

MOSS, NORWAY

MOMENTUM

Various venues

On view through Oct. 9

CURATORS MARTI MANEN AND

Anne Klontz have organized the tenth edition of Momentum, a biennial dedicated to contemporary art from the Nordic region, around the theme of emotion, attempting to “redefine the possibility of feeling” in an age rife with its algorithmic manipulation by Silicon Valley. Works by twenty-nine artists are installed at Moss’s Galleri F 15 and Momentum Kunsthall, as well as outdoor sites around the city. The show looks to both the past and the present, taking stock of the biennial’s history in honor of its twentieth year. New commissions by artists who have never shown at the biennial before stand alongside works that were included in past editions.

Saskia Holmkvist bridged this temporal gap by writing a new voice-over for her 2009 video *Blind Understanding*. In her commentary, she expresses misgivings about the video, which comprises a single rolling shot of a boat gliding along a river lined with lush, wild overgrowth, and uses metaphors such as bird migration and work songs to explore the xenophobia ignited by the economic recession. While a standard director’s commentary is intended to add to the film’s legacy, Holmkvist leans into her doubts about the naïveté of her earlier output with vulnerability and a sense of humor.

The biennial reflects the challenge of emotionally connecting with others at a time when almost all social exchange is technologically mediated. Some works, especially those motivated by feminist concerns, successfully elicited empathy. For the three-channel video installation *Mama, Dada, Gaga* (2019), Åsa Cederqvist collaborated with her mother and five-year-old daughter on scripted and improvised scenes in which they portray one another before, during, and after their lives together. Through this familial role play, the video expresses a view of motherhood that is at once endearing and uncomfortable, its idiosyncratic nature enhanced by the surreal sculptural landscape – sand piles, fabric-covered intestine-like objects – in which Cederqvist installed the monitors.

Fanny Ollas similarly prompts a range of feelings, from anxiety to calmness, by way of an immersive environment. For *Mental*



Fanny Ollas: *Mental Landscapes: Behind the Red Curtain, Blue Longing, Black Boxes*, 2018, mixed mediums; in Momentum.

Landscapes: Behind the Red Curtain, Blue Longings, Black Boxes (2018), she drew on color therapy principles to select the palette for a series of spaces – a narrow pink hallway leading to a blue room, through which visitors peer into a small black room – that contain her dramatically lit, otherworldly ceramics, some of them slowly moving, such as a blue ball that rotates atop a rock. Ollas hopes that viewers will attribute stories to her scenes and personalities to her objects.

Both Ollas and Cederqvist’s installations are genuinely and refreshingly strange, vibrant and maximal without seeming like Instagram-ready spectacles. They produce uncanny experiences that engage the

audience’s emotions, demonstrating the possibility of human connection that the show’s curators put forth. Other works establish dialogues with and among viewers using more ephemeral mediums. A piece by Ina Hagen invites people on the beach beside Galleri F 15 to sign in to a local area network on their phones and anonymously post messages in a chat room while taking in the surroundings. When I was there, users delighted in their conversations with fellow beach dwellers. Alas, this engagement was only temporary. A poetic reminder of the fleeting present, the program erases each day’s messages, leaving no trace.

—Cecilia