

Charlotte Blanche Myrvold

Public Art: Urban Learning



PhD thesis 90

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ISSN 1502-217x

ISBN 987-82-547-0307-6

CON-TEXT 90

Public Art: Urban Learning

A doctoral thesis submitted to:
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

Publisher:
The Oslo School of Architecture and Design

COVER ILLUSTRATION:
The Isle, 2013. Photograph Pfelder. ©Pfelder

PRINTED BY:
Akademika Publishing

DESIGN BASIS TEMPLATE:
BMR

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost my gratitude goes to my supervisors, Janike Kampevold Larsen and Boel Christensen-Scheel, for engaging critically, intelligently and generously with my work. My thanks goes to Kristin Bergaust who helped orient the project during its early stages. I am grateful to my former supervisor on my Master thesis, Arnfinn Bø-Rygg, for introducing me to the craft.

I wish to give thanks to my colleagues from the research group Art in Society at HIOA for showing interest and inspiring me with their own projects. I express my gratitude to the Institutes of Landscape and Urbanism at AHO, and in particular Jonny Aspen for reading parts of the manuscript at its various stages. Thanks goes to Andrew Morrison and Henry Mainsah for valuable advices.

I am grateful to the National Research School TBLR and the Center for Franco-Norwegian Cooperation in the Social and Human Sciences for letting me participate in Ph.D. seminars, where I found inspiration, new insights and saw my project evolve through the various meetings. In particular my gratitude goes to Knut Ove Eliasson for his generosity and to Frederik Tygstrup for reading an early version of the exegesis and giving me precious feedback. A great thanks goes to Gerd Elise Mørland for reading parts of the manuscript. This project would not have been the same without Even Smith Wergeland with whom I collaborated on one of the articles. Tim Cole's and Brian Larosche's language advice has been greatly appreciated.

Towards all of the artists and organisers, I wish to direct my sincere gratitude, none of the reflections in the thesis could have been made without their work to begin with: Pfelder, Tenthaus Oslo, Andrea Lange, Kunsthall Oslo, Katy Paterson, Amy Franceschini, Stijn Schiffeleers, Marthe van Dessel, Lode Vranken, Toril Johannessen, Marjolijn Dijkman, Marianne Heier, Matias Faldbakken, Gardar Eide Einarsson, Ane Hjort Guttu, Anne Beate Hovind and Vibeke Hermanrud.

Last, but not least I want to express my gratitude to my family, my mother, Berit Myrvold and father, Charles Hulsman for helping me in every possible way they can. I dedicate my work to my daughter, Agnes Finula Myrvold-Larosche for filling my life with laughter.

Abstract

This thesis is about the role of public art in the urban redevelopment of Bjørvika on the seaside of Oslo. The cultural-led approach to the area transformation has occasioned a public art programme embedded in the redevelopment process. The question of the role of art in urban development raises fundamental issues regarding the status of art when it appears in a context where its function is articulated from aesthetic, political, social and economic perspectives. The concern of this thesis is the reconfiguration of the areas' public character. Its particular approach positions art as a practice that enters processes that reconfigure what we perceive as public. The thesis applies perspectives from philosopher Jacques Rancière, which enables a discussion of the redevelopment as not only changing the area physically, socially and economically, but also acting upon our perception of it. The thesis argues that by displaying a variegated set of experiences in public, art generates knowledge about dimensions in the city that otherwise remain unarticulated. When doing so, art is discussed as performing an epistemological critique of the redevelopment and as enabling new forms of urban learning.

The approach of the study is empirical and theoretical. It discusses a selection of art projects in relation to a theoretical framework foremost consisting of aesthetic philosophy, art theory and urban theory. The question addressed by this study is *how do forms of knowledge manifested in art interact with public space production?* The study adopts a wide understanding to public space production and outlines four areas of public space production that art interacts with. These includes the image of place, the understanding of site, the use of public spaces and the creation of social spaces. The interest in the aesthetic character of art's intervention is at the center of the discussions that the thesis engages in and the particularity of distinct artistic interventions in the city are addressed.

With this thesis, I make contributions on four levels. It draws new connections between public art practices, aesthetic philosophy, urban theory and epistemology. The thesis identifies applied qualities in art beyond the roles ascribed to art in cultural strategies and outlines ways in which public art unfolds as a knowledge field in urban development. Moreover, the thesis demonstrates the necessity to discuss art's aesthetic intervention in the city and develops critical approaches that engage with art's ability to inhabit multiple and even contradictory positions. Finally, the aesthetic philosophical

perspective applied renders visible ways in which art intervenes in the reconfiguration of the perception of the area by displaying alternative forms of site knowledge in public. In doing so, the thesis positions public art as a practice that participates in the production of publicness in Bjørvika.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Art in public space might still be associated with bronze sculptures placed on plinths and centrally located on plazas, as inscriptions of past events into the city fabric. While the doves and seagulls seem happy with these arrangements, the practitioners and commissioners in the art field are moving on, reformulating the roles and conditions of art in public space. The object-based, permanent and representative character of art in public space as we all have known it is being shaken and reappears so altered that the birds on the plazas probably do not recognize it as art at all. Less comfortable to sit on, new public art practices can be temporal, aim towards social change, resonate in the public's memories of an event, and enter political decision-making processes. As the character of art in public space changes, new roles emerge and new areas of use are defined, activating multiple relations between art and the city. Contemporary urban development projects make up one arena where the roles and uses of art are being forged anew. The role of art in the redevelopment of Bjørvika, the historic port and shipyard area on the coast of Oslo's fjord, is the subject of this thesis.

Artistic competence and urban development

A formal definition of the notion of public art is that it, in opposition to private art, is owned by the state or municipality and by virtue of that comprises a shared cultural asset. According to this definition, public art collections kept in storage or artwork on display in public buildings with restricted access, are nevertheless public. The notion of art in public space on the other hand, can range from publicly commissioned works, privately funded projects, activist art and street art. Still, "art in public space" specifically designates art located or occurring in spaces accessible to the public. Instead of discussing public art as a particular relation between art, space and funding, the approach adopted in this study aims at discussing ways in which art enters processes where public arenas are negotiated, represented and reconfigured. By redefining the concept, public art will be seen as one, among many, of the producers of what we hold in common. This thesis discusses the role of art in public space production, investigating how art interacts with the configurations of the public spaces in the Bjørvika area as it is being redeveloped.

The question of the role of art in urban development raises fundamental issues regarding the status of art when it appears in a context where its function is articulated from aesthetic, political, social and economic

perspectives. The overarching factors in play actualise questions concerning the position of art in urban development. Is art integrated in the processes of urban development, or is it applied as mean of beautification? Does it play a role or is it being used in the realisation of the vision of Oslo as the Fjord City. Is it positioned as an aesthetic object of cultural consumption, or does art unfold as a vital process in the life of the city as such?

This study focuses its effort on increasing understanding of how art can act a processual practice and outlines areas where it interacts with the production of public spaces. More specifically, the shift of attention from aesthetic object to aesthetic practice has as its motivation an interest in art as a knowledge field in urban development.¹ The main research question of the study delimits the area investigated by the study as to: *How do forms of knowledge manifested in public art practices interact with the production of public spaces in Bjørvika?* The approach to art as process has generated investigations into the specific competencies that are introduced in public space production when art practices enter the process of transforming the area. By investigating artistic practices' involvement in Bjørvika at a time when the perceptions of the area is still being formed, I have suggested that art interacts with the urban development by generating forms of urban knowledge that are influencing how publicness is conceived in Bjørvika.

The motivation to do this study was provoked when I was confronted with the common endeavours of artists, curators and stakeholders in formulating art as *useful* in urban development. I first became aware of the intriguing common interest of stakeholders, curators and artists in the usefulness of art at the Slow Days seminar in 2011. The seminar launched the permanent public art programme of Bjørvika Development, the company in charge of the area development, and presented curator Claire Doherty's curatorial concept entitled Slow Space.² The hosts of the seminar were the art commissioner of Bjørvika Development, Anne Beate Hovind, and Claire Doherty. Among the participants were artists Amy Franceschini, Katie Paterson, Heather and Ivan Morrison and soon after they were commissioned by Slow Space to create projects to be unfolding over very long periods of time.

During the seminar, several of the speakers reflected upon the public role of art by inquiring into its usefulness and attempting to formulate the distinctiveness and public relevance of art in terms of certain skillsets. I recall artist Marianne Heier describing the artist as possessing a double ontological

¹ The works in public art theory that have influenced my view, are, among others, Martin, *Artistic Citizenship*, Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, Kwon, *One Place After the Other*, Doherty and O'Neill, *Locating the Producers*, Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, Mitchell, *Art and the Public Sphere* and Matzner, *Public Art*.

² Doherty's assignment as curator of the permanent art programme was terminated during the autumn of 2014.

gaze, curator Mary Jane Jacob arguing that the artist has a particular skill of listening, and curator Alistair Hudson advocating the importance of usefulness in art.³ Artists and curators voiced a sense of social engagement and argued for the ability of artists to contribute to the development of the city. While the rhetoric of artists and curators emphasised the usefulness of art in instigating social change over time, areas of use are also ascribed to art in Bjørvika Development's art strategy. Art's usefulness was articulated by the different parties in a remarkable mix of connotations and divergences, prompting me to investigate the engagement of artists in relation to particular areas of public space production.

This does not mean that the study opposes views that stress the commodification of art when applied as cultural strategy and its role as object of cultural consumption; however, it argues for the necessity of applying other perspectives. The importance of not relying solely on the logic of the market when discussing art is pointedly expressed by Boris Groys:

There is no doubt that in the context of a contemporary civilization more or less completely dominated by the market, everything can be interpreted as an effect of market forces in one way or another. For this reason, the value of such an interpretation is null, for an explanation of everything remains unable to explain anything in particular. (Groys 2010, 18-19)

A discussion of urban development that limits it to a process of commodification of cultural capital is reductionist regarding the roles art can play in such contexts. In the approach adopted here, attention is redirected from the commodification of art as product to the agency of artistic competence as practices that by representing a wide range of site experiences occasion new forms of urban learning.

The aim and approach of the study

The perspective adopted by this study is that the area transformation reconfigures the public character of Bjørvika, and the aim of this study is to increase the understanding of how forms of knowledge manifested in art interact with public space production. The public character of the new spaces is discussed in relation to how the new sites are perceived and integrated into the existing, immaterial, urban fabric of Oslo. In Bjørvika, new divisions are inscribed between leisure and labour, private and public. However, the

³ Based on observations during the seminar Slow Days that took place in Oslo August 16th -19th 2011. Alistair Hudson runs the Grizedale Art project, developing projects that are useful for the local community. Mary Jane Jacob is a curator and one of the founders of new genre public art and advocates art project that has concrete impact on societal problems, see Jacob, "An Unfashionable Audience." Marianne Heier is a Norwegian artist working in public space whose project *A Drop in the Ocean* is discussed in article 1.

changes are not only a product of pragmatic concerns and physical changes, but anchored in their capacity to make sense. My approach is influenced by philosopher Jacques Rancière and his theory on the *distribution of the sensible* and it enables a discussion of the redevelopment of Bjørvika as both changing the area physically and changing the perceptions of it. An issue at stake in the distribution of the sensible is the configuration of that which is held in common. Rancière writes “A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and its exclusive parts” (2007, 12). Space and time delimit the common and determine who has the ability to access positions from which one can be heard and seen and influence what is held in common for a community. In the process of the distribution of the sensible, certain sense perceptions are configured into common sense, while others are perceived as noise or remain unseen. In addition to Rancière’s philosophical approach, the study applies critical perspectives from urban sociology by introducing Sharon Zukin’s analysis of visual editing of public culture.

The approach of the study is empirical and theoretical. It discusses the empirical data appearing in the case studies in relation to a theoretical framework foremost consisting of aesthetic philosophy, art theory and urban theory. Additional perspectives have been introduced from history of science, feminist theory, anthropology and queer theory. Through observations, interviews and analysis of documents and images, this study endeavours to capture multiple relationships between the urban redevelopment of Bjørvika and art in public spaces. The study is indebted to anthropology by adapting participatory observation as a method. It should be considered as a product of shifting research positions between a theoretical analytic point of view and positions that emerge from relational, empirical and situated relations to the research subject. While contemporary art theory often formulates distinct political views concerning artistic practice, this study can be perceived as more anthropological in its attempt to understand and describe a set of phenomena, qualities and relationships that emerge in the empirical material. Yet, in its discussion of public art it forms critical perspectives on the production of public spaces and combines different art theoretical perspectives in view of discussing both the critical function of art as well as its involvement with the redevelopment scheme.

The study addresses the following research question: *How do forms of knowledge manifested in public art interact with public space production?* Three key areas of investigation arise from this question. These can be outlined as investigations into what forms of knowledge are manifested in public art, particular aspects of public space production that art interacts with,

and lastly, the aesthetic character of art's interaction with public space production.

Art and the production of public spaces

The ongoing character of the physical transformation of Bjørvika has been crucial to the construction of the analytical framework for the study. The constitution of public spaces is viewed as an actual construction process, as well as what Sharon Zukin has argued is a restructuring of a symbolic urban landscape (1997). Thus, public space production has been addressed as a process that is not restricted to the conception and implementation of a physical design. On the contrary, in the approach to the notion of public space it has been taken to denote a wide range of relations between site and people, such as public use, public access, public ownership and social diversity. The study has applied a wide perspective and outlines four aspects of public space production that can be available for art to interact with. These can be summarised as *the image of place, the understanding/narrative of site, the use of public space and the creation of social spaces*. The study suggests that the abovementioned dimensions of site are negotiated in the process of producing public spaces and that forms of knowledge manifested in art should be considered as playing a role in these processes.

The forms of knowledge manifested in public art practices are the second of the areas of investigation. The art practices are positioned as alternative approaches in public space production that aim at representing situated and local forms of site knowledge by including different socio-economical, geographical, perceptual and relational forms of experience. Artistic research of the site and the epistemological dimension of perception are aspects of artistic competence that I have addressed. In addition, an area of interest has been the imaginative dimensions of artistic projects, which form yet another kind of interaction with public space production. The deviation from the actual and the ability to imagine differently is a significant aspect of how artistic competence intervenes in the city. Moreover, the artistic competence at play within participatory art practices has been essential to how I have approached the influence of art on the use of public spaces and the creation of social spaces in the city.

I have considered the visual strategies applied in the production of public spaces as epistemological approaches that artistic practice opposes, contrasts, supplements or expands. The visual strategies include image-building, optic structuring of the public spaces, the creation of visions as planning tools, the use of visual renderings of city-life before the construction of public spaces, and the accommodation of leisure activities grounded in the activity of seeing. The study highlights discrepancies between the situated

experiences of the city and the constructed vision of it, and suggests that the forms of site knowledge implicated in art should be considered in light of this knowledge gap as potentially corrective of deficient reality descriptions.

The discussion of the interaction of art with public space production is based on the assumption that public arenas are continuously reconstituted because our perception of what is held as common is subject to reconfiguration. Public art is understood as participating in the formation of public arenas and not only appearing in them. Rancière's perspective enables a critical discussion of how perception and significance are reconfigured in Bjørvika. It gives rise to an understanding of the transformation of the area as not only a physical, economic, social and political process, but also a process that on top of this must also make sense. With an urban redevelopment project, new forms of perception and signification are produced. Art has, however, according to Rancière, an extraordinary ability to reconfigure the sensible freely and give rise to new forms of perception (Rancière 2004). This study conceives urban development not only as a physical transformation, but also as producing changes in perception. Art is considered as participating in processes of sense-making by containing disparate sets of significances and inhabiting multiple positions, such as both critical and collaborative. The aesthetic impact of art is considered as an effect of this ability and the thesis outlines the need for a critical framework that can reflect how art practices inhabit multiple positions.

Public art in the knowledge society

This study positions art as a knowledge field in urban development by focusing on knowledge and artistic competence as the object of interaction between art and public space production. In doing so, the investigation redirects attention from the role of art in a cultural economy to its role in the knowledge society.

Since the 1980's culture has played a key role in the regeneration of former industrial areas and investments into arts have been rhetorically underpinned as necessary steps in the transition towards a new, sustainable cultural economy (Evans 2001). The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Tate Modern in London, and MACBA in Barcelona are renowned cultural flagships that have paved the way for a redefinition of the use and identity of an area. In Oslo, the capital of Norway, this ongoing trend was manifested when the new Opera House opened in 2008 on the former industrial harbour site of Bjørvika in a signature building designed by the architectural and



Futurefarmers, *Soil procession* (2015). Copyright Futurefarmers

design firm Snøhetta. The culture-driven development of the Oslo sea coast also occasioned the Bjørvika public art programme.

The embedding of art within the urban development process of the area has, on one hand, occasioned expectations of art that are formulated in line with a cultural development discourse. On the other hand, it has provided opportunities for artistic engagement in Bjørvika prior to the actual construction of public spaces and housing, thus reversing a more conventional approach that presupposes an existent public space before art arrives and, to use a figure of speech, places art as a cherry on top of a cake. The double movement at hand is positioning art as a cultural strategy in the redevelopment while providing art practices access and funding during the processes of public space production. I have perceived it as worthwhile to consider the embedding of art within the actual context as giving rise to opportunities for artists to go beyond reproducing already established roles. The areas of use delineated for art in the policy documents open up spaces within the development that artists can inhabit from within in a mode of *criticality* (Rogoff 2006) and occasion new connections between art and context (Myrvold & Wergeland 2016).

I am concerned that important dimensions of art in urban development contexts are overlooked if they are only discussed in relation to the shortcomings of a cultural development paradigm. Assessing art only in the framework of a cultural economy is problematic. On one hand, cultural economy discourses tend to reduce art to a commodity and the public to

consumer. On the other hand, in the current economic climate, the belief in the economic sustainability of cultural strategies is fading, and large public expenditure on cultural infrastructure is increasingly perceived as an economic burden. To legitimise the role of art in urban development as beneficial for the cultural economy might prove ineffective in a longer term.

The artists collective Futurefarmers has intervened in the Bjørvika planning by deviating from the original public space concept for Loallmenningen, a rocky space on the Bjørvika development site. They have developed the area into an urban farm. By doing so, the artists have aligned themselves more with the green-turn in urbanism than with the culture-led conceptual framework that occasioned the public art programme in the first place. The interaction between art and public space production creates new roles for art in urban development. It is evident that if policy moves away from a cultural development rationale, art in public space may find itself associated with an old urban development paradigm. For this reason, alternative relationships between planning and art need to be formulated.

In his theory on the creative class, Richard Florida introduces distinctions between different forms of creative work. The creativity of artists is positioned as creating an attractive environment for other creative workers to consume in their leisure time by boosting the so-called bohemian factor (Florida 2012, 245). Art is thereby associated with leisure, at the expense of art as production. In a wider perspective, it is relevant to inquire into the viability of positioning art as object of cultural consumption in a cultural economy, while overlooking art as producer of creative knowledge in the city. In an *actual* creative city, art in public spaces should be considered beyond the logic of cultural economy and as part of a knowledge society. A discussion of public art as a dimension of the knowledge society can provide a perspective on art that identifies the interaction between art and other societal fields as a form of critical urban learning (MacFarlane 2011). Smart cities, clever cities, cities of intelligence are all part of the new repertoire of titles advocating urban initiatives that see knowledge as the key to sustainable cities. In the city of knowledge, art in public spaces can represent forms of knowledge and competences that engage with social and ecological challenges, inscribing thus alternative practices in the city through creative and innovative labour. This study suggests that art forms a knowledge field in urban development by performing an *epistemological critique*, producing knowledge through *artistic research* and creating opportunities for *dissensual urban learning*.

Study material

In Bjørvika a variegated range of artistic projects has been undertaken and has offered potential entrees for a discussion of art as a knowledge field in

urban development. Bjørvika has been an important site for art production since the studio-collective Borgen was established there in 1993. However, the peculiar dynamic between art and urban development was formally launched in 2002, after Statsbygg, the Norwegian government's Directorate of Public Construction and Property, had initiated a collaborative platform with the goal of devising a cultural strategy for the development of the area. From 2002-2003 the association Bjørvika Culture and Commerce [Bjørvika Kultur og Næring] organized cultural events in vacant buildings, pending the forthcoming construction of the Opera House. Among the initiatives that summer was the Contemporary Art Museum's exhibition "Where Am I Now, II," [*Hvor er jeg nå 2*] curated by Andrea Kroksnes. Among the featured works were *Whoomp –there it is* (2002) by Mathias Faldbakken and Gardar Eide Einarsson, one of the projects discussed below.

In 2010, Runa Carlsen and Tone Hansen pieced together a time line showing all the 'cultural' activity in Bjørvika from the establishment of Borgen in 1993 until the theatre boat Innvik was closed down in 2010. The overview communicates clearly the diversity of facilitators, artists and organisers that operated within the context of the Bjørvika development.

The particular focus of this study on the relationship of art to public space production has led to a specific interest in Bjørvika Development's public art programme because it is connected to the company's commitment to construct public spaces in Bjørvika. Therefore, this study has mainly discussed art projects that are part of Bjørvika Development's investment in public art. The company's commissioning of art follows four curatorial approaches, of which only one has the production of permanent forms of public art as its aim.

The first art projects accommodated by Bjørvika Development took place in 2005, curated by Per Bjarne Boym. Among these were Marianne Heier's project *A Drop in the Ocean* discussed in article 1. Bjørvika Development's next temporary public art investment, *Common Lands-Almannaretten*, took place in 2009-2010 and was curated by Åse Løvgren and Karolin Tampere.

In 2010, Kunsthall Oslo opened in one of the high-rises in the Barcode Project cluster, the KLP-building. Kunsthall Oslo is the largest investment of Bjørvika Development in temporary forms of public art. The material for this thesis includes two projects from Kunsthall Oslo's exhibition series "I do not see the fjord from where I live- The Oslo project." The project spanned two years and was curated by Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk and Will Bradley. During this period, artists were invited to research the city and eventually to present an exhibition on Kunsthall Oslo's premises. Two exhibitions, both from 2012, are further discussed in this thesis, Andrea Lange's initiative *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* [*Atelier Populaire*

Oslo/Palestinerleiren], and Ane Hjort Guttu's *The Rich Ought to Get Even Richer* [*De rike bør bli enda rikere*].

In 2011, the curatorial vision of Claire Doherty for Bjørvika Development's permanent public art programme Slow Space was launched. Doherty originally commissioned four projects by Heather and Ivan Morrison, Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman, Katie Paterson, and Amy Franceschini/Futurefarmers. Of the four, only the two latter have entered into production phase while the first two were cancelled. Futurefarmers' project *Flatbread Society* (2012-) is discussed in Articles 2 and 3, first in light of my participatory observation of the temporary bakehouse that they installed in 2013, and then again in relation to the influence that the project has gained on the planning of the public space Loallmenningen. Katie Paterson's project *Future Library* (2014-2114) is discussed in Articles 3 and 4.

Although the study discusses all of the above-mentioned artistic explorations, an emphasis has been given to the projects *Flatbread Society* and *Future Library* because these, by being part of the permanent public art programme, enter public space production processes in privileged ways. Nevertheless, the study is not solely preoccupied with art projects that directly influence the development. The approach to art as practices of alternative forms of knowledge in urban development has made it necessary to include also unrealised art projects in the discussion. Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman's *Carstreetroad* and Lars Ramberg's decorations of the ventilation towers are discussed in Article 3 as examples of alternative approaches to site which are not in line with the current development paradigm and hence draw attention to underlying factors that condition artists' possibilities for influencing the production of public spaces. I have also included *The Isle* (2013), by the artist Pfelder in the material, a project curated and organised by Tenthaus Oslo. In Article 4, *The Isle*, together with *Atelier Populaire*, facilitates a discussion of the publics formed by participatory art and offers a contrast to the participatory structure of *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*.

The structure of the thesis and summary of the articles

The thesis consists of four articles and an exegesis. Each of the articles engages in discussions that arise from the relationship between art and public space production. In the four articles, art projects are discussed in relation to public space production and a distinct theoretical framework. The conceptual purpose of the exegesis is to support the main inquiry of the study, namely how forms of knowledge manifested in art interact with public space production. The articles in their distinct approaches are occasionally touching upon other discussions, however the topic of the exegesis is the main inquiry.

The exegesis both elaborates on theoretical discussions from the articles and introduces new theoretical perspectives that substantiate the study. While the articles apply empirical approaches and develop their argument in close relation to the case studies, the exegesis is primarily theoretical. The exegesis is intended to create a theoretical space in order to contextualise the articles as partial studies and to locate them in the greater study.

In addition to the introduction, the exegesis consists of five other chapters. Chapter 2 presents the context and background for the study and suggests that the public art practices discussed are relatively autonomous and semi-integrated in the development process. The next three chapters are theoretical. Each has a distinct focus. Chapter 3 presents the methodological and epistemological approaches of this study. It also presents the theoretical framework constructed to support a discussion of the aesthetic forms of knowledge manifested in art and its interaction with public space production. The main subject of chapter 4 is public art. It positions public art as a process and practice in the city and argues that it should be considered as not only a practice that is perceived in public, but also contributes to the constitution of public arenas. Artistic research is suggested to represent an expansion of what we understand as public art. A central issue in this chapter is the question of art's effect and impact on the development process and the need for a critical framework that assess art as inhabiting multiple positions is outlined. In Chapter 5, I consider the forms of knowledge engendered by art in relation to other sets of urban knowledge, drawing primarily on urban theory. The visual strategies applied in public space production in Bjørvika are discussed as epistemological approaches and the chapter identifies knowledge gaps between the vision and the situated experience of the city. Artistic competence is outlined as a relevant epistemological approach to the production of public space when performing an epistemological critique and creating opportunities for dissensual urban learning. Chapter 6 summarises the study and draws out its findings. The four articles are included as appendices, but summarised here in the introduction:

Article 1: “Negotiating the Image of the City: A Discussion of Skilled Perception and the Role of the Artist in the Redevelopment of Bjørvika” (2013)

The primary concern of this article is the importance attributed to the imageability of Bjørvika and it asks how visual forms of knowledge can influence public space production? In line with the intention of creating a broad vision and constructing an *image* of the place for branding purposes, a visual representation of the area is constructed which does not rely on the actual, physical site. In this article, I argue that a critical investigation of the constructed visual representations is necessary because images influence how

the new area is perceived. I suggest that the construction of the visual representations of Bjørvika can be approached as constituting a perceptual regime as formulated by Jacques Rancière in his theory of the distribution of the sensible.

The representations of the new public spaces act upon what is perceived as public and have influence hence on the social, economic and cultural dimensions of public space. More specifically, the article suggests that images play a significant role in structuring the process of area transformation by exemplifying, convincing and warranting a joint approach, however they can be epistemologically dubious because they do not necessarily contain empirically based knowledge. In this way, the article suggests that transformation of the area requires other representations that can convey empirical forms of knowledge and act as forms of *dissensus* concerning how the public space is represented. Dissensus is a key concept in Rancière's writing and denotes conflicts between different regimes of perception and significance (Rancière 2010, 139).

The article discusses three sets of visual representations in Bjørvika, the 3D model applied in area planning, the architectural prospects that illustrate Gehl and SLA Architects public space programme and the project *A Drop in the Ocean* (2005) by artist Marianne Heier. Heier's project addresses the image building of the area as the "Fjord City." Heier's approach is to critically investigate the idea of a fjord town by looking into the swimming abilities of children in Oslo. In a threefold intervention, empirically formed knowledge of Oslo inhabitants' limited access to swimming pools contrast the economic resources directed into the seaside transformation. The closed-down Sagene Bath/[Bad] is reopened for a day, the project fills a page in newspaper *Morgenbladet* and large photos of empty public swimming pools in the suburbs are temporarily displayed along the seaside.

The study material of the article comprises images that belong to different urban registers; however a common nominator is advanced in the discussion, namely that they all can have effect on the skilling of perception. The notion of *skilled perception* is central in the theoretical framework here. Drawing on both Lorraine Daston and Jacques Rancière, the article outlines a relational dimension of perception. Crucial to the argument advanced is that perception is trainable, and that images play an important part in the skilling of vision and influence what we perceive in common.

The article suggests that by influencing our perceptual habits visual representations indirectly have agency on how we interact with space and that for this reason the forms of knowledge contained in images impel critical attention. Stereotypical representations of public spaces as found in the architectural prospects are argued to reproduce and enforce stereotypical use of public spaces. Therefore, the article suggests the need for images that

show otherwise unrepresented potentials and interests, and thereby stimulate innovative spatial practices by rendering visible local and empirical knowledge that otherwise remain unseen and include a variegated range of forms of visibility in representations of public space.

Article 2: “Flatbread Society and the Discourse on the Soil” (2016)

This article discusses the site-specific approaches of the artist collective Futurefarmers in relation to the site approaches of Gehl and SLA Architects. The focal point of the article is the negotiation of a *site narrative* from a set of professional forms of knowledge (Beauregard 2005). It addresses how alternative forms of knowledge emerge in the project Flatbread Society and contribute to a new understanding of the Loallmenningen site.

In the approach outlined in the public space programme of Loallmenningen, sightlines are key to creating connectivity with the East side of Oslo. The use of the public space is pre-conceptualised as a part of its design, and the proximity to the Fjord is rendered as the site’s main asset. The article suggests that, in comparison to the pre-established approaches to site, Futurefarmers shows relational sensibility and encourages connectivity and the public use of site through relational and aesthetic approaches. The article is based on empirical data developed during a participatory observation of Futurefarmers’ month-long intervention in Bjørvika in 2013 which consisted of a series of workshops and events.

Futurefarmers is an artist collective commissioned for Bjørvika’s permanent public art programme Slow Space. Their collaborative project *Flatbread Society* uses the traditional Norwegian “flatbrød” as research device to learn about cultural, historic, political and social dimensions of Bjørvika and its neighbouring areas in the inner east area of the city. The artistic proposition of Futurefarmers is to install a public bakehouse in Bjørvika, yet at the time when this article was written they were still researching the city to see what people in the area “needed.” Futurefarmers’ intervention was not only a temporary public artwork; it was also a research framework for the artists to learn about Bjørvika. The peculiar combination of a structure that both acted as art in a public space and artistic research of a site is significant for my approach to the project.

The article shows how the artists produce relational and situated forms of site knowledge and contribute to a shift in the approach to site from an emphasis on the fjord as recreational asset to the soil as social, historical and ecological resource. Loallmenningen is the public space along the seaside furthest East in Oslo, and thereby located on an axis of social, cultural and economic difference. The political dimension of the Flatbread Society project can be appreciated by virtue of its spatiality. The ephemeral and relational dimension of the work and its reliance on subjective experiences and

memories could result in a marginalised public position. However, in the discussion of the project I suggest, in line with art theorist Grant Kester's notion of dialogical aesthetics, that the public dimension of the project is formed through discursive interactions that transgress singular readings and experiences (Kester 2013).

The theoretical framework of the article relies mainly on Rancière, Grant Kester and Doris Sommer, and the artistic approach to the site is discussed as a form of aesthetic labour. The notion of aesthetic labour is influenced by Sommer and in this discussion it denotes an ability to leap between the actual and the imaginary, undo and deconstruct what seems certain and reasonable. The peculiar merging of art and artistic research in public space is suggested to reconfigure knowledge, interests and values into an alternative site narrative.

Article 3: “Participatory Action in the Age of Green Urbanism. How Futurefarmers Leapfrogged the Cultural Consumer?” (2016)

[Co-written with Even Smith Wergeland]

This article investigates the intervention of Futurefarmers in the planning process of Loallmenningen and the deviation from the original design concept in favour of an urban farm and a public bakehouse developed by the artists. The article looks into how the art project has acquired influence on planning processes and entered decision-making processes and thereby introduces an alternative *public use* of the site. It suggests that public art and urban planning have joint interests in the area that include the green shift in urbanism, the vision of an active city, urban gardening and public participation. We suggest that through the constellation of public participation and vegetational growth Futurefarmers forges an alternative approach to public space compared with purely cultural strategies, and that the project thus can be discussed as an update of the area's planning by introducing values and practices in line with a green-turn. Moreover, the article suggests that the project foreshadows new associations between planning and public art and requires a reconsidering of the privilege position of discourses on cultural economy in urban planning.

In addition to *Flatbread Society*, the empirical material of the article comprises Katie Paterson's *Future Library*, and two cancelled projects. These includes Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman's *Carstreetroad* and a project by Lars Ø. Ramberg for the ventilation towers on Loallmenningen. In combination, they facilitate a discussion of whether some projects are chosen because they are more agreeable and less critically challenging than others are. Put otherwise, do the commissioned projects envision new ways of being public or do they propose more of what the

prevailing planning paradigm requires? And, thirdly, how inclusive is green discourse when implemented in practice?

The investigation suggests that the participatory structure of the *Flatbread Society* is an essential condition for artists' influence on development processes, because participatory art practices hold the ability to activate the public and thereby realise the sought-after civic participation and liveliness called for in the vision of an active city. In addition, the article discusses, however, the complex notion of participation through three lenses in order to differentiate distinct levels of participation: participation in decision-making and planning, participation in art production, and participation in public spaces. Thereby the article problematizes bottom-up readings of Futurefarmers, and suggests that participants in the art events are not necessarily participating in planning. Nevertheless, the article suggests that the critical potential of collaborative art lies in its ability to negotiate different worlds.

Article 4: “Producing Publics: Stranger Relations in Public Art” (undergoing peer review)

This article addresses a seeming conflation between the ambition to build active and lively urban environments and the commissioning of participatory art in public space. Art enters the processes of creating *social spaces* in new built areas, yet participatory art gives social relations both aesthetic and public qualities. The involvement and engagement of participants in collective structures prompt for a discussion of how this art form intervenes in the city.

The question that this article addresses is how art produces particular publics in Bjørvika. The move from singular public to plural *publics*, is influenced by Queer theorist Michael Warner, and permits a discussion of how art forms *a* public in its public address and take active part in reinventing the areas public character (2005). Warner's approach to publics allows for a discussion of them as more than an empirical reception context and as re-imagining *stranger relations*. Resting upon this approach, the article installs a distinction between the actual reception context formed by attendees and the artworks' public dimension that I characterise as a form of stranger relationality.

The empirical material of this article consists of three art projects in Bjørvika that rely on different forms of public participation. *The Isle* (2013) by the artist Pfelder consisted of a little cottage on a floating stage placed in the bay in front of the newly built high-rises on Oslo's seaside. It functioned a hostel as one could book it free of charged for a night. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* [Palestinerleir] (2012) took place at Kunsthall Oslo in one of the Bjørvika high-rises. *Atelier Populaire* addressed the situation of

paperless Palestinian immigrants and included them in a collaborative project facilitated by Norwegian artist Andrea Lange. The last project, *Future Library*, by Scottish artist Katie Paterson is part of the permanent public art programme of Bjørvika. It was launched in 2014 and has the year of 2114 as its focal point. Every year one writer is invited to submit a text, which is kept unread until the totality of the text will be published in 2114. While the unread texts are stored at the municipal Library at Bjørvika, a forest planted by the artist and her collaborators slowly grows in order to provide paper for the future anthology. The three projects introduce forms of participation in Bjørvika that ranges from installing a pleasurable event in the woods, a sleep-over with a friend in an art installation, to the creation of an activist platform in *Atelier Populaire*.

The commission of temporary and participatory art projects is a current tendency that changes the accessibility of art in public space. The three abovementioned art projects are discussed in relation to how they structure participation temporary, physically and relationally. The *affect* circulating in a project is considered as acting upon who feels included in a project. In particular, hope and solidarity is identified as crucial to the participatory structure of *Atelier Populaire* and *Future Library*. Moreover, affects are suggested to influence the quality of the imagined stranger relations. The article outlines the need for more knowledge on how the artistic competencies at play in participatory art interact with the affective registers of cities.

The article argues that a critical understanding of art's role in the production of publicness should not overlook the productive gap between the crowd of attendees and the social imaginary that constitutes the event's public horizon. Imagination, perception and affect are suggested to act upon the constitution of Bjørvika's public character. The article argues that when art installs connections between subjective perceptions, social situations and its own public dimension, it generates knowledge about dimensions of the city that otherwise remains unarticulated and enables a form of urban learning. When acting as a form of urban learning, art is positioned as a phenomena that we can think *with* in order to better understand the sensible as an inter-subjective field that is being reconfigured through the way we think and perceive, as well as what we conceive as possible.

Chapter 2

Public Art in Bjørvika: Being used and playing a role

The empirical material of this study is drawn from art projects commissioned in relation to the redevelopment of Bjørvika. The economic, political and social context of the redevelopment acts upon the production of public art. It both enables the production of the art projects discussed in the thesis and delimits the sphere of influence for art. Public art, in Bjørvika, is caught up in a double movement in the tension between being used and playing a role. While the area development plan positioned art as integrated in the urban redevelopment process, the relationship between public art and public space production remains somehow unsettled. This is demonstrated in that the art practices involved in Bjørvika work on the issue of public space independently of the overall place production scheme and thus the public art programme operates relatively autonomously. The role of art is not only devised and defined in policy documents and curatorial approaches, but also tackled in situ by practitioners in the field. This chapter presents the context of the case studies.

The redevelopment of Bjørvika is culturally driven and must be considered a pilot in the Norwegian context. What does it entail when art is applied as a cultural strategy? The cultural development discourses outline a number of use areas for public art that range from boosting tourism, activating urban areas, branding places and enhancing cultural diversity. The many paradoxes and shortcomings of the cultural strategies applied in Bjørvika are addressed in this chapter in a review of existing research on the subject. Moreover, this chapter presents curatorial approaches, the commission strategies and policy documents devising use areas for public art. The areas of use outlined in strategic documents can represent potential areas of influence for art. In particular, this seems the case in the coupling between art and the ambition to activate the area.

The four articles of this thesis discuss art projects that in dissimilar ways develop, expand, transgress and contest what is represented as public in Bjørvika. Ultimately, the understanding of what public means is at stake as Bjørvika is completely reconfigured and the character of the area transformed. Public art represents a platform on which to negotiate what lies in the very notion of public. However, reflections cannot stop at understanding what it is, the embedding of art in an urban development project singles art out as a partner in the production of something public. The decisive question seems to be: how is publicness produced? The potential

sphere of influence for art is conditioned by its involvement in processes that are not linear and throughout regulated. This chapter outlines the peculiar semi-integrated and relatively autonomous position of art that characterises the interaction between art and public place production as well as dimensions of the redevelopment that conditions the role of art.

Background

The redevelopment of the industrial waterfront of Oslo is a large and ongoing project. The former industrial harbour is being transformed, and what used to be a place of labour has turned into an area of cultural consumption and leisure. Art in public spaces installs new activities and enter into the process of redefining the character of Bjørvika. The deindustrialization of the harbour has taken place in different phases of which the first was the demolition of the socially deprived area Pipervika in 1915, followed by the establishment of the City Hall by the waterfront. In 1987, the City Council adopted a municipal plan opting for urban development and redistribution of the port (Oslo byplankontor 1987). The areas singled out in the municipal plan were Filipstad, Tjuvholmen, Akerbrygge, Vestbanen, Vippetangen, Loenga, Sørenga and Bjørvika. In 2000, the City Council strengthened and developed further the municipal plan by adoption of the Fjord City concept (Oslo kommune 2000).⁴

The fundamental transformation of the industrial harbour reconfigures the site and its uses completely. The most striking symptom of the significance of cultural strategies in the planning of the Fjord City is the relocation of multiple cultural institutions to the waterfront in new iconic buildings. Listed from the West we find the Astrup Fearnley Museum (2012), the National Museum, The Deichmanske Library, the Opera House (2008) and the Munch Museum, some already completed, others on their way. However, of the different areas of the Fjord City, it is only in the case of Bjørvika that the application of cultural strategies is set forth in a separate policy document. The Supervisory Programme for Culture/[Kulturoppfølgingsprogram] (KOP) is devised as an appendix to the regulation plan of 2003, and formulates the cultural strategy.⁵ This makes Bjørvika a pilot project in Norway (Statsbygg 2005, 29) and has prepared the ground for a public art programme, which is anchored in the development process and plays a part in the development prior to the actual completion of public spaces. One could say that the traditional role of public art that

⁴ For an extensive overview of the historical process and political processes leading to the Fjord city see the recent doctoral thesis of Heidi, Bergsli, *Urban Attractiveness and Competitive policies in Oslo and Marseille*.

⁵ The Directorate of Public Construction and Real Estate/[Statsbygg] initiated the process leading to the formulation of a supervisory programme for culture in connection to their involvement with the planning of the Opera House and the area development.

positions art as an ornament, a cherry on a cake, has been inverted, as temporary projects have entered the site during construction.

Public in Bjørvika: a complex compound

The notion of public in the context of Bjørvika represents a peculiar complexity, which has influenced artistic approaches to the area. The redevelopment of Bjørvika is structured as a public-private collaboration, which entails that the municipality plays a central role in the devising of strategies and visions. Private companies, however, take on the actual construction. The major landowners in the area of Bjørvika are public companies such as the National Railway Company and the Port of Oslo. The company Bjørvika Development Inc./[Bjørvika Utvikling AS] (BU) was formed by their daughter companies HAV Property Inc./[HAV Eiendom AS] and Oslo S Development Inc./[Oslo S Utvikling], the latter company is owned by two state-owned real estate companies, ROM Inc. and Entra Inc., and one private company, Linstow Inc. As part of the redevelopment process, formerly publicly inaccessible areas owned by the public companies have been privatized. However, one of the agreements in the private-public collaboration between Bjørvika Development and the municipality of Oslo is that the private developers construct public infrastructure and new public spaces making thus the area publicly accessible (Bjørvika Utvikling). The budget of the public art programme is intimately linked to the construction of public infrastructure and consists of 1% of Bjørvika Development's daughter company Bjørvika Infrastructure Inc.'s budget (Eeg-Tverbakk et. al. 2009). Thereby, the commissioning of public art is placed with the private development company, although positioned as a strategic investment in producing *public* spaces. Hence, the public art programme is part of the intricate historical, economic and political fabric that forms the public character of Bjørvika. The conflation of public and private interests in Bjørvika gives reason, as stressed by art theorist Rosalyn Deutsche, to be wary of the adjective of public, which can be used to legitimate spaces as democratic, while veiling asymmetries and power (Deutsche 2008).

The political significance of public spaces in Bjørvika must be taken into account. In the Fjord City-plan one can read that "The Fjord City will vitalise, create pride and belonging, besides securing public access to the 'amenity values' by the sea"⁶(Oslo kommune 2008, 7). Public access to the fjord is by far the most dominant narrative on the public relevance of the redevelopment. The significant role that the production of public spaces plays in the management of public interests in the area is noteworthy. The public

⁶ My translation.

character of the public spaces is underscored by their unusual appellation as *commons*. In fact, as pointed out by Geographer Heidi Bergsli in a recent doctoral thesis about the redevelopment of Oslo's seaside, the new public spaces can be perceived as playing a role in legitimising the redevelopment as an initiative in which citizens share a common interest. (Bergsli 2015, 226). A point of importance in the urban planning of the waterfront is therefore whether the development manages to include the diversity of inhabitants in Oslo, or rather operates as a gentrification process, pushing socially and economically deprived inhabitants further east. Rhetorically, art is presented as part of a strategy to enhance cultural diversity and a multifaceted urban environment (Plan- og bygningsetaten *et.al* 2003; Eeg-Tverbakk *et.al.*2009) and its public role is thus located in the tension stretched out between the financial stakes and the social responsibility of the developers.

Paving the way for public art

The general area development plan of Bjørvika, Bispevika and Lohavn, passed in 2003 has two appendices that have been influential in establishing a sphere of action for art in the development process. The first is the Supervisory Programme for Culture (KOP) referenced above. The second is the Design Manual, which defines an overarching purpose for the production of public spaces.

KOP was an initiative of the Directorate of Public Construction and Real Estate/[Statsbygg] and forms a framework for the cultural strategy of Bjørvika. In the document, a societal role was devised for culture in relation to urban development. The formulation of a series of recommendations and guidelines has informed this relationship. Certain use areas conceived for culture deserve attention because they influence the role of art. Culture is defined as a means to activate the area, and KOP stresses the significance of a cultural profile during the construction phase and recommends therefore access and funding for culture while the development work is ongoing (Plan- og bygningsetaten *et. al.* 2003, 15-16). This can be seen as paving the way for the commissioning of temporary and participatory art projects and providing a role for art during the actual construction process. Moreover, the relevance of culture is both expressed in economic terms, thereby in conformity with discourses that perceive culture as a mean to assert Oslo in inter-city competition (Plan- og bygningsetaten *et. al.* 2003, 12); and positioned as an instrument to achieve social inclusion and realise diversity in public spaces (Plan- og bygningsetaten *et. al.* 2003, 17-18). The conflation of commercial incentives and social responsibility is inherent to the cultural strategy. Lastly, KOP placed the responsibility for supporting diverse cultural forms with the developers. This resulted in Bjørvika Development's creation

of its public art programme and the earmarking of 1% of the infrastructure budget to public art (Plan- og bygningsetaten *et. al.* 2003, 29).⁷

The very existence of a public art budget is nevertheless a significant consequence of the culture-driven development framework devised for Bjørvika. In comparison, the development of the nearby seaside area Tjuvholmen does not have a separate public art budget. Instead, the municipality agreed on a price reduction on the land sale in exchange for the developers' accommodation of the Astrup Fearnly Museum (Bergsli 2015, 101; 260). In other words, investment into art in public space is not certain to happen even under a cultural development paradigm. The public art programme of Bjørvika remains unparalleled in Norway.

Separate processes of public art and public space production

The second appendix to the development plan is the Design Manual. The document outlines art as one out of six separate elements of public space and it recommends the involvement of artists in the planning and production of public spaces (Statsbygg *et. al.* 2003).⁸ The original intention laid out in the Design Manual recommends that art appear in all the public spaces of Bjørvika and calls for an art budget funded by a levy on all construction projects, in addition to requiring a commitment by the company in charge of infrastructure (Statsbygg *et. al.* 2003, 54). The current budget is significantly smaller and the actual space of influence opened for public art practices hardly corresponds to the role outlined in the Design Manual.⁹ Compared with the recommendation to involve artists in the planning of public spaces, the influence of artists on space production has been limited. A significant reason for this is that the art programme and public space programme have been pursued as independent initiatives.

The relationship between art and the public space programme in Bjørvika needs closer attention because the semi-integration of art in the redevelopment process is influenced by its independent role vis-à-vis the broader public space programme. SLA Landscape Architects and Gehl Architects have devised the concept of the public space programme for Bjørvika. In 2004, the two Danish firms won the international open

⁷ KOP recommend the designation Bjørvika Development INC as a responsible party in the management of the cultural strategy and further development of the organisation Bjørvika Culture and Commerce/Bjørvika Kultur og Næring) in close relationship with Bjørvika Development, see, Plan- og bygningsetaten *et. al.*, Bærekraft i Bjørvika, 13, 29.

⁸ The intentions outlined in this manual were later specified in six booklets. The "Art booklet" (2009) is one of the six documents and formulates Bjørvika Development's art strategy.

⁹ Of the seven new public spaces, only Loallmenningen has a temporary public art project, *Flatbread Society*. The second permanent public art project, *Future Library* is integrated in the Deichmanske Library. In size, the permanent public art programme is much smaller than envisioned in the Design Manual.

competition for the overall concept for the public spaces in Bjørvika with the project “New City-Life” [Nyt byliv]. In its decision, the jury emphasised the ability of the concepts presented by the winning firms to accommodate social life through its formal strength and aesthetic coherence (Gehl Architects *et. al.* 2007). The distinctive strategy set forth by Gehl and SLA Architects would create an active and lively city by offering a rich set of potential activities in the different public spaces to address a diversified group of people. Altogether, the public space programme encompasses seven public spaces and a harbour promenade. The activities devised are first and foremost linked to cultural events, commuting and physical activities (Gehl Architects *et. al.* 2007).

The original intention to integrate art in the public space programme was reflected in the fact that one of the curators of the Art booklet and engineers behind the Bjørvika public art strategy, Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk was a member of the jury. However, he asserts that public art was not emphasised in the design competition.

The assignment and programme called for a collaboration with artists, but this was followed-up on only to a small degree. My role in the jury was therefore peripheral because there was little to handle. Very few architectural offices handed in projects including a substantial role for art.¹⁰

In the proceedings that followed, there has been little collaboration with artists and few initiatives to integrate art in the public space concept of Gehl and SLA Architects have been undertaken. A possible explanation advanced by one of the curators of the Art Booklet is that the architects’ approach to art was that “all should be fun, it should have a lightness, though none of us shared that attitude” (in Bergsli 2015, 259). Bergsli concludes in her analysis of the matter that the reflective, theoretical and critical perspectives devised in the art strategy did not correspond to the approaches actively pursued (Bergsli 2015, 259).

Art has only to a small degree been integrated in a larger collaborative context. Quite to the contrary, from the side-lines, so to speak, art practices have interacted with the development process through distinct projects in public space and have mainly relied on artistic strategies *in situ* to influence public space production. Article 3 discusses the process that led to the discarding of the original concept for Loallmenningen devised by SLA and Gehl Architects, in favour of Futurefarmers’ project, revealing the separate processes of the production of public space and the public art. As we will see, public art in Bjørvika is not supported by an institutional framework that

¹⁰ Interview with Per Gunnar Eeg-Tverbakk 13.1.2015

warrants its space of action. For this reason and due to art's semi-integration in public space production, the implementation of aesthetic strategies have been determining for the influence that art acquires.

The commissioning model of Bjørvika Development's art programme

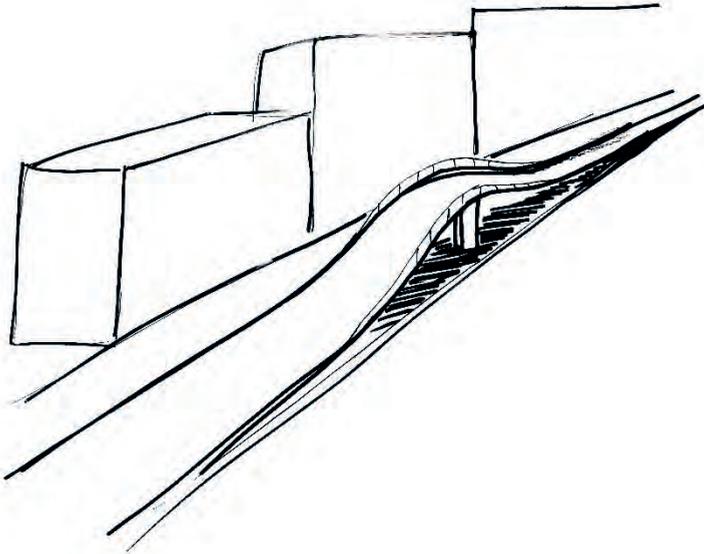
In the heteronomous context in which the art practices in Bjørvika operate, the art functions with relative autonomy. The commissioning model for Bjørvika Development's public art programme is a product of the close intertwining between art and the commercial enterprises that finance it. Although employing independent curators, the investments into art in public space are intertwined with the developers' general interests. The artists commissioned are contracted for shorter terms awaiting the commissioner, curator and board of Bjørvika Development's clear signal for the next phases of their project.

In the permanent public art programme, *Slow Space*, projects by Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman as well as one by Heather and Ivan Morrison have been cancelled, clear signs of the uncertainty of the context artists are operating in. Artists are dependent on ongoing approval to continue their projects, and economic, artistic and relational factors influence whether projects are realised. Heather and Ivan Morrison's project was cancelled shortly before entering the construction phase when the costs were revealed to largely exceed the budget and external sponsors withdrew their support. Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman developed three project proposals before they were decommissioned to *Slow Space*.¹¹ Although cancelled for different reasons, the two abovementioned projects illustrate the long way from commissioning to realisation. In Article 3, I argue together with Even Smith Wergeland that participatory green projects are in concord with a current 'green'-turn in urbanism and that *Futurefarmers* successful intervention in Bjørvika must be considered in light of this trend. The participatory events in public space are in this article considered as a mean to gather support for further development of the project.

