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INTRODUCTION

Miðbaugur og Kringla: Leisure, Administration and Control is a collaboration of 11 Nordic visual artists. The group first met in Helsinki in 2005 after being chosen together for the project Hard Revolution curated by Mika Hannula and Frans Jacobi. The group met twice and created an exhibition in the Potsdamer Platz train station in Berlin, 2006. The group decided to continue working together in public spaces in our home region, giving us the advantage of being both locals and neighbouring guests. We decided that the first exhibition would take place in Reykjavík, in the two spaces we consider to be Iceland's most important public spaces, the old city centre and the Kringlan mall. Built in the 80's as an attempt to create a new city center Kringlan still is the most used public space in Reykjavík, where in the average month the equivalent of the whole population of Iceland passes through. For us these places represent a lot of what Iceland and Reykjavík are. The name of the exhibition is the umbrella that we worked from in viewing these places as the public spaces that they are. The works come from contemplation on these spaces leaving the individual artist free to go on their own expeditions.

For us this collaboration has probably been most important as a dialogue and critical discourse, which for this exhibition has been going on for over a year. Now we are there again at the end of a process with ideas for further collaborations in the other Nordic countries. Working with public space is hard but equally rewarding because the context becomes society with all that it is and the space itself. That will always take you somewhere new.

Making a project like this would never be possible if it wasn't for the hundreds of others that came into the process by opening doors and saying yes to countless things that we have asked from them. We want to especially thank the Nordic Council, Kringlan, The City of Reykjavík, Gutenberg Printing, our graphic designer Nicole Nicolaus and the Iceland Academy of the Arts for their support. This exhibition wouldn't exist without them and the countless others that came into the project.





THE TRANSFORMER

We are looking at our relationship to Kringlan and the downtown as if they were two vehicles that we were given keys to and allowed to take out for a test drive. We are not going to place them at opposite ends of a road and make them play chicken. We are not going to take their measurements but we are going to attempt, if just for a day or month, to teach them to walk a different walk. We are going to attempt to take away, add and underline what is there and what is missing. We come from the inside and penetrate to the outside. We deal with the surface and the core. We work with the architecture and the people. We work on a populist level, a constructive level, a destructive level and a critical level.

Without any to do 20.000 thousand people enter the transformer a day, 300.000 a month. That is about the whole population of Iceland. Few people will see everything, hopefully everyone will see something. Working with public space is a gift where the audience is everything. The audience owns the work and can do with it as they please, hate or love it and there are no wrong vantage points. The only disclaimer we would like to put out, is don't expect to like everything, hope to see something and have a nice day.

What is it, and what do we want it to be? How do we take it a step closer to that? How many layers does a cake have? Are they sweet, are they thick, are they necessary and are they replaceable? Can we have our cake and eat it too? Or should we make two? Will it have marzipan, jelly, cream or oil and will there be a groom on top, a baby in a cradle or a 14 year old waiting to be confirmed by a wolf pack with rabies?

... and who are we? Are we construction workers, city planners, social workers, sales representatives, floor cleaners, culture critics, freelancers, a concerned public, responsible citizens or attention needy somebodies?

-Working conceptually and producing industrially. We put our ideas into the machine and the machine spits them out. We might want to disown our babies but we are still responsible for them. This is a public space, we want to see how it's not being used. This is a public space owned by a private company and this is a public space owned by the state, we want to know: What are the rules? What do they serve, and how can we break them and make new rules, our rules or any ones rules be accepted in this realm. This is a love affair, this is a long and short term relationship. This is about the masses and about the individual. A meeting point.

We chose the space but the space also chose us. The space invites us for a direct dialogue where we are not sidetracked at a subsidized culture venue but in the midst of great and grand public venues where most of the population dwells or drops by.

Thank you for listening.
Berglind Jóna Hlynsdóttir and Bjarki Bragason

Sögustaður við Sund eða staður án sögu

Á sumrin geng ég um miðbæ Reykjavíkur og segi sögur. Ég er leiðsögukona í bókmenntagöngum Borgarbókasafnsins fyrir útlenda ferðamenn og í fylgd með bandarískum leikara leiði ég gesti í gegnum sögu Reykjavíkurborgar, sagða í gegnum skáldsögur, smásögur og ljóð. Egill ristir rúnir við Aðalstræti, kommúnistar mótmæla við Austurvöll, ástandið veldur einelti við Miðbæjarskólann, Elvis hljómar úr djúkboxi við Austurstræti og í Hafnarstrætinu er skotbardagi. "Pína skál Reykjavík" ómar niður Skólavörðustíginn og svo er að sjálfsögðu endað á Hallærisplaninu, þar hljómar hið ljúfa pönkljóð Diddu "Ó Reykjavík, ó Reykjavík". Prógrammið er afar metnaðarfullt, í fjölmenningsarsamfélagi eru málefni eins og menningarleg og pólitísk átök nærtæk og ég vel textana í samræmi við það; landnámið og átök við noregskonung, ameríska hersetan og áhrif hennar, nútíminn með trúverðugari glæpasögum, pönkbylgjan frá englandi og afsprengi hennar sem njóta vinsælda á alþjóðavísu. Nema að í miðri göngu uppgötva ég að ég er alls ekki að segja þessa sögu, heldur allt aðra sögu, sögu af fólki að skemmta sér: Óboðinn Egill á fyllerí í konungspartýi, íslenskar konur að dansa við dáta, röðin fyrir utan Kaffibarinn, Baddi og félagar að blússa um miðbæinn á Chryslerum, sjómenn að sumbli á Dubliner's og svo auðvitað unglíngarnir á Planinu: "þú yndislega borg ... með hrein og falleg torg".

Ég veit ekki vel hvort ég á að skammast mín fyrir þessa dálítið ölvuðu söguskoðun, kannski er ágætt að benda fólki á að slappa bara svolítið af og skemmta sér saman? Miðbærinn er jú einskonar miðstöð skemmtanálífsins, menningarmoli með meiru og hver segir að menning þurfi að vera leiðinleg?

Fyrir áratug flutti ég röð útvarpspistla um Reykjavík og velti þar fyrir mér hinum mörgu skilgreiningum borgar og miðborgar. Á þeim tíma bjó ég í hinu ágæta úthverfi Breiðholti, Kjálarnesið hafði nýlega stórborgarvæðst og ég var mjög upptekin af landamærum borgar, úthverfis og náttúru. Svona byrjaði einn pistillinn:

Bráðum verður Esjan inni í Reykjavík hugsa ég með mér þar sem ég stend á þaki heimilis míns í Breiðholti og horfi yfir heiminn. Nú stefnir allt í það að stórborgin Reykjavík stækki enn og dreifi sér alla leið upp að Esju. Ó dýrðin dýrðin segi ég við lóu sem vappar í túninu heima og gefur mér engan gaum fyr en ég hendi í hana steini. Hún er svo óvön mannaferðum að hún kann ekki að styggjast eins og öll almennileg borgardýr. Enda ekki að furða þar sem

hér í Breiðholti er allt hægt og hljótt, varla bíll á ferli. Til manna sést náttúrulega aldrei og oft á ég erfitt með að trúa á að það sé til líf í öðrum húsum.

En svona á þetta einmitt að vera segi ég við halta lóuna og klifra niður af þakinu, Breiðholtið er að þessu leyti dæmigert úthverfi. Hugmyndin að baki úthverfum er sú að forðast ys og þys bæjarlífsins og vernda sig gegn hávaða og mengun og ofbeldi því sem fylgir miðborginni. Úthverfi eru beinlínis hönnuð fyrir útigrill og ófælnar lóur og eiga að vera svefnbæir. Úthverfin eru einkonar velferðaræxli á borgum og standa í hugum fólks fyrir allt það sem er leiðinlegt og staðnað og forpokað miðað við hinn lífandi kjarna sem miðborgin er.

Á Lækjartorginu er til dæmis alltaf líflæg bílaumferð og Laugavegurinn er iðandi af túristum. Skólavörðustígurinn sómuleiðis en þegar ég beygi inn í Bergstaðastrætið dettur allt í dúnalogn. Eftir að hafa gengið alein framhjá auðu bakaríi og hárgreiðslustofu fer mér að líða dálítið eins og Úllu sem var ein í heiminum. Kannski er stóri suðurlandskjálftinn riðinn yfir, hugsa ég og leggst á glugga og allir hafa farist og sjálf er ég bara draugur á framliðinni gangstétt. Þá er Reykjavík eins og Pompei, eilíf draugaborg mörkuð í óskulag sögunnar. Eða kannski er þetta alls ekki Reykjavík heldur bara módel, einskonar spilaborg eða einfalt pappalíkan sem hefur aldrei hýst lífandi fólk og er bara hér til reynslu. Eitt hvað hlýtur að ganga hér á seyði því það getur ekki komið til greina að það sé í sjálfu sér enginn munur á miðbænum og úthverfunum og að Reykjavík sé öll ekkert annað en svefnbær án borgarbrags, draugaborg án suðurlandskjálfta.

Á einum stað í bókmenntagöngunni er lesið ljóð eftir Einar Már sem nefnist "science fiction", það hljómar svo: "spurð'ekki / hvort það sé líf / á öðrum hnöttum // fyrr en þú / hefur fullvíssað þig / að það sé einnig á þessum" (1981). Vissulega er litla brúðborgin orðin öllu líflægri nú á blómaskeiði menningarhátíða og ferðamanna, en þó get ég ekki annað en velt fyrir mér, á þessu sögulega rambi mínu, hvort miðbær Reykjavíkur sé eitthvað annað en saga.

Sagan flækist þó allavega ekki fyrir konu í Kringlunni. Kringlan, eins og úthverfið, er sögulaus staður, ósöguleg, næstum því ósegjanleg. En Kringlan á reyndar sína eigin bókmenntasögu. Eða allavega bók. Í Mannveiðihandbók (1999) Ísaks Harðarsonar er lýst verslunarmiðstöðinni Rínglunni sem stað óhöflegar neyslu og andleysis og beinlínis hættulegu fyrirbæri sem miðar að því að ná valdi yfir fólki,

heilla það í gömlu merkinu þjóðsagnanna, þegar álfar heilluðu fólk inn í steina sína og það varð aldrei samt eftir. Þessi ímynd verslunarmiðstöðvarinnar er náskyld hinni hefðbundnu marxísku gagnrýni á verslunarmiðstöðina sem musteri mammons og mekka kapítalismans. Í Kringlunni myndast kjör-aðstæður til innkaupa, tryggðar af hinu miðstýrða umhverfi. Tónlist, lýsing, lofthiti og jafnvel lykt, allt miðar að því að láta neytandanum líða vel, og hvetja hann jafnframt til að kaupa meira, vera sem lengst í hringlunni, kíkja í næstu búð og þá þarnaestum, stoppa við á matsölustöðum og kvikmyndahúsum. Sjónræna hliðin er ekki síður mikilvæg, en þar er undirstaðan ekki aðeins glerið í búðargluggunum heldur og í svalahaldriðum og sjálfu þakinu.

Þó verslunarmiðstöðvar séu fremur ungæðisleg fyrirbæri hér á landi á þá eiga þær sér auðvitað sína sögu. Samkvæmt Wytold Rybczynski á verslunarmiðstöðin rætur sínar að rekja til aukins kaupmáttar millistéttarinnar á fyrri hluta tuttugustu aldar. Miðbæjarsvæðið var of dýrt fyrir stórverslanir og bílastæði og því fluttu stórmarkaðir út fyrir bæinn á ódýrari lóðir og þar mynduðust nýjir miðbæir, sem síðan mótuðust í mynd verslunarmiðstöðvarinnar sem við þekkjum í dag, yfirbyggð og glerjuð með loftræstu veðurfari, hrein og tær, björt og glaðleg, aðgengileg og fjölbreytt.

Fyrir Rybczynski liggur aðráttarafið nákvæmlega í þessu, í verslunarmiðstöðinni er allt á hreinu, þar er ekkert af þeim óróa og óreiðu sem einkennir miðborgir, umhverfið er undir miðstýrðu eftirliti með eigin 'lögreglu' sem sér um að allt fari vel fram. Í verslunarmiðstöðinni er ekkert sem ógnar friðsælli neyslu borgarans, ekkert sem truflar hugmyndaheim hans og velmeunartilfinningu – engir rórnar, engir heimilislausir geðsjúkir sem vappa um göturnar, engir aðsópsmiklir unglingar, engir glæpamenn sem bíða færís í myrkum skúmaskotum. Verslunarmiðstöðin verður því eins og einkonar útópísk eftirmynd miðborgarinnar, hún birtir borgina í sinni bestu mynd, sem skipulagða og verndaða neysluveislu.

Þessi lýsing á verslunarmiðstöðinni hljómar auðvitað eins og niðursoðinn og dauðhreinsaður listi yfir innihaldslausu og ofhannaða ævidaga jakkafataklæddra fartölvudýra sem starfa eins og maurar að útrás milljarðaævintýrisins. Hér þarf leiðsögukonan allavega ekki að óttast að missa tókin á málefnanlegri sögu um menningu og enda á fyllerí á planinu: "harðsoðna hálfmelta brúðuborg skál" sagði Dagur Sigurðarson í ljóðabókinni Milljónaævintýrið (1960), löngu fyrir daga verslunarmiðstöða á Ís-

A historical place or a place without history

landi en þessi ljóðlína hans á ekki síður vel við um Kringluna en Reykjavík sjálfa. Meðan miðbærinn býður allavega uppá göngu er Kringlan statísk, hún hverfist einungis um sjálfa sig.

En þó, í hvert skipti sem ég rölti hringinn í Kringlunni minnst ég fjölmargra verslunarferða með afa og ömmu, og lúinnar raddar ömmu minnar þegar við gengum frá einum enda til annars, frá Hagkaup að því sem þá var kaffihús Myllunnar: “þurfum við að fara svona langt?” Fyrir þreytta fætur gömlu konunnar var þetta heilmikil leið og síðan býr Kringlan yfir sögu, allavega minni sögu.

