

MARTE EKNÆS
NICOLAU VERGUEIRO

OPEN 24 HOURS

Munchmuseet i bevegelse







Open 24 Hours – another world unfolding

As one of the first art projects in Munchmuseet on the Move, Marte Eknæs and Nicolau Vergueiro's work *Open 24 Hours* has become one of the more permanent fixtures in the ever-changing urban landscape of Bjørvika. Bjørvika is the newest addition to the borough of Old Oslo: the swanky new waterfront development emerging on a harbour formerly used for industry and shipping. At the time of writing, the stacks of buildings known as the Barcode are being supplemented by a new "cultural" barrier towards the sea, consisting of the Deichman Library and the new Munch Museum, which join the Opera at the water's edge. The artists' 48-meter banner, what they themselves refer to as a "soft mural", can be seen in an art historical lineage that connects it to public murals or the frescos decorating the inside the Oslo City Hall. The softness, however, means that the work has more in common with traditions of large-scale tapestry. Materially, however, Eknæs and Vergueiro's commissioned work differs from its art historical precedents. Their tapestry is a digitally created collage printed on PVC, in which hand-drawn elements sit alongside original photography and found imagery.

Its materiality echoes the many other commercially printed banners, wrapped around the building sites in Bjørvika, advertising the luxuriousness of the buildings emerging behind the fencing. In Eknæs and Vergueiro's work, however, the proposed view is not of a glamorous future, but instead activates elements of the past and fictional flights of fancy, which poke fun at the lofty aspirations of the new development. The five panels that make up the PVC tapestry depict snapshots of a city on the move and narrate an urban tale set within an imagined landscape of Old Oslo. Playing with the language of architectural presentation by showing models and renderings for the future in combination with historical maps and buildings from the past the artists let another world unfold. As Eknæs and Vergueiro themselves put it: "Real and fictional references recreate construction as well as destruction, maintenance and repurposing, production and consumption, while reaffirming the urban construction site as an ever-changing still life."

The work's installation along a pathway leading from the Oslo Opera House enables a close-up view. Unlike other murals, often installed high up, underscoring their elevated ideals, *Open 24 Hours* addresses the viewer directly, providing bodily access to an alternative universe, anchored in the local context. It is incredibly detailed and invites close scrutiny. Given that it is permanently accessible, limited only by the fading daylight, viewers can spend a long time with work, noticing new elements each time. This publication follows the narrative structure of the tapestry, in which each panel gets its own chapter. The images provide close up views in lieu of being able to stand in front of the work itself. Characters from the urban tale that the artists narrate leap out of the mural and land on the page, allowing closer scrutiny. The first page depicts a signpost at the crossroads of the past and the future. Its arrows, depicted in a typograph that indicates a fairy-tale world, point to some of the varied features of Old Oslo: here are the Oslo Prison, the Botanical Gardens, medieval ruins, a skate park. The sign also points to the past: here was a harbour, a sweet factory, a dairy. Some of the arrows take a more fictional direction pointing to the Rattissson, a holiday destination for the rats that work tirelessly underground in the artists' imagined vision of the city's waste disposal system. Some of the arrows point to aspects depicted in the mural, others to elements external to it, but nonetheless hovering in the background of this area suffused with contradiction.

The subsequent chapters focus on the building site of and around the new Munch Museum – the activity that dominates this area of Oslo. The artists have inserted a female work force, drawing on found quotes from newspapers across Norway by women who work in the construction industry. The second chapter looks at the grandiose plans for the new borough by the Oslo Fjord, mixing in the aspirational language of advertising and urban planning under the slogan of The Flexible City. The outline of a mosque can be traced over a line of houses taken from Edvard Munch's painting *Telthusbakken with Gamle Aker Church* (1880), and giant spermatozoa dangle over the Barcode skyline. The third chapter looks back into the history of Oslo,

against the backdrop of old maps, superimposing the title *A Brand New Life* onto a former urban landscape. The hand – or the foot – of the artist is marshalled to provide decoration for this bold new venture: the new building *BOOM!* echoed in the Pop Art slogan dotted across the image and settling on the artists' toes like nail polish.

