



Luna Scales, *Memories by Touch* (film still), 2024.

Seminar: The Plastic Body

Thursday 23 January 2025, 10 am–4 pm
Auditorium, Stavanger Art Museum

The seminar is organised in connection to the exhibition *The Plastic Body: Sculpture from Poland 1960-1989* at Stavanger Art Museum 28 September 2024 – 26 January 2025. The aim of the seminar is to address recent art historical perspectives on the artists included in the exhibition – and beyond – and to discuss their contributions to the field of sculpture and to contemporary art practices dealing with the politics of the human body.

[Book your free ticket here.](#)

Lunch (optional) NOK 145.

Program

10.00 Coffee and registration in the museum foyer

10:15 Welcome and introduction

Vibece Salthe and Helga Nyman

Curators of the exhibition *The Plastic Body: Sculpture form Poland 1690-1989*

10:35–11:20 ‘Emancipatory Language of Sculpture’

Agata Jakubowska

Institute of Art History at the University of Warsaw

The presentation will be dedicated to the works of some artists shown at The Plastic Body exhibition, with particular attention given to Maria Pinińska-Bereś. I will discuss how they responded to the dominant discourses around the female body in Poland in the 1960s and 70s. Analysing their work, I will answer whether the artistic experiment in their work corresponded with emancipatory strategies.

Agata Jakubowska is a professor at the Institute of Art History at the University of Warsaw. She is the author and editor of numerous publications on women's art. Recently, she published a monograph on Polish sculptor Maria Pinińska-Bereś under the title *Art and Emancipation of Women in Socialist Poland. The Case of Maria Pinińska-Bereś* (in Polish, Warsaw University Press, 2022). She is currently researching the transnational history of all-women exhibitions (a project funded by the Polish National Science Center). Within the framework of this project, she is preparing a book under the working title *Real and Imagined Communities in International All-Women Exhibitions*.

11:25–11:55 ‘Polish Influences and Norwegian Textile Art in the 1960s and 1970s’

Caroline Ugelstad

Chief curator and director of collections and exhibitions at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo

This paper will look at Norwegian textile art in the 1960s and 1970s through its Polish influences. More specifically, it will concentrate on the practices of the central Norwegian textile artists Brit Fuglevaag, Siri Blakstad and Bente Sætrang, who all went to Poland to study in the 1960s and 1970s. The purpose of the paper is to deepen the understanding of the transnational exchanges that took place in Norwegian textile art during this time by studying these three artists in particular and to discuss what imprint these exchanges have or have not left on Norwegian art history writing.

Caroline Ugelstad is chief curator and director of collections and exhibitions at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo. Ugelstad has a degree in art history with distinction from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and a PhD in art history from the University of Oslo. Ugelstad has curated numerous exhibitions within the field of contemporary art and modernism, and has a special interest in art historiography, modernism and avant-garde studies, exhibition studies, and contemporary art. Ugelstad is jury leader of the Lise Wilhelmsen Art Award Programme.

12:00–12:30 'From Resilient Objects to Performative Boundaries'

Klara Kemp-Welch, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

This paper explores how artists from the exhibition used their sculptural practice to challenge psychological and political obstacles and to call into question restrictions on their creativity. Rather than being deterred by everything that conspired to stand in their way, these were women who worked through the barriers they faced, both internally and externally, to experiment with the plastic experience of freedom. Their work championed resilience, movement, and life against the forces of entropy and stasis, and continues to do so today.

Klara Kemp-Welch is a Reader in 20th century Modernism at the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. She works on modern and contemporary art from Eastern Europe and is the author of *Antipolitics in Central European Art. Reticence as Dissidence under Post-Totalitarian Rule 1956-1989* (IB Tauris, 2014), *Networking the Bloc. Experimental Art in Eastern Europe 1965-1981* (MIT Press, 2019). She is currently completing a monograph entitled *Free Movement? Migration and Mobility in Eastern Europe through the Lens of Contemporary Art*.

12:30–13:30 Lunch followed by a tour of the exhibition *The Plastic Body*

13:30–13:50 Film screening: *Memories by Touch, 2024* by Luna Scales (18:50 min)

The video work *Memories by Touch* is based on childhood memories of hospitals and medical examinations, a recurring theme in works inspired by investigations of doctor-patient relationships from a personal as well as broader cultural-historical and ideological perspective. Scales has interviewed four women born with a congenital muscular or neurological diseases. Growing up all four of them were under close medical observation. In the interviews Scales has focused on creating the kind of language used when your body is under constant scrutiny. This creates a narrative that goes beyond the examination room to explore family grief and vulnerability, confrontational encounters with other children, and attempts to exist on the same terms as others. Scales' works are primarily video based. She explores the poetic dimension of diagnostics to create a language that goes beyond the objective science of medicine.

Luna Scales (b. 1992) is a graduate of the Funen Art Academy (BFA, 2016) and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (MFA, 2020). Her works have been exhibited in group shows at Kunsthall NORD in Aalborg, Denmark, ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art in Ishøj, Denmark, and HotDock Project Space in Bratislava. In 2019 she had a solo exhibition at Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm, Sweden. She is the recipient of the Poul Erik Bech Foundation Art Award, the KE Prize, and the Blix Award.

13:55–14:10 Response to *Memories by Touch* (2024)

Ingvil Hellstrand, University of Stavanger

Ingvil Hellstrand (PhD) is associate professor in gender studies at the Department of Media and Social Sciences, University of Stavanger (UiS). Her research is about the connecting lines between narratives, narrative practices and knowledge production. She is particularly interested in how science fiction,

speculative and creative narrative practices can be used to explore issues of power, difference, collectivity and vulnerability in a more-than-human perspective. In 2020-2024 she researched cultural notions of care and technology in the interdisciplinary research project *Caring Futures: Developing Care Ethics for Technology-Mediated Care Practices*.

14:15–14:45 *Women's Performances: Material remains and aftereffects*

Marika Kuzmicz, Arton Foundation

Marika Kuźmicz, PhD, is an art historian, curator, and researcher. She is the main curator of research for the Susch Institute at the Museum Susch. Additionally, she is the dean of the Faculty of Artistic Research and Curatorial Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and lectures at Collegium Civitas in Warsaw. For many years, she has conducted research on Polish art of the 1970s, with a particular focus on advocating for performance, photography, and video art.

14:45–15:00 Conclusive remarks

Coffee break

15:30–16:00 'Prompt' by Weronika M Lewandowska

Multimedia performance

"Hey Siri, do you have a body?" This verse from Lewandowska's spoken word poem became the foundation for the multimedia performance Prompt. In this work, she forecasts the "weather of the future" by crafting "multimodal prompts (metaphors)" that engage in a creative and critical dialogue with artificial intelligence. Through this exploration, she questions whether AI can aid humanity in making better decisions on crucial matters. Can it help us avoid wars or foster global cooperation? Without a biological body, can AI develop a substitute for "embodied memory"?

Weronika M Lewandowska – creator of immersive narratives, poet, performer, and cultural studies PhD. She experiments with interdisciplinary forms of poetry and aims to blur the boundaries between artistic practice and technological innovation. Her poems were published in Romania, Estonia, South Africa, Brasile and Poland. Noccc has been showcased at international festivals and exhibitions, including Palais de Tokyo in Paris. She co-directed the award-winning VR erotic poem Noccc (Nightsss), which premiered at Sundance. She leads workshops in immersive storytelling and creative writing, focusing on innovative media tools that engage the body and enrich narrative experiences.

The seminar is generously supported by Adam Mickiewicz Institute

