



natural forces sculpt rammed earth columns in sustainable norwegian quarry installation

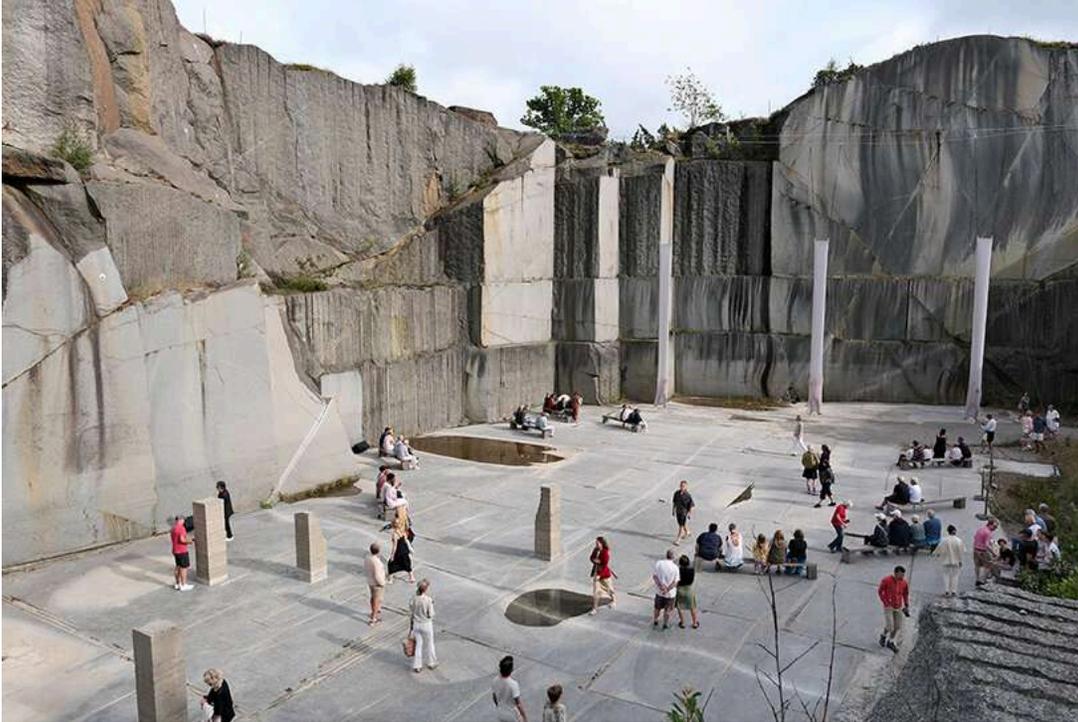
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ACT!, CLAYA, ASK HOLMEN & STUDIO WINTHER PRESENT BORROWED LAND

Set against the dramatic backdrop of an old stone quarry in Brøtsø, Norway, architecture practice ACT!, Studio Winther together with architect Ask Holmen and CLAYA present Borrowed Land, an installation that explores the symbiotic relationship between architecture, environmental degradation, and the climate crisis. Harnessing rammed earth techniques, the piece creates a tactile, thought-provoking dialogue between built and natural environments.

At the heart of Borrowed Land is the concept of circularity—borrowing resources from the earth and returning them after use. Built from materials sourced from a local landfill, including clay and stones deposited by ancient glaciers, the columns of the artwork highlight the finite nature of natural resources. As rain, wind, and sun interact with the structure, erosion leaves behind intricate variations on the columns,

