

// aaj press

ART & PUBLIC SPACE, COMMISSIONS, COMMISSIONS & PROJECTS, SCULPTURE

Nick Hornby: Old Shapes, New Brutality. Poznań-Lawica Airport, Poland

POSTED BY BROOKELYNMCG · NOVEMBER 22, 2012 · [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

FILED UNDER NICK HORNBY, OLD SHAPES NEW BRUTALITY, POZNAŃ, POZNAŃ-LAWICA AIRPORT



British artist Nick Hornby's *Old Shapes, New Brutality* is a new monumental sculpture commissioned for the *Mediations Biennale 2012* in Poznań, Poland. Sited at the new Poznań-Lawica Airport, it is inspired by the architecture of Poznań – in particular, three buildings from the city – the renaissance town hall, a neo-classical church and a modernist circular tower.

Brutality and beauty, hunger and hybridity: in British artist Nick Hornby's recent commission for the Mediations Biennale in Poznań, Poland, the forgiving forms of a renaissance town hall, a neo-classical church, and a modernist circular tower collide in an irreverence and an abstraction of architecture. An overwhelmingly circular structure, augmented by vestigial porticos and by the interstitial scarring of a process of mapping form upon form, *Old Shapes, New Brutality* (2012), composed in brilliant white and adorned with a self-referential blue stripe, stands auspiciously sited at the entrance to the Poznań Airport, itself the vision of architect and project co-commissioner Peter Barelkowski. Hornby's work, conceived during a research residency at the Eyebeam Center in New York City, explores a candid drive on the part of the artist to utilize form as hypothesis, employing a three dimensional manifestation of the Boolean operation (the convergence of data sets, often represented in a binary, whose initial propositional logic is meant to result in a yes or a no—an outcropping of decision theory). Yet architecture does not respond to true or false. A façade, though it may predict power or culture, the very manifestation of the icon, provides no parlance to right or wrong, save in Alberti's postulations or DaVinci's proportional demands. What is produced, even proposed, by this monumental sculptural challenge to perception and horizon is a dissolving, in the pursuit of process, of any presumed necessity of a pre-thought image. What results is at once accidental and intended, citational and authored, meta-modernist and the very act of deconstruction—the formal darling of iteration and chance.

ART & PUBLIC SPACE

[Art & Public Space](#)

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

[Architecture & Design](#)

COMMISSIONS & PROJECTS

[Commissions & Projects](#)

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS

[Exhibitions & Events](#)

NEW BOOKS

[Books Reviews: November 2011](#)

AAJ PRESS

[RSS - Posts](#)

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION

Enter your email address to subscribe to this blog and receive notifications of new posts by email.

Join 526 other followers

LINKS

- [AAJ Press](#)
- [AAJ Press on facebook](#)
- [Art & Architecture](#)
- [Art on the Underground](#)
- [Art-Public](#)
- [artconnexion](#)
- [Artichoke](#)
- [Arts Catalyst](#)
- [Artsadmin](#)
- [Bienal del Chaco](#)
- [C-Lab](#)
- [Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto](#)
- [CultureCritic](#)
- [Cultureshock Media](#)
- [David Barrie](#)
- [ENPAP](#)



Art re-orders the world. In Hornby's previous work, also applying an investigative structure, the artist utilized the self-same citation mode in the name of invention. Through computer modeling and later hand rendering, Hornby melded the silhouettes of busts from the Victoria and Albert Museum, demanded a Barbara Hepworth commune with Rodin's *Man walking*, and even created an archival record between the common Victorian table leg, an automobile axle, and the sculptural remains of the cinema classic *Star Wars*. Such is the assault on the icon which is Hornby's oeuvre: a method of violent de-contextualization conflating the artifacts of absorbent kitsch and high modernity, or high modernity and low-classicism, whereby nothing is sacred—hybridity always produces transgression, even horror, in the production of forms as yet or previously unknown. However, Hornby's recombinant efforts violating the DNA of visual culture are never horrific, but rather always err on the side of beauty, an uncanny elegance, whose very brutality exists at the limits of the referential. His is an art which manifests the promises Robert Morris proclaimed in 1969; an art that is, *Of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability, of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perpetual modes*—this is the verbal applied to seeming static form.

And yet, Hornby's present work, *Old Shapes, New Brutality*, surpasses even Morris's pledge. In terms of a process he calls meta-modernity, the artist comments "*After a year of doing it with sculptures (modern or historic) I made a turn to architecture*", in a simple statement which is anything but. For if architecture implies the production of peopled places, ever sullied by a humanity which would inhabit them, so does Hornby's interruption of architectural space by sculptural practice advance the fetishization of a post-human perspective, of dissolution, of void. Like the gaping emptiness which occupies the center of the work itself, this work at once heralds absence and calls forth a hunger for new forms demanding to be filled. It is for the viewer to decide what to consume.

Brooke Lynn McGowan, 2012