The continuation and realisation of the permanent art programme depend on the ability of artists, curators and commissioner to negotiate a field of action for art. This study focuses on artistic strategies in public space, yet the absence of an institutional framework for art as an autonomous practice influences the role of the commissioner of the art programme, Anne Beate Hovind.¹² On a question of which frameworks Bjørvika Development and

¹¹ Interview with Johannessen and Dijkman (22.9.2014)

¹² In comparison, Public Art Norway/[KORO] establishes a committee when launching a new project consisting of art consultants and representatives of the receivers, architect and developer. A report on KORO suggests that although this often forms the ground of well-functioning collaborations, the artists enter the production late and this renders difficult the integration of the art. In contrast to the artists working in Bjørvika, in KORO projects artists function as developers of their own project once contracted. It entails that they



Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman, *Carstreetroad* (unrealised). Copyright Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman

herself have put in place in order to ensure the development of artistic projects over time, she underscores her own role as mediator.

I believe it partly depends on me as a person. I have succeeded in gaining the support of a steering group that understands, and I have had enough credibility to take them on this journey. And, they have had confidence. Yet, one also needs to show results and progress.¹³

Hovind negotiates between the different interests and objectives at play in Bjørvika: the progress and stability of the permanent art projects seem to rely on her ability to negotiate a space for art within the greater context.

The multiple roles ascribed to art

Art's changing roles is a key to comprehending its embeddedness with the temporal and processual character of the development. Four documents illustrate the shifting roles and conditions ascribed to public art as the development of Bjørvika enters different phases. The documents are the Report from Bjørvika Culture and Commerce, The Art Booklet devised by

dispose their own budget and have a certain predictability concerning the realization of their projects, however they are also economically responsible for budget overruns. See, KORO, "Rettledning for kunstutvalgets arbeid" and, Ramboll, Evaluering av statens fagorgan kunst i offentlige rom, 59.

¹³ Interview with Anne Beate Hovind (21.9.2015)

Bjørsvika Development, and the curatorial strategies behind *Common Lands-Allmannaretten* and *Slow Space*.

Bjørsvika Culture and Commerce Report

The Report recapitulates the activities of the association Bjørsvika Culture and Commerce [Bjørsvika Kultur og Næring].¹⁴ The association accommodated cultural events in 2002-2003 in the early phase of the redevelopment at a time when available spaces in the vacated harbour made possible multiple temporary activities. It played a role in the formulation of the KOP-document. The report retraces potential opportunities and challenges arising from the desired collaborations between business and the cultural sector (Hovind & Gran 2007). It stresses the importance of the cultural dimension of the area in relation to the image-building of Bjørsvika as a driver to motivate investments by BKN's business partners. Attracting attention to the area was hence an important objective and BKN stimulated and facilitated as much cultural activity as possible (Hovind & Gran 2007). The relation between art and the strategic construction of an image of the area is the topic of Article 1.

The Art Booklet

"The Art Booklet" ("Temaheftet for kunst") was published in 2009 and re-edited in 2012. A major topic in this publication is characterising the underlying conditions required to produce art in public spaces. Significantly, it devises an art strategy for Bjørsvika Development that aims at both formulating a notion of art in public space that is relevant according to the contemporary art field and at articulating the stakeholders' expectations towards art (Eeg-Tverbakk et. al. 2009). Bjørsvika Development's art strategy summarises these two interests by attributing a set of different roles to art in addition to its intrinsic value.

BU [Bjørsvika Development] would like to make Bjørsvika a place where different artistic expressions have a strong presence, and where audiences will see and experience works of art of a high, international standard. BU is focusing on art in the public sphere to create a lively and multi-faceted urban environment. The works of art will give Bjørsvika an identity and create a cultural content that will give a sense of co-ownership to the diverse groups of people who will be using the site. Not least, art is supported for its own intrinsic value. BU will play both an independent role as the initiator

¹⁴ The report was published in 2007 and recapitulates the association's activity from it was founded in April 11 2002 until it was dissolved December 9th 2003, as well as conveying the experiences gathered on private-public partnership and accounting for its influence on the devising of the supervisory programme for culture.

and commissioner of the art projects, as well as functioning as a coordinator and offering support and encouragement to the art endeavours of other in Bjørvika. (Hovind in Løvgren & Tampere 2009, 21)

In place of the linking of culture, image building and place branding that was dominant in KOP and the report of BKN, the social dimension of art is emphasised here. The role of art is to fulfil the ambition of creating a lively and multi-faceted urban environment and co-ownership including diverse groups of people in the area. The actualising of *life* and social diversity are a challenge in the redevelopment and represent both general development issues and an area of use designated for art. The coupling of art with a social dimension of the city seems to have favoured the commissioning of art projects that rely on participatory activities.

Another important dimension of Bjørvika Development's art strategy is opting for both temporary and permanent art projects. Of the 20 million NOK art budget, 25 % is reserved for temporary art forms and 75% for permanent art installations (Eeg-Tverbakk *et. al.* 2009, 69). The choice to include temporary forms of public art is an innovative move in the strategy. The largest investment in temporary art is Kunsthall Oslo, established in 2012. The argument for supporting Kunsthall Oslo stresses the importance of providing room for artists in Bjørvika after the development process they participated in comes to an end. The Kunsthall is hence framed as a way to integrate art's production in the city's daily life (Eeg-Tverbakk *et. al.* 2009, 37).

Common Lands- Allmannaretten

The last two documents present curatorial approaches to Bjørvika. The first is "Art as Protagonist," edited by Karoline Tampere and Åse Løvgren, the curators of the temporary art program *Common Lands –Allmannaretten* (2009-2010). The underlying dilemma that the curators discuss is how art can be part of the development process without being instrumentalised from within (Løvgren & Tampere n.d.). *Common Lands* attempts a critical approach to Bjørvika and engages hence in a discussion of the development model employed, the factual meanings in the use of commons as appellations for public spaces in Bjørvika, and how the realization of public diversity is approached. The objective of the curators is to create an independent space to manoeuvre within such a commission (Løvgren & Tampere n.d., 3).¹⁵

¹⁵ Due to the particular interest of this study in the interaction between art and public space production, the approach adopted in *Common Lands* have not been central in my investigation.

Slow Space

The last document is the curatorial vision presented in the permanent art programme *Slow Space*, formulated by curator Claire Doherty and the Bristol-based organisation Situations. The vision commits to shaping the experience of Bjørvika from the ground and outlines the role of art as indistinguishable from the overall ambition of making Bjørvika into an “extraordinary place” (Doherty 2011, 3). The curatorial concept of ‘slow space’ pulls the permanent public art programme in a direction that emphasises the social dimensions of art and its ability to create social spaces.¹⁶ Doherty gives examples of aspects of slowness that due to their event-based nature give the impression that *Slow Space* primarily outlines the role of art as contributing to life and bringing together people in Bjørvika.

The roles ascribed to art in the publications diverge and different areas of use are outlined for art in public spaces. While in the early phases of the development art was explicitly encompassed as a dimension of the image of Bjørvika and a means to draw attention to the area, the ensuing art strategy downplays the economic incentives to invest in art and emphasises its social role in public space.¹⁷ The two curatorial approaches represent distinct understandings of art’s role in Bjørvika. Tampere and Løvgren investigate an autonomous position for art from which artists can develop their own critical agenda. Doherty, on the other hand, is not preoccupied with distinguishing art from the general production of public space and outlines art instead as a means to bring life and activity to the area.

The documents formulating the intentions behind the art programme show a variegated range of roles attributed to art in urban development. As has been shown by Graeme Evans, there is nothing new to the strategic use of art in contemporary urban development (Evans 2001). In Bjørvika, however we can spot how our own time envisions art’s societal function. In this respect, a particularly interesting dimension of the art programme is the pull between the economic incentives to invest in art for the sake of the image building of the area and the use of art as a means to realise the ambition of socially inclusive public spaces. The diverging roles ascribed to public art act upon its ability to signify and provokes question on its impact on other societal fields, a topic that will be discussed further in chapter 4. The relation between art and the strategic construction of an image of the area is the topic of Article 1. The commissioning model has favoured temporary and participatory strategies, these form the study material of article 2, 3 and 4.

¹⁶ The curatorial concept draws on the *slow movement*, that originated in Italy in 1986 as a protest against *fast food*. The slow movement advocates a slower pace in various practices, including food, travelling, reading and living in general and has established an international network of slow cities.

¹⁷ It is important to stress that the development company’s art programme is not a ‘free’ commercial investment in the image building of the area, but conditioned by the political framework.

Art as cultural strategy in perspective

In the renowned book *The Cultures of Cities*, urban sociologist Sharon Zukin argues that cultural strategies have become crucial to the survival of cities in a post-industrial economy (1995). Due to its key role, Zukin claims that culture “is a powerful means to control cities” (Zukin 1995, 1). The alleged power of culture in urban development raises multiple issues, because culture is positioned as a means to resolve numerous urban challenges. Steven Miles and Ronan Paddison argue that in a cultural economy, “culture has been redefined as to include new uses to which it can be put to meet social, economic and political objectives” (Miles & Paddison 2005, 834). Such wide definitions of culture and its uses bring about paradoxes and divergences as the objectives listed by Miles and Paddison are often in opposition. Art applied as cultural strategy tends to be located in the intersection between the objective of making the city more competitive and the concern for decreasing social inequalities (Sharp, Pollock & Paddison 2005). Moreover, the very meaning of culture can be at stake in the rhetoric of the cultural economy, which, according to Malcolm Miles, is characterised as a foggy conflation of culture as art, as a way of life and as a material means in the symbolic economy (Miles 2005, 894).¹⁸

Key to the discussion of cultural strategies in urban planning is the management of culture as a publicly funded amenity subject to political priorities. Graeme Evans outlines the potential of cultural planning *if* cultural and social needs are placed in at the centre of the physical planning process (Evans 2001, 281). However, he outlines the risk in concentrating cultural resources in certain areas and in privileging investments in high-art, because both practices represent threats to a more democratic inclusive cultural approach in cities (Evans 2006). In Oslo, the seaside can be considered as an area that both concentrates and ties up cultural resources.

Speaking of the democratic foundation of culture also raises questions about *whose* culture? An inherent paradox of cultural economy is that although it promotes a creative and diversified cultural environment, indexed by Florida as a bohemian factor (Florida 2012), the commodification of culture and constructing of strong, coherent visions reduce the multifaceted life of places (Zukin 1997). This is possible according to Malcolm Miles and Steven Miles because consumption on the surface is rendered as a question of opportunity while it “inevitably reinforce[s] existing social divides” (Miles & Miles 2004, 177). Social and cultural diversity is central in a discussion of cultural strategies in Bjørvika, as is the

¹⁸ In contrast to the scepticism outlined concerning the watering down of the notion of culture, Nigel Thrift and Amin Ash advocate a cultural-economical turn that goes even further by thinking culture as drives and powers and thereby actualising a very different urban economy. See, Amin and Thrift, «Cultural-Economy and cities»

relationship between public art and commodification of cultural power as well. The following passage reviews research and criticism that indicate that Bjørvika is no exception to the paradoxical effects of the application of cultural strategies outlined above.

Short literature review of public art in Bjørvika

The shortcomings of the cultural strategies in the Fjord City in terms of realisation of social inclusion are among the topics addressed in a recent doctoral thesis by Heidi Bergsli. Bergsli draws out the paradoxical effect that while diversity is promoted in discussions of the ‘creative city,’ the cultural strategies employed create arenas that are less socially diverse (Bergsli 2010; Bergsli 2015). Similar perspectives are stressed by Oddrun Sæter who outlines the homogenisation of the culture of the inner city as an effect of current gentrification processes (Sæter 2005; 2013). The closing down of the theatre boat Innvik in 2010 and the lack of political support for establishing a new multicultural stage in Bjørvika caused the displacement of the theatre company Nordic Black from Bjørvika and reduced the cultural diversity of the area (Bergsli 2015, Sæter 2013). Bergsli points out that Kunsthall Oslo is the only new cultural offering installed in Bjørvika on a permanent basis, and questions the actual contribution of the cultural strategies to Oslo’s cultural offerings overall (2015, 253).

The Bjørvika redevelopment has also rendered visible the paradoxical effect of culture-led development on artists’ production conditions. In a recent publication, artist Ingrid Lønningdal traces the history of the collective working space Borgen established in Bjørvika in 1993, and demolished in 2013 due to the development of the area (Lønningdal 2015). Borgen stands as an example of how a cultural development strategy may favour culture consumption spaces, at the expense of affordable production spaces, and may drive out the creative class that it rhetorically promotes (Sæter 2013, Smith Wergeland 2015, Bergsli 2015b).

The imbrication of public art in urban development processes that marginalise vulnerable social groups is addressed by Geir Haraldseth in an art critique. He discusses a temporary sound installation *Speculation* (2010) by the Dutch artistic duo Bik Van der Pol that was performed on a pedestrian bridge leading to the new Opera. The soundscape diffused conversations between experts on urban development, sociology and the history of Oslo, and attempted to give voice to the interest of the marginal social groups currently displaced by the installation of the Opera and the gentrification of Bjørvika. Haraldseth asks whether contemporary art is not in essence just as elitist as the Opera and suggests that the project fails to communicate with the marginal groups whose interests it attempts to voice (Haraldseth 2010). The perceived paradox can be argued to be an underlying effect of social art:

it seems unable to include without dividing. The relationship between the outspoken intention of critical art and its impact on the situation that it addresses is also a subject addressed by Bergsli. She suggests that art is 'harmless' in Bjørvika and that projects that contest the property structure do not achieve any substantial impact such as changes in discourses or practices of property development (Bergsli 2015, 282). However, her study also indicates that in comparison to the wide and vague definition of culture in KOP, the art strategy of Bjørvika Development is timely, specific and easy to engage with and has had an impact through the establishment of Kunsthall Oslo (Bergsli 2015, 259).

The event-based and temporary forms of public art and their potential long-term effects is discussed by Jonny Aspen and Pløger in *The Vitalist City [Den vitale byen]*. The authors outline use areas for public art that can explain the attractiveness of event-based forms of public art in Bjørvika. Among them are branding, creating a general public interest in the development, and embedding the development in local realities through site-specific artistic strategies (Aspen & Pløger 2015). Their main contribution, however, is the proposition that theories on affect and vitalism can articulate possible correlations between temporary art projects and long-term effects in the city (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 190).

Yet, Aspen and Pløgger underscore art's function in branding strategies and place it above all as an element in the construction of the image of Bjørvika,; it is thus to be considered less as a social or aesthetic intervention in public space (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 182). Their views coincide with theatre scholar Anne Britt Gran who has written extensively on the relation between art and business in a Norwegian context (Gran 2003; 2010; Gran & de Paoli 2005). Gran and Donatella de Paoli stress that art in the context of Bjørvika is part of a marketing strategy and hence an aspect of the place image of the area (Gran & de Paoli 2005). The commissioning of "feel good-projects" in the permanent public art programme Slow Space is seen by Beate Petersen as entering into the construction of narratives and the branding of Bjørvika. She stresses that "ecology and the environment are marketing moves, while those participating in the green projects are also a kind of raw material for the developers' vision of a successful urban development" (Beate Petersen 2012, 99). According this view, artistic practices represent inexpensive labour and are service providers in the instalment of a cultural and 'green' environment in Bjørvika.

In a doctoral thesis from 2014, Halvor Skrede discusses how the relations between culture and capital are articulated and suggests that in the redevelopment of Bjørvika cultural value is primarily entangled with economic sustainability, subjecting hence cultural life to a market logic (Skrede 2014, 103-104). A cultural development strategy relies on an

understanding of the cultural sector as a societal field that has the potential to boost the economy. In this perspective, art can be reduced both by instrumentalist approaches and perceived as dubious through its intertwinement with explicit commercial interests. However, art can also inhabit a public position from which other sets of values, forms of knowledge and interests can circulate.

My concern is that important dimensions of art are overlooked if only discussed in relationship to the shortcomings of the cultural development paradigm. In the following, this study discusses art beyond a perception of it as an ulterior marketing strategy. In the articles, I suggest that art circulates alternative forms of knowledge in public spaces that act upon perception of place, the understanding of site, the uses installed in public space and the forms of relations among strangers engendered by public space. In doing so, art in public space can contribute to a more sustainable production of public spaces.

Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined aspects of the redevelopment context that have influenced my approach to public art. The processual character of art's embeddedness within urban development is central to this study. Pivotal for the study is the ongoing reconfiguration of Bjørvika, where the public spaces represent a site for the ongoing constitution of its public dimension and play a part in how the area transformation is rendered into a common interest for citizens. Regarding the approach taken by the study, another clarification concerns the significance attributed to aesthetic strategies in public space due to the semi-integrated role of art in public space production. The divergent roles ascribed to art in Bjørvika that were outlined in this chapter will be discussed further in chapter 4. In addition, the commissioning of temporary and participatory strategies with a view to enhancing city-life and activating the area, forms yet another important area of investigation that is discussed in this thesis.

Chapter 3

Epistemological Perspective and Method: How to make sense out of urban transformation

In this chapter, I present my methodological approach, how I have approached structuring the article-based thesis, and my epistemological perspective. The study is theoretical and empirical; its approach is therefore relying both on qualitative methods and on an analytical framework that actualises aesthetic philosophical discussions. This chapter will first present my methodological approach and account for how I have adapted the qualitative methods, among them participatory observation, to art research. Next, it will outline my epistemological perspective. The theoretical discussion drawn in this chapter has as its objective to substantiate, contextualise and clarify my approach to the main research question: *How do forms of knowledge manifested in public art practices interact with the production of public spaces in Bjørvika?* The *aesthetic* character of *interaction* with the public space programme, as well as how I have understood the *forms of knowledge manifested in art*, are key to the selection of theoretical perspectives in this chapter.

In the introduction, I positioned art in public spaces as an epistemological critique of the redevelopment of Bjørvika. I aimed at showing that art interacts with how the public character of Bjørvika is conceived, by representing situated, relational, affective, local and sensuous forms of experience, and by these means offer alternative approaches to public space production. In doing so, the forms of knowledge discussed in the thesis are perceived in a wide theoretical perspective. This study endeavours to render visible that the redevelopment of Bjørvika is not only a political, social, economic and physical process, but also a process that must *make sense* and that changes the perception of the area. This entails a process of constituting perceptions and significances, which are in turn crucial to the constitution of new public spaces and the democratisation of the area. The theoretical framework on which these suggestions rest draws on aesthetic philosophy, political philosophy, history of science, art theory, feminist theory, queer theory and fields within urban theory such as human geography and urban sociology. The discussion that I engage with is noteworthy by virtue of the connections it draws between public art practices, aesthetic philosophy, epistemology and urban theory. I hope that it will be perceived as relevant for these fields.

The perspectives presented in the theoretical discussion of this chapter include feminist critique of objective vision and poststructuralist views on the power structures that condition and validate knowledge and practice. Jacques Rancière's theory on the distribution of the sensible is crucial to how I have perceived the political implications of, on the one hand, the perception of Bjørvika, and, on the other hand, art's ability to interact with this perceptual aspect of the redevelopment process itself. Rancière is a French political philosopher, grounded in a Structural Marxist tradition, who in recent years has contributed greatly to the field of aesthetic philosophy by articulating relations between politics and aesthetics. Pivotal to Rancière's thought are his understanding of democracy as a 'dissensual' practice reconfiguring ways of seeing, thinking, being and doing; and his articulation of social emancipation in terms of changes in the distribution of the sensible. Political processes are understood by Rancière as processes of reconfiguring what is perceived in *common*.¹⁹ The political implication of the sensible identified by Rancière enables a discussion of art as political, by virtue of the forms and practices that it displays in public not a political message contained in the artwork. For this study, it has rendered possible a discussion that considers the political significance of perception. In addition, I have relied on how he articulates art as inhabiting double positions, at once subjected to heteronomous structures and while also extraordinary in its reconfiguration of forms of perception. However, this study also develops its distinct approach to perception by inquiring into its epistemological dimension.

The approach: theory meeting practice meeting theory

The study is a result of movements back and forth between theory and practice. In Articles 1 and 2, practice is understood in light of theoretical discourse; in Articles 3 and 4 observations of how artistic practice interact with the development process introduce the theoretical perspectives. This is a somewhat simplified description of the articles, but it serves to illustrate that the study applies an abductive explanatory model. Characteristic for such an approach is a successive development of the empirical material and an ongoing adjustment and refinement of theory in view of *understanding* a relation between theory and practice (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, 4). The abductive model considers thus theory and practice in close relation; theoretical perspectives are adjusted in the encounter with practice. In this thesis, I have in consequence constructed distinct theoretical frameworks for each article. From the beginning, this thesis has been a study of the Bjørvika

¹⁹ Rancière distinguishes between politics and policy, the former is a dissensual practice that reconfigure the sensible while the latter represent established power structures. For more see, among others, Rancière, *Disagreement*, and *Dissensus*.

redevelopment, and the selection of art projects discussed is a consequence of this contextualisation. The ‘geographic’ criteria for selection of cases also influence the approach, since the cases are not chosen by virtue of how they fit or challenge a theory. The ongoing and processual character of some of the case studies has, on the contrary, required an approach that *listens* to the art projects and continuously readjusts the relations that are drawn between theory and practice.²⁰

The article-based thesis as methodological approach: framing discussions

This study is the outcome of a sustained involvement with the ongoing processes of public art production in Bjørvika. Neither the production of the public spaces, nor the public art programme will be completed by the time this thesis is submitted. This has been a significant challenge, because the study is preoccupied with the interaction of art with public space production. However, neither of the two sites for the permanent art projects, Loallmenningen and the Deichmanske Library are yet completed. The study has had to take into account the processual character and the uncertain future of the art projects commissioned for Slow Space. This has particularly been the case with Futurefarmers. In 2013, I did a field study of their month-long temporary intervention where I constructed data on the working methods and intentions of the artists. Still, the structure for a permanent bakehouse was only raised in May 2016. In the meantime, the project secured its position in the development, and after Futurefarmers had restored the soil of Loallmenningen during the summer of 2015, I wrote an article together with Even Smith Wergeland on how the project had gained influence on planning. A delay in the Futurefarmers process would therefore have affected this study. The cancellation of planned projects by Marjolijn Dijkman and Toril Johannessen, as well as of Heather and Ivan Morrison’s project for Slow Space, are also unforeseen events caused by the complex context that art has been participating in, and by extension, this study.

In order to deal with the complex and processual character of the context, I have constructed ‘frames’ that delineate areas of investigation. Mieke Bal discusses interdisciplinary relationships in her research, and suggests that *framing* can be a useful concept to define areas opened and negotiated by analysis and practice (Bal 2002). One of her argument in favour of framing resonates particularly with my approach.

²⁰ Listening is described as a skillset and quality in collaborative art. When engaging with such art practices listening could be perceived as a relevant methodological approach also for art researchers in order to grasp the dynamic of the project. For more on listening as an artistic skill see, Kester, *Conversation Pieces* and Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*.



Bal writes: “Framing is a verb that points to process. Process both requires time and fills time. It is a factor of *sequence* and *duration*. And where there is duration, change occurs: differences emerge over time” (Bal 2002, 136). Durational involvement with a project will necessarily lead to observations of how the project changes, hence the analysis is dealing with case studies that have the character of being processes which produce differences over time. Bal argues that framing is a method that itself has roots in time and therefore acknowledges the unstable ground of knowledge in relation to time (Bal 2002, 136). Thereby, Bal positions the application of distinct frames on complex research subjects as a method that enables one to deal with instability, and regain a practical kind of grounding from the certainty that is lost (Bal 2002, 136).

The article-based format has functioned as a practical grounding for this study by virtue of the articles that I have applied as distinct frames. On a practical level, an article is a format where, in my experience, theory, method, context, presentation of case studies and discussions must be structured in order to fit the limited space of an article. Furthermore, once the article is accepted it is subjected to a different production process than is the The construction of Futurefarmers’ permanent Bakehouse in May 2016. Photo by C.B.M

thesis. Thereby, the article format has both influenced the framing of the discussions and contributed to a structure between theory, case studies and

the larger context, as well as framing smaller studies within the thesis. However, the processual qualities of the article-based thesis is the main reason that I have chosen this format. The articles have functioned as separate time-frames and have been practical tools for dealing with the changes, uncertainties and temporalities of the artworks and the urban development context. For instance, the artist collective Futurefarmers' ongoing engagement in Bjørvika continuously gives rise to new questions. The article-based format has therefore made it possible to frame some aspects of an ongoing process from the point of view of an unstable ground where change is constant.

The article-based thesis can be characterised as a relatively new format in humanistic disciplines. It differs from the monograph and prompts questions with regards to how it should be conceived (Haara & Smith 2011; de Lange 2013). The two formats represent different epistemic cultures that are respectively identifiable both in the structure, the style in which the argument is put forward and the formulation of the research aim (de Lange 2013). On the latter point, the difference lies in that the article format necessitates delimitation and sharpening of the argument while the monograph constructs a more comprehensive and overall perspective (de Lange 2013). The exegesis of the article-based thesis, is expected to provide a theoretical base that goes beyond the theoretical framework of each article, inscribing hence the separate articles in a wider study (Haara & Smith 2011).²¹ In other words, what is at stake is, on one side, the Ph.D.-student's ability to communicate in the delimiting format of an article and, on the other hand, how the *exegesis* assembles the discussions of the separate articles into a whole.

The use of the articles as framing devices does, as the reader of the thesis will notice, affect the relation between the separate parts and the whole of the study. Each article addresses a distinct aspect of the interaction between art and public space production, while discussing it in relation to a theoretical framework constructed for this purpose. Article 1 discusses the relation between the representation of Bjørvika, perception and place and suggests that art by circulating other forms of visibility interacts with the constitution of what is understood as public. Article 2 has Futurefarmers' approach to a site as its focus and suggests that an alternative site narrative is formed by the aesthetic reconfiguration of situated, relational, local and professional forms of site knowledge. In Article 3, the redefinition of the *use* of Loallmenningen is crucial, and the article argues that artists gain agency on planning by virtue of their ability to activate the area with participatory strategies. Article 4's subject is the creation of social spaces; it inquires into

²¹ In addition, the peer review processes and the profile of the journal are external factors that add to the differences in style and focus of the articles.

the peculiar form of sociality constructed in participatory art and suggests that the gap between the actual gathering of attendees and the forms of stranger relationality imagined within the project needs attention. The exegesis attempts to contextualise and draw lines between the distinct discussions, while here I focus attention on the interaction of artistic competence with public space production, and suggest that it can be considered as an epistemological critique of the redevelopment itself.

By opting for separate timeframes that discuss moments in a larger process, the study does not offer a comprehensive discussion of how the role of art has evolved in Bjørvika. Nor does the positioning of the study in a processual relation to the case studies provide the distant overview that an evaluation of the art programme of Bjørvika would necessitate. The latter is not only a question of how the article-based format is applied, but also a result of the fact that the permanent art projects are still in the production phase.²²

	Research questions	Main theoretical perspectives	What the article aims to do
Article 1	<p>How can visual forms of knowledge influence public space production?</p> <p>The article discusses Marianne Heier's <i>A Drop in the Ocean</i> (2005), the 3D model of Bjørvika and illustrations from the public space programme.</p>	<p>Daston (2008)</p> <p>Rancière (2000, 2008, 2004)</p> <p>Böhme (1998)</p> <p>Evans (2006)</p> <p>Mommaas (2002)</p> <p>Aspen (2013)</p> <p>Petrin (2008)</p>	<p>Looks into the construction of the visual representation of Bjørvika as perceptual regime.</p> <p>Draws relations between perception, epistemology, art and perception of public spaces.</p>
Article 2	<p>How do forms of knowledge emerge in the project Flatbread Society and contribute to a new understanding of site?</p> <p>The article is based on my participatory observation of Futurefarmers' temporary intervention with the <i>Flatbread Society</i> (2013).</p>	<p>Kester (2013)</p> <p>Sommer (2014)</p> <p>Kwon (2002),</p> <p>Ranciere (2000, 2008),</p> <p>Beauregard (2005)</p> <p>Diedrich (2013)</p> <p>de Certeau (1988)</p> <p>Bishop (2012)</p> <p>Lacy (1995)</p>	<p>Looks into artistic research as site-specific approach. Discusses situated, relational, and historic forms of site knowledge generated in the artistic practice as forming a new understanding of site/site narrative.</p>

²² In particular, I have considered it as too early to conclude on the crucial question of the reception of the public art programme to a wider audience because it is likely that the art projects will have different audiences once the public spaces such as the Deichmanske Library, are ready to accommodate them.

Article 3	<p>Are certain projects chosen because they are more agreeable and less critical than others?</p> <p>Do participatory art practices bring about new ways to be public or are they proposing exactly what the new planning paradigm craves?</p> <p>How inclusive is the green discourse when implemented in practice?</p> <p>The article discusses Futurefarmers' <i>Flatbread Society</i> (2012-), Katie Paterson' <i>Future Library</i> (2014-2124), Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman's <i>Carstreetroad</i> (not realised) and Lars Ramberg's project for Loallmenningen (not realised).</p>	<p>Ranciere (2008) Bishop (2012) Rogoff (2006), Aspen and Pløgger (2015), Bergsli (2015),</p>	<p>Looks into the commissioning of participatory art as an urban strategy to activate Bjørvika.</p> <p>Discusses the intervention of Futurefarmers in the planning of Loallmenningen and the new use introduced in public space.</p>
Article 4	<p>What publics are formed through the intervention of participatory art in the city?</p> <p>The article discusses Katie Paterson' <i>Future Library</i> (2014-2124), <i>Atelier Populaire Oslo /Palerstinerleir</i> (2012) and Pfelder's <i>The Isle</i> (2013)</p>	<p>Bishop (2012) Warner (2005) Mitchell (1992), Thrift (2004), Rancière (2000, 2004, 2008)</p>	<p>Discusses participatory art events as an urban strategy targeting the creation of social spaces.</p> <p>Looks into the aesthetic and public dimension of the sociality of participatory art by differentiating the social interaction between attendees and the forms of stranger relationality imagined in the project's public address.</p>

Multiple methods

This thesis' has employed multiple methods to gain an in-depth understanding of public art's interaction with public space production. In qualitative research the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, is not a strategy of validation. Quite to the contrary, it is an alternative to validation. Instead of constructing a narrative of scientific objectivity, triangulation is a combination of multiple methods with the aim of adding breadth and complexity to the study (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, 5). The methods used in this study are *semi-structured interviews with key informants, participatory observation, observations of events, conversations, analysis of recordings, analysis of images and documents analysis*. The use of interviews requires some clarification concerning how the method has been applied. Furthermore, the method of participatory observation requires further reflection because it provokes, as we will see, fundamental questions as to the nature and status of art.

The key informants have been people holding a professional position in relation to the art programme of Bjørvika, and who have had their own views and agendas in relation to art's role in public space production. The interviews were semi-structured and could slip into a more conversational form, enabling the informants to share their experiences and opinions in more open and fluid ways. The form alternated between factual interviews for the purpose of collecting information (Kvale and Brinkmann 2010, 162) and narrative interviews revolving around the informants' experiences (Kvale and Brinkmann 2010, 165). Interviews were mainly used to gather background information, to hear accounts from parts of the processes around the public space programme that I have not observed myself and to learn more about the artists' approach. In this context, it is necessary, however, to be aware of political and ideological positions of both the researcher and the informant, and the asymmetrical power relation of a research interview (Kvale and Brinkmann 2010, 52).

The stakes are high in the development of Bjørvika, and although the independent art projects are to a certain degree self-organised, their completion relies on collaboration with Bjørvika Development. The public art programme is part of the image of the Bjørvika redevelopment and a positive mentioning of the art projects have been prioritized in communication strategies.²³ The interviews revealed inconsistencies that may be the products of strategic constructions of narratives. However, since these

²³ In the framework of Slow Space texts have been commissioned that document the participatory events as well as ensuring the public circulation of the work in line with the curatorial framework and artistic intentionality. Two booklets have been published on Futurefarmers, see McDowell, "The Sun Gives Without Receiving," and Tampere "People, Seeds, Belonging Together," and one text on Future Library, see Rød, "A New Spring." The texts commissioned from Beate Petersen and Ketil Nergaard based on their participation in the seminar Slow Space were never published. However, Beate Petersen's participation occasioned a critical review of the curatorial strategy. See, Petersen "From Critical Discourse to Utopia."

inconsistencies concern the social dynamic of the collaborations I am not able in this study to discuss them specifically, without revealing sensitive information. Participatory observations, observations, un-recorded conversations and document analysis have been important alternative sources of information.

Participatory observation

Participatory observation, as in this study, is often combined with other qualitative methods such as interviews and document analysis. Data constructed through participatory observation can form the basis for interviews and provide an alternative understanding to an informant's self-understanding of a phenomenon (Fangen 2004). With the exception of Article 1, all the articles discuss participatory art. Participatory art is a generic term encompassing a range of different artistic practices and intentions that have in common that attendees are contributing to the actual production of the art project through their participation. Hence, the term is connected to that of post-studio art (Doherty 2004), and must be distinguished from approaches that argue that beholders participate in the production of art merely through the re-composition of it in a subjective aesthetic experience when contemplating it (Eco 1989). As stressed by Claire Bishop, participatory art has roots in the historic avant-garde, however it is currently embraced as a cultural strategy for the sake of enhancing creativity and social inclusion (Bishop 2012). Participatory art encompasses a variegated range of artistic practices including social events, collaborative art, community-based art, activist art and antagonistic art practices that confront audience members independently of their wish to participate (Finkelpearl 2014). A common feature, however, is that participatory art blurs the distinction between audience and artwork, the production of the art and its reception.²⁴ This transgression has implications also for the relationship between the art researcher and her research object.

Participatory art as a genre that challenges critics and researchers methodologically because it can be happening in geographically remote locations while relying on qualities such as durational involvement, ephemerality, social dynamic, raised consciousness and other non-visual outcomes that are not easily documented (Bishop 2012, Kester 2013). Art historian Claire Bishop, points out that participatory art depends on a first-

²⁴ The attempt to transgress the distinction between beholder and art is an aspect of participatory art that has its roots in the historic avant-garde. Peter Bürger formulates the intention of returning art to life as characteristic of the historical avant-garde. The autonomy of art in the bourgeois art institution made it possible to identify the experience of art as a separate domain. Bürger argues that the avant-garde used the bourgeois aesthetic register in order to expose the inefficiency of autonomous art and construct a new life praxis through artistic means. See, Bürger, *Om avantgarden*. Contemporary participatory art tackles similar issues by also being engaged in creating alternative ways of living, for more see Christensen-Scheel, *Mobile Homes*.

hand experience, preferably over a long time, although few observers are in position to take such an overview (Bishop 2012, 6). Hence, researchers often rely on accounts from artists and curators. In light of this, participatory observation offers a methodological approach grounded in durational involvement, and provides first-hand experience of an event (Fangen 2004, 217, Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2010, 180). Moreover, participatory observation is a methodological approach that enables the documentation of many of the specificities of participatory art, such as the blurring of ordinary situations and art, the importance of social interaction for the constitution of the artwork and the collective character of the aesthetic experience.

Participatory observation is a well-established method in ethnography, anthropology and sociology, nevertheless, the questions my own fieldwork left me with are to what extent this method is applicable to art research and how it can be done fruitfully. In order to gain a better understanding of this I have read art theorists from the point of view of method, an often-under-communicated aspect of art research.²⁵

The risk of becoming emotionally involved with one's subject is one of the dangers, or charms, of participatory observation (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2010, 185). Interestingly, this resonates with how Bishop's retells her methodological journey into participatory art, originally motivated by frustration of the lack of critical distance characterising the narratives of projects.

I have come to realise that in staging multiple visits to a given project, this fate increasingly also befalls the critic. The more one becomes involved, the harder it is to be objective – especially when a central component of a project concerns the formation of personal relationships, which inevitably proceed to impact on one's research. (Bishop 2012, 6)

Critical distance, otherwise key to the approach of art critics, is recalibrated by methodological approaches grounded in durational involvement. Participants will influence the project through their interaction and presence, and for some this can lead to a mild censure of one's own critical feelings because one does not want to ruin the atmosphere. This applies as well for the researcher who participates in an art project, the social relations she forms with people, her attitude and interaction with the situation becomes part of

²⁵ More specifically I have been preoccupied by how art theorists let their own subjective position in relation to the work transpire and expose the degree of their own participation with the work. Where they present? Is the analysis based on observation? Conversations? Readings? Among the work I have revisited from this point of view is Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, Kwon, *One Place after the Other*, and Bishop, *Artificial Hells*.

the artwork. In addition, her experiences can be the subject of re-narrations of the project that give insights to secondary audiences.²⁶

The researcher can act as participant observer and/or a documentarist of a project. Yet, her role will be understood differently, depending on which art theoretical traditions that she operates within. Bishop, although admitting a degree of imbrication, stands in a tradition that advocates critical distance. Lucy Lippard champions an opposite position: “The critic’s role is to spread the word, propagate ideas, conceptualize, and network publicly with artists. We are mediums” (Lippard in Lacy 1995, 42). Here, the critic is understood as someone who expands the artwork’s potential meaning, contextualises and communicates with different audiences. The method of participatory observation opens positions from which the researcher can reduce distance, collaborate and produce knowledge in the moment with the participants (Nelund 2013). Critiques embedded through legwork and immersion are labelled by Suzanne Lacy a *close reading critique*, which implies scrutinizing the material, with the ‘meaning’ emerging at various stages of a processual artwork on the artwork’s premises (Lacy 2008). The aim is to expand, amplify and add complexity to discourses on the artwork; moreover, the method is not anchored in visual experience and the subjectivity of the researcher will act as an aesthetic structuring device (Lacy 2008, 22). Article 2 is written on the basis of participatory observations of Flatbread Society and its approach corresponds to a close reading critique. In line with the approach of close reading critique I chose to contextualise the project, amplify discourse by expanding the potential meaning of the work and position myself as a participant observer in the text allowing hence my subjective experience to transpire.

The analysis in Articles 3 and 4 also rely on observations of events and participatory observations, though critical distance structure the argument and the research position is less embedded. Here, the articles do not aim at expanding potential meanings, rather they attempt to shed light on questions concerning the interaction between art and public space production which transgress a singular project and artistic method. Critical distance is constructed, and the experiences from participatory observations are reframed

²⁶ The use of the method of participatory observation affects the researcher’s position and prompts questions about what it entails to participate *in art*. Traditionally, art research adopts a distance between the production of the work and its reception, the intentionality behind the work and the interpretation of the researcher. Through participatory observation, however, the researcher can be said to navigate multiple positions on this chart and influence the participatory event through her particular approach. The subjectivity of the researcher is not only the site of the interpretation of the work, but something that the researcher must negotiate in relation to the social dimension of the art format. Moreover, the presence of the researcher matters for the social situation and to inhabit a critical and distant position can be perceived as undoing the work of art rather than participating in its construction. The researcher can be perceived as embodying a ‘permanent critical eye’ as Jeanne Heeswijk puts it in O’Neill and Doherty, *Locating the Producers*, 345. Therefore, it can be argued that the participatory observation of participatory art both necessitates self-reflexivity with regards to the researcher’s subjectivity, and challenges a critical position because it will affect the degree of participation of the researcher.

in discussions that compare several projects in light of a set of questions. Still, the discussion of *Future Library*, *Flatbread Society* and *The Isle* are informed by participatory observations.

The first-hand experience is also a source of subjective feelings of a different kind. Such individual feelings are important parts of an aesthetic encounter with an artwork. In ‘emotionalism,’ a direction within qualitative research, fieldwork is discussed in terms of non-rational and pre-analytical sensations and emotions (Gubrium & Holstein 1997). An emotional take on fieldwork suggests that “the ongoing subjective negotiation of the fieldworker in the field and the incomplete nature of many field experiences are themselves positive and fruitful aspects of the fieldwork process” (Davies & Spencer 2010, 262), and that emotions have epistemological worth (Davies & Spencer 2010, 2).

Emotionalism has not influenced my approach in the field, yet the ‘incomplete nature of many field experiences’ have affected my analysis and the directions the study has taken. Particularly feelings of uneasiness, of being provoked or not in concord with the situation can offer a critical entrance to an aspect of the artwork that needs critical reflection. In Article 3, the distinction between audience participation in *Flatbread Society* and artists participating in planning was partly due to uneasiness that I experienced with the participatory format during fieldwork. Article 4 is in part motivated by feeling a bit provoked by the rhetoric around *Future Library* that motivated me to look into different layers in the work.

Research position: the interpretative subject

In humanistic research, the epistemological perspective and theories chosen to understand the object of analysis can be understood as the methodological approach of the study. The cases necessitate an approach that deals consciously with different relations emerging between art and public space production. The research question of the study regarding how forms of knowledge manifested in public art practices interact with the production of public spaces in Bjørvika, could have been answered in various ways. My particular approach has revolved around five fundamental issues that in the following are presented as the epistemological perspective of the study: ‘*From sense matter to common sense*’, ‘*changes in perception*’, ‘*situated critique of objectivity*’, ‘*movements from knowledge to practice*’ and ‘*art’s ability to inhabit double positions*.’

Although the interaction of art with the societal context that it enters is important in the study, the aesthetic dimension of the artwork is at the centre of attention for the study and I have endeavoured to formulate how it interacts aesthetically. I have opted for a theoretical discussion on art that aims at understanding the sense-making processes that art is involved in.

Herein, the approach is developed in view of discussing the significances produced in art. In a certain way, I have participated in identifying different significances through an interpretative engagement with the artworks. Hence, my own subjective approach to the projects has been hermeneutical, rather than positioning myself as objective. Through durational involvement with the projects, the study has evolved by revisiting earlier experiences in light of new understandings. However, this positions the researcher as the subjectivity that gains new understandings on the basis of pre-understandings. Therefore, the relevance of the study relies partly on a hermeneutic premise that a subjective experience can have intersubjective relevance.

This approach has shortcomings, if perceived in light of public art research that advocates the importance of taking the views and experiences of a broad public into account when assessing significances to art in public space (Woods 2012; Hall & Smith 2005; Hall 2003; Zebracki 2015). This is a relevant criticism posed to the professional art field because it can indeed be a problem if public art relies on expert knowledge in order to be received as meaningful. Still, my durational engagement with art as a process in an urban development project has involved looking into relations that are not always *in* public space and therefore unavailable in an un-mediated direct encounter with the art projects. The public reception of artworks has not been the focus of the study. Nonetheless, the multiple field trips and informal conversations have provided multiple perspectives that has informed my own understanding.

Epistemological perspective: from sense-matter to common-sense

As mentioned, the aim of this study to articulate the relationships between the forms of knowledge circulated in art projects and the ongoing transformation of site, is influenced by the philosophy of Jacques Rancière and more specifically his theory on the *distribution of the sensible*. The distribution of the sensible is a general theme in his writings and articulated as a political philosophical theory in *La Méésentente* (1995). In *Le partage du sensible* Rancière discusses it in light of aesthetics and his attention is drawn to how art reconfigures experience and gives rise to new modes of sensing (Rancière 2000). The distribution of the sensible is outlined by Rancière as the division of the sensible in time and space, in the visible and the invisible, and in language and noise.

It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and stakes of politics as a form of experience. (Rancière 2007, 13)

According to Rancière, the objective of politics is the distribution of the sensible because politics reconfigures time and space, labour and leisure, the private and the common. Yet, the claim that he advances is that a particular aesthetic is at the base of politics because sensations are an a priori to all forms of experience and our ways of doing.²⁷ What is crucial is what Rancière describes as moves from positions of invisibility to positions of visibility in which something is perceived as *common* and gains a public dimension. The distribution of the sensible is not only reconfiguring access to a sensuous fabric, but also affecting the ability of sense-matter to signify. Rancière's preoccupation is the unequal ability of *sense-matter* to *make sense* and produce publicly acknowledged significations. Discussing a slave riot in ancient Rome, he refers to the roman citizens perception of the slaves voices as noise, depriving them hence of not only freedom, but also the ability to produce significations held as common, in other words able to be held as parts of the common discourse (Rancière 1999, 23).

Therefore, the structuring of what is held as common and the parts that are exclusive is not only a question of distributing sense-matter, but more importantly the distribution of the sensible structures *common-sense* (Rancière 2000, 12).

From a Rancierian perspective, art is considered as a practice that can open new forms of visibility and therefore have a political dimension by virtue of distributing new forms of experience, as well as new ways of doing. Contemporary urban development in itself is not a topic in Rancière's writing, the polis (city), however, is significant for his thought, as a site where commons are structured and constituted.²⁸

²⁷ Essential to Rancière's approach to aesthetics is that it is not a question of representation, but of sensory experience. To clarify this point, he proposes to understand the distribution of the sensible as a system of *a prioris* in the Kantian sense, suggesting that the sensory experience therefore is fundamental to all forms of existence. However, to the contrary of Kant's categories of *a prioris*, Rancière understands time and space as unequally distributed and therefore political because they both shape our experience and can be locus of societal change. See Rancière, *Le partage du sensible*, 13.

²⁸ The issue of space is central in the distribution of the sensible because it installs divisions between what is in and out, held in common or not. Rancière argues that the opening of a democratic space in Greece represents the invention of a new topography. Plato's *Republic* is revisited as a tight spatial organisation of the people (demos). Rancière stresses that when speaking of spaces of democracy, both symbolic and material spaces matter. See, Rancière, "The thinking of Dissensus," 6. The importance of both symbolic and material space in Rancière's theory represents an interesting perspective to discuss the politics of space, for more on how Rancière's theory can be applied in discussions on urban equality and social emancipation see, Iveson, "Cities within the City," and Davidson and Iveson "Recovering the politics of the city."



Ane Hjort Guttu, *The rich ought to become even richer* (not realised). Copyright Ane Hjort Guttu

The dissensual efficiency of art

In Bjørvika, public art provides an interesting entrance for discussing the changes in perception of, use and sense attributed to the seaside, because art puts these sense-making processes on public display. I perceive the redevelopment of Bjørvika as a reconfiguring of the sensible that transforms what is private and common, labour and leisure, one that relies on the transformations' capacity to make sense and on art as participating in sense-making processes by staging them *in public*. A project by artist Ane Hjort Guttu, which was never realised, forms a good example to discuss this.

As part of her exhibition in Kunsthall Oslo within the framework of *I don't see the ocean from where I live –The Oslo project*, she proposed together with the curators of Kunsthall Oslo a project for the Central Station/[Jernbanetorget]. Guttu's proposal was a billboard-sized photo showing an exclusive view onto the fjord with a text reading: "The rich ought to become even richer."²⁹ The project draws attention to how light, in a city that is made denser, is increasingly becoming a limited resource, one no longer distributed democratically in the newly built apartments. Guttu's point is that the construction of the new residential areas in the Fjord City represents a practice where natural sun light and exclusive views onto the fjord are used to maximise profit and are not seen as democratic resource (Guttu 2013). By addressing how the redevelopment redistributes access to sense-matter such as views onto the fjord and natural sunlight, the artist

²⁹ In Norwegian: *De rike bør bli enda rikere*.

invokes the political significance of the sensible. Yet, the project was never realised and a possible explanation is that not only the physical transformations are at stake, but that the significances attributed them also matter. The latter comes into view in Guttu's discussion of the decommissioning of the project (Guttu 2013).

At the time, Kunsthall Oslo curated the public art programme of Rom Eiendom Inc., a stakeholder of Bjørvika Development that manages the property portfolio of the national railway company, including the Central Station of Oslo. Guttu asserts that the reason for the decommission given to her was that Rom Eiendom did not desire to be associated with the content of the project. In a discussion of the project, Guttu stresses the influence of commercial interests in the managing of public spaces and the commissioning of art (Guttu 2013).

In Bjørvika, artists interact with ongoing processes that also form perceptions and significances, and in this case, Ane Hjort Guttu's project was cancelled and the banner never achieved the originally envisioned position in one of Oslo's most potent public spaces. Although alternative forms of experience circulate in art, they do not necessary reach positions of visibility or circulate to a wider audience. Public art interacts with ongoing sense-making processes that are not straightforward processes, particularly when different significances and interests compete in public. The project proposal "The rich ought to become even richer" was published as part of Ane Hjort Guttu's artistic research, and found hence a smaller public than what was originally intended.

The area transformation of Bjørvika relies on its capacity to make-sense, and, as I suggested in the introduction, the perspective of Rancière allows for a discussion of the redevelopment not only as a physical, economic, social and political process, but also as process that changes the perceptions and significances of the area. In Article 1, I suggest that the visual constructions of the area prior to its physical construction form a *perceptual regime*. For Rancière, a perceptual regime formulates the established common-sense that structures ways of seeing, thinking and doing.³⁰ In chapter 5, I revisit the notion when discussing the application of visual strategies in Bjørvika and Sharon Zukin's critique of the visual editing of public culture.

The notion of perceptual regime must be considered in relation to a very important concept in Rancière's writings, namely *dissensus*. Dissensus arises from conflicting sense. Both Heier's work discussed in Article 1 and Guttu's project confront the transformation of the area by publicly displaying

³⁰ 'Perceptual regime' is not a defined concept in Rancière's writing in the same way as 'dissensus;' it is one among various notion that he applies to describe consensual structures.

different significances than the ones circulated in the place marketing of the area. In view of the complete make-over of the seaside, the circulation of forms of dissensus that confront and expand the perception of the area have a significant democratic role. A crucial point in Rancière's discussion of art is that it has the ability to confront perceptual regimes when publicly displaying dissensus.

[Dissensus] means that every situation can be cracked open from the inside, reconfigured in a different regime of perception and signification. To reconfigure the landscape of what can be thought is alter the field of the possible and the distribution of capacities and incapacities. Dissensus brings back into play both the obviousness of what can be perceived, though and done, and the distribution of those who are capable of perceiving, thinking and altering the coordinates of the shared world. (Rancière 2009, 49)

Dissensus is a conflict between sense and sense, which renders visible opposing perceptions and significations and confronts a common perception of the world (Rancière 2010, 139). Rancière writes:

I have tried to conceive heterogenesis through a type of thinking and activity that produces shocks between worlds, but shocks between worlds of the same world: re-distributions, re-compositions, and re-configurations of elements. (2010, 212)

Herein, he specifies that his own use of the notion of dissensus denotes difference and heterogeneity within the same world and hence that he opposes understandings of dissensus as a power of ontological difference.³¹ The political efficacy of dissensus acts in art by introducing new forms of visibility and reconfiguring experience. In chapter 5, I will pursue a discussion on art's ability to display forms of dissensus publicly and to occasion opportunities for dissensual urban learning.

Although Rancière's writings have been highly influential on this study, the individual analysis proposed in the articles do not necessarily rely strongly on his theory. Rancière's theory enables a positioning of art as dissensual practice, a discussion of the symbolic and physical transformation of

³¹On the one hand, Rancière distinguishes his approach from Jean François Lyotard's concept of the sublime as an absolute power that disrupts other forms of experience, on the other, he opposes Hannah Arendt's distinction between political life and bare life. Rancière's argument is that both pure aesthetics and pure politics collapse in the rhetoric of the infinite wrong and that discourses on the disruptive power of absolute otherness stands in the way of formulating specificity in relations of equality and inequality. For more see among others, Rancière, "The Thinking of Dissensus," *Dissensus*, and "Lyotard et l'esthétique du sublime."

Bjørvika as the constitution of a perceptual regime and an understanding of art as reconfiguring forms of perception.

Yet, when dealing with the particularities of my empirical material, his theory has actualised many new questions. Rancière's philosophical claim that there are correlations between the distribution of the sensible and ways of doing, leaves open the question of how the one acts upon the other in the peculiar context that I investigate. The epistemological perspective that has formed the approach of this study relies therefore also on other theories. An underlying inquiry that has influenced my approach to the case studies is how perception is altered and how new significances are brought into a seemingly fixed context. I have structured the remaining chapter in four parts that account for my approach to how forms of knowledge generated in art interact aesthetically with public space production. They are not extensive expositions on the subjects addressed, but merely account for the particular approach taken in this study. The four parts concern *changes in perception*, *situated critique of objectivity*, *movements from knowledge to practice* and *art's ability to inhabit double positions*

Perception in Rancière's writings

Rancière positions sense at the basis of both politics and art and argues that changes in perception are intrinsic to both societal changes and innovation in art. In *Le spectateur émancipé*, new modes of perception are articulated as being emancipatory and Rancière states “[s]ocial emancipation was simultaneously an aesthetic emancipation, a break with the ways of feeling, seeing and saying” (2009, 35). The working class's access to new sensuous forms of experience is essential to how he understands social emancipation as reconfiguring the sensible (Rancière 2008, 25; 41).³²

Art is important in this perspective because its ability to reconfigure sense freely engenders new sensible forms. This free ability in art is understood by Rancière as its aesthetic autonomy:

For aesthetic autonomy is not that autonomy of artistic ‘making’ celebrated by modernism. It is the autonomy of a form of sensory experience. And it is that experience which appears as the germ of a new humanity, of a new form of individual and collective life. (Rancière 2011, 32)

Changes in perception bear promise of new understandings and new ways of doing. Art is political by virtue of its ability to bring forward

³² In *La Nuit des prolétaires* Rancière conducts historical research of the leisure time of the working class and argues that transgressing the partition of time is key to social emancipation. By conquering the night, the workers are argued to reconfigure their individual lives and break away from social subjection by accessing new sensory experiences.

heterogeneous experiences. Rancière outlines how art produces displacements of perception (Rancière 2004, 37) and modes of being sensible (*manières d'être sensible*) (Rancière 2004, 21). Art interrupts the ordinary coordinates of perception (Rancière 2004, 39), and fiction acts upon our perception of sensuous events (Rancière 2008, 72). This however, provokes questions regarding how art alters perception and occasions new ways of doing. I have perceived it as productive to discuss changes in perception in terms of actualisation of new forms of knowledge and investigated the *epistemological and relational dimension of perception*.