Úlfhildur Dagsdóttir

In the summertime I walk around the Reykjavík city centre and tell stories. I am a guide in the Reykjavík City Library Literature walks for foreign travelers and together with an American actor I guide guests through the history of Reykjavík, told through novels, short stories and poetry. Egill, from The Saga of Egill, carves runes in Aðalstræti (the old Mainstreet of the city), communists protest at Austurvöllur, opposite the Parliament house, the ‘situation’ causes harassment at Miðbæjarskólinn (The City Centre School), Elvis sings from a jukebox in Austurstræti, and a thrilling shoot-out takes place in Hafnarstræti. “Cheers to you Reykjavík” resounds down Skólavörðustígurinn and of course the final stop is at Hallærisplanið - the Dead-End Square - where Didda’s sweet punk-poem “Ó Reykjavík, ó Reykjavík” booms. The program is highly ambitious, in a multicultural society issues like cultural and political struggle are relevant and I choose the texts accordingly; the settlement and conflicts with the Norwegian king, American influences during the occupation by American forces in the Second World War and the American base after the war, modernity providing more credibility for crime fiction, the punk-wave from England and its progeny (Björk among them), now enjoying global popularity. In the midst of the stories I tell during the walk do I realize that this is not the story I am telling at all, I am telling a totally different story, a story about people having fun: Egill gatecrashing a party for the Norwegian king and queen, Icelandic women dancing with American soldiers, the queue in front of Kaffibarinn, Baddi and his friends driving their Chrysler through the city centre, sailors drinking at the Dubliner’s pub and then of course the youth in the Square: “you wonderful city ... with clean and pretty squares”.

I do not know whether I should be ashamed of this rather tipsy history, maybe it is not all that bad to point out that people should just relax and have some fun together? The city centre is after all a kind of centre for amusement, a cultural hub, and who says that culture has to be boring?

Some ten years ago I presented a few short essays on Reykjavík for the national radio, pondering the many definitions of a city and a city centre. At the time I lived in the wonderful suburb of Breiðholt, the Kjalarnes had recently been incorporated into the city and I was preoccupied with the borders between city, suburb and nature.

This is how one of the essays started:

Soon the mountain Esja will be in the middle of Reykjavík I think to myself, standing on the roof of my house in Breiðholtið, watching the world. Nothing can stop the metropolis of Reykjavík from becoming even larger, migrating all the way into Esja. O wonders I say to a plover who is hopping around the lawn and does not notice me at all until I throw a stone at her. She is so unaccustomed to people that she does not even know to avoid them as all proper city animals do. This does not come as a surprise as the Breiðholt suburb is quiet as a mouse, hardly a car ambling about. People, of course, are never to be seen, and I often find it difficult to believe in life in other houses.

But this is exactly how it is supposed to be I say to the limp plover and climb down from the roof, Breiðholt is in every sense the perfect suburb. The idea behind suburbs is to avoid the much ado of the city life and protect oneself from the noise and pollution and violence belonging to the city centre. Suburbs are explicitly designed for barbecues and fearless plovers and are supposed to be sleeping towns. The suburbs are a kind of a well-being-tumor on the city and in peoples minds they stand for everything that is boring and stale and old-fashioned as opposed to the living hub of the city centre.

Lækjartorg, for an example, always sports lively car traffic and the Laugavegur is teeming with tourists. Also the Skólavörðustígur but when I take a turn into Bergstaðastræti everything goes quiet. After walking past an empty bakery and a hairdressers I start to feel a bit like the last woman standing. Perhaps the big earthquake has already struck, I think and peep into windows, everybody has died and I myself am only a ghost on departed pavement. Then Reykjavík has become a new Pompei, an eternal ghost-town marked in the ashes of history. Or perhaps this is not Reykjavík at all, only a model, a kind of a city of cards or a simple papermaché cluster of houses that has never been a home to living people and is only here as a trial. Something must be going on for it cannot be that there is no actual difference between the city centre and the suburb and that Reykjavík as a whole is nothing but a bedroom community without urbanity, a ghost-town without the big quake. Late in the literature walk a poem by Einar Már is read out, named “science fiction”. It goes like this: “don’t ask / if there is life / on other planets

/ until you have / convinced yourself / that it's on this one too" (1981). Certainly the little doll-town has become more lively now in the heyday of culture-festivals and tourists, but still I can't help but wonder, in this historical wandering of mine, if the Reykjavík city centre is anything but a story.

History, at least, does not entangle one in Kringlan shopping centre. Kringlan, much like the suburb, is a place without history, ahistorical, almost unspeakable. Kringlan does, however, have its own literary history. Or a novel at least. In Ísak Harðarson's Handbook for Hunting Men (1999), the shopping centre Kringlan is described as a place of unlimited consumption and insipidness and actually a dangerous phenomenon with the sole purpose of gaining control over people, enchant them in the old folk-tale literal way, as when the fairies put a spell on people. This image of the shopping centre is closely related to the traditional marxist criticism of the shopping centre as the temple of mammon and the mecca of capitalism. Kringlan provides you with a perfect atmosphere for shopping, insured by the centralized surroundings. Music, lighting, temperature and even smell, all this helps to make the consumer feel good, to encourage him to continue shopping, to stay as long as possible in the roundabout, to wander into the next store and the one beside that, making brief stops at the food court or the cinema. The visual side is no less important. Glass is the predominant material, not only in the shopping windows but also in the railings and the roof.

Even though shopping centres are a rather youthful phenomenon here in Iceland they do of course have their own history. According to Wytold Rybczynski the shopping centre developed due to the growing middle class in the first half of the twentieth-century. The city centre was too expensive for supermarkets and car parks and so they were built outside the town in cheaper plots and new centres formed around them, later becoming the shopping centres we know today; glass-roofed with air-conditioned weather, pure and clean, happy and bright, accessible and diverse. For Rybczynski the attraction is precisely this, in the shopping centre everything is in the clear, therein lies nothing of the unrest and entropy characterizing the city centre, the surroundings are under a centralized surveillance monitored by a private 'police' making sure everything is under control.

In the shopping centre there is nothing that can threaten the peaceful consumption of the citizen, nothing that interrupts his world-view and feeling of wellbeing - no bums, no homeless psychos prowling the streets, no importunate teenagers, no criminals waiting in dark alleys. The shopping centre thus becomes a kind of a utopian simulation of the city centre, it is the idealized image of the city, as a well organized and protected consumer-feast.

This description of the shopping centre sounds of course like a canned and sterile list of the empty and over-designed days of suits with laptops who work like ants to ensure the Icelandic invasion of the billion-dollar-adventure. Here the guide never has to worry about losing grip on the factual history of culture and winding up drunk in the Dead-End Square: "hard-boiled, half-digested toy-town cheers" said Dagur Sigurðarson in the poetry collection Milljónaævintýrið (1960) (The Million-dollar-adventure), long before the advent of shopping centres in Iceland and his refrain suits the Kringla just as well as it does Reykjavík city. While the city centre at least offers the possibility of a walk, the Kringla is static, it only revolves around itself.

Still, every time I stroll around in Kringlan I recall a number of shopping expeditions with my grandparents, and the tired voice of my grandmother as we were walking from the one end to the other, from Hagkaup supermarket to what was then the Myllan Café: "do we really need to walk this far?" For the the tired feet of the little old lady this was quite a hike and since then the Kringla has a history, at least my history.

Úlfhildur Dagsdóttir

Works referred to or cited:

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- "Return" by Svava Jakobsdóttir
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- Devil's Isle by Einar Kárason
- Operation Napoleon by Arnaldur Indriðason
- The Dead-End Square by Páll Kristinn Pálsson
- "Ó Reykjavík, ó Reykjavík" by Didda, performed by Vonbrigði (from CD Rokk í Reykjavík)
- 101 Reykjavík by Hallgrímur Helgason
- "science fiction" by Einar Már Guðmundsson (translation by Bernard Scudder)

Opinbert rými: Til hvers er það?

Opinbert rými? Já ekkert mál. Þessi er auðveld. Allir vita hvað það er. Það er strætisvagnastöð, það er sundlaug, það eru gatnamótin sem fánánlega töff ungmenni slæpa á þegar alls ekkert annað er að gera. Opinbert rými er opið og aðgengilegt mörgum, ekki fáum. Það er sveigjanlegur staður fyrir samkomur og samskipti sem eru ekki alltaf fyrirfram ákveðin og geta leitt til atburða sem engin vissir fyrir að endi á árangursríkan eða ánægjulegan hátt. (geta leitt til einhvers sem ekki endilega fer vel eða ánægjulega)

Opinbert rými er allt þetta og meira til. Því eins og það er í sjálfu sér, er opinbert rými ekki neitt. Það er tóm skilti. Vissulega lofar það mörgu af öllu tagi en reynd þess er alltaf og stöðugt mótuð af ákveðnu og sérstöku samhengi. Opinbert rými er bundið stað og tíma. Það á sér fortíð og nútíð sem saman mynda möguleikan á framkvæmd eða ekki framkvæmd í framtíðinni.

Opinbert rými er eins og óorðið slys. Slys sem gæti falið í sér eitthvað óvænt sem er unaðslegt og ljúft eða haft slæmar óvæntar og óæskilegar afleiðingar. Opinbert rými er það sem það er vegna þeirra sem taka virkan þátt í að móta og endurmóta það og gera það að einhverju. Til að opinbert rými geti verið trútt sínu opna breytilega víxlverkandi eðli, í stað þess að vera eitthvað eitt og sér þá er það alltaf á mörkum þess að verða eitthvað.

Þannig fjallar opinbert rými um það hvernig ákveðin staður og aðstæður eru að verða það sem það er. Það er skapandi augnablik, ekki aumkunarvert minnismerki. Spurningin er: með hvaða gildum, þrá, áhugamálu, markmiðum og ótta er þessi staður skapaður, mótaður og honum haldið við? Eða til að bera fram spurninguna frá öðru sjónarhorni: hvað er að gerast og hvernig gerist það þegar staðurinn er að verða sem einstakur.

Áður en við tökum á þessum vanda verðum við hinsvegar að fara langt af leið. Hvernig við svörum þessari flóknu spurningu fer algerlega eftir hverju við erum að sækjast, hvað það er innst inni sem við þráum. Og já, það skapar annan vanda, nefnilega að það sem þú finnur fer eftir því að hverju þú leitar.

Í hefðbundnum skilningi þegar talað hefur verið um möguleika og vanda opinbers rýmis, þá hefur pólitísk heimspeki einblínt á tvær tengdar en að-

skildar leiðir að settu markmiði. Þetta er kenningin um a) samstöðu og kenningin um b) ástríka andstöðu. Það sem augljóslega aðskilur þær er hvernig þær sjá æskilega niðurstöðu úr þeim sanningsviðræðum og árekstrum sem stöðugt móta og endurmóta opinbert rými.

Í kenningunni um samstöðu er hugmyndin og markmiðið það að skapa opinbert rými þar sem allir þátttakendur hafa möguleika á því, með samræðum og svo meiri samræðum að komast að samþykki um þær grunnreglur sem allir eiga að hlíta. Þessar samningaviðræður fara fram í anda sanngírni, og sjónarmið og áhyggjur allra eru teknar fyrir og íhugaðar. Þannig miðar þessi kenning að því að finna sameiginlega samræmda leið og niðurstöðu.

Gagnstætt samstöðukenningunni er hugmynd og markmið kenningar um ástríka andstöðu ekki að ná fram reglubundinni samstöðu um opinbera rýmið. Á hinn bóginn, eins og hugtakið gefur til kynna, er litið öðrum augum á kröfur og möguleika heimsins. Ólíkt samstöðuhugmyndafræði, gerir ástrík andstaða ráð fyrir stað og aðstæðu sem er aldrei ein, án áhættu eða örugg.

Samkvæmt þessari sýn er raunveruleiki opinbers rýmis, t.d. í Reykjavík, hvort sem er í miðbænum eða verslanamiðstöð, aldrei einn: hann er alltaf margfaldur. Opinbert rými mótast af óteljandi mörgum markmiðum og leiðum til að gera það sem við viljum, hvort heldur við erum ein, með fjölskyldunni eða öðrum sem hópur. Samkvæmt þessari kenningu er opinbert rými alltaf mótað, umdeilt, í samkeppni en vonandi líka fullt umhyggju. Þar sem samstöðukenningin sér þetta óreiðuástand sem aðal vandann, þá sér kenningin um ástríka andstöðu þessa þörf á stöðugri þátttöku sem kjarnan í möguleikunum sem opinbert rými hefur. Það er ekki, en er að verða.

En nú kærur vinir og óvinir óvina minna, hvert hefur þetta óljósa zblablabla leitt okkur? Augljóslega er tilgangur þess að greina á milli þessara markmiða (eins og í óskabrunni) sá að finna rótársaukans, að benda á sárið. Þessi æfing er til þess gerð að gera okur meðvituð um þá brennandi spurningu sem allir er hafa aðgang eða áhuga á opinberu rými verða að svara: Styður þú þann raunveruleika sem er í einni vídd, niðurnjörvaður í fyrirframákveðna stýrða ímyndun um áhættustjórnun; eða getur þú og vilt þú horfast í augu við raunveruleika sem passar ekki í þessa snyrtilegu og fínu kassa sem svo auðveld-

lega og áreynslulaust er hægt að selja, kaupa, leika sér með og svo henda? Stóra spurningin er hvort þú ert fær um að taka þátt í móttíróafullum stað og aðstæðum þar sem markmiðið er að fela ekki eða minnka andstöðu, heldur að komast smám saman, fet fyrir fet, að leiðum til að semja um árekstra og mótstöðu? Getur þú leitað leiða til að skapa samræður þar sem ólíkt ræðir við ólíkt sem svo aftur ræðir við ólíkt og svo enn aftur við ólíkt?

Það þarf varla að taka það fram að ef leið ástríkrar andstöðu er valin, þá ertu að biðja um vandamál. En á sama tíma leyfir þú þér að framkvæma á sjálfs-gagnrýnin, sjálfsrýnin og skapandi hátt. Þú opnar fyrir möguleikanum á sætum og súrum uppákomum. Þú veist, öllum þessum smáu, stóru eða miðlungs sem gera það þess virði – sama hvað það er sem þú leitar eða vilt ná fram.

