

Assessing Gender in Place and Time

How to evaluate Gender Aspects of Works of Art in Public Places

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How can gender aspects of works of art in public places be described, analysed, interpreted and evaluated? In this article these questions will be discussed in relation to a study which examines gender aspects of works of art in public places and deals with the question of if, where and when the official Swedish policy of gender equality has been implemented. The study was started in 1999 and some preliminary results from it will illustrate concepts, categories and methods presented in the following discussion.

The discussion here will thus focus on the main questions to be raised in a study of this kind and it will introduce some theoretical and methodological tools, some of which will be applied to concrete examples of works of art in public places.

By public places is here meant streets, squares, parks, schoolyards and other places accessible to the public. Public places are, briefly, outdoor places which you are confronted with when walking in a town or a city.

The discussion is thus limited to public places in the stipulated sense and to the Swedish society, but

the approach presented here can be used more widely. The concepts, categories and methods suggested are also applicable to other kinds of public places and to other societies or cultures.

Works of art in public places as an expression of gender norms

The design of public places with works of art is connected with various forms of power, i.e. the power of landowners, financiers, builders, artists and users. Sometimes private enterprises, foundations and even individuals have influenced the design of places by means of donations. However, it is political bodies and official institutions which have exercised and still exercise much influence on the design of public places with works of art. This fact has certain consequences for the choice of the design and work of art. Usually, this choice is limited by prevalent opinions of what is suitable; representations which public opinion may consider extreme are avoided. The motif of the work of art is often a person, an activity or a pheno-

menon which is well known and thought to be worthy of manifestation. In general the design of the public place and the work of art can be seen as expressing both influential power structures and prevailing ideas of society and culture. This includes ideals and norms of gender.

Changes of gender ideology in Sweden

During the 20th century Swedish society passed through important changes in the relationships between men and women. At a very general level the development can be described as a change towards more equality. Women have acquired access to education, paid employment and political representation under the same formal conditions as men. Women's average level of education is now higher than men's, most women have paid work and women's representation in political assemblies have considerably increased during the last decades.

Higher education and labour market are, however, still very sex segregated. Salary differences remain and women combine paid employment with care of children and home, while men combine paid employment with economic, political and union power. From an ideological point of view the development can nevertheless be described as a gradual change from a society defending sex segregation towards a society with sex equality as a norm. It is in fact possible to see the period from the 1930s to the 1960s as a period characterised by a gender ideology according to which the man is breadwinner and the woman is housewife and mother. This prevailing norm was also largely manifested in real social relations between men and women.

This gender ideology, however, was met with a lot of tensions and challenges and after a period of transition in the 1960s a new period began. The state was increasingly propagating an equality policy; both husband and wife should be at the labour market and they should share responsibilities for children and home. Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for men and women should now be a goal for all political reform activity (Hirdman 1990, 2000, Hageman&Åmark 2000). According to the national plan of equality policy from 1994 a gender perspective should be app-

lied to all policy areas. Thus, the change of the official ideology at the national level has been strong since the 1960s. This does not exclude, however, that there has been and still are great variations within the country. In many regions traditional gender ideology has very slowly changed and remains even today. And within a region different localities may be at different stages of development (Forsberg 1997, Johansson 2000).

Two hypotheses

Considering the fact that the works of art in public places can be seen as expressing, among other things, influential norms of gender, an examination of gender aspects of works of art in such places can preferably be related to the development just described. Given the change of the official gender ideology it is interesting to raise the question whether this change has somehow manifested itself in the works of art in such places. Since political bodies and official institutions have exercised a large influence on the design of these places, it could be expected that the ideological change has had some effects. Has the new national policy been implemented? If so, how, where and when? Are there temporal and regional variations?

Hence, two hypotheses seem interesting to examine:

1. Before 1960 there is a stronger and more extensive gendering of the works of art in public places than after 1960.
2. Within a region different local gender contracts are expressed in the works of art in public places.

Examining gender aspects of works of art in public places – important questions and regional demarcation

An examination of gender aspects of works of art in public places preferably starts from certain questions. The answer to these questions should provide a picture of the gender aspects. For that purpose the following three main questions seem clearly important:

1. To what degree are man and woman made visible through art?
2. How are man and woman represented through art?
3. How are gendered works of art in public places

interpreted by users?

Since the study which is the basis of this article also aims at examining the relationships between gender aspects of works of art in public places and the official gender ideology of Sweden, there are two further main questions which seem highly relevant:

4. What have been the intentions of the decision makers influencing the design of the public places and the works of art?
5. Has the official Swedish policy of gender equality been implemented?