A viable angle to discuss how Rancière articulates an epistemological dimension of perception is found in the notion of *éducation sensible nouvelle* (a new education of the senses) that he holds as essential to the aesthetic regime of art.³³ An example he discusses is a passage in *Vie de Henri Brulard*, where the writer Stendahl describes how sensuous experiences from childhood have marked him. In the blurring that occurs between the forms of sensuous experience of everyday life and the sensuous forms of art, Rancière suggests that a new sensorium is formed (2004, 13-14). The example of Stendahl's writings outlines changes in the modes of sensing as a form of education, and Rancière pursues this perspective in his discussions of Schiller's notion of aesthetic education.³⁴

While art can be the source of forceful, heterogeneous experiences, aesthetic education, Rancière argues, displaces the subjective character of the sensation into a collectively shared experience. « Aesthetic education is therefore the process that transforms the solitude of free appearance into lived reality and changes aesthetic idleness into the action of a living community » (Rancière 2011, 35-36). Here, the movement from the solitary aesthetic experience to collective action is positioned as an effect of an education of the senses. Rancière suggests that the utopia of an aesthetic revolution installs new collective ways of seeing and represents in fact the constitution of a *consensual community* or a sensing collective (Rancière 2004, 54). However, Rancière does not embrace this shifting, because in the collective sharing of a mode of sensing, the effectivity of dissensus, which is at the core of art's political effectivity, is lost.

In *Le spectateur émancipé* that also thematically investigates education in relation to the arts, emancipation is discussed in terms of pedagogy. Yet,

³³ Rancière operates with a classification of art in three regimes: the ethical regime where art is not identified as such, but valued inasmuch as it is recognised by the community by virtue of its truth and origin. The representative regime, which recognises art as a separate domain and evaluates it according to specific artistic criteria including skilful imitation. And, the aesthetic regime which distinguishes art as a peculiar form of being sensible that is heterogeneous to ordinary forms of perception, and not as the product of a particular way of doing. For more see *Le partage du sensible*.

³⁴ It has been outside of the scope of this thesis to discuss *aesthetic education* further, although recent discussion of the notion offers interesting perspective on the contemporary role of aesthetic as a potent field of knowledge. For more see among others, Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Sommer, *The Work of Art in the World*, and Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization*.

the education or training of perception itself is not discussed beyond the suggestion that changes occur in perception. Rancière's concern is not the epistemological dimensions of perception. This comes to expression in his discussions of the pedagogical practices of the "ignorant master" Jacotot. Here, he puts aside perception as a locus of change and approaches this emancipatory and educational project in terms of translation, framing it thus as a discursive and conceptual practice (Rancière 2008, 16). Rancière's approach to the sensual as a form of experience relies on a Kantian distinction between the sensuous and the intelligible, the sense-matter and the concept, that renders possible the dissensual practices of art as autonomous moves between sense-matter and sense-making. The position adopted by Rancière belongs to a tradition in aesthetic philosophy formed by Kant and Hegel that subordinates the analysis of the sensuous knowledge in the aesthetical experience to that of the aesthetic judgement.³⁵

The epistemology of perception in Daston writings

There are many possible approaches to the epistemological dimension of sensuous experiences.³⁶ Lorraine Daston's studies represent a particularly interesting approach because they mark an intersection between sensing and knowing, science and perception. Her field of study is the history of science, and her discussions on scientific observation is at once a critique of 'objectivity' as a scientific position and an investigation into the role of perception in science (Daston 2008, Daston & Galison 2007, Daston & Lundbreck 2011). Daston and her collaborators investigate scientific observation as a collective, historic and cultural practice (Daston & Lundbreck 2011). Daston shows that perception acts upon epistemology, however she goes one step further by stating that the way that perception outlines, sorts, and shapes the universe has ontological implications because it identifies scientific objects (Daston 2008, 98). The approach to perception as trained by habit, and as a phenomenon that organises the universe in parts and whole, allows us to consider the epistemology of perception beyond art

³⁵ Gernot Böhme argues that this is a significant reduction of the potential field of investigation for the discipline of aesthetics as it was originally defined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in *Aesthetica* in 1750 (Böhme 2008) For more, see, Böhme, "The Atmosphere of a City," and "Innføring," 528. For further reading on how Baumgarten dissolves the paradoxes concerning the relationship between sensation and thinking, experience and understanding, see among others, Kjørup, *Another Way of Knowing*.

³⁶ Anthropology is a related field of interest where ongoing development in methodological approaches target sensory experiences as significant sources of knowledge. The "sensorial-turn" in anthropology and ethnographic research is characterised by methodological awareness, innovation concerning the researcher perceptual skills and sensuous engagement with the environment, for more see, Davis Howes, *Sensual Relations*, Sara Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, and Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*. The ethnographic-turn in contemporary art, coined by Hal Foster in "The Artist as Ethnographer," has also occasioned interest in artistic methods as a component in ethnographic research that can overcome the restriction of text-based models, for more see, Ingold, *Making*, Rutten *et. al.*, "Revisiting the ethnographic turn in contemporary art", Schneider, "Contested grounds," and Marcus, "Contemporary Fieldwork Aesthetics in Art and Anthropology."

and a narrow understanding of aesthetics. Moreover, it marks relational dimension of perceptions.

This study has nevertheless considered how artists by producing forms of perception that are distinct from everyday perception, can offer contrasts and critique of perceptual habits that otherwise become invisible due to their ubiquitous presence. Daston's approach to perception as both skilled and relational has been fruitful for the inquiries in this thesis because it shows that perception is an integral part of how we know the world and act in it. The Daston's theory is applied in the discussion of Marianne Heier's work in Article 1, but it is also influential for the approach of this study in general and the importance that it attributes representations as devices to create consensual ways of seeing and doing.

In "On Scientific Observation," Daston discusses how clouds became scientific objects. In the 19th century, clouds represented a formidable challenge to collective perception (Daston 2008, 105). The formation of a science of clouds renders visible two issues that are of importance for Daston, one is that the transformation of clouds, an everyday object, into a scientific object requires a skilling of perception. And, giving clouds a scientific form is a collective enterprise and requires the constitution of *collectives of seeing*. Clouds are interesting to Daston because they are simultaneously a mutable phenomenon that takes on an infinite variety of forms, and a global phenomenon, yet they are denoted locally in different vernacular terms. Scientific observation requires that one agrees to what one sees and the objective is to "see things in unison" (Daston 2008, 104). The constitution of clouds as a scientific object relied on a collective *skilling of perception*.³⁷ However, the constitution of the seeing collective was dependent on the manufacturing of images (Daston 2008, 110). It is the picture when seen at a glance, that according to Daston, "guarantees the sturdy existence of a world" seen in unison (2008, 110).³⁸

There are similarities in Rancière and Daston's understanding of perception, because both discuss how particular ways of seeing influence what we hold as common. Their shared interest in the relational aspect of perception, give rise to similar notions; Daston's seeing collectives and Rancière's *communauté consensuelle* (consensual community). One might

³⁷ Skill was a central notion in article 1, and an entry point for this study to consider artistic competence as applied knowledge. In this perspective, the relational dimension of skill as it is conceived by Richard Sennett has been influential, see *The Craftsman*. I have also consulted historical studies on the impact of visual culture on perception, see, among others, Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, Ottermann, *History of a Mass Medium*, trans. Schneider, and Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in fifteenth Century Italy*. Another line of inquiry has been the skillsets outline as essential in collaborative art practices, see Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, 1995, 174-177, and Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 2013.

³⁸ By denoting relational aspect, the notion of skilled perception differs from a phenomenological approach as represented in Merleau-Ponty's notion of a *style de perception* (style of perception), that grounds production of meaning in a subjective embodied experience, see Merleau-Ponty, "Le langage indirect des et les voix du silences" 1967, and Myrvold, Verden /mellom-verden, 2010.

say that while Rancière's interest lies with the efficiency of dissensus, in other words the ability of art to produce heterogeneous forms of sensual experience, Daston studies the efficiency of collective and *consensual* perception on epistemology and ultimately ontology. In Article 1, the efficiency of a critical artwork by Marianne Heier is discussed as a dissensual practice. However, the subsequent articles discuss art projects that are part of the permanent art programme and their influence on the production of public spaces seem quite to the contrary to rely on their ability to represent collective visions and change the collective perceptions (and knowledge) of site in a consensual approach.

Situated criticism of objective vision

Ultimately, it is the concept of scientific objectivity that is under attack in Daston's study. By showing that scientific observation is a trained, embedded practice, Daston deconstructs the fiction of objective knowledge as something that "bears no trace of the knower – knowledge unmarked by prejudice, skill, fantasy or judgement, wishing or striving" (Daston and Galison 2007, 17). Characteristic for objective visions is that they appear as if produced from an infinite viewpoint, detached from subjective, embodied experience (Daston 2007; Haraway 1988). The god-like infinite point of view of the objective vision presupposes a separation between knowing and sensing, episteme and perception. The association of vision, objectivity and power, can be said to have given visual forms of knowledge a bad reputation. While objective knowledge is presented without traces of the knower, situated knowledge, on the contrary, is embedded in skills, subjective experiences, political agendas etc. In the urban development of Bjørvika, the dichotomy of situated and objective knowledge can be a useful perspective to discuss art as forms of knowledge.

In an urban development context art represents a marginal form of knowledge. This can in part be explained with art representing situated and subjective perspectives within urban developments that are traditionally grounded in discourses that position themselves as objective and rational by relying on quantifiable methods. The situated perspectives represented in art can therefore appear extrinsic to the logic of the development. It is important, however, to remember that the urban redevelopment of Bjørvika relies on visual strategies such as image-building, visioning, the planning of architecture as destination-image, and the accommodation of sight-seeing as leisure activity. In relation to the application of these visual strategies, artistic competence and knowledge appear more familiar and relevant. In chapter 5, I suggest that the visual strategies applied in Bjørvika can be considered as a particular way to learn and know the city. In the articles, I suggest that situated, relational, affective, local and empirical experiences unfold in the art

practices and I consider these as forms of knowledge that form a contrasting approach to the abovementioned visual strategies.

The influential role of vision in urban planning is interrogated by Michel de Certeau in *L'invention du quotidien*, where he draws out a very effective dichotomy between viewers and walkers. Essential to de Certeau's study is the optic ordering of the city and the power structures that intervene in our everyday, not unlike Michel Foucault's analysis of panoptic power.³⁹ However, he opposes an understanding of consumers and people in general as passively subjected to pre-conceptualised modes of functioning. He argues instead that our uses of objects and practices in the city, such as walking, hold creative and subversive qualities.

De Certeau describes a view of Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Centre. This sight of the city from above, de Certeau argues, represents a viewing practice that places the world at a distance and enables us to possess it in one gaze. It is the distance, he suggests, that translates the opaque mobility and matter of the city into a concept (1990, 142). However, de Certeau questions the forms of knowledge that we acquire when inhabiting an elevated viewpoint because the view does not permit knowing the city as matter. What we possess is only its concept. Elevated viewpoints, are actually operating as producers of fiction because "the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more" (de Certeau 1988, 92).⁴⁰ In other words, de Certeau assigns to elevated visions a rather dubious epistemological position, keeping the messy urban reality at a distance. He does acknowledge that the city-as-concept enables a rational urbanistic approach to the city; however, he argues that it is easily appropriated and transformed by discourse and ultimately disjoined from urban life (1990, 144).

Contrary to viewing, walking, de Certeau suggests, represents a situated practice and a way of being in the world and making sense of it (de Certeau 1990, 148). The walker realizes the potentiality of the city and actualizes forms of knowledge that the city-as concept cannot encompass. When de Certeau opposes the vision of the city with walking in it, he contrasts two forms of knowledge; on the one hand, *visual knowledge*, which he argues ultimately to be based on a fiction, and on the other hand, a *situated form of knowledge*. However, de Certeau compares walking with enunciations, and hence applies a linguistic form to the practice of walking. A consequence of the conflation of walking and language, is that walking is approached by de

³⁹ See, Michel Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon." The idea was a prison conceived with a spatial disposition that allowed continuous visual surveillance while concealing the observation post itself so that the prisoners eventually internalized the unseen gaze cast upon them in *Surveiller et punir*.

⁴⁰ In French, the quote reads: "N'être que ce point voyant, c'est la fiction du savoir" (de Certeau 1990, 140). The formulation has a slightly different sense than the English translation, in that it states that *being* the viewpoint is the fiction of knowledge. Read in this sense the quote indicates that fictive knowledge follows from the abstraction of the body.

Certeau as a non-visual practice that has its force in the ability to trace invisible relations in the city such as dreams, memories and stories.⁴¹

De Certeau's dichotomy of viewing and walking reflects the difference between the collectively appropriable city-as-concept and the urban matter as a multiplicity of situated experiences, but it also draws out an antagonism between two forms of knowledge, vision and language, associating the former to fiction. In light of the dichotomy of the walker and the viewer, visual urban strategies are epistemologically unsubstantiated and in continuous need of non-visual approaches that correct vision with the actual urban life. This perspective and de Certeau's argument inform how I discuss the site-specific approach of Futurefarmers in Article 2. The scepticism about the visual as epistemological approach to the city has been a point of departure for discussing the art strategies in Bjørvika in terms of forms of knowledge. Visual strategies can be unsubstantiated and in need of non-visual approaches that correct vision with the actual urban life. Indeed, 'correcting' the vision to Bjørvika is an important aspect of the art strategies.

Similar to de Certeau and Daston, Donna Haraway uncovers infinite, objective vision as "an illusion, a god trick" (Haraway 1988, 582). Donna Haraway is a prominent researcher in science and technology studies, renowned for her feminist critique of scientific objectivity. In the seminal article "Situated knowledge: The science question in Feminism and the privilege of partial perspective" Haraway's main argument is that all vision is embodied, and she revisits the coupling between a disembodied, Western, male gaze and objectivity (Haraway 1988, 581). However, Haraway does not construct an argument against objectivity and vision per se. Quite to the contrary; she attempts to dissolve the binary oppositions placing situated knowledge on one hand, and objective vision on the other. Haraway takes the concept of objectivity and reinvests it with another sense; objectivity is a particular and specific embodiment (1988, 582-583). According to this, objective visions are always partial, and only *situated perspectives are objective visions*.

The implications of this view of the epistemological dimensions of perception are twofold. Firstly, by anchoring objective knowledge in particular and specific embodiments,⁴² Haraway suggests that "[to find] a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (Haraway 1988, 590). In place

⁴¹ While De Certeau discusses the walker as practice that primarily creates non-visual relations with the city, walking has also been approached as a peculiar visual practice. Benjamin's writing on the *flâneur*, outlines walking as practice that embodies a particular gaze. See, Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Eiland and McLaughlin. For further readings see among others, Jenks, "Watching your step," and Sæter, "The Body and the Eye."

⁴² It is important to clarify that when Haraway stresses the importance of specific embodiment she does not delimit this to the human body, but includes the bodies of technologies. See, Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 582.

of a phantasmagorical vision that can contain all in once, Haraway advocates the need for multiple situated viewpoints. Secondly, she stresses the importance of seeing better. Instead of arguing that all visions are illusions, she states the necessity to reclaim the sense of vision. Haraway reframes the discussion on the epistemology of vision in order to avoid an antagonism between different realms of perception. Her interest in vision lies in how to see well and critically from situated positions (Haraway 1988, 585). Ultimately, it is by approaching seeing as a skilled practice that visual knowledge becomes situated and objective.

Haraway's take on vision is interesting as she both outlines the visual as an epistemological field and as a question of power. In the urban development of Bjørvika, the visual strategies also have this double layer, since, though they represent forms of knowledge, they are expressions of power that overlook the partial and situated perspectives that are not represented. The power of vision to frame and control space is essential to Sharon Zukin's critique of the cultural economy. I will return to the issue of the optic ordering of space in chapter 5, where I discuss visual urban strategies. The reflections on vision by Haraway and de Certeau outline possible epistemological positions for public art in relation to how visual strategies are applied in Bjørvika. For one, art can act as an epistemological critique by following Haraway's suggestion to *see better* and critically from situated viewpoints. Secondly, in line with de Certeau, art can represent situated forms of urban knowledge that vision does not encompass. The two epistemological positions outlined correspond to the epistemological critique of the redevelopment that Marianne Heier and Futurefarmers perform, the former by skilling perception and the latter by circulating situated and relational forms of knowledge.

The social structuring of knowledge: movements from knowledge to practice

By seeing better or making sense of the city's messy urban matter, art can represent alternative forms of knowledge. However, the production of forms of knowledge within an art project does not automatically gain agency in public space production. The research question of this thesis should make apparent that this study is not merely interested in what forms of knowledge art represents, but also how forms of knowledge produced in art interact with the production of public spaces. In other words, the study aims at identifying potential relationships between alternative forms of knowledge generated in art and how public spaces are produced. I have already suggested that

perception when subjected to change brings about new practices.⁴³ Still the interaction of art with public space production is a question of art's role in a greater societal context and ultimately how forms of knowledge are validated, put in hierarchies and circulate across disciplines.

Michel Foucault is an influential philosopher within French poststructuralism. He offers a valuable perspective to contextualise the discussions addressed in the articles, because the relations between power and knowledge are essential to his writings. He uncovers the societal structures that conditions what is perceived as true, relevant and valid knowledge and display the marginalisation of certain forms of experience by societal institutions. This is essential with regard to this study because art represents a marginal form of knowledge in an urban development. Chapter 2 brought to attention that although the Design Manual recommended the involvement of artists in the production of public space, the two processes have run separately and artistic competence has not been integrated in the processes. However, in the following I will suggest that art can be considered in relation to interdisciplinary *knowledge spaces*.

The relations between discourse and practice in Foucault's writings comprise an extensive subject, one indeed beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it ought to be mentioned that Foucault also performs a critique of the notion of objectivity. In *Les mots et les choses*, he renders visible how narrations of progress, rationality and objectivity rely on particular epistemological fields that are historically conditioned (Foucault 2010 [1966]).⁴⁴ Foucault does not discuss knowledge in itself, but rather the societal conditions that constitute, order and validate knowledge as objective. Empirical forms of knowledge emerge, according to Foucault, from specific 'knowledge spaces' that give rise to particular conditions of existence (Foucault 2010 [1966], 13). I believe that the interaction between forms of knowledge that are produced in art and public space production can be appreciated when identifying knowledge spaces where they meet.

L'ordre du discours renders visible the ways in which discourse validates knowledge. Foucault outlines ways in which the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed and shows that the status of knowledge as such is dependent on the order of discourse (2010 [1971], 10). In Bjørvika, the interaction of different forms of knowledge is a

⁴³ The movements between discourse and practice are essential to the interrelations between hearing, seeing, being and doing that Rancière articulates. It is in his preoccupation with this philosophical question that Philosopher Thomas Bolmain sums up the influence of Foucault on Rancière in that both philosophers revolve around the same question: How does discourse communicate with practice? See Bolmain "De la critique du 'procès sans sujet' au concept de la subjectivation politique," 191.

⁴⁴ I refer here to *Les mots et les choses*, however this can be argued to be an overriding subject in Foucault's discussion of knowledge and power, for equally interesting perspectives on the matter see among others, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, *Archéologie du savoir*, and *L'ordre du discours*.

question of disciplines, indeed one of the principles that Foucault outlines as organising discourse (2010 [1971]). Among the disciplines involved in Bjørvika are geologists, landscape architects, marketers, engineers and architects. The application of conceptual models, technical language and measuring devices will determine whether a proposition belongs to its discipline and is acknowledged by it, independently of it being false or true. Due to the particular way in which the discourse of a discipline organises knowledge, disciplines constantly reject knowledge that circulates beyond their borders (2010 [1971], 35).

A supplementary perspective on the circulation and agency of different forms of knowledge in the city is found in human geographer Colin MacFarlane's concept of 'critical urban learning' (MacFarlane 2011). MacFarlane positions the entire city as site for urban learning, but problematizes the mobility of certain forms of knowledge relative to others and advocates the need for more democratic and sustainable approaches to learning the city. In chapter 5, I pursue this perspective with regards to how art can be conceived as a form of critical urban learning.

When discussing art as a knowledge field in relation to the urban development of Bjørvika, one is not speaking of the relations between two different fields of knowledge. Yet it is possible to discuss *conflicting epistemological perspectives*. In chapter 5, I will outline forms of knowledge generated in artistic practices that can be perceived as critique of approaches to site that are based on other epistemological grounds. Urban development relies on many different disciplines and is in itself a collaborative project that relies on multiple forms of knowledge that cannot be assessed as one coherent discourse. Therefore, in the different articles the relation between public space production and art is approached by discussing artistic forms of knowledge in relation to what can tentatively be understood as specific knowledge spaces within the development. The knowledge spaces that the thesis has studied art in relation to are the construction of a place image, the understanding/narrative of site, and policy documents.

The first article's focus is on the role of images in the redevelopment of Bjørvika. The article applies perspectives from critical urban theory that questions the use of image-building as an urban development strategy due to its insufficiency to represent local and empirical realities, as well as the way these constructed images reduce social complexity for the sake of a coherent image (Mommaas 2002, Evans 2006). The article engages in a discussion of the role of images in the transformation of space and suggests that it is necessary to critically inquire into what forms of site knowledge they represent. The knowledge space in relation to which artist Marianne Heier's work is discussed, is hence delimited to one aspect of the public space production, namely the visual construction of it.

The second article discusses artistic methods and engagement with site in relation to the construction of site narratives. Similar to the construction of a place image, site narratives refashion empirical, situated experience of site and enable the structuring of change (Beauregard 2005). In the site narratives, different forms of professional knowledge are negotiated, and the article looks at how the art project *Flatbread Society* constructs a counter-narrative by circulating a different range of professional knowledges and situated experiences. The third and the fourth articles both discuss public art practices in relation to the expectations formulated for public art by policy documents. Crucial in this respect is the commissioning of participatory art and the attempt to contribute with a better understanding of how it interacts with public space production. In particular, the general ambition formulated in policy documents to construct lively public spaces has accommodated the commissioning of participatory art and opened an area of influence for this form of artistic competence. Article 3 outlines how critical art projects that do not conform to the vision of an eventful city are not realised. The intervention of participatory art practices in public space is discussed in Article 3 as giving artists leverage in urban planning and the possibility to influence the use of public space. Article 4 discusses the ambition to enhance diversity and create social spaces in Bjørvika and the commissioning of participatory art, however it suggests that it is necessary to discuss the public horizon that a participatory event constructs in order to understand its intervention in the city. For this reason, it devises a critical framework in order to discuss the aesthetic and public dimension that social relations gain when enacted in participatory art.

Art=Double, and how art is extraordinary according to Rancière

In the following, I will retrace readings that have structured the way in which this study has approached the aesthetical dimension of the public art practices and discuss art's ability to inhabit double positions. By positioning art as a practice that has the ability to produce dissensus, Rancière attributes to art a somehow privilege role in the distribution of the sensible. Although he maintains that art is subjected to the mechanism of the distribution of the sensible, he also argues that it can signify freely. In view of this thesis's choice of studying public art practices that participate in an ongoing urban development, the double positions inhabited by art are interesting because they enable an approach that both acknowledges art's embedding in the heteronomous urban development and its autonomous production of alternative forms of perception in public.

In his writings on art, Rancière addresses both the relations between the sensual forms of art and ordinary perception, and the ways in which artistic practice is different from "ordinary" work. Fundamental to the theory of the

distribution of the sensible is Rancière's insistence that dissensus acts as shocks in *this* world and is not a supra-sensible power (Rancière 2010, 212). Thereby he holds that, although one can postulate differences between art and the market, there is no real, ontological difference in the sensible fabric off the two (Rancière 2010, 214). In line with this important element in his thought, Rancière states:

Whatever might be the specific type of economic circuits they lie within, artistic practices are not 'exceptions' to other practices. They represent and reconfigure the distribution of these activities. (Rancière 2007, 45)

In other words, art belongs to the same sensible fabric and economic circuits as do all other practices. Still, the quote indicates that although art is not exceptional from a wider societal perspective, it reconfigures and represents the societal processes that it itself participates in. Herein, lies the potentiality of art to do two things at the same time; for instance, participating in the gentrification process of an area, while representing the process critically. In the next chapter, I will suggest that this is the case in Matias Faldbakken and Gardar Einarsson's *Whoomp –there it is*. Rancière sees the autonomy of art in relation to this doubleness, art is heteronym in that it cannot be distinguished from or is exceptional to the societal context in which it operates. Art is autonomous in that it produces new and heterogeneous forms of perception (Rancière 2004, 48). In other words, art is not exceptional with regard either to the sense-matter that it employs or to the economies that it participates in. The exceptionality of its participation in the distribution of the sensible is its ability to do two things at the same time.

The mimetician brings confusion to this distribution: he is a man of duplication, a worker who does two things at once. Perhaps the correlate to this principle is the most important thing: the mimetician provides a public stage for what is common to the community with what should determine the confinement of each person to his or her place. [...] Hence, artistic practice is not the outside of work but its displaced form of visibility. (Rancière 2007, 43)

Rancière claims that the reason that Plato wishes to ban the mimetic arts from the state is that they disturb the societal order that designates each man, by virtue of his profession, to a particular time and space, keeping work thus private and out of sight (Rancière 2000, 67-68).



Katie Paterson, *Future Library*. Paper for the future anthology. Copyright MJC

The *mimetician*, the craftsman excelling in the mimetic arts, blurs this tight societal order because although art is work, it is also a form of visibility on public display. By constituting a public scene, art is not the opposite of ordinary work, but a displacement of it in public that circulates new forms of visibility.⁴⁵

Art continuously invests sense matters with new significances. The doubleness of the artwork is present when both *extraordinary artistic forms of perception* and *ordinary forms of perceptions* co-exist. The written word and the theatre, both objects of Plato's scepticism, display familiar forms, in this case, human bodies and the word, in new formats (Rancière 2000). Thereby, the well-known gains new sense when reconfigured in a different sensorium, yet the former does not necessarily vanish. The cases in this thesis are artistic practices that infuse existing sites with alternative significances. The forest planted by artist Katie Paterson is an example. It is composed of ordinary pine trees in the midst of a pine forest, however, Paterson's pine trees are inscribed in the sensorium of her art project *Future Library*. Similarly, the flatbreads circulating in *Flatbread Society* are thereby re-imagined and carry new significances. Neither the trees nor the flatbreads are physically reconfigured. Rather the art projects activate new passages between sense-

⁴⁵ The object of Plato's critique are the mimetic arts, which Rancière formulates as belonging to the representative regime of art. However, the idea that art displaces labour by rendering it publically visible is not delimited to Rancière's discussion of mimetic art. For instance, Rancière argues that the notion of *production*, which is recurrently applied about contemporary artworks, designates a reconfiguration of labour and its visibility by combining the act of making with the act of displaying. See, Rancière *Le partage du sensible*, 71.

matter and sense-making and produce new significances that co-exist with established common-sense.

The potential of art to inhabit double positions seems particularly noteworthy in instances when one can identify moves between forms of ordinary perception and the forms of perception produced in art. Rancière argues that art reconfigures the sensible and is a site of public visibility that displays conflicts between *sense as matter* and *sense as significance*. A possible way to understand the doubleness of art is that it renders visible the co-existence of different perceptual regimes and thereby relies on its ability to make sense in both perceptual regimes. Assessing only one set of significances would therefore be reductive.

Claire Bishop and the double ontology of participatory art

Art historian Claire Bishop gives Rancière credit for having rehabilitated the idea of aesthetics and, in *Artificial Hells*, her ground breaking work on participatory art, she translates his aesthetic philosophy into an operative art theoretical discourse (Bishop 2012). Thereby, Bishop has developed an analytical framework that actualises Rancière's writing and that is relevant for the approach of this thesis. Claire Bishop is renowned for her critique of Nicolas Bourriaud's notion of 'relational aesthetics' and revisits the rhetoric of collaborative art practices and the 'social turn' in art from analytical and critical positions.⁴⁶ In the discussions in the articles and in the next chapter, I introduce art theory from among others Grant Kester and Suzanne Lacy, theory that represents antagonistic views and advocates for art's capacity to instigate societal change. Bishop, as we will see shortly, upholds the autonomy of art as essential to its aesthetical dimension. Theatre scholar Shannon Jackson, one of Bishop's critics, argues to the contrary that it is necessary to stop celebrating art's autonomy and stop seeing society as external to art (Jackson 2011, 28). In my study, it has been important to formulate intersections between art and other societal processes, such as for instance the knowledge spaces referenced above, and I have applied theory that opposes Bishop's approach to participatory art. However, Bishop's analytical framework is essential to my epistemological perspective because enables a discussion of the double positions inhabited by art.

A concern of Bishop is the imbrication of participatory art with social, political and economic structures. Yet, she insists on the necessity of critically assessing its aesthetic dimension, which is often put aside in favour of the social impact of art. On one hand, she argues that artistic quality is judged by virtue of the urgency of the social task taken on by artists (Bishop

⁴⁶ See, among others, Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaborative Art and its Discontents," and "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics."

2012, 13). On the other hand, she outlines the merging of cultural policy discourses on creativity and social inclusion with the rhetoric of collaborative art practices (Bishop 2012, 16). The risk, Bishop argues, is the reduction of art to an instrument in the dismantling of the welfare state under the guise of creativity discourses, while actually promoting self-administration and the exploitation of the format of participatory art by neoliberal ideology (Bishop 2012, 14; 277). The solution for the situation in which socially engaged art practices stand is, according to Bishop, to uphold the tensions that social art generates when operating in these socio-economic contexts. In Rancière's writing, Bishop identifies a theoretical framework that permits us to conceptually assess this tension.

The aesthetics for Rancière therefore signals an ability to think contradiction: the productive contradiction of art's relationship to social change, which is characterized by the paradox of belief in art's autonomy and in it being inextricably bound to the promise of a better world to come. (Bishop 2012, 29)

The ability of art to withhold these contradictions lies in its aesthetical dimension, and in line with Rancière, Bishop defines art's autonomy as a particular mode of aesthesis, "an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality (Bishop 2012, 18)."

'Keeping an eye on aesthetics', as Bishop puts it, means in this thesis to acknowledge the autonomous aesthetic experience and to suggest that art can inhabit double positions. In *Artificial Hells*, Bishop concludes that "[By] using people as medium, participatory art has always had a double ontological status: it is both an event in the world, and at one remove from it" (Bishop 2012, 284), it is both a social activity and a symbolic one (Bishop 2012, 7). This assertion has been crucial to the approach of the study and formed a structure according to which I have discussed participatory art as both art and an urban strategy in the development. ⁴⁷

Throughout the work, Bishop demonstrates how participatory situations rely on this double structure, being always both art and something else: participant and audience, education and art, or social intervention and artistic authored project. The double ontological status of art is one possible approach to the reconfiguration of the relations between sense and sense by artists in Bjørvika. The pull between art's autonomy and the conditions it

⁴⁷ An alternative approach to the one that I have adopted, but that also formulates the reflexive quality that social situations gain when unfolding within an artistic framework, is found in Boel Christensen-Scheel's doctoral thesis. She discusses the experience of participatory art in terms of 'situated de-situatedness.' See, *Mobile Homes*.

operates within is also a question of the artworks' capacity to signify and produce meaning in the context, instead of solely taking on the meanings already circulating in the context. However, when discussing art's usefulness, or effectiveness, one can be in danger of forgetting that assessing art's usefulness is also an interpretative practice. By opting for an epistemological perspective that approaches art as having a double ontological status, this thesis aims at assessing the art projects it discusses as relations between the actual and the imaginary, without reducing the imaginary's effect on the actual and vice versa.

The double ontological status of participatory art, as outlined by Bishop, has influenced both Articles 2 and 4 that discuss movements between the actual and the imaginary. In Article 2, I describe the methods applied in Flatbread Society's site-specific approach as *aesthetic labour*. With this experimental and tentative notion, I attempt to denote how the artists infuse the actual situation and objects with layers of significance that unsettle the coherent site narratives otherwise dominant. The moves between the actual and the imaginary are seen in Article 4 in relation to how participatory art both gathers attendees and forms publics by *imagining stranger relations*. In light of the general ambition to activate the area, the article discusses whether the fictive or imaginative layers of a participatory art event can sometimes be taken for actual city-life and hence function as embellishment of public spaces rather than contributing to social diversity. The tensions between aesthetics and social change that I have dealt with in the case studies of this thesis, is nevertheless of another kind than those framed by Bishop. As suggested in Article 3, consensual structures and collaborations seem to have been crucial to the art projects' ability to negotiate alternative forms of knowledge into the planning process.

Art's double ontological status is not only a question of its capacity to signify freely, it is also a pivotal point to formulate its participation and embeddedness in other sets of significances and societal structures. How art interacts with the structures that it is a part of is key to its political impact. In the next chapter, I will discuss further the imbrication of artistic practice with the social and economic interests of the Bjørvika redevelopment.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed how the articles are the product of distant and embedded research positions, qualitative methods and theoretical analysis. The processual character of the article-based format has been central to the structure of the thesis and the distinct frames of the articles and the exegesis was briefly outlined. Six theoretical issues that have been pivotal to the epistemological perspective were presented. I propose that art displays dissensual forms publicly and can be considered in relation to processes that

constitute common sense and a perceptual regime in Bjørvika. The relational and epistemological dimension of perception are essential to how I understand the influence of perception on practice and in this perspective, I also discuss the formation of collectives of seeing. A crucial point regarding how I perceive art as performing an epistemological critique is the suggestion that artistic practices can represent situated knowledge and see better and thereby correct disembodied objective forms of knowledge. I outline particular knowledge spaces in which artistic forms of knowledge interact with public space production. Lastly, I outline my approach to art as holding the ability of inhabiting double position and thereby generate new significances that co-exist with established forms of common-sense.

Chapter 4

Artistic Production of Publicness

The subject of this chapter is the relationship between art and the public, and I clarify my own approach, which is to perceive *public art as one among many producers of what we hold as public*. In line with the research question of the study, the forms of knowledge manifested in art are essential to how I approach the role of public art, and I suggest that artistic research can represent a way to position art as public in a knowledge society. I outline collaboration and criticality as modes of public engagement that are relevant in view of discussing the cases of this study. Due to the commissioning strategy and the imbrication of art in an urban development undertaking, process, temporariness and participation are aspects that are characteristic of my case studies. In this chapter, I contextualise the above-mentioned aspects of art theoretically and draw out the potential influence of the city's socio-economical processes on the capacity of art to signify freely. Lastly, the chapter considers the very important issue of art's impact on the redevelopment and suggest that the ability of art to inhabit double positions is crucial to its aesthetic efficiency.

Not surprisingly, defining *art in public spaces* or *public art* has been a headache for art theorists and historians.⁴⁸ The task of providing a definition for public art outside of museums and galleries is the objective of public art researcher Cameron Cartiere and public art commissioner Shelly Willis (2008). According to them, public art can be identified through four distinct relations with the public; accessibility for the public, in the public's interest, located in public space, or publicly funded (Cartiere 2008, 15). Although their categories encompass multiple public art practices, the definition is problematic because it relies on an understanding of the public as something external to art that it can be assessed in relation to. An opposite view on the matter is advocated by Mitchell, who claims that "either there is no such thing as public art, or all art is public art" (Mitchell 1992, 4). The approach adopted in this study aims at going beyond articulating public art as a mere relation between art and the public; yet it does not rest with an understanding of publicness as an inherent dimension of all art. Rather, publicness is perceived as something that is continuously produced through negotiations,

⁴⁸ Technically, public art was recognized as a practice in the US in 1967 with the creation of a programme for Arts in Public Places by the National Endowment of the Arts. In Norway, the Decoration Fund for Governmental Buildings/[Utsmykningsfondet for statlige nybygg] was established in 1976, however it was only in 2007 that the organisation changed their name to KORO/[Public Art Norway] an acronym of Art in Public Spaces/[Kunst i offentlige rom], moving hence away from a technical appellation of art as decoration of public property.

representations and reconfigurations of public arenas. Public art is one among many producers of what we hold as public.

The approach of this study rests on Jacques Rancière's understanding of the public as constituted through democratic processes that are dissensual by nature. The public is configured and reconfigured through the distribution of sensible and this process in *itself* actualises democracy, redistributes abilities and inequalities, and constitutes a common (Rancière 2010). The public arena, which often functions as a qualifier of public art, is not thereby perceived as a pre-given phenomenon, existing independently of culture, politics, economics, and ... *art*. Instead, the public is considered as formed through a particular organisation of togetherness in art, politics, economics and culture. As public pedagogy scholar Gert Biesta suggests, it represents a "possibility of actors and events *to become* public" (Biesta 2014, 23).⁴⁹ A public arena is produced in the movements between potentiality and practice. The oscillation between the idea of what a public is and its actual configurations is central to Art and Policy professor Randy Martin's advocacy of public art's civic role. He reminds us that "[t]he public is, after all, an idea in need of representation as much as it is a tangible ground where folks can gather (Martin 2006, 4) and I believe that it is worthwhile to consider the role of public art in relation to the potent space that opens between idea and practice.

Public art: A Way of Seeing, a Way of Knowing and a Way of Gathering

On the basis of the assumption that publicness is continuously being formed, and that it represents a phenomenon to which art stands in a reflexive relation, I wish to convey the potentiality in art of both being perceived through a public arena and participating in the formation of these arenas. Randy Martin proposes a definition of public art that diverges from Cartiere and Shelly's, and which is much more in line with the approach of this thesis. He writes:

Public art can be understood in a variety of ways. Among them, it can be seen as a site or physical place, as a representation of civic ideas, or as an occasion for people to gather to engage in critical reflection –in short, a way of seeing, a way of knowing, and a way of gathering. (Martin 2006, 2)

⁴⁹ The subject of Biesta is not art, but public pedagogy. There are interesting affinities between art and public pedagogy, particularly so when artists draw on participatory and pedagogical format, and obtain public impact through communicative action. For more on the relation between art and public pedagogy, see, among others, Burdick *et al.*, *Problematizing Public Pedagogy*.

Herein, public art is positioned as publicly shared practices. In the quote, one can identify three distinct registers that actualise the relationship between art and public, namely a perceptual, an epistemological and a relational register.

The articles in this thesis have indeed formulated the interaction between art and public space production as happening through relational, perceptual and epistemological dimensions in art. However, art as a way of knowing, and more precisely knowing and learning about the public, has been the prevalent perspective, particularly so because I have discussed perception and relationality in terms of alternative knowledge production. Another perspective on art as publicly relevant by virtue of its epistemological force exists in the idea of the artist as a public intellectual, because it positions knowledge as an interface between public and artist. The underpinning of knowledge in artistic practice represents, as is rightly observed by philosopher and art theorist Stephan Schmidt-Wulffen, that the role of the artist should be recognized in light of the knowledge economy (2008). More specifically, artistic knowledge has an important public dimension as renegotiation between theory and practice, which Schmidt-Wulffen suggests should be viewed as a pragmatic epistemological turn (Schmidt-Wulffen 2008, 10).⁵⁰

The publics of public art

So far I have addressed the issue of public art without addressing its relation to *the* public, the people, not the idea. Arlene Raven, who has championed the definition of public art as art serving the public interest, goes straight to the point when she asks, “does art in the public interest really interest the public?” (Raven 1993, 1-2). Public art’s artistic innovative approaches, societal critique and peculiar political agendas, as well as its entanglement with complex societal dynamics, are seldom the object of public appraisal.⁵¹ On the contrary, it is art experts that perform the assessment of public art, and therefore its public relevance is not understood from the point of view of the everyday, non-professional, encounters between art and public. Or, this is at least the claim of Julia Lossau and Quentin Stevens.

In *The Uses of Art in Public Space*, they steer attention to the interactions between art and the public and investigate what the use of public art is for the public, delimiting the scope to the immediate situations arising from this interaction (Lossau & Stevens 2015). The authors’ ambition is to revisit the stereotype described by Lacy: “use + art = bad art” (Lacy in

⁵⁰Artistic use of pedagogical art formats forms another arena for the circulation of artistic forms of knowledge in public space. For more see among others, Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 241-274, and O’Neill and Wilson, *Curating and the Educational Turn*.

⁵¹For more on the issue of appreciation and value judgements of public art, see among others, the recent doctoral thesis of Baldini, *Public Art*.

Lossau & Stevens 2015, 5). Although I am sympathetic to Lossau and Stevens' advocacy of art's public usefulness, their scope is limited to immediate interaction with public artworks and seems reductionist regarding the potential interfaces that art in public space can create with society.

Instead of discussing whether art in the public's interest interests the public, although that is an excellent question, I have focused on *how* public art interact with processes that define and constitute what is perceived as the public's interest. This study has been preoccupied with relationships between art and urban redevelopment, in an area where there have not been operative public spaces and pre-existing local communities that the art practices have interacted with. Yet in Article 4, I do address the question of who the public of participatory art is, and suggest that it is necessary to distinguish the attendees of participatory art and its public. Instead of discussing art in relation to an ideal of an all-inclusive public sphere, the article discusses the multiple *publics* formed by art. By introducing perspectives from queer theorist Michael Warner, I draw attention the imaginary character of the *stranger relationality* conceived in participatory art. My point in doing that is the importance of acknowledging the disjuncture between the actual and the imaginative dimension of the work because the latter can both have agency in the city and be appropriated as an embellishment strategy. In this article, I also position my own methodological approach with regard to the relation of art to its public as not relying on sociological analysis, because I attempt to say something of the aesthetical and public character that social relations gain in participatory art.

The idea advanced so far in this chapter is that public art is not only perceived in public, but is also a phenomenon that can produce publicness. Still, if art is to have influence on the production of publicness it must interact strategically with the many strong currents involved in urban processes that are indeed affecting artistic collaboration when positioned in the stretch between bureaucracy and a market logic. The consequence of parting with an understanding of public art as an art form that is defined by virtue of the space it occupies or the commissioning process, is that the conception of public art instead relies on the artworks' capacity to become public. Rather than being allocated a tangible, physical space, the challenge is, as Martin puts it, "[that] it is not sufficient for art simply to appear in public; it must understand how to make a room for itself and how to join its voice with other voices in public" (Martin 2006, 5). The room that art builds for itself is key to understanding the role of aesthetics in public and this is at the core of my discussion. As we all know, artists do not dispose unlimited resources, therefore the operative question asked by Lacy is not what artists

should do: “but what resources *can* they bring to the public and political arena if they are so inclined” (Robbins & Lacy 2014, 155).

Artistic research

The forms of knowledge generated in art are essential to my approach and several of the artistic approaches to the area development of Bjørvika have the character of *artistic research*; in particular, this is the case for Futurefarmers who put up a temporary bakehouse in 2013 in view of researching the area.⁵² Artistic research can represent a potent positioning of art as public in a knowledge society. The discourses on and practices of artistic research and their potential with regards to forming a role for artists in the knowledge economy can contribute to the understanding of *public art as a way of knowing – in public*.

Artistic research has two distinct orientations; one connected to education institutional frameworks, the other is intimately related to art practices *per se*, as well as the knowledge, skills and innovations in the art field.⁵³ The latter approach is in line with my use of the notion in Article 2, and is advocated by art theorist Andrea Phillips. She suggests that:

[A]ll artists carry out research as part of their process, whether it be material, philosophical, site-specific, and so on, and that this process should rather not only be understood but also articulated as a sophisticated contribution to new forms of practice and action. (Phillips in Petersson & Sandström 2015)

Phillips claims that site-specificity relies on artistic research. Although the epistemological relation to site is not necessarily outspoken, the time and involvement of artists with site engender site-specific knowledge. In other words, the artists’ knowledge of site is an underlying premise of site specificity, and site-specificity generates artistic knowledge about site.

Although the relevance of artistic research for urban development should be understood in relation to Phillips’ use of the term, the institutionalisation of artistic research is worth attention. In 1995 in Norway, artistic research achieved equal status to other forms of research, and currently the programme for artistic research fellows defines artistic research

⁵² Other projects that I consider as engaging with the area transformation through research are Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman cancelled contribution, Ingrid Lønningdal’ *The Bjørvika Structure in the Studio* (2010) and ‘Views from Ekeberg’ (2012) curated by Harald Østgaard Lund.

⁵³ The former discourse is connected to the Bologna process that reformed higher education in Europe and established comparable standards and equivalent degrees across national borders. In addition to the above-mentioned discourses on artistic research, a third approach should be mentioned, one which emphasises its difference from other ways of knowing. See among others, Kjörup, *Another Way of Knowing*, and, Wesseling, *See it again, say it again*.

as contributions of knowledge, insight and/or experiences (Malterud *et. al.* 2015, 8).

Noteworthy consequences of the institutionalisation of artistic research is the acknowledgement of knowledge production as a societal function of art (Malterud *et. al.* 2015, 7).⁵⁴ The present institutionalisation of artistic research can be key to discussing how it can relate to contemporary discourses on the knowledge society. This potential is addressed in *The Artistic Turn: A manifesto*, which argues that artistic research forms new trajectories for art in society and can thereby have an expanding role in society if assessed in light of the forms of knowledge at play in art production.

Art as 'commodified' through its duplication and consumption has already become part of market knowledge, while artistic skills and knowledge have generally remained hidden, accessible only by an educational trajectory and exchanges between insiders. The recent move towards the institutionalisation of research by artists in artistic milieus and education is another way of opening the doors of performance-related 'know-how'. This contributes another multi-faced aspect to the field: artistic skills — concerning personal artistic trajectories and their interrelatedness with science and other forms of knowledge. (Coessens, Crispin & Douglas 2009, 22)

The manifesto states that artistic research renders visible aspects of art production that have been hidden. Skills and artistic knowledge represent thus new interfaces between art and society. By advocating artistic knowledge as an aspect of the societal function of art, the claim in the quote resonates with the approach in this thesis. It is worthwhile to consider how artistic research also represents an expansion of what we understand as public art.

While renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci are known for the mastering of several disciplines, today it is primarily collaborations that produce new connections between art and other knowledge fields.⁵⁵ Futurefarmers' approach to site, discussed in Article 2, is an example of a collaborative art practice that circulates and reconfigures knowledge from

⁵⁴ The inclusion of knowledge production in the criteria shows a development compared to the benchmarking definition devised at Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, which positioned art as production of meaning, not knowledge. See, Malterud *et. al.* *Forskning og utviklingsarbeid innen fagområdet kunst*, 28. For more on the differences between scientific research and artistic research, see among others Wilson and van Ruiten, *Handbook for Artistic Research Education*, and Hannula *et. al.*, *Artistic Research*.

⁵⁵ Connections between artistic inquiries and other fields of knowledge is the subject of Marga Bijvoet who discusses innovative, interdisciplinary collaborations crossing boundaries. She maps projects from the 60's until the turn of the millennium developing new approaches to environment, new media, ecology and space, see Bijvoet, *Art as Inquiry*.



Futurefarmers temporary bakehouse. This is from the workshop, *Beneath the pavement: soil science* (2013). Photo by C.B.M.

different fields. Artistic research represents a form of interaction between art and public space production.

In the following, I will shift the focus from the epistemological dimension of public art, towards a discussion of the positions of art in relation to public space production and in particular outline the relevance of *collaboration and criticality* as modes of interaction.

Making the public: collaborations and criticality

Public space plays a privileged role in the history of Western democracy, and is a rich subject of political imagination. The different narratives and genealogy of public space is of concern for Sven-Olov Wallenstein, who cuts straight through this gnostic knot. On the one hand, he outlines the narrative of the rise and fall of *a* public space that embeds democratic ideals, and, on the other, a materialistic understanding of public space as ridden by asymmetry and power relations, an ‘antagonistic space’ in the idiom of the political theorist Chantal Mouffe (Wallenstein 2013).⁵⁶ Whether public space is a battle zone of opposing interests or a state of democracy that continuously seems to slip out of our hands, the stakes are high when it

⁵⁶ Mouffe conceptualises the role for critical art as to intervene in antagonistic struggles by marking sharp opposition to practices that it opposes. See, among others, Mouffe, “Cultural Workers as Organic Intellectuals”

comes to public space because it represents the enactment of a state of democracy.

Similarly, to the two narratives on the concept of the public that Wallenstein outlines, the public role of art can be calibrated along the lines of antagonism and collaboration. Also, the forms of sociality enacted in participatory art can be discerned along these lines, which in the end boils down to different attitudes with regards to the question of art's autonomy.⁵⁷

The autonomy of art is an important topic in relation to art in public spaces because such art practices operate in contexts where the consideration of art's autonomy enters into conflict with other interests. Critics such as Bishop have stressed the importance of socially engaged art's ability to reflect the conditions that they work within, in order to render visible the contradictory relations that the project deals with and how they affect its autonomy (Bishop 2006, 178-179). This entails an expectation that an art practice should install a self-reflexive relation with regard to its autonomy and find ways to reflect this autonomy in the art project. However, Bishop's standpoint is opposed by voices advocating collaborative heteronomy (Kester 2011, Doherty & O'Neill 2011, and Sommer 2014). The discourse on the autonomy of art is here substituted with a relationship to context characterized as "co-operative production process that is neither autonomous nor over-regulated" (Doherty & O'Neill 2011, 14).

In chapter 2, I suggest that the public art programme of Bjørvika is not supported by an institutional framework that accommodates art as autonomous practice and therefore to be considered as semi-integrated and relatively autonomous. The private developers of the area manage the public art programme and artists are intertwined with this structure of public-private partnership. Due to the semi-integration of art with the redevelopment, embeddedness and collaboration seem to be the modus of the social engagement of the art practices. Collaborative art is a socially engaged form of participatory art that challenges the conception of the solitary, autonomous, even ingenious artists and rests instead upon the creative power and agency of a collective structure.⁵⁸ Futurefarmers represents an artistic practice that opts for a collaborative approach rather than an autonomous position when producing art in public. The 100 years long production span of

⁵⁷ In *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant demonstrates that the judgment of beauty and the sublime is autonomous from pure and practical reason and establishes the aesthetic experience as an autonomous realm and clears the ground for a concept of art as autonomous. The problem with the autonomy of art is articulated by Theodor Adorno as an effect of art's desire to intervene in world while staying autonomous. Yet, art's societal responsibility can be realised in the multiple dialectical interactions that emerge when art is introduced in society. See, *Estetisk teori*.

⁵⁸ The works on collaborative art that have influenced my view includes, Kester, *The One and The Many*, Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*, Jackson, *Social Works*, Thompson, *Living as Form* and Billing et.al., *Taking the Matter into Common Hands*.

Future Library also relies on a collaborative structure, including public institutions that ensure the realisation of the project, although attributing the authorship for the project to Katie Paterson.

Collaborative approaches can cause the absence of clear and absolute stands, and the critical position of the intervention can appear as tainted if one is perceived to ‘sleep with the enemy.’ Irit Rogoff’s notion of *criticality* enables one to grasp the dynamic provoked by embeddedness in a constructive way. Criticality, Rogoff writes “operates from an uncertain ground of actual embeddedness” (Rogoff 2006, 17), and a comparison to what it is not can be useful in order to understand the notion. It is not a criticism that performs judgement according to a predetermined set of values and neither is it a critique that observes and unveils underlying premises (Rogoff 2006). The art practices in Bjørvika can, in line with Rogoff, be said to operate in a mode of criticality because they are embedded in the structure, *inhabit* the problem and can learn to know the urban development from *inside* their imbricated position which again give rise to different questions and approaches. Marianne Heier’s project discussed in Article 1 exemplifies well the possibility of developing a project in a mode of criticality by acknowledging, researching and exploring from within the structures that one challenges. The intervention of Futurefarmers in the planning of Loallmenningen is yet another example of a project that is realised by learning to manoeuvre through the system from within.

