguishes from the monument that is *unintentional*, which was not originally meant as a reminder, but has become one in its historical context.⁸ The memorial value of such a work is not defined by its creator, but given to it by its contemporaries and their attitude to it.

The pillars in Høyblokka, like the other concrete structures in the building, were planned and designed by the architect Erling Viksjø and the civil engineer Sverre Jystad. They have been central to the debate on the future of the Government District and Høyblokka since the bomb exploded in 2011.⁹ Engineers have pointed out that their solid construction, with their wide radius and firmly compacted aggregate material of gravel, probably helped to ensure that the pillars suffered no structural damage and the building remained standing. As a result the pillars were elevated to the status of an unintentional monument in the time after 22 July. As a monument they pointed to the resistance of the building's construction to the explosive power of the bomb, and may thus for some people stand as a symbol of the nation's resistance to anti-democratic attacks. Manna has incorporated this symbolism in her project. In a letter printed in the exhibition catalogue she writes that "This quarter is famous for its brutalist architecture as well as the modernist art on its façades and interior. Since the structure and most of the artworks

5 Nora cites Frances Yates (cf. n. 4) as one of the few historians of the twentieth century who has dealt with memory. P. Nora, "Mémoire collective", in J. Le Goff et al. (eds.), *La Nouvelle histoire* (Paris, Retz, 1978), 394–401.

6 *Vi lever på en stjerne*, exhibition folder (Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, 2014).

7 A. Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments. Its Character and Its Origin", *Oppositions*, 25 (Autumn 1982) [Ger. orig. (1903)], 21.

8 Ibid., 23.

9 For a survey and analysis of the debate in the years after the bombing, see Ekman, "Edifices", 237–312, esp. 289–91.

were made of concrete, they survived the attack, almost as a triumph of those very same values of socialism, simplicity, honesty, and rationalism that the ethics of the building stands for”.¹⁰ What these values are she does not say, but between the lines she refers to the values attributed to Høyblokka in the debate, including democracy, equality and welfare.

It is thus not arbitrary parts of the building that Manna creates duplicates of. In her act of casting Manna takes her cue from the pillars as an unintentional monument and creates a new monument, an intentional one. In this respect it differs from other artworks that can be read as monuments after 22 July, which appear rather to be unintentional. When Vanessa Baird, in her three works executed for Government Building 6 (R6), finished in 2012, painted Høyblokka and fluttering paper among other motifs, the intention, according to herself, was to refer to state power and bureaucracy.¹¹ For some of the users of the building the picture spontaneously came to constitute a reminder of the explosion at Høyblokka which scattered thousands of government documents out through the windows. The paintings, which were originally meant to refer to the state and the nation, became an unintentional monument to 22 July, in this context with highly negative connotations. After the controversy over the artworks, recounted in the media, it will also be difficult for the wider public not to be reminded of 22 July.

In another way the explosion of 22 July 2011 transformed an older, intentional monument to Swedish support for Norway during World War II into a new, unintentional monument. In 1947–1948 Per Vigeland made four large stained glass windows for the Swedish church Margaretakyrkan at Hammersborg, a neighbouring building to Viksjø's Y-block, as a commission from a collection committee. The windows were a gift, funded by money collected from the population of Oslo as

thanks for the extensive aid that was organized by the congregation of the church.¹² The stained glass windows, which were to commemorate the gratitude for the so-called ‘Swedish soup’, were completely shattered in the explosion in the Government District on 22 July, and in that connection the story behind the old monument was revived and linked with the events of 22 July. In the wake of those events the empty windows have stood as an unintentional reminder of the acts of terror, but also of the intentional monument that disappeared.