The fourth chapter shows snippets from the imagined lives of the rats that labour underground. One of them gets caught in the negative spell of credit card debt, and finds her way out by utilizing the card as a shovel. Another repurposes a sardine can as a suitcase, while a couple snuggle on a love seat fashioned out of a discarded neck pillow. To cast the rat – the *Rattus norvegicus* or brown rat – is hardly arbitrary. As mainstream media has pointed out, the most populous of species in Bjørvika is not the human, despite the 10.000 people who travel to it daily, but the rat, which outnumber us about two to one. The final panel focuses on the harbour and the fjord. Microplastics dominate the ocean blue: they make it into the fish, which in turn are made into sushi and consumed. The sea is filled with microbeads, like the ones found in popular brands of toothpaste, and oil drums, hinting at Norway's wealth creation, bob awkwardly alongside discarded coffee capsules. In amongst the detritus of 21st century living, there are hand-drawn fantastical creatures, inspired by the Carta Marina, the 16th century map of Scandinavia, which included the sea beasts that sailors feared lurked in the depths of the ocean. The waves crash onto the shore against a backdrop of shipping containers, referencing the industry that was moved from the harbour to make way for the new waterfront development.

Eknæs and Vergueiro's description of an "ever-changing still-life" evokes the notion of *Vanitas* from the 17th century genre of still-life painting – is this soft mural with its spectacular vision of a future superimposed onto the past a warning of the vanity of worldly pleasures and goods? Is there another world unfolding where the rat will outlive us all?

Natalie Hope O'Donnell
Curator

Munchmuseet on the Move



(Inspiration trivia: Gerhard Munthe's *Fairytale Moods*, tapestries, illustrations and typefaces.)

Which way to go? The objective is to build a neighborhood:

- Identify an advantageous site.
- Remove useless and offensive obstructions and maintain useful frameworks.
- Pitch and advertise the site's future, while considering its nostalgic assets.
- The solution is (re)coded within the activities underground and on the margins.

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CONSTRUCTION SITE AS THEATRE

The temporal / transitional quality to how we experience urban space allows us to see construction sites as a still life or a theater. Compared to the pace of commuting, working schedules, entertainment and trends, it is slow moving.

It has the effects of a spectacle. The colour scheme of safety is bright and flashy. The large-scale movements of machinery are lit up like a theme park. We are excluded by fences and warning signs of danger, but provided with access holes and viewing opportunities from a safe distance. Gaping holes expose the underbelly of the surface we all occupy in which remnants of the past get excavated in an accidental archeology. The positive of these dents are piles of sand like temporary urban mountains or mole hills.

The performance ends when the building is complete.

SYNOPSIS AS PRODUCTION DESIGN

This construction site has been preceded by more than a decade of political and public debate. After the decision was made to move the Munch Museum in 2008, the architecture competition was won in 2009 by Herreros Arquitectos / estudio Herreros for their plans titled "Lambda". Local politicians, *Riksantikvaren*, and the inhabitants of Oslo argued over the site, size and form. In 2011, the project was dropped by Oslo City Council, and alternative solutions were debated. In 2013, "Lambda" was pulled back out for a renewed discussion and vote. Some people marched with torches in support of the project, telling politicians to get "their finger out of their ass" and get moving on the project.

The outside walls and vertical inner walls were constructed in 30 days, through vertical slip forming, at a speed of almost 2 meters every 24 hours. The walls amount to around 10 000 square meters wall containing 700 tons of rebar and more than 3000 cubic meters of concrete.

Slip forming enables continuous, non-interrupted, cast-in-place "flawless" (i.e. no joints) concrete structures that have superior performance characteristics to piece-wise construction, using discrete form elements.

The technique is often used for oil platforms, and experts from the gas and oil industry have been consulted in the process. The building will be ready in 2019, and opens to the public in 2020.







CAST AS CREW

Rinda, electrician, Bodø, 2013

“Sometimes, when the men see that the workload is heavy, they don’t want me to do it. They don’t want to see me struggle. I can be let off the hook more easily, but it’s not what I want. I believe I can do exactly the same work as the men.”