Although the claim that art can produce publicness is grounded in the aesthetic philosophy of Jacques Rancière, it is just as much an effect of studying the redevelopment of Bjørvika where public spaces are produced in a chain of practices ranging from imaginative acts to pragmatic implementation of concepts. Public art, as mentioned in chapter 2, is in the Design Manual qualified as one out of six dimensions of public space in Bjørvika (Statsbygg et.al. 2003). Although this outlines a potentiality, it does not predetermine a distinct space for art in public space. The aspect of public space that art has been perceived to interact with are its use, its representations, its social dimension, as well as the public management and planning of a site. In order to investigate moments in the development where art enters the processes that form the public character of Bjørvika, one could say that I have been looking for problems that art can inhabit and that these have represented distinct relations between art and the public. Yet in these investigations of the public dimension of art, the notion of ‘the public’ is visited from different perspectives.

Article 1 discusses how art can act both upon our perceptual habits and on the constitution of what we perceive as common. Article 2 suggests that

the discursive exchange enabled by Flatbread Society expands the forms of knowledge that circulates in the public sphere (Kester 2013).⁵⁹ Article 3 has a different take on the relation between art and the public by investigating the intervention of art in urban planning. Hence, the public dimension that art is considered to interact with the bureaucratic machine of public governance. In Article 4, the focus is how participatory art practices form their own distinct publics and it rests on Michael Warner's notion of multiple 'publics and counterpublics' (Warner 2005). These four separate discussions on the interaction between art and the constitution of public space are developed in the respective articles. Nevertheless, a common denominator can be discerned in how the four articles approach art as a process in the city, rather than an aesthetical object of contemplation.

From object to practice: process as site

The processual character of the public art practices included in the material of this thesis will in the following be considered in light of art theory, the joint interest of developers and curators in temporary formats, and art's imbrication with commodification processes.

In *Public Art: A Reader*, Florian Matzner states that by the notion of art in public spaces we do not mean "the sculpture paths and parks or even boulevards that seem to be mushrooming on all sides, where art is all too often reduced to no more than a form of decorative atonement (Matzner 2004, 12). More than anything else, the postfix "in public space," seems to underscore the public relevance of art. This ongoing shift in the understanding of what it means to be *in public* takes the form of a turn away from an object-based approach that primarily defines the public character of art as either publicly owned or located in public space. Leaving the object behind, it is the processes that art instigates that form the intangible nature of its publicness. In other words, it is towards art as a process, not an object, that we aim our understanding.⁶⁰

The disintegration of the aesthetical object as the focal point of public art practices forms a deep current in Miwon Kwon's seminal work on site-

⁵⁹The notion of public sphere in question is attributed Jürgen Habermas who argued the significance of the bourgeoisie for the development of a public sphere that transcended economic, political and private interests by enabling rational, discursive exchange, see *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Burger. Mitchell shows that although the notion of public art is inseparable from the bourgeois public sphere, the constellation of a disinterested, rational citizen and a conception of art's universal public address fails to grasp the confrontational and even violent encounters emerging around art, see Mitchell, "The Violence of Public Art," 29-48. The changing role of art in relation to the public sphere is an extensive subject, for more see among others, Zuidervaart, *Art in Public*, Knight, *Public Art*, and Schmedding, *Monument og Modernitet*.

⁶⁰The curatorial framework of *Neighbourhood secrets*/[Nabolagshemmeligheter] (2008), aimed at introducing art in public spaces as processes in the city. The approach of the curators Jan Inge Reilstad and Jörgen Svensson to art as process was informed by Nicholas Bourriaud's notion of relational aesthetics that emphasises the changing relations between the work of art and what lies outside of it, addressing thus the processual qualities in the work which unfold differently according to context. For more see, Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, and, *Esthétique relationelle*, and Reilstad, *Nabolagshemmeligheter*.

specific art *One Place after Another* (2002). In the genealogy of site-specific art drawn out by Kwon, she demonstrates that artistic engagement with site represents a confrontation with the modernist tradition that placed aesthetical objects in public space without a conscious distinction between public space and gallery space (Kwon 2002). This changed in the late 1960's and early 1970's when artists working in the wake of minimalism took a phenomenological approach to public space. *Tilted Arc* (1981) by Serra exemplifies how Kwon conceives the shift from an understanding of site as art's physical arena to a *siting* of art in urban processes and immaterial dimensions of society (Kwon 2002). Serra's contested and debated work intersected Foley Federal Plaza in a way that obstructed the pedestrian patterns of the users of the area, instigated dismay, and was removed in 1989. The legal, political and social processes that *Tilted Arc* entered have overshadowed the phenomenological dimension of the work, particularly so because the work was dismantled and discarded, while the discussions of it, on the contrary, still form a potent discursive site.

In addition to phenomenological and discursive approaches to site-specificity, Kwon discusses artistic practices that formulate site-specificity in relationship to the social dimension of site as it is approached in community-based art, or 'new genre public art'. Specificity is in this genre articulated in relation to a *specific* audience and in addressing publicly relevant issues (Lacy 1995; Raven 1993).⁶¹

Kwon outlines social, economic and political processes as constitutive of art's site, reducing hence the physical public arenas to only one among many sites. Not only can societal processes be sites for art, at the nexus of Kwon's critical revisiting of site specificity, is the insistence that physical arenas are also the object of the mobility of global capitalism that disrupts presumed coherences between place and identity (Kwon 2002, 164).⁶² These forces also affect art, and the itineraries of travelling artists and the nomadism of the art world are expressions of this tendency. Kwon proposes an understanding of site as the product of an infinite set of potential disruptions, in which temporality plays an important part by continuously dislocating us "out of place," revealing thus asymmetries, power relations and global mobility that structure and constitute what we call public space.

The shift from an understanding of site as a circumscribed physical location to site as a process, give way to time as an essential quality of site-specificity. As, Kwon states herself, today a site can be virtually anything

⁶¹ The notion of site specificity has been invested by various artists and theorists, a further inquiry of the transformation of the concept of site into multiple fluid, discursive fields can be found in Rugg, *Exploring Site-Specific Art*. For an alternative approach to Kwon, see Lippard's discussion of site as inhabited *places*. Lippard, *Undermining*.

⁶² Essential to Kwon's analysis is the time-space compression identified by David Harvey, which we experience as an effect of technology's disruption of the relationship between time and space. See, Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

(Kwon 2002, 3). For instance, changes in perception can be considered as a process that forms a site that art can intervene in.

Temporariness in public art

When discussing art as process, temporality is obviously essential. The permanent bronze sculpture designed to be impermeable to the tooth of time is no longer *en vogue*. The increased awareness of the temporal dimension of public art is found in the way specific durations in themselves are increasingly the object of curatorial strategies for art in public space. This is also the case in Bjørvika, where 25% of the public art budget is designated for temporary forms of art. In her writings and curatorial practice, Claire Doherty has articulated and developed this tendency.⁶³ In the temporality of the work lies a possibility, according to Doherty and her collaborator O'Neill, to circumvent the criticism addressed by Kwon of the nomadism of the art world (Doherty & O'Neill 2011, 4). Doherty's appointment as curator of the permanent art programme of Bjørvika coincided with an interest in her publication *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation*. Doherty develops further Kwon's deconstructed concept of site in her own notion of 'situation.' It is a rather open notion that is presented as a mean to think across the processes identified by Kwon that dislocate us out of place, a relational aesthetical approach and the role of art in urban regeneration (Doherty 2004).

Due to the appointment of Doherty and the commissioning of temporary forms of public art in Bjørvika, temporality has represented an aesthetical quality with which art has interacted with the development process. The curatorial vision "Slow Space" advertises this approach, while the practices of Futurefarmers and Katy Paterson in distinct ways circumvent a traditional understanding of permanent public art by placing civic engagement and organic vegetation as the material on which permanency rests. The constellation of participatory events and organic growth in the permanent public art programme is discussed in article 3. Temporal and participatory art formats enter a wider trend where social and cultural events are perceived as means to intervene in the life of cities (Bishop & William 2012; Richards & Palmer 2010), which corresponds to the vision of an active urban environment in Bjørvika. The use of temporary strategies represents an interesting intersection in urban development between different actors. As Florian Haydn and Robert Temel observe, the acceleration of temporary use is characteristic of today's neo-liberal economies and "temporariness also belongs to the opponents of those who want to use urban space in a culturally

⁶³ For more see, Doherty, *Out of Time Out of Place*, Doherty and Cross, *One Day Sculpture*, and O'Neill and Doherty, *Locating the Producers*.

subversive way” (Haydn & Temel 2006, 19-20). Temporariness represents one way in which art enters urban processes.

Opting for temporary artistic interventions in Bjørvika, even in the permanent public art programme, has paved the way for the commissioning of participatory art. For this reason, participatory art represents an aesthetic strategy that this study gives significant attention to in the articles; its interest lies with how participatory art events interact with ongoing processes in the city.

While the modes of participation vary, the nature of temporary and participatory events is ephemeral and relies on subjective memories and documentation in order to have an after-life. The aforementioned ambition to consider participatory art events as processes represents in reality an attempt to formulate relationships between art and society that lie beyond the here and now of temporary and relational art. A notable example is artist François Alÿs’ project *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002) that the artist intended to “become a story that survives the event itself,” living on in the immaterial urban fabric as a modern myth (Alÿs 2009, 39).

The intervention of art in social, economic or political processes does not only represent a breath-taking expansion of an artistic format; it occasions the question of what is indeed the impact of art in these processes. The million-dollar question is how one identifies and formulates the aesthetic and social effect of an artwork when the time and space of the work coincide with the city as process. The pull between social engagement of artists, the socio-economic processes of the redevelopment of Bjørvika and the aesthetics of an art project, renders any attempt to formulate the impact of art troublesome. In the next chapter I will discuss these processes in terms of ‘affect’ and learning. In the following, I consider the efficiency of art and its impact on public space production in light of *commodification* of cultural capital and trace back to the discussion on art’s ability to inhabit double positions that was introduced in the previous chapter.

Commodification of art

When considering participatory art as an urban process, it is indeed necessary to see it in relation to processes of commodification of cultural power and the economic incentives of the developers to represent Bjørvika as a lively urban environment. The strategy to fund temporary, participatory events coincides with the desire for diversity, activity and public ownership in Bjørvika. Doherty’s curatorial vision explicitly states that the role of art is to gather people (Doherty 2011). Attracting people, one might add, is something that the development of Bjørvika craves. Jonny Aspen and Gaute Brochmann are among those that have argued that, rather than getting ‘people’ to the actual

physical locations in Bjørvika, the challenge of creating ‘life’ is resolved virtually by photo-shopping people into the prospects of the new public spaces (Aspen 2013; Brochmann 2015). The organization of participatory events and portrayal of real life in the documentation of the interaction of real participants can represent an alternative method that also produces representations of Bjørvika as active and lively. It is timely to consider a potential risk in the format of participatory art, namely the *commodification* of its participants.

In spite of narratives that paint participatory art as a platform enabling the agency of the audience, Bishop stresses that participatory art might also represents “a story of our ever-increasing voluntary subordination to the artists’ will, and of the commodification of human bodies in a service economy (since voluntary participation is also unpaid labour)” (Bishop 2012, 277).⁶⁴ The critique raised by Gilles Debord of the commodification of social relations into spectacles absorbed by capitalist economy, still has validity (Debord 2004). Bishop, on this account, underscores that although participatory art forecloses the traditional idea of spectatorship, “the existence of an audience is ineliminable, since it is impossible for everyone in the world to participate in every project” (Bishop 2012b, 36). In order to reach secondary audiences, participatory art relies on mediating third terms, which indeed can turn social relations into spectacles.

Moreover, the commodification of cultural capital in the logic of image building and place marketing influences art in public spaces and often transgresses the intentionality of artists. Rosalyn Deutsche has famously argued that artists, when interacting with an urban context, become part of economical processes such as gentrification, and even contribute to these value systems despite opposing them ideologically (Deutsche 1996). Current public-private partnerships, such as the Bjørvika development, transgress the dichotomy of private and public space and make it necessary, as Deutsche argues, to be wary of the adjective ‘public’ that legitimates spaces and art as “democratic even when oppressive power relations, including that of power property, produce and maintain the spatial organization of the city” (Deutsche 2008, 19). While the efficacy and usefulness of art are understood in relation to the artist’s and community’s intentionality, art’s commodification and value production in capitalist economy is rather a question of effects that the artist does not control.

⁶⁴ Remunerating participants is one possible strategy carried out in order to counteract the potential subordination and exploitation of participants, see among others Stephanie Springgay and the Torontonians, “How to Be an Artist by Night,” 133-148. Another critical review of the status of participants exists in a polemic between Kwon and Kester. The former warns against the construction of fixed identities in community-based art. The latter advocates collaborations between artists and coherent communities, perceiving these as more equalitarian. For more see, Kwon, *One Place after Another*, 138-155, “Public Art and Urban Identities” and Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 152-191, “Aesthetic Evangelists.”

In a recent publication by Gerd Elise Mørland and Heidi Bale Amundsen, the question of politics in art is displaced from discussions on the intentional production of meaning to how meaning is affected by political frameworks external to the curatorial sphere of influence (Mørland & Bale Amundsen 2015). In the same publication, Andrea Phillips frames the paradox between the ‘content’ of art exposed in art institutions and the economic structure that supports the institutions (Phillips 2015). A relevant issue with regard to both the art programme of Bjørvika and contemporary art in general, is the degree to which art holds the capacity to produce meaning independently of the structure that supports it.

Critics such as Bishop, Phillips and Deutsche are concerned about the conditions of art in a neoliberal economy (Bishop 2012, Phillips 2015, Deutsche 2008), framing hence a dynamic between art and societal context applicable to the redevelopment of Bjørvika, which has also been characterized as neoliberal (Bergsli 2015; Skrede 2014). Among the potential impact of the socio-economic processes of the redevelopment on art are the commodification of participants, commodification of cultural capital and the masking of power-relations in public space.

In relation to Bjørvika, these perspectives require that one reconsider whether the intentions driving the art practices can actually be assessed independently of the structure that funds them. In addition, the imbrication with the context confronts commissioned artists with an ethical dilemma. Would it be more ‘effective’ not to participate; or how can one avoid the commodification of the participants of an art project?

There seems, however, to be no straightforward answer to these questions. Because the project *Future Library* has received the most media attention, it might be the best case to discuss the commodification of art and the rendering of social events in Bjørvika into spectacle.⁶⁵ In this project, the artistic intention of producing an anthology accessible only for readers in 100 years from now represents a consideration for future generations which undoubtedly reflects well on the developers. However, the development of Bjørvika is not characterized by a particular concern for long-term sustainability. Therefore, it is possible that although the art project reflects positively on the image of Bjørvika, the urban development context can act negatively on or even destabilize Future Library’s production of meaning.

Critical art can be used by large enterprises to “outsource” a critical function that appears as self-reflective with regards to their conduct, due to the association with art.⁶⁶ In an era of concern for the climate, the

⁶⁵ Future Library has received worldwide attention from major newspapers, for complete and updated overview of media coverage visit, www.futurelibrary.no

⁶⁶ This point with regard to critical art is made by Aspen and Pløger, see, *Den vitale byen*, 191.

commissioning of “green art” in Bjørvika seems to indicate that the association with art that champions ecological sustainability reflects particularly well on stakeholders. Nevertheless, assessing the societal impact of art, whether it is question of the political agenda of artists or its relation to its supporting structure, is an interpretative practice that acts upon sense-making processes that art is part of. In chapter 3, I outline art’s ability to inhabit double positions as essential to my epistemological approach and I will now discuss this further.

Litago and flatbread: double and contradictory positions

The work *Whoomp – there it is* (2002) by Matias Faldbakken and Gardar Eide Einarsson forms a good example of how an art project operating in an urban development context cannot avoid its entanglement with the context. Yet, it also demonstrates a way in which art can use the context by actualising the multiple significances that the embeddedness in the context occasions.

The project addressed gentrification processes boosted by the waterfront development and installed a ‘gathering point’ between the audience attracted to Bjørvika by the art events accommodated by Bjørvika Culture and Commerce and the locals, prostitutes and drug addicts that had been using the area already for years. *Whoomp – there it is* comprised a round, white leather sofa with a middle-section containing *Litago*, a strawberry or chocolate flavoured milk product for kids that is popular among drug addicts that have difficulty eating. During a week, the artists refilled the emptied Litago-supplies every day.

The timing of the artistic intervention is significant, because the summer of 2002 represented a transition in Bjørvika. The former industrial use of the site was closed down and the site was introduced as a space for art and cultural consumption. Thereby, the art project entered the processes of regeneration of the area and the gentrification that it criticized. The intervention drew attention to the existing social life of the area and formed an intersection between two social groups, hipster/artists and local drug addicts. *Whoomp – there it is* enacted in public the temporary art event’s role in the process of making the harbour attractive to as a middle-class area and the eventual displacement of the marginalized groups elsewhere.

As I passed the sofa, the project also taught me my first lesson on what gentrification is, and the role of hipsters and artists in preparing the way for the middle-class’s entry to dis-favoured urban areas. Through a simple set up, *Whoomp – there it is* rendered visible the commodification of cultural capital



Matias Faldbakken and Gardar Eide Einarsson, *Whoomp –there it is* (2002).
Copyright Matias Faldbakken and Gardar Eide Einarsson

and the social and economic processes at play from a situated perspective. Part of the efficacy of the project was due to the introduction of Litago, a kid's drink, in a context of drug addiction and social marginalization. *Whoomp – there it is* shows how the same material, the Litago-drink, can play distinct roles in different contexts. Interestingly, it does the same to the audience. The work reflected and reinterpreted the expectations and drive of people heading to Skur 55 to see the exhibition *Bjørsvika 17. August!* by re-contextualising the social situation, hinting at the audience's own role in gentrification. Thereby, the aesthetic experience of the work, the convenient offer of Litago, the commodification of cultural capital, and the critical undressing of the economic and social processes at play co-existed in the work as dimensions of this peculiar urban context. The imbrication of the project in the socio-economical processes that it critically undresses can be appreciated in how Einarsson and Faldbakken also addresses and include drug addicts in the project as 'silent' participants. Thereby also this marginalized group participates, as their way of life is put on display and their authenticity appropriated as cultural capital by the artistic intervention.

The project plays different roles according to the situations and socio-economic processes it is assessed in relationship to, and it is by virtue of its capacity to contain these disparate dimensions that it reconfigures issues at

hand and circulates alternative urban knowledge. Art's ability to inhabit double and contradictory positions provides useful insight into the complexity of urban reality. In Article 2, Futurefarmers' introduction of flatbread in various cultural, historical and social contexts is perceived as actualising a similar ability, by carrying a load of significances.

The impact of art and the question of its usefulness

Discussing art as a process in the city, invites a discussion of the influence of art in contexts that are conditioned by societal forces that are most likely uncontrollable for an artistic practice. How do we deal with both the relationship between art's aesthetic and social impacts and the impact of the ongoing socio-economic processes on public art? Artistic intentionality is cast up against an urban Goliath, and its most effective tool may be, just as in the myth, its symbolic force. Notwithstanding the symbolic dimension of art, one ought to consider art's embeddedness with urban process as an arena that establishes other connections between aesthetics and life, in relation to which art's usefulness can be formulated. Affect, knowledge and perception travel between processes instigated by public art practices and other urban processes. The art programme of Bjørvika draws on the traditions of socially engaged art, while potentially fuelling the gentrification processes in the area. The potential usefulness of art is enacted in the tension field between good intentions, aesthetic approach, and the social and economic stakes of the development. Due to this study's concern with the interaction of art with public space production, the question of its *impact* is significant and it will be discussed in the remaining part of this chapter.

In the art movement 'new genre public art,' of which Suzanne Lacy and Mary Jane Jacob are among the pioneers, a primary concern is the efficiency of art when addressing societal issues. Jacob outlines the potential in art of remedying social problems and making lasting impact if addressing public issues and interacting with the members of the public (Jacob 1995, 54). In this context, art's effectivity is understood as a result of the artists' empathic and collaborative skills and should be considered in relation to participatory and community-based art practices which seek to empower local citizens.

Bishop, as we saw in the previous chapter, is sceptical about discourses on the effectivity of art. The urgency of the social task at hand and the ethical drive leading to the collaborative initiative has, according to her, led to a shortage of critical responses to projects as art and not as social initiatives (Bishop 2012, 13). Two elements are crucial in Bishop's critique of the promotion of art's effectivity. First, she claims that the consensus on the ethical dimension of the work stands in the way for discussing its aesthetic dimensions. Secondly, in her view the effectiveness of art is not assessed

critically in relation to similar initiatives in other social practices. Rather its social effectiveness is assessed in art theoretical terms (Bishop 2012, 19).

Futurefarmers' project *Flatbread Society* can illuminate the critical challenge outlined by Bishop. This art practice has been able to influence the space production in Loallmenningen and can be assessed as having had effect on other social practices; however when compared to the number of people that signed up for allotments gardens at *The Wonderful [Herligheten]*, the art project appears as a marginal public practice. Precisely therefore, one can argue that the project's aesthetic dimension is a significant part of its impact relative to its social efficiency. When confronted with socially engaged art's ethical imperative of right-doing and its quest for "real efficiency," Bishop states that we slide into a sociological discourse and asks rhetorically "what happened to aesthetics?" (Bishop 2012, 17)

The question has influenced this study because if one looks only for the impact of art in a wider societal perspective, while dismissing its *aesthetic impact*, art practices are reduced in the sense that they are only viewed as relevant when obtaining results that other disciplines are trained and equipped to do, while the particularities of artistic approaches are overlooked.

Revisiting the failings of art in Bjørvika

The critical reception of the art programme is on the one hand characterized by criticism of how art is used in the commodification of cultural capital (Bergsli 2015; Aspen & Pløger 2015; Hansen 2006, Gran & de Paoli 2005). On the other hand, it occasions inquiries into the actual impact of the art strategies on non-commercial dimensions of the development (Bergsli 2015; Aspen & Pløger 2015). Overall, the general impression seems to be that art has indeed contributed to the image building of the area, while failing to influence the actual development (Bergsli 2015, Aspen & Pløger 2015, Hansen 2006, Bergsli 2010). My study indicates something different. I suggest that art has interacted with the development in various ways, and the articles of the thesis indicate areas in which the art projects can be considered as having had an impact. However, I believe that the discussion of how art has influenced the development or has had actual impact on spatial practices is fundamentally affected by how one comprehends the usefulness of art.

Aspen and Pløger's *Den vitale byen* and Heidi Bergsli's doctoral thesis are two recent academic studies that discuss the influence of public art on the general development of Bjørvika. They offer perspectives on what is perceived as the use of art, but their work can also be read as examples of how the discussion on art's effect on the development is conditioned by the analytical framework and preconception of the role of art. Heidi Bergsli discusses the impact of critical art on the development of Bjørvika and

includes among her examples *Common Lands – Allmannaretten*. She concludes that, “[T]he questions about the right to the spaces of Bjørvika brought up by the artists did thereby not achieve any substantial impact on the public or political sphere. The arts have not had the powers to contribute to changed discourse or practices” (Bergsli 2015, 282). Bergsli draws out the roles of art as nurturing the image of the city, contributing to the creation of place-feelings, enhancing diversity and providing critique (Bergsli 2015, 281). However, the position that she adopts in the discussion of art’s role in Bjørvika is that art cannot be separated from other kinds of social practices (Bergsli 2015, 281). Her stand rests on the cultural-materialist approach of Raymond Williams and his influential work *Culture and Society* (1963).

The position adopted by Bergsli is interesting because it entails the expectation that critical art can have a substantial impact on other social fields and change discourse and practices. Yet, it is problematic in that it is a position from which public art practices can be considered failures, depending on the degree of impact that they have on other societal fields.

Similarly, when discussing “Common Lands – Allmannaretten” and “Slow Space” Jonny Aspen and John Pløger imply that there is little evidence suggesting that the art projects endeavour to confront the developers’ visions of public space (2015, 186). On the subject of *Flatbread Society*, the discussion revolves around the assessment of the art project’s limited capacity to have a substantial impact on the public spaces (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 187). Aspen and Pløger understand the urban redevelopment context of Bjørvika as a potential expansion of art’s traditional field of action, and they stress the complex relations between capital, societal structure and art that emanate from the context (2015, 188). Their readings, however, underscore the ambiguity in the curatorial documents and art strategy, and ultimately they argue that the divergent roles ascribed to art in relationship to the image building, the creation of place identity and art’s critical function, do not add up (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 189). The role of art is perceived as ambiguous, even schizophrenic (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 182).

Can we have it both ways?

Both Bergsli’s and Aspen and Pløger’s discussions of art in public space are saying, because they genuinely endeavour to take art seriously as part of the urban redevelopment context and take the curatorial standpoints and art strategy at face value when evaluating the impact that public art has had in Bjørvika. However, my study does not support their findings that art has not had a substantial impact on the practices in Bjørvika. In, particular the third article discusses the artist group Futurefarmers’ actual impact on the planning process of Loallmenningen. I am inclined to argue that art has influenced public place production and acted beyond a traditional understanding of the

art sphere. Still, in my study the question has not been whether art influences other processes of space production, but *how*.

Bjørsvika has been an interesting case because areas of use for art have been outlined from the start. In policy documents, curatorial strategies and critical reception, art has been perceived as contributing to the image constructed of the place, activating the area and contributing to place identity, multifaceted urban environments and co-ownership. However, I have been interested in how these roles are inhabited critically from within and how specific artistic knowledge has been at play within the spaces opened and prescribed in policy documents. The discussions that I have engaged in in the articles rely on another comprehension of the usefulness and role of art than what is both embedded in Bjørsvika Development's artistic strategy and in the critical reception.

The ambiguity that Aspen and Pløger attempt to resolve when stressing that the art strategy does not add up, is precisely what I find crucial to the role of art in Bjørsvika, namely that it is navigating by multiple charts and both has and does not have impact: it is both accountable to the developers and evades singular readings. It is both an investment in the redevelopment of Bjørsvika and it is art. The question of the use of art is therefore not only a question of its measurable impact on the development; rather one should also attempt to discuss how art practices inhabit critically, in Rogoff's sense, the roles that have been ascribed to it.

Paradoxically, the 'schizophrenic' positions ascribed to art in the policy documents and curatorial statements, seem to be adopted in the reviews of them. The assessment of art swings like a pendulum that points either to the intertwinement of art with the economic incentives of the development, or to the critically confrontational stances adopted in art practices. Artistic strategies that aim at negotiating between the two are therefore discarded. Hence, I suggest there is a need for critical framework that is able to reflect the ways in which a complex artistic practice such as Futurefarmers' produces substantial impact, adopts a critical stance *and* meet the developers' expectations. The problem, in my view, is that art is discussed as ideally inhabiting a single position. When inhabiting dual positions such as critical and collaborative, transformative and conformist, or commercial and idealistic, projects are dismissed as not only ambiguous, but their credibility is affected. Although these dualities should be acknowledged, I suggest that art's capacity to activate multiple positions simultaneously must be included in discussions on the usefulness of art.

Part of art's usefulness, is that it produces unexpected results, and does not have a predetermined output (Christensen-Scheel 2013). A one-sided view on the role of art is in danger of overlooking the unexpected ways in

which it navigates and resonates in a complex context. Hence, it is particularly in contexts where art is held to a set of social, cultural and economic expectations that its double ontological status should be acknowledged. When discussing art's role and usefulness in an urban development context, the researcher should endeavour to do so with a double ontological gaze.

Summary

In this chapter, I suggest that art opens a potent space between idea and practice and participates in the formation of what we perceive as public. I outlined that the epistemological dimension of the interaction between art and public space production is essential to my approach and clarify that I have discussed perception and relationality as generating alternative forms of knowledge. Artistic research is discussed as a form of interaction between art and public space production, representing an expansion of what we understand as public art, and is framed as itself a societal function of art in a knowledge society. Moreover, I outline a distinction between participating attendees and the public of participatory art, and stress that my own concern is with the aesthetic and public character of social relations in participatory art. The mode of interaction between art and public space production is characterised in terms of collaboration and criticality, and the study is concerned by how art inhabits its role in the development critically from within.

The chapter discusses the move away from an object-based approach to public art to an understanding of it as process in the city. The commodification of participants is outlined as a risk of temporary and participatory strategies. I suggest that the embeddedness in the socio-economic processes of the redevelopment can destabilise public art's production of significances. However, this study perceives art as holding the ability to inhabit double and contradictory positions and thereby as having the capacity to contain disparate aspects of the context and be a source of urban knowledge. Compared with previous research, this study suggests that art has had "actual" impact on public space production. However, it argues that discussing art in terms of its influence on other societal fields is not sufficient and outlines the necessity to devise framework that manages to assess how art navigates by multiple charts.

Chapter 5

Public Art: Urban learning

Why do we act as we do and on what knowledge are our decisions and priorities based? This vertiginous and vast question can be posed to a number of situations in life, but in this instance, it is provoked by the transformation of Bjørvika. Which trajectories are traced between knowledge and practice? What forms of site knowledge and experiences are included as the potential of the area is perceived and defined? In the following chapter, I am engaging with a discussion of what forms of knowledge and which epistemological perspectives influence the redevelopment of Bjørvika. My point in doing this is to contextualise the forms of artistic competence traced in the articles of the thesis, and make visible how I have assessed them in relation to other practices that are influential in public space production. This chapter elaborates further on the relationships between artistic forms of knowledge and the city that were introduced in chapter 3. I introduce Sharon Zukin's analysis of the power of visual representations and the use of visual strategies in public space production. I suggest that Zukin's critique of the visual editing of public culture correlates with the earlier discussions of Bjørvika as a perceptual regime in which art can have political significance by displaying dissensus. Dissensus is in the following not merely understood as conflict between forms of perception and significance, it is also key to articulating conflicting epistemologies.

In the introduction, I stated that the study outlines four aspects of public space production that can be available for art to influence. The areas can be summarised as the *image of place*, *the understanding/narrative of site*, *the use of public space and the creation of social spaces*. These are discussed in each case as a distinct article. In the following, I will revisit these areas of public space conceptualisation and suggest that the application of visual strategies conditions how they are resolved. I will retrace some of the arguments from the articles and suggest ways in which artistic competence can be perceived in relation to other forms of professional knowledge.

The discussion of the situated critique of objective vision re-emerges in my discussion of public art in this chapter. I outline instances where art performs an epistemological critique of deficient visual representations by seeing better and more critically from situated viewpoints. I also point to artistic approaches that form alternatives to the public space programme by actualising situated forms of urban knowledge. Artistic competence is also approached with respect to interventions in the city through participatory

strategies, and the peculiar dynamic of participatory art is discussed in terms of ‘affect’.

Towards the end of the chapter, I introduce the concept of critical urban learning (MacFarlane 2011) in order to open up a discussion on how art circulates in the city as a form of knowledge, while acknowledging the dominance of some forms of knowledge over others. Lastly, I discuss the possibility of viewing art as a ‘dissensual form of urban learning’ in the city.

Urban epistemologies

The epistemological approach to a problem is key to understanding which solutions and empirical forms of knowledge are formed. Urban theorist Francois Ascher addresses the relation between epistemology and urbanist practices when he revisits the notion of *serendipity* (Ascher 2009). Serendipity is an approach to the world where one finds something other than what one searched for.⁶⁷ By introducing the notion of serendipity in a discussion of the methodologies of urbanism, Ascher advocates a move away from pre-conceptualized models and pre-edited routines; hence, at the very core of his argument lies a discussion of the production and application of knowledge in an urban context. He suggests that in order to respond to particular situations and the uncertainty that they present, one needs to change the ways in which one knows the city (Ascher 2009, 89). Central to a serendipitous approach is acknowledging things that we do not yet know and therefore do not know how to or where to look for. It represents an approach that departs from what we already know in favour of the particular that yet remains to be experienced.⁶⁸

In a twofold movement, this study has been preoccupied both by how we know the city and how we know the city through art. This enormous question was first approached in regard images as forms of knowledge. In Article 1, I have argued that the representations of the public spaces of Bjørvika that circulated prior to their actual construction influenced how we see and learn to know public space. Not only did I suggest that images can condition our perception of these spaces, central to the argument advanced is that the representations of public space within a place-marketing rationale circulate inadequate forms of site knowledge. Images can both create preconceptions of the use of public space and get in the way of acquiring situated forms of knowledge. The role of vision in urban development has remained a focus as I have investigated both visual strategies applied in Bjørvika and artistic approaches that depart from them.

⁶⁷ The notion builds on the fairy tale of the three princes of Serendip, who made great discoveries by accident.

⁶⁸ A serendipitous approach can also be detected in artistic research discourses that apply a method of not knowing. Futurefarmers’ approach in Bjørvika had this character by being open to “moments of not knowing.” See, Bugge, “Bugge chooses Futurefarmers’ *Flatbread Society* at Bjørvika,”⁷⁹. For more on artistic research as productive ways of not knowing, see, among others, Wesseling, *See it again, Say it again*.

Professional knowledge: making optical order out of space

Sight, images and urban transformation act upon each other. The role of the visual in city transformation is a question of the ordering of space, sensory experiences of the city and the professional skills of urban planners. Baron Haussmann's renovation of Paris under Napoleon III stands as a prominent historical example of how a grand scale urban transformation also altered our practices of seeing the city. Through the inscription of avenues into the labyrinthine, medieval urban matter, a visual order was imposed onto the city and our gazes, as well as forming new trajectories in the city for feet to find. Sociologist Richard Sennett describes Haussmann method when inscribing a new visual order in Paris.

To make the actual streets of the plan, Haussmann constructed tall wooden towers up to which his assistants –whom he called “urban geometers” –ascended, measuring out straight streets with compass and ruler to the old walls of the city. (Sennett, 1996, 330)

The renovation of Paris represents a restructuring of the sensory landscape of the city (Degen 2014), however the width of the streets was carefully calculated to enable the control of the movement of crowds in revolt (Sennett, 1996, 330). The visual ordering of Paris went hand in hand with social control. Haussmann's renovation of Paris exemplifies a power dimension embedded in the visual structuring of space and social relations. Seeing the city is a pleasurable practice of which the 19th century *flâneur* stands as an iconic figure, but the reconfigured city also represents particular power structures. ⁶⁹

Of particular interest for this study, however, is the peculiar visual methodology that Haussmann's instalment of the wooden towers represents. The influence of a historical period's visual practices on the professionalization of urban planning is a central narrative in Rebecca Ross's doctoral thesis (Ross 2012). The professional knowledge developed in urban planning is intimately linked with the visual technologies available, whether it is enabling to see the city from the sky in a balloon (Ross 2012), or the emergence of new methods in cartography (Picon 2003). Maps, diagrams,

⁶⁹ I am thinking in particular of Benjamin's writing on Baudelaire and the Parisian *flâneur* as a figure that embodies the pleasure of seeing, see *The Arcades Project*, trans. Eiland and McLaughlin. An example of visual power structures, is found in the analysis by Michel Foucault of Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon." The idea was a prison conceived with a spatial disposition that allowed continuous visual surveillance while concealing the observation post itself so that the prisoners eventually internalized the unseen gaze cast upon them. Foucault's theories on the power relations embedded in spatial structure are applied by Paul Rubinow in a study of colonial, urban planning. See, Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, and Rubinow, *French Modern*.

illustrations and other visual representations are influential methodological tools in urban planning and architecture.⁷⁰ The professional seeing practices that has evolved in urbanism over time represent perceptual habits, and can be understood as collectives of seeing in Daston's sense of the term (Daston 2008).

Also in contemporary urban planning, visual practices, aesthetics and methodologies give rise to visual, urban strategies. Currently, the visual plays a role in planning through the strategic creation of 'visions' of the city that are conceived as projections in the present of a desired future. Visions are increasingly used as governmental tools in urban redevelopment (Shirley 2000; Bergsli 2015), although also part of modernist tradition and representations of utopia (Pinder 2005). In addition, visual strategies should be considered expressions of visual urban aesthetics as planners, local authorities and developers canalise efforts toward the beautification and optical order of the city. The importance of visual planning is the topic of Nikolaus Pevsner who promotes the organization of cities as well-organized visual wholes, installing picturesque qualities in urban environments (Pevsner 2010). Kevin Lynch offers another approach to visual planning, outlining a methodology to increase clarity and legibility of the cityscape through conscious design of the visual qualities of a city (Lynch 1990). The influence of the very tools that city planners use in order to visually achieve spatial organisation is critically investigated in *Life Between Buildings* by architect Jan Gehl (1980 [1971]). Here, the aloof visual conceptualization of space that architecture models allow is revisited from the perspective of the ground, and embodied viewpoints are argued to be essential to urban aesthetics.⁷¹

Gehl's architecture office is, together with SLA Landscape Architects, responsible for the public spaces of Bjørvika. For this reason, an interesting topic for further investigations is how the methods applied there coincide with the argument from 1971. The line of investigation of this study, however, suggests that architectural prospects in a place-marketing logic also installs disembodied viewpoints, however not conceived from the sky. In addition, it questions the effectivity of solving the issue of connectivity between Bjørvika and the inner city by constructing sightlines. The epistemological grounding of disembodied and distant viewpoints, characterised by de Certeau as a "fiction of knowledge," is perceived as

⁷⁰ The role of different forms of visual representations and technologies in architecture and urban planning has been addressed in previous doctoral theses at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design. See, Basma, *Engaging Realities*, Aspen, *Byplanlegging som representasjon*, Wergeland, *From Utopia to Reality*, and Schlegel, *The Gap between Design and Vision*.

⁷¹ For a more recent publication that offers an extensive overview of alternative architectural practices to the creation of inclusive spaces, see Awan et al., *Spatial Agency*.

object of an epistemological critique performed by public art practices (de Certeau 1988, 92).

Zukin's critique of visual strategies in a cultural economy

In a place-marketing logic, the use of visual strategies in the construction of public spaces affect the relations between visual forms of knowledge and city planning. The role of visual representation in defining public culture is essential to urban sociologist Sharon Zukin's writings on the symbolic economy's influence on cities (Zukin 1995; 1996). Zukin states that "[c]reating public culture involves both shaping public space for social interaction and constructing a visual representation of the city" (Zukin 1995, 24). The symbolic economy, Zukin argues, is characteristic of older capitalistic countries where the production of symbols was intimately linked to production of jobs and production of space (Zukin 1996, 226), and it "recycles real estate as it does designer clothes" (Zukin 1995, 9). In the current place marketing logic, visual representations enter into the ongoing construction of the city as symbolic landscapes designed for visual consumption. Post-industrial cities rely on these representations in order to ensure the growth of cultural consumption and the fuelling of the symbolic economy (Zukin 1995). Public art, as well as museums and artists in general, are included in Zukin's definition of the symbolic economy. Artists play a significant role in the 'recycling' of real estate, and places invested by them are infused with new imaginaries and can easily enter gentrification processes (Zukin 1995, 23).

Zukin rightly points out that the visual representations of cities have social and economic consequences, because representations have the ability "to control urban spaces by 'framing' a vision (Zukin 1996, 241). However, with whom this power lies is a primordial question for Zukin because she perceives that "[i]n the absence of a strong collective vision including all the city's people, the power to impose a visual frame becomes the power to define a public culture" (Zukin 1996, 241). How urban life is represented is therefore symptomatic of what we understand as public. The visual is a pivotal point in Zukin's discussion, coherent visions and visual representations are means to control urban space, and therefore the negotiation of new imageries in visual representations of urban culture can itself then be a democratic act (Zukin 1995, 20). In other words, social inclusion is at stake in the editing of what –and who – is visible or invisible. When visual representations have the power of defining public culture they can be considered as forming the perception of what we hold in common. As I have earlier suggested when discussing Ranci re, the construction of a visual representation of Bj rvika can be viewed as constituting a perceptual regime. The visual representations form a perceptual regime when structuring

ways of seeing, thinking and doing. Yet, Rancière enables another perspective on art than Zukin because it articulates art's dissensual efficiency when disputing the conscious design of the perception of the area.

Zukin suggests that *visual strategies* are essential to the restructuring of urban space and, she identifies them both as means to construct representations of space and shape physical space (Zukin 1996). Similarly, in this study visual strategies are understood as producing coherent visions that frame spaces for consumption and shape urban life, both in visual representations and in public space. Moreover, Zukin's analysis is of interest because it articulates relationships between social, economic and power structures of the city in visual terms. The strategic exploitation of visions in the symbolic economy, necessitates in my view both critical investigation of the perspectives from which these visions are articulated, and initiatives that aim at bridging the gaps that are created between the situated experiences of the city and the constructed visions. The discrepancy between the forms of site knowledge represented in constructed images and situated urban knowledge is one such gap. In Articles 1 and 2, I suggest that Marianne Heier's critical correction of Bjørvika's image and Futurefarmers' research of the site generate knowledge about site that infuse the constructed visions with local and situated knowledge and mend this gap.

Visioning and participation in planning

Visions and *visioning* are powerful tools to control urban space when applied systematically in urban planning. Heidi Bergsli (2015) discusses the multiple roles of visioning as urban strategy in the Fjord City. The creation of a vision was an important strategy that re-framed the industrial waterfront as a space of possibility and promoted access to the seaside as beneficial for the urban society at the turn of the millennium (Bergsli 2015, 90). Bergsli suggests that the consolidated vision of the City of Oslo captured in the slogan "the blue, the green, the city in between" illustrates the shift from an industrial use of the site towards what was perceived as a "future-directed city of knowledge, culture and environment" (in Bergsli 2015, 89). Through the consolidation of a strong vision, visual representations are given the power to frame urban space as stressed by Zukin.

Visioning, however, is also applied as a method in urban planning in the objective of enhancing civic participation in planning (Sanoff 2010). The question of whether a visioning process represents broad civic participation or rather an elitist construct of a few visionaries, can be turned around into



The Bakehouse workshop (2013). Futurefarmers invite participants to imagine the form and function of a permanent bakehouse. Photo by C.B.M

a question of which forms of knowledge a vision is based upon and whether it includes situated viewpoints based on local, diversified knowledge.

During a week in 2004, a charrette was organized aiming to include multiple perspectives in the vision of the Fjord City. The shortcomings of the ‘participatory’ visioning process are recapitulated by Bergsli who remarks that the charrette mainly engaged professionals, that the scenarios were based on the visions formulated by the City Council, and that in hindsight the process was criticised for ignoring broad citizen participation (2015, 93).⁷² Participation, however is a buzz word both in planning and contemporary art. The joint interests and challenges of participatory art and planning in enhancing civic participation are discussed in Articles 3 and 4.⁷³ This represents yet another approach of this study to how artistic competence enter into the processes of producing public spaces. Article 3 problematizes a bottom-up reading of Futurefarmers’ influence on the planning of Loallmenningen by distinguishing the artist collective’s participation in

⁷²There have been alternative initiatives aiming at broadening civic participation. In 2006, Interdisciplinary Arena of Urban Development/[Tverrfaglig Arena for Byutvikling] invited members of the public and professionals to share their opinion on Fjord City in order to include a wider range of perspectives, to consult the compilation, see Kjellsen et al. *Stemmer om Fjordbyen*. An alternative charrette was organised 22.1-26.1 2008 on the initiative of the district council of Gamle Oslo/[Bydelsutvalget for Gamle Oslo]. See, Engh, “Plansmie Bjørvika.”

⁷³ The conflation in the ambition to involve members of the public in planning processes appears in that Futurefarmers organised a workshop that aimed at an open visioning process off how their public bakehouse in Bjørvika could be imagined. The workshop was held on 17 June 2013.

decision-making processes from the attendees' participation in the art project. Article 4 discusses participatory art in terms of how it create social spaces in public space. It suggests that although a project such as *Future Library* gathers people in public space, an essential feature of the project is that its open address includes multiple generations. The attendees' ability to imagine a form of stranger relationality with participants that are not yet born is essential to the event. When discussing art's intervention in public space production, both articles differentiate the immediate gathering of attendees in an event from other dimensions of the work that make up its intervention in the city. The point in doing so is to problematize readings of participatory art as civic participation. The imaginative dimension of *Future Library* and the "green" and collaborative practice of *Futurefarmers* are considered as installing alternative experiences in public space and circulating new site knowledge, yet the arguments in the articles suggest that the projects do not actualise broad civic participation.

Epistemological critique of place images

Crucial to Zukin's argument is that visual strategies, even when relying on governmental support, tend to frame public culture toward private spheres (Zukin 1996, 239).⁷⁴ Through the construction of place images conceived for visual consumption, public spaces become objects of economic speculation. In the transformation of place identities into objects for visual consume, a wide range of cultural dimensions are translated into values in the property market (Zukin 1997, 167). Culture is presented as a dimension of *the place image* of Bjørvika and thereby becomes an element in the place marketing strategy and the intercity competition rationale of the redevelopment (Planog bygningsetaten et.al. 2003).⁷⁵ Art in public spaces can transform the symbolic power of culture into values in real estate.

When Kunsthall Oslo opened in one of the high rises of Barcode, art critic Jonas Ekeberg asked the head of Kunsthall Oslo: "To what degree will the new art centre act as a tool to increase the value of apartments and premises in Bjørvika?" (Ekeberg 2010).⁷⁶ The question is pertinent, precisely because it addresses the question of the economic revenue of the developers' investments into public art in quantitative terms, showing in fact the complexity of measuring the economic value of culture. However, it is important, I believe, not only to discuss the construction of place images as

⁷⁴ This point is also made by Bergsli in relation to the Bjørvika development. "Vision and promotion were thus merged in the strategic planning." See, Bergsli, *Urban attractiveness and competitive policies in Oslo and Marseille*, 94.

⁷⁵ An image in this context is understood as a branding tool, and the design of a place image follows five criteria: simplicity, validity, credibility, appeal, and distinctiveness. See among others, Kotler et.al., *Marketing Places Europe*, 167.

⁷⁶ The translation is mine.

marketing strategies, even though this is highly problematic in terms of the commercial targeting of particular social groups, but also to discuss it as an actual urban strategy. Visual representations of space encompass only certain forms of site knowledge. They define which dimensions of a place will circulate in public, how a place is eventually perceived, and influence the public life of places. In the following, I will outline ways in which place images can structure site knowledge.

In the construction of place images, urban scholar Graeme Evans identifies a conflict between place marketing and democratic city management (Evans 2006). Since branding seeks to construct unified versions of place identity, it ultimately enters into conflict with democratic interests and methodological approaches that deal with the complexity and diversified subjectivity of city ownership (Graeme 2006, 202). The complexity of social life is simplified and excluded from coherently designed representations of urban life.

Moreover, when the place image is directed toward external financial markets, local knowledge is constantly in danger of being overrun and often the image does not reflect local reality (Mommas 2002, 44). Situated and empirical forms of knowledge are thereby discarded in order to conform to generic representations that have high market value. Furthermore, the way the constructed images relate to the existing symbolic landscape of the city is significant. Geographer Briavel Holcomb argues that, when the marketers construct new images of former industrial sites, they adapt their 'product' to a desired market. Thereby the image does not represent current or historic ownerships of the site by socio-economic groups other than the ones targeted in marketing (Holcomb 1993, 133; 141). When seen in relation to a site's past history, the new place image can reveal conscious obliterations of existing site practices (Kearns & Philo 1993, 29).

In light of the abovementioned points, a place image is a problematic form of site knowledge because its very mode of functioning is dependent on simplifying complexity, overrunning local realities and obliterating existing forms of social life. In light of the constructed image of Bjørvika, the points raised are relevant. The commercial interests behind the marketing strategy can be viewed as entering into conflict with democratic city management and the place image constructed corresponds to an international waterfront development trend. Moreover, in the new image of Bjørvika, site practices from the time when it was still an industrial site has only to a small degree been transferred and the new image is completely adapted to new social groups. Place images can be shaped independently of situated forms of urban knowledge, however because of its conscious design it has consequences for the future perception of an area (Petrin 2008). Place marketing represents a



Marianne Heier, *A drop in the Ocean* (2005). Copyright Marianne Heier.

conscious use of visual strategies in order to simplify and edit places without much regard for the actual site.

Therefore, visual representations of places in a marketing logic are dubious; they are the object of visual manipulations of site knowledge, which have little or no epistemological value.⁷⁷ Place images enter public space production processes, and the representations drawn of space at best reduce the potential of site and at worst prevent the realisation of democratic ideals of social inclusion. The works of Ane Hjort Guttu, Marianne Heier and Futurefarmers are among the art practices discussed in this thesis that perform an epistemological critique of the images constructed from disembodied viewpoints by contrasting them with local, sensuous, empirical and situated forms of knowledge.

Revisiting visual solutions to relational objectives

A discussion of the application of visual strategies should not be limited to visual representations, but include other dimensions of public space where the visual plays a significant role. As pointed out by Zukin, visual strategies are applied in both representations and the *optic ordering* of public space (Zukin 1996). An interesting phenomenon in the case of Bjørnvika is indeed how optic ordering of space, both virtually and in actual physical urban space, is applied methodologically in the effort of realising *social spaces*. The articles suggest an inadequate use of visual strategies, and positions

⁷⁷ To put it more precisely, the constructed images used in place branding do not enable learning of the actual site, but are nevertheless a source of knowledge about the urban processes that they are a product of.

artistic strategies as alternative methods. The optic ordering of space established by cultural strategies in Bjørvika installs peculiar sensory dimensions in public space.⁷⁸

Visual ordering of space

The aforementioned public space programme of Gehl Architects and SLA Landscape Architects is crucial to the realisation of a democratic management of public space production. The public spaces play an important role in substantiating the political vision and realising a general Norwegian ideal of public access to the seaside. In light of the political goals to accommodate universal access and enhance diversity, the public spaces are of central value in the planning process and the only areas where the municipality aims at assuring a high degree of universality (Bergsli 2015, 226-227). Yet in her discussion of the public spaces of Bjørvika, Bergsli states that they are developed without much concern for social diversity (Bergsli 2015, 228). Furthermore, she outlines a distinction between landscape and urban life elaborated by Don Mitchell. In his perspective, landscape represents a particular way of seeing, ordering and controlling surroundings; while urban life represents uncomfortable and troublesome heterogeneity (in Bergsli 2015, 230).⁷⁹

It is noteworthy that visual strategies are significant in the realising of public access to the seaside because this issue is partly turned into a question of visual access. Visual cohesion between the seaside and the city centre is both an objective formulated by the municipality (Oslo byplankontor 1987, 8) and one of the uttermost debated effects of the redevelopment. This is particularly due to the row of high-rises named Barcode that by virtue of height and density create a visual barrier to the city centre.⁸⁰

The visual ordering of the new public spaces is one possible way to achieve connectivity with the city centre and surrounding landscape, yet it represents a peculiar methodological approach to the city and the efficacy of this method should be considered critically in light of the ambition to realize social diversity and be discussed in relation to alternative approaches. I have been preoccupied by the use of sightlines since it represents an overarching methodological strategy in creating cohesion and achieving connectivity between the city centre and the seaside.

⁷⁸ The sensory dimensions of cities are the subject of Monica Degen's argument that they are objects of urban planning and are manipulated in order to attract or deflecting the uses and engagements by particular social groups. See, Degen 2014, "The Everyday Cities of Senses."

⁷⁹ On this issue, see also, among others, Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*.

⁸⁰ By the 6th December 2006, 22.250 signatures were collected in a civic action against the construction of high-rises through an initiative started by Vala Bjørnson and delivered ahead of the deadline for comments. The collection of signatures continued and counted 33.000 in 2013. See, Lundgaard, "Protestsamleren," and Bratten, "Barcode."

This is also applied at Loallmenningen, the public space the furthest to the east and the site of Futurefarmers' public bakehouse. Due to its location, Loallmenningen has the potential to serve as a public space for the inhabitants of the inner east area. However, it is striking that the public space programme only discusses connectivity with the east part of the city in terms of physical and visual qualities (Gehl 2008). Furthermore, the activities that the design seeks to accommodate have no bearing on studies of the interests of potential users (Diedrich 2013).

This is a topic in Article 2, which positions the practice of Futurefarmers as an alternative approach by virtue of the situated and relational nature of the artists' research of site. I suggest that their situated approach opposes the public space programme's panoptic practice of inscribing sightlines by generating different forms of site knowledge. The article suggests that the forms of site knowledge generated form a different understanding and a *new site narrative*.