To examine gender aspects of public places with works of art at a national level, i.e. to carry out an investigation over a whole country, is however very time consumptive. For practical reasons it is clearly necessary to limit the material of an examination of this kind geographically. For instance, a specific region or some specific regions of the country can be chosen. It is essential, however, that the selected region or regions contain a lot of localities exhibiting differences of economic life and local history. In the study here referred to the material is confined to a certain region in the middle of Sweden, the province of Gävleborg. This region contains many communities, from a city of about 90.000 inhabitants to small towns of about 10.000 inhabitants. Within this region a further selection of localities has then been made. These contain a number of public places with works of art and exhibit the kind of differences mentioned. These differences concern e.g. agriculture, forestry, kinds of industry, trade, schools and education, level of administration or service. The presumption is that there have been and still may be different or partly different local gender contracts with the power of influencing the design of public places with works of art.

Documentation and quantitative analysis

The examination of the gender aspects necessarily starts by a documentation. This means that public places with works of art are photographed and described with respect to their origins and development. Of course, it is desirable that this documentation is total, i.e. the researchers trace and register all public places

with works of art, in the sense stipulated, within the chosen region. For practical reasons, however, the documentation can be limited to localities having a certain amount of public places with works of art.

This documentation finished a quantitative analysis of the material is needed in order to answer the first question formulated above. Thus, the attempt is made to arrive at an assessment of the proportion of women and men, respectively, made visible in the public places. The works of art are categorized as to whether they represent a man (men), a woman (women) or a man and a woman (men and women). These are the essential categories in this part of the investigation. The objects falling under these categories are then further described in terms of age, social class/position, profession/work or occupation.

In this part of the examination the key concept is biological sex and the main classification is dichotomous, man or woman. The object may, however, also be classified as indeterminate from the aspect of biological sex (or as androgynous). Though the concept of biological sex is not totally stable, – among other things it is related to scientific definitions, which may vary historically and culturally – this concept is not further analysed in the study in question.

The quantitative analysis results in a measure of the proportion of men and women, respectively, made visible in public places. This will be an important conclusion of the analysis and gives an answer to the first question above. However, the analysis also shows to what degree men and women of different ages are represented as well as to what extent men and women are represented in a context of working life and occupation. Moreover, the proportion of phenomena, other than human beings, represented and the proportion of abstract works of art are measured.

Since the study here referred to aims at assessing gender both in place and time, the quantitative analysis cannot stop at this point, however. The time axis has to be introduced and local variations must be observed. This means a temporal classification of the objects and a subsequent comparative temporal analysis. To this must be added an examination of objects from different localities with the region in order to find out



whether they express local variations of gender contracts. The result of this further analysis will shed light on the two empirical hypotheses above.

It should be noted that there are certain problems of classification which the researchers have to deal with in an examination of this kind. In some cases it is not easy to decide which category a piece of art belongs to. Michael Beck's sculpture "The reunion/Återföreningen/", from 1988, in Gävle, the biggest city of the chosen region, certainly gives the impression of a meeting between a man and a woman. (See Fig. 1) But is that for sure? And is the tallest figure a man and the other a woman? This work may perhaps be interpreted as two people of the same sex or as gender neutral ghosts.

Moreover, since the borderline between objects

representing human beings and abstract objects is not completely sharp, the researchers may meet with difficulties of classification. For instance, a work of art of K G Bejemark named "Female torso/Kvinnotorso", attached to a wall of a school in Bollnäs, one of the towns investigated in the study, requires a careful examination in order to find subtle tracks of a female body; one can easily pass the place without noticing anything but an arrangement of abstract forms.

A work of art may also have human beings as a very small part of the message. In the study in question all works of art where persons can be recognised, however small, have been categorised as to whether they represent a man (men), a woman (women) or a man and a woman (men and women).

