

AR@K26: Reclaiming art! Creative expression as a building block in our social foundations

Title

The Metahuman Sphinx as Living Collective Consciousness

Abstract

How can creative expression build new social foundations when communities face displacement? This multimedia installation at Interkulturelt Museum transforms a poetic fable into a metahuman sphinx guardian. It embodies community consciousness and tests intentions of those entering Oslo's gentrifying Grønland neighborhood.

Using AI-assisted research and projection mapping, digital artist Rafal Hanzl and spatial designer Jannicke Johansen created this animated cellular-patterned metahuman sphinx emerging in golden light across walls and suspended veils. Unlike passive monuments communities inherit, this sentient being enacts community sovereignty. The cellular pattern represents collective intelligence as a singular guardian.

Utilizing the methodology of "mythological technology", the work reclaims both urban infrastructure and art. It transforms barriers into cultural gateways, challenges the dominant modernization narratives by imagining alternative futures and gazes back at visitors, promoting reciprocal accountability and allowing the visitors to collectively imagine what a just city would be like.

The multimedia installation shows that museums can serve as democratic platforms for multi-voiced civic engagement, providing a replicable methodology that uses immersive experiences to empower the marginalized voices in contested urban areas. The project serves as an example of how artistic expression builds social foundations by transforming everyday infrastructure through mythological reimagining.

Keywords

1. Mythological technology
2. Community sovereignty
3. Immersive media
4. Museum as civic platform

Disciplinary field

Artistic Research / Immersive Media Studies / Cultural Heritage Studies

Format of presentation

Artists Presentation

Name, affiliation, contact information, and a mini-CV

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Rafal Hanzl is digital artist, founder of Extended Media and a visiting researcher at Kristiania University College, specializing in immersive experiences in museums and cultural institutions. He has a PhD in film arts (2017), and was awarded a Norwegian Artistic Research Fellowship in 2019. The current focus of his research includes creating immersive narratives using virtual reality, projection mapping, and spatial visual effects. Some of Rafal's recent projects are reconstructions and multimedia installations of medieval Akershus castle for the Norwegian Armed Forces Museum (2022-2024). Rafal's artistic practice combines the visualization of cultural heritage with extended reality and socially engaged art.

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Jannicke Johansen is an associate professor at Kristiania University's School of Arts, Design & Media. She has an international background in design, architecture and film. Her research area is spatial design, social sustainability, placemaking and the role of art and design in establishing trust and belonging in society. As a practitioner using artistic research, she strives for human-centered creative approaches to technology. Previous AR@K presentations include "Instagram meets Homo Ludens" (2024) "100 HEADS: Screendance, Spherical Filmmaking and Meta-Art" (2022). Jannicke works with film, art and spatial storytelling exploring cultural heritage and community identity within rapidly changing urban environments.