Although, the practice of inscribing sightlines into the public fabric is a well-established strategy to achieve connectivity, it raises fundamental questions regarding how the design of public spaces carries out the goals of enhancing social diversity and accommodating universal access. The visual 'solution,' once again, is in opposition to social and relational approaches to site. In comparison, Futurefarmers' approach circulates situated, historical, local and relational forms of site knowledge.

Another visual strategy, which has the social dimension of space as its object, is found in the visual prospects presented by Gehl and SLA Architects to illustrate their concept. Aspen and Pløger argue that it is indeed the seductive imagery in the prospects sustains the vision of the Fjord City will eventually look (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 143). In an earlier article, Aspen (2012) discusses the rhetorical function of these images as ways to present public spaces as functioning, active, social spaces. The result, he argues is that one perceives the challenge of creating social spaces as resolved, when in fact there are very little actual attention given to the social qualities of public spaces in the public space program (Aspen 2013). Similarly, architecture critic Gaute Brochmann states, "Nobody is directly deceived by the fancy illustrations of architects. However, would one have been allowed to build Barcode this high and dense without simultaneously actively selling the image of a living, active city? I doubt it" (Brochmann 2015, 44).⁸¹ Both Aspen and Brochmann point to the practice of "photoshopping" people and

⁸¹ The translation is my own, in Norwegian it reads "Ingen lar seg kanskje direkte lure av fancy arkitekturillustrasjon. Men hadde man fått bygge Barcode så tett og så høyt uten samtidig å selge inn bildet av en levende, aktiv bydel. Jeg tviler på det."

thereby producing images of active social spaces, while in effect leapfrogging other necessary steps in processes of creating active public spaces.

The first and the last article of the thesis approach the representation of “life” from different angles. Article 1 suggests that architectural prospects mask the lack of a methodological approach to *how* city life should be realised in public spaces. Article 4 discusses the use of participatory strategies as an urban strategy to activate the area and create social spaces. Yet, it continues on the same line of thought because my interest lies with the artificial sociality of participatory art which can also be considered as a form of representation. This is particularly the case when documentation of events circulates.

The visual uses of public space

The complete makeover of Bjørvika establishes new uses of the seaside. A significant shift is the re-definition of the *uses of site* from industrial labour as main activity to leisure produced within the framework of a cultural strategy. The forms of leisure that the Fjord City enables are to a certain extent directed at the sense of sight. The transformed seaside accommodates a visual experience of the city that can be framed in three sequences: 1) the ordering of sightlines in the public spaces, 2) the relocation of cultural institutions in new iconic architecture that function as destination images, 3) the aesthetic experience of visual art inside the relocated cultural institutions.

The aforementioned visual ordering of the public spaces gives priority to visual aesthetic qualities. One of the most promoted new assets of Bjørvika is the harbour promenade that provides a continuous area along the seaside. However, promenades do not represent just any walking practice; rather, the promenade can be understood as supporting a visual practice (Sæter 2011, Jenks 1995). Furthermore, the new iconic architecture of Bjørvika engages visually with the public. The fact that the architecture functions as an image does not mean that it is deprived of phenomenological and social qualities. The new Opera House serves as an example that one does not exclude the other. Still, the visually striking effect of iconic architecture, as well as its capacity to easily translate into two-dimensional formats, turns it into an array of ‘destination images.’ Visual representations of cities circulate worldwide, influencing the mobility patterns of travellers and attracting tourists (MacCannell 2013; Miles & Miles 2004; Gran 2010; Chon 1990). The visual appeal of Bjørvika is in itself an invitation to a type of leisure activity. The harbour promenade and the iconic architecture contribute to a space that gives prevalence to the sense of sight.

Yet a third visual practice is enabled when we move from the promenade and enter the new art museums of the Fjord City, because art institutions such as Astrup Fearnly Museum of Contemporary Art, the

National Museum and the Munch Museum primarily accommodate visual experiences. The majority of the relocated cultural institutions display visual art. Article 3 discusses Futurefarmers' project and suggests that by deviating from a contemplative and visual relationships between art and beholder, the artists' development of Loallmenningen contrasts cultural strategies that would primary enable visual consumption. With the bakehouse and the urban farm the artistic intervention installs new uses of public space. In this respect, the commissioning of participatory art can represent an alternative to the investments directed into constructing a visually engaging city. The article suggests that the developing of Loallmenningen into an urban farm can be considered as breaking with the cultural development paradigm and is more in line with a green-turn in urbanism and embraces the active citizen rather than the leisure-minded cultural consumer.

The public art programme in Bjørvika has both commissioned durational and participatory, critical and discursive projects. However, visually engaging object-based artworks have not been prioritised in the curatorial approaches.⁸² In this respect, the public art strategy can be viewed as distributing different forms of contemporary art than the public art institutions in Bjørvika and intervene in the city by devising alternative uses of public space.⁸³

Saying one thing, doing another: city-life

The articles in this thesis discuss the role of visual strategies in the methodological approach to Bjørvika Development's public space programme. The focus of this study is on the alternative approaches to site in particular art projects, and the discussion in the articles suggest that artistic practices have both devised approaches to site that expands the understanding of site and performed critiques of prevalent approaches to site.

Yet the need for a wider range of approaches and forms of urban knowledge is a great concern and public art in itself is not a sufficient approach. In the case of Bjørvika, *The Vitalist City* formulates a critique of the epistemological grounds on which the redevelopment moves.

Here, Jonny Aspen and John Pløger outline the prevalence of spatial modes of thought in urban planning, an approach to the city characterised by seeking to actualise social objectives through the ordering and design of physical space (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 126). One of Pløger and Aspen's main

⁸² Both the curatorial framework of Commonland: Almannaretten and Slow Space have accommodated projects with temporal, relational and discursive qualities in public space, this does not imply that they are lacking engaging visual qualities. Rather, it represents a move away from the concern with visual immediacy as a primary quality of art. See, Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, 50.

⁸³ As the Astrup Fearnly Museum is the only one opened yet, the discussion is a bit premature, although the current practices of the institutions and their collections indicates an emphasis on visual art. However, in the transition phase foreshadowing the relocation of the Munch Museum the institution has opted for a temporary art programme in public space. See, Munchmuseet, "Munchmuseet on the Move."

criticisms is that the primary concern of urban planning is the physical surroundings, form and function. Consequently, socio-cultural conditions are perceived as secondary effects of the physical surroundings (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 135-136). Moreover, the authors suggest that epistemological perspectives, such as phenomenology, affective geography, vitalism and urban assemblage have little influence (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 130).

The paradox that the authors outline is that, while the conceptions of urban space rhetorically rely on immaterial entities such as image, life and local identity, the actual approach to urban development is still based in spatial modes of thoughts. They describe the conception of “citylife” applied in Bjørvika as conventional and simplified, arguing that it fails to engage in dialogue with the actual urban reality (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 139). The consequence, Aspen and Pløger argue, is that Bjørvika’s new urban environments are built on the basis of deficient description of reality and that both the discourses on public space and the spatial modes of thinking stand in the way of working with urban development in more creative and experimental ways (Aspen & Pløger 2015, 139; 146).

In order to go beyond a discussion of the limitations of visual strategies, I will present two theoretical perspectives from the academic field of human geography that engage with non-representational dimensions of the city, namely ‘affect’ and learning.

The affective dimension of participatory art and the city

The strategic investments in art for the sake of creating city-life in Bjørvika prompt a discussion of how this art format interacts with ongoing urban transformation. In particular, the ability of participatory art to engage and involve participants in collective structures necessitates new perspectives on how art intervenes in the city. In Article 4, I discuss different participatory structures and in two of the cases, *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*, the investigation revealed that a particular feeling circulated in the projects. What I perceived as noteworthy was that the feelings in question, hope and solidarity, were embodied in the sensorium of the projects and that the feelings were crucial to the production of the artwork. It might therefore make sense to discuss them in term of ‘affect’ because the notion denotes a state that transgresses the individual sensation. This choice meant that I introduced a new concept rather late in the study and that my subject in Article 4, the intervention of art in the city, intersects with the academic field of Affective Geography.

The concept of affect can be helpful in denoting that the feelings circulating in a project take on a life beyond the subjective experience of the singular attendee. Affect is central for the way in which the philosophers Gilles

Deleuze and Felix Guattari's distinguish art from philosophy and science. In the artwork, they argue, affects are contained independently of the subject (Deleuze & Guattari 2008). A characteristic of the affect as they perceive it is that it is detached from subjective emotions and transgresses the singular, and even the human (Deleuze & Guattari 2008). *Affective Geographies* is heavily influenced by Deleuze and the approach to affect sketched above resonates with how human geographer Steve Pile distinguishes affect and emotions. Emotions are personal or inter-personal, while the production of affect is trans-personal and 'connects bodies' (Pile 2010, 8).⁸⁴

In Article 4, I suggest that both the projects *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire* can be considered to embody affect through the collective structure of the event. The affect continuously circulated in the projects while participants enter and exit situations. I suggest that affects act upon the quality of the stranger relations engendered in the projects, and act as a mode of inclusion and exclusion in public space. Still, the move from individual feeling to an affect articulated in public is maybe most significant if one consider the embodying of hope or solidarity in collective structures as constructing an inter-subjective field of perception in the city. A move from individual feeling to affect has consequences for art critiques and researchers because when detached from the individual, an affect is part of the work's public dimension. Affects when products of art, are independent of a subjective feeling and a consequence is that we can critically assess them. Critique is particularly important if, as *Affective Geography* indicates, affects intervene in the city.

While affect can be a fruitful entrance to discuss how participatory art projects intervene in the city, art's ability to produce 'place feelings' is already an established place-making strategy in which installations and sculptures are the privileged genres (Warwick 2006, Fleming 2007). Place-making strategies target the imagined life of spaces and perceive public art as a means to realise the lived spaces as urban planning is otherwise not equipped to do. Henry Lefebvre's theory of the production of social space is key to understanding how making space can entail more than a physical construction, and how artists can enter place making processes by engendering place feelings (Lefebvre 1991).⁸⁵ Place-making strategies can have as their object to create feelings of ownership and, as Ronald Lee Fleming suggests, "enable us to feel, understand, love or otherwise have faith

⁸⁴Pile outlines three theoretical models applied in affective geography to account for the transpersonal movement of affects: circulation, transmission and contamination. See Pile, "Emotions and affect in recent human geography," 13-14. Pile's article is disputed, for a critical review see, Curti et.al., "For not limiting emotional and effectual geographies."

⁸⁵ Although there are affinities between Lefebvre's theory on the production of social space and this thesis's study of public space production, I do not draw on Lefebvre's concept in my analysis and use the term public space production descriptively.

in a particular place” (Fleming 2007, 29).⁸⁶ Anthony Gormley’s many sculptures of the human figure cast in iron and installed in public spaces around the world are examples of public art that interacts with public space by engendering place-feelings. Gormley has also created an emotive place along the Oslo seaside, west of Bjørvika. *Place of Remembrance* (2000) commemorates the deportation of Jews from Norway during the Second World War, and Gormley’s empty iron chairs facing the fjord do not only invoke history but can be said to actualise a feeling in public space.

The project *Park Fiction* (1994-) enables us to consider the intervention of art in the city in terms of affect rather than feelings. *Park Fiction* represents a deliberate attempt to exploit the affective force engendered by participatory art and redirect it outside of the immediate situation that fosters it, in order to gain political agency. *Park Fiction* is a renowned project that successfully reversed the decision to build a high-rise on the only publicly accessible land in a disfavoured neighbourhood in Hamburg. Local residents and artist Christoph Schäfer organised a number of events, underpinning hence the public usefulness of the land and accumulating support until the plans of selling the property was finally abandoned in 2005. The strategy applied is particularly interesting, since the motto of *Park Fiction* positions an affect as the drive that will transform the area, “Desires will leave the house and take to the streets” (in Thompson 2012, 201).⁸⁷ Arousing desire is among the most powerful tools applied in marketing and is deeply grounded in the market logic. The invocation of desire by *Park Fiction* formed a potent counter strategy to the privatisation of the area. Artists Barbara Holub and Paul Rajakovics elaborate on the potential agency of a collectively articulated desire when suggesting that vacant areas can provide “space for the unknown wish and thus creating desire – desire to have a say in development and allow oneself to be led by the fiction that one can really have influence” (Holub & Rajakovics 2006, 113).

Park Fiction is an example of an activist project that has gained influence on urban planning, yet when participatory art engenders and articulates affects collectively it can be appropriated as affective labour. Affective labour represents for Bishop an articulation of neo-liberalism that, she argues, correlates with participatory art production and enables the commodification of participants (Bishop 2012b, 39). Human geographer Nigel Thrift and

⁸⁶ For a more nuanced and critical approach to art as a place-making strategy consult Odrunn Sæter’s study of the Cultural Landscapes of Nordland, that draws on Lefebvre theory. She suggests that artistic projects can uncover hidden dimensions of space, but that conflict arises due to the transformation of places identities. See, Sæter, *Stedsblikk, stedsfortellinger og stedsrider*.

⁸⁷ Collective production of desire is the key to *Park Fiction* and it draws on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of *desiring-production* in *Anti-Oedipus*.

others stress that caution and attention is needed to better understand how affect is being politically deployed (Thrift 2004, Anderson & Holden 2008, Sharp 2009). Thrift outlines three reasons why the affective register of cities should not be neglected. First, systematic knowledge about the creation of affects are used in the everyday urban landscape. Secondly, this knowledge is deployed politically under the guise of aesthetics. Thirdly, affects define the identity of cities, through qualities such as “buzz” or “creative” (Thrift, 2004 58). Art in public space potentially falls under all three categories. Due to the intertwining of art with the redevelopment of Bjørvika, the points raised by Thrift should not be overlooked. Thrift claims that urban spaces “are being designed to invoke affective response” and that the current accumulation of professional and informal knowledge takes it to an unprecedented level (Thrift 2004, 68). One of the objectives of Articles 3 and 4 has been to render visible the fact that art practices that apply participatory strategies in public spaces represent a form of competence, which there is demand for due to the ambition of associating Bjørvika’s new constructed identity with city life. Yet, there is a need for more knowledge in order to better understand how the competence at play in participatory art can also interact with the city’s affective registers.

Hope, similarly to desire, has been suggested to have agency outside of the immediate situation and to influence spatial politics. This is noteworthy in view of the role of hope in *Future Library*. Human geographers Ben Anderson and Adam Holden argue that hope plays a significant role in urban regeneration because it has both a temporal and spatial reach and thereby brings the future into the present (Anderson & Holden 2008, 156). They suggest that hope is particularly influential when the outcome of an initiative is not clearly delimited. By offering individuals the possibility to fill the object of hope with their own expectations, “the event [of hope] comes to act as an undetermined figure; a blank” (Anderson & Holden 2008, 153). This finding from Anderson and Holden’s study can have transfer value to *Future Library* because the future anthology represents a blank in the project and this can illustrate how hope seems to grow and expand both temporarily and spatially. The lack of specified content gives efficacy to the event of hope because each attendee is free to direct her hope according to her own expectations. Yet a central point in Article 4 is that projects that circulate affects in the city needs to be assessed in relation to the context, because art can be deployed and used in urban strategies that embellish and mask failings in urban planning.



Future Library's annual event in the woods (2016). Photo by C.B.M

Critical urban learning

The necessity to understand better how urban knowledge emerge and circulate is stressed by human geographer Colin MacFarlane in his investigations of how the city is learned from multiple situated practices and through everyday engagement with the city. MacFarlane draws out the whole city as 'learning machine' (MacFarlane 2011b). Art in public space is part of the urban fabric and MacFarlane's work is essential to understand better art as a form of urban learning. I have not developed this perspective in the articles, however I believe it will prove useful as a last theoretical contextualisation on the forms of knowledge generated in art.

In chapter 4, I position the epistemological dimension of the interaction between art and the public as essential for this study and suggest that artistic research should be considered as a form of public art in a knowledge society. MacFarlane's perspective enables a further inquiry into the role of art in the knowledge society by positioning it as a form of urban learning. The positioning of art as a publicly accessible form of knowledge is linked to a discussion of art as public pedagogy. Both critical urban learning and public pedagogy perceive the practice of learning beyond institutional frameworks and as a holding a critical, public potential (Burdick et.al. 2014).

In an article from 2011, MacFarlane discusses art as a form of urban learning and states that Indian painters' vernacular art on trucks and buses acts as a type of 'urban improvisation' (2011b, 367).⁸⁸ However, his concept of *critical urban learning* might prove more interesting in discussions of public art (MacFarlane 2011). The concept of critical urban learning can shed light both on the effectivity of dissensus in the city and the learning opportunities that the double ontological play of art in public spaces provides.

MacFarlane claims that, "while the history of urbanism is predicated upon the question of how we might come to know the city, the question of learning itself has remained black-boxed" (MacFarlane 2011, 184). MacFarlane redirects the attention on knowing the city towards a discussion of *how* we learn about the city, shifting hence the focus onto how our knowledge about the city is constituted through various urban practices. Not only does he argue that urbanism demands learning, more specifically, in his book *Learning the City*, he discusses how it can be *relearned* and give rise to more democratic and sustainable approaches (MacFarlane 2011).

The title of the book might spark associations to contemporary debates on the 'knowledge economy,' and 'smart' or 'creative cities,' and MacFarlane outlines how these discourses indeed perceive the city as a production site for knowledge (MacFarlane 2011, 141; 2011b, 361). This is relevant in the context of the redevelopment of Bjørvika, where discourses on the knowledge economy are an important ideological backdrop to how policy documents have been devised (Bergsli 2015). However, top-down approaches are not MacFarlane's main interest, as his efforts are primarily directed towards understanding forms of informal urban learning and rendering visible the inequalities in knowledge mobility. MacFarlane's approach is in fact advocating how urban learning always unfolds from situated perspectives. "It is through encountering elements of these myriad forms of urban change through the particular lives, contexts, and agendas of policy-makers, activists or residents, that learning the city takes place" (MacFarlane 2011, 181). In line with the inquiry of this study, artistic research and art in public spaces can be perceived as a form of critical urban learning by both representing situated perspectives and supporting an alternative knowledge economy that defies top-down approaches in the city of knowledge. MacFarlane "drives critical attention to why and how particular forms of urban learning become dominant over others, for example, why certain forms of knowledge travel while others are marginalized" (2011, 28). Also, art can be considered a marginal form of urban knowledge that co-exist with dominant forms of knowledge.

⁸⁸MacFarlane outlines the mixing of traditional craft, popular culture, spirituality and political debates as urban improvisation.

What is at stake is the emergence of new connections between the actual and the possible, created through alternative urban learning (MacFarlane 2011, 25). “Potential,” MacFarlane writes, “signals the relation between the actual and the possible in learning – between the city that is known and the city that might be or could have been” (2011, 25). He outlines the possibility of learning as two different modes. One, through continuity and the assessing of practices of habit. The second, as events that create disruption through:

[T]he potential and excessiveness of the moment, the capacity of events to disrupt patterns, generate new encounters with people and objects, and invent new connections and ways of inhabiting everyday urban life and therefore to create different possibilities for learning. (MacFarlane 2011, 25)

There are similarities between art and the mode of learning characterised by MacFarlane as disrupting patterns. In the following, it will be discussed as a *dissensual form of urban learning* that draws new relations between the actual and urban potentialities.

Dissensual urban learning opportunities in public art

Rancière’s concept of dissensus has affinities with the disruptive modes of critical urban learning outlined by MacFarlane. Dissensus represents a type of thinking that continually reinvents the conflict between sense and sense, and it is tempting to understand dissensual activities also in terms of conflicts between epistemological perspectives. Rancière’s advocacy of a dissensual practice of philosophy indicates that dissensus indeed can emerge from conflicting epistemologies (Rancière 2010, 218). Dissensus is the undoing of the certainty of what we perceive, reconfiguring thus the topography of the possible (Rancière 2008, 55). Modifying the perception of the possible is one of the elements at stake both in the disruptive mode of urban learning and in dissensus.

It ought to be mentioned, however, and particularly in light of MacFarlane’s thoughts on learning, that Rancière writes that art can produce effects of dissensus precisely because it does not give lessons (Rancière 2008). In light of this, I must underscore that when suggesting that it is relevant to discuss art as a form of urban learning, I do not aim to construct a didactic analysis of art. However, if art disrupts the existing patterns of habit by deploying disconnections in our perception, use and sense of the city, it can still be fruitful to discuss it in terms of alternative learning possibilities.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Rancière himself discusses the difference between giving a lesson and learning in *Le Spectateur Emancipé*. There, he proposes the figure of the ignorant master as a contrast to pedagogy. In his view, the latter stands for

Both the dissensual effectivity of art and disruptive modes of urban learning should be understood as open-ended relations between subject and knowledge that enables each individual to create her own path of learning from a situated perspective.

What is a form of dissensual urban learning, how is it any different from critical urban learning? As it is a compound of two theoretical perspectives, I can only tentatively suggest some qualities I have observed in public art that have led me to consider it a relevant approach. A dissensual form of urban learning is a mode in which art intervenes in the city when reconfiguring opposing significances and perceptions and containing disparate and conflicting dimensions. It disturbs any constitution of forms of common-sense à la Rancière and is embedded in the urban fabric as a learning opportunity in line with MacFarlane's approach.

MacFarlane suggests that new learning possibilities emerge when one studies the changing roles of urban materials in different contexts and I will consider how this might act as a form of dissensual urban learning (MacFarlane 2011).⁹⁰

[D]ifferent materials might matter for how we learn the city, whether those materials might be glossy policy documents, housing and infrastructure materials, placards, banners and picket lines, new and old technologies, software codes, credit instruments, money, commodities, or the material conditions of urban poverty, dispossession and inequality. (MacFarlane 2011, 161)

To this list, I think one ought to add the materials that are introduced in public through art and even more so when art projects consciously redistribute materials that are already integral to the urban fabric. In those cases, it might be relevant to consider art as a form of dissensual urban learning.

In chapter 3, I outline the dissensual effectivity of art as displaying conflicts between different regimes of perceptions and significances. Moreover, I suggest that the clashing of different perceptual regimes is rendered visible in instances when forms of perception produced in art co-exists with forms of ordinary perception. I have earlier suggested that only assessing one set of significance of art is reductive, and in chapter 4, I stress the necessity of developing critical frameworks that assess art as inhabiting

an attitude to learning conceiving the teacher as in possession of all the knowledge of which the pupil is ignorant, including the knowledge of how to learn what the master knows, See, Rancière, 14.

⁹⁰Jane Bennett's argument for a 'vital materialism' provides a supplementary perspective on the forms of learning emerging from studying urban materials, but it has been outside the scope to pursue this. For further readings on the subject, see, Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

multiple positions. To discuss public art in terms of a dissensual form of urban learning represents a possibility to acknowledge its ability to display conflicting sense in public in terms of *knowledge production*.

The project by Faldbakken and Einarsson referenced above and Futurefarmers' *Flatbread Society* are interesting from such a perspective, because they reframe materials artistically, in this case flatbread and Litago, that are already part of the urban fabric and present in various urban contexts. As discussed in Article 2, the object of flatbread was infused with multiple sets of significances in addition to its cultural and practical roles. Futurefarmers' introduction of flatbread in various contexts in the city displayed the different cultural and historic significances of the object, as well as creating new practical and imaginary uses through social interaction. Through the multiple sets of significances attached to the object, flatbread formed a material in which different dimensions of the city co-existed and provided a way to learn about the city. In *Whoomp –there it is*, the multiple forms of interaction that took place around the Litago milk are hinted at. The Litago provides an opportunity to learn about urban inequalities through the superpositioning of the aesthetic contemplation of the milk product, the intended market for the product and the display of consumption of it by drug addicts.

By alluding to multiple cultural, aesthetic and social uses, the artistic re-introduction of the flatbread and Litago into the city simultaneously displays multiple sets of significances attached to the objects. I suggest that the aesthetic reconfiguration of the object renders visible disparate dimensions of the city that occasions opportunities for dissensual urban learning. The artistic strategies shift the perception we have of certain objects by displaying their different roles *all at once*. Disparate social, economic and aesthetic experiences are accentuated in the flatbread and the Litago milk and form a learning opportunity about the complexity of the city. The artistic use of material objects renders visible conflicting social, cultural and economic frameworks.

The idea that art can enable a form of dissensual urban learning can be considered in relation to the visual strategies outlined previously and Zukin's critique of visual editing of public culture. When seeing critically from situated viewpoints or displaying alternative forms of perception in public, art creates opportunities for dissensual urban learning by contesting significances and perceptions that seemingly hold the power to define publicness.

Rancière holds that art is composed of the same sense matter as everything else and is intertwined in heteronomous societal structures. In this

regard, it is not exceptional relative to other practices. Yet it is exceptional in that it constitutes a public scene and displaces ordinary forms of perception, while reconfiguring them in a new sensorium. Neither the Litago nor the flatbreads are exceptional, but the public display of them is. It actualises multiple sets of significances and displays a form of dissensus in public, which occasion an opportunity for dissensual urban learning.

Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the use of visual strategies in Bjørvika in light of Zukin's analysis of the power of visual representation on the definition of public culture. I have also observed how visual forms of knowledge historically play a role in urban planning. The forms of knowledge generated in art have been considered in relation to forms of professional knowledge that are influential in public space production.

I have suggested that the constructed vision of Bjørvika can be considered as forming a knowledge gap to the actual city and that artists such as Futurefarmers, Heier and Guttu revisit deficient reality descriptions in visual representations with local and situated forms of knowledge and performs thus an epistemological critique. I have also suggested that the situated practice of Futurefarmers expands the understanding of site through a relational approach. Futurefarmers have also been suggested to install alternative uses in public space and breaking with an approach to sight as visual consume.

Participatory events in the city have been addressed both as initiatives for activating citizens and as interventions in the social spaces of public space. The study distinguishes participation in art and participation in planning. It also distinguishes the social interaction among attendees and the stranger relations imagined in the public address. Moreover, the competence at play in participatory art practices is discussed as circulating affect, and Future Library is suggested to have both a spatial and temporal reach beyond the immediate event by virtue of how the project seems to generate hope.

Lastly, artistic forms of knowledge are discussed as critical urban learning and MacFarlane's perspective is useful in identifying art as an alternative knowledge economy in the city. I suggest that public art, when reintroducing urban materials in the city, can be considered as a form of dissensual urban learning if the artistic use of material objects render visible conflicting social, cultural and economic frameworks.

Chapter 6

Final Remarks

In the research question, I ask how do forms of knowledge engendered by public art practices interact with the production of public spaces in Bjørvika? I chose the word interact over notions such as influence or impact, because I wished to consider different kinds of relations emerging between art and public space production and not to limit the study to a discussion of the influence of art on public space production. With the notion of interaction, I also wanted to acknowledge that public space production also affects public art. In the introduction, I outline three areas of investigation: 1) the forms of knowledge manifested in art, 2) aspects of public space production that art interacts with, 3) the aesthetic dimension of the interaction of art with public space production. The theoretical framework, the empirical material and the methodological approach are chosen with the intent of enabling a discussion that engages with the abovementioned issues. As I sum up the study, I will revisit these areas.

Interaction with public space

Pivotal for the study is the ongoing reconfiguration of Bjørvika and the political significance of the public spaces for the constitution of the area's public character. I have approached the redevelopment of the area as an ongoing constitution of its public dimension. I have proposed that the transformation of the seaside, in addition to reconfiguring the area socially, economically and physically, changes the perception of it. Rancière has informed my view and led me to consider the redevelopment of Bjørvika as the constitution of a perceptual regime, which defines what we perceive and understand as common. In this study, art is viewed as introducing *dissensual* forms publicly by displaying conflicts between sense and sense. In chapter 3, I discuss projects by Marianne Heier and Ane Hjort Guttu as interventions into the process of constituting a *perceptual regime*. In chapter 5, I return to the question of how that which is understood as public is defined, and introduce Sharon Zukin's critical disclosure of the power of visual representation on the definition of public culture.

The study perceives the role of art in public space production as semi-integrated. This has consequences insofar as art is considered as an actual urban strategy in the redevelopment, while operating relatively autonomously and inhabiting public positions from which it performs a critique of the redevelopment. The study outlines four areas of public space production that art is considered to interact with: the use of public space, the image of place,

the creation of social space, and the understanding/narrative of site. Yet because art is partly integrated in the redevelopment and relies on its structure for realisation, I have suggested that the mode of interaction should be considered as collaborative and as operating from a position of criticality. This entails that artistic practices, having inhabited problems, work from within, and develop their critical approach while getting to know the structure from an imbricated position. The abovementioned aspects of public space production are indeed also use areas for art as a cultural strategy. In particular, public art is, as a cultural strategy, both a dimension of the image of place and a use in public space considered to activate the area. In this perspective, Futurefarmers is, by negotiating a new use for Loallmenningen, influencing public space production by inhabiting critically a role already devised for art. Likewise, Marianne Heier is critically positioning herself as a dimension of the place image by infusing it with empirical knowledge. I suggest that public art therefore should be considered as opening a potent space between idea and practice. It participates in the formation of what is conceived as public in Bjørvika from a *position of criticality*. Due to the semi-integrated role of art and its relatively autonomous position, I have considered the artistic strategies unfolding in public space as essential to the interaction between art and public space production.

A particular area of interest with regard to the intervention of artistic strategies in public space, is the commissioning of temporary and participatory strategies. I have considered it important to gain a better understanding of how participatory art events intervene in the city and to acknowledge the competencies of the artists working in this genre as interacting with public space production. The study proposes two distinctions that are useful in critically assessing the dynamic of participatory art in public space production. For one, on the subject of the influence of Futurefarmers on the development of Loallmenningen, I outline together with Even Smith Wergeland a distinction between attendees' participation in participatory art, and the art project's influence on planning, suggesting thus that it is foremost the artists that intervene in planning processes. Secondly, I distinguish the attendees of participatory art events and its public. A public is understood as generating *stranger relations* beyond the immediate situation and encompassing an imaginary dimension. Moreover, the competence at play in participatory art practices is discussed as circulating *affect* that can act upon the quality of stranger relationality in public space beyond the immediate event.

Aesthetic impact

While previous research on the role of public art in Bjørvika suggest that it has not had substantial impact on the redevelopment, my study indicates something different. In particular, Futurefarmers installation of an urban farm on a site that was projected to be dedicated to sport, is an example of a substantial impact. Notwithstanding Futurefarmer's actual impact on the area development, this study insists on the importance of art's aesthetic impact.

In the discussions that I have engaged with on how the artists managed to intervene and gain actual influence, a crucial point has been how they aesthetically interacted with public space production. Article 2, outlines the aesthetic labour and methods of Futurefarmers as they destabilised certainty and reconfigured the understanding of site. Article 3 discusses the participatory and green strategies of Futurefarmers as approaches that are in line with a green-turn in urbanism and representing hence an update in the area development. Still, the article acknowledges the peculiar artistic competence at play in participatory art as crucial to artists' influence on planning.

My study also differs from previous research on art in Bjørvika, in that it endeavours to discuss art as inhabiting double, even contradictory positions, and navigating on multiple charts. I have adopted a Rancierian view of art as holding *the ability of inhabiting double positions*, which I perceive as essential to the aesthetic character of its interaction with public space production. By virtue of this capacity, art is perceived as able to generate new significances that co-exist with established forms of common-sense. Herein lies the potentiality of art to do two things at the same time. I suggest that this is the case in *Whoomp – there it is*, which both participates in the gentrification process of the area, while representing the process critically.

In line with Rancière I consider art as aesthetically autonomous and holding the ability to reconfigure the sensible and signify freely, while embedded in heteronomous structures. Still, such a position is problematic when perceiving, as I do, art as a process in the city. The reason is that art is imbricated with other sense-making processes and appropriated as a form of cultural power. In this perspective, the commissioning of participatory art in Bjørvika must also be viewed as potentially *commodifying participants*. Moreover, the entanglement of art and commercial interests can destabilise art's production of significances. This is outlined as a risk in the case of *Future Library*, where the long-term perspective reflects well on the redevelopment, yet short-term commercial interests can undermine the credibility of the project. Due to the many sense-making processes at play in Bjørvika and the various interpretative frameworks that art can be assessed in relation to, this study renders visible the need for a critical framework that

enables a discussion of art as inhabiting multiple, and even contradictory positions. This study stresses that public art should be acknowledged as useful by virtue of its capacity to inhabit multiple positions and contain disparate significances.

Forms of knowledge in public art

Lastly, the study has investigated the forms of knowledge generated in art. My inquiries and the discussions that I have engaged with has led me to consider art as a relevant knowledge field in public space production. Moreover, this study indicates that art in public spaces, when perceived as an urban practice rather than an aesthetic object, holds many potentials. This study suggests that artistic practices develop innovative approaches to site and render visible potentials in the city.

This study has considered, with regard to art as it operates in Bjørvika, the tension between market logic and the social responsibility of the developers for creating diversified public spaces. Indeed, the study indicates that art contributes to the process with situated and local forms of knowledge, and suggests that art contributes to the production of culturally sustainable public spaces. However, the centre of attention has been how knowledge manifested in art interacts with public space production and not whether art creates values or applies strategies that enhance diversity and social inclusion in public space. Sociology has shown that art is far from being a stable and universal phenomenon that diversified groups of people close ranks around. To the contrary, art and taste act as markers in a logic of social distinction and art arenas should be considered as social structures that can both include and exclude.⁹¹

More research is needed to discuss further the multiple ways in which art acts as a form of knowledge in the city. Still, this study has contributed to the understanding of art as knowledge field in urban development by outlining that art can perform *an epistemological critique*, produce knowledge through *artistic research* and act as *dissensual urban learning*.

I have suggested that the constructed vision of Bjørvika forms a knowledge gap to the actual city and that public art has corrected deficient reality descriptions. In their approach, artists such as Futurefarmers and Heier have displayed forms of site knowledge based in situated, relational, perceptual, local and empirical experiences. I have discussed these artistic

⁹¹ Pierre Bourdieu's renowned study on the relation between taste and social position articulates the relational structure of taste and shows that it operates as forms of social distinction. Bourdieu argues that the appreciation of fine art depends on cultural competence and shows that taste participate in the reproduction of social differences and the art field can be subjected to socio-economic dynamics. For more see among others, Bourdieu, *Distinksjonen*, trans. Prieur, and, *The Field of Cultural Production*. For a study on the social structure of the Norwegian art field, Solhjell and Øien, *Det norske kunstfeltet*.

approaches in relation to the visual strategies applied in the public space programme. The study suggests that public art both performs an epistemological critique by seeing better from a situated viewpoint, and can represent situated forms of urban knowledge that vision do not encompass.

Artistic research is outlined in the study as a societal function of art. The study suggests that when defining the role of art as part of a knowledge society rather than in a logic of cultural consumption, artistic research represents and expansion of what we understand as public art.

Finally, the study revisits Rancière's concept of dissensus from the perspective of MacFarlane's concept of critical urban learning and open up one last discussion on the epistemological value of art in the city. If public art renders visible conflicting social, cultural and economic frameworks, I suggest that it can be considered as a form of *dissensual urban learning*. *Flatbread Society* and *Whoomp – there it is* are put forward as examples of the dissensual urban learning opportunities because they reintroduce urban materials in the city, that carry multiple significances. The project's ability to contain disparate and conflicting significances all at once make them useful forms knowledge. It has not been within the scope of this study to investigate how art in public space acts as urban learning in public spaces for a broad public. This appears, however, to be a significant area of investigation to gain more knowledge about art as a field of knowledge in the city.

A critical understanding of art's role in the production of publicness should not overlook the productive gap between idea and practice, the actual and the imaginary, because as this study suggests, art intervenes in the constitution of commons by moving in-between the registers. Imagination, perception and affect act upon the constitution of Bjørvika's public character. Yet, these dimensions of public space are not part of a common discourse on the city and remain often unarticulated and unacknowledged. There is therefore a need to identify and articulate them in order to raise our competencies on these matters. Art represents, not only a practice that engages with perception, imagination and affect, but also a phenomena that we can think *with* in order to better understand the sensible as an inter-subjective field. By installing connections between the subjective experience of the city and a public arena, art enables a form of urban learning and generates knowledge about dimensions of the city that otherwise remain unarticulated. When we learn the city in new ways we change what we think and perceive, as well as what we conceive as possible, for this reason it can be fruitful to inquire further into how art acts as forms of critical and dissensual urban learning.

The four articles engage in in-depth discussions of areas outlined in the thesis. They are partial studies that lead up to the main suggestion advanced in the exegesis, namely that public art can be considered as a form of urban learning. The articles have identified ways in which art acts upon perception and thereby also produces changes in how we perceive and understand public spaces. Article 1 outlines art as a practice that *skills perception* by introducing dissensus into the perceptual regime constituted in Bjørvika. Article 2, identifies the reconfiguration of the site narrative of Loallmenningen as a form of *aesthetic labour* that acts upon the perception of site by circulating multiple sets of significances and by destabilising the pre-conceptual approach to site. As both articles articulate ways in which art confronts a common perception of site with alternative forms of urban knowledge, they should be considered as leading up to the idea of art as dissensual urban learning. Article 3, outlines the critical potential of the collaborative and transdisciplinary approach in the project *Flatbread Society* as crucial to how it has successfully influenced planning. Here the collaborative mode of the artists can be considered as a way to learn to manoeuvre the system from within. Article 4, addresses the *affects* and *stranger relations* that art produces and discusses them in light of the public and collective character of the art projects. It suggests that participatory art installs connections between sociality, subjective experience and the artwork's public dimension and enables a form of urban learning about how the sensible is reconfigured as an intersubjective field.

The abovementioned aspects that are mentioned are applied qualities of art that are introduced in the urban development of Bjørvika. I hope that by articulating them, the articles will inform our discussions on public space production, and eventually our practices.

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Pfelder's *The Isle*

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Katie Paterson's *Future Library*

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Hand-over of Margaret Atwood's manuscript and conversation between her and Katie Paterson at Deichmanske Library, 26 May 2015

Hand-over of David Mitchell's manuscript, 28 May 2016.

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Appendices

Article 1

Myrvold, Charlotte Blanche. 2013. "Negotiating the Image of the City: A Discussion of Skilled Perception and the Role of the Artist in the Redevelopment of Bjørvika." *InFormation 2* (2):124-144.

Article 2

Myrvold, Charlotte Blanche. 2016. "Flatbread Society and the discourse on soil." *The International Journal of Social, Political and Community Agendas in the Arts* 11 (3):1-21.

Article 3

Myrvold, Charlotte Blanche, and Even Smith Wergeland. 2016. "Participatory action in the age of green urbanism. How Futurefarmers leapfrogged the culture consumer?" *International Journal of Cultural Policy*:1-19.

Article 4

Myrvold, Charlotte Blanche. (in peer review). "Producing Publics: Stranger Relations in Public Art."

Negotiating the Image of the City: A Discussion of Skilled Perception and the Role of the Artist in the Redevelopment of Bjørvika

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Abstract: In the master plan of the redevelopment of the former industrial harbor Bjørvika, funding for art is stipulated along with access to the site during the construction phase. This article looks at an intervention, from 2005, of the artist Marianne Heier, in relation to the strategic use of imagery in place branding and the use of images to structure change. The epistemological dimension of images will be argued to have ontological implications on how we perceive the world and consequently act upon it. This article suggests the need for a critical approach to mediated images in the context of urban development. By discussing the relationships between Lorraine Daston's use of the notion of 'skilled perception' and Jaques Rancière's concept of the 'distribution of the sensible', I attempt to draw attention to how our perception is skilled and thus affects what we hold in common. Ultimately, the formation of public spaces is the subject of the article and by pointing to the role that images play, as the way we see the city is shaped, this paper argue the need for images that unveil otherwise unrepresented potentials and interests. The notion of skilled perception is presented as a tool for investigating how mediated images in Bjørvika form the basis of perceptual habits, and are suggested to be of use in grasping the "politics" of artistic interventions within the larger constructed image of Bjørvika.

Keywords: Public art, public space, urban redevelopment, skilled perception, Bjørvika, Marianne Heier, image, perceptual regime, place production, observation, cloud, waterfront development, critical art, seeing collective

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From the perspective of anthropology, we are not the masters of our images, but rather in a sense at their mercy; they colonize our bodies (our brains), so that even if it seems that we are in charge of generating them, and even though society attempts unceasingly to control them, it is in fact the images that are in control. (Belting, 2011, p.10)

Introduction

This article addresses the ongoing redevelopment of Bjørvika, the former industrial harbor, in Oslo. Bjørvika can be seen as part of a global trend known as *waterfront development*. The attempt to attract transnational capital and exploit lifestyle, leisure, and culture as a means to brand the place is characteristic of this type of urban development. Rendering assets visible is a major part of the branding of such places.

A prime consideration of urban development is founded in the concept of the material redistribution of space; however, the importance attributed to the *imageability* of the place in Bjørvika, is a distribution of another order. Here, I suggest that the involvement of the redevelopers in the production of an *image* of Bjørvika influences the sensory landscape, and can be understood through the philosopher Jaques Rancière's concept of a distribution of the sensible (Rancière, 2000, pp. 12-14). This notion identifies how our partition in the sensible is formed through the configurations of time and space, work and leisure, private and public, which play out quite literally in the context of the redevelopment of Bjørvika. By emphasizing that, the sensible is something in which we partake and the distribution of the sensible is a configuration of what a community holds in common, the sensible is outlined as shared dimensions of time and space to which our access is limited and must be negotiated. Specifically, the access to a position from which one is seen and heard, and the access to a position from which one can see and hear are political; nevertheless, our partition of the sensible is also the configuration of a shared *way* to perceive the sensible. I want to investigate how the production of the imagery of Bjørvika is a means of configuring the sensible and a locus for negotiating the experience of the sensible, as well as the constitution of the public.

One might argue, as has the philosopher Gernot Böhme (1998), that the prevalence of vision over other senses in urbanistic interpretations of place necessitates other perceptual approaches. Although I adhere to this perspective, I also think a critical approach to the role of *vision* is equally important. Therefore, this paper investigates how and what the constructed image of Bjørvika encompasses. My focus is to delineate a relation between the construction of images and spatial production through the intermediate mediation of perception. This paper additionally attempts to outline the possibility for opening new forms of visibility in the public, as counterparts to the stage value, which dominates the constructed appearance of cities (Böhme, 2008, p.528).

As pointed out by urban geographer Heidi Bergsli, in her analysis on the entrepreneurial city development-model applied in Bjørvika, the striking and seductive visuality of waterfront

developments simultaneously draws attention away from other areas of the city and contributes to the spread and mimic of the waterfront development model around the world (2005, p.112). While art historian Hans Belting's definition of *image* provides a starting point for grasping the cultural diffusion of images, it also informs my use of the word. Belting dissociates image and medium and determines the medium as the specific kind of materiality, which, in each case, renders the image visible. Although the medium can be a painting or a photo, when the image is lodged into the memory, the body becomes the medium (Belting, 2011, p.44). While the images have a nomadic character, the medium, the body, is a carrier of those images (Belting, 2011, p. 21). Indeed, the understanding of an image as nomadic captures the mobility of that image and its transgression into different mediums. In the context of the waterfront development of Bjørvika, one can recognize a generic image that has traveled worldwide. Nonetheless, the concern of this paper is to explore how the *image* travels from one medium to another and is incarnated in the *city*. I will present two computer-generated images of Bjørvika, made for planning purposes, and contrast them with an intervention by the artist Marianne Heier. I will discuss Heier's work as potentially rendering previously unperceived forms of visibility. An understanding of perception as *skilled*, and therefore theoretically evolving, is central to this reading. I suggest that it is by being plastic that perception plays an important role in the distribution of the sensible and I will attempt to support this assertion by presenting relationships between the work of Rancière and Daston on the ontological dimension of perception and the constitutive part it plays in relation to the formation of the public.

Skilled Perception and the Configuration of the Public

We see the world differently, depending on profession and culture.² The term *skilled perception* describes those qualities of seeing and understanding that are developed within a profession or a specific community. A skilled perception is attained in the same manner as all other skills; through trained practice. The notion of "skill" reflects the increase in knowledge that occurs as the practice is trained. As the sociologist Richard Sennett argues, there is an ancient tie that joins skills and community and from this tie, the collective agent of craft is established (2008, p.51, 73). The development of skilled perception is not merely a process that plays out between the subject and the perceived object; it unfolds through the subject's participation in a collective. Skilled perception denotes a relational aspect of perception that is said to be tacit and, consequently, is frequently omitted or excluded from discourse. I suggest that skilled perception has an agency based on the constitution of a common experience. More specifically, it influences spatial practices that contribute to the formation of common ground. I wish to investigate the role of images in the training of perception and suggest the agency that artists can have on the formation of common perceptions of a given phenomenon.

² See Grasseni, C., Ed. (2007). *Skilled visions: Between apprenticeship and standards*. New York, Berghahn.

Science historian Lorraine Daston investigated the collective conditions of one of the prime examples of skilled perception, namely scientific observation. Daston argues that perception is trained through repetition and that the role of habit is determinative as to which objects are perceived as stable, universal, or scientific objects; furthermore, this has ontological implications.

Without these acquired habits of perception cultivated by observation, there would not only be no science; there would be no articulated visible (or auditory or tactile) world at all. This is the way perception furnishes the universe. It doesn't create the universe, but it does shape and sort, outlining sharp edges and arranging parts into wholes. In contrast to languages, which may be learned either by ear or by grammatical rules, there seems to be only one route to competent perception, and that royal route is habit. (Daston, 2008, p.100)

In the citation above, the role of skilled perception, arranging the universe into parts and wholes is poetically described as a way of furnishing it. Although distinguishing language and perception, the argument suggests that it is only by being skilled and competent that perception can articulate the world and form the basis of a collective way of seeing and holding the world in common. If one considers the ontological implications of this assertion, the arrangements of parts and wholes through which we articulate the world, is a bilateral movement in which the world is shaped, both by the slow skilling of perception as well as in the way skilled perception resonates in the construction of the physical world. Brita Brenna, historian of ideas, exemplifies such that it is only possible to perceive a terrain as a landscape if one have learned to do so. By establishing a connection between the findings of Daston and the conception of the landscape, Brenna manages to demonstrate how perceptions of landscape are intimately connected with economic and politic changes in our relation to it, and ultimately forms how we act upon it (2012, p.14).

I propose that there is a strong affiliation between Daston's use of the notion of skilled perception and Rancière's description of the formation of perceptual regimes. Rancière does not use the notion of skilled perception, nevertheless one could say that it is an element of his thought. It is present when he describes the writer Stendhal's "*éducation sensible*" (2004, p.14), fiction's ability to change our perception (2008, p.72), and the correlation between emancipation and new ways of perceiving (2008, p.26, 49), which is central to his theory of the reconfiguration of the sensible.³ In his writings on the politics of art, Rancière discusses art in relation to the production of new forms of visibility and reconfigurations of perceptual regimes through new ways of sensing (*manières de sentir*).⁴ It is through reconfigurations of this type that art and politics touch upon each other as forms of *dissensus* (Rancière, 2008, p.55).⁵ Therefore, the politics of art can be said to consist of the

³ An on-going topic in Rancière's writing from *La Nuit des prolétaires. Archives du rêves ouvrier* of 1981 to his newer texts.

⁴ See: *Les paradoxes de l'art politique* (Rancière, 2008), *L'esthétique comme politique* (Rancière, 2004), and *The aesthetic revolution and its outcomes* (Rancière, 2010).

⁵ Rancière plays with the ambiguity of the notion of consensus and defines it as the accordance of "sens and sens"; signification and perception (Rancière, 2008:75). *Dissensus* is an operation linked to art, while perceptual

suspension of the coordinates of the ordinary experience of the sensible (Rancière. 2004, p.39). This outlines the potential of art to produce new visible forms by the operation of dissensus and suspension; nonetheless, these forms should not be taken literally, as it is as much a form of perception as the perception of a form.

As far removed from each other as the symbolist poet and the functionalist engineer may seem, they both share the idea that forms of art should be modes of collective education. Both industrial production and artistic creation are committed to doing something on top of what they do – to create not only objects but a sensorium, a new partition of the perceptible. (Rancière, 2010, p.122)

Discussing the utopian quest for an aesthetic revolution, Rancière mentions the interest of artists and engineers in the idea of a collective education.⁶ In the comment above, he clearly distinguishes the creation of an object and the creation of a sensorium; differentiation of the two enables us to notice the plasticity of perception and its receptivity to the forms of art.

Seeing in Unison

I now propose a little detour into the history of observation of clouds for the purpose of presenting the notion of *seeing collectives* and their relation to images. In the article “On Scientific Observation”, Lorraine Daston presents an example of an everyday object that posed tremendous challenges to the scientific community’s definition of it as a scientific object. That object was clouds.

The *International Cloud Atlas of 1896* was meant to make clear-cut scientific objects out of evanescent, protean clouds by teaching observers all over the world, on land and at sea, to see things in unison. (Daston, 2008, p.104)

Since clouds are a global phenomenon, such a synchronization of visions would imply that observers all over the world would be able to discern the same universals, despite the multitude of shapes in which clouds appear. The consequence of the global scope of the research was that the collective of observers, both scientist and lay people, would have to agree on what they saw and what to call it, in spite of geographical and linguistic differences. Therefore, the linking of image and word was pivotal in the effort to reach a collective agreement of what was seen. In the case of clouds, the *International Cloud Atlas* played a crucial role in providing a common ground from which the collective could practice seeing in unison. It is said that none of the meteorologists were allowed to leave Uppsala before this collective vision was formed. Seeing the same would entail having the same competence, or if one follows the point Daston makes on habits, the collective would have to learn to see the same by repeating the same observations. Good perceptual habits are learned as students gradually learn to

regimes, in contrast, are characterized by *consensus*, a proper order of configuration of the sensible (Rancière, 2010, p.213).

⁶ On engineers’ agency on the shaping of new sensorium, see Gjesvik, T. På sporet av veier i 1800-tallets Voyages pittoresques. In (Eds) Kampevold Larsen, J. & Frang Høyum, N. *Utsikter sett fra veien 1733–2020*. Oslo, Forlaget Press, and Picon, A. (1992). *French architects and engineers in the Age of Enlightenment*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

see the same thing and in the same way as their masters. In paraphrasing the bacteriologist and philosopher Ludwik Fleck, Daston shifts the focus from “thought collectives” to “seeing collectives,” and thus describes how scientists are trained to share ways of seeing (2008, p.106). To articulate the relationship between images and the skilling of perception, I wish to elaborate on the notion of *seeing collective*, as presented by Daston. In the case of clouds, the global reach of the phenomenon, the shifting conditions of the observations, and the infinite variety of forms, offered a demanding condition for a systematic shaping of perceptual habits through repetition. This is also why the 28 templates in *International Cloud Atlas*, which the collective of meteorologists agreed upon, was of such tremendous importance. The way clouds were rendered was a significant factor in the training of the perception of clouds.

Image as a Tool to See Better

The role and agency that art, through image-making practices, have had in science is extensive; clouds are only one of many possible examples.⁷ In the first *International Cloud Atlas*, published in 1896, the Danish artist and librarian Philip Weilbach contributed depictions of clouds. By close observations of the sky, he later identified a new type of cloud, the *cumulonimbus*, a thunder cloud. Similarly, by linking word and image, the artist John Constable’s depictions of clouds contributed to stabilizing the new categories that ordered the mutable clouds. The new taxonomy of clouds found its visual expression in the art of its period. Since observations are transitory in nature and a situated experience, which is not easily repeated for the many, images play an important role as containers and conveyers of multiple and dispersed data. Daston writes that the ambition of innovative visualization techniques is to condense the findings so that one can view it in one ‘*coup d’œil*’ as an experience of *all-at-onceness* (2008, p.108). As part of her conclusion, she claims:

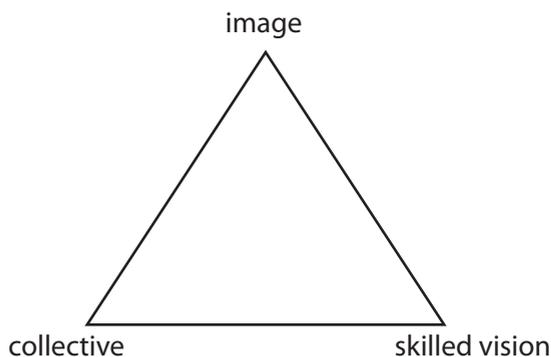
It is observation, grounded in trained, collective, cultivated habit, that fuses these bits and pieces into a picture—often a literal picture crafted by techniques of scientific visualization. And it is the picture, seized at a glance, all at once, that guarantees the sturdy existence of a world (Daston, 2008, p.110).