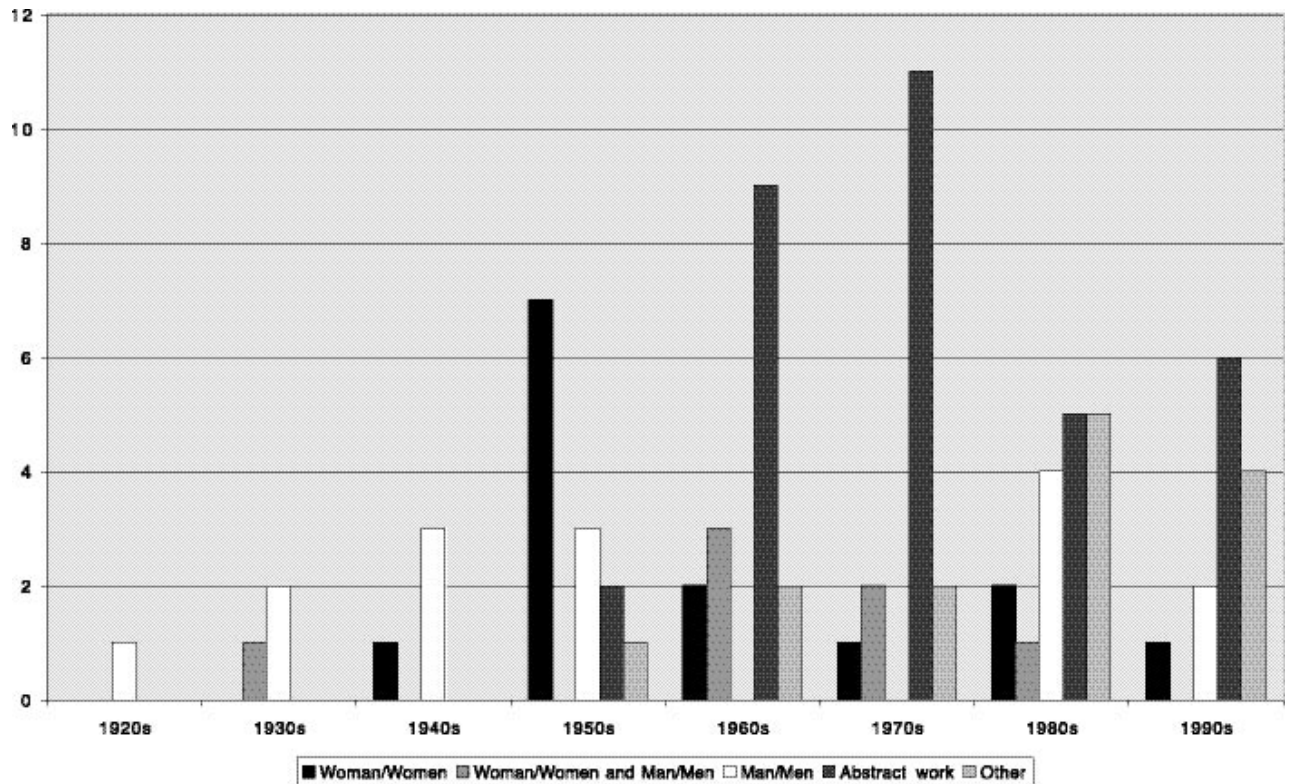
Finally, there are problems arising from the fact that works of art may be created at one time and put up and arranged at a place much later. Statues may also be moved and rearranged. In such cases the main rule in the study has been to classify a work according to the time it was put in the place.

Illustrating examples

To illustrate the quantitative approach some results from the study which is the basis of this article shall be presented. Public places with works of art in the city of Gävle, which has about 90.000 inhabitants, have been documented and classified. Gävle is the oldest city in the north of Sweden and has long been a center for regional administration, trade and education. It has a large harbour and several industries.

All objects originating from 1920 up till now have been included and the documentation was finished the 1st of October, 2000. The reason for choosing 1920 as a historical limit is that the study is related to the development of gender ideology in Sweden and aims at testing the first hypothesis formulated above. There are also very few objects originating before 1920 in the city.

The objects have been classified in five categories: objects representing only a man (men), only a woman (women), both man (men) and woman (women), objects representing things, other than human beings (for instance, animals, stones, trees) and, finally, abstr-



ract objects.

Diagram 1 gives a chronological picture of the objects along the time axis from 1920 till 2000.

What is the general impression of the period 1920–2000? Some general features can first be noted. Before the 1960s works of art in public places in Gävle were rather few. Moreover, from the 60s there is a striking increase in abstract objects; abstract art had obviously become popular. There is also an increase in art depicting other things than human beings.

Considering the whole period there are at large two kinds of works of art showing men, one depicting the honourable man, whose deeds are wellknown and the other exposing men occupied in heavy physical work or sports. Women are represented as more idle, often passive, standing or lying and they are related to children. Generally, men are represented as acting, women as non-acting, men are dressed, women are undressed. There are however a few works depicting women engaged in physical activities: “Diana hunting/Diana på

jakt/”, “Hunting girl/Jaktflicka” and a young girl holding a ball. But during the whole period there is only one work depicting a woman, known for her professional work.