The purpose of Manna's copies of the Høyblokka pillars is not, like that of the original pillars, to support the building or to show with their large dimensions what forces they can bear, but to memorialize 22 July and the transformation of the government buildings into national symbolic heritage. The Jesmonite pillars are meant to recall the role of the concrete pillars at the moment of the bomb blast and in the time that followed. In a comment on HOK's Facebook page Manna says that “the interesting thing about the pillars is that although they stood just a few metres from where the bomb went off, they were hardly damaged”.¹³ That the Jesmonite pillars with their fragile materiality could be toppled by the slightest gust of wind is irrelevant. They are not autonomous objects, but are designed as indices pointing to the originals with their visual resemblance. Manna further writes in the exhibition catalogue: “Due to the density of the concrete, and the solid construction, the explosion on July 22 did not seriously harm the structure of the building. *Government Quarter Study* is a tribute to the qualities that made the building resistant to the terrorist attack, and to its values. Yet, by asserting itself as a fragment and resembling a ruin, the work suggests

¹⁰ J. Manna, “Nothing is More Radical Than the Facts”, in T. Hansen & M. Paasche (eds.), *We are Living on a Star* (Henie Onstad Kunstsenter/Sternberg Press, 2014), 32.

¹¹ See for example A. Nydal & E.L. Gossner, “Når veggdyret våkner”, *Morgenbladet*, 5 Oct. 2012, part 1, 26–28; A. Fjellberg, “Alarmerende maktutøvelse”, *ibid.*, 27 Sept. 2013, 29; H. Tørdal, “Kunstnerisk ufrihet”, *Klassekampen*, 1 Oct. 2013, part 1, 16; L.K. Lund, “Den store fortellingen om oss”, *ibid.*, 5 Oct., 28; O.Ø.S. Holth, “Veggpryl”, *Dagens Næringsliv*, 19 Oct. 2013, 82.

¹² Towards the end of the war the congregation organized the serving of c. 40,000 portions of hot food every day in Oslo alone. F. Bergh, *Svensk kyrka i ockuperad stad. Motstånd och nödhjelp i Oslo 1942–45* (Stockholm, Proprius, 1988), 39. For a history of the emergence of the stained glass windows and an analysis of their commemorative function see M. Ekman, “Remembrance and the Destruction of Church Windows”, in J. Bornemark et al. (eds.), *Monument and Memory* (Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2014), 43–61, 239–258. A shorter summary of the history in Swedish can be found in M. Ekman, “Historien om ett kyrkfönster”, *Margaretabladet*, 93/1 (Oslo, Svenska Margaretaförsamlingen, March–June 2014), 7.

¹³ “Vi lever på en stjerne #7: Hva skal til for å skape en ruin?”, Facebook, updated 3 Apr. 2014 <<https://www.facebook.com/henie.onstad/posts/10152367758337386>>, downloaded 9 Aug. 2014.

a withdrawal, thereby questioning if the values of 1958 will withstand the new set of ethics, economy, and politics of our present”.¹⁴ Director Tone Hansen, who along with Marit Paasche curated the exhibition, also says in an interview printed in *Dagsavisen* that “it was these pillars that ensured that Høyblokka did not collapse completely ... The pillars stood while everything else flew through the space when the bomb exploded, and in that sense the pillars are a symbol of resistance”.¹⁵

With their statements the artist and the curators avoid letting the work refer to its own materiality, but to at least three external things: *one*, the original pillars and their materiality; *two*, knowledge of how their construction appears to have prevented the bomb from making the building collapse and thus hindered the perpetrator in his intent; and *three*, how the resistance of the material to the explosion can stand as an image of the supposed resistance of society and its values to anti-democratic attacks.

Besides the visual similarity of the Jesmonite pillars to the originals, it is in these statements that we can identify the attempt to establish the artwork as an intentional monument. As with most monuments, their materiality and artistic qualities primarily have the purpose of supporting and guiding the viewer’s act of memory. Material and form are means, not ends, and are a result of the intended commemorative function.

Placeless

Unlike the concrete pillars, the Jesmonite pillars are not fixed in place. They can be moved. Their placing is thus relatively arbitrary compared with that of the original pillars, which are firmly cast in place as well as interwoven with the building with reinforcing steel. The pillars Manna has created will be protected as an artwork, not as architecture, and will be able to remain if Høyblokka should be torn down.¹⁶ The place as an

anchorage point for memory is duplicated, and the copies are disengaged from the process involving the future of the Government District, which will determine the fate of the original place’s architectural structures.