Þannig að til að svara aðal spurningunni, Opinbert rými, Til hvers er það? Þá verð ég að fara hliðargötur. Spurningin í núverandi formi er endurgerð af annari spurningu. Og þá spurningu þekkjum við flest vegna illkvittislegs lags á níunda áratugnum sungið af Frankie goes to Hollywood: Stríð, Til hvers er það? Og við munum öll svörin sem við fundum. Fyrir mig var rétta svarið: Alls ekki neins. En tengt við spurninguna um opinbert rými er er ég sannfærður um að svarið er hið gagnstæða.

Opinbert rými: Til hvers er það? Til alls. Það er allt, það er hvað sem er, það fer eftir því hvað við getum mótað úr því í löngu ferli sem aðstæðubundin og ákveðin sjálf. Mikilvægast er að það er allt sem er og kemur til með að verða. Það er þarna svo við getum hugsað um og fundið hver við erum, hvar við erum, með hverjum við erum og hvernig við getum mögulega tekið þátt í að skapa og hrista upp í þessum stöðum þar sem við getum dvalið saman á ríkan, fullnægjandi, ánægjulegan hátt og ekki til að gleyma, fagan.

Mika Hannula

{Þýðing: Helga Lilja Bergmann}

Public Space: What Is It Good For?

Public space? Sure, no problem. This is easy. Everyone knows what that is. It is a bus stop, it is a swimming pool, it is the crossroads where hysterically cool youngsters hang out when there is absolutely nothing else to do. Public space is open to and accessible to many, not few. It is a flexible place for encounters and interactions that are not always fully predetermined and which can lead to events in which there is no guarantee for success or happy outcomes.

Public space is all of this and something more. Because as it is, in itself, public space is nothing. It is an empty sign. Certainly, it promises loads and loads of different things, but its actuality is always and constantly shaped and made in a given and particular context. A public space is site and time specific. It has a past and a present, which together construct the possibilities of future action or lack of action.

A public space is like an accident waiting to happen. An accident that can be full of sweet and tender surprises or filled with nasty, unpredictable and unwanted consequences. A public space is what it is because of what those who actively take part in forming and reforming it try to make out of it. For a public space to be true to its inherent characteristics of open-ended transformation and exchange, instead of it being something on its own, it is always on the verge of becoming something.

Thus, a public space is about how a given site and situation is becoming what it is. It is a productive moment, not a pathetic monument. The question is: with what values, wants, interests, aims and fears is that particular site made, shaped and maintained? Or, to state the question from a slightly different angle: what is taking place and how is it taking place when a site in its singularity is becoming?

Before tackling this dilemma, however, we need to take a serious detour. The way any one of us answers this complex question depends completely on what we are after, what is it - deep down - that we crave for. And yes, this creates another dilemma, namely: what you find depends on what you are looking for.

Classically speaking, when talking about the opportunities and challenges of public spaces, political philosophy has concentrated on two connected but distinct routes towards the preferred result. These are the model of a) a consensus, and a model of b) a loving conflict. Clearly, what separates them is how each model sees the preferable outcome of the

negotiations and collisions through which a public space is constantly constructed and reconstructed.

In the consensus model, the idea and the aim is to create a public space within which all the agents participating in it are able - through discussions and then some more discussions - to agree on the basic common rules to which everyone commits themselves. These negotiations are done in the spirit of fair play and each and everyone's views and worries are addressed and taken into consideration. Thus, this is a model in which one strives for a common, united and unifying process and outcome.

In contrast to the consensus model, the idea and aim of the model of a loving conflict is not to achieve a regulated unity of a public space. Instead, as the concept itself suggests, it takes a very different view of the demands and potentialities of our world. Unlike the consensus ideology, a loving conflict presupposes a site and a situation that is never one, risk-free or certain.

According to this view the reality in a public space, for example in Reykjavik, either in the city centre or in the shopping mall, is never one: it is always plural. A public space is defined by the unaccountable plural means and ways of how to do whatever we want to do, be it alone, together as a family or in another collective form. According to this model, a public space is always constructed, conflictual, contested - and hopefully also compassionate. Whereas the consensus model sees this rather disorderly state of affairs as the main problem, for a loving conflict model this necessity for constant participation is at the core of the potential of public space. It is not, but is about to become.

Well now, my dear friends and enemies of my enemies, where does this abstract blah blah blah leave us? Obviously enough, the point of the distinction between these aims (as in wishing wells) is made in order to put locate the source of pain, to point out the wound. This exercise is there to make us aware of the burning question that anyone having access to or interest in a public space must face: Do you want to support a version of a reality that is one-dimensional, safely locked into its carefully managed illusion of risk management; or are you able and willing to confront a reality that does not fit into neat and tidy boxes that can be elegantly and effortlessly sold, bought, played around with and then thrown away? The ultimate question is whether you are able to participate in a antagon-

istic site and situation where the point is not to hide or to diminish the differences but to find out, one by one, moving inch by inch, ways to negotiate confrontations and collisions? Can you seek to generate a dialogue where difference speaks to a difference which again speaks to another difference and then again to another difference?

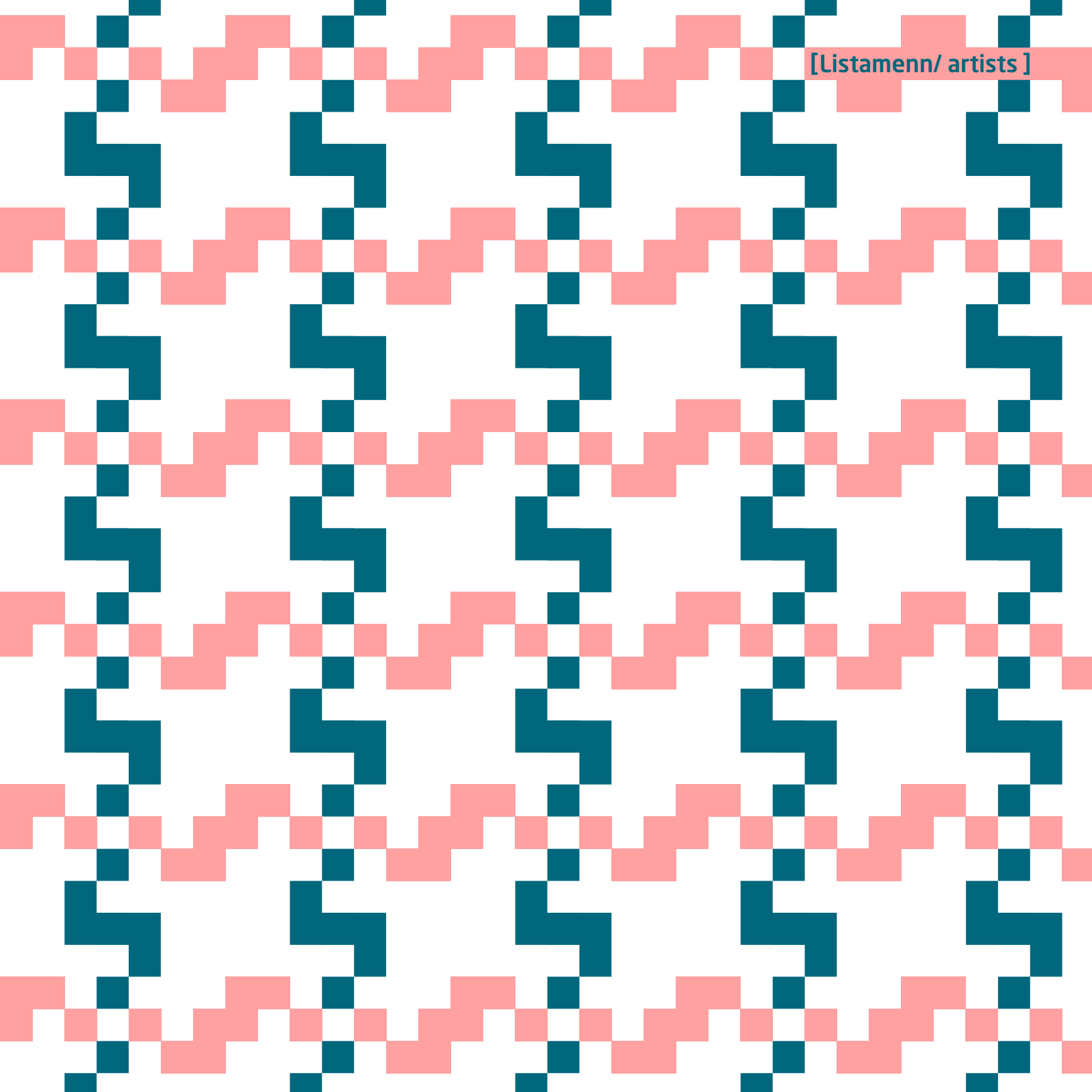
Needless to say, if you take the path of a loving conflict, you are asking for trouble. But at the same time, you are letting yourself act self-critically, reflectively and constructively. You are opening the door for the elements of sweet and sour surprises. You know, all those tiny, big or medium size things that make it worthwhile - no matter what it is that you seek or try to achieve.

Therefore, to answer the main question, Public Space, What is It Good For? I again need to take a side step. The question in its current form is a deliberate paraphrase of another question. And this question, known to most of us by the cruel 80's hit by the band Frankie Goes to Hollywood, has been asked: War, what is It Good For? And we all remember the answers we found. In my view, the correct one was: Absolutely nothing. But when linked back to the question of a public space, the answer, I am truly convinced, is the opposite.

Public space: What is it good for? Absolutely everything. It is everything, and it is anything, depending what we are able to make of it in the long, never-ending processes as situated and committed selves. Most importantly, it is really everything there is and ever will be. It is there for us to think about and feel who we are, where we are, with whom we are and how can we possibly participate in shaping and shaking these particular sites where we could co-exist more meaningfully, more fulfillingly, more pleasantly, and yes, not to forget, more beautifully.

Mika Hannula

[Listamenn/ artists]





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Education Iceland Academy of the Arts, B.A. Visual Art. 2006

Recent exhibitions Feel Free to Join Me. Gallerý Auga fyrir Auga. Reykjavík 2007.
Kynnir myndlist. Kirkjuhvoll. Akranes. 2006.
Hard Revolution. Potsdamer Platz. Berlin 2006.



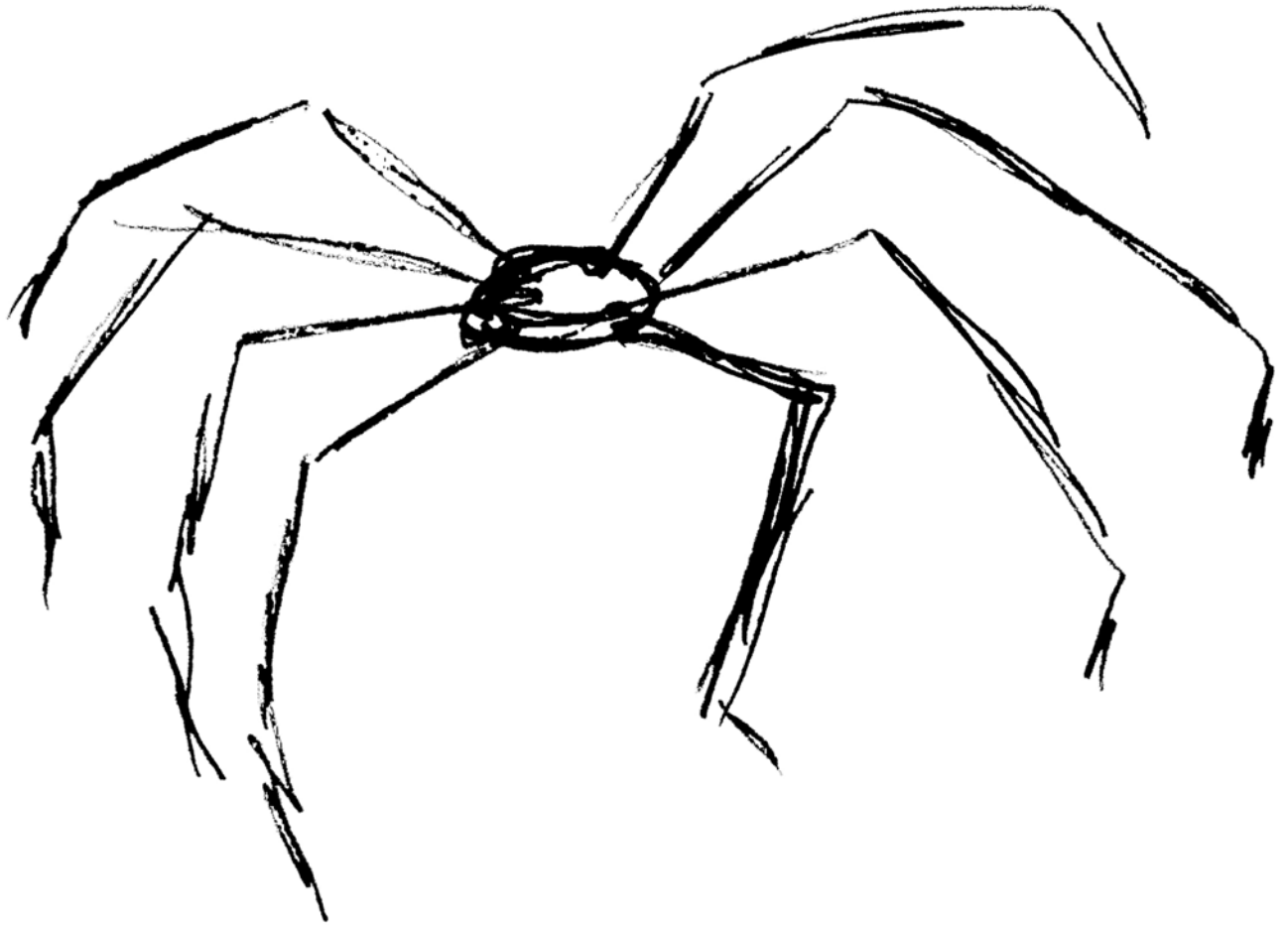
There is a rabbit hole in Reykjavík. There is a rabbit hole in one of the houses in the center of the city. The real and the unreal are put together as you make your way through the woods towards the entrance of a basement of a house. It is for you to enter and for you to view. It is located in a domestic area but when you take a closer look at it and compare it to its surroundings, it doesn't fit in. It has a notable character difference.