In the 1920s a sculpture was erected to the memory of the Swedish king Gustav Vasa and the fact that Gävle was the first city in Sweden supporting him in 1521, in the uproar against the Danish king. In 1938 a mythological sculpture with Loke, a musculus man, was donated to the city and a bust of a famous politician, Fabian Månsson, was erected in a central place in 1939. The same year a relief in granite displaying a halfnaked woman in the front of a boat with a man at helm was attached to the wall of the museum. The 1940s, however, brought a bust of a woman, Karolina Själander, known and honoured for founding a school of girls.

During the 1950s several works depicted women, most of them naked or half-naked nymphs and goddesses. Works displaying men contained one sculpture depicting a wellknown citizen, one representing

Gävle

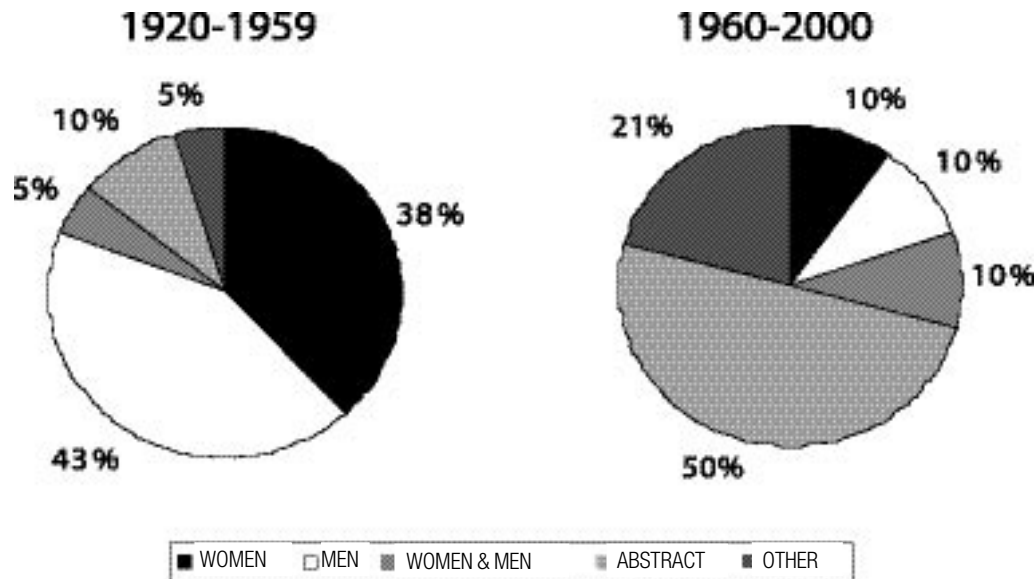


Diagram 2. Gävle: works of art in public places, 1920–2000.

a musculus worker and still one representing a sportsman. A couple of abstract works appeared in the 1950s for the first time.

Did the next decade, the 1960s, bring about any change? As noted abstract art became dominating. Furthermore, another naiad was added through donation – the work itself however dates from an earlier period, being created in 1916. There are a few works depicting both men and women. One of them is named “To the honour of labour/Till arbetets lov/” showing a man with a tool and a woman carrying a small child. This scene is a good illustration of the gender contract earlier mentioned in this article and which emphasises man as breadwinner and woman as taking care of home and children. According to Hirdman’s analysis the years 1930–60 can be described as the period of the housewife contract, a period, which, after a transitional change in the decade 1950–1960, is followed by the period of the equality contract (Hirdman 1990).

There are, however, also two examples in the 1960s easily connected to another gender contract characterised by equal status, both depicting children playing

with each other. In one of these two boys and two girls stretch up their hands to reach a ball. All children are of the same height and seem to be equally strong; the girls wear skirts and the boys have shorts but the clothes cover their bodies to almost the same degree.

What happens after the transition period of the 1960s, i.e. during the period of the equality contract? First it is to be noted that works of art representing men become more varied. There are some works showing men in low-status occupations, e.g. a clown, an old man with a goat and a shepherd boy. Second, it is interesting to note that there is no such variation with respect to works of art depicting women. Instead two more naiads, one goddess and a mother with child are added.