In the act of casting, the seed for a new memorial has been sown. The Jesmonite pillars become a material creation that can take over and house selected memories associated with the original, unintentional monument. Despite the visual resemblance it is hardly likely that the copies will be confused with the originals. Their status as copies enables them to create associations with a special set of memories. The artwork does not imitate the original to replace or simulate it, but extends the original monument by making it movable. If Høyblokka should be demolished, or if it is made inaccessible to the public in a new design of the Government District, it will no longer be able to function as an everyday reminder in the cityscape of the events of 22 July and the dispute that followed. With the act of casting Manna establishes an object whose presence reminds us of certain aspects of the debate about the buildings. If the Jesmonite pillars are placed in a building accessible to the public they will be able to evoke memories among the population.

Collective memories

Manna and the curators tell visitors and art critics what they want the pillars to help to commemorate. Having been made by an internationally active artist and included in the exhibition marking the Constitution anniversary of 2014 at the recognized art centre gives their interpretation of the artwork legitimacy. The controlled symbolism then evokes a response from the critics, who pass it on to their readers, examples being Øivind Storm Bjerke in *Klassekampen*, who speaks of Manna’s pillars with their “geometrical beauty and symbolic meaning standing for power and strength”,¹⁷ and Mona Pahle Bjerke of the Norwegian broadcasting corporation NRK, who describes how the reconstruction of “the gigantic, massive, decorated pillars of Viksjø, which constitute

¹⁴ Manna, “Jumana Manna”, 27.

¹⁵ B.R. Gavklev & H. Unosen, “Åpner 2014 med 22. juli-utstilling”, *Dagsavisen*, 3 Jan. 2014, sect. “Fremtiden”, 20–21.

¹⁶ It was not until May 2014, or about four months after the exhibition had opened, that the government announced that Høyblokka should not be demolished.

¹⁷ S. Bjerke, “Distansert blikk på terrorren”, *Klassekampen*, 12 Feb. 2014, 28–29.

the actual load-bearing system in Høyblokka, remain standing undamaged, and have thus proved unusually solid. Høyblokka refused to be razed to the ground”.¹⁸

In *Stavanger Aftenblad* Guri Hjeltnes writes: “Jumana Manna exhibits a series of casts of the bearing pillars in the foyer [of Høyblokka], with their beautiful details. When we walk around the pillars the physical strength of the building is revealed to us. Because the construction was so solid and was based on heavy materials, the bomb explosion was unable to affect the structure of the building”.¹⁹ We understand from the journalist that the Jesmonite pillars do not refer to their own materiality, but to the original concrete pillars. She reads the physical strength of the original building into the fragile body of the copy. The relationship of the pillar to the photographs by Mark Boyle, which hang beside them, is given little or no attention by the critics.

Internationally too, what the artist and curators have emphasized about the work has been repeated. In *Artinfo* Daniel Kunitz writes of Høyblokka and Manna’s work: “The structure itself rests on these pillars, which weren’t damaged by the bomb. Their appearance here seems an incitement to query what structures Norwegian society itself stands upon and to what extent they were damaged by the terrorist act”.²⁰ Besides these examples I have seen dozens of reviews, most of them Norwegian, that only mention Manna’s work, but do not clarify or interpret it.²¹

Perhaps as a result of the way the exhibition gathers so many artists and works, the critics offer few of their own reflections on Manna’s work specifically. In their uncritical parroting of the formulations that they have been served up, they contribute to the spread of a uniform interpretation of the artwork. One important intention of the monument – to

point to selected aspects of the debate – becomes the standard interpretation. The Norwegian critics could have read many different things into the copies of the Høyblokka pillars – the aesthetic potential of natural concrete, the fragility of the Jesmonite material compared with the original concrete, values and symbolism related to the growth of the welfare state, the disagreement of the national community on the issue of the representativity of the concrete architecture, and so on – but they seem to accept what Manna and the curators express as appropriate interpretations. This is how the artwork functions as a monument. It isolates selected symbolism and associations, and ties them firmly to the object. It is art that does not appear to ask the viewer for an interpretation or a critical stance, but provides a powerful instrument of memory that directs the gaze towards a problem-filled debate. Not allowing Norwegians to forget the debate can be understood as taking ethical responsibility. In her act of casting Jumana Manna has created an art of memory in a double sense of the concept: an art object with the aim of supporting memory as well as a mnemotechnical tool for the Norwegian public.

