

## **Translation of the review of "Life-boats" at the Utzon centre in the Norwegian National newspaper VG, 16 July 2010, by Lars Elton**

**Aalborg (VG). Some people dream bigger and differently to others. When these dreams become reality, they can move the world.**

Marit Benthe Norheim (50) is amongst those artists who do not allow themselves to be restricted by received truths. She has worked in concrete as her artistic material for a long time and produced "Campingwomen" in 2008 – the art project that will probably be remembered best from the year that Stavanger was the European Capital of Culture.

**"Campingwomen" were goddess sculptures moulded in cement onto caravans and they made people smile and engage themselves everywhere that they went.**

### **River journey**

Now she has moved from land to water and launched the "Life-boats", three cement women formed over a lifeboat shell which will sail around Europe's waterways, rivers and canals.

### **Large and small**

**The project has been exhibited at the Utzon Centre in Aalborg, the last building the great Danish Architect Jørn Utzon built before he died. The place is symbolic because both the building and the "Life-boats" are beautiful, but also because the centre is engaged and unites the creative disciplines that Norheim is working with.**

The exhibition marks the fact that all the artistic and construction choices have been made and that the boats can be built to scale in accordance with all the safety requirements. In the exhibition, Norheim shows the boats on a smaller scale in bronze and as larger models on a scale of 1:5. In addition, animations of the project in different European cities is shown, working sketches and technical calculations as well as an overview of earlier projects. She has also gotten children to contribute with figures in clay which decorate one of the boats, an example of how she would like to involve people that the boats sail to on their long voyage. It is, in other words, possible to get a good idea of how this will look when the boats are finished on the full scale. And it is easy to become enthusiastic.

**This enthusiasm is due to Marit Benthe Norheim's realism combined with her narrative ability. The boat womens' poetic qualities are obvious and the models are so large and so detailed that they are artworks in themselves. There is also something about the project's basic ideas that make it a reminder of what is important to protect in life.**

### **Life-affirming lifeboats**

"Life-boats" are something as simple as an optimistic and life-affirming project. Each boat has its own identity based on the device of "my ship is loaded with..." and the boats carry with them, and will be filled along the way with, longing, life and memories. The three mottoes are mirrored in the shapes of the boat women ("Life", for example is a pregnant woman who sails on her back), but the motto will also function on another level, e.g. as future, present and past. The foundation of the project is an affirmation of the

eminine powers and women's abilities to bear and foster life. This makes the "Life-boats" both a life-affirming and awarenessraising project at the same time. And because it also has a clear stance on the environment and energy as well as a willingness to bind cultures together, then the possibilities of this project are huge.

**Thank heavens that someone wants to move the world.**