Of the works exhibiting both men and women some works expressing traditional gender contracts are added. A large work consisting of four pylons with reliefs is created in 1973 at the main square in the city. Both men and women are seen, but women are few and in subordinate positions. All leaders and persons with high status are men. The same tendency can be seen in a sculptural work at another square; it depicts

Sandviken

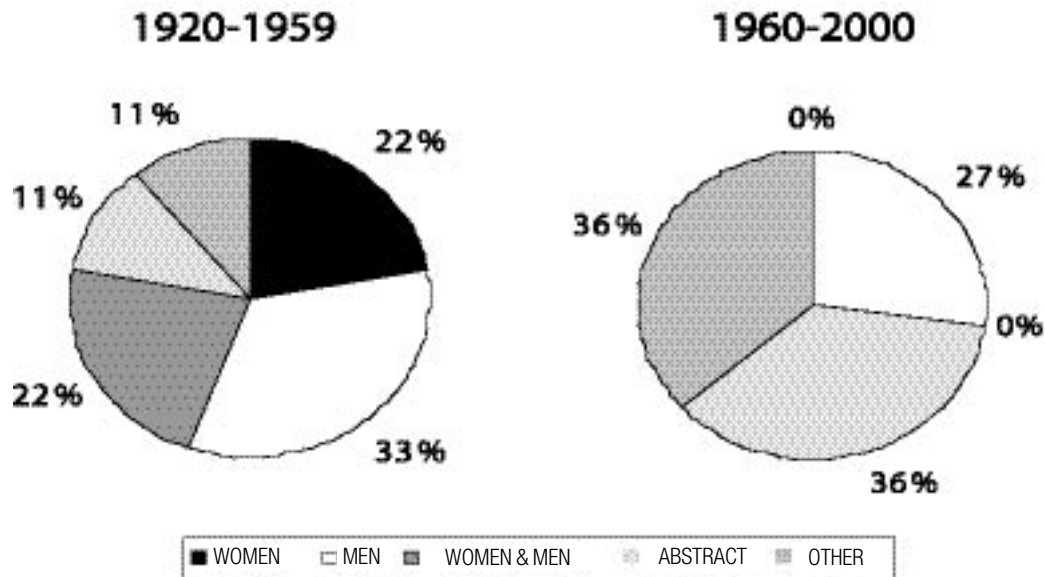


Diagram 3. Sandviken: proportions of works of art in public places, 1920–1959 and 1960–2000.

a man, an agitator talking to a group of listening men and women. And in 1984 a work “Nostalgia/Nostalgj” is put up which depicts a family in old-fashioned clothes; the man is resting on the lawn, his wife and child are standing together at some distance from him. There is only one work, depicting dancing boys and girls, which does not preserve forms of traditional gender contracts.

Comparisons between Gävle and Sandviken

The city of Gävle can be compared to Sandviken, with about 40.000 inhabitants and only 20 kilometres from Gävle. This city, which was founded in the middle of the 19th century around an ironwork, has a strong tradition of steel industry and is in many ways a contrast to Gävle. The economic life is dominated by a now modern industrial export company and with respect to administration, culture and education the city is dependent on and overshadowed by the much larger Gävle.

Various kinds of comparisons can be made between the two cities. Considering the changes of gender ideology at the official level in Sweden it is interesting to

compare the situation before and after the transition period in the 1960s. The following diagrams, which show the proportions between the five categories, indicate both similarities and differences.

Diagram 2 shows the proportions for the period from 1920 till 1959 and the proportions for the period after 1959 with respect to Gävle. Diagram 3 gives the same type of data with respect to Sandviken.

Considering the case of Gävle diagram 2 demonstrates the clear dominance of works of art representing human beings in the first period. In the latter period however abstract art and art representing other things than human beings are the larger categories; in fact half of the works created and erected at public places in this period is abstract. Thus there has been a strong percentage increase in art not representing human beings. This means that with respect to many objects from this latter period the question of gender aspects (as this question is understood here) is not relevant. With respect to works of art representing human beings it can be noted that the categories only man and only woman are almost equally large in

both periods. The category man and woman is however larger in the second period and for this period the three categories man, woman, man and woman are in fact equally large.

As is seen from diagram 3 there is also in Sandviken a significant increase in works of art that are abstract or represent other things than human beings. This is of course an important similarity between the two cities. But in the case of Sandviken a striking fact appears by comparing the period before and after the 1960s: In the first period all three categories man, woman, man and woman are represented. In the second period, however, only the category man is left. Hence, after the period of ideological transition those works of art which have been erected depicting human beings only depict men! The quantitative analysis indicates then that the change of the official gender ideology has in no way been implemented in the design of public places with works of art in the case of Sandviken. On the contrary, the male gendering (in this quantitative sense) has proportionally got stronger.

