



Researching public art and public space, part 2

Editorial

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This special issue is devoted to research on the changing paradigms of public art and of public spaces. Today all art can be characterized as public since it is mediated via relational networks. The shift of paradigm from modernist art to contemporary art coincides with this shift of paradigm – from consumption to communication – in the sense that advanced art practices have already absorbed the change from individual mediation to relational networks. In the communication network of relations, artists and works are constitutive elements. Without the works and the artists, the relational network does not exist, and vice versa – without the network of relations, neither artists nor works are made visible. This constitutive reciprocity of relations is decisive both for theorists doing research on public art and art in public spaces and for artists who are doing research in public spaces.

Today, more than before, art involves institutions, critics, and audiences. Research on art, as well as research by artists, must take into account not only the artwork itself, but also the process of production, circulation, context, and consumption/reception. By highlighting and questioning these relational interdependencies,

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contemporary art research actively participates in shaping our understanding of art, public art, public spaces, and art in public spaces.

As our cover image we have chosen a picture of Marianne Heske's public artwork House of Commons in the square Eidsvolls plass, in front of the Norwegian Parliament Stortinget. This square is recognized as a symbolic public site, as one of the country's most important arenas for people's freedom of expression. More than 300 political demonstrations are held here every year. When Heske's House of Commons was placed here, it provoked a storm of reactions – which just shows the importance of debating art, public art, and public space where anyone can participate.

In this second part of a two-pronged special issue on public art and public space, the following four artists, researchers, and theorists contribute. The first part is listed in the references.

The conversation entitled *How do you know?* between **Apolonija Šušteršič**, Slovenian architect and visual artist, and **Maria Lind**, Swedish curator, art writer, and educator, is conducted in response to a list of topics proposed by the editor Olga Schmedling, who invited the two to take part in part II of the special issue of *Nordic Journal of Art and Research* entitled *Researching public art and public space*. The reason why they have chosen to name their conversation *How do you know?* is because the two, while they both were professors at KHiO, initiated a discursive project on epistemology named *How do you know?*² where they focused on how

² How do you know? was deliberately constructed as a project, not as a conference or one-time event, because it is performed through a series of workshops and seminars dealing with epistemological challenges of our time. Three seminars were conducted during spring 2018. Each seminar/workshop consisted of two presenters – one practitioner and one theoretician – with one section open to the public and a second, closed section for KHiO students and staff. The series was accompanied by a reading list with texts suggested by the presenters, and a reading group and workshop for KHiO students and staff. Each presenter was invited to conduct a group critique, a workshop, tutorials, or the like. Seminar 1: Sarat Maharaj (theoretician, professor, Lund University, Malmö Art Academy) and Matts Leiderstam (artist, professor, Malmö Art Academy). Seminar 2: Anna Daučíkova (artist; dean, Academy of Fine Arts, Prague). Seminar 3: Andrea Phillips (theoretician, professor; head of artistic research, PARSE; professor, Valand Art Academy, University of Gothenburg) and Fernando Garcia-Dory (artist).

meaning is created in the post-truth era. They are using their experience from *How do you know?* to look back on their collaboration. They have worked together on numerous occasions since 1997.

Hild Borchgrevink, artist and researcher, explores in her article *Finding objects, connecting dots* “serendipity” as an interruptive artistic strategy for audience interaction in public spaces. While the audience is largely controlled by the artist leading the project in most participant-based art projects in public spaces, Borchgrevink does the opposite. She allows the audience to act freely – relatively freely – not only to investigate what such an approach can lead to but also to see how “serendipity” as an interruptive strategy can affect herself as a researcher, along the way opening up for unexpected perspectives.

Marie Skeie, artist and researcher, discusses in her article *The stitch project* in the Palestinian context, the opportunities and challenges of participatory textile art projects within a conceptual framework of New Materialism. The fact that she also applies the following two concepts of respectively *diapaxis* and the Arabian term *Al Masha* enables her to explore the complexities of inclusion and participation in the wider public realm.

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About the editor

Olga Schmedling, Dr. Philos, is professor emerita at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Schmedling was educated at the University of Oslo and the University Paris I, Sorbonne, with a doctoral thesis on *Changing paradigms of art and architecture in a social-historical perspective* (Schmedling, 2009), following a period as research fellow in the interdisciplinary project *Visual expressions in the public realm* (VISROM). Schmedling has worked as a critic and editor in SIKSI Nordic Art Review, and as editor in chief of Norwegian Art Yearbook. She has held positions at the Munch Museum and at Academy of Art and Design, Gothenburg, and was the director of KIK Centre for Contemporary Art and Craft in Oslo, vice-president in the International Association of Art Critics AICA, and president of the national section of AICA. Since 2012, she has been a member of the editorial board of Nordic Journal of Art and Research.

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