Circle 1: Place of Heritage in Interdisciplinarity – Uses of Heritage

Negotiating Sámi culture heritage in Norwegian spaces: the case of the National Museum in Oslo, the Nordic Pavilion and the Sámi Landscape

Solveig Vanniez-Salvesen

In 2022, the New National Museum in Oslo opened, the new museum and building would consolidate the Museum of Art and Industry, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the National Gallery. The museum, aside from its permanent collection, bought Maret Anne Sara's *Pile O'Sápmi* that is now exhibited at the entrance of the museum. The original piece was made up of 200 reindeer heads that were placed outside Inner Finnmark district Court in 2016. The art piece was made in protest of government forced slaughtering of reindeer and the general government policies limiting Sámi reindeer herders in their practice. The piece as of today is under a 10-year contract at the National Museum in Oslo. The conditions stipulate that the piece cannot be put in storage, and if so, it would automatically be sent back to a Sámi institution. This contract is said to have been inspired and structured through a dialogue between Maret Anne Sara and Māori communities.

In April of the same year, 2022, the Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Biennale was transformed into the Sámi Pavilion. This project was commissioned by the Office of Contemporary Art Norway exhibiting three Sámi Artist, Pauliina Feodoroff, Máret Ánne Sara and Anders Sunna. The transformation of the Nordic Pavilion to the Sámi Pavilion shows the acknowledgment of Nordic countries, specifically Norway, the art and sovereignty of the Sámi Indigenous community. However, it also puts into question the role and agency of Nordic states and Sámi communities acknowledging those claims outside of the space of the Biennale.

Lastly, in March 2023 marked 500 days of the Supreme Court in Norway ruled the project of the windfarm in Fosen illegal as the project "infringes the reindeer herders right to cultural practice". Since the ruling in October 2021 there has been no changes to the status wind farm in Fosen. The Norwegian government and Fosen Vind have failed to provide a solution after the court ruling. The project remains as is, and not only poses a threat to cultural and language practices in the area but also other parts of Sápmi that might be used for other sustainable energy ventures pushed by the Norwegian government.

The three cases propose a space in which there is a negotiation of Sámi culture in a Norwegian space. For this research I would like to focus on four actors that can be identified in all 3 cases, *governmental institution, Sámi cultural advocates, external observers,* and *space*. All four of the actors play a role to a certain extent in the negotiation of exhibition and narrative of Sámi culture in these given spaces. Through this research, I want to identify the position and agency of these actors within the different case studies.

In the case of the National Museum in Oslo, I would like to investigate the process of acquiring the art piece, *Pile O'Sápmi*, the different people involved but also how different actors interact with the art

piece as it stands now. This would also help in identifying what kind of culture and heritage claims, as well as political claims, are made in terms of exhibiting this contemporary Sámi protest art in the Norwegian National Museum today.

A similar approach would be utilized in the case of the Sámi Pavilion, although the actors could have similar claims to heritage and culture. The function of those claims and to whom would be different under the limited time and space frame of Biennale 2022. However, identifying the different relationships, actions and networks could also put forth the types of heritage, culture and political claims that are made in a transnational space outside of Norway.

Lastly, the Sámi landscape would focus on the case of Fosen Vind and the way that also non-human actors are involved in the process of culture, heritage, and political claims. I would also like to put this analysis in dialogue with Harrison's notions of "alternative heritage ontologies" and "ontological plurality". Through this, I hope to bring to light some of the ways that culture and heritage claims are made in the Sámi and Norwegian context, what kind of networks and claims are created through this negotiation.

Selected sources

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