To this could be added that of those three works of art which represent men and which have been erected during the latter period two are placed in the most frequented street of the city. One is a sculpture depicting three men, and the other is a set of five objects. These five objects show no less than nine men. According to a terminology later introduced in this article this implies a strong male gendering of the works of art in public places and this, of course, gives further support to the conclusion above.

Finally, the findings which have been made in the case of Gävle and which concern the depicted persons' occupation, status and activity can also be made with respect to Sandviken. From the earlier period there are for instance some sculptures depicting important men, viz. the founder of the iron industry and, in the church park, the "apostle of the North", and in the latter period the men represented are all related to some work or occupation. The works of art depicting women represent naked women, a naked, young girl in the middle of a pond and three naked women picking apples.

Thus according to this analysis it seems that there

are certain similarities between the two cities, but there are also important differences. In the case of Sandviken the male gendering of works of art in public places is, in quantitative terms, more dominating and this may suggest a difference in local gender contracts between the two cities. However, as has been noted above, the tendency to preserve traditional gender contracts appear to be strong in Gävle, even in the last three decades.

Introducing new concepts and qualitative methods

A quantitative analysis of the kind just described clearly gives certain interesting results. However, it cannot answer the second question raised in this study, i.e. the question about the way in which man and woman is represented through the works of art in public places. To answer this question the categories above and the quantitative methods are clearly not sufficient. A set of key concepts must be developed and different qualitative methods should be introduced.

Gender and gendered have been chosen as the main concepts in this part of the investigation. Gender is then taken to refer to categories which are socially constructed but which nevertheless are related to biological sex. What is investigated is whether a work of art in a public place expresses some form of masculinity, femininity or some other form of gender, and how this gender can be more exactly specified. In general the specification of a certain gender deals with corporal and mental features, behaviour and activity, attributes and symbols etc.

A suitable terminology in terms of gendered is also introduced. The description of a work of art in a public place as gendered means that it expresses some form of (specified) masculinity or femininity or some other form of (specified) gender, or possibly several forms of gender. If the work of art does not express some form of (specified) gender it is said to be gender neutral.

However, the concept of gendered is not uncomplicated. In the kind of investigation here discussed it is important to understand this concept as a related concept. It is related in a threefold way.

The work of art in a public place can be gendered according to the intention of the decision makers. The

work of art has then been created with the intention of expressing some form of gender. Naturally, a work of art in a public place may also be created with the intention of being gender neutral or without any intentions about gender at all.

The way in which the observer or user interprets a work of art in a public place may of course differ from the intention of the decision makers. For instance, a work of art in a public place which according to the creator is gender neutral can by an observer or user be interpreted as gendered. The work of art is then gendered according to the observer or user.

Finally, a work of art in a public place can be gendered according to the analysis made by the researchers. For instance, the researchers may come to the conclusion that the work of art in a public place expresses a specific form of femininity. This specific form of being gendered need not correspond to any of the forms of being gendered mentioned above.

Works of art in public places can also be gendered at different degrees of strength, varying from being weakly gendered to being strongly gendered. (The concept of degrees of strength is inspired by Thurén 1996 and her discussion of gender aspects.) This strength is a function of several factors: the clearness of the form of gender, if there are many or few women and men, respectively, if there are many or few attributes or features. In cases where there is a relationship between a man and a woman the strength is a function of, among other things, the character of that relationship. Is it a relationship of dominance, of authority, of subordination, or is it rather a symmetrical relationship, a reciprocity, a relationship characterised by equality?

Introducing these concepts makes it possible to formulate more specific question related to the second, third and fourth main questions raised in the study:

- A. In what way is the work of art in a public place gendered according to the analysis of the researchers?
- B. In what way is the work of art in a public place gendered according to the observers/users?
- C. In what way is the work of art in a public place gendered according to the intentions of the decision makers?



The investigation of these questions is, of course, only possible by the use of different qualitative methods.

The qualitative analysis

Considering first the analysis made by the researchers it starts with a selection of the documented places at the different localities. Some places are chosen which according to the researchers have works of art expressing some form of masculinity, femininity or relationships between men and women, masculinity and femininity. Some examples of places with gender neutral works of art are also chosen. The researchers interpret and analyse the object in order to arrive at a description of the form of gender. The object is related to the time it was created and particularly to dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity. The two hypotheses are here of special relevance.