This reminds of the story of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, or by its original name Alice's Adventures Underground (1866), by Lewis Carroll. As she went down the rabbit hole and found a whole world to be explored. A world to be explored by her as she constantly changed sizes after drinking or eating peculiar things. As we measure our surroundings from ourselves, Alice's constantly changing sizes effected her experiences of the world around her. To be smaller than a mushroom or bigger than house give you a different world view. For Alice it made her confused and sometimes she doubted that she was her self.

When we experience things in different sizes than our prior knowledge tells us is right it can give us a different angle on what we are looking at or simply help us see better.

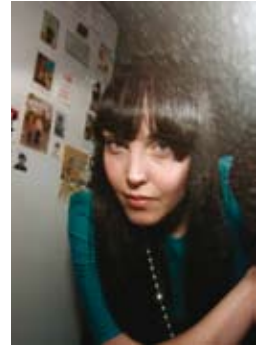
So what are we looking at? A big spider that has been puzzled together by a child, man or a giant? A space that doesn't really fit us? At least we can make a choice to take a look for ourselves and measure it by our own means. Whatever size we are.

I like the stories and the world that we can create in our minds and that is where my works come from. As I write my own walking out into the morning into the mixed world of it all while grabbing a coffee on my way to work.





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Recent exhibitions SJÖMÍLNA SKÓR, Listasalur Mosfellsbæjar, Heimilisfriðun ~ Household Reserve, Mosfellsbær. 2007.
AAA (expo-aaa.ch), Pórgata 6, Neuchatel/Swiss. 2006.
SEQUENCES (sequences.is), Don't you love me baby?, City Hall/ Reykjavík. 2006.

Malbik - Audience is everything, art is something, the artist doesn't matter.

GET YOUR MOTOR RUNNING, HEAD OUT ON THE HIGHWAY.

The word Malbik in Icelandic has a double meaning. It is the main construction material in the building of roads, called asphalt in English. Malbik is also a word for useless bullshit, something completely unnecessary. Malbik is a core material for creating an interactive net of connections that is important for the life in the city

All roads lead to Rome, was once said. Which brings me to the question of why roads would lead to Rome in the first place. I would say that the answer lies in something that Rome has to offer. In other words it's not the road but what it takes us to.

Which brings me to my interest in Malbik and the abundance of it in the city scape. The road, the car, the parking lot are all tools we use in life, tools which are of importance but are not the fundamental quality of the life we lead. That quality has to do with other people, be they friends, family or random strangers. The quality of space is always connected with the quality of life maintained in the space.

The city, the mall and the art museum all have in common that they are structures built around some function and part of society. The structure is successful when life chooses to grow in these structures and when they encourage life to grow even larger, larger than life, what ever larger means anyway. Without life these structures are nothing but shells, like the skin a snake has shed, which can be interesting in itself but only because of the life that used to occupy it. Like the ruins of Pompeii that I walked around last summer reminded of the life once lead there vs. the life of the tourist as archaeologist that had taken over the site.

Lets hope that the country, the city center or Kringlan never become just vague ruins or shells, left only in stories or stone, but remain structures that grow, expand and create new ways of living. For me there is no need for utopia, there is just need for flux and fluid structures. That can incorporate us all without assimilating us or sandpapering away our differences. Without differences there is no life, nature shows us that plainly with it's biodiversity-that it is our differences that maintain life.

As for Kringlan and downtown Reykjavík my initial feeling comes from a want to combine them but I mean that not in a physical way but more to introduce them to the best of each others traits. A mall is a form of a city and it has the potential to grow and to offer things that the public space of the a city center offers. It will never replace the first center but it can grow to be another option. The city on the other hand is place that you notice a big part of the Icelandic population doesn't use. You frequently hear complaints of the streets being to tight and no parking places available although there are numerous large parking houses in the city that have for a long time been used very little. Thankfully that is changing and a few of them are now crammed which gives the city incentive to build more. From my point of view parking lot houses increase the quality of life in the city. The less parking lots on the street the more space for nice urban areas. Some people complain that they don't know how to use these houses but still successfully use the parking houses of Kringlan or Smáralind a few times a month.

In most foreign cities there are very strict laws regarding building in the city center and it's near-environment and construction companies can not get away with just pouring asphalt over the surrounding areas and painting some white lines on it. They have to spend money in digging down for parking lots and they have a very clear responsibility to create a usable public space for the city's citizens.

I guess my point is that it isn't the amount of parking lots that increase that quality of life in one place or another but the quality of space and place and it's opportunities for human interactions. Those qualities inevitably increase the value of society which in the end will increase economic growth. As for solutions or ideas for public space I think they can only be of an organic structure. As an artist, architect, city planner, contractor, entrepreneur or city official all you can do is try. I don't believe that one person can create a total concept for society that will work from the start but I do believe that structures that are fluid and open can attract life and that life can start to build many substructures that can make the environment more habitable. No matter who starts or thinks of the original shell, whether it's a private or public project, if it is a space for people it is important to remember to leave space for people to make the space there own.



Art is often a free space although of course it has its limits. For me it is a vantage point from where to create small structures that are fluid and in a dialogue with what is around them. Suggestions of life that are life in its self. Whether it's with humor, distance, sensitivity, irony or mysticism. It can allow you to be an active member of society, especially when working with public space and all the problems it brings. Art can of course also be a safe haven or asylum for like minded people,

like sometimes happens in the gallery context. For me it comes from my responsibility as one of many members of society. It comes from my need to understand, my desire to deal with myself and the other, my longing for a dialogue, my belief in responsibility and my want to build bridges even if they might collapse. It is life, not the means or the way that plays centerfield.

LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE
AND WHAT EVER COMES OUR WAY

YEAH I GOT TO GO MAKE IT HAPPEN
TAKE THE WORLD IN A LOVE EMBRACE
FIRE ALL OF YOUR GUNS AT ONCE AND
EXPLODE INTO SPACE

p.s. This is a little glimpse of the place where my work comes from.



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Education Iceland Academy of the Arts, B.A. Visual Arts. 2006
Universität der Künste Berlin, dept. of Fine Arts. 2005

Recent exhibitions Musraramix 7, Musrara Gallery, Jerusalem. 2007
Bridge in a Bag, Skaftfell, Seyðisfjörður. 2007
Hard Revolution, Bahnhof Potsdamer Platz, Berlin. 2006



Vo vo vol vo

I am a part of society's many layers and different systems. They stretch out into the bigger picture and somehow my daily actions and habits are connected to the habits of others, and they become patterns. We have things in common and there are also things we don't like about each other. We're turning on the same axis and we share the same North- and South Poles. One system I am a part of is the car, it is my bridge in a bag, it is what transports mountains in boxes and it developed almost like a natural phenomenon in my life, almost in sync with puberty came my car. Those things which you go into, rather than deciding to become a part of, are often the ones that become your biggest rub-wounds. It feels so great but the skin on my heals is sore and bleeding.

Natural phenomena are concepts in the world, they are places and we understand them through our immediate environment perhaps better than the actual place or wonder itself. I don't understand the North Pole for what it is in reality. It surely doesn't feel close to Reykjavik or the region I live in but it still is a place and it means something. Now in times of global warming this ice bridge up north seems like it's going to open up loads of troubled water for us to sail into. To begin with we'll plan the building of new harbours and start transporting a bit of oil to Japan. After all there are positive things about disasters: they can open up new markets. Breaking the ice (cap) opens the way for new connections and relationships while shattering something fundamental.

The car which I'm rolling in underlines my participation in the world regarding this dilemma. Driving a car is about going places and getting things done, but it's also, at least for me, makes me lose the feeling of distance. I have to think about the car when I'm thinking about public spaces and places like the north pole. What does it mean when there is no North Pole?
In an abandoned farmhouse in West-Iceland I found the North Pole in the corner of two walls. Humidity and rain

slowly breaking the fortress of a house down is nothing unusual but it still is special to see modern history disappearing and the infrastructure of today breaking down.

The robot Polar bears are on display in Kringlan every year before Christmas. They're hanging out on their paper-mache iceberg, floating through the streams of shoppers, moving slowly but going nowhere. When I park my car in the lot outside and whisk myself in to buy something, they're there, no longer my childhood fantasy of far-away places, but as bitter-sweet reminders of the state of things. I roll on. Cities and public spaces, whatever their ownership is, are forums that change and break apart, and build up again most of the times. Public spaces change and they need to change, cause we keep dying and new people keep being born. Things keep being made and things constantly disappear. A map of the North Pole for free. If the North Pole disappears it's not just one more house in a unpractical part of a country breaking down, but something fundamental. It is a region and a source of ideas. I can only understand the world from where I am located whether I am at Kringlan tickling robots, downtown by the harbour hoisting up a flag or somewhere else, perhaps even speeding.

Our public spaces are like the North Pole even if they are concepts constructed by us they evolve to be fundamental. Addressing the issues that come up regarding them is not about finding someone to blame but maybe about putting ourselves into the equation.

I like to wonder about which one will be the first one to go, me, my car or the North Pole.





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Art History, University of Lund, Sweden.

Recent exhibitions Bra Konst, Vikingsbergs Konsthall, Helsingborg/Sweden. 2007
Galleri Rotor, Göteborg/ Sweden. 2007.
2nd Moscow Biennale, Matter & Memory Exhibition. Moscow. 2007



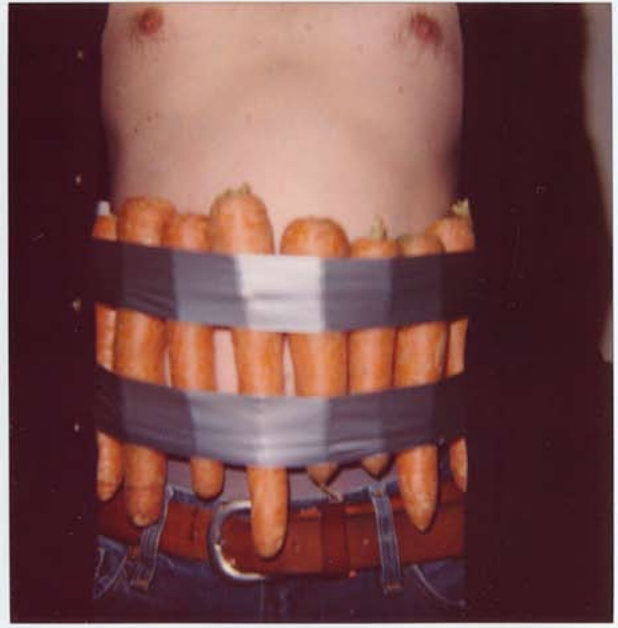
For several years now, I've been returning to a piece I call "Bunny Project", wherein I use the huge metaphoric potential of the rabbit. In 2005 I started putting carrots out on golf-courses. This is a quite obviously symbolic gesture. An encouragement for the rabbits to continue their underground networking, digging tunnels that undermine dominating hierarchies. Golf, in this case, being symbolic with upper class entertainment, and thereby oppression. The golf-course is basically nature made obedient and impotent. Nature tamed and made to entertain. The double nature of the rabbit has been a great advantage in my project. The rabbit could be called a cute virus. It has a very harmless appearance, but beneath this cuddly surface lays potential disaster. This is something that British land owners in Australia during the nineteenth century got to know, when they introduced the animal on their grounds for hunting purposes. A handful of specimens reproduced themselves into a land-wide pest within a couple of years.

In 2006 I worked with a series of bombs constructed of carrots. Obviously harmless, but still mimicking the equipment of terrorists, they kept the double nature of the rabbit even though the encouragement now had become the actual threat, and the rabbits were nowhere to be seen. The most recent version of these bombs was made as an installation at the big underground square beneath, amongst others, the Sony Center and the Daimler Chrysler building at Potsdamer Platz, Berlin. I placed carrot bombs on all supporting pillars, putting the whole economic centre of Berlin at risk.

Above I proposed an analogy between the rabbit and a virus, and I am quite interested in the idea of the vi-

rus. A virus is not a whole organism without its host. It cannot reproduce outside the host. By hijacking the systems of the host, it is able to spread. The virus enters a cell and forces it to start producing more of the virus. It may then use the hosts movements and connections to spread beyond to other hosts. This is, I believe, the only probable way to change a system. To work within the system, turning it against it self. Making small, small changes, hoping that in the long run the changes will be so many that something new will emerge. Not as a revolution, but as a slow, gradual morph. This is where art comes in. As small scale contaminations. There are two general ways to work, and I guess there's a time and place for both directions. One is of course actual confrontation, where the art piece it self is a direct interaction with some significant aspect of the society. By it self, resulting in however minor a change. The other (which tends to be my way) is symbolic confrontation, where the art piece illustrates a possible line of action, highlighting something in urgent need of change, hoping that it will plant a seed of thought in the audience. Something that could grow on another level from the piece itself.

Visiting Kringlan (and Reykjavik) for the first time, it was quite clear to me that the topic of my work had to be consumption. The western countries are consuming the resources of the earth faster than you can say SUV these days, and we are all in one way or another playing along in this game. At a place like Kringlan this becomes clearer than ever, and when we as artists choose to collaborate with such an institution our own position is not at all simple. This is the starting point for my work.