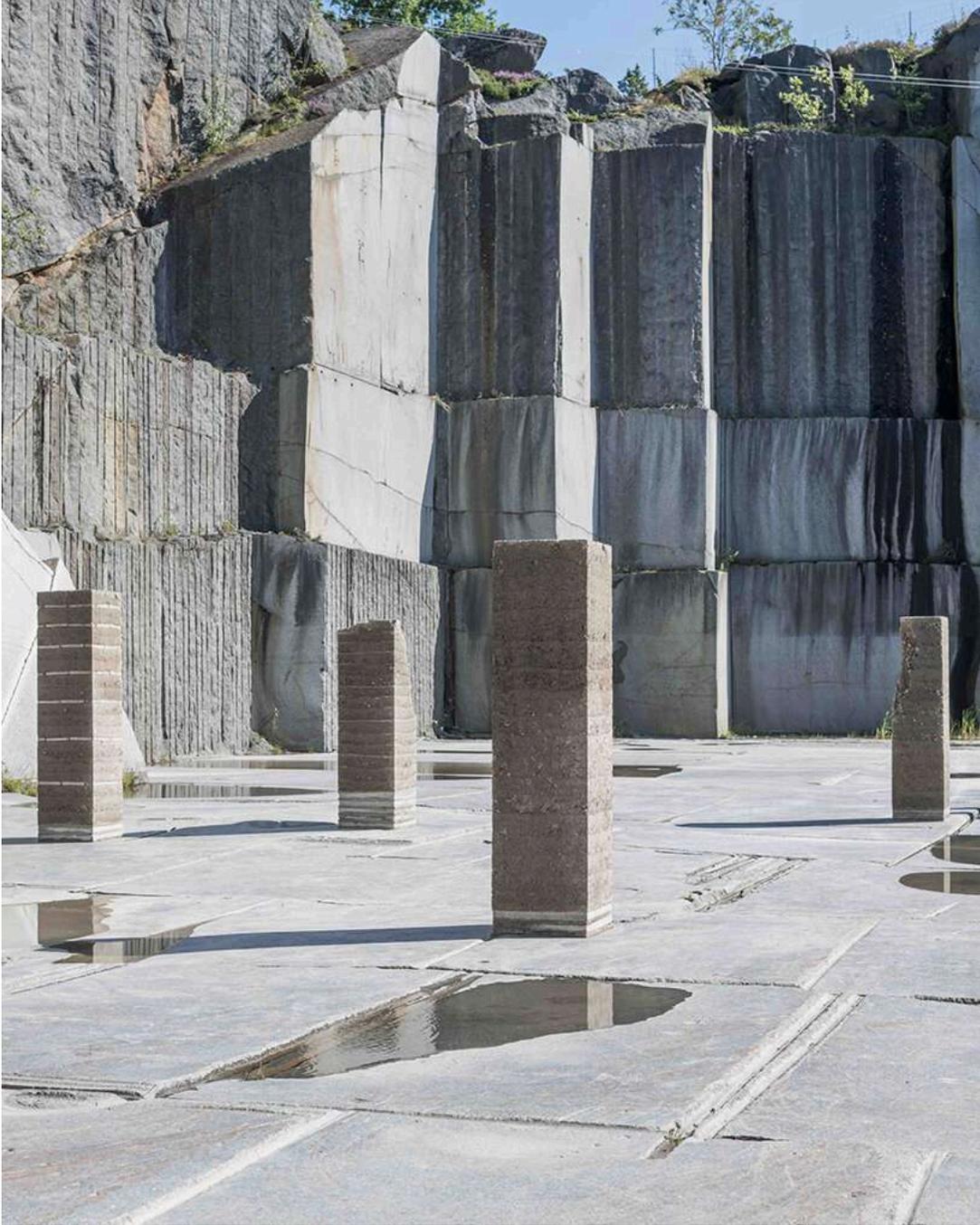


images by ACT! | Armelle Breuil, unless stated otherwise

FIRST OUTDOOR RAMMED EARTH PROJECT IN NORWAY IN DECADES

The installation is situated in an industrial quarry—a site shaped by human intervention and natural forces. This duality is mirrored in the construction process, in which Oslo- and Paris-based studio ACT!, Studio Winther, Ask Holmen and CLAYA compress layers of soil into architectural forms that echo the geological stratification of the site. The project reimagines earth as a contemporary, sustainable construction material by utilizing rammed earth, one of humanity's oldest building techniques. *'Earth breathes,'* notes the design team, *'storing warmth, releasing coldness, and connecting people to their surroundings.'*

Winning the first prize of the international Færderbiennale 2024—a festival at the intersection of dance and architecture—Borrowed Land is the first outdoor rammed earth project in Norway in decades. While this technique saw limited application between the 1920s and 1970s, much of the knowledge surrounding it has since disappeared. Apart from designing the installation, the project team also sourced and tested materials, crafted specialized tools, and undertook the construction themselves. Their labor-intensive efforts in the challenging Norwegian climate reflect the determination to revive and innovate this age-old building method.



set against the dramatic backdrop of an old stone quarry in Brøtsø, Norway | image by Bruno Giliberto