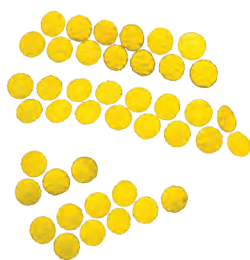
Helen, construction engineer, Oslo, 2013

“As a woman, you’re almost always alone on the construction site. It can be frightening to start working in field where men determine all the premises. I have experienced everything from sexist language to harassment and being completely ignored in meetings. As it stands today, you have to be tough to keep going as a woman in this field. I know several women engineers who have quit after a short time.”

Timothy, traveler, 2015

“I feel like I did something different from other tourists; I saw new things and got to experience a different Bjørvika. It is now enjoying the surge of tourists as it opens up most of what was previously industrial land. And trust me, it is so interesting! Nowadays, it is an area that reclaims its past, and creates new opportunities.”





REVIEWS

“... a cabinet of horrors, where the buildings look like crashed space ships and bad imitations of Nazi bunkers from the war ... Some of the contributions are unsuccessful attempts at creating phallic symbols, but, in their failed architecture, they look more like enormous erectile dysfunctions.”

Gabriele Tagliaventi, *NRK*, 1 June 2010

“The process behind this project was long, but now there is no return. It has been done according to plan, both in relation to time and budget. We have now drilled 320 pillars as far down as the building will be tall, and built the foundations the new museum will be standing on.”

Stein Olav Henrichsen, director of the Munch Museum, *Dagbladet*, 16 October 2016









HOW TO LIVE ON UNSTABLE GROUND

“I believe that it is possible to live on unstable ground, like one can live anywhere if the temperature is right, if the air pressure and humidity are right, i.e. if there is something like a climate. But only if one develops certain political virtues. The political virtues necessary in such a flexible climate are, firstly, a readiness for conflict, i.e. one somehow has to develop individualistic virtues. And, secondly – and this is part and parcel of warfare – one has to simultaneously develop diplomacy. One has got to be willing to negotiate a peace deal at short notice. Militancy and diplomacy will be the living conditions, the ethological conditions, if you like. That is the kind of behaviour that one will necessarily have to adopt, were one to live in such territories. If we were to treat this seriously, also in reference to what is shown in the video, i.e. this fluctuating, unstable ground, and this permanent mobility, this readiness at any moment to declare one's independence, one's self-determination, then individuals have to be able to arm themselves, to arm and to rearm themselves. We already have what are basically imported military gadgets for this purpose, e.g. walkie-talkies – nowadays that's a mobile phone; or equipment for carrying provisions – that would be the water bottle. A psychological, physical, and logistical armament is essential; and then one is ready to fend for oneself in this flexible world.”

Joseph Vogl to Marte Eknæs and Michael Amstad



“Linear time is a Western invention; time is not linear, it is a marvelous tangle where at any moment, points can be selected and solutions invented without beginning or end.”

Lina Bo Bardi



HOW TO NAVIGATE UNSTABLE GROUND

“The masterplan occupies a unique site in the city between the expanse of the fjord and a major transport hub that combines the Central Station and highways. The goal of the project is to maximise urban and architectural diversity as well as spatial flexibility, and the realization of a pedestrian-friendly zone in the center of Oslo.

The execution of the masterplan allows for a phased development. Each building is constructed independently from the others with the public space around becoming a 24h-accessible, animated, pedestrian-zone.”

