

John Holten *Oslo, Norway*

Broken Dimanche Press

Broken Dimanche Press, Ireland/Germany, 2015, 187 pages

»*Oslo, Norway*« est un roman et une expérience littéraire. Construit comme un plan de la ville norvégienne, la narration suit l'émigrant William et sa copine excentrique Sybille à travers les quartiers urbains. L'autre protagoniste est l'auteur lui-même qui partage son expérience d'écrire. Le livre peut être lu d'un ordre non linéaire.

After his critically acclaimed debut novel *The Readymades*, John Holten returns with an intriguing story of love and loss that begins in the affluent and rapidly growing city of Oslo, Norway. It follows the story of William Day, an economic migrant who moves to the city to work as a mechanical engineer before chance thrusts him into the alluring world of Sybille and her artist friend Camille. As they do their best to reconcile growing differences in personality and culture, Camille's growing influence over Sybille threatens the relationship, before her dangerous friends in the Oslo underworld finally undo William's search for stability. This sets William – and the reader – in the direction of the novel's horizon, which is set outside of historical time and space, taking in the history of oil exploration, Norse mythology, coronal mass ejections and post-apocalyptic landscapes.

Written with an emotional honesty, Holten places himself directly in the book as both narrator and first reader, highlighting the discrepancy between any map and the territory it represents. The second book of a project entitled »Ragnarok«, *Oslo, Norway* is constructed in a unique style and set with a visually arresting layout: a self-styled literary atlas that is a pleasure to behold, it creates a new form for a reading experience in line with how we read online. The story is recounted over thirty nine chapters, each named after various streets and environs of the city of Oslo, followed by a legend that unlocks and provides information from the preceding narrative in a revealing interplay between what is real and what is fiction. Inviting a non-linear reading, Holten has galvanised a new type of literary experience that is open-ended, multi-layered, wholly contemporary.

John Holten is a writer and artist as well as a publisher. Born in 1984 in Ireland, he studied at University College Dublin and the Sorbonne-Paris IV before obtaining an MPhil from Trinity College Dublin.

In 2011 John published his first novel *The Readymades* to great acclaim, and the art group he created in the novel (with Darko Dragicevic), The LGB Group, was included in *The Armory Show*, New York in 2012. Having co-founded Broken Dimanche Press as an international art press in 2009, he has overseen as Editor-In-Chief more than thirty publications and attended exhibitions, projects and public events. In 2011 he received a Literature Bursary from the Arts Council of Ireland.



Presse:

»It is a rare privilege for a city to have a book dedicated to itself and Holten has been thorough with his research (...). *Oslo, Norway* is conceptually ambitious and is at its strongest when carrying some of the most well established traditions in contemporary art over into the literary format. The transposition of the map into the written word grants new access to the reading experience, while the meta twist in the form of a letter by the book's main character to its writer erases borders between fiction and reality.« - Inger Wold Lund, Billedkunst magazine, Norway