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Education The Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. MFA. 2001-2007
Malmö Art Academy. Exchange. 2003-2005

Recent exhibitions Suomen 25 parasta taiteilijaa, Mäntän Kuvataideviikot. Mänttä. 2007
I could have told you that, coll. with J. Laatikainen FaFa Gallery. Helsinki. 2007
Make Your own shadow, Hoden Gallery. Manchester. 2006

101 Reykjavik, Kringlan and me

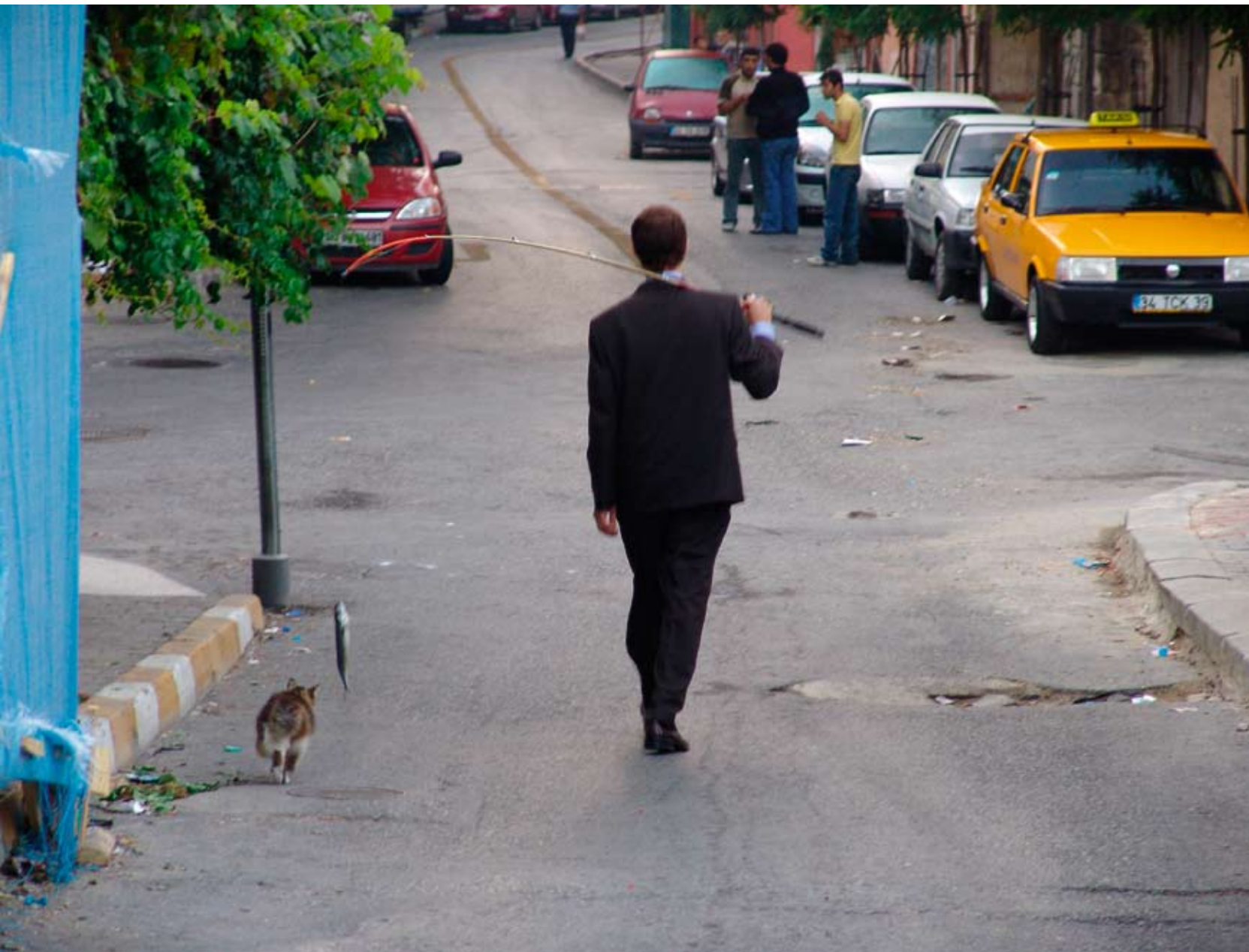
Before coming to Iceland I probably had all the same preconceptions about the country everyone else. That it has unique nature, high living standards and that Reykjavik is a picturesque town. Some friends had even warned me that the city is surrounded by emptiness. I imagined a sharp border between nature and the city. Like an island surrounded by a desert. When I arrived at Keflavik airport late in the evening, the sun had gone down and my first impressions were of the darkness and an occasional light here and there. The amount of lights increased as the bus approached the city. At one point there was a sea of lights that reached deep down towards the horizon. It opened up a scene that I had not been expecting. I suddenly felt like I was arriving in a metropolis.

As I awoke the next morning to see the city for the first time in daylight, the scenery from the night before was quickly erased. The city centre was a lot smaller than I had imagined. Laugavegur was apparently the downtown. What I experienced did not feel like a city with a population of almost 200 000. I seriously thought that it would be bigger. It wasn't until I went to the top of the church tower that I realized the actual scale of the city. It occurred to me that the city was not so much like an island in the midst of a desert but rather a widespread web of suburbs and highways that dissolve and intertwine into the surrounding wilderness. The suburbs were the city and the centre itself was merely a relic of something already forgotten.

Kringlan is located 4 kilometres from the old downtown, it is marketed as the new city centre, and perhaps, rightly so. The visitor numbers indicate that one third of the Icelandic population visits Kringlan weekly. It is an interesting to wonder whether a mall

can be the city centre of a capital. What does this tell us about the nation? Maybe nothing more than the fact that it's cold in Iceland: it's more comfortable to drive a car and shop inside instead of walking on windy streets. Still I wouldn't imagine Kringlan being the first stop locals would take their foreign visitors for sightseeing. Compared to the other parts of Reykjavik Kringlan is a place with no specific identity. It is a concrete complex designed to serve our commercial needs. It could be anywhere in the world and something exactly like it probably exists everywhere else in the world.

What generally fascinates in different cities is their soul. It can be an idea of some kind of originality or a feeling that only exists in a certain place. I'm interested in trying to catch a certain idea of the site. For Midbaugur og Kringlan I'm thinking about creating two halves that together create a whole. Something that connects the mall with the 101 area, and vice versa. My art often deals with situations that create a subjective encountering with one-self. It could be something that happened to me during the process or a more directly created moment for the viewer to experience. Even though I also create work for gallery spaces I find that making art in and for public spaces is very productive. To work in new surroundings always pushes me in a direction that I could not have foreseen. Eventually it makes me do things I would never otherwise have ended up doing. As much as this kind of practice is refreshing it is also scary; to jump blindly into a project when one has no idea of the outcome.





Juha Laatikainen [*1978, Finland]
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Education Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Media Studies, Master of Fine Arts. 2007

Recent exhibitions I Could have told you that. FaFa Gallery, Helsinki/ Finland. 2007
Hard Revolution, Potsdamerplatz, Berlin/ Germany. 2006
Test Department nr.1, Bak, Utrecht/ Holland. 2005

My torment is my glory.

At some point in my life where I realized that the reality I enjoy is not accessible in an existing reality, I decided to stage my own.

Jump on the train and meet someone who knows you better than you do.

It was some time between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. when she got the phone call from someone. I don't know what that person told her, I don't even know her, but the moment she dashed out of the house, made it harder for me to believe that she had dreamed my dreams, or that my face looks great. -Really. -Sort of.

Bright daylight fills up this apartment through the white curtains. My ambiguous feelings for these curtains are evident. If they stubbornly keep up with the realism, no one will be able to testify that something boozy and sexual happened. The evidence can be followed by a trail from the door to the bedside, beer bottles, dress, fallen ashtray, ash, pantyhose, and cigarette butts, a bra, an open purse, stuff from the purse and women's underwear.

Then the flip side of the coin is that if those curtains keep their position no one will be able to see me naked on my knees, hands and legs chained together pushing my face sideways against the linen. Smut lurking in my soul is brought back by a pulsating sensation of stabs, bangs and cramps from bruises on my pale white legs covered with a spectrum of colours revealing an illness. It seems that this bed is fencing me in and keeping me from the world. The only thing moving is an alarm clock, turning to 9 a.m.

I kind of lost track of time when the phone rang again and again. Numbers kind of blurred from 2 a.m. to 9 a.m. on the alarm clock. In dreams are the seeds of irresponsibility. Maybe it was the call from someone waiting for her outside of the house or from a hospital saying that her mom had died or maybe it was my father asking if I am happy, they must be a hallucination or a dream, but that

was not as relevant as the fact that her eyes were lying, which made me sick from a disappointment or maybe a bit from the dehydration.

I can't tell the exact time when I felt it, the sensation that she could just leave me there to dry. I don't know if I pissed the bed from being afraid of the fact that she could be that cruel or from sexual excitement, but here I am tied up, drinking my own urine in the bed of someone totally weird and I'm thinking that I could be chasing her all around the place naked calling her like a wild cat or something as stupid as that.

We could go out and people would not stare at me strangely anymore, cause I would be your boyfriend. Most of the time we would be in your home fucking the living shit out of each other. Happiness would shine above us making rainbows in the rainy sky of Reykjavik. People would adore us. I would start wearing something like a funny badge saying: "dreams are a drag" and finally your slightly weird but cultivated friends dressed up too neon to stay out of the picture, would greet me in the streets. We would start meeting other couples and soon we would be too smart, too good looking, too trendy, my acne would have gone after twenty years of indecent invasion and from time to time we would think that cultivating your legitimate strangeness is the best way to describe our social life, we would live the pop life, we would talk hours on end about how leather sofas smell. Some day you would say that people aren't people and I would laugh and chase you again around the house naked.

That thought is of course kind of depressing, while lying in my own urine, realizing that the only thing I would tell her if she would returned is: "Shut up. I am dreaming", and we would both agree, that my torment is my glory.

I was planning to do some project as well. Right now I am too busy dreaming, to tell you.





Lasse Ernlund Lorentzen [+1974, Denmark]
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Education University of California San Diego, Visual Arts MFA Program. 2007-2008
The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art. 2001-

Recent exhibitions Deadpan Exchangell, Performance, super bien. Berlin-Basel. 2007
Blackberrying Photography, Galleri Christina Wilson. Copenhagen. 2007
"The Danish Friend - Just another love story", New Ebbesen, Copenhagen. 2007



What is a catalogue?

Why do visual artists make catalogues and what is the purpose of them?

Of course we want a collective memory of what we have done, but this representation is often impossible because the catalogue is made for the opening of a show, which is not yet realized! Then it gets another function, not as a documentation of the exhibition it is made for, but former exhibitions or projects that have been realized.

The publication becomes a sort of process-oriented biography of the artist, a sketchpad for our ideas and practice in past, present and future projects or an answer to the questions What is to be done or what are we doing? This leads me to the theme of this publication of artists' preconceptions and first impressions of Reykjavik and Iceland! It is impossible to answer properly because any answer depends on my selective and non-historical/linear memory... But I did have one impression that I do remember quite clearly... In Iceland I felt like I was in a constant semi existential state of mind. Maybe it was just my personal situation and the fact that I had just left from my first solo exhibition The Danish Friend - Just Another Love Story in Copenhagen? My preconceptions was that Iceland was completely Americanized and everybody where driving their own SUV. It seemed, however, that the people living there weren't in as bad a condition as I thought. It was as if the Icelanders adopted the American lifestyle but still had their own life. The nationalistic vibe seemed quite strong, though, and shocking to me. I did get a little closer to understanding this when I visited The Golden Plover Has Arrived and saw the secret weapon at the Biennale in Venice.

When I flew in to Iceland the first time I noticed some houses looked like, monopoly model houses, as if they really didn't belong there. I guess it was the former U.S army base? What is it going to be used for, are you really interested in having the Danish navy or any sort of Danish authority present for security, economical or political benefits?

For me it seems strange, but at the same time obvious, that it is a possibility to take political advantage of the your status as a former Danish colony and the bad conscience of Danes as suppressing colonizers! Somehow I can't stop think of the national representations at the 52nd Venice Biennale it seems as if the function is to keep us as artists categorized as national symbols of free thinkers or critical researchers... But we as artists also categorize each other by nationality linked to the pavilion, or which opening party we went to and everything is kept in order! I choose to show you the Trojan horse and the demolition of it because it was made in co-operation as a site-specific installation with an insiders view. In this case I am an outsider working by myself among fairies, consumerism and trend spotting in Reykjavik and Iceland. To answer the original question, maybe we forget who and where we are if we don't make these catalogues. Maybe nobody would notice us, or the works we do! Which leads me to the last question, what is an artist?





Linda Nora Rogn [⁺1980, Norway]
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Education Bergen National Academy of the Arts. MFA. 2005 - 2007
University of Reading, BFA with Art History. BFA. 2001-04

Recent exhibitions UNIT 8, Invented Communities, Reading UK. 2007
Kunsthall, Artism. Bergen. 2007
Hard Revolution, Bahnhof Potsdamer Platz. Berlin. 2006.



I work with video, mostly as installations. The observer has an importance. Immediately as the observer enters the works a connection between her/him and the video is forged. An interactive connection triggers the relationship between them. What I find interesting in the usage of interactive mediums in combinations with old technology, is the aspect of a subversive line between found and lost, old and new, and, most of all, fact and fiction.

One of the issues that I address in my work is the fishing industry and how it is no longer visible for tourists and inhabitants of Iceland. The fish market on the harbour down town has been demolished and now new buildings and high-rises are taking its place. I have questions directed towards the young Icelanders, and what their relationship to this industry is now, compared to that of young people 30 years ago.

The second issue came when visiting Kringlan the shopping mall, where I met the sub-culture of the small capital, a culture with strong resemblance to any big city in general. Without having in mind that this is how "it is" but rather pointing the finger towards "how can I in a small scale way draw attention to the usage of the downtown area as "a hanging out place" for young people? The art Movie, and the connection between the two venues: Kringlan vs. Downtown. The red thread and the bandits who untied it. In Kringla, A poster stands alone, in an overflowed place of information and dense human traffic. On the poster is a message camouflaged as an advertisement for a movie shown in a walk in cinema downtown Reykjavik.

The space downtown.

This work is made together with Anna Lind Sævarsdóttir, a creative collaboration of a platform and a show case, a venue spot where we are drawing attention to the issues concerning the borders between public and private spaces: The communal "hang out place" for public lounging. The entrance of the Rabbit Hole: a park and a green alleyway to lead the observer into "a walk in Cinema" built as a Rabbit Trap. The alleyway is dressed in fake grass, a fairytale forest, the rabbit trap that led Alice in wonderland. To draw attention to the venue there will be, during the two fist weeks of the show, small screenings on buildings close to the alleyway.