MVRDV Project description

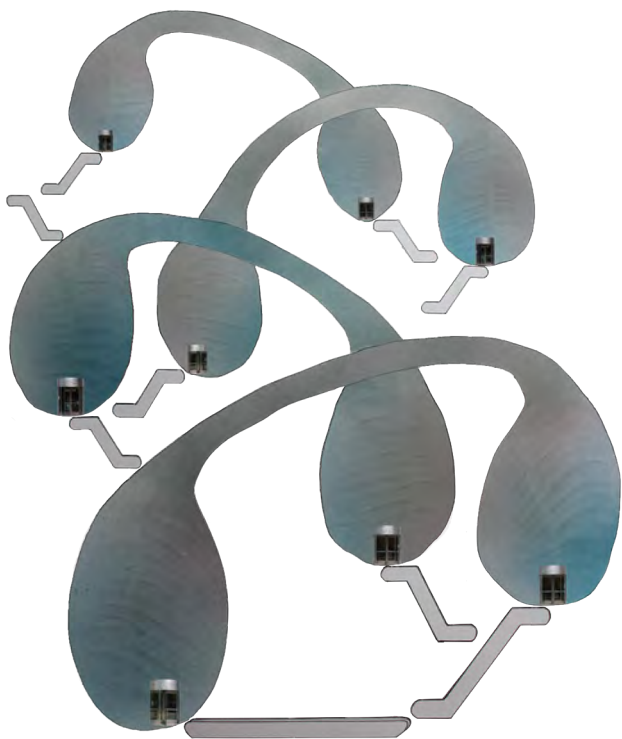
“The Barcode Project is a section of the Bjørvika portion of the Fjord City redevelopment on former dock and industrial land in central Oslo. It consists of a row of new multi-purpose high-rise buildings, that was completed in 2014. The developer is marketing the project as ‘The Opera Quarter.’ There has been intense public debate about the height and shape of the buildings.”

Kjetil S. Østli, *Aftenposten*

For a dynamic-looking facade and to ease movement within the development, slides partly replace elevators and internal delivery systems. They are mostly used within business hours, but can also be accessed by residents. For a faster descent, sacks are provided to sit on to reduce friction and to protect clothing.

When Bjørvika is completely developed, there will be 4–5000 apartments and 20,000 people at work in the area. In addition, the cultural institutions and other activities will draw thousands of visitors to the sea front.

The Institute of Flexibility is established at the heart of the area to analyse the economic development and how the urban space and human behaviour adapt. It is a mobile unit, designed to provide contact with the regions of greatest importance to present and future scientific progress and economic development.







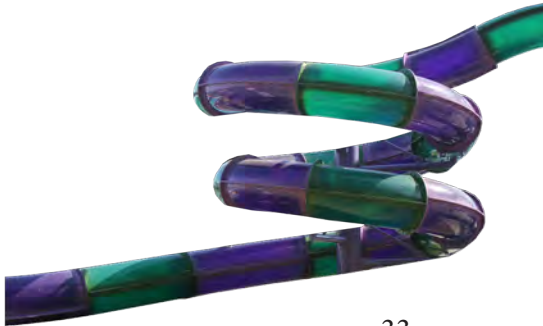


HEALTH AND SAFETY

“Rather than letting young children play on slides by themselves, some parents seat the children on the adult’s lap and go down the slide together. If the child’s shoe catches on the edge of the slide, however, this arrangement frequently results in the child’s leg being broken.”

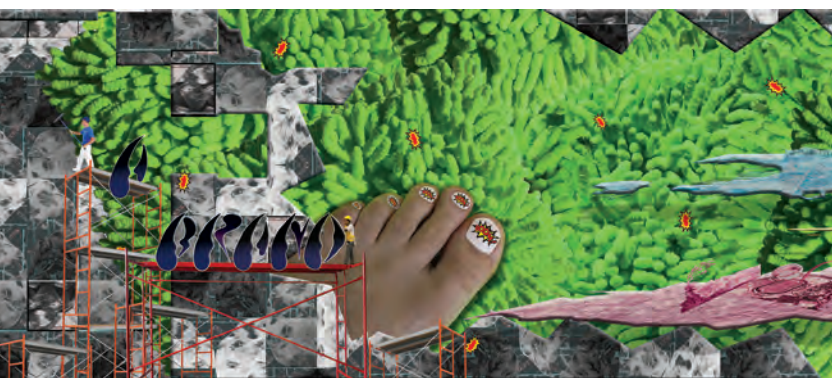
“If the child had been permitted to use the slide independently, then this injury would not happen, because when the shoe caught, the child would have stopped sliding rather than being propelled down the slide by the adult’s weight.”