The image is attributed a role as container of a certain warranty in which the *seeing collective* can ground their consensus and expand the collective through developing skill in perception. As she identifies the formation of a scientific *seeing collective*, Daston indicates a relationship between perception, image, and participation in a collective. By looking closely at the role that images play as skill in perception is developed, one can define skilled visions in relationship to skilled perception.

⁷ Three examples are Jones, C. A., Galison, P., & Slaton, A. (1998). *Picturing science, producing art*. New York: Routledge, Klonk, C. (1996). *Science and the perception of nature. British landscape art in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*. London: Yale University Press, and Daston, L., & Lunbeck, E. (2011). *Histories of scientific observation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This notion seeks to identify skills that are trained by the help of visualizations, which point to the qualities that are important within the “seeing collective” to which one belongs.⁸

I suggest that skilled vision can be read in a triangular relation to the collective on one side, and the mediated visualization on the other. This triangular constellation entails that each part relies on the other two; the collective needs the mediated image to externalize a common understanding of what they see, the mediated visualizations play upon the formation of skill, and the skill is the ticket to participation in the collective. The purpose of the triangular schema is to articulate the collective character of skilled visions.



The relational aspect of perception is also outlined by Rancière, who articulates the partition in the sensible as belonging to a particular sensorium (2004, p.44) and investigates the collective function (*fonction communautaire*) of art as a constitutor of both common symbolic and material territories (2004, p.35). It is noteworthy that while Daston identifies the role that the images of clouds had as a new *consensual* way of seeing them, Rancière understood art as a practice that produces *dissensus* within an established regime of perception. Nonetheless, while the practices might sound as though they are in opposition, both theorists investigate changes in the way of seeing that destabilize an established ontological understanding of a phenomenon. Such reading would imply that Daston’s study of the science of clouds is in fact pointing to a moment of *dissensus* and that the identification she does of scientific seeing collectives could very well articulate not only a relational aspect of perception, but also say something about the relationship between an acquired perceptual skill and changes in an entire perceptual regime. Therefore, *seeing collectives* could inform an analysis of what in Rancière’s terms would be identified as clashes between perceptual regimes.

⁸ Specifically, skilled visions are not merely a result of direct perception of the “live” phenomenon, since mediated images of the phenomenon play a role as one learns to recognize the qualities represented in the image.

My concern in the context of Bjørvika is the construction of its *image* and the stakeholder's desire for visibility. The notion of skilled perception is a tool for investigating how mediated images in Bjørvika form the basis of perceptual habits and "collectives of seeing," but might also be of use in grasping the "politics" of artistic interventions within the larger constructed image.

The Image of Bjørvika as a Perceptual Regime

Visuality plays an important role in Bjørvika. Because of its early commitment to a cultural planning strategy, the redevelopment of the former industrial area is unique in a Norwegian context. However, the "Supervisory Program for Culture" (*Kulturoppfølgingsprogrammet*, in short the KOP-document), an appendix to the master development plan of 2003, attributes a cultural role that is largely defined in relationship to sight and visibility. One of the major recommendations of the KOP-document is to strategically invest in cultural activities to make Bjørvika visible both locally and internationally. The desire for visibility is part of the place marketing strategy embedded in the KOP-document, and culture is partially defined as a dimension of the brand that is being constructed. Specifically, the KOP-document is imbued with the intention of constructing a cultural *image*. What the difference might be between a cultural image of a place and a cultural place, or how one should deal with the construction of visibility pursued through culture in Bjørvika, are both questions that confront us with the ubiquitous presence of images and the agency of visibility in the production of place.

Whereas visual terms denote the branded *image* of the place, the KOP-document also refers to the sense of sight, or their *vision*, in relation to the stakeholder and the municipality's ambitions for Bjørvika. While an effective marketing *image* is characterized as simple,⁹ the *vision* is described as a strategic tool for building a sustainable city and the goals are to encompass diversity. The vision of Bjørvika's goals is to include history, modernity, technology, the environment, and an idea of the Norwegian, as well as all the inhabitants of Oslo. Consequently, it is recommended that the process of producing a vision be wide in scope (Plan- og bygningsetaten et. al., 2003, p.11). The strategic construction of both vision and image is particularly interesting because both the stakeholders and the municipality rhetorically underscore it as an important area in which to invest during the actual physical construction of the site (Plan- og bygningsetaten et. al., 2003, p.15). Specifically, the visibility of Bjørvika is constructed and mediated independently of the conditions imposed by time and space on the actual place; to put it differently, the visibility of the site does not rely on its physical existence. This has yet to come into being. The strategy appears to be in the attempt to construct a well-directed visibility, established before the developed and completed Bjørvika enters the stage.

⁹ Simplicity is one of five criteria for the design of a place's image; the others are validity, credibility, appeal, and distinctiveness (Kotler, Asplund, Rein, & Haider, 1999, p.167).



Marianne Heier, *A drop in Ocean* (2005). Note the placement of the image in relation to the physical construction site.

I believe that the aesthetic dimension at play in the image making strategy built to make Bjørvika visible is not only a question of *how it looks*, which would be a narrow understanding of aesthetics limiting it to a question of taste, but also a question of *what is seen*. It could well be said that the use of imagery for implementing positive connotations of Bjørvika in the public could be an attempt at constructing a “regime of visibility” in Jaques Rancière’s sense of the term. In the case of Bjørvika, the economically strong classes targeted by the developers contrast the multicultural demography and the relatively high percentage of low-income families in the neighboring areas of Bjørvika, the inner east Grønland and Gamlebyen. Since the new public places of Bjørvika are to serve both groups, these social and economic differences are indeed important. Therefore, the *vision* of Bjørvika is sketched in various ways to represent very different interests to different members of the public. Although the two approaches to the visual in the KOP-document, namely the *image* and the *vision*, are argued to be fruitfully reflecting on each other, they are more likely to operate similarly concerning what is made visible. Consequently, the investment put into constructing a certain visibility is necessarily the product of layers of invisibility.

Graeme Evans, Professor in Urban Cultures, critically analyzed the consequences of image-building strategies within contemporary urban development. He points out that one of the inherent objectives of branding strategies is to “create a unified version” of the product, and that this conflicts with the social and cultural complexity of space (2006, p.202). Moreover, divergent social and cultural interests are at stake, as one constructs an image that revolves around a coherent narrative. He warns

that the strong impact of branding strategies, in the name of cultural planning, can produce uneven and unpredictable results of which spatial planning and more democratic city development have better tools to handle. Specifically, image-building raises the issue of representation. Who is represented in the constructed image? In the process of building a distinct and attractive image, there is a risk of masking and disregarding social and cultural aspects of a place by rendering them invisible.

The difference between image-building and the composition of an embodied and empirically experienced view is formulated by Hans Mommaas, who has written on the relation of city branding and contemporary architecture in the Netherlands. He describes one of the characteristics of city branding as, “The tendency to gear city brands to the dynamic of an external cash-rich market rather than to that of internal cultural practices and feeling” (2002, p.198). The work of distance is evident both in the choice of images, which are easily mediated, as well as in the external forces that drive the marketing process. The consequence of branding places to attract international attention is that they become increasingly “constructed for the eye” (De Paoli & Gran, 2005, p.175). However, the eye in question is not an eye that is embedded in the constructed site. Anne Britt Gran and Donatella De Paoli maintain that because they are skilled in producing visualizations, the emphasis on the place as a visual phenomenon favors the profession of architects, designers, and marketers in the place-branding processes. In the case of Bjørvika, there is a particularly explicit example of the agency of the mediated image on the development. Commenting on the design of the projected Munch museum, the architect Herreros said, “We are consciously designing the postcard everybody wants.”¹⁰ What he pinpoints in this statement is to what extent the imageability of the building is its competitive strength. Moreover, the allusion to the postcard that “everybody” wants also addresses the efficiency of images already known and easily recognized. In other words, this type of image conforms to our habits of perception. However, the consequence of such imagery can be that place itself is rendered invisible through the striking and traveling imagery. As Evans maintained, the strategic use of image-building is a challenge to more democratic traditions of city development (2006, p.213). Nevertheless, it appears that there is a need for images to structure, imagine, and implement changes in physical environments. Visualization skills will have agency in relation to how urban environments are perceived and acted upon.

Image and Spatial Production in Bjørvika

While they are among the least accessible, the most influential visual representations of Bjørvika are probably the 3D models, which have been active tools in regulating the work in the area. By virtue of being a model of the site, the image constructed in the model is obviously ahead of the actual physical construction of the site and the model’s purpose is to propose images that will later be implemented physically. Nevertheless, due to the strong impact of the visual, the 3D model permits one to

¹⁰ Retrieved October 29, 2013 from <http://www.arcspace.com/features/herreros-arquitectos/munch-museum/>

concretize how visualization skills have agency upon place production. In his article, “Bjørvika. Bruk av 3D i planarbeidene,” the engineer, Torbjørn Tveiten, describes the efficiency of the 3D model in structuring such a large and complex construction as Bjørvika. The 3D model allows one to circulate the virtual Bjørvika and take snapshots from any location in the model; this is one of the possibilities that Tveiten puts forward as a valuable method of visualizing what otherwise could not have been seen; for instance, how the new high-rises would alter the view (2011, p.237). However, the design of the 3D model has also had an apparent and unexpected effect: In 2010, a new tunnel system was inaugurated underneath the bay of Bjørvika.



Photo taken by Mona Strande / Teknisk Ukeblad

During this period, the 3D model was in active use. Tveiten mentions what he describes as a mere curiosity; in the model, a picture of the National Opera and Ballet was inscribed on the tiles, this virtual decoration was later built in the actual tunnel (2011, p.238). One can imagine that the picture was originally meant to help make the monotone, virtual space of the tunnel legible and to differentiate the south going track from the other. Later, it can have been judged as adequate to realize this design in physical space.¹¹ Nevertheless, a certain slippage took place, as an image that was originally meant only for the virtual representation of Bjørvika, leaked into the real world. From the account of Tveiten, there does not appear to be any particular reason or interest that drove the realization of the image on the tiles. Rather, there appears to be a certain innocent causality, which

¹¹ In Oslo, there have been antecedents of the practice of depicting a monument in a tunnel to inform the drivers of their location, e.g., the depiction of the Akershus Castle in the “Festningstunnelen.” For the sake of the above argument, I want to emphasize that even a depiction of the opera can be done in a number of ways.

resulted in the current decoration on the tiles.¹² Of course, the tunnel could have been decorated in a number of ways, and one might object that this should be the task of professional artists. However, the way in which the picture of the opera came to decorate the walls of the tunnel illustrates how influential visualization skills are in the production of place.

Coming from the artistic field, not urbanism, what strikes me is the complexity of both time and space in the redevelopment of Bjørvika. Nevertheless, the outside perspective also manifests to what degree images and the visual appears to play different roles in this field, as compared with the artistic field. While images are always complex and visibility is never simple in art, in urban development, images seem to have one major function, and that is to solve complexity. To render it, art-based approaches to images frequently intend to disclose complexity, one might even argue that such attempts are a force that have provoked changes throughout the history of art. A comparison of the two approaches, solving or disclosing complexity through the media of images, might be best conducted if one named the sort of complexity with which one deals. In the case of 3D modeling, there is an obvious need to structure the changes and develop visualizations that resolve complex spatial scenarios. However, when images deal with complexity of a social and human order, it is timely to ask whether social complexity can actually be solved in an image, or are they merely concealed. The illustrations in the public space program of Bjørvika, conceived by Gehl Architects,¹³ approach the social complexity of public space in such a way that layers of visibility appear to be rendered at the expense of other aspects that are kept invisible. The illustration of one of the future public spaces, presented on the webpage of Bjørvika Development, Loallmenningen, is characteristic of the imagery being produced. The illustration displays people lingering in the public space, sitting around some sort of fountain, one person actually in the water. Others are passing by, some alone and others in groups, there is also a bike in the picture. In the distance, there seems to be a ball game going on, and the biker is walking. It might indicate that this place is so pleasant that there is no reason to hurry past. The “Loallmenningen” appears to be a place where people will gather, and the pivotal axis of success, highlighted repeatedly in the development plans of Bjørvika, is truly met in the image: the public spaces are teeming with city life. In the article “Oslo – The Triumph of Zombie Urbanism,” urban theorist, Jonny Aspen, discusses the use of images in the public space program. Contextualizing the production of attractive urban imagery in relationship to place-marketing in urban redevelopment, Aspen argues that the public space program’s staging of places, as diverse and vibrant, contributes to legitimizing the redevelopment. He suggests that through the visualization methods in urban design, the social challenges are presented as solved and thus the discipline is given a new role as legitimizing authority (2012, p.3). The problem Aspen identified within the public space program is that it is

¹² “Som en kuriositet kan det nevnes at det i sørgående løp midt i tunnelen vises Operaen på flisene. Grunnlaget ble her hentet fra 3D-modellen og benyttet direkte i produksjonen” (Tveiten, 2011, p.238).

¹³ Gehl Architects designed the master plan for the public space program, but the visualizations of the future commons were made in collaboration with different landscape architect offices.

generally based on features and factors that can be quantified and mapped. However, the approach to social aspects of the public spaces is evasive and uncommitted (2012, p.11). One could say that what the program does not explain and exemplify, the images can be telling, however, for the imagery to be more than rhetorical figures of eloquence, they would have to contain empirically based knowledge, in the same way as the written program.



Loallmenningen, illustration by Gehl Architects, ©Bjørvika Development AS

Aspen writes, “As such the seductiveness of the illustrations play an important role in making the public believe that there are serious plans for truly public places. They play a major role as legitimizing authority for the whole waterfront redevelopment” (2012, p.8). The *imagery* produced seems to solve the complex social issues of contemporary public spaces, quite simply, by refusing to render them *visible*. Therefore, one can claim, that the future commons are strategically structured in a regime of visibility.

The reductive character of the images of the public space program have the exclusive character of branded images and are, as pointed out by Evans, constructed as *unified versions of complex realities*. Their deficiency is in their incapacity to incorporate the internal feelings of a place and empirical based narratives. Specifically, although the illustrations offer a stereotypical and easily recognized image of leisure, they lack critical, empirical attention and consequently conceal the complex urban reality as well as the existing social dynamics. Aspen explains in his article why he is skeptical of the depictions, “All this makes me quite suspicious. Not necessarily because the new waterfront won’t look as depicted when finished [...], but precisely because it just might become what is imagined!” (2012, p.4) The role of images in the distribution of the sensible and the construction of regimes of visibility is worth attention so that one can better understand their relationship to the construction of our commons. Given the strong impact of the sense of sight in spatial production, it is relevant to investigate how or when the visual generates possibilities rather than reproducing stereotypes. Urban theorist, Julian Petrin, wrote on the question of perception of space in contexts where the complexity and scale make mediated images of what is not directly perceptible, necessary. The increased influence of the current mediatized processes on spatial production and urban development motivates the study:

Put in simple terms, planning is focused on structures that generate images, since this is the only way to ensure visibility within the matrix of locational completion. The media shapes the perceptual habits and “consumption patterns” of the city, but media also represents the hurdle that urban space must successfully negotiate. (Petrin, 2008, p.160)

In this quotation, two factors are put forward; on one hand, the way in which planning relies on images, and on the other, the effect that mediated images have on our perceptual habits and thus the way we interact with space. Petrin suggests that mediated images are a constant backdrop to our interaction with material space and consequently that the patterns of our use of the city are influenced by images. He claims that immediate perception and mediated perception often overlay each other and you see what you already know is there. When the mediated images are built on stereotypes, they tend to channel broad mainstream practices and thus confirm and stabilize conventional mental images. This reflects upon the perception of material space (Petrin, 2008, pp.163–164). It is exactly this point that Petrin makes on the dynamic potential of the relationship between image and material space, when he argues for the need of “spatial stimulation.” Innovative visualization practices have the means

to stimulate space by creating disruptions in the mechanisms that reproduce easily legible, spatial images (Petrin, 2008, p.165). Petrin encourages the critical use of images in urban development, so the process of “building with images” can have an innovative role, and make the invisible possibilities of space visible and legible, rather than confirming conventional, mental images. In the following images, an epistemological figure, which teaches us a certain way to see space, is outlined; however, Petrin’s analysis also indicates an ontological aspect of the role of images, as he argues that spatial stimulation uncovers otherwise unknown potentials.

The Robin Hood-Strategy

In images discussed thus far, I have attempted to show that the strategic construction of the visual representations of Bjørvika have agency upon spatial production and that the images can also be read in relationship to what they render invisible. I suggest that the distribution of a selected and thoroughly designed set of images is contributing to the configuration of Bjørvika in the public sphere and that the images are constructed as coherent narratives that do not encompass spatial and social complexity. The conflicting interests of the inhabitants of Gamlebyen and Grønland, with the economically attractive classes targeted by the stakeholders, are concealed in the coherent narrative of the constructed imagery. The unease, expressed by Aspen, on the notion that stereotypical imagery should slip into real space, affirms the nomadic quality of the images, as pointed out by Belting. As a means of spatial stimulation and the apparent shortcomings of the images to express complexity in the context of Bjørvika, Petrin’s approach to the images suggests the necessity of infusing the visible narrative of Bjørvika with images that can enlarge its visible representation and negotiate complexity and empirical experiences into the public *image*. In 2005, the artist Marianne Heier did exactly this, by addressing the cultural image construction for the sake of marketing Bjørvika. Through the critical stance of the artist toward image-building and her use of visual terms to describe her own artistic methods, the artistic approach plays with the construction of visibility in an early phase of the redevelopment.

Heier’s intervention, “A Drop in the Ocean,” was done on invitation from the stakeholder Bjørvika Development (BU). Thereby, one can note that BU met the KOP-document’s recommendation to accommodate cultural activities during the construction phase of Bjørvika (Plan- og bygningsetaten et. al., 2003, p.15). I rely primarily on Heier’s text, “A frame around reality,” in which she describes her approach and reflects on her own methods in this particular project. Heier is aware of the expectations of an economical spinoff effect from the cultural investments and hesitates to accept the invitation from Bjørvika Development. She writes:

It is impossible to avoid contributing exactly with what they want you to: making sure the audience associates the area with cultural and artistic activities. In a certain sense you could even say that the edgier and more aggressive you are, the better: It would just make the audience more curious, and make the area appear edgy, bold and even trendier. (Heier, 2006, p.2)

Heier outlines the economic structure in which she, as an artist, will participate, and delineate the increase of value that the association with art has on the real estate market. The logic of place marketing becomes a central component in Heier's intervention. Bjørvika is branded as the "The Fjord Town" and Heier's work informs the constructed image of the brand with a situated meaning of what it implies to be a location close to the fjord. Historically, Heier reminds us, the proximity to the fjord contributed to a high risk of drowning, and part of the social democratic project was to construct swimming pools and provide swimming lessons to decrease that risk. Her answer to the underscoring of Oslo as "The Fjord Town" was to investigate the condition of swimming pools and swimming ability in the city. In 2003, only 2% of the pupils in Oslo received swimming lessons, while the national average was 46% (2006, p.4). Heier's approach is motivated by the shortcomings of the municipality of Oslo in facilitating the swimming education of its inhabitants.

I chose to focus on the notion of the value and meaning of the notion "Fjord Town" and I decided to try to adopt a sort of "Robin Hood-strategy" to the situation. I would try to "steal from the rich (in this case Bjørvika Utvikling AS [Bjørvika Development]) and to give to the poor" (the increasing impoverished municipality of Oslo). (Heier, 2006, p.2)

The established strategy captures an economic relationship between the municipality and the stakeholders, and plays on the value of the branded image, as well as the value attached to the art. However, the approach also forms a spatial figure by putting forward a tension between, on one hand, the east side of Oslo and its suburbs where the largest quantity of economically vulnerable families live, and on the other hand, the large investment around the waterfront branded as "The Fjord Town." The flux of value is perceived as floating through space toward the waterfront. A negotiation starts on the character of the actual artwork, and the original plan of Heier was to make Bjørvika Development finance the refurbishing and reopening of Sagene Public Baths, owned at the time by Oslo Council.¹⁴ However, the cost of the operation would have exceeded the total art budget of the Bjørvika Development and it was not accepted. As a response to the rejection of the original idea, the project took another turn and was realized as an intervention in three different locations: the Sagene Public Bath, the waterfront of Bjørvika, and as an ad in the newspaper *Morgenbladet*. The publically inaccessible Sagene Bath was reopened for a day on the 25th of June. Meanwhile, large photos of empty swimming pools from the suburbs were put up in Bjørvika. Since it exposes a potent relationship between the site of construction and the photos taken by the artist, I will focus on this intervention.

As Heier arranged to photograph the pools, she discovered that many of them were closed the majority of the time (2006, p.5). Consequently, the physical reality of the municipality of Oslo's shortcomings in providing public baths was made known to her.

¹⁴ The building was to be sold for a symbolic amount if the buyers restored it.



Marianne Heier, *A drop in the ocean* (2005). The photo of Holmlia public bath was placed on the site of the future Loallmenningen.

“A Drop in the Ocean” introduces counter narratives to the unified version of the branded image of the “The Fjord Town.” The question of who and what is represented, is put forward through the critical investigation of what substances can be played into the notion of “The Fjord Town.” Heier’s research, along with the documentation of the empty public pools, infuses the general process of making Bjørvika visible with images that mediate experiences anchored in local, internal, and economic realities. On one side, whether she wants to or not, one can easily agree with Heier’s analysis of the artist as a contributor in the gentrification of the area. However, her critical approach to the image of the “The Fjord Town,” can also be said to negotiate the visible representation of Bjørvika by rendering visible what was previously unseen. In a certain way, because of the way it problematizes the simple and unified narrative of “Fjord Town” and operates in accordance with Evans and Mommaas’ critique of the image-building of places, the intervention is a counter-image to the branded image. If the circulating images have agency upon spatial practice, and the processes of development are staked out by images, the question of who is represented, along with the visualizations of local empirics, becomes important. In concurrence with Rancière’s theory of the distribution of the sensible, I believe that sensorial experiences that transgress boundaries and divisions instituted through a perceptual regime can have an ontological dimension and affect not only our ways of *seeing*, but also our ways of *doing*. Marianne Heier’s intervention puts forward interests and experiences, which otherwise would have been invisible. By placing the large boards of empty swimming pools along the

waterfront, Heier was putting up literal images in the future commons and distributing other aspects of Bjørvika that were yet to be seen.

Rancière argues, as we remind ourselves, that the work of artists has the potential to open new forms of visibility and thereby recompose the landscape of the visible (2000, p.72). Although central to this paper, to what extent art recomposes the general landscape of the visible, or only the landscape of visual art, is a difficult question. Rancière wrote the following on the dissensual practices of politics, “It thus necessarily confronts the blindness of those who ‘do not see’ that which has no place to be seen” (2010, p.39). Tentatively, one could propose that art has the visual means to confront institutionalized blindness.

New Eyes or New Forms of Visibility

The question remains, when does art affect the regime of visibility and more precisely, how is “A Drop in the Ocean” attempting to open new forms of visibility in the representation of Bjørvika? Even though the materiality of her work is not strictly visual, Heier applies visual terms to describe her artistic tools and the mechanisms that she manipulates. In her art practice-based doctoral thesis, Marianne Heier writes that she looks for “blind zones” that are lost in simplifications and that they constitute the starting point of her works (2013, p.6). When she introduces physical, concrete elements in a chosen environment, she attempts to activate overlooked potentialities. In her reflection on the intervention in Bjørvika, visual terms are also used to describe the goals of her own practice.

Through this process, the artist takes on a temporary ownership and responsibility of actions and experiences taking place within the frameworks of the situation defined as “art”. [...] When the strategy works, it opens up for situations to appear as new and different; as never seen before. It provides new eyes. (Heier, 2006, p.1)

The strategic goal of “A Drop in the Ocean” was to provide new eyes and open the situations to appear as never seen before. I will suggest that the visible is modified in two steps: first, the artist, through thorough research, sees the situation as it has not yet been seen; second, the situation can appear to others as new. Specifically, the artist proposes an anonymous public spectator to see with “new eyes.” One can argue that the object of the artistic touch is the gaze of the beholder. The assumption that the gaze is determinative of how a situation is perceived and that there are blind zones within our visual culture, concurs with Rancière’s identification of a regime of visibility. However, the formation of a new collective way of seeing can be approached by the relational aspect of the skilled perception, coined by Daston as *seeing collectives*. Nonetheless, before closing on this issue, I will attempt to describe the workings of the “new eyes” that Heier provided.

During the summer of 2005, the photos of empty swimming pools were displayed along the waterfront of Bjørvika. The concrete and physical object through which Heier attempts to stimulate an overlooked potential has its own striking visuality. However, the photos are not the objects that need

to be seen with new eyes. Instead, it is the surrounding reality and the constellations of which the empty swimming pools are a product, which Heier puts forward to be seen. So what happens to the gaze of the passer-by along the waterfront? It is quite concretely *redirected*. By redirecting the gaze from the waterfront to the suburbs, the emplacement of the photos in Bjørvika reconfigures a portion of the visible. If one agrees with the logic of place marketing and the assumption that visibility increases economic value, the gaze has an economic value and the redirection of it is a redirection of value. One could read the valuable gaze as moving upstream and in the opposite direction of the general money flux. This interpretation suggests that Marianne Heier's Robin Hood-strategy works. As difficult as it might be to answer, the question of efficiency remains. Whether the critical and analytical approach of Heier was encountered as such, or absorbed as a cultural event, is also a question for the audience.¹⁵ In a case such as with Bjørvika, negotiating the *image* of the city is also to negotiate which parts of the population one addresses. If the gaze proposed by the artist comes to be shared by many, it can be identified as more than a symbolic gesture. The ambition of the artist to provide new eyes can be rephrased, as to skill her spectators' gaze, so that they see what they used to overlook. How the *seeing collectives*, studied by Daston, were established despite professional, linguistic, and cultural differences is thought-provoking because differences of that order are not easily transgressed. One of the challenges of the urban redevelopment of Bjørvika is to construct a common ground despite social and cultural differences, this challenge can also be said to account for the artist whose work is embedded in a social set of problems and wishes to reach communities trained in other perceptual habits.

Final Remarks, Recomposing the Visible

In the example of the skilling of perception in relation to the new collective way to see clouds, I touched upon the role of images, as seeing collectives are being formed. The *International Cloud Atlas* was the product of a compromise reached in Uppsala, and the images were pivotal in illustrating and shaping what was agreed upon as seen in unison. These images can be said to have established a new way of holding the world in common. I wish to draw a parallel from this atlas to the 3D model of Bjørvika. The atlas was the locus of negotiation, as the diverse interest and different competences—one could say different ways of seeing—attempted to reach agreements. Torbjørn Tveiten claims that the 3D model was indispensable during the negotiations of the development regulations, and that it was the primary tool for mediating the project (2011, p.236). In spite of the differences, the use of the model during the decision making process suggests the importance of the images in the process of forming a collective way of seeing.

Lorraine Daston's study on the science of clouds demonstrates how scientific observation affects the everyday perception and articulation of the visible world. However, the new way of seeing

¹⁵ Heier outlines this dilemma herself (2006, p.5).

clouds was also a result of artistic observations. The paintings of Constable and Weilbach influenced the science of clouds that was contemporary to their time. Earlier Italian painters such as Giotto, Masolino, Corregio, and Mantegna had rendered other possible shapes of visible clouds (Damisch, 2002). Just as one can identify a relationship between scientifically skilled perception and everyday perception, artistically skilled perception can influence how everyday perception is formed. The triangular schema outlining the relation between the skilling of perception, the participation in a collective, and images, defines images as influent. Such an understanding of the role that images play urges a critical approach to them. While images that mediate forms of formerly unperceived visibility might skill perception, stereotypical imagery maintains a static perception. This article has attempted to draw attention on the necessity of a critical approach to practices within urban development that “builds with images.”

While Rancière identified the sensible as constitutive of the public, Daston’s approach to the formation of seeing collectives provides insight as to how the plasticity of the sensible is shaped through the skilling of perception. Therefore, the term ‘skilled perception’ might prove helpful in the analysis of perceptual regimes. The prevalence of vision over the other senses in the redevelopment of Bjørvika calls for a more competent perception of the visible. Although opposed by artist Marianne Heier through different visual means, the seductive visuality of the waterfront, as pointed out by urban geographer Heidi Bergsli, draws attention away from other areas in the city. Images are more than illustrations, rhetorical figures, and temptations. They have an epistemological dimension through which we learn to see the world. By rendering possibilities known, images present us with what is within reach and they separate the known from the unknown. Rancière (2008) sees the access to new forms of sensibility in relationship to social and political emancipation and argues that the divisions in the definitions of the material of the sensible, which we hold in common, can be transgressed by critical art. As part of the distribution of the sensible, images can be a locus of discovery and change. They can also counteract the boundaries and divisions that exclude economic, social, and cultural forms of visibility from the public simply by not representing them.

On the contributor

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VOLUME 11 ISSUE 3

The International Journal of

Social, Political, and Community Agendas in the Arts

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THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY AGENDAS IN THE ARTS

www.artsinsociety.com
ISSN: 2326-9960 (Print)
ISSN: 2327-2104 (Online)
doi:10.18848/2326-9960/CGP (Journal)

First published in 2016 in Champaign, Illinois,
USA by Common Ground Publishing
www.commongroundpublishing.com

The International Journal of Social, Political and Community Agendas in the Arts is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.

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Flatbread Society and the Discourse on the Soil

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Abstract: Flatbread Society is a public art project in the newly redeveloped waterfront of Oslo. The durational engagement of artist Amy Franceschini and her collaborators have led to a deviation from the original design concept of one of the public spaces. With Flatbread Society, the approach to site has shifted from an emphasis on the fjord as a recreational asset to the soil as an essential resource of social, historic and ecologic importance. The aim of this article is to discuss temporary artistic interventions that generate or circulate new knowledge about the city. More specifically, it investigates the research methodology of Flatbread Society, arguing that public art can act as producer of new insights in the context in which it operates. The empirical data of the article are constructed through participatory observations of the temporary intervention and interviews with the artists. Flatbread Society's site-specific approach is viewed in relation to the urban redevelopment context and the site-specific approaches already in place through the public space program. The article introduces the notion of aesthetic labour in order to discuss art's reconfiguration of materiality and competences, and how Flatbread Society brings about a new understanding of the site they work within.

Keywords: Public Art, Urban Redevelopment, Participation-based Art

Introduction: The Fjord and the Field

The waterfront of Oslo is undergoing substantial changes. The former industrial harbour, Bjørvika, is transforming into the cultural epicentre of the city, with the Opera and the future Munch Museum as main attractions. As the redevelopment advances, bits of the new projected harbour promenade are completed. The 2,8 km promenade along the redeveloped area connects different cultural venues, new residential areas, and the fjord. The promenade suggests a particular spatial practice—it is a space for leisure and represents a contrast to the earlier industrial history of the site. Furthermore, the promenade entails a visual framing of the harbour landscape and enables an appreciation of it from a distance. This promenade further embodies the strategies of a cultural-led development, characterised by the conscious design of a space for leisure and cultural consumption. Artist Amy Franceschini, the front figure of the artist collective Futurefarmers, was commissioned by Bjørvika Development's public art program in 2011.¹ As a response, she formed Flatbread Society, a working collective in Oslo. In this article, the Flatbread Society is discussed as an independent project, although it is closely affiliated with Futurefarmers.² In one of the future public spaces along the harbour promenade, Amy Franceschini and her collaborators are currently developing an urban farm, Losæter, which in the future will be the location of a permanent public bakehouse. At first sight, there is hardly anything extraordinary about this planted field by the seaside, as the soil almost blends in with the earth that is constantly being turned over in the neighbouring construction areas. However, the process leading up to this point, with the collective of artists managing the site, is noteworthy. With Losæter and the Bakehouse, Amy Franceschini and Flatbread Society are in fact

¹ The public art program is managed by Bjørvika Development Ltd. (Bjørvika Utvikling AS) and the art budget equals to 1% of Bjørvika Infrastructure Ltd.'s investments. Curator Claire Doherty commissioned Amy Franceschini to BU's permanent public art program "Slow Space."

² Initially formed in Oslo, the Flatbread Society has expanded and appeared in different venues, such as the Survival Kit Festival in Riga, the Broad Art Museum in Michigan, and in Sardinia at the Italian Capital of Culture. Due to the Flatbread Society's appearances in different contexts, it is at present more integrated in Futurefarmers' practice than it was at the time of the intervention in Oslo. Although addressed as an artist collective in the article, it is a simplification as the collaborators are from different professional fields.

intervening in the official public space program of Bjørvika as designed by Gehl Architects and SLA Architects in 2008.³ The activation of the soil of Bjørvika by Flatbread Society's hands-on engagement introduces a different relation to the area whose harbour promenade is mostly about underscoring the sightlines of the fjord. The aim of this article is to look at how Flatbread Society, through temporary interventions, constructs a counter-narrative of Bjørvika. Flatbread Society's research of the city brought about a new understanding of the site that they are working on. Through their temporary intervention, the artists circulated a range of site knowledge that unsettled the established approach to the site.

Methodology and Scope

From 22 May to 23 June 2013, the collective installed a temporary Bakehouse on-site and hosted a range of variegated participation-based events of which the first was the building of a dome oven.⁴ This article discusses Flatbread Society's engagement with one particular public space in Bjørvika, Loallmenningen, and the scope of the article is this temporary intervention. The article's empirical data are constructed through participatory observations and recorded conversations with the artists during that time.



Figure 1: The Temporary Bakehouse of the Flatbread Society
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

³ In 2004, Gehl architects and SLA landscape architects won the competition for the overall design concept for the public spaces in Bjørvika. The design concept for Loallmenningen is from 2008.

⁴ The events assembled a variegated range of attendees, depending on the location and character of the events. Among others, there were local activists, by-passers, people from the art field and schoolchildren.

Flatbread Society operates within an urban development context, and in this article, it is viewed in relation to the design concept for the public spaces of Bjørvika. However, a narrow reading that focuses only on the effect of public art on urban development is reductionist. Humanistic interpretation offers a scientific position that acknowledges both the context and the layers of significance activated when engaging with an artwork. Hence, this article discusses Flatbread Society from a humanistic perspective, thus engaging with both the actual and its significances, not unlike the parallel motion at work in the art project itself. The art project consists of ephemeral and participation-based events, and I have therefore used the method of participatory observation. In participation-based art, the audience is subjected to a twofold-dynamic in relation to the artwork: They are also, in a way, both observing and participating. Art historian Claire Bishop states: “In using people as medium, participatory art has always had a double ontological status: it is both an event in the world and at one remove from it” (Bishop 2012, 284). Participatory observation renders the double positions of the audience accessible for the researcher. Rather than a conceptual, analytical approach, it enables a close, first-hand experience with one’s subject (Fangen 2004; Alvesson and Skjöldberg 2010). The ephemeral and durational character of a participatory-based art project makes the first-hand experience rather exclusive. As pointed out by Bishop, few observers participate over time, and consequently researchers often rely on the account of the artist or curator to gain an overview of the project (Bishop 2012). From this perspective, participatory observation can be a critical research tool. Bishop acknowledges that the potential loss of critical distance and the forming of personal relationships when involved with a project over time is an aspect of experiencing participation-based art (Bishop 2012). Having this in mind, the methodological strategy behind this article is in line with what Suzanne Lacy labels the “close reading critique,” developed through legwork and immersion (Lacy 2008, 22). The critical practice of close reading aims at expanding, amplifying and adding complexity to discourse (Lacy 2008).

Theoretical Approach

Claire Bishop argues that participatory art is both a social and symbolic activity, and hence has a double ontological status (Bishop 2012). They are both immediate social situations and art projects with layers of significance. This has implications for theory as well as for method. Baking flat breads is a worldwide practice, and the actual, practical object is recognisable to many. However, the Flatbread Society introduced the flatbread in various situations, and the same object inhabited multiple positions. In the interaction, flatbread was a concrete object as well as a topic of discursive exchange, and it could carry a load of significance. The artists described the temporary Bakehouse as research. This article traces the artists’ research by discussing the situations around the flatbread. One of the concerns of this article is hence the double character of the Flatbread Society’s temporary intervention, of being both a public artwork and a research methodology. Art as research, in this case an integral part of public art, might be an aspect of the usefulness of art in an urban development context. Art practices that work in the *in-between* of art and other societal fields are often discussed in relation to the influence they have on the context they situate themselves in, rather than the autonomous realm of art.⁵ The context can be intrinsic to public art, just as the white cube is fundamental to modernist aesthetics. The aim of this article is three fold. First, it presents the artists’

⁵ For more on this see Claire Doherty and Paul O’Neill (Eds.), *Locating the Producers*. (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011), Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013) and Doris Sommer, *The Work of Art in the World* (Durham: University of Duke Press, 2013).

methodology in relation to the context that they entered, and suggests that their approach, supported by the different roles of the flatbread, produced situated and relational site knowledge. Secondly, the artistic use of objects is discussed as a play with art's double ontological status. Thirdly, I argue that in Flatbread Society, new site knowledge circulated and enabled the construction of a counter-narrative of Bjørvika. Attempting to discuss Flatbread Society in relation to context, but without reducing the double ontological positions at play, the challenge is to trace what Doris Sommer calls art's disruptive energy (Sommer 2014, 7). In her book, *The Work of Art in the World*, she proposes readings of art projects that unfold in collaborative situations and various contexts. She argues for the relevance of the Kantian space of the disinterested aesthetic judgment and suggests that when imagination and reason are in free play, a critical and creative space opens within pragmatic contexts (Sommer 2014). Central to her readings is the understanding of the aesthetical experience, not as a pure receptive moment, but as an experimental practice of judging, exploring, speculating and testing possibilities (Sommer 2014). Anchoring her reflections on the German philosopher Schiller, she underscores the temporality of the aesthetic experience, articulating it as a "time-consuming labour of creativity" (Sommer 2014, 144).⁶ Contemporary art theory marks the drift of participatory art practices towards a coinciding of art's creation and art's reception into a mutual unfolding in a space of production. (Ranci re 2000; Doherty 2004). The idea of creative or aesthetical labour as an experimental practice bridging the production and reception of art inspires the reading that I propose of Flatbread Society. The notion of labour resonates with the importance attributed to usefulness and the thoroughness of the artistic research, while the aesthetic character of the labour denotes the double ontological positions and imaginative fields that the artistic practice activates.⁷

Context

The public space program designed by Gehl and SLA Architects consists of seven public spaces and a promenade along the fjord. This program is one of the cases in the doctoral thesis of landscape architect Lisa Diedrich. She investigates site-specific approaches in harbour transformations and centres her work on observations that contribute to shedding light on the context of Flatbread Society. In Bjørvika, she argues, it is noteworthy that both the official planning and the design approach are somehow constructing narratives in which the fjord is the main protagonist (Diedrich 2013). A site narrative is, according to urban theorist Robert Beauregard, a necessary strategy that professional developers use to structure the complexity of a site and discard ambiguities in discourse (Beauregard 2005). The double emphasis on the fjord in the site narratives of Bjørvika is, on one hand, apparent in the municipality and the developers branding of it as the "Fjord city."⁸ On the other hand, by using the fjord as the main point of reference Gehl and SLA Architects have indeed conceived the public spaces as different local atmospheres based on observations of water. Thus, the overarching narrative of the design is also constructed on the relation to the fjord (Diedrich 2013).

⁶ This is not a central notion in Sommer's book, as she more frequently uses the notion of play.

⁷ I use the notion as an experimental tool in my close reading; however, it is not within the scope of this article to theorise it further.

⁸ For more, on public art in relation to place marketing and the construction of an image of Bjørvika, see Charlotte Blanche Myrvold, "Negotiating the Image of the City," *Information 2* (2): 124–144.



Figure 2: Loallmenningen as Seen from the Sky
 Source: *Oslo S Urvikling 2012* (text added by Charlotte B. Myrvold)

Another important aspect of the area redevelopment is the intention to reintegrate the post-industrial site of Oslo into the urban fabric. *Connectivity* between the new public spaces and the existing urban fabric is a challenge as the railway and the former highway separate Bjørvika from the city. The public space program, however, pays little attention to the complex dynamic of social space production, and rather prioritises quantitative data on the material conditions of the area (Aspen 2012). This entails that the strategy does not formulate connectivity in social and relational terms. Instead, sightlines are introduced as the main instrument to achieve connectivity, and landscape is then not only rendered a discursive role but is also applied as a structural principle. This is also the case with Loallmenningen, the public space furthest east and potentially a recreational area for the multicultural areas of Grønland and Gamlebyen on Oslo's east side. The site's relation to the existent city is described in visual terms, and sightlines towards the medieval park are proposed as the main effect to achieve a connection between Loallmenningen and the inner East (Gehl Architects 2008).⁹ Attempting to solve the issue of connectivity primarily by designing sightlines, the public space program reveals a superficial approach, and that is one of its shortcomings. The last aspect of the public space program that I wish to present is how the site's design concept predetermines certain activities. At the time when the Flatbread Society executed their temporary intervention, the design concept of Gehl and SLA Architects for Loallmenningen was still valid, although not implemented. The uses planned for Loallmenningen was sport activities such as ball games and rock climbing. Diedrich argues that the emphasis on the design as a framework for a pre-conceptualised situation is an approach where the designers are "excluding people from contributing to the design of the framework" (2013, 281). The design's role as a deviser of activities contrasts with contemporary design approaches that aim at facilitating the use of the site on the basis of what is already in

⁹ Sightlines have also been the subject of the public discussion. The main objection to the development in Bjørvika, namely that the high-rises would block the view, was a question of visual access to the landscape, rather than other resources such as the economic investments into this part of the city compared with others.

place.¹⁰ One might argue that the large depopulated site of Bjørvika is not adequate for site-specific approaches that acknowledge site as relational and aim at involving local communities. Nevertheless, as we will see, Flatbread Society aims at precisely that. In the public space program, the site-specific approach is phenomenological and seeks to underscore the perception of site (Diedrich 2013). Flatbread Society's research can be described as a relational approach to site-specificity. Art historian Miwon Kwon advocates approaches to site-specificity that encompass the fluidities and nomadism of practised space, while demarcating relational specificity rather than constructing place-bound identities (Kwon 2002). Kwon's book ends with the suggestion that a certain kind of relational sensibility can be the key to articulating spaces between people and places. In Flatbread Society's research during their temporal intervention one can observe relational sensitivity towards connectivity, the use of public space and site narratives.

A Boat Walking on Land: The Flatbread Society's Research of the City

On Friday, the 24th of May, two men walked with their legs poking out through a boat strapped to their shoulders along the sidewalk to number 31b of Grønlandsleiret in Oslo. The men were Stijn Schiffeleers and Lode Vranken, and the boat was a red canoe with a chimney torching from the middle section. Upon arrival, the canoe was put on trestles, the men climbed out and a fire was lit in the canoe's oven. While the smoke rose, the teapot already on the stove, Amy Franceschini helped assemble a temporary baking table next to the canoe and started to roll the dough flat. Men and women stopped around the canoe, whose legs were now hanging loose and empty down to the ground. The fourth core member of Flatbread Society, Marthe Van Dessel, switched from one language to another, as she invited the gathered people of multicultural Grønland to share their stories on flatbread and astronomy through a microphone that was, for the occasion, dressed up in a heel of a loaf. The dough, rolled in a round, flat shape, was put to bake on the griddle of the canoe oven. A few moments later the warm and fresh flatbread was buttered, cut in sections and offered to by-passers. Together, the smoke, the melted butter and the warm bread fused into a familiar and including atmosphere, while the sight of a four-legged canoe and the old fashioned baking devices were uncommon enough to slow down traffic and spark questions. (Field notes 2013)

The note above is based on my observations on 24 May 2013 when Flatbread Society's core members took the four-legged canoe on its first trip. In the middle of the canoe, there was an oven with a built-in griddle. Thus, it performed as a portable baking station under the name of the Mobile Bread Oven. Its first stop was on the sidewalk of 31 B, a psychiatric day-care/café in Grønland. Here, by-passers were offered newly baked flatbread and invited to roll out flatbreads themselves. Conversations around the topic of flatbread were initiated by Marthe Van Dessel, who also livestreamed the interviews on Radio Ramona. The canoe's phantasmagorical design resonates with traditional Norwegian folktales; it can both walk on land and float in water. Hence, it can be said to mirror Flatbread Society's approach to site. The temporary Bakehouse was based by the fjord, but this satellite oven was on the move around the city. Consequently, the

¹⁰ For more on design methodologies that work with what is already there, see Christophe Girot, "Four Trace Concepts in Landscape Architecture," in *Recovering Landscape. Essays in Contemporary Architecture*, ed. James Corner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 59–68 and muf architecture/art's collaboration with the artist collective EXYZT on the project Dalston Mill (<http://www.muf.co.uk/>).

site-specific approach of Flatbread Society was not limited to the physical site by the waterfront. As mentioned, crucial to the public space program of Loallmenningen is the *connectivity* with Grønland and the East side, supposedly achieved through sightlines. By visiting different locations in Oslo, the Mobile Bread Oven *performs* the sought-after connectivity in a way that profoundly opposes the panoptical practice of inscribing sightlines into the urban fabric.¹¹ However, the mobile oven is more than a symbol or a performative gesture. It is a device in Flatbread Society's research methodology and a way to assemble knowledge about the city.¹² The Mobile Bread Oven created a social space that allowed the public to be involved, facilitating a research approach to the city that was concerned with the social dimension of public space. Amy Franceschini recalls the question that initially prompted their first inquiries:

One of the questions we had was “Who is Bjørvika?” because there were some preconceptions of that articulated to us from various groups in Oslo. As visitors to this place, we did not know who Bjørvika was, and that is a big question, but by situating ourselves here we have a little bit of an idea of the diversity of who Bjørvika is. Now we ask “What does Bjørvika need?” And, we have time to ask them and involve them in shaping this place to include their desires. (Interview, Franceschini 2013)

The question of *who* Bjørvika is represents more than mere curiosity of artists coming in from abroad. As mentioned before, in the narratives surrounding Bjørvika, the fjord is the main protagonist, and the area is restructured as a visual framing of the landscape. The social complexity of the area, however, is not dealt with in a convincing way. By using the pronoun *who*, Flatbread Society stated a relational understanding of the site. By participating in the making and sharing of flatbread around the extraordinary canoe and other events that the artists hosted, one joined the ongoing conversation on flatbread and what a Bakehouse in Bjørvika could be.

Social as Site

Loallmenningen is the name of the future public space where Flatbread Society installed the temporary Bakehouse during the early summer of 2013. Bjørvika is the former grounds of all heavy traffic traversing Oslo, but in 2010 the highway was built into a tunnel underneath the fjord. Two immense ventilation towers now intersect Loallmenningen vertically, thus inscribing the site on the skyline. Loallmenningen is a rather remote and unknown place in Oslo, but the towers are a point of reference. To the southwest, Sørenga, a residential area, is under development, and in 2013 the first residents moved into the completed apartments. Around the towers, Bjørvika Development finances 100 temporary allotment gardens named *Herligheten* (the wonderful).¹³ This is where Flatbread Society first planted a field of heritage grains in 2012

¹¹ Among the locations were the municipal library in Grünerløkka, the Society of Young Artists (UKS), the Opera at Bjørvika and the Intercultural Museum in Grønland.

¹² Colin McFarlane discusses the city as assemblage of knowledge and investigates the relation between the ways in which the city is learned and the knowledge that we base our acts on. He does not discuss public art as a way to learn the city, but it is nevertheless a relevant perspective. For more see, *Learning the City* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

¹³ The inspiration behind the instalment of the allotments garden is accredited to the exhibition “Views from Ekeberg,” curated by Harald Østgaard Lund at Kunsthall Oslo. Here, a photo by Axel Lindahl's Christiania fra Ekeberg. I-IV (1884), showed this part of Bjørvika as an agricultural site.

and are currently developing an urban farm.¹⁴ It is through the spatial position of the Bakehouse that the political dimension of Flatbread Society is apparent. Oslo is conceived as socially and economically divided into East and West, the Eastern part being the less wealthy. By making Bjørvika attractive to the moneyed, the decision to redevelop the area represents a significant remodulation of the urban frontiers in Oslo. Loallmenningen is both projected as a recreational space for the new residents of Bjørvika and as an accessible location by the fjord for the whole city, particularly for the inner East. Loallmenningen then becomes the only public space in Bjørvika that is situated on an axis of social and economic difference. Moreover, Grønland is the most multicultural area of the centre of Oslo. Loallmenningen can therefore be a site for negotiation of cultural difference and dissimilar practices in public space. In light of the social geographical context of Loallmenningen, the site may be conceived of as an urban frontier, and, by choosing Loallmenningen, the artists entered a site of polarities.

By placing ourselves right on this spot in between—which obviously was a clear decision at some point—we made a statement indicating: “We need to be there. This is the spot we need to be in”...and being here comes with its own specific politics, you know. You need to fight a bit to get this spot. (Interview, Schiffeleers 2013)

Stijn Schiffeleers describes the site of the Bakehouse as a spot *in between*, but also as the right place to be. If we go back to the initial research question of Flatbread Society, *who is Bjørvika*, we might be able to sense the connection proposed between this particular site and the personification implied in the question. The social, economic and cultural entities intersecting in Loallmenningen explodes the *who* of Bjørvika into as many answers as there are recipes for flatbread.



Figure 3: Dome Oven Building-Workshop
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

¹⁴ The species of grains planted, the “Svedjerugen,” was recovered from 10 grains found in an old sauna at Grue in Finnskogen, and the Flatbread Society collaborated with farmer Johan Swärd on this project. Flatbread Society works for the preservation of ancient heritage grains and is collaborating with institutes in both Russia and Palestine, as well as currently devising a seed bank on Loallmenningen.

Multilingual Flatbreads

Flatbrød is embedded in Norwegian food culture. It is a thin, crispy type of bread without yeast traditionally made by travelling bakers, and it could be stored for a long time because of its dryness. However, making flat breads without yeast is a worldwide practice, and the multicultural history of flatbread is a pivot point in Flatbread Society's approach to the multicultural urban society in Oslo. Flatbread offered a possibility to explore contemporary cultures articulated in flavour, style and baking methods (interview, Schiffeleers 2013). During the Flatbread Society's first encounters with Oslo, they visited Zagros bread bakery in Grønland, Newroz bakery and restaurant in Gamlebyen, and the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History. Although researching the cultural history of flatbread, making traditional tools and looking up different types of rural ovens, the actual presence of flatbread in the contemporary cultural context of Oslo was important in the project. As retold in the notes from the artists' fieldtrips: "[It is] not just the Kurds or Arabs that come to Zagros to buy bread: in recent years, more and more Norwegians are stopping by" (www.flatbreadsociety.net). When the temporary Bakehouse opened on 22 May, a roof structure was already in place, and the first events were participatory oven-building workshops. During the first week, oven-builder Sten Sjøgren, participants and artists built a dome oven, a tandoori oven and a griddle. Thus, the Bakehouse could host different baking styles and facilitate the potential of the flatbread to represent cultures. However, Stijn notes in the interview that although the flatbread was initially imagined as a device of cultural representation, it was the flatbread as a practical entity that the events foregrounded to him, particularly the pleasant sensation in kneading the dough (interview, Schiffeleers 2013). The actual bread was a springboard for interaction. In the interview with Amy Franceschini, she points to both cultural significances of bread and the culture of microorganism within bread. But in the picture that she draws of the events, she highlights the invitation to "... a kind of gathering the culture of all these hands" (interview, Franceschini 2013).