The private basement of Dwarf Gallery, The Cinema. Alice in wonderland; The work inside the basement space is two video's by Linda Rogn and Anna Lind Sævarsdóttir. The themes in the films have different elements, but both based on the same idea "the rabbit trap" the element of surprise when going into the "hole" is the ground force in the structure. The fake grass and the make believe forest are the main ingredients in the video works, when being shown together with the Americanization of Alice in Wonderland. Questions drawn to attention with this installation are: When is something private? What is a gallery when it also is a park? What does a park represent? Who uses a galley space when it is dressed up as a small park, and is more a small lounging area, with a public cinema? A place where you can sit outside and inside at leisure. What will this park do to Downtown Reykjavik in the summer?





Pilvi Takala [*1981, Finland]
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Education Finnish Academy of Fine arts. MFA. 2006

Recent exhibitions Between Sharing and Caring, Nantes, France and FaFa gallery, Helsinki. 2007
In Search of the Miraculous 5th Triennial of Finnish art, Kunstahalle, Helsinki. 2007
9. Istanbul Biennial. Istanbul. 2005



I pretty much expected Iceland to be one of the weirdest places on earth, which it for sure is when you stand in the middle of a lava field next to a natural fart-smelling spring. On the other hand when you step inside Kringlan, you suddenly enter the universal space of a shopping mall, which looks exactly like everywhere else. It is a challenge to try to work in a space like that but that's exactly why we have to try. When longing for the white cube where art looks like art, I think of how limiting it is to only have intellectual art audience coming to see your work.

In Kringlan we have the brilliant opportunity to work with the system from within. Having created an independent action in a mall last year for our show in Berlin. Kringlan offers up a new interesting challenge. Strategy is the main question here. How to use this opportunity in a clever way and how to reach this non-art-shopping audience in an interesting way.

For me it is always important to remember what I stand for as an artist and what that means. As a participant in a society I try to be somewhere in between entertainment and sociology. When it comes to clear political issues, I'd rather not use art to address them. I wouldn't try to illustrate a clear opinion about something with art, but rather make something, which is somehow unclear to myself as well. I'm concentrating on things that don't have a solution, but still bringing up questions and feelings.

I use a kind of unprofessional sociological analysis of a certain situation to build an entertaining narrative. By entertaining I mean something that makes viewers personally relate with the issues I want to bring to light. Something that makes the viewer pay attention to something they wouldn't otherwise think is important. To point out those kinds of issues in a scientific text would be unnecessary and it wouldn't interest anybody. I'm concentrating on things that seem rather self-evident

and actually appear in real life in interesting ways. My theory is that with art I can make specific (even site specific) examples expand and become universal through the viewers interpretation in a very different way from an already universal statement.

In Kringlan I was really interested in the possibility of organizing actions that the public would not know of. If the people in charge of the peaceful institution would help me make something unusual happen, the public would only have their eyes to question what is happening around them.

My favorite place in the mall is of course the ice cream bar, which is really enticing. It has everything you wish for behind glass and you have to take a number, queue up and then pay to have a piece of it. My ultimate fantasy would be to get free access and be able to taste everything. Then I thought of the old people in public space, how they can get away with being a little silly without anyone interfering because they are not little children. I therefore want an old lady to play out my fantasies. She would seem to be invisible because she would be totally ignored by the young staff. She would just come once a day, walk in from the back door and start tasting the ice creams. She would be an exception to rules, a ghost living out a true fantasy.

I had imagined bringing someone in to grill sheep heads at the mall to give it an Icelandic feeling because I feel it's too multinational. I was also quite interested in the gift-wrapping table, which seemed to be used a lot and which could be used as a strategy to distribute ideas. A gift-wrap that would look almost normal could for sure travel undercover to innocent peoples homes carrying a message that wouldn't be seen until it's too late to stop it spreading.





Stine Marie Jacobsen [*1977, Denmark]
[m: skrigeren@gmail.com]

Education CalArts. Los Angeles. BFA. 2006-07
The Royal Danish Art Academy Copenhagen. 2003-

Recent exhibitions Action Speaks Louder, DameUlove. Copenhagen. 2007
Deadpan Exchange, Greenhouse for Contemporary Art. Berlin. 2007
29025 Eveningside Dr. House Project. Los Angeles. 2007



My work ranges from film to photography and drawing. I depict aspects of humanity as staged settings where subjectivity or social convention are put on trial. I invite people that are not associated with the art scene to participate in my art. I prefer honest acting in controlled environments. My methods derive from and are a reference to performance art, but I always seek to incorporate humor into my works to be able to deal with hard issues like media, femininity, social interaction and to comment on art history.

I have exhibited in the USA, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Hong Kong, Mongolia and will be exhibiting in the USA, Denmark and Austria this year. I currently live and work in Los Angeles, California, and will be receiving my MFA from The Royal Danish Art Academy in 2009.

Midbaugur and Kringlan have a very different character. I talked with a lot of people in Kringlan and asked them why they liked Kringlan. Nobody had an answer for that question. It seemed that it has become a necessity, a practicality, that nobody needs to have an opinion on anymore. When I asked them what they didn't like about Kringlan, a lot of them mentioned the bad air. I thought this was very true noticing that there are no windows or open areas so that one can enjoy the amazing nature sights around the space. Besides actually breaking a hole in the wall of Kringlan (which would have been great!) I did not know what to do.

I then came to think about behavioural conventions existing in all public spaces and got interested in using the clothes that are being sold at Kringlan in a different context. I started reading about licking and sensory integration in autism and found this very interesting as a source of inspiration. I wanted to create a space where the anti-social and a pro-social would blend together to create a sphere of alienation.

In general Iceland makes me think of history writing. Søren Thilo Funder and I both find the Icelandic sagas particularly interesting. We are interested in the conditional field where conceptual art meets the public and we find the structure of the sagas very suitable for a project. Sagas are a mixture of fictitious and real events that survived through oral tradition for a long time before they were written in down. We still live in a world filled with sagas, especially in the art world.





Søren Thilo Funder [*1979, Denmark]
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Education The Danish Royal Academy of Fine Arts. MFA. 2008
The University of Illinois at Chicago, Dpt. Art and Architecture. 2007

Recent exhibitions 29025 Eveningside Dr. - Val Verde, Los Angeles/ USA. 2007
Untitled, Home Base, Tokyo/ Japan. 2006
Alt.Cph - Copenhagen/ Denmark. 2006

My work revolves around a dystopian vision of contemporary society; of human beings kept in repetitive disciplinary patterns, confining physical and psychological spaces, manufactured realities shaped by fear and restriction. Situating performing characters in this vision, I explore the feelings of alienation, solitude and melancholia that modern day society produces.

By sampling appropriated materials from commercial media, directing performative scenarios and through physical performances, I explore the personal realm and its position in the social sphere. The work points at existing structures and by reversing these, re-enacting them and dissecting them, I seek to shed light on the hidden agendas and origins of such structures. The uncanny feeling of the spaces created by the works, speaks of an ubiquitous shadow realm, a flip side, constantly lurking behind the gestures; there is a certain loss of natural behaviour; the body seems detached from the surrounding world; time is fixated in repeating loops; the gestures seems deprived of consequence and emotion. Using an often-autobiographical investigation and public interventions, the disclosures, accesses, dead ends and failures, map out a twisted and unsettling world.

My preconceptions about Iceland revolved a lot around the meeting between raw, unspoiled nature and the „investors“ seeking to exploit this natural force, the economic boom as a motor of the transformation of Iceland into a gigantic conference-centre with a most luxurious spa. Iceland seemed also to be the pure Scandinavian exotic stereotype and the cold

beauty of the Icelandic people and their connection to the nature forces, seemed to be the ideal poster child of Scandinavian products. There is a very interesting friction between these two, the rawest elements of nature and the neo-capitalist adventure.

In the mall, what first comes to mind is the curious fact that entering through the revolving glass doors, you step into a place that could be anywhere in the world. As an artist I immediately ask myself; at what prize does one engage in the language of this consumerist non-space?

I am interested in working with the mall at night and in collaboration with the youngsters that spend most of their time in this place. I want to approach the space, when it is not serving its function as a place for consumerism and maybe approach a moment where the space belongs to the people in it and not the people belonging to the place.





Etienne de France [*1984, France]
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Education

Iceland Academy of the Arts, BA Visual Arts. 2005-2008
Bachelor in Art History, University of Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne, Paris. 2005 - 2002

Recent exhibitions

Life sucks : Utopia and last blah-blah before you go, ASÍ Art Museum, Reykjavik. 2007
Publishing of Dance , novels and poetry, l'Harmattan, Paris. 2005
Abstract Landscapes, photographs and A Whale on the Sky. Sweden. 2004



The plan of Reykjavik is quite reminiscent of some american grids, areas where cars rules the inner flow of the city. Distances, the absence of a subway, or railway system and the organization of the diverse shopping zones all serve to reduce the interest in having long, non-itinerative walks.

One should also note the climate factor that influences the transport system and the commuting habits: we can compare Reykjavik with other northern towns like Rovaniemi in Finland.

However, these two cities are not quite so deprived that they lack a precious « downtown area ». This « downtown area » contains, in a small zone, some of the characteristics of a classical european city such as Copenhagen, Paris, Vienna or Barcelona. The prospect of walking and wandering may appear limited in Reykjavik, but the « flaneur » idea or the more recent concept of « derive » can be found in some specials areas, for example behind Hallgrimkirkja. Public and private spaces are rarely connected there, only few locations highlight those transtions-spaces, where the person can enjoy a random walk, allowing a different sensation of time, thinking, meeting, imagination and surprises. If we call those spaces « passages » without a direct reference to Walter Benjamin's definition, we would see that these are small spaces that contain and tell stories that imagination and dreams may transform in history.

I choose to work with the passage located besides and in between the Austurbaejar school buildings, I would like to tell the story that happened there a few decades ago. This could be explained as playing with reality, and the impact of a story on collective memories for both Icelanders and tourists that will perhaps walk through this space, There is also a need to play with the tourism strategies, by distorting reality in order to work against the lack of discovery or curiosity that is part and parcel of an ordinary guided tour. Putting up an information sign, telling of a fact that happened or not gives the space another character, another color.

Inspired by a film-noir atmosphere, I will relate the tale that one day in the cold winter of 1944 an unexcepted and secret meeting took place in this passage, that over the years has slowly been forgotten.





Margit Säde [*1984, Estonia]
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Education Estonian Academy of Arts, Art History and Theory, 2005-2008
Iceland Academy of the Arts, Visual Art, 2006-2007.

Recent exhibitions A Fog With Some Blue Sky, Dionysia, Djúpavík, Strandir/ Iceland. 2007.
MonuMental NiceNess, sound installation in Perlan, Reykjavik. 2007
Recycling Museums, coll. with Grant Watkins (SE), Gallery Aatrium, Tallinn/ Estonia. 2006

Monumental Touch

Experience The Multifunctional Sculpture Garden of Einar Jónsson (Eiriksgata, 101 Reykjavík)

It all started in the night when I and couple of my acquaintances climbed over the fence to enter the garden of the great Icelandic sculptor Einar Jónsson. Of course I had heard of him before, though in that moment I couldn't remember what I had heard. All I knew was that I passed this place everyday and the fence seemed so monumental and off-putting that I never actually took the time to see what was behind it. Just before we reached the garden, Maggi - a schoolmate of mine had a influential story to tell about the knees of one of the sculptures. As he works in the bookstore Mál & Menning, he meets lot of people, both people very fond of sculptures and others not so crazy about these old carvings that no one knows how to look at. Anyway, the woman who was indeed very fond of sculptures insisted showing Maggi the picture of knees she daily worships. After climbing the fence me and Mr. Silla decided to find the precious knees that had this certain kind of magic power over the woman.

While going through all the sculptures, and almost all of them had a pair of knees, we discussed the importance of touching and caressing monuments and sculptures generally. Isn't this the best way to understand how the sculpture is made and what it stands for?

After a while we agreed that old-school sculptures are rather unnecessary and out of place when you are not allowed to touch them, use them as shelter, hide behind them or even urinate behind them if there isn't a better solution to the problem. Touching the knees finally opened our eyes to the sculptures, the delicacy and smoothness of the material and the craft involved. On my way home I asked myself - Aren't sculpture gardens ornamental grounds laid out for public enjoyment and recreation? Indeed they are.

A few days later I returned to the garden, this time during the daytime. I was happy to see, that the garden was in use - 4 young boys were playing a contemporary version of hide and seek, a wargame. Everybody who has been in the garden can understand that it offers up a perfect stage for wargames. You can hide behind the sculptures and lean on them while shooting the enemy. I suddenly remembered why the high fence was built around the garden in the first place, the artist didn't like the running and playing children to be in a serious place like that. Even if the guns were made of plastic they looked very serious to me and I had a feeling Einar Jónsson would not have liked it. I bet he could never have imagined someone touching the knees of his creations either. Nevertheless, all of these unforgettable events were happening in his sculpture garden, the ornamental ground laid out for public enjoyment and recreation. Indeed.

In a way the enthusiasm of the boys reminded me of myself with Mr. Silla, running and touching the curious knees. By the way, the ones we thought were the ones the woman worshipped were not „the ones“. We found our own.

I guess I am trying to say that however much time, thought and logic is involved in planning a public space it will to some extent always be a failure. People will always find their own ways to use the space and experience the site according to their definitions of enjoyment and recreation. Isn't it just our nature to climb the secret fences and discover the multifunctions of sculpture parks?

Yes, and as long there are still some places without surveillance cameras we can act true to our nature.