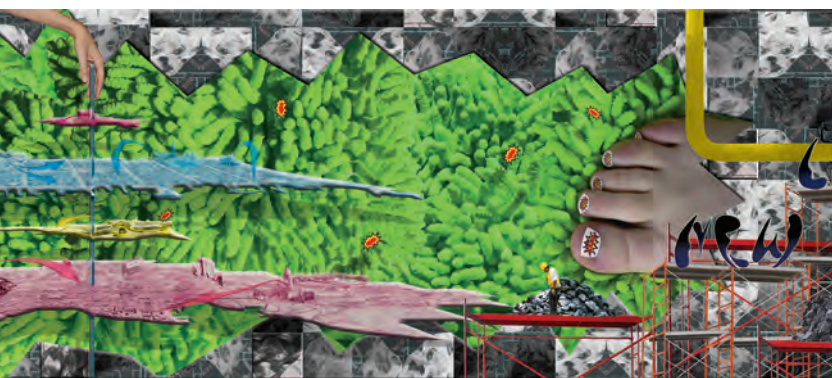
Tara Parker-Pope, *The New York Times*













COMING SOON, A BRAND NEW LIFE

Pitch –

A spinning spit pierces slabs of parallel possibilities of the neighbourhood Old Oslo. Like a wheel of fortune, it draws up a sense of chance in a pictorial diagram, each segment displays old and new, real and fictional, didactic and misleading information from the site of Old Oslo.

Architectural models, new businesses and announcement banners foresee a new center of activity and decorate the arrival of the future neighborhood. As a timeless organism, the symptoms show the area's adaptations and transitions into other eras and conditions.

Envisioning the discoveries of new territories, the stomping feet and "boom" icons aestheticize the destruction of the old that allows for new action. Linking colonialism to real estate development and to the idea of the "new" (avant-garde) to be a potential blind and dangerous agent.

WHAT IS HERE? WHAT WAS HERE?
WHAT WAS IMAGINED TO BE HERE AND NEVER WAS?
WHAT WILL BE HERE?

New condominium: "You'll have a nostalgic feeling that you have been here before, but at the same time that you have arrived in your customized future; what a smart ploy, everybody loves to be the center of attention."





Spinning hand: "Tell me when to stop;
this will give you a frivolous sense of free will."





Landscape oil painting: "I once tried to be pastoral when rendering this site; I'm a victim of always trying to keep up with the trends. But as we all know, once identifiable: already outdated."



Proposed Olympic stadium model:
"I represent the burden of a dreamt life."



Feet of the Creators: "This is all ours to take!
This spot will make a great 24 hour spa!"





Women workforce: "At least we are being represented as workers in this promotional scheme, and not as wives and mothers."











MEANWHILE SOMEWHERE ELSE

Meanwhile somewhere else there are multiple parallel universes, existences that are experienced as the centre for those who occupy it.

The world of the *Rattus norvegicus* is an underground network of oozing pipelines that compound oil and sewage, waste and goods. They make a new life out of discards from the affluent above-ground communities, preparing delicious meals from scraps and leftovers, repurposing objects for new uses, and utilising pipelines for logistics and public transport.

The story of the Norwegian rat is one of discarded theory as well as discarded matter. It is found nearly everywhere humans have settled. By the definition of geographic spread, it is the most successful mammal on the planet, alongside humans. They are found in towns, cities, and rural areas. They may be found in barns, fields, ditches, corn cribs, and dumps. Unlike the black rat, they often burrow in the ground beneath for protective cover.





This underground world is the domicile of the rats, where they in skillful ways have designed their environment, work and social life out of human discards. They are carefree creatures in a precarious life. Confined to a happy-go-lucky attitude they make the most of what is thrown their way.



The Traveler Rat is on his way to the Ratisson. Normally, his movements are governed by need. Feared and unwanted in most parts of society, he is constantly on edge. Weary and restless, he tiptoes and zigzags on his daily hunts for food and shelter. But as luck has it, he got a room at the Ratisson. In this locale of public negotiation for consumption and mobility, the consumed becomes the consumer and the Traveler Rat feels at home.

The Romantic Rats are having an early morning date at the 24HRS Bar. Without sunlight, the time of day doesn't really make any difference. They live according to dreams and instincts. They don't have the means or possibility to make plans, so this time is as good as any for a drink and a heart to heart. An inflatable neck pillow is turned into a cozy sofa, and the forgotten last swig of a serving-size wine bottle provides refreshments for the couple.





XXX – no picky dress code, no VIP seating section, just a lively underground club with a kick-ass sound system. Head down to get a fix of something funky.