I began the analysis by proposing to apply Nora’s concept *lieu de mémoire* to the limited context around Manna’s Høyblokka pillars, and to try to understand the artwork as a part of the wider memorial site the Government District. As a consequence the artwork can be understood as an expansion of the original monument, that is the pillars in Høyblokka. But whether it has thus established itself as a miniature *min-nested* (*lieu de mémoire*) in its own right is doubtful. It looks rather as if the act of casting confirms and reinforces the original memorial by isolating a selected symbolism. Because of their resistance to the bomb the pillars became the most emblematic part of the building in Høyblokka, in itself the most symbolic building in the Government District. And thus they assumed the role as a monument to the events and the debate. In the Jesmonite pillars the memorial site of the Government District finds its ambulatory subsidiary. And so Manna helps to give one of the crystallization points in the nation’s art of memory greater flexibility.

18 M.P. Bjerke, “Vi lever på en stjerne”, NRK, updated 30 Jan. 2014, <http://www.nrk.no/kultur/anmeldelse_-vi-lever-pa-en-stjerne-1.11508068>, downloaded 9 Aug. 2014.

19 G. Hjeltnes, “Vi lever på en stjerne”, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, 3 Feb. 2014, section “Mening”, 2.

20 D. Kunitz, “We Are Living on a Star’ Attacks Mass Murder With Art”, *Artinfo*, updated 28 Feb. 2014 <<http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1011765/we-are-living-on-a-star-attacks-mass-murder-with-art>>, downloaded 11 March 2014.

21 The exhibition gathers nineteen artists, architects and art historians, and it goes without saying that they cannot all be treated in the reviews.



For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires, installed in Bjørvika, 2010.

Stian Gabrielsen:

Something to Buzz Around

In the film *The Fly* (1986) by David Cronenberg the eccentric scientist Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) undergoes a gradual transformation from a human being to a fly. He has been unlucky enough to have his DNA spliced with the DNA of a fly while being teleported. The first physical indication that Brundle is changing is some stiff hairs resembling insect legs growing out of his back. The three twisted flagpoles in Jumana Manna's *For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires* (2009) send my thoughts off in the same direction – to the squirming legs of an insect that has involuntarily landed on its back and is now trying to roll back over on to its legs. Similarly locked in an unwilling prone position is Gregor Samsa when he wakes up in Franz Kafka's short story *Metamorphosis* (1915) – undoubtedly the best known work of the man-to-insect genre. Unlike Cronenberg, who has the transformation take place gradually, Kafka begins his tale with the transformation already a fact: "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect".¹

For Those Who Like the Smell of Burning Tires was first shown at Galleri Maria Veie in 2009. The next year, in collaboration with Kunsthall Oslo, Manna placed her work as a temporary installation in Bjørvika, under the bridge that spans the platforms outside Oslo Central Station and connects

¹ Franz Kafka, "Metamorphosis", in *Metamorphosis and other stories*, transl. Willa & Edwin Muir, Penguin 1961.

Trelastgata with Schweigaardsgate.² It is this outdoor version, with the looming Barcode buildings on one side and frequent train departures on the other, that I will discuss. The publicly accessible artwork challenges art in an interesting way, by risking the banal approach that the gallery setting often de-programmes. Detached from art-specific exhibition spaces, which are usually visited with the intention of seeing art, the work is abandoned to a public that comes upon art unexpectedly. The non-ideal circumstances make strong demands on communicability seem natural.³ That Manna's title can be read as an invitation to a specific group ("for those who like") both underscores and problematizes this communication aspect. The addressee is described, given demographic properties. In the same way as a commodity or an entertainment product, *For those* has a declared (if rather vaguely defined) target group. The work positions itself illustratively in a kind of pseudo-public space under a bridge. If the railway lines and construction projects in Bjørvika can be read as images of infrastructure and growth respectively, Manna's poles, as they seem to 'wake up' under the bridge, have a more alienated and unsublimated character. According to Georges Bataille Kafka was "intolerable in the world of self-seeking, industrial and commercial activity".⁴ His "completely childlike attitude"⁵ was incompatible with the demands and expectations of the outside world. If you reside beneath a bridge the chances are

2 The artist contacted KORO afterwards to get assistance in relocating the work when the exhibition period at Bjørvika was over. However, they were unable to find a suitable place and get the necessary permits.