Sitthvað um listrýmið

Það er dálítið sérstakt að ganga um sýningarsali listasafna og sjá þar ýmskonar skurðgoð, krossfestingamyndir og altarisstöflur sem í eina tíð gegndu mikilvægu hlutverki í trúarlegum ritúólum þar sem fólk deildi með þeim sorgum og eftirsjám, ákallaði þessar ímyndir og leitaði huggunar í gegnum þær. Í þessum hlutlausu sýningarsölum hafa slíkar ímyndir ekki sömu samfélagslegu virkni. Það þætti allavega einkennilegt ef sýningargestir í Metropolitan eða Louvre safninu tækju upp á að fara niður á skeljarnar undir einhverri kristsmynd frá endurreisnartímanum, spenna greipar og byrja grátklökkir að þylja bænin. Slíkt hátterni er óviðeigandi í sýningarsölum listasafna en er sjálfsagt í hofi eða kirkju þar sem svona ímyndir hafa jafnan átt heima. En með tilfæringu frá einum stað til annars hafa þessar ímyndir hlotið nýtt samfélagslegt hlutverk sem er undirstrikað með skilgreiningu þess rýmis sem umlykur þær.

Hið hlutlausu listrými safna og gallería er sniðið fyrir listaverk. Þau eru afsprengi kantískrar hugmyndarfræði og eru nokkurskonar frírými þar sem listin er til sýnis á eigin forsendum. Með öðrum orðum að þá er listin undir verndarvæng rýmisins og ber gestum að haga sér í samræmi við það. Málið horfir hins vegar öðruvísi þegar listamaður stígur út fyrir listrýmið og hyggst vinna í almenningsrými (public space) eða atburðarrými (event space). List í almenningsrými verður óumflýjanlega hluti af þeirri atburðarrás sem skilgreinir rýmið en um leið kann hún að varpa nýju ljósi á atburðarrásina og þá vonandi bæta rýmið frá því sem fyrir var. Þ.e. ef hún á í þannig samræðum við það.

Hollendingar stæra sig af því að eiga flest listaverk í almenningsrými í heiminum miðað við ferkílómetra af landi. Mikið til eru þetta formalísk verk sem standa við vegakanta og hef ég ósjaldan velt því fyrir mér hversvegna hinum eða þessum staur eða stálkubbi hafi verið komið fyrir á grasbletti sem hefði betur fengið að standa óhreyfður í landi sem ósnert náttúra er nærri horfin. Eftir sex ára dvöl í Hollandi hafði ég þróað með mér megnustu óbeita á slíkum skúlptúrum, þ.á.m. á formskúlptúrum bandaríkjamannsins Davids Smith. Þegar ég síðan heimsótti New York borg varð einn vel fægður formskúlptúr eftir Smith á vegi mínum og hóf ég undireins að éta ofan í mig allt slæmt sem ég hafði sagt og hugsað um verk hans, því hér stóð ég frammi fyrir listaverki sem átti í hörku samræðum við arkitónískt umhverfið. Það voru þá aldrei for-

malísku skúlptúrnarnir sem ég hafði svo mikla andstyggð á í Hollandi heldur var það ósamræmi þeirra við rýmið sem umlukti þá.

Listamaður sem ræðst í að gera listaverk í almennings eða -atburðarrými getur vart gengið út frá forskrift hins hlutlausu rýmis og hugsað sér að listin standi þar á eigin forsendum. Þegar Þýski listamaðurinn Joseph Beuys var beðinn um að gera verk í almenningsrými spurði hann sig jafnan að því hvers rýmið þarfnæðist. Í Kassel í Þýskalandi standa til að mynda 11000 tré sem hann lét planta á árunum 1982 - 1987 sem almenningslistaverk og var það svar hans eða viðbrögð við reikspúandi strompum stóriðjunnar í og við borgina. Beuys notaði þannig listina til að vekja almenning til meðvitundar um umhverfi sitt um leið og hann bætti það til muna.

Þýski heimspekingurinn Martin Heidegger hefur bent á að tilvistarlegur skilningur manneskju sé ekki inni í rými heldur er hann rúmtakið sjálft. Þ.e. að hann byggist á líkamanum sem/og rýminu sem umlykur hann. Kenningar Heideggers hafa haft mikil áhrif á nálgun listamanna á rýmið síðustu áratugi og ekki síst í viðhorfum þeirra til virkni rýmisins í tilvistarlegum skilningi. Gott dæmi er sagan af arkitektinum sem var beðinn um að lækka lofthæð í opinberu rými um einn metra og hannaði hann til þess hatta sem teygðu sig einn metra upp í loft sem gestum bar að setja á höfuð sitt og bera þegar þeir gengu um rýmið. Með slíkri athöfn áttu gestirnir að vera meðvitaðir um eigin líkama sem/og rýmið sem umlykti hann.

Heidegger gengur út frá því að rými sé í eðli sínu huglægt og eingöngu hægt að hugsa og skilgreina það út frá manneskjunni.

Þegar norskur listamaðurinn Öyvind Pål Farstad var fenginn til að vinna listaverk fyrir sýningu í Svolveg í Noregi árið 2006 var niðurstaða hans sú að skrifa og senda greinaröð í dálkinn "Innsendar greinar" í svæðisdagblaðið Lofotposten og skapa þannig umræðu um menningu og listir í þorpinu. Farstad valdi þetta dagblað sem almennings eða -atburðarrými fyrir listaverk sitt en lesendur Lofotposten höfðu þó engar forsendur til að ætla að greinar hans væru nokkuð annað en hefðbundið innsent efni, ekki frekar en þeir sem skrifuðu honum til móts eða til stuðnings gátu vitað að þeir væru virkir þátttakendur í almenningslistaverki, enda hefði listaverk Farstad ekki virkað sem skyldi ef forskriftin hefði verið gefin eins og í hlutlausu

rými. Öfugt við Kristsímyndir kirkjunnar, sem fá nýtt hlutverk, sagnfræðilegt og fagurfræðilegt, í hinu hlutlausu rými, fær sjálft rýmið nýtt hlutverk í höndum Farstads því hann breytir blaðinu í listrými. Og í sjálfu sér getur hvaða rými sem er orðið að listrými ef það er hugsað sem slíkt.

JBK Ransu

Pakkir til
Ólafs Gíslasonar
Halldórs Björns Runólfssonar
Jonathans Dronsfield

A Bit About Art Space

It is kind of special walking through the display rooms of an art museum and seeing various idols, crucifixions and altar tablets that in their time played important roles in religious rituals where people shared with them sorrow and regret, invoked these images and sought comfort through them. In impartial gallery spaces these kinds of images don't hold the same social function. It would seem odd, anyway, if a guest of the Metropolitan or the Louvre decided to fall to their knees under some Christian image from the Renaissance, clasp their hands and begin rattling off some maudlin prayer. Such behavior is unacceptable in museum galleries but is a matter of course in the temples or churches where these images were once housed. But with the movement from one place to another they've taken on a new societal role that is identified by the definition of the space that contains them.

The neutral show spaces of galleries and museums are designed for artwork. They are an offspring of Kantian philosophy and are in essence free zones where art is displayed for its own sake. In other words, art is under the protective arm of the space and guests are expected to behave themselves accordingly. The situation changes, however, when the artist steps out of the art space with the seeming intention of infiltrating public space or event space. Art in public space becomes an unavoidable part of the events that define that space while at the same time holding the potential to shine new light on those events, thus improving the space from what it was. If, that is, there is communication between the two.

The Dutch pride themselves in having the greatest number of artworks in public spaces in the world per square meter of land. Many of those pieces are formalist works that stand at the side of the road, and I've often asked myself why this or that post or steel cube has been plunked down on a stretch of grass better left untouched in a country that seems to lack quite a bit of virgin nature. After a six year stay in Holland I'd developed a refined repulsion toward these sculptures, including the form sculptures of American David Smith. When I later visited New York I ran across a famous sculpture after Smith and immediately began to eat all of my disparaging words and thoughts about his works, because here I stood before a piece of art that was in total communication with its architectural environment. It was not formalist sculptures

that I'd been so turned off by in Holland but their contradiction with the spaces that surrounded them.

The artist that chooses to place a work in a public or event space can hardly follow the formula of the neutral gallery space and assume that the art stands there for its own sake. If the German artist Joseph Beuys was asked to create a piece for a public space he always asked himself what the space needed. In Kassel in Germany are 11,000 trees that he had planted between 1982 and 1987 as a public artwork, which was his answer or reaction to the smoke-spewing industrial chimneys in and around the city. In that way Beuys used his art to awaken the general public to awareness of their environment while at the same time improving it immeasurably.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger points out that the existential human understanding is not within space but is content itself. That is, it builds on the body as/and the space that surrounds it. Heidegger's theories have had powerful impact on artists' understanding of space in the past decades and not least their perception of the use of space from an existential perspective. A good example is the story of the architect who was asked to lower the ceiling in a public space by one meter, and who designed a one meter high hat that guests were asked to wear in the space for that purpose. With this act the guests were to become more aware of their own bodies as/and the space that surrounded them.

Heidegger operates from the principle that space is in its nature subjective and as such is only possible to consider and define based on an individual perspective. When the Norwegian artist Öyvind Pål Farstad was asked to create a artwork for a show in Svolvær in Norway in 2006 he decided to write and send in a series of articles for the "submitted articles" section of the regional newspaper Lofotposten and in that way incite discussion on culture and art in the village. Farstad chose that newspaper as a public, or event, space for his artwork though the readers of Lofotposten had no way of knowing that his articles were anything other than regular submitted material, no more so than those who wrote in opposition or support could know that they were active participants in a public work of art. In fact, Farstad's work would not have succeeded as intended had the formula been

given beforehand as in the neutral gallery space. In contrast to the Christian images that gain a new role, historically and aesthetically, in the neutral space, the space itself gains a new role in Farstad's hands when he changes a newspaper into an art environment. And in actuality, any space at all can be an art space if it is considered in that way.

JBK Ransu

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Jonathan Dronsfield

{Translation: Maria Alva Roff}

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Miðbærinn og Kringlan

Peir sem hafa skipulag þéttbýlis með höndum ættu að hafa í huga að það sem skiptir mestu máli er fólk-ið sem býr á viðkomandi stað. Borg er í grundvallar-atríðum "svið" fyrir mjög fjölbreyttar athafnir manna og þetta þéttbýli ber óhjákvæmilega með sér sér-kenni, menningu og metnað þeirra sem ráða ferðinni í skipulagi og framkvæmdum. Skipulag borgarinnar mótast þetta "svið". Það hefur oft afgerandi áhrif á líf fólks og lífsgæði og getur m.a. auðvelað eða torvelað mannleg samskipti. Einn þeirra þátta sem hefur hvað mest áhrif á gerð borga og samskipti fólks er hvernig skipulagi verslunar er háttað.

Fyrir um það bil fjöru árum voru borgaryfirvöld í Reykjavík að velta því fyrir sér hver æskileg framtíð-arþróun verslunar í borginni væri. Niðurstaða þessara bollalegginga var sú að gamli bærinn þyldi ekki þær stórverslanir eða "molla" sem kaupmenn töldu æskilegt að byggja. Með tilheyrandi umferðarmann-virkjum myndu Laugavegurinn og Kvosin glata þeim viðkvæma "sjarma" sem þessi svæði hefðu ef það væri reynt.

Auk þess væri skortur á hentugum lóðum í gamla bænum og lóðaverð þar alltof hátt til þess að hægt væri að bjóða upp á samkeppnishæfa vörur í stór-verslunum sem reistar væru þar. Á þessum tíma bar Reykjavíkurborg höfuð og herðar yfir önnur sveitarfélög á Íslandi hvað varðaði sérverslun og segja má að allar "finustu" verslanir landsins og líka flestar bestu dagvöruverslanirnar hafi verið í höf-uðstaðnum.

Nokkrir staðir voru kannaðir þar sem æskilegt gæti verið að reisa þessa verslunarmiðstöð en endanlega varð núverandi lóð við gatnamót Miklubrautar og Kringlumýrarbrautar fyrir valinu.

Margir urðu til þess að benda á að líklegt væri að Kringlan myndi draga til sín talsverða veltu frá verslunum á Laugavegi og í Kvosinni. Þar á meðal var undirritaður sem þá vann talsvert að skipulagi gamalla hverfa í borginni. Ég og samstarfsmenn mínir héldum því fram að æskilegt væri að grípa til mótvægisáðgerða áður en Kringlan væri byggð og lögðum m.a. til að Lækjartorg og Austurstræti yrðu gerð að göngusvæðum; að byggt yrði þak yfir Ing-ólfrstorg og umhverfis það reist verslunar- og menn-ingarmiðstöð með íbúðum á efri hæðum. Einnig væri nauðsynlegt að viðskiptavinir verslana og þjónustu í gamla bænum ættu kost á bílastæðum á sömu kjörum og viðskiptavinir Kringlunnar.

Einungis lítill hluti þessara mótvægisáðgerða var

framkvæmdur. Austurstræti var að vísu gert að göngugötu að hluta en engin samkeppnishæf bílastæði voru byggð. Bílaumferð var hleypt aftur á Austurstræti að beiðni kaupmanna og til sögunnar kom fólk sem hélt því fram að það eina sem þyrfti til þess að "endurlífga" gamla bæinn væri að vernda þar sem flest gömul hús. Í kjölfarið var Ingólfrstorg, þar sem áður var hvað þéttust byggð á Íslandi, hellu-lagt og þar með komið í veg fyrir að þar væri byggð - að minnsta kosti í bili - sú verslunarmiðstöð sem miðbærinn þarfnast ennþá. Enginn miðbær getur blómstrað án líflégar verslunar.

Fyrir einum tveimur áratugum, þegar ég var for-stöðumaður Skipulagsstofu höfuðborgarsvæðisins, byggðum við upp tölvulíkan yfir valvöruverslun á höfuðborgarsvæðinu sem gat sagt fyrir um hvaða áhrif mismunandi stór verslunarhverfi hefðu hvert á annað. Þetta var talsvert áður en "Smárinn" var byggður. Við héldum því jafnframt fram að æskilegt væri að mynda sameiginlega stefnu viðkomandi sveitarfélaga varðandi stærð og staðsetningu þessara verslunarhverfa í grófum dráttum, ef vel ætti að fara. Ekki féll þessi hugmynd í frjóan jarðveg og vor-um við vinsamlegast beðin að snúa okkur að öðrum málum því sveitarstjórnarmenn vildu vera "frjálsir" í því að ákveða þessi mál hver í sínu sveitarfélagi.