Travel guide to Hong Kong, Hotels.com

The Worker Rat felt lucky when she came upon the credit card. She had heard of the golden opportunities and the doors that could be opened by this thing called Visa, but still she remained skeptical. She thought she was careful enough, but didn't have much experience with finances. And the energy it took her just to carry it around and keep it protected from thieves might have made her both more in need of the better quality food and beverages it gave her access to, as well as making her more susceptible to the services she was constantly offered. After a fairly short time, the magic spell had turned into a curse, and she found herself working overtime on most days to avoid blacklisting. As most rats, the Worker Rat is thrifty and she found a way of turning the credit card into a tool to tackle the very situation it had caused.





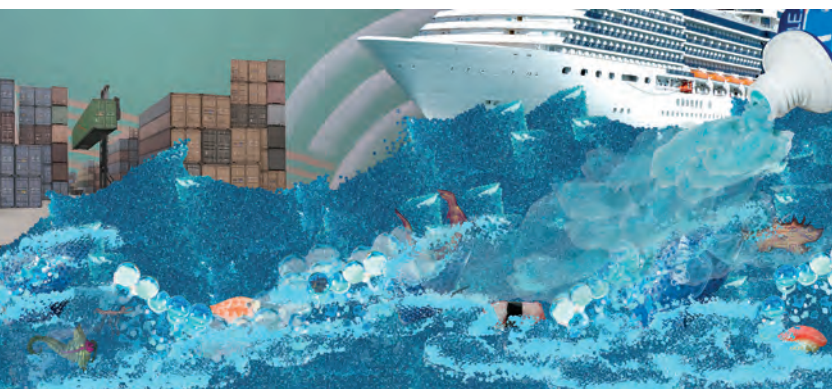
Sortere avfallet ditt



www.miljostiftelsen.no









HARBOR ANSWER SHEET

The liminal city – its ins and outs, comings and goings,
export/import, tourism/(im)migration, consumption/discard.
Did you know?



Carta marina et descriptio septentrionalium terrarum (Latin for *Marine map and description of the Northern lands*; commonly abbreviated *Carta marina*) is the first map of the Nordic countries to give details and place names, created by Swedish ecclesiastic Olaus Magnus and initially published in 1539.



The map is centered on Scandia, which is shown in the largest size text on the map and placed on the middle of Sweden. The map covers the Nordic lands of "Svecia" (Svealand), "Gothia" (Götaland), "Norvegia" (Norway), Dania (Denmark), Islandia (Iceland), Finlandia (Finland), and Livonia (Estonia and Latvia).

Olaus Magnus' Scandinavia, University of Minnesota

... “The chart’s giant lobster gripping a swimmer in its claws, a monster being mistaken for an island, and a mast-high serpent devouring sailors would have represented actual fears of the unknown deep. Those and Olaus’ other fanciful sea beasts are not mere decorations to fill empty spaces. Nor are they only visual metaphors for dangers lurking in the sea. Intended as representations of actual marine life, they are identified in the map’s key. They are the ancestors of the decorative whales that dot oceans on modern commercial globes.”

Joseph Nigg, *Sea Monsters: A Voyage Around the World’s Most Beguiling Map*.





“Salmon Sushi was invented in Norway.”

“Sushi dates back to the 8th century in Japan, but Salmon Sushi ... that originated in the mid-1980s. And ... wait for it, it’s not even Japanese. It’s a Norwegian invention.”

Bjørn Eirik Olsen, *CNN’s US Great Story*



“Could the plastic you are washing your face with end up in your sushi? Yes. Fish species harvested for food have been known to eat micro-plastic particles at an alarming rate and the toxins absorbed in those plastics transfer to the fish tissue ...”

storyofstuff.org

(advertisement)

“Norwegian Cruise Line to build two-deck high race track on board new 4000 passenger ship. Norwegian Cruise Line has revealed its new ship to rank among the 10 biggest cruise vessels in the world.”

Launch date April 2018.

<https://www.express.co.uk>

(advertisement)

“Norwegian Cruise Lines treats all blackwater and graywater beyond the minimum as required by municipal water standards and they were also the first cruise line to install an eco-ballast system to ensure that toxins or invasive species are not introduced to new destinations.”

