



In this home-vernissage, we have created an occasion for the visitors to discuss ornaments—intended and ephemeral—in aspects that are linked to their possible place-making function. The vernissage takes place in Idungate 3b Thursday June 1st 2023 at 17:00-19:00 hours (instructions below). HULIAS is hosting the event, on the background that Bjørn Blikstad (designer) has previously exhibited elements of his PhD work, in the gallery space.

As he was about to submit the work and reflection for his PhD in artistic research, furniture designer Bjørn Blikstad accepted a commission in the kitchen of his mentor. The brief: *make a side-table with overarching shelves and a built-in element from an old hospital apothecary (Ullevål)*. At HULIAS we decided that we would host a *vernissage* outside the premises of the gallery, to tease out insights on *place-making* that are more striking in a *home* than in a gallery. For the obvious reason that a home is dedicated to place-making, while the gallery is rather dedicated to events.

Though the HULIAS gallery in Maridalsveien 3 focuses on spatially oriented practices—verging unto artistic research—none of the exhibits hosted in the space are functionally dedicated to domestic placemaking. It is a *public space* weft into the city-plan of Oslo: it is a witness of rock and clay; of solid and slippery foundations. The point of going home with Blikstad is linked to his work-in-progress with his PhD project *Level up*, exhibited in the HULIAS space May 8th through 30th in 2021. At that time, our house-critic Igory Mansotti pointed the relevance of the provenance.

Not only Blikstad's forays from the steles of Greek antiquity, through Tilman Riemenschneider's *furry* Magdalene of Münnernstadt back to the early Egyptian mythic symbolism of Taweret—the *hippo-crocodile-lion mother*—but also to the fact that much of the work was done at Blikstad's home in Trysil (owing to the lockdown during the pandemic). In this exhibit we are moving the question. Instead of asking *wherefrom?* we are now asking *whereto?* As of this date, there is no PhD in furniture design. And so we ask: how does artistic research articulate, for instance, in a *home*?



Homage to Igory Mansotti—Bjørn Blikstad: side-board with inbuilt chest of drawers from a hospital apothecary of yore, with robust shelves. Light parts (fir): rubbed with chestnut stain. Dark parts (oak): treated with *tincture*.

The piece (left) is called *homage to Igory Mansotti*. It is made from materials left over from Blikstad's PhD project. This was not done from environmental concerns mainly, but to frame the work within the resource management of a regular workshop where something like this could have come out. The woodwork is mainly in fir. The lighter parts are rubbed with walnut stain. The darker elements are oak tinted with a tincture of steel-wool and vinegar. The carved ornamental work in the piece are restricted to such blacked ebony-like areas: they are *almost* invisible. They are counter-balanced of the number of asymmetric elements featuring in the homage. It seeks and invents the *resident principles*.

This is a term coined by British *joiner*—furniture and interior designer—Norman Potter, whose *literalist* precepts (1990) always recommends a *fresh start*, but proceeds in § 2-3 of a list of 20 precepts enjoining the designer to: “2. Seek always the resident principles; 3. Find them where they belong—in the job itself.” Though he thereby formulates the *invention* of resident principles, as they are intercepted and moved on to the job, of which he shows different examples (notably in two *kitchens*; one in London, one in a cottage, advocating

the kitchen as a place to be). At the vernissage we want to propose a discussion based on this.

We wish to explore the possibility of a *functional*—rather than added—definition of *ornaments*. That is, to explore options *alternative* to ornaments as a decorative *add-on*, accused by e.g. Adolf Loos (1908), and that the degenerative implications he points out, might be linked to degenerative aspects of design-practices, rather than to ornamentation *itself*. Instead, we want to discuss the ornamental affordance to *hold-in-pattern* such aspects of the site, location and place that regularly escape us, because they define one step off of what is functionally linked to our bodies.

That is, the qualities of the site, location and place that are *not* body-centric, but are still essential to bring out spatial qualities of what we would call a *home*. Including the myths, fetiches and ghosts that [Antonio Artaud](#) located at *bottom* of the theatre stage. The *homage to Igory Mansotti* is located in a kitchen with profiled wall-boards of unequal breadth as the oldest elements in the kitchen. Next to the drawers from the apothecary. The flooring and the *Kvik* kitchen are new. The homage is the newest element; though it comes out in the ensemble as the most established one.

It intercepts qualities of the space that without it would not have been manifest, but buried in the depths of potential and possibilities of what is already there. We ask: is the ornamental function restricted to the carvings in the darkened fir? Or, are the carvings what permits the rhythmic events—created between the bottom of the *homage* and the panel—to define a precinct *beyond* the *functional* perimeter of the human body? Does the ornamental function allow its users to occupy a space that *exceeds* their biological time-span, and defines them properly as *dwellers*?

Does the ornamental function extend to *scan*, *intercept* and *frame* the interplay of other elements—for instance how the thickness of the boards will refer to a bigger kitchen, or shop-keeping functions, consistent with the origin of the drawers from the commercial space of an apothecary? Would we readily pick up on other reverberations of *consistency* between non-same elements in the homage's construction, without the ornamental pitch: which, when functionally defined, may be to remove the work one step off functionalities limited to and defined by the human body?

Here we are clearly pledged to discuss the co-existence in the world of a *variety* of bodies: the human body being only one of them. The qualities previously spotted by Mansotti as: “spectres and hauntings, beginnings and endings, things lost, and legacies that last and linger, words that do not stick, but work like shafts to weapons that do not show.” These are qualities that Mansotti associates with *mountain-passes*—such as Casera Kanin, where he comes from, in the Friuli mountains—which we could begin discussing in relation to homes, view in a new/different way.

Indeed, should we continue to consider homes as domestic isolates/enclosures? Or, could they be seen as something closer to Mansotti's mountain-passes? Could we see them as a kind of *crossroads*, where social *encounters* become organised according to the *task* and the *occasion*? In all likelihood, the pandemic/lockdown reset our homes—repurposed as offices—as the traffic light of mediated alignments between materials found and marks made? Perhaps we do not need

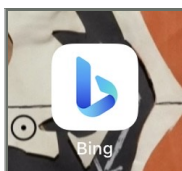
to become more intelligent, but rather become *clever* in a new way? Bjørn Blikstad asks in his works.

“Igory Mansotti is a writer and philosopher who explores the hidden dimensions of art, culture and history. He writes with a sharp and poetic style, drawing on his diverse background and influences. He is not afraid to confront the dark and scandalous aspects of human nature, and to question the role of guilt, blame and sarcasm in our society. He collaborates with artists and curators to create immersive and provocative experiences that invite the visitors to become witnesses of their own entrapment and escape. He is currently working on a project about taweret, a hybrid creature from ancient Egyptian mythology that embodies both protection and predation.”

“More like furniture that comes with life-ways, winds and trade. Certainly not art.” Mansotti wrote of his work. To discuss these matters from a piece of paper evidently will *not* do. Maybe even the paper is counter-productive. Maybe we best could receive you June 1st 2023 at 17:00-19:00 hours *without* any statement. If you are of that heart, *then burn after reading!* We want the question to be raised: someone has asked it, and it is now *out there*.

Because there might be a role in artistic research to relocate the options we have in the contemporary society.

With more limited resources than before, we cannot limit ourselves to being inventive *pathfinders*. We have to engage with *goalseeking*. What, under the circumstance, can we and do we want to do? Do we imagine that we going to do the same, only less of it? Or, what can we do to evolve humanly, environmentally and strategically as members of the contemporary society pledged to design?



Igory Mansotti
BIO