3 One result of this communicability requirement is that debate over outdoor art often reduces it to a specific content, even when it has no clearly stated symbolizing function in itself – whereupon it is criticized on the basis of how well it performs this enforced symbolic task. A bizarre example (cited from memory): the toilets in Lars Ramberg's *Liberté*, which were intended for a place in front of the Storting, should have been toilets for the disabled, someone claimed, because the work in its present form, consisting of toilets for the functionally unchallenged, contrary to their intention, signalled that participation in society does have a threshold. In itself the interpretation behind this is not unreasonable, but it would be ridiculous to make such a specific proposal for changing an artwork that one encountered in a gallery. The demand that was made on Ramberg's work reveals the risk run by art once it steps outside the white cube.

4 Georges Bataille: *Kafka*, transl. Hans Johansson, in *Litteraturen och det onda*, Brutus Östlings bokförlag 1996, 120.

5 *Ibid.*, 119.

that you do not satisfy the productivity requirements of society. You neither consume nor produce. Most likely, you are sleeping.⁶

The man-to-insect genre thematizes the 'intolerability' that attaches itself to what – or *who* – falls outside the norm. Although in Manna's case it is the flagpole, not the human body, that is deformed (or transformed), her hydraulically bent poles nevertheless have a physically nauseating effect that recalls Cronenberg's "body horror". As in the insect tales of Cronenberg and Kafka there is a negotiation between the erect and the creeping. The flagpole, like the bipedal human body, is in principle a vertical figure. A prominent feature of the insect man is the way he disrupts this verticality: prior to the visibly deforming part of the transformation process, Brundle, as well as improved vision and hearing, experiences that he can effortlessly leap between floor, walls and ceiling in his apartment, uninhibited by gravity. A similarly increased mobility is experienced by Samsa: an "adhesive substance" he secretes enables him to crawl up the wall and hang from the ceiling. But it is on the floor that he ends up and in time expires. *The Fly* too ends with the now completely transformed Brundle dragging himself – or his battered remains – along the floor before dying of a merciful shot to the head.

Within the framework of the story it seems impossible to maintain the insect as the centre of the action. Its instinctive mode of being dissolves the opposition between desire and reflection that gives a character an inner life, a dissolution that must end in death because it represents a killing of the neurotic self, the point in the tale with which the reader or viewer identifies. "Have you ever heard of insect politics?" Brundle asks rhetorically, and so deprives his future insect-self any chance of being the protagonist. He can only fly away or be squashed, but cannot be held fast within the framework of the narrative. A similar motif can be found in Knut Hamsun's short story *A quite ordinary fly of average size*, where an author is disturbed by a fly while writing, and ends up making

6 Jonathan Crary writes about how mankind's sleep requirements are incompatible with modern capitalism's continuous production and consumption cycle in 24/7: *Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, Verso, 2013.

friends with it. However, the relationship between the two is unstable and is dependent on the author's anthropomorphizing projections: "She held her head askance and looked sadly at me".⁷ The irrational projection reaches its zenith when the fly is finally killed in a crime of jealousy along with its partner of choice with a well-aimed blow from the author's ruler.

Symptomatically, the role of 'the hero' is taken over in the last scene of Cronenberg's film by a character who so far has been made to personify the unsympathetic and unheroic. The dissolution of the higher cognitive functions is the true evil, one thus concludes; faced with something as monstrous as a man turned into a fly, even the villain, without more ado, becomes a hero. His egoism is a pardonable vice, an indication of character despite everything. He is still in principle able to distinguish right from wrong. Bataille writes in the periodical *Acéphale* (headless!): "Beyond what I am, I meet a being who makes me laugh because he is headless, who fills me with dread because he is made of innocence and crime [...] a monster".⁸ Innocence and crime, or innocent crime, are typical of those who know no direction, order, law. He who – or *that which* – navigates instinctively, constantly buzzing from stimulus to stimulus, like a fly.