<https://www.greenmelocally.com>

“The Norwegian Pearl is one of a dozen large cruise ships allowed to discharge treated wastewater in Ketchikan, Juneau and some other Alaska harbors this year. The State Department of Environmental Conservation issues the permits for ‘stationary discharges’ under new rules that took effect late last summer. ‘It has to be treated wastewater through an advanced wastewater treatment system,’ says DEC Environmental Program Specialist Ed White. White says the new system allows samples to be taken after being diluted in what’s called a mixing zone (A mixing zone is the defined portion of a water-body where a permitted wastewater discharge undergoes initial dilution.) The zone for most harbors is 90 yards from the point of discharge. That’s about a third the length of the Norwegian Pearl.”

Cruise Ship Report Card – Friends of the Earth

“The number of cruise visitors in Norway have increased from about 200,000 to almost 700,000 the last 15 years. The number of cruise ship port calls have gone up from approximately 1200 to 2000, and the number of passengers per ship has nearly doubled in the same time period.”

Petter Dybedal, Eivind Farstad, Per-Erik Winter, Iratxe Landa-Mata, *Summary – Cruise passenger traffic to Norway – history and forecasts until 2060*





“A 3,000-passenger cruise ship (considered an average size, some carry 5,000 or more passengers) generates the following amounts of waste on a typical one-week voyage: 1 million gallons of ‘gray water’, 210,000 gallons of sewage, 25,000 gallons of oily bilge water, over 100 gallons of hazardous or toxic waste, 50 tons of garbage and solid waste, and diesel exhaust emissions equivalent to thousands of automobiles.”

Bluewater Network, Petition to US EPA

“In 2017, Norway produced 236.4 million Sm³ o.e. of marketable petroleum. By way of comparison, total production was 230. million Sm³ o.e. in 2016 and 264.2 million Sm³ o.e. in 2004. In other words, production in 2017 was about 11 % lower than in the record year 2004 and 3 % higher than in 2016.”

The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate

“The year 2015 showed a strong growth of the Norwegian fish and seafood value and a new export record of €7.43 billion was set, caused by strong demand and high prices for Norwegian salmon on the global market. Nearly 70 % of the seafood export value is represented by farmed fish species, Atlantic salmon, and sea trout, amounting to €4.69 billion. Although Norway exports about 90 % of its production, in recent years imports have grown significantly. This is partly because of the need to import fishmeal, fish oil and fish feed for its growing aquaculture industry. The main suppliers are the EU member states and countries in South America.”

<http://www.eurofish.dk>





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All other material courtesy of Marte Eknæs & Nicolau Vergueiro.

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Marte Eknæs & Nicolau Vergueiro, *Open 24 Hours* (2018)

Edited by Natalie Hope O'Donnell

Published by the Munch Museum

Design by Eller med a, based on a concept
developed by Eriksen/Brown and Eller med a

Paper: Invercote, MultiArt Gloss

Fonts: Arial Narrow, Times Eighteen

Printed by TS-Trykk

Images courtesy of Marte Eknæs and Nicolau Vergueiro

Inside cover by Ove Kvavik/Munchmuseet

The artists would like to thank: Michael Amstad, Will Bradley,
Rhea Dall and UKS, Eller med a, Espen Kregnes, Karine Grinde,
Estudio Herreros, Natalie Hope O'Donnell, Maria Manoella,
and Kathrine Wilson.

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ISBN 978-82-93560-19-7





Marte Eknæs is an artist based in Berlin and Espa, and Nicolau Vergueiro is an artist based in São Paulo and Los Angeles. They have collaborated since 2013. Their project *Open 24 Hours* was commissioned for *Munchmuseet on the Move* (2016) and curated by Natalie Hope O'Donnell.

Munchmuseet on the Move (2016–2019) is an off-site curatorial project that continues and develops the work of the Stenersen Museum in Vika (1994–2015), now part of the Munch Museum. *Munchmuseet on the Move* includes a series of contemporary art commissions, shown in the area between the current Munch Museum at Tøyen and the new museum, which opens in 2020. The aim of the contemporary art programme is to establish relationships with the neighbourhoods the Munch Museum will be moving through on its one-mile journey down to the waterfront of Bjørvika.