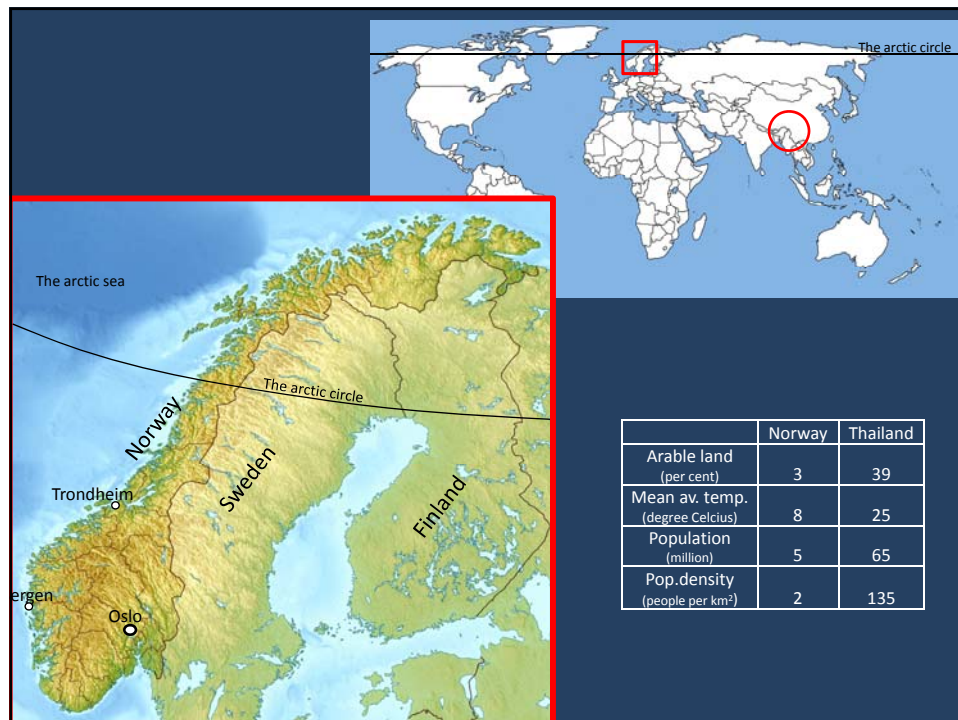# Investing in Culture – Megalomania in a Miniature Country?
Knut Samset, Program Director
Concept Research Program
Norway

http://www.concept.ntnu.no/english/

The 6th Concept Symposium on Project Governance, 25.–26. September 2014, Norway

Public Spending and the Search for Cultural Identity: Monumental Buildings or Cultural Activities?

Knut Samset, Professor, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology

The arctic circle

The arctic sea

The arctic circle

Norway

Sweden

Finland

Trondheim

ergen

Oslo

	Norway	Thailand
Arable land (per cent)	3	39
Mean av. temp. (degree Celcius)	8	25
Population (million)	5	65
Pop.density (people per km^2)	2	135

A dispersed population in a non-feudal society

No castles or cathederals – hardly any culture

Natural resources and economic development

GNP/Capita 1875 - 1940

Hydro power

GNP/Capita 1945 - 2011

Oil and gas
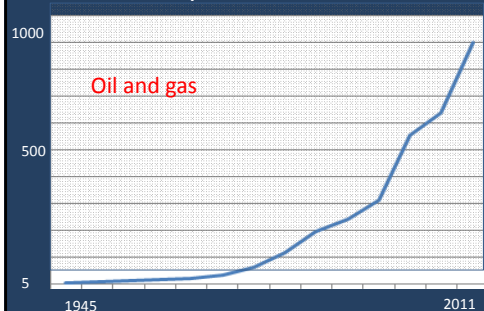
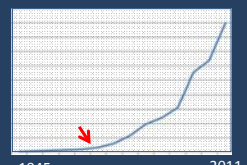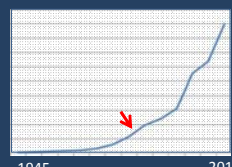# Oslo today

Oslo Opera (1959)

1200 seats

1945   2011

Oslo Concert Hall (1977)
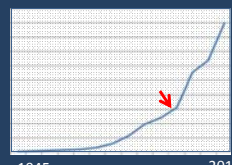

1600 seats

Oslo Spectrum (1990)