The flagpole has a clear direction. It urges you to stop straying, to lift and fix your gaze. The verticality diverts your attention from the instinctive life that takes place at ground level. The flag at the top calls for an identification between an abstract entity (the nation) and the individual. You renounce the rooting of identity in the earthbound body and join a greater unity. The impure, ecstatic nature of the organism is overshadowed by the clear abstraction of the flag. The repression of nature and body is also found in art, perhaps most clearly articulated in the demarcations from the world of nonfigurative painting – its concentration on flatness and the delineation of flatness, as Clement Greenberg put it.⁹ But

7 Knut Hamsun, *En ganske almindelig flue av middels størrelse, Siesta | Krattskog | Stridende liv*, Gyldendal, 2007, 87.

8 Georges Bataille, *La Conjuración Sacra, Acéphale*, 1936. Engl. transl. by Allan Stoekl, in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoekl, University of Minnesota Press, 1985, p. 181.

9 Clement Greenberg, *After Abstract Expressionism, The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol. 3, The University of Chicago Press, 1993, 131.



there are ways of interpreting the modernist tradition that make it harder to reconcile with Greenberg's programme. In 1996 Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois curated the exhibition *L'Informe: mode d'emploi* at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, where they borrowed Bataille's concept of the formless ("L'informe") to promote a reading of modernism that broke with Greenberg's. Tellingly, they called one of the sections of the exhibition "Horizontalité". To claim that the universe is formless, Bataille writes, is the same as comparing it to a spider or spit.¹⁰ The formless is in other words associated with the insect world, with what crawls and winds and twists – and with the effluent, what the body secretes.

While nationality is characterized by lifelong investment in a collective identity into which one has likely been born, there are also group formations detached from the geographical, cultural and genetic coordinates that have traditionally defined and stabilized national collectivities. "The multitude" is a concept adopted by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt to describe a new type of collective formation which they believe is growing up in the wake of globalization.¹¹ One characteristic of this new collectivity is that it arises across society's traditional social and geographical dividing-lines. Unlike the nation-collectivity with its ideal of equality, the multitude does not seek to cover up the internal differences in the group which constitutes it – it consists of "singularities that act in common".¹² While nationality is expressed almost by default, the multitude is bound together by political action – always as a reaction to acute provocations or circumstances. Obviously enough, Negri and Hardt therefore tend to see the multitude manifested in the form of protest movements and demonstrations.

It is not clear which group the invitation – or dedication – in Manna's title is addressing – who "those who like the smell of burning tires" are. Clearly tyre-burning has a connection to protests and street riots, but the phenomenon also includes the large stockpiles of car tyres that

sometimes spontaneously combust. Singling out tyre-burning as a phenomenon thus associates social protest with the automobile industry. Strange bedfellows. If one thinks of the automobile industry as an enabler of individual mobility, though, the dissonant coupling makes sense. The protest movement and the car both mobilize individuals, although in distinctly different ways: one brings people together, creates a collective movement, while the other mainly splits them apart by offering increased independence and range to individuals. Symptomatically, the combustion process, which normally drives the car engine, is here used to transform the tyre from a functional automotive part made to grip the underlay and thus help the vehicle to accelerate and move in a predetermined direction, into a fluid, amorphous mass – rather like Bataille's gob of spit.

Although Manna's flagpoles carry no flags, the representational function still adheres to them; the string remains attached, sagging against the ground, heavy with dirt. In the middle of one of the documentation pictures at the website of Kunsthall Oslo, a man stands facing forward with a camera in front of his face. The man's central position makes it look as if the picture is actually a portrait of him, and in a transferred sense of the photographer – since he covers his face with a camera and thus appears as the personification of a photographer. The displacement from work documentation to a kind of self-portrait-by-proxy is helped by the fact that Manna's flagpoles are difficult to distinguish from the disorderly urban environment and the crowd of people forming the background. Rather than treading forth and claiming our attention, the metal seems to squirm under the anticipation of representation. Given the associations with an insect lying on its back, Manna's twisted poles seem to want to evade precisely the fixation called for by the flag (and the photograph). They are in a state of ecstasy. Ecstasy literally involves a transcendence of stasis (*ek-stasis*). If one insisted on wresting a representational function from the shape of these poles, one could for example read them as tracings of the unplanned movements of a fly.

