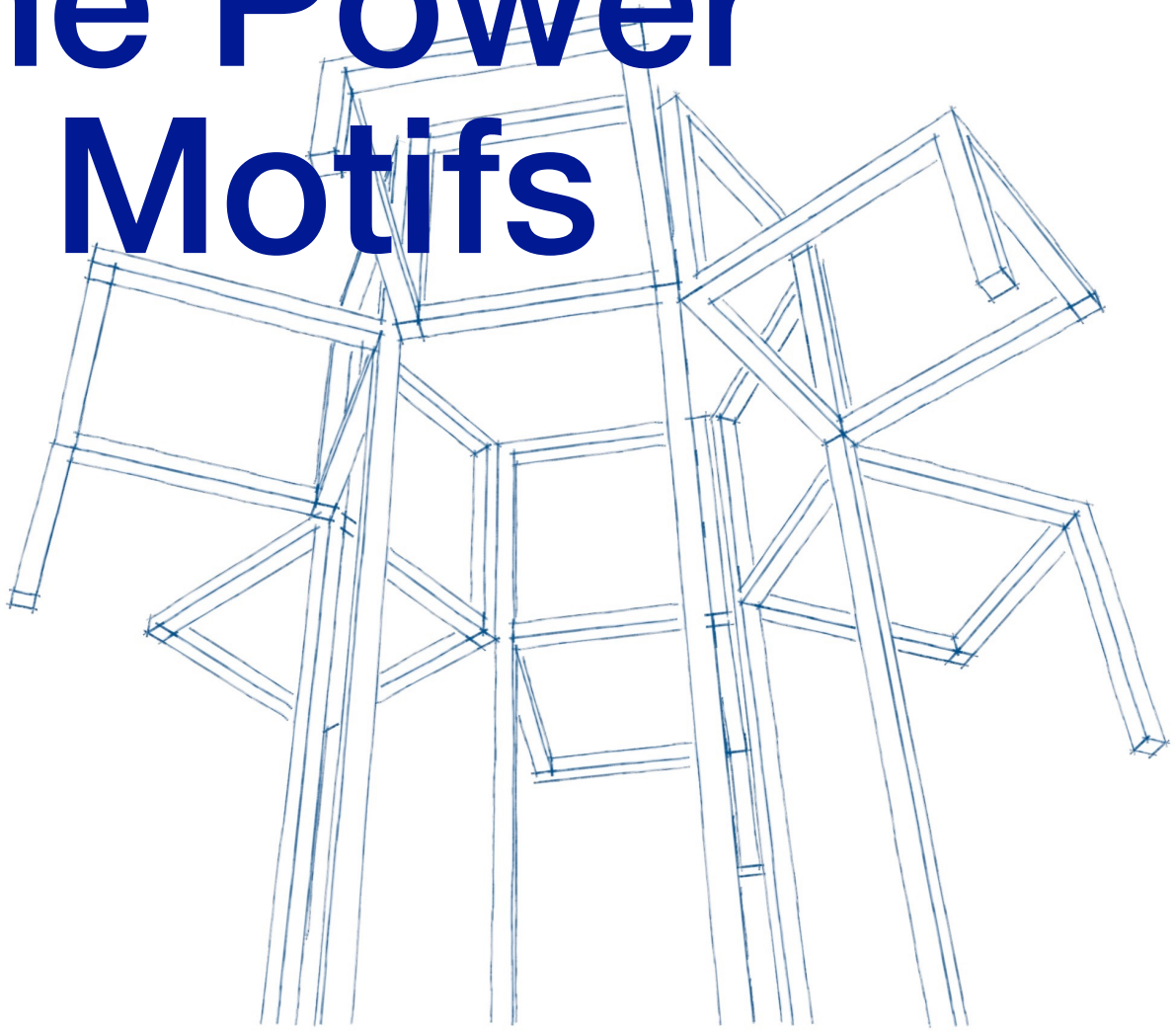


The Power of Motifs



«Portal» sketch for temporary installation in public space © Petrine Vinje 2016

Conference and Public Art Project

September 7–9
2017

University of Oslo

Why do human beings communicate through motifs, symbols and metaphors? What impact do motifs and symbols have on human beings' ability to learn, create and interact?

A combined multidisciplinary conference and the realization of a public art project will be arranged with the intention of discussing *The power of motifs* in different thematic sessions on September 7–9, 2017 in Oslo, Norway.

The aim of the event is to discuss motifs as part of the human faculty of communication – not as separated into communication in different types of media or from different periods of time. Rather, patterns which unite historical and contemporary communication will be explored.

Religious and social political topics, including gender perspectives, will serve as an overarching framework for the examination. Different scholarly and artistic methods will be used in order to investigate the role of motifs in the intersection of different periods and modes of expression. The integration of an art exhibition will be important for the exploration of the themes through visual, auditive and tactile senses.

We hereby invite you to contribute to this event.

Part I: Biological perspectives, understanding the human way of communication

In this thematic section we will explore human communication through motifs and signs, in which senses, emotions and the inner self (*autopoiesis*) are activated. Through perspectives of biosemiotics, philosophy, neurobiology and neuroscience we will explore the nature of signs and the communication of signs as a biological phenomenon.

Part II: Communication of motifs and its social consequences

Motifs and symbols are often bearers of strong ideological, political and religious content. The meaning and symbolical horizon of a motif reflect relations to humans, things and nature. We will explore the social impact of tangible/entangled motifs from a gender, religious, and power-related perspective. From strict patterns to perverted distortions – the range of associations for an ideal motif seems to be unlimited.

Part III: Remembrance and storage of motifs: historical and futuristic

How do particularly successful symbolical motifs influence our understanding of the past and the present? Will they also affect the future transmission of motifs? In several humanistic fields, e.g. studies related to the Viking and Medieval periods, certain motifs (preserved in visual sources) have obtained an outstanding position in understanding the past. Taking into consideration the emergence of new medias in today's society we will ask if also new modes of transmissions of past and present could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of reality.

Part IV: Art and science

Through analyses of female representations in Marian Motifs and relations to classical artistic topics such as body in space, we wish to explore how art and science can complement and nourish each other. This part of the conference will unfold through a sitespecific installation in public space, readings, film screenings and performances.

Background

The conference and art project, *The Power of Motifs*, will be the final event of my ongoing postdoctoral project *Marian Words & Marian Images. Motifs of Spiritual and Intellectual Mediation*. In this project I analyse mediation of Marian motifs with different symbolical values. Throughout history Marian motifs have been used with spiritual, political and intellectual purposes. A survey of the development in Marian motifs will serve as a base for discussing these overarching perspectives concerning the communication of motifs. Furthermore, the focus on Mary provides a historical platform for investigation of how modern gender issues and female rhetoric is part of a chain of historical debates. The Marian perspectives will be reflected in parts of the conference, and will partly serve as a theme for the associated performance- and filmprogram in the art project, also including a temporary installation on the University's premises (artist/curator: Petrine Vinje).