10000 seats

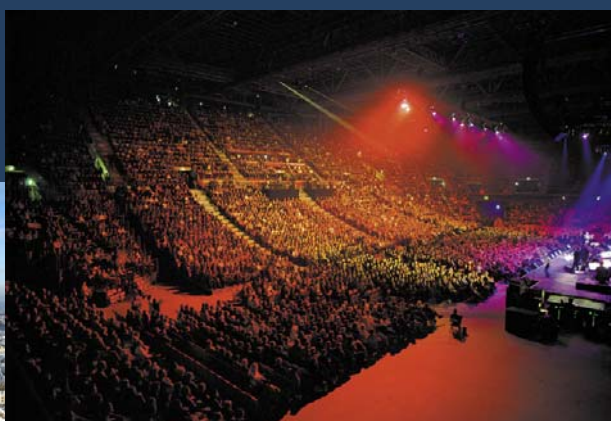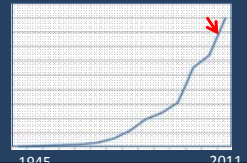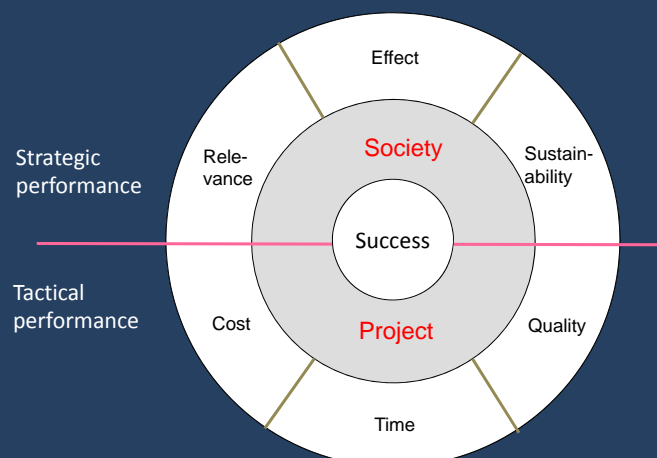Foto: TrondHeggelund.no

Oslo Opera House (2008)

1700 seats

Oslo Opera House (2008)
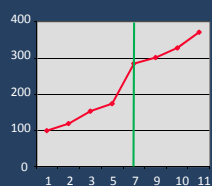
A good idea?

Successful projects: a test (OECD)

Oslo Opera House – a success?

Efficiency

- On time, but is
- Four time more expensive than anticipated

Relevance

- Previously 1200 seats – now 1700 seats
- Last year only nine opera performances more than the old opera
- Extensively used for concerts and commercial activities
- Tourist attraction - but no significant increase in tourism
- Catalyst for urban development

Sustainability

- Operational cost three times higher than planned
- Annual government grant :
  - > 80 per cent of budget
  - > 10 per cent of total investment
  - Equals total government support to all other performing arts
- Return of investment - never
- Is damaging for funding cultural activities in the regions
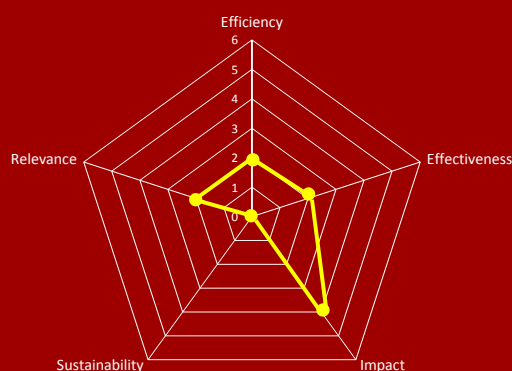
"We have got ourselves an Opera Monster: high above on its pedestal, singing old classics that we all have heard before, demanding ever more resources without giving much back to society - and it is simply impossible to stop." (K. Meisingset, Minerva)

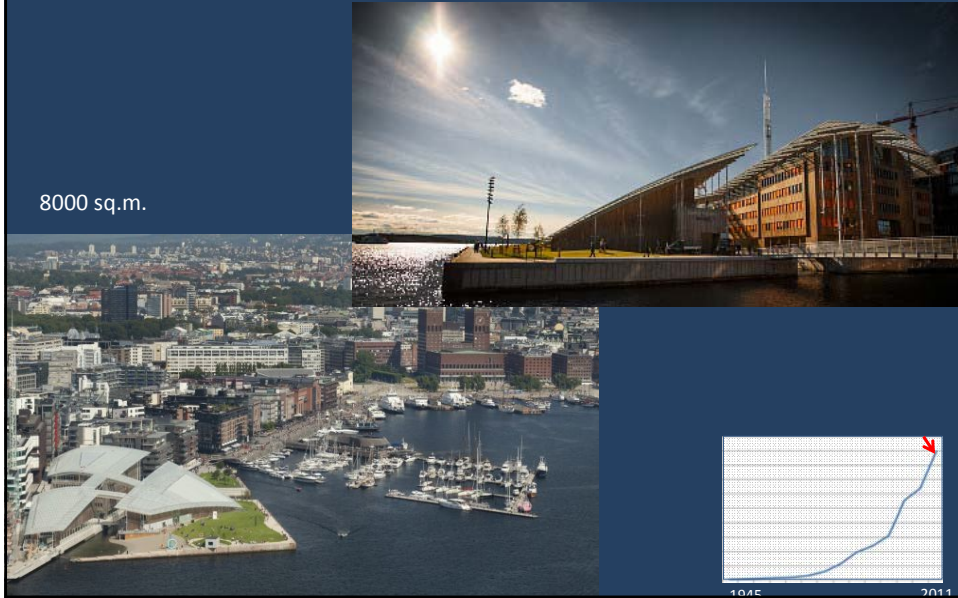# Will it attract tourists?