Fátt í skipulagi borga gerist af sjálfu sér heldur er gerð þeirra og framtíð að verulegu leyti ráðin af þeim sem fara með skipulagsvald á viðkomandi stað. Hyde Park, Central Park og Austurvöllur urðu ekki til af sjálfu sér og þeir sem tóku ákvæðranir um að þarna skyldi ekki byggja hafa örugglega gert sér grein fyrir því að þarna gætu líka verið dýrmætær byggingarlóðir.

Þarna skiptir miklu að þeir sem ráða ferðinni marki ákveðna stefnu og hafi líka gott yfirlit yfir það fjöl-breytta, síbreytilega kerfi sem nútíma þéttbýli er. Það skiptir líka máli að þeir sem taka stefnumótandi ákvarðanir um framtíð Reykjavíkur og höfuðborg-arsvæðisins alls þekki vel helstu grundvallaratriði skipulagsfræða og hugmyndir manna eins og t.d. Charles Fourier, Edward Bellamy, Ernest Callenbach og Ebenezer Howard. Við þurfum ekki að endurtaka öll mistök sem aðrar þjóðir hafa gert. En þeir sem fást við skipulag þurfa líka að geta búið til umhverfi sem er í samræmi við óskir okkar og langanir og framtíðarþarfir. Í dag þurfum við heldur ekki að ganga að því gruflandi hverjar verða afleiðingarnar af mikilvægum ákvörðunum í skipulagi en til þess þurfa stjórnámálmenn að vilja nota tiltæka þekk-

ingu og aðferðafræði.

Reykjavíkurborg stendur nú frammi fyrir nokkrum slíkum ákvörðunum sem munu hafa grundvallarþýð-ingu fyrir framtíð borgarinnar. Af þeim má nefna hvernig tenging Sundabrautar yfir Elliðaárvog verður gerð; framtíðarbyggð á flugvallarsvæðinu og tenging þess svæðis við vegakerfi höfuðborg-arsvæðisins; og fyrirhuguð jarðgöng undir Skóla-vörðuholtið, Óskjuhlíðina og Kársnesið. Útfærsla þessara framkvæmda og hvort af þeim verður mun skipta sköpum fyrir framtíð borgarinnar.

Það er ekki nóg að allar byggingar séu vel hann-aðar ef heildarsamhengið vantar. Við, íbúar þessa þéttbýlis getum verið nokkuð sammála um ákveðin atriði í þessu samhengi. Borgir þurfa að vera fjöl-breyttar og líflégar, þær þurfa að vera mengunarlitl-ar og öruggar og virða náttúrulegt umhverfi; þær þurfa að fara vel með takmarkaðar auðlindir, vera í manneskjulegum mæliskvarða og aðgengilegar fyrir alla. Við viljum líka gera þá kröfu til nútíma þéttbýlis að það bjóði upp á hentugt rými til félagslegra sam-skipta, menntunar, þátttöku í stjórnámálum og versl-unar.

En þetta er hægara sagt en gert því mjög mikl-ir hagsmunir eru hér að veði hvert sem er lítið og þeir eru ófáir sem líta fyrst og framst á borgir sem staði þar sem auðvelt er að hagnast. Fallegustu og skemmtilegustu borgir heims voru hins vegar skipu-lagðar af fólki sem hafði mikinn metnað, var ekki bara leiksoppar þessara hagsmuna og gerði sér fulla grein fyrir mikilvægi þess að nota alla tiltæka þekk-ingu til að búa til gott skipulag og framkvæma það.

Undanfarna áratugi hefur skipulag á Íslandi orðið "pólitískara" en það var áður. Um það er ekki nema gott eitt að segja að stjórnámálmenn sýni skipu-lagsmálum áhuga enda bera þeir pólitíska ábyrgð á þeirri stefnu sem þar er mótuð þótt hún sé oft ansi þokukennnd. Hins vegar væri mjög til bóta að gera auknar kröfur til þeirra sem bera faglega ábyrgð á skipulagi. Gott skipulag er miklu meira en teikning af nokkrum húsum. Skipulag skiptir okkur öll mjög miklu og við eigum að geta treyst því að þeir sem eru að vinna að skipulagi undirgangist ákveðnar siðareglur og séu að vinna að almannahagsmunum en ekki þröngum sérhagsmunum. Við höfum fyrir löngu komist að þeirri niðurstöðu að það sé ekki til-hlýðilegt aðdómara séu launaðir af máláðilum og það samaætti að gilda um skipulagsaðila. Þeir þurfa að vera óháðir sérhagsmunum á viðkomandi stað. Kennslu í skipulagsfræðum á háskólastigi þyrfti

Downtown and Kringlan

líka að stórauka bæði til þess að gera starfandi skipulagsfræðinga hæfari til starfa í sífellt flóknari heimi, veita stjórnámálönnum nauðsynlegt aðhald og líka til þess að efla almenna faglega umræðu um þessi mál. Við eigum bara eitt Ísland og það skiptir okkur öll miklu hvernig það er notað og nýtt.

Gestur Ólafsson
Arkitekt og Skipulagsfræðingur

Those who are involved with city planning should bear in mind that what matters most are the people who live in the affected areas. Cities are basically “stages” for very diverse human activities, and the urban area inevitably carries with it the peculiarities, culture and ambitions of those who determine the course of planning and implementation. The planning of a city shapes this “stage.” It often has a profound effect on people and their quality of life and can among other things either facilitate or hinder human interaction. One area that has a major impact in city design and human interaction is how retail shopping is planned.

Around forty years ago the city leaders of Reykjavik began considering the future development of shopping in the city. The outcome of this consideration was that the old city center could be destroyed by commercial centers, or “malls,” that retailers felt were necessary to build. With the necessary road construction the area around Laugavegur and Kvos in the old center would lose their delicate “charm” if it was attempted. In addition, there was a shortage of available sites in the old town and the high property costs would not enable the large retailers to offer competitively-priced goods in shopping centers built there. At this time Reykjavik was head and shoulders above all other municipalities in Iceland regarding specialty retail, and it could be said that all the “finest” stores and best markets could be found in the capital region.

A few areas were considered for the location of this shopping complex, and in the end the site at the intersection of Miklabraut and Kringlamýrabraut was chosen.

Many pointed out that in all probability the Kringlan Mall would draw quite a bit of traffic away from the stores on Laugavegur and in Kvos. At this time my office did quite a bit of work trying to plan the old part of the city. My coworkers and myself argued for a complementary plan for the old town to be carried out before the Kringlan Mall was built, making for example Lækjartorg and Austurstræti pedestrian areas, and building a roof over Ingólfstorg with the surrounding space dedicated to retail and cultural centers with living space on the upper floors. In addition, we considered it necessary for those taking advantage of stores and services in the old centre to have access to parking at the same price as visitors to Kringlan.

Only a small portion of our proposal was implemented. A section of Austurstræti temporarily pedestrianised, but no additional parking was provided. Car traffic was eventually allowed on Austurstræti again at the request of retailers, and people who felt the only thing necessary to revitalize the old town was the preservation of as many older buildings as possible arrived on the scene. As a result, Ingolfstorg, which had historically been the most densely built area in the whole of Iceland, was paved with stone, ruling out the building – at least for the time – the shopping center that midtown Reykjavik still needs today. No city center can flourish without a lively retail trade.

A few decades ago, when I was the manager of the Planning Office of the Capital Area, we built a retail gravity model for the capital region that could predict the impact of various-sized shopping areas on each other. This was well before the Smáralind mall was built. We considered it advisable to formulate a regional policy regarding the size and location of future shopping centers, at least in general terms, if all were to go well. This proposal of ours was not well received, and we were asked to please concentrate on other issues, as the municipal leaders in the different local authorities wanted to be “free” to make these decisions themselves.

Very little in the planning of a cities happens by itself, but instead their creation and future are for the most part decided by those who are responsible for planning at each location. Hyde Park, Central Park and Austurvöllur didn’t just happen, and those who made the decision that they were not to be built upon of course knew that each of these locations were very valuable real estate.

It is very important for us all, that those in charge make well thought out policies and have a good understanding of the diverse and dynamic system that a modern urban area is. It also matters that those who make basic decisions about the future of Reykjavik and the capital region are familiar with basic principles of urban planning and the theories of men like Charles Fourier, Edward Bellamy, Ernest Callenbach and Ebenezer Howard. We don’t need to make all the same mistakes that other nations have already made. Yet those who undertake planning must also be able to design environments that are in keeping with our wishes, desires and future needs. Today we can also evaluate the possible

outcome of important planning decisions if elected officials are willing to take advantage of available knowledge and methodology.

Reykjavik is now facing several very important decisions which will have a fundamental impact on the future of the city. Among them are the how the connection of Sundabraut across Elliðaárvogur will be made; the future development of the area where the Reykjavík airport is now situated and the linking of this area to the road system already in place; and the proposed tunnels through Skólavörðurholt, Öskjuhlíð and Kársnes. The planning and implementation of these projects will have a major effect on the future of the city.

It's not enough for all buildings of a city to be well designed if they are out of context. We, the residents of this urban area can to a large extent agree about certain aspects of this context. Cities need to be diverse and lively; they must be low-pollution and safe and respect the natural environment; they should take good care of limited resources, be constructed on a human scale and accessible to all. We would also like to demand of modern cities that they offer usable space for social interaction, education, participation in political life and shopping.

But this is easier said than done as there is quite a lot of interests at stake wherever one looks, and there are many who see cities first and foremost as places where you can make money. The most beautiful and enjoyable cities in the world were, however, created by people with high aspirations, who weren't simply puppets of profit and who understood fully the importance of using all available knowledge in creating good plans and carrying them out.

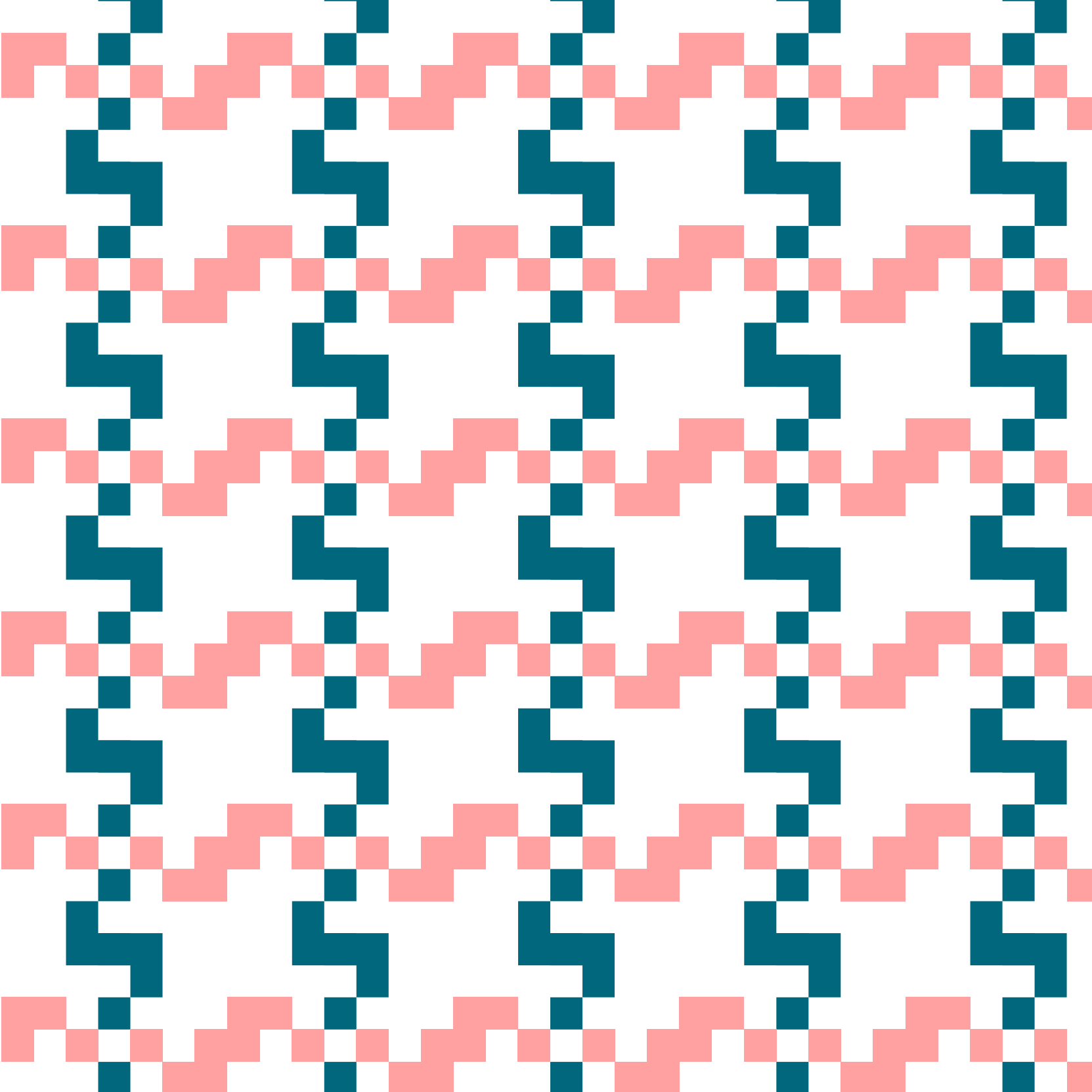
In the past few decades planning in Iceland has become much more "political" than it used to be. It is not altogether bad that politicians are giving planning their attention, because ultimately they hold political responsibility for policies and planning, foggy as they may be. Conversely, it would be very positive to exact higher standards from those who bear professional responsibility for city planning. Good planning is much more than just drawings of a few houses. It influences our total environment and we should be able to trust that those professionally responsible are bound by specific ethical rules and are working for the benefit of the community and not for narrow personal interests. We have long ago come to the conclusion that it is not prudent for a

judge to be on the pay of litigants, and the same should be the case for professionals in city planning. They must be independent of profit motive at the relevant location. Education in planning at the university level in Iceland also needs to be greatly increased to assist practicing planners in an increasingly complex world, to provide political officials with necessary scientific advice, and to encourage general, informed discourse on this topic. We only have one Iceland and it matters a lot to us all how it is planned, used and enjoyed.

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{Translation: María Alva Roff}



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