In interpreting the objects the historical setting is important. As mentioned above the earlier gender ideology in Sweden associated masculinity with paid work and femininity with home, children and caring. These are examples of forms of masculinity and femininity in a fairly clear sense. But masculinity has also been tied to physical strength and energy, while femininity has rather been related to the opposite. Masculinity has also been associated with authority and power and femininity with lack of authority and with subordina-



tion. Other aspects which are important in analysing forms of masculinity and femininity manifested in art concern activity, passivity, beauty, sexuality, body, intellect, thinking, ambition and will.

In examining gender aspects it is also fruitful to apply theories from feminist research. Since the 1970s feminist art history and art criticism have been an important field. In this research there is an emphasis on art as producer of meanings only to be uncovered by means of a deeper examination. Art is looked upon as contributing to the creating of ideology and therefore art becomes important for any cultural analysis (Pollock 1988, Lindberg 1995, Meecham & Sheldon 2000).

Among the various topics dealt with in this field is

the representation of women and womanhood and different stereotypical forms of gender and gender relations. Feminine and masculine prototypes are identified as 'tropes' or 'themes' which, once created, are reproduced in various genres and styles during different periods. Examples are 'the mother', 'the fallen woman', 'the female nude', 'the male nude', 'the male warrior', 'the thinker' (Nochlin 1999).

Works of art are also analysed by using theories about "the supposed spectator's gaze". In this 'gaze theory' questions are raised about "the male gaze", woman as an "object" of this gaze and the construction of femininity as a suitable object of the "male gaze". The mechanism of objecthood and subjecthood is, it is argued, implicit in the western form of the male gaze. And as there are a "colonial gaze" and a "racial gaze" there is a "gendered gaze" which has its basis in power relations between men and women (Pollock 1988).

Within this theoretical framework the assessment of gender aspects of with works of art in public places can focus on the following questions: Who is the supposed spectator? What are the supposed spectator's desires, interests, curiosity, fascination, pleasure? What possibilities of identification with the place with its work of art have men and women?

Analysis of gender aspects – some examples

As an illustration of the qualitative analysis made by the researchers let us consider some examples from the study in question. The following two examples of works of art in public places both belong to the category man and woman (men and women).

The first example is a bronze relief at Brotorget, the main square in Bollnäs, a town of some 28.000 inhabitants. The relief was created by Per Nilsson-Öst and inaugurated in 1984. (see Fig.2)

The relief is a homage to Snoddas, or Gösta Nordgren, a popular singer and bandy player from Bollnäs, well known all over Sweden after his appearance in a radio program in 1952. Snoddas is seen singing, playing bandy and fishing; together with other men he is dominating the picture. Women are few, a small minority, and most of them are passive, they stand listening. One woman is dancing with a man. They form a couple, where he is

standing firmly with both feet on the ground and she is jumping or lifted up in the air. He is taller than she.

The masculinity appearing is related to physical activity, strength and control, as well as to making one's voice heard and being listened to, while femininity may be understood as connected to passivity, silence and subordination, and subject to control. Who is the perceived viewer? A man remembering Snoddas playing bandy when the team from Bollnäs became Swedish champions? Or a woman remembering Snoddas singing the song "Floater's Love / Flottarkälek": "... all girls were like wax in my arms. In all crofts and in all villages I had a little girl-friend ..."?

The second example is a bronze sculpture, "The Cyclists/Cyklisterna"/, from 1953, created by Erik Höglund (see Fig.3). Its height is 1,23 m. and it is placed in front of a small church and near a little square in Sandviken.

The sculpture represents a meeting of a boy and a girl on their bikes. They are turned to each other and they are approximately equally tall. Their glances meet at an equal height and their bodies are supple and elastic, both hold one hand on the other's handlebar. The boy wears long trousers and a sweater. He stands firmly, straddling the saddle and both feet on the ground, while she is balancing on her bike. Her left leg is stretched towards the boy and with her right leg she supports herself, her foot slightly touching the ground – a graceful and somewhat insecure movement. Her skirt is stretched out and her thighs are partly seen.

The boy and the girl are represented as equal so far as they meet at an equal level and they seem to communicate in a straightforward and open manner. None of them appears to be subordinated to the other. The movements of both of them express strength, agility and activity. The boy, however, is more clothed, though he partly exposes his strong arms; the girl exposes more of her body, especially the lower part, her legs and thighs. The boy's body also expresses more stability and control, while her bodily movement is more unstable. In contrast to her he is not easy to move.

Thus, interpreting the relationship between man and woman in this case it seems that they are on equal terms, there is no superiority or subordination. Neither of them is represented as less worthy, in a lower posi-

tion, or as being a subject of the other's suppression, authority or control.

