

# Preface

This book started with the belief that the final essays written by art history students during their education should be made public. Normally, student essays in the humanities are read only once. Compelling ideas and new interpretations are forgotten the moment the students receive their final grade from the one, or perhaps two, readers of the text. When planning the course ‘Art and Criticism in the Anthropocene’ at the University of Oslo in the autumn semester of 2018, I decided to make public the students’ writings and developed an online research platform called Oslo Form Lab. During the semester, 88 essays of art criticism by Norwegian and international students were published, and the project continued under the name Trondheim Form Lab when I taught the course ‘Art in its Contexts’ at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in autumn 2019. The outcome of these two courses were strong essays written by young voices who felt that traditional art-historical approaches were not sufficient for our current times; new kinds of questions need to be asked, and new methodological approaches and theoretical foundations need to be developed. The university courses laid the ground for the public seminar Klima for Kritikkk [Climate for Criticism]—organised in collaboration with the Norwegian Critics’ Association in November 2019—and several of the authors in this book presented papers. This event became the start of Oslo/Trondheim Form Lab as a book project.

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