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High-rise building under attack

Of **Change Eidsaa Larsen** - 05/12/2016



Hammersborg - Protecting the Bygone Future

Directed by Birgitte Sigmundstad

When Anders Behring Breivik placed a bomb outside Regjeringsbygningen on Hammersborg, then travel to Utøya to kill young people at AUF's summer camp, it was an actual and symbolic attack on the Norwegian social democracy. Government building, which also goes by the name H-block, has since the late 1950s stood as an imposing manifestation of the curator Bente Aas Solbakken at the National Library has called "monumental architecture". Built symbolized social democratic values, stedsbunden rationality, proud bureaucracy, a solid state, collectivism and a restrained optimism in postwar Norway.



In the film *Hammersborg - Protecting the Bygone Future* (2016) analyzes the artist Birgitte Sigmundstad highrises mission statement. She does not stop to give a fuller picture and an interpretation of how past and contemporary political ideals were attacked on 22 July 2011 - work is also a reflection of a modern Norway where certain social values seem faded and threatened.

Life in concrete walls. Sigmundstads film is one of the few documentaries in the Norwegian short film

program at this year's short film festival in Grimstad which impresses with its reflectivity and sense of form - and with its ability to integrate the næranalytiske with the big political.

The work concentrates on the Norwegian architect Erling Viksjø working in Regjeringkvartalet - consisting of the rectangular high-rise and the curved Y-block - and casts cutouts their in buildings forms. A soft voice settles over the static depictions of the unshakeable nature concrete, and breathe life into it. At one moment we are outside and have an overview of the buildings exterior, monumental and sculptural shapes; in the next moment we are in their more intimate space where artistic river rock gravel walls animates the sandblasted concrete walls.

We get an outline of the buildings history and architectural character: the high-rise and Y-block was built in the '50s and '60s to house the Norwegian government, and is, according to the narrator, as a *Gestamtkunstwerk*: a building that materialized egalitarian values in the postwar period. Like so many other architects were Viksjø inspired by the works of the French-Swiss modernist Le Corbusier. In the development of high-rise he an architectural technique that has been described as "sculptural" and that integrated work of art with the building's functionality. This post-war architecture hung according narrated along with the political belief 'progress through reforms and not big jumps. " "There was no shortcut to utopia," she says affirmative, before the cut to a konkylieformet staircase that winds its way up towards the top floor and the white sky light. Viksjø wanted to give material form to "a way forward" rather than utopia. The buildings' natural concrete, material type Viksjø even developed, and that here was first used on a large scale, suggests a human fragility and natural roughness in the monumental, which testifies to the gradual and tentative rather than absolute.

Film - like architecture - is a value-related work with shapes and Hammersborg emerging as a melancholy cast of Viksjø monumental dream.

Change threatening. In the book *House in Oslo* (1971) describes the architect odd brochmann metropolitan area Hammersborg as "a collision of buildings, terrain, streets and conflicting considerations." In Sigmundstads film emerges instead rather as unified and Viksjø work emerges as the dominant centerpiece. But by opening with a picture of restoration cloths covering highrises backing, and a little later give us a skirt closeup one enkeltduk who knocked over by the wind, let Sigmundstad terrorist attack disrupt the peaceful reflection and optimistic "monumentality" that is in the film's portrait. The film's tone A stirring balance between the monumental and fragile, the visionary and melancholic.

Sigmundstad is however not only concerned about terror fact, but is equally concerned that the postwar socialist values are partly Ancients, they quickly became threatened by a new political and cultural mentality. In an "individualistic consumer culture," as the narrator suggests, not associated Viksjø buildings necessarily something positive; one looks closed technocracy where previously so egalitarian bureaucracy.

But Sigmundstads film goes further: Over a naive artworks by Picasso, a preindustrial picture of happiness, she pulls into the plans to demolish the buildings after the terrorist attack (in 2014 it was decided that the high-rise should stand but that the wye block the demolition). For an irony, claims the narrator, if the goal of a right wing extremism and fascist aggression would be consummated by a New Public Management ideology as "putting a price tag on every human choice."

Film - like architecture - is a value-related work with shapes and *Hammersborg* emerging as a melancholy cast of Viksjø monumental dream. As architecture professor Thomas Thiis-Evensen wrote in *Aftenposten* on 13 January 2012, the high-rise with its "white bandage" suddenly "gained attention as a resistance symbol after the terrorist attack." *Hammersborg* continue such thinking, arguing that the building also stands as a more widely resistance symbol - a reminder of our collective roots in an era of individualism and market forces.

A new type of "Oslo-film"? The same forces characterizes film our culture - a film culture where many filmmakers working with advertising to make money and develop. In the film industry often awareness of the vital link between moral and aesthetic values seem to crumble or dumbed down.

This trend was mirrored during this year's documentary film festival in Lviv, where *Cellist* (Kinnerød and Fjellheim, 2015) won the award for best short / medium-term documentary. It's hard to see this film (which

ends with "# Roros") as anything other than a self-love and softcore graphic advertisement for beautiful surroundings and an adorable cellist.

Hammersborg is not a total "free and artistic" short film, but distinguishes itself as a smaller promotional and more reflective and responsible film. According intro texts, there is a mission-based film (from CPH: DOX), and it takes a clear stand that the high-rise symbolizes values that should be defended. As such, and in his "enlightenment embossed" form, it can be said to have points in common with the classic "Oslo films," which had its heyday in the postwar period, and that was of short films about modern life in Oslo. These bar often show signs of being creative like and propagandistic - and although *Hammersborg* to some extent emerges "attitudes", has a far less didactic and more critical and questioning tone than what characterizes them. The film listens to a place rather than selling an idea.

Nevertheless *Hammersborg* possibly be seen as a critical and revitalizing continuation of this tradition - a documentary tradition that was an important part of a social democratic educational project, which promoted the idea of a well-functioning community and a depiction of this for posterity.

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