Considering certain features of the figures, however, it appears that they are clearly related to forms of gender. There is a representation of masculinity in terms of physical strength, control and stability and of femininity in terms of nakedness, lack of control and instability. And there is an element of woman as the sensual and sexual object of "the male gaze". The removal of the skirt provides the boy and the viewer – male understood – with the opportunity of glimpsing interesting bodily territory. Some satisfaction for the desiring "male gaze" is offered even by this girl. Though some of these features are rather slightly suggested, they are still there.

Works of art in public places being gendered according to users and decision makers

With the researchers' analysis concluded the users' interpretations of the works of art in the selected places are to be investigated. The question is here if the work of art, which according to the researchers' analysis is gendered, also is gendered according to the users, and if so whether it is gendered in the same way.

To examine this question another method must be introduced, the qualitative interview. A selection of men and women from the localities is made, representing different ages and backgrounds of class and/or education. The youngest can be upper secondary school pupils, the oldest retired persons. The interviews deal with questions of how the interviewed person interprets the work of art, i.e. how the person understands the type of situation in which the man and/or the woman represented is situated, his/her occupation, features, attributes and symbols as well as relationships between the man and the woman in relevant cases. The interviews are made at place, are recorded and analysed. The result is then related to the two formulated hypotheses and is compared to the researchers' analysis of the gender aspects.

The final part of the qualitative analysis deals with the decision makers' ambitions with the public places with works of art. Investigating these intentions makes it necessary to use a dual methodological approach.

First, written documents about decisions are subjected to examination. The analyses of the texts focus on the question whether gender aspects have been discussed and assessed. The result of these text interpretations will then be compared to the researchers' analysis of the gender aspects as well as to the conclusions about the users' conception of the gender aspects.

Second, these text analyses are complemented with qualitative interviews of the decision makers (Kvale, 1997). These interviews focus on the intentions behind the design of the place with its work of art. Questions about how the artist has understood the order from the decision makers and the artist's own ambitions are also put in the interviews. The decision makers also get the opportunity to read the researchers' analyses of the gender aspects and to react upon these analyses. The interviews are recorded and analysed and the result is compared to the researchers' as well as to the users' assessment of the gender aspects. For some public places with works of art dated from earlier decades it is of course only possible to apply the first method mentioned, i.e. text analyses. The result of text analyses and interviews are finally related to the two empirical hypotheses.

Since the process of designing public places with works of art also can give room for e.g. the intentions of architects, builders, artists, a study of this kind can be widened. The intentions of these persons involved in the process can, of course, also be examined by text analyses and interviews.

It is not possible to report any findings about the gendering according to users or decision makers in this article, for the simple reason that this part of the study has not yet been finished.

Conclusion

As the examination of gender aspects in the study in question aims at assessing the development of gender relations in Sweden the results obtained from the various parts of the study are finally compared. The problem to be discussed is if, when, how and where the official Swedish policy of gender equality has been implemented. Comparisons between different localities

are made in order to investigate whether there have been and still are different local gender contracts.

A study of this kind thus gives a general picture of the current proportions of men and women represented in public places with works of art within a region. It also gives a picture of this proportion related to different times. Moreover, similarities and differences between various localities and periods are described. This implies that a picture of local gender contracts as they appear in works of art in public places will be obtained. The examples of the two cities of Gävle and Sandviken show how a study of gender aspects of works of art in public places can be executed.

The case of Gävle seems to support the first hypothesis, that there is a stronger and more extensive gendering of works of art in public places before 1960 than after. It is perhaps amazing that there is about the same number of works depicting woman/women as man/men. The character, occupation and appearances of these males and females are however rather different; men are often strong, active and dressed, while women are weak, passive and naked. The qualitative analysis of the gender aspects rather indicates that the tendency to preserve traditional forms of femininity and masculinity as well as traditional gender contracts is still strong.

The comparison between Gävle and Sandviken shows both differences and similarities. In quantitative terms the male gendering of works of art in public places are much stronger in the latter city. But at the same time the study indicates a persistent tendency in the former city to preserve traditional gender forms in works of art depicting human beings.

How is it, has the official Swedish policy of gender equality been implemented? This question can, with respect to the two cities here referred to, get the following answer: The picture is mixed, a change can be recognised, but at the same time there are remains of older gender contracts and traditional gender forms. The increased dominance of abstract art and art representing non-human phenomena is, however, a characteristic feature. Can this fact be interpreted as a way of escaping gender issues in public places with works of art?

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