The well-known buzzing-around of the fly is related to its simple nervous system. The signals it receives from the surroundings generate

¹⁰ Georges Bataille, *L'informe, Documents* 1, 1929, 382.

¹¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Penguin, 2004.

¹² *Ibid.*, 105.

an immediate reaction. One of the insect's most important instruments of orientation is its sense of smell. Orientation by smell is associated with primitive behaviour. If one thinks of the title's "for those" as a specification of the addressee of the work – that is, as an invitation – the allusion to olfactory desire puts the viewer in a reflexive mode like that of the fly. Smell does not have the same semantic complexity as a picture. Nor can olfactory phenomena be taken up and spread like a digital image or a sound file. It is not inconceivable that at some point we shall have the technology that can recreate smells by manipulating the sensors in our noses without the chemical components of the odour having to be present, and will thus make it possible for smells too to be transmitted through digital networks in coded form. But for the present at least smell is a locally anchored atmospheric, more or less formless phenomenon (properties visualized by the thick black smoke that drifts over the burning tyres) which resists mediation. Its spread happens unintentionally, caused by circumstances no one controls. It is carried along by the wind, or it attaches itself to clothes, skin, hair, fur etc.

The drama of burning tyres of course lends itself to photographic representation. As with most other things, the mediation of protests is often visual. Sharing in their smell, on the other hand, requires proximity, and proximity risks participation. To prefer the smell to the image implies that this is more than just a distanced aesthetic fascination. All the same, regardless of the degree of participation, the mode is still one of desire: an instinct-driven attraction to the aura of the amorphous mass that makes up the body of the protest. Once the identification with the revolting body does not take place through moral or political sympathy, is it not then apolitical? Whereas politics calls for a reining-in of desire, a reflective rather than a reflexive mode of being, the allusion to the olfactory-aesthetic appeal of the protest in Manna's title opens the way for a participation based on a far simpler response.

Nor must we forget the horror: the subjects of the invitation/dedication in Manna's title are 'headless' in Bataille's sense – they act without thinking. In this they resemble the insect-people that Kafka



and Cronenberg felt obliged to terminate in their respective fictions, because their apolitical mode of existence (compare Brundle's line: "Have you ever heard of insect politics?") threatened their ability to relate. Would an insect in the leading role be as intolerable now? At any rate it does not seem so far out to take an interest in other points of view than the human one, or even to identify with them. An increased interest in non-human, even non-organic perspectives has made an impact in philosophy (and in art) in recent years. In parallel with this, the gradual despiritualization of our consciousness by the neuro- and biosciences is re-inscribing us in the natural world. This aggressive mapping of the functioning of the human organism is bringing grist to the mill of deterministic perspectives.

And it is not only gloomy speculations in the wake of theoretical-scientific self-insight that provide grounds for pessimism; our behaviour is surveyed, analysed and exploited to an increasing extent, and with unprecedented precision, by profit-seeking interests. Art, naturally infected by the resignation that is rising in the slipstream of this development, is now openly more concerned with furnishing the product with an ironic sneer than with mobilizing outside places. The Bohemian drifter mode, frequently idealized by the twentieth-century avant-gardes, has lost its feasibility as an escape module when unplugging is itself a plugged-in and thus productive activity. After all it is difficult to see the atomized and distracted now in front of the screen as particularly emancipated. Manna offers a doubly heretical response: *For those* insists on an affinity with outside places – with places detached from the sphere of work and consumption, and the commercial cycles of art – by laying claim to a vagrants' spot. Although their form is evasive, the use of flagpoles here is nevertheless a reactivation of art as representation, something to gather (and possibly buzz) around.

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