



ONLY MANKIND MAKES STRAIGHT LINES

24 November 2018 – 13 January 2019

Lise Amundsen / Eyvind Solli Andreassen / Lissette Escobar / Anneke von der Fehr / Ellen Grieg / Carl Martin Hansen / Mattias Härenstam / Johannes Block Hellum / Karina Herteig / Aleksander Jæger / Ervin Løffler / Henry Moore / Knut Odden / Aase Texmon Rygh / Thor Sandborg / Martin Stråhle / Hanne Tyrmi

Curator: Silja Leifsdottir

We are pleased to present this group exhibition themed on the concept of biomorphism.

Biomorphism is a movement in modern Western art history that can be claimed to have existed since the early 1900s and up to our own era's neo-materialism. By exploring biomorphism as a context and common term for all the artists participating in this exhibition, the aim is to build a bridge between different generations and traditions in Norwegian sculptural history.

'Biomorphism' was first used by the anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon in 1895, as an umbrella term for anything that represented a living organism. It was thereafter picked up by Alfred Barr, in his catalogue text for the highly influential exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* at MoMA in 1936. Today, the term is used to point to things resembling or suggesting forms of living organisms, or which have an organic visual language. It is thus a relatively inclusive concept covering every manmade thing that resembles nature – including humans themselves.

In the last decade, new themes and tendencies have emerged in contemporary art that can be said to be in opposition to the neo-conceptual and text-based art of the 1990s. In neo-materialism, artists re-engage with traditional philosophical questions about nature versus human activity. Concepts such as 'object-oriented ontology' and 'speculative realism' try to give us a new understanding of material reality; this is a reality in which human beings are no longer the measure of all things, but one of many elements in a large eco-system where everything that is real can be seen as an autonomous object, with ontological status equal to that of all other objects. A dream or myth can thus be viewed as just as much an object as is a chair, and a physical movement or a human being can be seen on the same ontological level as a tree in the woods.

Even though the claim of the exhibition title – that ONLY MANKIND MAKES STRAIGHT LINES – is a truth with modifications, it gives a hint about the shared visual characteristics of the exhibited works at the same time as suggesting the artists' shared interest in exploring intuitive, romantic, mystical and organic phenomena more than that which is pragmatic, structural, straight-lined and intellectual.