Conversations about Flatbread

The flatbread, there is symbolism in it, really just symbolism, like the Jewish think it is unlevelled bread, and the idea is that it is only pure flour. When you put yeast in it, it swells up, becomes puffed up, much like the human ego. So, flatbread can symbolise unpolluted material, just like we would be if we didn't have egos. (Recordings Radio Ramona 2013)

I have a story from Liverpool. My great grandmother, she told me that when she was just married that the communal oven was just down the bottom of the road, so everybody made their bread in the morning and went to the baker and got there bread baked. At the end of the week, you paid however much you had, because this oven was always warm anyway. (Recordings Radio Ramona 2013)

The above quotes are both recordings done by Marthe Van Dessel for Radio Ramona. One of these fragments of conversations, introduces a symbolic approach to flatbread and the other shares a historical and personal reference to bakehouses. Both of them provide an entrance to the discursive field around flatbread. The sharing of flatbread and the gathering of people and hands

echo a range of art practices that have explored the relational dimensions of a meal.¹⁵ However, art practices run the risk of being placed in a marginal public position if they are only attributed meaning in the imaginative capacity of the individual viewer. For instance, the tactile, phenomenological access to good food and nice people can be a challenge for theorists to articulate as a relevant, public artwork. Therefore, art theorist Kester Grant establishes discursive interaction as a site of the artwork and argues that by facilitating conversations art participates in the public sphere (Kester, 2013). Hence, Kester's notion of a dialogical aesthetics offers a key approach to art practices that are ephemeral and not object-based. Kester describes dialogues that are an integral part of the artwork as "an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict" (Kester 2013, 8). Through dialogue, unanticipated forms of knowledge emerge (Kester, 2013). As suggested earlier, the situations hosted by the artists supported the inquiry of who Bjørvika is, as well as what Bjørvika needs. By being part of both a public art project and research, the discursive interaction in Flatbread Society can be said to comprise the same double character as the temporary Bakehouse. In the way Marthe Van Dessel constructed the interviews, one can perceive the potential of conversations as sites of imaginative exchange. In the quote below, she describes what flatbread represents in her artistic approach.

It is a sort of empty container into which you can project a lot of ideas. It can be on a level of identity [...] And you can load it with any kind of signification; it is a medium somehow, and it is a medium to try to talk to people about who they are and what they think, and their dreams and their imagination. And that is throughout the interviews that I am doing for the radio which I give in a very open way. To use it really as a medium to see what people really want to talk about. It functions quite well, I think, as this empty container. And through the radio interviews, we give a voice to Ramona, a character who is circulating in Flatbread Society. (Interview, Van Dessel 2013)



Figure 4: The Mobile Bread Oven
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

¹⁵ One famous example is Nicholas Bourriaud's reading of artist Rirkrit Tiravanija's projects; see, *Esthétique Relationelle* (Paris: Les presses du reel, 2001).

Double Ontological Positions: From Flatbread to Art

In Grønland, standing outside of the psychiatric day-care café 31B, the relational potential of the baking situation was still unknown to me. What I learned, standing around the four-legged canoe with both pedestrians and visitors of 31B, was how many vivid stories and memories connected to flatbread are carried invisibly around in Oslo. Flatbread proved to be a subject that easily enabled conversations. Baking, maybe unlike contemporary art, is a practice that many people relate to. In this section, I wish to discuss how Flatbread Society activates double ontological positions and stages objects and practices further than what a more “pragmatic” approach to baking would imply.

I am told baking stories from Iraq and Turkey. An adult man’s remembrance of his childhood’s anticipation of boreks, always baked at the end of baking day in a village in Turkey. Recipes and descriptions of ovens, something twinned with a lot of nuts and oil. I realise that the flatbread, called so in Norwegian, is not a Norwegian phenomenon. A North African tells me in French about a grandmother and a grain field, and a Norwegian recalls how his mother once a year baked bread on a one-meter large griddle. At the very end of the event, a woman bakes flatbread. She tells us that her mother as a child, helped with the flatbread baking. The woman herself has a great baking method; she rolls the bread on a stick and moves it to the griddle. Someone asks: “Did you also help to bake flatbread?” “No,” she answers, “I only heard the stories.” The method she says has been learned by watching television. (Field notes, 2013)

The practicality, the tastefulness and the memories of homemade, “transcultural” flatbread are important parts of the proposition. It is an easily shared subject—quite in line with what Jane Kardon in the 1980s argued was a necessary quality in public art for it to be meaningful and reassure the viewer rather than to unsettle (Kwon 2004, 96). Miwon Kwon outlines a parallel in contemporary community-based work, where conceptual and performative practices do not propose literal representations. Hence, a need arises for the participant to have something else to identify with. She suggests that through labour, situations are created so that the community can see itself at work. Thus, audience’s own labour is the recognisable and reassuring entity (Kwon 2004). For instance, when participating in building the ovens for the Bakehouse, a wider public were able to appreciate the concrete output of the labour. Some of the same applies to flatbread, because it is recognisable to a diversified public. Kwon’s reading of participation-based projects as a *reassuring* artistic representation of labour can thus apply to Flatbread Society. Moreover, she frames such an approach to labour as an idealistic assumption that artistic labour is a form of unalienated labour (Kwon 2004, 97).¹⁶ Flatbread Society enters Bjørvika with an intention to create situations of empowerment and more participation in the process of urban redevelopment. Therefore, in this respect Kwon’s critique is also relevant. However, in the following I will suggest that Flatbread Society’s approach to ordinary and recognisable practices such as baking is not treating labour as an easy, reassuring entity. Rather, in their proposition there is a critical attempt to investigate the recognition of competence and skill in societal, historical and political perspectives. By reconfiguring the issues at stake in the critical and creative space opened in the art project, artistic labour is here acting beyond a staging of itself as an idealistic endeavour. In the field note above, I describe an adult woman baking flatbread for the first time, even though

16 Through the notion of unalienated labour, Kwon refers to Marxist theory and comments on the presumption that artistic practices can enact collective labour provisionally outside of capitalism forces.

she has a lifelong relation to it through her mother. I was surprised by this virginal and competent baking and think it illustrates that an open invitation to a practice such as baking can be empowering. However, to discuss the Flatbread Society as public artwork, the perspective should be shifted from the subjective changes in positions of competence to a reading of the whole art project as multiple changes of positions.

Flatbread, Flat Earth

Flatbread is merely an example of the multiplicity of roles that one object can hold. The artistic practice activates a leap from tangible flatbread, held within the well-ordered structure of a good recipe, to a shared space of imagination. The fried pattern of the flatbread holds a beauty of its own, and some eyes will reimagine it as the surface of the moon. In one of the quotes in this text, one of the participants interprets the flatbread as a bread that has no ego. The potential described by Marthe Van Dessel of flatbread as an empty container enabling open conversations also activates discourses that omit the actual bread in favour of the imaginative. Yet, at the core of Flatbread Society's engagement with flatbread are flat earth theories. The theory that the artist society puts forward is that our conception of the world is connected to our baking practices. The daring parallel drawn is that at the time when flatbread was the prevailing bread, people believed the earth to be flat. It was only with the introduction of yeast into the dough and the subsequent spherical shape of bread that the earth was imagined round. Looking at the shifting roles of flatbread, an ontological doubleness presents itself; flatbread is both part of a social situation and a work of art. This far, I have traced the changing roles of the flatbread within this artistic project. It has functioned as cultural representation. It has been eaten. The dough has served as concrete plasticity introducing playfulness in the situations. Flatbread provided a connection to the past. It was interpreted as a symbol. It was a topic of conversation. Moreover, flatbread has been a canvas for imaginative projections and an object of cosmologies.



Figure 5: Baking flatbread at the Bakehouse
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

I will say that the flatbread is playing on two teams, the concrete and the imaginative, the reassuring and the playful. When the leap from one role to another introduces a double ontological play, I suggest it is a result of aesthetic labour. Philosopher Jaques Rancière sees a disruptive potential in art because it can inhabit double positions. He outlines the unsettling

potential of art in relation to Plato's critique of mimetic art and argues that it is by publically inhabiting double positions in time and space that art intervenes in the distribution of the sensible (2000, 14). For instance, the actor in the tragedy is both himself and the character on stage; he is both a fictional being and a real man. Thus, he embodies the ontological double status that Bishop emphasises in participation-based art, because it shares materiality with ordinary human sociality. The political and emancipating process that the Flatbread Society seeks to initiate begins by outlining double positions that unsettle the certainty of habit that accompany familiar objects.

Double Positions

Objects can belong to different realms of competence, and, by displacing them from their designated place, some of the unsettling potential of art described by Rancière is acted out. In the song "La complainte du progrès," Boris Vian mocks modern couples' accumulation of objects designed for all possible specialised functions, exemplified by the "tourniquette pour faire vinaigrette," a specialised device to mix salad dressing. The object in question has only one specific purpose. The opposite is the case in the hybrid objects produced for the Flatbread Society—for instance the Mobile Bread Oven, the four-legged canoe running as smoothly on land as on water. The introduction of fully functional absurd objects of multiple uses challenges the logic of the specialised object. Another example is the "Flatbread Society Rolling Pin Telescope,"¹⁷ a rolling pin where one of the handles is detachable and hides a lens. The object is materially bringing together an instrument of astronomy and an instrument of baking, and thus the two practices are symbolically fused. Objects and people are connected through competence. The astronomer-baker is a figure that arises from this constellation, and it resonates with the imaginative projection of moons and planets on the surface of the baked flatbread. Although appearing in the urban landscape as an absurd construct at the same level as the four-legged canoe, their origins differ. The Flatbread Society traces the astronomer-baker to ancient Mesopotamia, the oldest practice of collective astronomic observation (Daston and Lunbeck, 2011). At night, the guarding posts of the grain storages were also used for star observation, thus the grain was the source of knowledge of both the heavens and the soil. The astronomer-baker inhabits a double position, and to claim double positions, for instance that of baker *and* astronomer, is a political act according to Jaques Rancière's theory on the distribution of the sensible. The tight societal distribution of time, place and occupation are by Rancière argued to be configurations of the sensible that keep each in their own place (Rancière 2000). In light of this, emancipatory acts contribute to blur the boundaries that keep individuals in their designated place (Rancière 2008). A double position that Rancière explores, one, which resonates with the baker-astronomer, is the worker-philosopher. In the 19th century, workers could access double positions by spending the nights reading and writing instead of conforming to the designated time and practices of leisure. Thus, they unsettled the configuration of the sensible and accessed progressive ideas and an imaginative free space during the time designated for rest (Rancière 2008, 25-26). One of the events organised by the Flatbread Society was the workshop "Grain Power. Milling the Archives," at the Oslo City Archive. In Norway during the nineteenth century, local libraries emerged from the Society of Agriculture's (Sogneselskap) establishment of a range of subdivisions. During the workshop, books and lending registers from the society's

¹⁷ The Flatbread Society Rolling Pin Telescope (2013) is a collaboration between Amy Franceschini and Noah Murphy-Reinhertz.

libraries were brought up from the archives.¹⁸ The peeking into the old book collections of nineteenth-century farmers conveys partitions into knowledge, progressive ideas and imagination similar to how Rancière outlines the ways in which the 19th century worker-philosopher transgresses the configuration of the sensible by inhabiting a double position. The material of the archive displays shifting positions, from the field to the library, and traces the farmers labouring of both earth and intellect. The workshop “Milling the Archive” shows the historical and vertical research of the Flatbread Society. The relations they draw from historical practices are used critically to investigate labour as a position of competence.



Figure 6: The Flatbread Society with the Rolling Pin Telescope and the Mobile Bread Oven
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

The Discourse of the Soil

The flat earth-theory circulating in the Flatbread Society is also a question of what position one inhabits. In the famous map of Imola, Leonardo da Vinci depicts an aerial view of the world. This meant imagining how the world would look as seen from above at a time when this was an impossibility for the situated eye (Rees 1980). At present, the many satellite images of our world are seamlessly accepted as the bigger perspective, an objective truth, although witnessed by few. The invitation to join the Flatbread Society and believe in flat-earth theories might be a hard exercise for the imagination and necessitates the unlearning of certain truths for a short time-lapse. However, a situated engagement with that which is within the circumference of the immediate, perceptible world holds the potential for critical engagement. The Flatbread Society’s

¹⁸ The lecture on the subject was given by Marius Bjørnson Hofstad.

interest in flat-earth theories counters optical knowledge with a situated practice. Hence, practice gives rise to experiences that expand a visually constructed apprehension of the city. In the urban context of the redevelopment of Bjørvika, the epistemological standpoint of a flat earth can be seen in relation to the aesthetic antagonism between elevated vision and situated viewpoint. In *L'invention du quotidien*, Michel de Certeau formulates a dichotomy of voyeurs and walkers, relating the former to an optical and imaginary unit and the latter to a space that is not graspable from an elevated perspective (de Certeau 1990). Here, the walker is understood as a subject that reconfigures the planned and readable city that is formed from an elevated viewpoint by the space planner. De Certeau describes panoptic power as transforming the urban fabric into a concept formed and grasped from an elevated perspective. In light of this dichotomy, flat earth and flatbread can be viewed as claims to a situated and embodied urban practice. More specifically, the flat-earth theory supports a counter-narrative to Bjørvika as the Fjord City. As we have seen, both the authoritative narrative of the planning discourse and the narrative of the public space program take the fjord as their main protagonist. However, in Flatbread Society, situated site knowledge about Bjørvika circulated, and new positions of competence were introduced. Here, a counter-narrative was constructed, and it is a discourse on soil, rather than the fjord. The artists have researched the city with methods that are relational and situated and have reconfigured insights through an aesthetic approach that permits multiple positions. If seen as the protagonist in a narrative of the soil in Bjørvika, flatbread represents the soil that we walk on. The canoe that grows legs is an element of water adapting to life on land. Beauregard writes that site narratives are constructed from professional knowledge: “Because there is no essence to site, no single truth waiting to be discovered, different site knowledges—of the architect, the investor, the bureaucrat, and others—need to be negotiated” (Beauregard 2005, 55). The temporary Bakehouse combined different professional knowledge about the soil of Loallmenningen. Below are three events that conveyed political, ecological and historical approaches to soil.

Seed Action

The soil of Loallmenningen, former site of the highway corridor, has endured some of the heaviest traffic in Norway. Hence, the soil was marked physically by pollution, but was also mentally associated with it. On the 6th of June 2013, the Flatbread Society organised “Seed action,” and planted, for the second year in a row and in collaboration with participants, a field of ancient heritage grains. The event was one of four seed actions that spring, gathering farmers and consumers preoccupied with sustainability of food production and organised in collaboration with Network for GMO-free Food and Seed (Nettverk for GMO-fri mat og før). However, while the other three sites were located in rural and traditional agricultural areas, the inclusion of Loallmenningen marked this site’s transformation into a site for small-scale food production and inscribed the patch of soil into a discourse of resistance against monoculture in farming.



Figure 7: Seed Action
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

Beneath the Pavement: Soil Science

On the 5th of June, Erik Joner, senior researcher of Bioforsk Soil and Environment, was invited by the Flatbread Society to teach simple ways to test the soil and enable the participants to examine the composition of diverse dirt. The soil tests produced small rolled balls of different composite soils. When placed on small planks of wood, they resonated visually with the Flatbread Society's engagement with astronomy. The workshop aimed at raising awareness about the soil. Moreover, the exercises also inscribed themselves in the cosmology of the baker-astronomer. The aesthetical frame suggested the possibility to connect to some of the complexities of the cosmos through the complexity of the soil.



Figure 8: Beneath the Pavement: Soil Science
Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

Grain Power: Milling the Archive

The workshop *Milling the Archive* at the Oslo City Archive has already been presented; however, the workshop explored another historic phenomenon which I have not yet mentioned. The new public spaces in Bjørvika are all named *allmenninger* (commons), which is an unusual appellation in the urban context. The *allmenning* is a type of village green, a common area within a settlement, for instance a grassland or a woodland. In translation, the *Loallmenningen* could be the “Lo Common.” During the seminar, Øystein Eike, a researcher at the City Archives, gave a lecture placing the notion of commons in a historical perspective and explained the reconfiguration of these lands in Oslo. The workshop explored the notion of *allmenning*, which has little factual meaning in contemporary cities. The historical investigation gave substance to the notion, while providing the perspective of a longer duration to contemplate change. The notion of *allmenning* implies a public space that is useful to a community and managed collectively and is hence, a historic reference that differs from the pragmatic context of privatisation of the soil of Bjørvika.¹⁹

Cracks in the System: Aesthetic Labour

In this article, I have argued that important aspects of Flatbread Society’s research are the relational approach to site, the embedded experience of the city, and the discursive interaction around flatbread. Furthermore, I have suggested that the artistic reframing of flatbread activated double ontological positions. By comparing the astronomer-baker and the worker-poet, I argued that the artist collective blurred boundaries that otherwise keep individuals and competence in their designated places. Hence, Flatbread Society can be said to reconfigure the sensible as understood by Rancière. I set out to discuss the Flatbread Society’s double function as both research and public art in relation to the notion of *aesthetical labour*. Kwon suggests that participation-based practices represent labour as something concrete and graspable. The notion of *aesthetical labour* can denote practices that are undoing and deconstructing that which seems certain and reasonable. In the practice of Flatbread Society, the context of urban development has been one such materiality to undo and reconfigure. This entails that the pluralistic context, represented in the public space program and the authoritative narratives, is essential to the creative reconfigurations of the knowledge, interests and values that are performed in Flatbread Society. In the figure of the astronomer-baker, Flatbread Society blurs the boundaries that delineate positions of competence. By opening a space where knowledge and skills are circulating without a predetermined output, a site narrative of *Loallmenningen* is re-negotiated out of a wider range of site knowledge. The Flatbread Society positions public art in Bjørvika as something similar to how the astronomer-baker works across boundaries of disciplines.

¹⁹ Most land in Bjørvika was public property and connected to the harbour and the railway. The private company Bjørvika Development Ltd. develops the area, however it is owned by the partly public companies Oslo S Utvikling AS and HAV Eiendom AS. In this process, land that was public property is reconfigured and privatised. For more, see Heidi Bergsli, “Urban attractiveness and competitive policies in Oslo and Marseille,” (University of Oslo: Phd. Diss., 2015).



Figure 9: The Mobile Bread Oven on the Roof of the Opera
 Source: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold 2013

Five days after the Flatbread Society had visited 31B in Grønland, the canoe embarked on its maiden voyage. Stijn Schiffeleers and Lode Vranken walked into the water, their legs in watertight wellingtons attached to the bottom of the canoe, and once in deep water they paddled away in the direction of the Opera. Approaching the marble roof of the Opera, the canoe was met by security guards because of the prohibition to dock there. Schiffeleers and Vranken simply walked out of the water, and in front of the security guards stood two men wearing something similar to a canoe shaped tutu, but no boat. In the interview, Amy Franceschini describes the Flatbread Society's work as searching for different entry points in order to find and produce cracks in the thoroughly regulated area of Bjørvika. She proposes the moment on the Opera roof, when the boat suddenly conformed to regulations by walking, as an illustration of a crack opened by using absurdity as a tool (Interview, Franceschini 2013). In the absurd makeover of the boat lies an aesthetical suspension of the concepts fixed by reason. In the interview in 2013, Amy Franceschini outlined another crack: The temporary presence of the Bakehouse had unsettled the previously fixed design of Loallmenningen. On 3 February 2015, Loallmenningen was ceremonially baptised Losæter, and from then on, the site's development has diverged from the design concept in the public space program.²⁰ The multiple situations hosted by Flatbread Society during the early summer of 2013 introduced different competences into the discussion of the planning of Loallmenningen: The discourses on soil were nourished by the knowledge of Bioforsk Soil and Environment, the voices of anti GMO-activists and research in the Oslo City Archive. The collaborative structure of the Flatbread Society's event calendar in Oslo brought

²⁰ The artists marked their appropriation of the site with a Soil Procession on 13 June 2015; soil from 40 different farms in the surrounding area was carried through the city and down to Loallmenningen. During the subsequent summer, a team of Futurefarmers worked onsite, slowly developing its soil organically.

together competence and knowledge by opening up a common ground from which to discuss and imagine the future of Loallmenningen. The space of discursive interaction built on the topic of flatbread invited the diversified *who* of Bjørvika, which is not necessarily perceived elsewhere in the public eye. In this article, I have attempted to argue that Flatbread Society's initiation of a creative and critical space supported a re-imagining of Loallmenningen and that the circulation of positions of competence was central to the reconfiguration of the materiality and interests existing in the context. Heritage grains, ecological urban agriculture and the notion of the *common* are laboured into the cracks forged in the urban redevelopment of Bjørvika. The temporary annulation of certainty by Flatbread Society connected different forms of knowledge and gave a new understanding of the site of Loallmenningen.

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Amy Franceschini, Marthe Van Dessel, Stijn Schiffeleers and Lode Vranken for welcoming me as a participant-observant and for sharing their thoughts and experiences with me. Thanks also goes to Anne Beate Hovind and Vibeke Hermansrud for the information that they generously shared.

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- Participatory observation, Dome Building Workshop, Loallmenningen, 22 May 2013.
- Site visit, Loallmenningen, 23 May 2013.
- Participatory observation, Mobile Oven at 31b, Grønland, 24 May 2013.

Participatory observation, Tandoori Oven Workshop, Loallmenningen, 28 May 2013.
Participatory observation, Mobile Oven Maiden Voyage, 29 May 2013.
Participatory observation, Beneath the Pavement: Soil Science, Loallmenningen, 5 June 2013.
Participatory observation, Seed Action, Loallmenningen/Herligheten, 6 June 2013.
Site visit, Mobile Oven at Oslo Comic Festival, Grünerløkka, 11 June 2013.
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Participatory observation, Bakehouse workshops, Loallmenningen, 17 June 2013.
Field visit, Bread making workshops, Loallmenningen, 22 June 2013.
Participatory observation, Midsummer Celebration, Loallmenningen, 23 June 2013.

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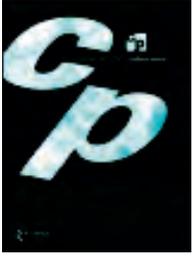
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To cite this article: Charlotte Blanche Myrvold & Even Smith Wergeland (2016): Participatory action in the age of green urbanism. How Futurefarmers leapfrogged the culture consumer?, International Journal of Cultural Policy, DOI: [10.1080/10286632.2016.1184658](https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2016.1184658)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2016.1184658>



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Participatory action in the age of green urbanism. How Futurefarmers leapfrogged the culture consumer?

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(Received 16 November 2015; accepted 18 April 2016)

This article looks at a shift in urban governance and policy-making from a culture-led approach towards a 'green turn' and an environmentally informed approach. The particular focus of this exploration is how public art practices participate in this ongoing reconfiguration. We are especially concerned with the parallel effort by public administration and the art community to activate citizens through nature-oriented, public spaces. Our main target of interest is the city of Oslo where we investigate the art group that goes by the name of Futurefarmers, whose engagement with land development relates to planning, cultural strategies, curatorial approaches and related art projects. Our findings indicate that while this work pursues a mission of its own, it also has the potential to advance its position in public space by representing green values in decision-making processes. We argue that through this ability to operate both within and outside the system, art practice can introduce interdisciplinary collaborations that can drive change in cultural policy.

Keywords: green urbanism; participatory art; cultural planning; active citizens; public art

Introduction

In this article, we investigate how contemporary art plays a role in the ongoing transition from a culture-led approach towards a green approach in the planning of Oslo, Norway's capital city. Our main target of interest is an ongoing art project in Oslo, the Flatbread Society by Futurefarmers, which has laid claim to a piece of land in the Fjord City, Oslo's waterfront scheme. The project has gradually gained influence on site by means of participatory events and durational engagement, and is currently developing into an urban farm. With Flatbread Society, Futurefarmers participates in the culture-led development of the area and the role of public art in urban development is again up for discussion.

Previous research on the Fjord City has been critical about the alliance of art and urban development. In Bjørvika, one of the redevelopment seaside areas, the close affiliation between the public art projects and the development company that funds them has led to a critical reception of the art projects, a response which insists on the impossibility of distinguishing the intentions of the artists from the

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overall aim of the developers. Hence, art has been viewed as a dimension of the image building for the Fjord City. Several critics have argued that this involvement intrinsically manifests commodification of cultural power (Gran and de Paoli 2005, Hansen 2006, Aspen and Pløger 2015, Bergsli 2015). Bjørvika has also been accused of driving the ongoing gentrification of the inner city (Sæter 1999, Sæter and Aure 2013, Bergsli 2015), thus rendering suspect investments in public art in these settings (Bergsli 2015, Lønningdal 2015). Human geographer Heidi Bergsli states that critical art projects operating in the context of the Fjord City are unable to contribute to changes in practice or discourse (Bergsli 2015, p. 282). Urban scholars Jonny Aspen and John Pløger contend that the art strategy of Bjørvika expands the traditional sphere of action, but they stress the overall function of art as image building, marking hence their doubt about the ability of these art projects to confront the ongoing space development scheme (Aspen and Pløger 2015, pp. 186, 189, 190).

While there seems to be agreement about art's 'image' impact, its effect on other aspects of the redevelopment remains unacknowledged. This article discusses a particular dimension made possible by virtue of the imbrication of art with the context, namely the relation between art in public space and urban planning. In the cultural-led development discourses, the concept of culture has been redefined to include social, economic and political objectives (Miles and Paddison 2005, p. 834). However, there is a shortage of investigations of public art and urban development relationships that apply other perspectives than those predetermined by cultural development discourse itself.

The Flatbread Society project calls for a discussion on the relationship between urban planning and art in public spaces, and more specifically on the influence that artists can gain when the participation of the public and green values are combined. Our Oslo material, which comprises Flatbread Society and three other art projects, suggests that Flatbread Society represents a move away from the typical ethos of cultural strategies. By forging a distinctly green profile in an area otherwise gov-erned by visions from the heydays of cultural development, the project aligns itself with current municipal planning programs marked by green values, e.g. the strate-gic plan (De Vibe and Wasstøl 2016) for Oslo's next big urban development area, Hovin City. The Flatbread Society can be considered a foreshadowing of this trend.

In this article, we wish to draw attention to this common field of interest between art and planning. The field includes the green shift in urban planning and the vision of an active city, as well as urban gardening, ecological art and participa-tory art strategies. A close investigation of this interaction between art and planning is particularly important because of the fading belief in culture-led planning, which means that art and planning must search for new forms of interaction in the future.

These matters are equally interesting from a cultural-policy perspective. The shift from culture to green is yet to be reflected in the key cultural-policy docu-ments for Oslo (Oslo bystyre 2006, Kulturmeglerne AS 2013), where culture is pri-marily linked to economic revenue. The explanation is that these documents borrow their rhetoric from scholarly and political discourses of the early 2000s, which propagated the rise of the creative class and fuelled the belief that instalment of new cultural attractions was the optimal way to boost the urban economy (Gibson and Stevenson 2004, pp. 1–2). Valencia started to build the City of Arts and Sciences in 1994, Bilbao got its Guggenheim Museum in 1997, and at the turn of the Millennium Oslo launched the Fjord City, which gave rise to a series of

prestigious cultural buildings along the city's waterfront. Many important cultural institutions were displaced from their previous settings in order to fulfil the culture-led Fjord City vision.

From cultural strategies towards a green city

Today, cultural planning is no longer at the forefront of urban planning in many Western cities. A major reason is that the so-called 'Bilbao effect' has worn off (Michael 2015). 'Perhaps the Bilbao effect should be called the Bilbao anomaly, for the iconic chemistry between the design of building, its image and the public turns out to be rather rare – and somewhat mysterious', writes Witold Rybczynski, who lists a number of failed efforts at kick-starting civic economies through culture (2015). The bottom line is that many glamorous cultural monuments of the 1990s and 2000s have struggled to prove their worth as long-term moneymaking machines.¹ Large and complex buildings can also be very expensive to build. Some of the new cultural landmarks of Oslo, most notably the Munch Museum and the Deichmanske Library, have been ridden with delays and budget overruns during the planning and construction periods. This has caused the Norwegian media to question the vast public expenditure on cultural palaces (Gravklev 2015, Juven and Bråthen 2015, Mæland 2016).

Even Richard Florida, who identified and coined the term *creative class* in 2002 (2002), has admitted that his theories on culture as fuel for economic boosterism do not always hold true in practice:

On close inspection, talent clustering provides little in the way of trickle-down benefits. Its benefits flow disproportionately to more highly-skilled knowledge, professional and creative workers whose higher wages and salaries are more than sufficient to cover more expensive housing in these locations. (Florida 2013)

The lack of trickle-down benefits is also detectable within the cultural field itself. While many cities have gained large cultural attractions, less has been accomplished in terms of amplifying a wider range of cultural productivity. The heavy emphasis on cultural attractions aimed at tourists rather than local art producers has gradually expelled artists and other creative labourers from the rejuvenated inner cities. In effect, cultural planning has set up a barrier between culture as attraction and culture as production, thus amplifying existing class divides within the cultural field. (Haugsevje *et al.* 2014, p. 16)

As Deborah Stevenson has argued, cultural planning was embraced by many policy-makers because of its alleged ability to enhance the everyday surroundings for all citizens. Culture was not only seen as an economic, intellectual and aesthetic stimulus – it was framed as a particular way of life. (Stevenson 2004, pp. 122, 123). Now that the disappointing effects of culture planning have propelled city governments into a search for other routes to success, similar ambitions have emerged on behalf of other values. Cities all over the world hear the signal for bottom-up initiatives with a green profile. Often these initiatives are grounded in participatory-based structures that combine urban agriculture, civic engagement, planning and art.

This move raises a number of questions. Can art maintain its art value while still reaching out in new ways? Some scholars are inclined to say yes (Raunig

2007, Jackson 2011, Kester 2013), others have opted for a more pessimistic view (Berlant 2011, Bishop 2012, Nelson 2011). In connection with this overarching dilemma in art theory, there are several issues at stake regarding the realisation of art projects in the empirical world. Firstly, are certain art projects chosen because they are more agreeable and less critically challenging than others? Secondly, do participatory art practices bring about new ways of being public or are they rather proposing exactly what the new planning paradigm craves? And thirdly, how inclusive is the green discourse when implemented in practice?

We do not pose these questions solely for the sake of staging an academic discussion. They are highly relevant in light of the recent shift in governance in Oslo. The city's new political regime, a coalition between the Labour Party, the Green Party and the Socialist Left Party, have agreed on a collaboration based on socially inclusive green principles (Johansen *et al.* 2015). There is therefore reason to believe that the next version of Oslo's overall cultural policy will try to tackle some of the dilemmas we are dealing with here.

Nature as the new culture

Of all the underlying forces working toward emancipation of the city dweller, most important is the gradual reawakening of the primitive instincts of the agrarian. (Wright 1958)

The above quotation from Frank Lloyd Wright's *The Living City* serves as a good reminder that the current green wave is not entirely new. The material we are investigating throughout this text is related, rhetorically and visually, to a number of different green discourses from the past. Some of them have been rejected – like Wright's car-dependant *Broadacre City* (1934) – while others have prevailed, most notably the belief in agriculture as a cornerstone for human wellbeing. This is obvious in the city of Seoul, where the move towards a greener city involves a rather radical move: to build an urban farm on the land earlier regulated for an opera house (Levenston 2014). Tempelhof Park in Berlin, where a referendum blocked the development of the former airport, can illustrate the popularity of allotments and the green shift's potential in regards of activating the citizens.

The Flatbread Society fits neatly into this ongoing reawakening of urban-agrarian instincts. The project was formed by the artist collective Futurefarmers in 2012 when artist Amy Franceschini was commissioned by Bjørvika Development AS's permanent public art program 'Slow Space.' One particular site, Loallmenningen, has been the object of Futurefarmers durational involvement with the redevelopment. In 2012, the exhibition 'Views from Ekeberg' displayed large blown up reproductions of photos from 1884 that showed the area as fertile agricultural ground. This sparked a revision of the area, which in later years has been marked by heavy traffic. The first temporary green projects on site were initiated by Bjørvika Development's art program in the summer of 2012. Futurefarmers planted a field of heritage grains and 100 allotment gardens were distributed to citizens of Oslo. The planting of heritage grains has been repeated every summer since, and in 2013 Futurefarmers installed a temporary Bakehouse on Loallmenningen and organized a series of participation-based events.

A more recent Flatbread Society event was the solemn baptizing of the site as *Losæter* in February 2015, marking thus Futurefarmers' ambition to build an urban farm on site. June 13, the same year, they organized a 'Soil Procession,' bringing ecological soil from farms all over Norway to their chosen site in Bjørvika. Futurefarmers are now rehabilitating the polluted soils and still sharing the site with the allotment gardens. The Flatbread Society's next step will be to obtain a building permit for a public Bakehouse – a token of their ability to be concrete in order to realise their work.

Interestingly, Futurefarmers are proposing a different use of the site compared to the current planning program for Loallmenningen. This program was launched in 2008, based on an analysis developed by the Danish architectural office Gehl Architects.

Loallmenningen is the only public space that offers recreational activities in the form of sports. These activities appeal to all age groups but special effort should be made to invite kids and youth to use them. (Gehl Architects 2008, p. 15)

This proposal has since been sidetracked by the Flatbread Society project. Futurefarmers opted to discard Gehl's design of an active, sports-oriented site, developing it instead as an urban farm, comprising the participation of the public and an ecological and *green* approach to the development of the site.

The establishment of *Losæter* at Loallmenningen marks a commitment to support farming as a key component within the cultural landscape of Bjørvika. By situating *Losæter* within this new waterfront development and alongside major cultural institutions, we embrace the understanding of farming as an art form. (Franceschini *et al.* 2015)

In the quote, Franceschini highlights several dimensions of the project. It emphasizes the positioning of farming as an element of Bjørvika's urban culture and points to an understanding of farming as art. Furthermore, the quote indicates that the project should be viewed artistically by virtue of its location on the new cultural parade of the waterfront redevelopment. Indeed, the context does affect the relation between art, culture and farming, by providing a public position to *Losæter*. Futurefarmers installed urban gardening on a site formerly subjected to heavy traffic and next to Barcode, a line of high-rises accommodating large business corporations. Due to this location, *Losæter* can appear absurd compared to how farming would be done elsewhere. One of its functions is symbolic as it represents ecological urban gardening as an alternative approach to Bjørvika. Rather than contributing significantly in terms of food production, the project enacts qualities that are quite in line with Wright's normative discourse on the emancipatory qualities of an awakened agrarian instinct. Secondly, the project installs actual, sensual qualities in public space. Thirdly, the project can be discussed in terms of public pedagogy and critical learning, because it clearly aims at expanding the understanding of farming as both cultural strategy and art. The public pedagogy aspect is an example of non-institutional educational discourses (Springgay and The Torontonians 2014, p. 134); in this context public art that moves from a symbolic to an actual impact in the public sphere. Flatbread Society is based on alternative site knowledge (Myrvold 2016). Hence, the project has a pedagogical function as it circulates alternative forms of knowledge, such as ecological farming practices.

The above listed points are relevant in order to discuss the project's function in public space; however, they do not fully explain why Flatbread Society's grain fields became more attractive than a football field. In order to address that matter, we suggest that it is important to look into the participatory structure of the art project in relation to the urban planning process, in which it has indeed intervened.

Flatbread Society depends on the complicated term *participation*, which is difficult to pin down in a simple phrase. In this text, we approach participation in a broad sense and see it as interlocked with related terms such as collaboration, engagement, involvement and inclusion. Our aim is to look at participatory action through three particular lenses: *Decision-making and planning*, which seldom involve direct and continuous participation from a wider audience (Arnstein 1969, Pollock and Sharp 2011). In Oslo, a planning process normally seeks participation by allowing the public to have a say at certain times. The same goes for policy-documents, which are devised through political decision-making processes with limited citizen interaction. Participatory art projects, in which the public is actively invited to collaborate throughout the process, at least in principle, and can have affinities with public pedagogy and pedagogical art projects (Lacy 1995, Bishop 2012). *Public spaces*, where citizens have the opportunity to participate but are not necessarily specifically encouraged to do so beyond the physical facilities at their disposal (de Certeau 1990).

Distinctive for Flatbread Society is the presence, research, and engagement of artists on site, in close relation to the general development of the area in an early stage of the transformation. The particular context of the development strategy of which the art project is part, has facilitated access to art prior to the actual construction of new public spaces, inverting the traditional relation between art and public space, typically placing art in an already functioning public space as a cherry on top of a cake. Flatbread Society is a permanent public art project that positions itself through temporary artistic strategies. In so doing, Flatbread Society has gained an unusual amount of influence on land use in a specific part of the Fjord City.

Contemporary aesthetics and the cultural-led planning paradigm

Flatbread Society's participatory-based events and framing of social situations as public art assign a role of co-actor to the audience. Much emphasis is put on creation through collaboration, as explained by Franceschini: 'We are interested in forming groups with people from different fields and ideologies who come together to make new work.' (Schultz *et al.* 2012, p. 158). However, the relation between art and audience in durational and participatory art projects can also be viewed as a rejection of the typical ethos of culture-led planning. The waterfront development of Oslo took its cue from a bourgeois aesthetic regime (Benjamin 2008, Rancière 2008) in the sense that it favored art experiences grounded in the Kantian space of disinterest. The architectural icons of the Fjord City require visual appreciation and contemplation, framing thus a kind of aesthetic experience that is distinct from everyday practice and momentary as it unfolds when gazing upon the aesthetic object (Kester 2013). Although acknowledged as a well-functioning short-term strategy for attracting citizens and tourists (MacCannell 2013), the ephemerality of such aesthetic experience might not succeed in fulfilling other desired aspects of city life. The instalment along the harbour promenade of iconic architecture and

major art institutions reflects the primary position assigned to leisure that revolves around the activity of viewing. Herein lies a potential conflict between the vision of the Fjord City and the cultural strategies applied. The Fjord City adopted the guise of an eventful city (Richard and Palmer 2010) to increase tourism and catalyze city regeneration. However, the actual realisation of vibrant city-life has proven to be a challenge, creating ‘zombie-urbanism’ rather than a lively atmosphere according to Aspen (2013). In short, the developers and the municipality face a challenge that the cultural strategies seem unable to meet. Participatory art events represent investments in the realisation of an eventful city. However, the model of the eventful city has its own pitfalls. Temporary cultural events have shown to have immediate economic impact, nevertheless it is a model that tends to compromise the possibility of long-term social and cultural legacies (García 2007).

The question of long-term impact is a recurrent topic in discussion of socially engaged art that relies on ephemeral qualities. Durational artistic engagement offers an alternative to event-based artistic formats. By activating the beholder through durational engagements on site, public art practices attempt to break with the disinterested aesthetical experience and enter processes of urban planning aiming at creating social places with long-term impact (Doherty and O’Neill 2011). In the cases we discuss in this article, participation-based events are inscribed into an artistic framework that has vegetational growth as one of its concrete impacts. We suggest that through the constellation of the participation of the public and vegetational growth Futurefarmers forge an alternative approach to public space compared with cultural strategies. Through its alignment with the green shift in planning, it represents an alternative to short-term events and the emphasis on leisurely sight-seeing. Ecologically oriented art might use event-based methods and be participatory, thereby forging an ‘eco-awareness’ that goes beyond the length and impact of each individual project. Eco-art has been a prominent art genre for decades, as Andrew Brown has shown (2014), and current variations on the theme are now reaping the benefits. Temporary art projects with green, ecological endeavours can enter production of social place in event-based structures, while inscribed in the cityscape as durational engagements with public space.

It would be problematic, though, to make an absolute distinction between gazing at architecture as a passive form, limited in time, vs. production of vegetables as an active form blessed with endless durability. Firstly, because there are long-standing traditions for cultural development that exceed the individual component. Many cities have devised cultural strategies with long-lasting and broad legacies (Lemasson 2015). And secondly, because it has been thoroughly accounted for within various scholarly discourses how a gaze can be active, be it feminist perspectives on the male gaze in cinema (a construction of active male power) or neuro-scientific studies of perception, thought, and action (Lauwereyns 2012). The point is, however, that our main example belongs to a field within contemporary art that is consciously moving away from the realm of the visual as a privileged site for the art experiences to take place (Lacy 1995, Jackson 2011, Thompson 2012, Kester 2013). Opposing previous attitudes that address the audience as passive receptors of an artwork’s inherent meaning, the interaction with the audience becomes a goal in itself. The art project’s participation-based structure and the hosting of various workshops represent of leap from art as an invitation to stand still and cast a view at something, to art as an invitation to act, to take part, to join in. The spectator thus becomes a co-actor, an accomplice, a piece of the action.

Similar ideas seem to exist within the matrix of agents who govern the city of Oslo. While the current cultural strategy for Oslo is firmly rooted in the ethos of cultural planning (Oslo bystyre 2006), new stratagems reveal a keener interest in the active citizen – the cyclist, the urban farmer, the beer brewer etc. – in contrast to the typical image of the cultural consumer of the ‘noughties’: a leisurely-minded observer of culture and entertainment. The recently approved master plan for Oslo is a typical example of this trend. The front page of the plan contains a picture of a girl on bike, paired with the vision statement ‘Smart, Safe and Green.’ Inside, the document is full of green visions and more pictures of cyclists (Oslo bystyre 2015a). These visions have been developing within the system over the past years, gradually changing the course of policy-making towards an emphasis on green programming. The latest outcome of this process is a competition program for Trygve Lies Plass, a public space in the eastern part of Oslo. The word ‘culture’ is completely absent from the competition program, which focuses instead on the creation of a green mobility hub and similar activity, and on environment-oriented tasks (Agency for Urban Environment 2015).

This turn may also explain why some artists have gone from being producers of art to active agents in the urban development. Or, to phrase it differently, from being producers of artefacts to producers of production. While this seems to suggest that the sphere of the arts now runs parallel with policy-making in Oslo, the situation is actually more complex. As previously mentioned, cultural-policy documents still rely on the rhetoric of cultural planning. The recent shift in governance – from a conservative coalition to a socialist/green coalition – is emblematic of this. The new Oslo government explicitly aims to establish an urban ecology innovation centre, accommodate more urban farming, protect wilderness areas and increase biological diversity (Johansen *et al.* 2015, pp. 26, 27). Their platform for cultural policy-making, however, revolves around concepts such as cultural entrepreneurship, innovation and attraction (Johansen *et al.* 2015, pp. 48, 49). One could thus argue that a segment within the art sphere has begun to explore possibilities that remain unseized by cultural policy-makers.

Art and public governance joining forces to activate the public

The simultaneous rise of a green and participatory approach in some sectors of art and public governance means that these spheres now have a shared challenge: how can the public be activated? As history has shown, art can play a role in articulating that general aim. A noteworthy example is Herbert Bayer’s *Mill Creek Canyon Earthworks* (1982), which was carried out in the form of artistic labour and public administration combined – a prerequisite for the collaborative efforts that are emerging today. Ironically, the often less than successful maintenance of artistic interests through cultural planning seems to have encouraged artists to work along-side and in concert with the very same system that exploited art as a puppet for economic revenue. As our empirical findings from Oslo indicate, there is certainly a tendency towards more involvement than a decade ago.

Similarly, we can detect a tendency towards the commissioning of socially engaged art practices that initiate tangible green endeavours such as urban gardening projects, which in turn amplify the green attraction of a new development scheme. Our point in mentioning this is that the urban farmers do certainly not swim against the urban tide – they cruise on the biggest wave currently available.

They may be grassroots in approach and ideology, but they are drawing upon the most coveted field within urban beautification at the moment.

This potentially close affiliation comes with a degree of uneasiness. For one, collaborative art practices enter a zone between autonomy and social intervention. Claire Bishop argues that collaborative art projects should themselves address the contradictory conditions that they are working under and reflect this antinomy in the work (2006, pp. 178, 179). The urgency of the social task at hand and the ethical drive leading to the collaborative initiative has, according to Bishop, led to a shortage of critical responses to projects as art and not social work (2012, p. 13). However, other voices in the field question the relevance of a discourse on the autonomy of art. Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty opt for considering collaborative practice as: 'co-operative production process that is neither autonomous nor over-regulated' (2011, p. 14).

Upon entering the realm of public governance, artists have to participate in accordance with a fixed agenda, perhaps having to defend values beyond art itself, and they might come under a different kind of scrutiny from the public eye and the media. Perhaps collaborative art practices' critical potential lies in the ability to negotiate different worlds?

A further complication is that culture still plays a certain role. This has to do with the fact that public governance seldom moves quickly from one paradigm to another, as Warren Magnusson has ascertained (2011). Such processes are seldom symmetrical either. Some sectors may change quickly; others may linger in the past. Oslo's cultural-policy is an example of that. The culture-led approach is kept alive through documents such as the 2003 strategic program for culture and an art booklet from 2009 (revised in 2012), both of which contain guidelines for Bjørvika. The latter proposes an integrated strategy for the commissioning of art for the public spaces of the area. This strategy was solidified with the 2011 appointment of curator Claire Doherty and the formulation by her of a vision for the permanent public art program.

Both documents encourage developers to invest in art and culture, but the art booklet is more specific in its aims. Among the key objectives outlined in the booklet is the assumption that art in public spaces will create living and multi-faceted city life, and a cultural profile that will provide co-ownership to diversified groups of people (Eeg-Tverbakk et al. 2009). These aims are positioned in the interval between the fading culture-led paradigm and the sought-after participation of the public. The double stress on *life* that underscores the ambition of creating *living city life*, echoes the overall ambition of the Fjord City development to create *vibrant public spaces*, as well as the more specific ambition of *activating* the area during the construction stage (Planog bygningsetaten et al. 2003). The move towards more investments into cultural events is a general trend in Norway (Henningesen et al. 2015). The Fjord City is an obvious exponent of the eventfulness trend, as Aspen and Pløger show (2015). From our perspective, however, the most important aspect of the developer's attempt to create living public spaces by investing in art, is its correspondence with contemporary art's move away from object-based practices towards an emphasis on experience. The cases we are investigating in this paper reveal a notable shift from artworks as fixed representations to be gazed upon to dynamic artworks in which practice – the art of doing something – lies at the very core. The Bjørvika public art program clearly favours art practices that are eager to expand the roles of public art, curating a shift from 'drop-in sculptures' to the artist-cum-planner.

The greening of Bjørvika through slow art

To support the creation of remarkable forms of public art in Bjørvika which contribute to the life of the area. (Doherty 2011, p. 4)

In the quote above, the permanent public art program ‘Slow Space’ states the contribution to *life* for the area as one of its principles. The art program also commits to ‘suggest [...] the use of public space’ (Doherty 2011, p. 9). The coupling of art with *life* and *public use* is thus inherent to the commissioning of art in Bjørvika. In the following, we will discuss what kind of *life* is represented or activated in Futurefarmers’ response to Claire Doherty’s curatorial vision of ‘Slow Space’ and Bjørvika Development’s art strategy. As contrasting examples, we will present other public art projects from the same context, in order to shed further light on the affinities between green, participatory projects and governance.

‘Slow Space,’ alludes to the Italian slow food movement, which advocates a general slower approach to activities such as cooking and travelling, but also a generally slower pace in society.² Doherty writes in her curatorial vision: ‘What if the proposition of Slowness was not just a utopian gesture but became the principle objective of Bjørvika public art program?’ (2011, p. 9). *Slowness* is furthermore suggested as a particular way to use the city: ‘Public use of the Opera House roof in Bjørvika is already a strong indicator of the desire for spaces in which slow activities [...] can take place [...] It is a physical space that produces a social space’ (Doherty 2011, p. 9). Doherty continues to elaborate on the objective principle of slowness and outlines aspects of it that can inspire the commissioning of art in Bjørvika. Among them are *dugnad* (collective volunteer work) and *field*. The former is exemplified by Futurefarmers’ project *Victory Garden* (2007–2009) in San Francisco and the latter by Agnes Denes’ *Wheatfield – A Confrontation* (1982). With her curatorial vision, Claire Doherty assigns public art the role of producer of social spaces, and the aspects of slowness that she outlines prefigure elements of Futurefarmers’ green intervention in Bjørvika.

Futurefarmers takes slowness as ‘a principle objective’ some steps further. In Losøter, the organic, on-site, rehabilitation of the soil follows the seasons’ natural cycles and conforms to the temporality of natural processes. Another articulation of organic time is the aforementioned field of heritage grains. The ancient heritage seeds have been ‘hibernating’ until they recently were recovered. Both articulations of time are in the context of Bjørvika a contrast to the development’s technobureaucratic implementation of change. The art project exhibits natural processes and oppose standardization by planting ancient grain species that do not conform to the regulation imposed on contemporary agriculture. However, the public attention given to organic processes of growth in Bjørvika appears to be the only critical gesture accepted in the permanent art projects by the developers.

Katie Paterson’s *Future Library*, the other featured art project commissioned for Bjørvika by Claire Doherty, also manifests a fascination for growth. In the spring of 2014 Future Library expanded beyond its initial designated waterfront site through the establishment of small forest of 1000 new trees just north of Oslo. Every year, starting from 2014, a writer will be commissioned to write a text that will be stored, unread and unpublished, until all texts are published together in an anthology in 2114. The anthology is to be printed on paper from the trees of Future Library’s forest. Although transgressing the life span of the individual attendees,

every year several events are organized in relation to the hand-over of the manuscript by the author. In 2014, the first commissioned author Margaret Atwood drew crowds and contributed to giving the project public attention.

The Slow Space projects actualize a durational approach to public space through the means of organic growth on site, then punctuate the slow process with social events. In both practices, organic growth can be perceived as transformative on two levels. Firstly, it affects the physical site by replacing the existing materialities with organic fabrics that have artistically woven layers of interpretation attached to them. Secondly, the ‘celebration’ of organic growth has a social effect, by creating new communities in Bjørvika. Future Library is an imaginary community of readers transgressing the century, while Futurefarmers’ ecological concerns bring together a community of interest. Vegetation is a key in the public art program to produce social spaces and suggest activity. The conscious selection of art that actualizes a constellation of vegetation and social events is apparent when compared with two projects that did not succeed in passing into the production phase.

Carstreetroad [Bilveigata] is a project proposition by Toril Johannessen and Marjolijn Dijkman. Slow Space originally commissioned Johannessen and Dijkman but their contribution was eventually cancelled after numerous proposals. *Carstreetroad*, their first proposal, was never approved by the commissioners and curator. Though never developed beyond a sketch-format, it illustrates a different take on the role of art in Bjørvika. The idea was to elevate a road segment that would act as sculptural and functional element for cars. The project alluded to a former highway that intersected the area in the form of an elevated roundabout, Bispelokket, perceived as cutting edge in its own time, the late 1960s. The elevated road proposition could have acted as a reminder of how urban ideals change, thereby staging a critique of urban development per se. The project ‘recovered’ a demolished piece of infrastructure of the kind that is vulnerable to reaching a state of obsolescence in the age of green urbanism, thereby providing a heritage contrast to Futurefarmers’ ancient grains. Johannessen and Dijkman were opposing the ‘greenwashing’ of Bjørvika and did not contribute to any social animation of the area. Instead of addressing an active citizen, *Carstreetroad* aimed at animating the movement of cars. Hence, the artists purposefully avoided the role of public art as initiator of slow activities.

In 2008, artist Lars Ramberg won a competition for an artwork on the ventilation towers that intersect the same site that Futurefarmers are developing into an urban farm. However, the project got cancelled in 2012 because of a lack of financial support (Hagen and Sivertsen 2012). Ramberg proposed to decorate the towers with LED lights transmitting the genetic code of the black plague bacteria, which caused the death of at least half of Norway’s population in the Middle Ages. This motif emphasized the medieval origins of this part of Oslo and, through the direct use of a contemporary road monument, hinted at the lethal effects of modern car culture. In hindsight, the cancelled project stands as illustration of an art scheme that aimed at disrupting the public space without any promises of creating social life.

These four artistic projects – *Flatbread Society*, *Future Library*, *Carstreetroad* and Ramberg’s towers – are all reflecting the relation between urbanity and rurality, nature and society; dualities as old as city planning itself. They are also indicative of how general urban trends influence the selection of public artworks. In the era of slow spaces, there is less room for cars and roads than there is for pastoral splendor.

The green artist: a conformist planner in disguise?

I think action is really the key. Just to do it, and see what happens. And make it irre-sistible. (Interview Franceschini 2015)

Due to Futurefarmers' position within a cultural development, the art project enacts a double modification of the role of public art. It inverts the relation of public art and public design by deviating from the planned design for Loallmenningen, replacing a football field with artistically invested soil. Simultaneously, the art project is so green that its main allies are from the field of agriculture. With the rejected artworks in mind, Futurefarmers' durational engagement with the development and their successful intervention makes it reasonable to ask whether certain art projects are chosen over others because they are more agreeable and less critically challenging?