Sydney opera

Guggenheim, museum, Bilbao

Urban development and the Opera

New cultural buildings

Fornebu Arena (2009)

25000 seats

Astrup Fearnley Museum (2012)

8000 sq.m.

Astrup Fearnley Museum (2012)

Photo: Nic Lehoux

Astrup Fearnley Museum (2012)

Photo: Nic Lehoux

Astrup Fearnley Museum (2012)
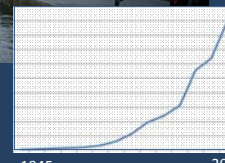

Photo: Nic Lehoux

The Munch museum (2016)

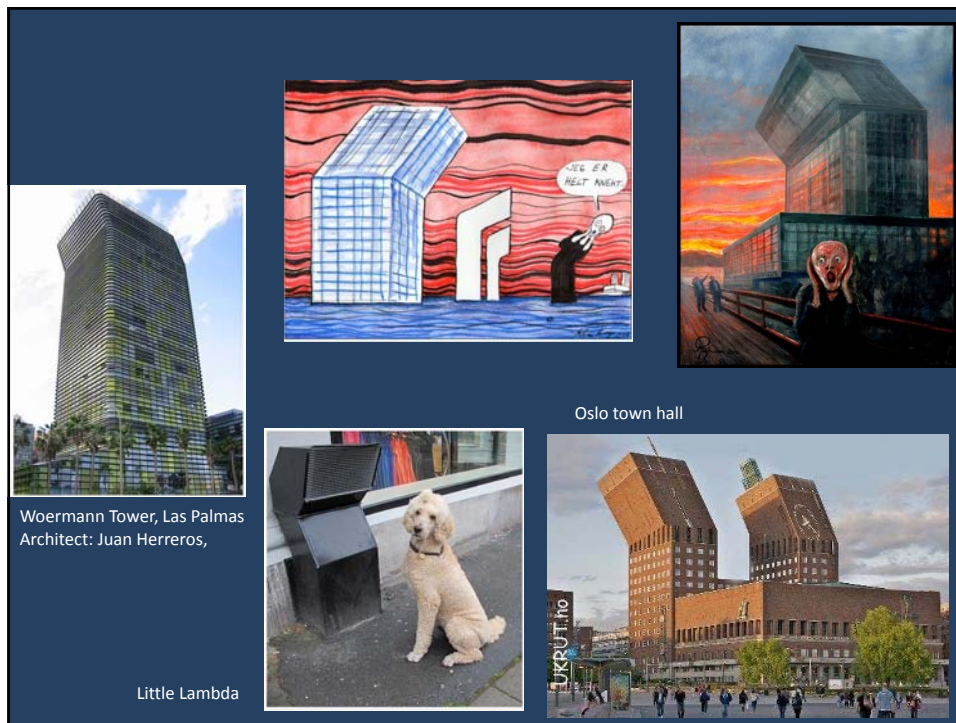26000 sq.m.

The Munch museum (2016)

Herreros Arquitecto

Woermann Tower, Las Palmas
Architect: Juan Herreros,

Oslo town hall

Little Lambda

The National Museum (2017)

54000 sq.m.

The National Museum (2017)

Future sea view 1

Future sea view 2

A small town with an impressive over-capacity for cultural consumption

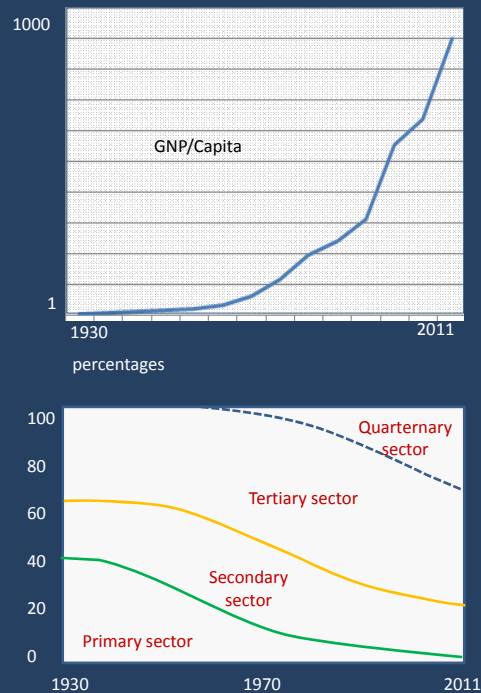| Cultural institution	Year	Seats	Area (square meters)	Cost (Billion NOK)
Oslo Opera	1959	1200	1500	-
Oslo Concert Hall	1977	1600	2000	0.1
Oslo Spectrum	1991	9700	8000	0.3
Oslo Opera House	2008	1700	49000	4.4
Fornebu Arena	2009	25000	40000	0.6
Astrup Fearnley Museum	2012		8000	0.7
The Munch Museum	2016		26000	1.7
The National Museum	2017		54000	4.5
Total		40 000	188 500	12.2

The regions

The result?

Cultural buildings without cultural contents?

Performances and exhibitions without an audience?

..or a non-sustainable society of cultural performers and consumers ?

Thank you for your attention