The shared interest among policy-makers and producers of participatory public art in creating social space and greening the city indicates that there is a degree of consensus at play, which makes it reasonable to speculate if art's critical edge sometimes appears exactly where the developers crave a rift in the otherwise smooth urban design. Futurefarmers participates in an urban development driven by values that they otherwise oppose in their artistic practice. Interestingly, both Anne Beate Hovind, the director of Slow Space, and Amy Franceschini describe the processes leading to the land acquisition as collaborative (Interview with Hovind 2015 and Interview with Franceschini 2015). The greatest resistance to the Flatbread Society and Bjørvika developments art program has come from the Norwegian art scene (Interview Franceschini 2015). The support for the art project, however, comes from an unexpected side. The strongest guarantees of future support the project has been given are in the municipality's agricultural report (Oslo bystyre 2015b, pp. 6–7).

Although to outward appearances Flatbread Society's progress might seem like a smooth process, such an image is deficient. It has taken quite an effort, mostly from Franceschini and Hovind, to procure a temporary permit. The art sector did not take a bow, it created a place for itself – and the participatory public – in the midst of a highly priced commercial property complex. Slow Space may defy the purpose of artistic activism as a protest form, but claiming a valuable piece of land is an achievement that hints of boldness and perseverance.

Partly, Losøter owes its existence to the way Futurefarmers has continued to develop the land as if it were going to be a permanent fixture, as any clever developer would do. Just do it and explore what's possible without always asking for permissions first, seems to be the main strategy of both director and artists (Interview Hovind and Franceschini 2015).

The timing here is of great importance. Futurefarmers has had time to strengthen their position on Loallmenningen in the *interim between* the zoning approval that simply says 'Recreational area (park)', and the completion of a detailed plan and design. Now, Loallmenningen has completely reconstituted soil, a cultivated grain field and allotments, as well as a submitted building permit for the public bakehouse. Hence, the tedious process of awaiting the detailing regulations for the site has been leapfrogged and their ownership strengthened. More than a critical confrontation with the general development, the artists and director seem to adopt what Irit Rogoff has coined an attitude of *criticality* (2006, p. 17).

Futurefarmers' imbrication with the context in which it is operating does not permit a distant 'clean' critique. However, they do learn the system from within and inhabit an embedded position from which they critically engage with a public space that they develop according to their own visions, not just the system's.

The inclusion of an urban farm on the waterfront was made possible by the culture-led development paradigm that opened the door to artists during the slow process of planning and construction. By installing Losæter, Futurefarmers revision the notion of culture as it was originally formulated. Farming is now promoted as leisure, and historical farming practices and ancient grains are put forward as cultural heritage. By expanding the notion of culture, as it appeared in the planning paradigm of the 'noughties', Flatbread Society is here contributing to an update of the area planning rather than acting as an antagonistic art project. The art project brings the sought-after green shift to an area that otherwise was surrendered to the logic of culture-led development. The overall receptivity to the project described by Hovind and Franceschini should be seen in relation to the larger green context that embraces urban gardening. The strengthening of the position of urban gardening in Oslo and the proof that Flatbread Society is in tune with the current planning paradigm is visible in Oslo's next big transformation area, a northeastern territory named Hovin City. An idea competition held in the autumn of 2014 yielded entries from 21 architectural offices. The resulting exhibition was a green urbanism extravaganza, demonstrating quite efficiently that green is the winning card in contemporary urban visions. However, a timely question is if the public art program is actually opening a space for revision and correction of the area planning? Without the artistic involvement, it seems likely that the set schedule for Bjørvika would have followed its linear path, even though the development is, due to its slow pace, destined to be overtaken by new and more contemporary ideals.

Back to the citizen? The pendulum between civic activation and artistic integrity

Our investigation indicates that Futurefarmers has succeeded in revising the use of Loallmenningen. However, a last point to discuss is the public's participation in Flatbread Society. By the means of participation, Futurefarmers has exemplified new ways of using Loallmenningen. In this study, we approached participation in a broad sense and looked at participation through three particular lenses: Participation in planning, participation in an art project and participation in public space. Our study has shown that the production process of the project Flatbread Society enters the planning process of Loallmenningen. In Flatbread Society we see the artists cum planners, and a profession that is usually kept in an autonomous zone, both protected and excluded from other decision-making processes is here participating in planning. However, Futurefarmers' participation in planning can be said to arise from the art practice itself, and not from the regular structure of the decision-making process. The temporary Bakehouse in 2013, the annual fields of heritage grains, the Soil Procession in 2015 and the rehabilitation of the soil of Loallmenningen are autonomous, artistic incisions which have entered the decision-making process through performances in public of the sustainability of Flatbread Society and its ability to deliver on the task at hand: activate the area. The commitment of the developers to the building a 'vibrant' city, can hence offer a loophole for participatory art to gain influence on planning. Therefore, the participation of the audience

in the art project seems fundamental if it is, indeed, the project's ability to bring *life* to the site that has acted as point of leverage for the influence that it has gradually gained on the site.

However, a relevant question is what the actual role of the participants within art projects is and whether they have the possibility to influence the project. Claire Bishop is calling attention to the consensus-driven dynamic that participation-based, socially engaged projects' well-meaning endeavours often produce. She therefore questions the participant's actual possibility to have a saying and argues that in some cases the participant is rather subjugated to the will of the artist rather than acting as co-producer (Bishop 2012, p. 277). This has both positive and negative consequences for the public, who can be included or excluded from the participation discourse, depending on the given power-relations. Similar concerns are pre-sented by Maggie Nelson, who claims that 'Some of the most good-intentioned activist, "compassionate" art out there can end up being patronizing, ineffective, or exploitative' (2011, p. 9).

But one might also argue that, on the contrary, audience participation makes visible what the grass-root wants by actually forming *that* space. However, two aspects seem to contradict such a linear bottom-up reading of Flatbread Society activities. First, the context in which the artists operate and the site that they are developing does not 'come with' a community. Loallmenningen was a remote site with no local residents when the artists started working on site. There is no coherent community that has ownership or a strong degree of positive place feelings that lays the ground for local citizens' participation in planning (Lachapelle 2009, Kil *et al.* 2013). Second, the long intervals between the different events also affect the gathering of people, and hence apart from the artists few participants have a durational engagement with the project.

However, while Flatbread Society has, on the one hand, only been able (so far) to assemble a small crowd of regular participants, they have on the other hand managed to involve a range of special interest organizations and professionals. The Flatbread Society cannot be said to be a platform that represents local citizens. Rather, we suggest that the artistic strategy of public participation, using people as a medium, so to speak, makes Futurefarmers an attractive partner in urban development contexts that are in short supply in city life. Our study suggests that the attendees with no professional agenda of their own, participated in the art project without necessarily participating in planning. As argued by Jancovich, participation in art is in itself not enough to change the unequal nature of power within decision-making (2015). The outcomes and the reception of public participation in an art project will also, as argued by Pollock and Sharp, depend on aspects of a development process that are not managed by the artist (2011). Having this in mind, Flatbread Society will as an art project have engendered a range of individual meanings by interacting with the attendees and carries an intrinsic value as art.

By contrast, to the modest crowd of regular participants in Flatbread Society, 3790 people applied when the allotment gardens were up for grabs on site in May 2012 (Bjørvika Utvikling 2012). In short: many Oslo citizens wanted to have their own individual green spaces. The collective pull of Futurefarmers remains limited by comparison. The allotment gardens represent the third form of participation; general use of public spaces. Here the temporary involvement will have given a credibility to the claim that people in cities want to farm and shows that the public's approaches to practice spaces can reconfigure the concepts and the

disconnected visions that emerge from planning offices. However, there is a difference in ideology in the response to the allotment gardens and Futurefarmers' approach to Loallmenningen. While the distribution of the allotment gardens envisioned the allocation of a private patch of soil, Futurefarmers is interested in creating new commons and participation is seen as a means to enact an idea of collectivity. In this sense, one could claim that yes, Flatbread Society offers new ways to be public, but these ways are aesthetically and politically manufactured in the artistic practice, not a result of grass-root participation in a strict meaning of the term. However, by supporting the urban agrarian, Futurefarmers engages with the contemporary idea that a greener city is of common interest. After the privatization of the majority of the waterfront, the developers are held to a commitment to the City of Oslo to build public, open spaces. This coincides with Futurefarmers commitment to develop Loallmenningen as a *common* asset. Although not a result of a grass-roots claim to land, their artistic proposal of an urban farm expresses values in line with what is perceived as common good in the current planning paradigm.

And perhaps, as we suggested above, the critical potential of collaborative art practices lies in the ability to negotiate different worlds. Futurefarmers has been the orchestrator of a trans-disciplinary negotiation that transcends several boundaries, within and outside the system of governance. They have carried out an art project that may contribute to the forging of a cultural strategy that has yet to appear in Oslo's cultural policy documents, where art's societal function is still framed in closer relation to economy than nature and active citizens. Their ability to work and communicate across the three areas we have been discussing – decision-making/planning, participatory art and public space – have enabled them to stay in dialogue with strategic continuities as well as the outspoken governance aim of activating the public. In morphing elements from art, planning, agriculture and recreation, they tap into a range of different participatory constellations and revisions the role of culture in Bjørvika.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes

1. The City of Valencia has recently launched a court case against home-grown architect Santiago Calatrava, the chief designer of The City of Arts and Sciences, because several buildings, including the opera house Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia (2005), have fallen rapidly into disrepair and are generating more maintenance costs than revenue.
2. The Nordic branch of Citta Slow was officially launched on 2 January 2009.

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Interviews

- Interview with Anne Beate Hovind 21 September 2015
 Interview with Amy Franceschini 24 September 2015

Fieldwork

- Participatory observation, visiting the site with Flatbread Society, 17 March 2013.
 Participatory observation, joining meetings with Sørenga Utvikling and IKM, 18 March 2013.
 Participatory observation, Dome Building Workshop, Loallmenningen, 22 May 2013.
 Site visit, Loallmenningen, 23 May 2013.
 Participatory observation, Mobile Oven at 31b, Grønland, 24 May 2013.
 Participatory observation, Tandoori Oven Workshop, Loallmenningen, 28 May 2013.
 Participatory observation, Mobile Oven Maiden Voyage, 29 May 2013.
 Participatory observation, Beneath the Pavement: Soil Science, Loallmenningen, 5 June 2013.
 Participatory observation, Seed Action, Loallmenningen/Herligheten, 6 June 2013.
 Site visit, Mobile Oven at Oslo Comic Festival, Grünerløkka, 11 June 2013.
 Participatory observation, Grain Power: Milling Archive, Oslo City Archives, 11 June 2013.
 Participatory observation, Bakehouse workshops, Loallmenningen, 17 June 2013.
 Field visit, Bread making workshops, Loallmenningen, 22 June 2013.
 Participatory observation, Midsummer Celebration, Loallmenningen, 23 June 2013.
 Participatory observation, Full moon gathering, Loallmenningen, 13 June 2014. Participatory observation, Full moon gathering, Loallmenningen, 3 February 2015. Participatory observation, Brick gathering: Full moon Celebration, 2 June 2015.

Producing Publics: Stranger Relations in Public Art.

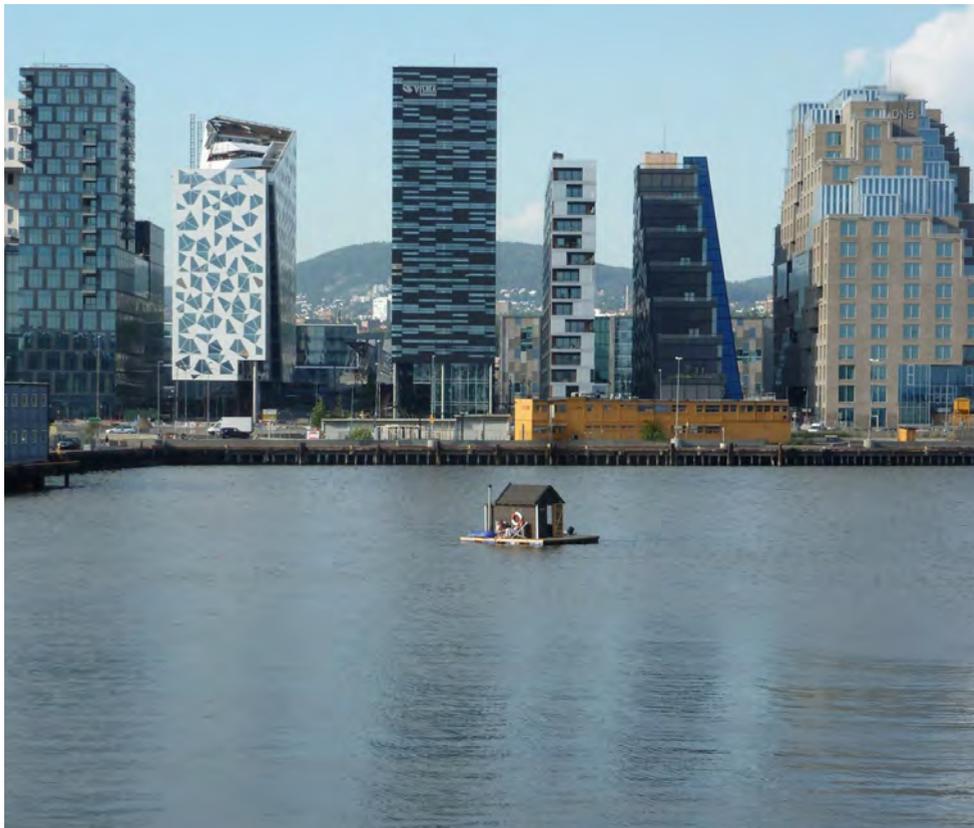
On the seaside of Oslo, the area of Bjørvika is undergoing a complete transformation in a culturally-driven redevelopment. Not only is the former industrial port now encompassing housing and recreation, the public character of the area is also being redefined. Bjørvika is being redeveloped as a private–public collaboration. The redevelopment process is following an agreement, whereby the private developers commit to create new public spaces while developing other areas commercially. This means that areas that before were publicly owned by the national railway company and the municipal harbour authority, although not publicly accessible, are now privatised, while other areas are being made public through the installation of cultural institutions and new public spaces.

Art in public spaces plays a role in these transformation processes. The public art programme of the seaside area Bjørvika is conceived as an element of the production of these new public spaces and contributes to the constitution of the area's new public character (Statsbygg et.al. 2003). The embeddedness of art in a process that reconfigures not only the area physically, socially and economically, but also reinvents the public character of the seaside, calls for attention to how art is not only appearing in public, but also produces *publics*. The move from singular *public* to plural *publics*, is influenced by Queer theorist Michael Warner. It permits a discussion of how art forms *a* public by drawing a public horizon in its intervention and thereby takes active part in reinventing the areas' public character.

The interest in how art interacts with the production of publicness in Bjørvika is triggered by a seeming conflation between the ambition to build active and lively urban environments and the commissioning of participatory art in public space. Despite other qualities in the work, once the event is over, documentation of it circulates as representations of 'life' in public spaces and bears witness to a successful urban strategy that activates the area. Art enters the processes of creating *social spaces* in areas with new construction, yet participatory art gives social relations both aesthetic and public qualities that are not necessarily encompassed in a photo. The involvement and engagement of participants in collective structures prompt a discussion of how participatory art intervenes in the life of the city as a whole. Participatory and temporary strategies represent a move away from an object-based understanding of art's public character and are no longer marginal forms of public art. Quite to the contrary, a current tendency is to earmark funds to temporary forms of public art and thereby fully integrate such art practices in the institutional frameworks that manage the public budgets for art.¹ This is also the case in Bjørvika, where 25% of the public art budget is directed into temporary interventions and the curatorial approach has opted for participatory art in the permanent art programme. Yet, a concern arises from the changes in practice, because while art in public spaces earlier was accessible around the clock, it now has a visiting time and can

be missed out on in the same way as exhibitions and events. The use of participatory strategies changes the accessibility of art in public space.

The question addressed in this article is how art produces particular publics in Bjørvika. In the following, it will discuss the move from an ideal of an inclusive public sphere to multiple partial publics. Moreover, it will discuss the imaginative dimensions of participatory art by drawing attention to art projects' 'public address,' the 'stranger relations' that they generate and the 'affect' that they circulate. It suggests that a discussion of these aspects contributes to the understanding of the peculiar public and aesthetic dimension that sociality gains from participatory art, and that this informs our understanding of how this art form intervenes in the life of the city.



Pfelder, *The Isle* (2013). Copyright: Pfelder.

The empirical material of this article consists of three art projects in Bjørvika that rely on different forms of public participation. *The Isle* (2013) by the artist Pfelder consisted of a little cottage on a floating stage placed in the bay in front of the newly built high-rises on Oslo's seaside. It functioned as a hostel as one could book it free of charge for a night. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* [Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestinerleir] (2012) took place at Kunsthall Oslo in one of the Bjørvika high-rises. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* addressed the situation of undocumented Palestinian immigrants and included them in a collaborative project facilitated by Norwegian artist Andrea Lange. The last project, *Future Library*, by Scottish artist Katie Paterson, is part of the permanent public art programme of Bjørvika. It was launched in 2014 and has the year of 2114 as its focal point. Every year one writer is invited to submit a text, which is kept unread until the totality of the texts will be published in 2114. While the unread texts are stored at the municipal Library at Bjørvika, a forest planted by the artist and her collaborators slowly grows in order to provide paper for the future anthology.

The three projects introduce forms of participation in Bjørvika that range from installing a pleasurable event in the woods, a sleep-over with a friend in an art installation, to the creation of an activist platform. Both *The Isle* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* are financially linked to the redevelopment; however they emanate from artistic initiatives that led to the positioning of these temporary projects in the context of Bjørvika.² *Future Library*, on the contrary, comes out of an invitation to artist Katie Paterson by Claire Doherty, the curator of the permanent public art programme of Bjørvika. In this respect, *Future Library*'s relation to the space production in Bjørvika is dissimilar to the two other projects, because the choice of Paterson's project is adapted to the expectations to public art formulated by developers and curator (Eeg-Tverbakk et. al. 2009; Doherty 2011).

New Commons

Making the seaside publicly accessible is by far the most dominant narrative of the transformation of the Bjørvika area (Diedrich 2013; Myrvold 2016). In this context, the production of public spaces significantly promotes the perception of the redevelopment as publicly relevant. The more so, because large areas along the seaside are zoned for private housing and business, and attractive property structures are market regulated. In the midst of an expensive property structure, the new public spaces of Bjørvika are crucial to the democratisation of the use of the area. It is therefore necessary to consider the public spaces as politically significant for the democratisation of the seaside. Maybe for this reason, the public character of the new public spaces of Bjørvika is underscored by their unusual appellation as *commons*/[allmenninger]. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Heidi Bergsli in a recent doctoral thesis, the new public spaces can be perceived as playing a role in the legitimising of the redevelopment as a common interest for citizens (Bergsli 2015, 226). The art practices discussed in this article are part of this area transformation where that which is perceived as public is at stake.

Here we can draw a parallel to French philosopher Jacques Rancière's discussion of the constitution of commons. He has devised a theory on the distribution of the sensible, which he understands as a political process that delimits parts that are common and parts that are exclusive. (Rancière 1999; 2000; 2009). In Rancière's thought, the notion of common is

not only designating a public space as in the abovementioned case, it must also be understood as a form of common-sense that structures the way we think, what we conceive as possible, what gains significance for us in a community and what we can perceive. What is at stake, are moves from a subjective experience towards commonly acknowledge significances. The relational aspect of perception is crucial to its political significance because it can render a subjective experience publicly significant (Myrvold 2013).

The transformation of Bjørvika's public character has consequences for a discussion of art in public space. When we discuss public art, very often a pre-established public arena functions as a qualifier of it as public; art is public by virtue of being in the public's interest or located in public space.³ In Bjørvika, a more fruitful approach is to consider how art also enters processes that reconfigure the area's public character. The urban transformation changes our perception of the area and intervenes in the intersubjective field that constitutes a common. However, art, Rancière claims, is also acting upon the constitution of commons by displaying new forms of perception and reconfiguring the coordinates of a shared world (Rancière 2009, 49). Yet, the particular ways in which participatory art involves and engages participants in collective structures, with the intention to forge new relationships among subjective perceptions, sociality and Bjørvika's public dimension, is a complex issue to approach.

Participatory Art as Urban Strategy

The redevelopment of Bjørvika calls for a discussion of the seeming conflation between the ambition to build active and lively urban environments and the commissioning of participatory art in public space.⁴ Still, participatory art does not only activate the city, but also people, and by working directly with social relations in public spaces, it represents an attractive cultural strategy for planners working in line with the vision of an active city. Because participatory strategies can enable an engineering of social spaces in the city, this art form needs critical attention.

At first glance, the social spaces opened in the city by artistic initiatives might appear as simple forms of social enjoyment, nevertheless recent art theory is wary of the sociality constructed by participatory art (Bishop 2012; Nelson 2011; Berlant 2011). Art historian Claire Bishop explains the challenge of assessing participatory art as an effect of its double ontological status; it is both art and social relations. "It is both an event in the world, and at one remove from it" (Bishop 2012, 284). The double character coined by Bishop is valid for participatory art practices that enter public space production processes as well. They are part of a general ambition to activate the city and create social events, however, they are also artistic formats that give social relations both aesthetic and public qualities.

When participatory art enters into processes of urban transformation, it becomes of interest to multiple academic fields, such as art theory, geography and cultural policy. Cultural strategies, including public art, have been advocated as potential solutions to problems with regard to both social and economic challenges. This has occasioned critical literature on the role of culture and art in urban transformation when unfolding within the framework of cultural developments (Miles 2005, Sharp, Pollock & Paddison 2005; Miles & Paddison 2005). Moreover, the alleged impact of art as a mean to enhance diversity, local participation and inclusion, has led to a critical reception of public art that scrutinises the

asymmetrical power relations between artists, members of the public and stakeholders (Jancovich 2015; Pollock & Paddison 2014; Zebracki 2014; Pollock & Sharp 2011). The interest in the role of participatory art becomes either a question of the influence of members of the public on the implementation of art in public space (Jancovich 2015; Sharp, Pollock & Paddison 2005) or of the influence of participatory art practices on planning (Myrvold & Wergeland 2016; Pollock & Sharp 2012). When it comes to assessing participatory art's role in processes of urban transformation, sociological perspectives that focus on the failings and impact of public art in terms of socio-economic redistribution seem to be prevailing. Attention is being paid to how public art, despite intentions to make it inclusive, fails in being so and reveals forms of contestation and conflict (Pollock & Sharp 2012; Sharp, Pollock & Paddison 2005). This article introduces insights from art theory, queer theory and aesthetic philosophy in order to carry the discussion further. What the article aims at in the construction of its theoretical framework is twofold. For one, it conceives, in line with Warner, publics as always partial and never fully inclusive. However, this is not perceived as a failing; rather art's ability to form new publics is investigated as an innovative potential when installing new connections between the subjective experience and sociality in public space. Secondly, the particularity of the aesthetic intervention is overlooked when efforts are directed into assessing the power relations and divergent interests among participants. The artistic publics discussed in this article are viewed as engendering new forms of *stranger relationality* by engaging in the imaginative dimension of the art projects.

Public Art: Producing *Publics*

To revisit the notion of public art in order to understand its contemporary role in the city is a necessary exercise that has been done before. What is at stake is the public role of art, which is still bound to the legacy of the ideal of an all-inclusive public sphere. Confronting such traditional preconception of public art is the object of W.J.T. Mitchell in *Art and the Public Sphere*. Here, Mitchell stresses the historic burden of the notion of public art:

The very notion of public art as we receive it is inseparable from what Jürgen Habermas has called “the liberal model of the public sphere,” a dimension distinct from the economic, the private, and the political. This ideal realm provides the space in which disinterested citizens may ideally contemplate a transparent emblem of their own inclusiveness and solidarity, and deliberate on the general good, free of coercion, violence, or private interests.” (Mitchell 1992, 35).

Mitchell's point is to cast the utopian ideal of an all-inclusive public sphere up against the violence and power structures generally found in public arenas, arguing hence that art, when located in public, deals with controversies and violence between various interests. In doing so, Mitchell deconstructs a utopian and harmonious relationship between art and public, outlining instead the multiple public interests that are at play in constituting art as public. The attempt to disassociate the notion of public art from a universal subject perceived independently of economy, gender and culture, coincides with feminist, queer and cultural studies critique of the constitution of the western male as universal subject. Once we render visible the power structures of public arenas, its non-inclusive character is revealed. Post-public (Sheikh 2007), past-public (Phillips 2015) and counterpublics (Warner 2002) are among the neologisms that denote the inequalities and divisions in the public sphere, and ultimately its fragmentation.

Queer theorist Michael Warner stresses that we are indeed dealing with multiple publics (Warner 2005). Yet a question arises from Warner's acknowledgement of multiple publics: how are new publics, if continuously coming into being, formed?

In his essay on "Publics and Counterpublics," Warner states that publics, "exist by virtue of being addressed" (Warner 2005, 67). Herein, Warner indicates that the public gains its particular form already in a public address. The address is in other words a means that constitutes a public. Warner does not only consider the address as giving existence to a public, but as a way to imagine it. The public address has a capacity of world-making because, as Warner puts it, "Public discourse says not only 'Let a public exist' but 'Let it have this character, speak this way, see the world in this way'" (Warner 2005, 114). This leads us to a crucial point made by Warner; publics are not purely empirical phenomena and "never just the sum of people who happen to exist" (Warner 2005, 68). Publics are more than a crowd of attendees because they also form social imaginaries that are open-ended, in the sense that they rely on the idea that *indefinite strangers* can receive a work of art or pick up a text. For this reason, Warner states that to study them requires methods unlike those of the social sciences because it necessitates attention to "the means by which the fiction of a public is made real" (Warner 2005, 15). Warner installs a distinction between the way the public is imagined in the address and the empirical reception context, which again allows for a discussion of the imaginative layers of participatory art's intervention in the city. Artist Simon Sheikh picks up on Warner's notion of publics and uses it in relation to art. He argues that it is precisely in the public address that the political dimension of aesthetics lies (Sheikh n.d., 7). Sheikh stresses that a public address is both political and aesthetic.

In Bjørvika, a new environment is formed. Yet, the public character that is being constituted can be comprehended as a compound of how the new corporate buildings, the housing areas and the new Opera House inhabit the area and address *their* specific publics. In this article, art in public space is perceived as interacting with the constitution of Bjørvika's public character by forming other publics that represent alternative connections between subjectivity, sociality and public space. The art projects' public address employ aesthetic means to produce particular publics, but it is also political when imagining a particular way to be public.

The absence of a credible universal subject affects the public address of an artwork, because if there is no universal addressee, art is necessarily addressing particular publics. Most notably, the movement *new genre public art* takes this into account and revisits the publics of public art. Here, the utopia of an all-inclusive public is swapped in favour of addressing specific audiences (Lacy 1995). Noteworthy, however is Miwon Kwon's critique of community-based practices working with specific audiences. In community-based art, she argues, the form of the invitation to participate represents a presumption of the identity of the participants that in fact is a discursive construction of a community (Kwon 2004, 145). Her objection to community-based art is that identity is simplified and it is hence in danger of excluding the subjectivity of actual individuals. Kwon shows how a specific public is formed and delimited in the address to a particular social group. Although adopting a different perspective than Warner, Kwon is in similar ways drawing attention to a way in which art imagines and forms its public in the address.

The merging of aesthetics and sociality in participatory art is not only a question of the potential editing of a social group, the publics formed by participatory art are also influenced by artistic intentions that act upon sociality. Bishop and Maggie Nelson describe the social dynamic within participatory art as often being consensus-driven, leaving therefore little space for a critical dynamic within the work and hence a loss of critical edge (Bishop 2012; Nelson 2011). The degree to which social consensus can be felt as inescapable for participants seems to come to light in the two authors' choice of book titles *Artificial Hells* and *Art of Cruelty*. More important, is that a consensus-driven dynamic represents a form of sociality, which is intrinsically part of the artistic proposition and regulates the social experience of the participants.

Both the issues of consensus-driven sociality and the 'imagined' identity of the participants represent consequences of the artistic reorganization of social relations. The question of the public's identity and the drive towards social consensus are aesthetic dimensions of participatory art that form and delineate social relations. By giving shape to social fabric, these mechanisms both exclude and include people in public space. It is important to keep this in mind when the use of participatory strategies enters the process of reconfiguring the public character of Bjørvika. Public art in Bjørvika is positioned as part of the overarching ambition to create multifaceted life, identity and civic co-ownership (Eeg-Tverbakk et.al 2009). Herein, the role ascribed to public art corresponds to an idea of the relation between art and public formed in line with the ideal of an-all-inclusive public sphere. Public art is positioned as a unifying phenomenon that diversified social groups can gather around. The social role ascribed to art does not take into account the dividing character of public art when discussed in relation to factors such as taste, education, social background, income and cultural belonging.⁵ Not only is the idea of public art as having the ability to produce a disinterested space that includes everybody a utopian one, it also stands in the way of discussing the particular publics that art produces and, as in our examples, the ways in which it contributes to the constitution of Bjørvika's public character.

A Public is a Relation among Strangers⁶

The dichotomy of private and public, as faulty as it might prove in practice, positions public space as accessible for everyone, in contrast to private spaces into which one must be invited. In public space, we interact with indefinite strangers, not our private acquaintances; and the co-presence and interaction of people in public space is a form of *stranger relationality*. In policy documents, "diversity" might be the leading word that corresponds to a vision of public space as a site of stranger relationality. However, in contrast to the term of diversity, the use of the notion of stranger relationality as adopted in this article addresses a form of relationality that draws on imagination. In doing so, the publics of participatory art are discussed in light of the public horizon of an event and this represents an alternative approach to a sociological mapping of how art enhance diversity in public space.

Stranger relationality is a term borrowed from Warner who stresses that a public is a relation among strangers. In line with his key argument that publics are more than an empirical reception context, he argues that the stranger relations generated in a public depend on the capacity to *imagine* the circulation of discourse among strangers (Warner 2005). When giggling over a movie or raging over an article, stranger relationality is the reshaping of

intimate dimensions of subjectivity through the conscience that they are shared with *indefinite strangers*. Both academic seminars and art venues will have in common that even in the presence of a small group of friends and colleagues, the discourse is oriented towards the indefinite strangers found in a public sphere. The ability that we have to imagine an indefinite stranger with whom we share the experience or interact with intellectually plays a significant role in constituting a situation as public. In relation to participatory art, Warner's approach can be a productive tool in articulating the disjunction that can be experienced between on the one hand, a social event's modest size or familiar atmosphere and on the other hand, the way it projects itself into a greater context.

The ability in the public address to imagine stranger relationality is crucial in Warner's analysis. Regarding his key notion *counterpublics*, Warner stresses that they, "are 'counter' to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability" (2005, 121-122). Warner's category of counterpublics, is primarily encompassing queer publics, however it also includes artistic publics (Warner 2005, 116). The idea that counterpublics re-imagine how stranger relationality is organised in public can be helpful in understanding participatory art's intervention in public space. It demands, however, that we are open to not only perceiving the publics of public art as immediate social interactions in public space, but also a practice that re-imagine stranger relations.

Before continuing, it is important to make Warner's aforementioned distinction between publics and empirical context of reception operational for a discussion of participatory art. This can be done by differentiating the *participating attendees* of an event and its *public dimension*. This entails that the social interaction that the actual event brings about in public space is never identical to the forms of stranger relationality imagined in the work's public address.

Participatory art practices have a tendency to underscore the importance of the participating attendees and to articulate their durational presence and commitment with the project as the locus. Bishop denounces this as simplified, because it fails to communicate adequately that there is an audience outside of the immediate situation (Bishop 2012, 241). The notion of stranger relationality forms yet another perspective to discuss an event's public dimension and the multiple audience positions created in participatory art. Moreover, it enables us to acknowledge that some of these positions are out of place and out of time.

It is this kind of participant position that this article aims at making visible – a participant position that comes out of the imaginary work within a participatory event. Such *imaginary* positions within the project rely on the participating attendees' capacity to picture a public horizon for the situation, beyond the exchange between attendees meeting in real time.

Three Forms of Participation

The three projects, *The Isle*, *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* and *Future Library* can all be assessed as immediate social interactions among participants. *The Isle* opened a private space for two. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* was a social arena where artists, activists, experts and asylum seekers interacted. In *Future Library*'s hand-over event, a crowd of attendees sits together in the woods. However, the works stage themselves as public in the public address, not by virtue of engaging the actual crowd, but by addressing indefinite

strangers beyond the event. *Future Library* is particularly interesting in that respect because its participatory structure and production rely on people that do not yet exist.

The indefinite stranger is the stranger you have not met yet, but that you know must exist and can easily imagine. Warner's notion of stranger relationality allows us to develop the formulation that also in participatory art intimate experiences are being reshaped when imagined as shared with indefinite strangers. According to Warner, all publics rely on the capacity to imagine the circulation of discourse among indefinite strangers, yet can it be that art imagines stranger relationality more, better or differently?

Future Library

A peculiarity of the participatory structure of this project is its timeframe. The realisation of the anthology in 2114 relies on future participation by people who are not yet born. Therefore, the participatory structure of *Future Library* is complex; it accommodates a social event every year, yet it also relies on the involvement and support from different institutions such as the Deichmanske Library, the Department of Forestry of the municipality, the Festival of Literature in Lillehammer and the board of trustees that each year commissions one writer. Nevertheless, at the core of this complex participatory structure lies the annual hand-over day that this article will focus on.



Katie Paterson, *Future Library*. The handing over of David Mitchell's manuscript (2016). Photo Charlotte Blanche Myrvold

The forest is the site of the annual hand-over day of the commissioned manuscript. In May 2015, Margaret Atwood handed over her manuscript “Scribbling Moon” to the trust of *Future Library*. The annual hand-over day takes form of a social event, attendees gather in the wood where they witness the hand-over of the manuscript, listen to readings, drink coffee and eat chocolate. Of the three projects, *Future Library*, asks the least from its participants. Here, participation takes form of a social event in the woods where one is free to engage in casual conversation with other attendees. It requires mere presence, but the presence takes on significance as the attendees act as representatives of their time.

The peculiarity of the public address is that it positions people who are not yet born as receivers of the anthology. This has implications for the stranger relationality engendered by the project. In the woods, sightlines are on the future, and the proximity to the future that the project enables one to feel motivates participation in the present. The proximity is suggested by the recurrent mentioning of ‘our’ grandchildren and great grandchildren in talks and conversations. Here, the capacity to imagine stranger relationality is absolutely crucial to the work. To a certain extent, the relations between the people assembled is also projected into the future and we see the others and ourselves as strangers from the future that we currently do not know and are yet to become. It is in these imaginative projections that the project creates a peculiar mix of privacy and publicness. What is the difference between writing a letter to a future, imagined great grandchild and participating in the social event that addresses future generations?

By dissolving the division between yours and my grandchildren, an indefinite address to the future is formed. The collective pull in the act of imagination engenders a feeling of infinite stranger relations and addresses indefinite strangers. Margaret Atwood describes the feeling that by participating she is part of something greater:

“I am very honoured, and also happy to be part of this endeavour. This project, at least, believes the human race will still be around in a hundred years! *Future Library* is bound to attract a lot of attention over the decades, as people follow the progress of the trees, note what takes up residence in and around them, and try to guess what the writers have put into their sealed boxes” (Atwood 2015).

Atwood recapitulates what is offered participants; one can follow the growth of trees, guess the stories of the secret texts and thus imagine what is beyond reach. Paterson’s 100-year-long production scheme is teasing in that it deprives attendees of the anthology, hence imagination is everything.

Atwood stresses that it is a project for believers. Attendees participate in a gesture of hope in the project and by extension in the future. In her annual speech, Paterson characterised the project as full of hope. Hope in the project, hope in the future, even the trees are imbued with hope.⁷ The project’s public address canalises collective hope into a social situation. Still, in *Future Library* hope is more than a personal emotion engendered by the artwork because it is crucial to its production. The realisation of the future anthology depends on continuous and collective hope.

Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp

In *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* exchange among strangers is at the core. Taking as its cue a societal context where institutional structures separate life experience, professional competence and political power, the aim of the project was to create an arena of exchange. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* gathered activists, undocumented refugees, writers, experts in different fields, and artists in Kunsthall Oslo for a month. The Palestine Camp was an informal campsite formed by undocumented Palestinian immigrants in front of the Jacob Church in the centre of Oslo. For one and a half years, it marked a continuous demonstration for the rights of undocumented immigrants. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* sprang out of Andrea Lange's yearlong artist residency in the Palestine Camp. When the municipality announced that the camp should be dismantled by the 6th March 2012, Lange timed the opening of the period for her own exhibition to that same date. By inviting the Palestine Camp to Bjørvika on Kunsthall Oslo's premises in the new high-rises, Lange offered a new location and framework for the activists. Through this gesture, the project remains community-based, as it unfolds in close collaboration with a particular social group and has no artistic authorship.



Atelier Populaire/Palestine Camp (2012). Photo by Tine Poppe. Copyright: Atelier Populaire/Palestine Camp

In forming its open workshop-based structure, *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* took its cue from the student revolution of 1968 and the *Atelier Populaire* at the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Paris. The project opened multiple positions for the participating attendees, ranging from durational commitment and the possibility to influence the project's calendar, to individual participation as audience members for a lecture.⁸

Despite the open invitation to participate, the project's explicit ambition of working for the conditions of undocumented immigrants demanded emotional, political and intellectual involvement of its participants. In its political agenda, as we can read on the project's webpage, the public address clearly delimits a public and departs radically from an idea of an all-inclusive and universal character of public art. "As an *Atelier Populaire* of today, the workshop offered an open meeting space for everyone who wants to work for a change in the Norwegian refugee policy" (atelierpopulaire.no). Collaboration, engagement and *working together* are modes of participation that characterise both the project and its public address.

The asylum institute is structured so that personal relations and emotions do not influence decisions. *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* counteracts this division between individual destinies and bureaucracy by inviting citizens, experts, activists, refugees and artists to the same arena. Lange marks this as an important dimension of the project: "The bringing together of many other professions, different activists using their professions, was interesting. This, I think, formed a very solidary platform" (Interview Lange 2016).

The actual exchange among participants is fundamental to the project. Still, the public dimension of the social relations structured in *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* relies on an ability to imagine indefinite strangers beyond the here and now. Both in the web archive and in a performance in the popular Autumn Exhibition, *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* projects itself into a larger public. The indefinite stranger is crucial for the project's attempt to produce changes in asylum policy.

In hindsight, the project did not directly change the precarious situation of the asylum seekers participating or have effect on the practices of social inclusion in the wider society. When thinking on how the project intervened beyond the immediate situation, Andrea Lange suggests that the project produced solidarity (Interview Lange 2016).

The Isle

The Isle offers three things in its public address: free overnight accommodation, an intimate atmosphere that evokes Norwegian cabin-culture and the possibility for participants to inhabit public space as a counteract to the urban redevelopment (www.tenthaus.no). The intimate space for two is an invitation to share time with someone one close, while participating in a critical gesture in public space in a small cabin with a spatial potency matching the new high-rises. On top of that, the free accommodation and limited nights available is a gift for the few and an experience that cannot be had elsewhere. *The Isle* offers privacy, adventure and participation in a critical gesture in the seductive wrapping of a free ride.

Privacy structures *The Isle* thematically, physically and relationally. The participatory structure of *The Isle* accommodated pre-existing private relations and removed the possibility of stranger relations as they would normally occur in public spaces. On an isle, one is literally isolated and in this case one chooses beforehand who one wishes to bring and bunk with. The participants can temporarily inhabit public space in a private manner, and hence share the view of the first residents in the recently privatised seaside. Still, this does not mean that the project does not engender stranger relations. The cabin had a guest book where one can view who else has been there and wonder who will follow. *The Isle* also gives you new neighbours overnight by placing participants by Bjørvika's residential area. In the cabin, one experiences how it is to inhabit Bjørvika privately, and the new neighbours are indefinite strangers to the

two bunking on *The Isle*. Still, the private mode that structures the participation in *The Isle* does the opposite of *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*, because here there are no feelings on display.

In *The Isle*, participation is organised quite differently than in the two other projects, because Pfelder constructs a private sphere for two within the artwork's public structure. The floating cabin's physical isolation from its surroundings and the limited nights available condition the public accessibility of *The Isle*. By virtue of its exclusive offer, out of reach for the many, the project recasts the idea of an all-inclusive public into the opposite, a public artwork for the few. In *The Isle*, participation is strictly delimited and the participating attendees re-enact divisions between what is made public and private. Obviously, this is a critical project that denounces the privatisation of large areas along the seaside. Still, through its exclusive structure it also puts on display the ways in which it itself configures public accessibility relationally, temporally and physically. Thereby, the participation of attendees is used as an aesthetic mean to redistribute access unequally and reveal an exclusive dimension of public art.

Affect and Accessibility

Public art that unfolds as events will necessarily limit the physical and temporary accessibility of the work. However, the ways in which the participatory structure of a work condition the interface between art and its public is less straightforward. As noted by Bishop, Nelson and Kwon, the construction of a public's identity and consensus-driven dynamics are mechanisms that exclude and include people in a project. The feelings of hope and solidarity that circulate in *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* can be considered as yet another aspect of participatory art that acts upon the interfaces between art and its publics. Sharing feelings such as solidarity or hope will influence whether we recognise ourselves in the public address of the work. If one feeling dominates in a participatory event, whether one shares it influences the involvement with the work and who feels included in this particular social structure.

Nonetheless, in the case of *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*, hope and solidarity are not merely a subjective feeling experienced when interacting with the work. The very production of the art project seems to depend on them. There will be no anthology without a community that directs their hope into it. There cannot be a benevolent, artistic arena that works for the right of undocumented refugees without solidarity. Hence, hope and solidarity are crucial to the production of *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*, and both projects seem to have generated enough of it so that it circulates independently of individual attendees that enter and exit the situations. It might therefore be productive to discuss the feelings in term of 'affect,' because it denotes a state that transgresses the individual sensation. Affect can be helpful in denoting that hope and solidarity take on a life beyond the subjective experience of the individual attendee.

The concept of *affect* is central for the way in which the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari distinguish art from philosophy and science. In the artwork, they argue, affects are contained independently of the subject (Deleuze & Guattari 2008). A characteristic of the affect as they perceive it is that an affect is detached from subjective emotions and

transgresses the individual, and even the human (Deleuze & Guattari 2008). For instance, the impression conveyed by Paterson when she describes even the trees as imbued with hope indicates that the whole sensorium created in the event carries the affect, and that it in this project transgresses the human. We will not travel any further into a philosophical discussion on the affect. Still there is one crucial consequence of perceiving affect as residing in an artwork, independently of individual subjects. Affects, when products of art, travel in an intersubjective field where they can be critically assessed. When participatory art circulates affects in public space, it installs connections among the subjective perception of the event, the social situation and the work's public dimension that need critical attention.

Above I suggest that the affect circulating in a participatory project gives a particular character to its public address and influences who feels included and excluded in the events unfolding in public space. In addition, it can be productive to discuss the affect that a participatory event sets in motion with regard to the way it impacts upon the stranger relations it generates.

Re-imagining stranger relationality is, according to Warner, a characteristic of a counterpublic. Previously a question was posed regarding whether art holds the ability to imagine stranger relations better, differently or more. The affective mode of an art event can represent a way to re-imagine stranger relations in public. The three projects discussed in this article include indefinite strangers in the public address, whether as a future descendant, a voting citizen or the next participant. Yet, the sphere of privacy installed in public space by *The Isle* reinforces distance among indefinite strangers. *Future Library* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* interact with public space differently by infusing the idea of the indefinite stranger with a feeling of hope and solidarity. Instead of discussing participatory art as enhancing diversity in public space, its effectivity in public space can be conceived as acting upon the affective qualities of stranger relationality.

However, the impact of affects does not necessarily “end” here. In the academic field of Affective Geography, cities are considered as affective registers with which urban transformation interacts.⁹ The participatory art projects discussed here are embedded in the redevelopment of Bjørvika. For this reason, the affective dimension of the art projects unfolds within a greater spatial agenda. Human geographer Nigel Thrift warns against the engineering of the affective dimension of the city and suggests that in urban planning aesthetics can be used as a guise to induce affect (Thrift 2004). For example, *Future Library* is commissioned for the permanent public art programme of Bjørvika Development and the concern for the future enacted in *Future Library* reflects unquestionably well on the developers' societal mission. It is therefore reasonable to ask whether the figure of hope produced in the project is appropriated by other spatial political agendas in the urban development.¹⁰ All the publicity that the work has generated occasion a positive mentioning of Bjørvika. Still, if the redevelopment became perceived as part of the sensorium of *Future Library* and imbued with hope in a similar manner as the trees in the forest, it would represent a significant shift in how the area is perceived. The wariness of Thrift towards the affective engineering of cities can be understood in light of the economic boost that affects such as hope can generate and the potential manipulation of citizens for the sake of achieving such effect. The affective

dimension of participatory art is still a fairly unknown subject and more knowledge is needed to comprehend how the artistic competence at play in this art genre interacts with the affective registers of cities.

The Intervention of Art on Stranger Relations.

The double ontological status of participatory art noted by Bishop should be considered when one attempts to formulate its intervention in the city. It is both a social event and art, it both occasions social interaction in public space and re-imagines stranger relationality. If critics and researchers do not acknowledge the imaginative layer of the work it is diminished remarkably. For instance, the social interaction among attendees on *Future Library's* hand-over day consists of a medium-sized art audience eating chocolate in the woods. Yet, the imagined relations to indefinite strangers that the event generates are crucial to the art project's ability to draw people out of the city and into the woods. However, it can hardly be mistaken for enhancing "diversity" in public space. A strength in Warner's analysis of publics is precisely his insistence that they rely on fiction and hence perform as more than empirical phenomena. In the context of an urban development, the relationships formed by participatory art practices between the actual and the imaginary are not necessarily perceived as such. Herein lies a danger that art is used to embellish and mask failings in urban planning.

An artwork addresses living and dead equally. We can experience this when facing a Picasso, or another iconic artwork that cuts its way through our life span as living creatures. By insisting on the importance of stranger relationality in participatory art, the article has drawn attention to ways in which also this art form is dependent on participatory positions that are not inhabited in flesh. Quite to the contrary, the forms of stranger relationality that has been described rely on the attendees' capacity to imagine them within the public horizon of the project. Participatory art events, even when applied as a cultural strategy to activate the city, will engage with other temporalities than the mere empirical context of the here and now. The constructed public of *Future Library* is interesting in that it indifferently includes living, dead and not-yet-born. In doing so, it creates an all-inclusive figure of publicness. The amazing reach of the public address of the project forms manifold imagined stranger relations and gives the project a powerful outreach. However, *Future Library* fails to engage the specificity of public space production in Bjørvika. Rather than introducing relationships to the everyday indefinite strangers of the city now, the future citizen is the locus of the work. There is an apparent greatness in that gesture, which is somehow punctured in the events. The recurrent mentioning of great grandchildren among participants indicates that the imaginative dimension of the project engenders stranger relationality that takes the form of a private mirroring of self and self-importance. The imaginative act in the social event triggers private spheres that echo the privatisation of land in the redevelopment of Bjørvika instead of actualising its public dimension.

By comparison, *The Isle* and *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp*, engage with the contemporary city. The projects deliberately reflect existing divisions and inequalities in the city, both in the way they represent publicness and organise the participation of attendees. Yet they differ in that *Atelier Populaire Oslo/Palestine Camp* attempts to reconfigure existing

social structures in the collaborative platform, while *The Isle* enforces them and put them on display.

Public Art: Urban Learning

This article has suggested that when discussing the intervention of participatory art in public spaces it is fruitful to distinguish the attendees of a participatory event and the forms of stranger relationality that the project generates. In doing so, it argues that the imaginative positions that are marked in the public address are essential to the public dimension of the artwork. The three art projects discussed in this article are examples of very different ways in which participatory art intervenes in the city. A central point in this article has been to stress that their interventions in the city must be considered in light of the peculiar aesthetic and public dimension of sociality and the imagined stranger relations that they engender. Affect has been considered as both acting upon the quality of the stranger relations and as defining who feels excluded or included as participants in a project.

Participatory art's use of human sociality and actual people as artistic material blurs the boundaries between the actual and the imaginary. It stages a form of sociality that most likely is not sustainable outside of the aesthetically constructed situation. Obviously, this is part of what makes this art form interesting. However, when it is part of a greater urban development agenda, the blurring of the imaginary projections generated in the artwork and the social reality of public spaces can be used to embellish the actual without acknowledging its play with fiction. Overlooking the imaginative layers of participatory art is not only reductionist of the event as an art project; it also stands in the way of understanding how this art form interacts with the city. By taking into account the public horizon that a participatory art event creates we can gain information about how art enters processes that reinvent the public character of Oslo's seaside.

A critical understanding of art's role in the production of publicness should not overlook the productive gap between the crowd of attendees and the social imaginary that constitutes the event's public horizon. Imagination, perception and affect act upon the constitution of Bjørvika's public character. Without a critical understanding of how these qualities enter into the constitution of commons, they are left free for commercial actors to appropriate. Art represents not only a practice that engages with these qualities, but also a phenomenon that we can think *with* in order to better understand the sensible as an intersubjective field that is being reconfigured through the way we think and perceive, as well as what we conceive as possible. By installing connections among subjective perceptions, social situations and its public dimension, art enables a form of urban learning and generates knowledge about dimensions of the city that otherwise remains unarticulated.

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Interview

Andrea Lange, 21 July 2016.

Fieldtrips

Pfelder's *The Isle*

Overnight stay at the Isle 20-21 June 2013

Katie Paterson's *Future Library*

Observation, conversation between Katie Paterson and Ion Trewin, 12 June 2014.

Hand-over of Margaret Atwood's manuscript and conversation between her and Katie Paterson at Deichmanske Library, 26 May 2015

Hand-over of David Mitchell's manuscript, 28 May 2016.

¹ In Norway, this tendency can be observed in three institutional frameworks. Public Art Norway's/[KORO] programme URO, which funds temporary forms of public art; Pilot Oslo, the new public art biennial of Oslo that is enabled by the redistribution of means allocated to public art, which were previously tied up to and integrated in the realisation of in new public structures; and, Bjørvika Development Inc's public art programme that directs 25% of the budget to temporary forms of public art.

² Kunsthall Oslo is in part financed through Bjørvika Development Inc.'s public art programme. *The Isle* was in facilitated by HAV Eiendom/[Property] and Bjørvika Development Inc, although curated by the independent project space Tenthaus Oslo.

³ According to researcher Cameron Cartiere and public art commissioner Shelly Willis (2008) public art can be identified through four distinct relations with the public; accessibility for the public, in the public's interest, located in public space or publicly funded, for more see *The Practices of Public Art*, 15.

⁴ 25 % of the public art budget of Bjørvika Development Inc. is earmarked for temporary forms of public art and in curator Claire Doherty's vision emphasis is given to art that gather people in public space. For an in-depth discussion of conflation of art and public governance in the ambition to activate the public, see, Myrvold and Wergeland, "Participatory Art in the Age of Green Urbanism."

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu's renowned study on the relation between taste and social position articulates the relational structure of taste and shows that it operates as forms of social distinction. Bourdieu argues that the appreciation of fine art depends on cultural competence and shows that taste participates in the reproduction of social differences and the art field is subjected to socio-economic dynamics. For more see among others, Bourdieu, *Distinksjonen*, trans. Prieur, and, *The Field of Cultural Production*. For a study on the social structure of the Norwegian art field, Solhjell and Øien, *Det norske kunstfeltet*.

⁶ I borrow the title directly from Warner's essay.

⁷ The recollection of Paterson's word is based on field observation of the handover-day, 28 May 2016.

⁸ Suzanne Lacy has drawn a diagram of the multiple positions that exists within a community-based project that make visible the different degrees of responsibility and influence on the production of a project. See, Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain*.

⁹ Geographer Steve Pile addresses the difference between the concepts of affect and emotion in Geography. He defines affect as trans-personal and as prior to representational translation of a sensation into an emotion. The

latter is crucial to his critique of Affective Geography, he states non-representational character of affect undermines the theories on how affect travels between bodies, it being through circulation, transmission or contagion. See, Pile, "Emotions and affect in recent human geography."

¹⁰ There are existing studies in the agency of hope in urban regeneration projects that indicate that hope have an agency on spatial politics because it has both a spatial and temporal reach. For more, see, Anderson and Holden, "Affective Urbanism and The Event of Hope" and Anderson, "Becoming and Being Hopeful: Towards a Theory of Affect."