ACT!, Studio Winther with Ask Holmen and CLAYA, present Borrowed Land | image by Bruno Giliberto



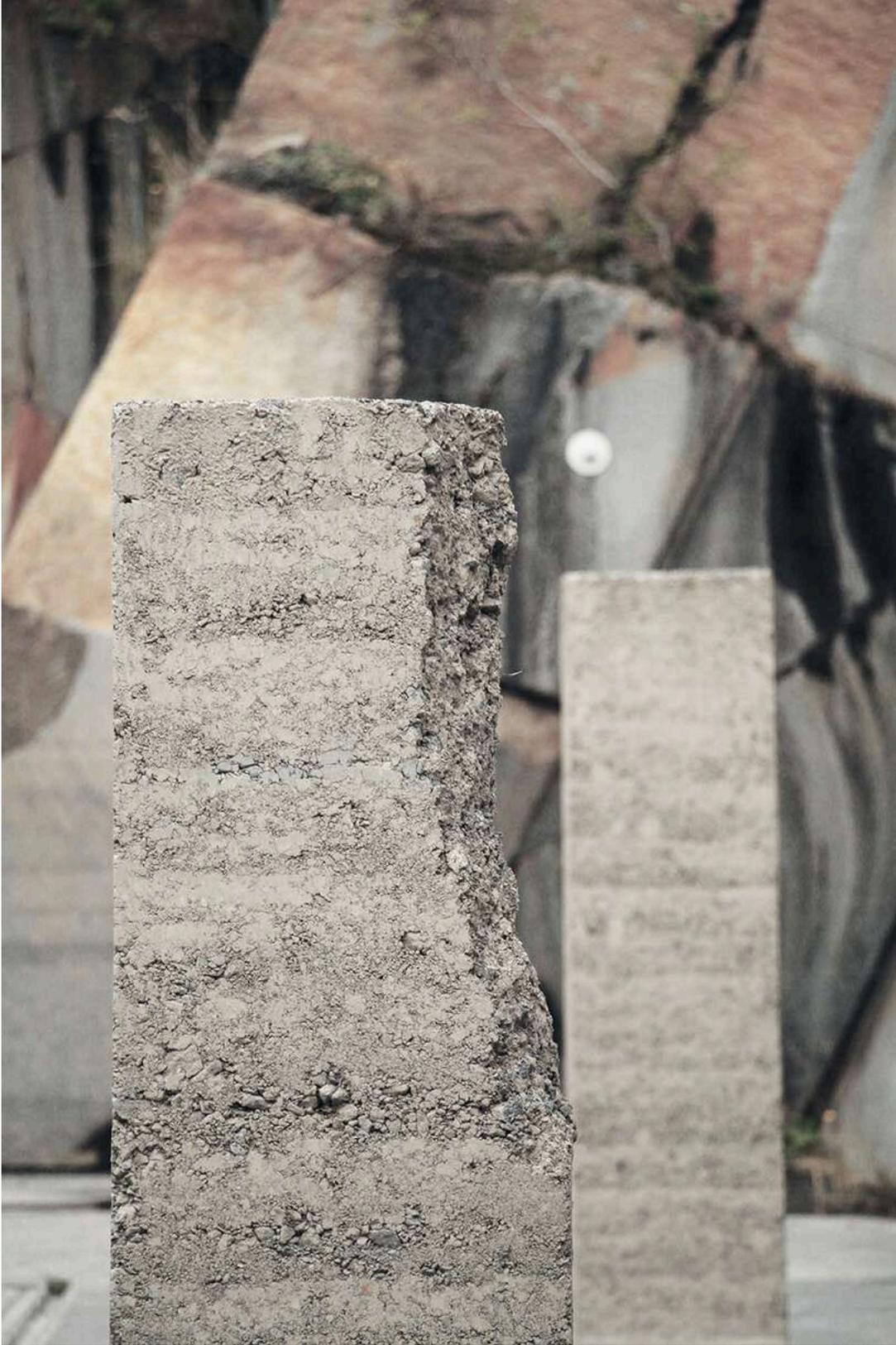
exploring the relationship between architecture and environmental degradation | image by Sophie Koenig



borrowing resources from the earth and returning them after use | image by Sophie Koenig



as rain, wind, and sun interact with the structure, erosion leaves behind intricate variations on the columns



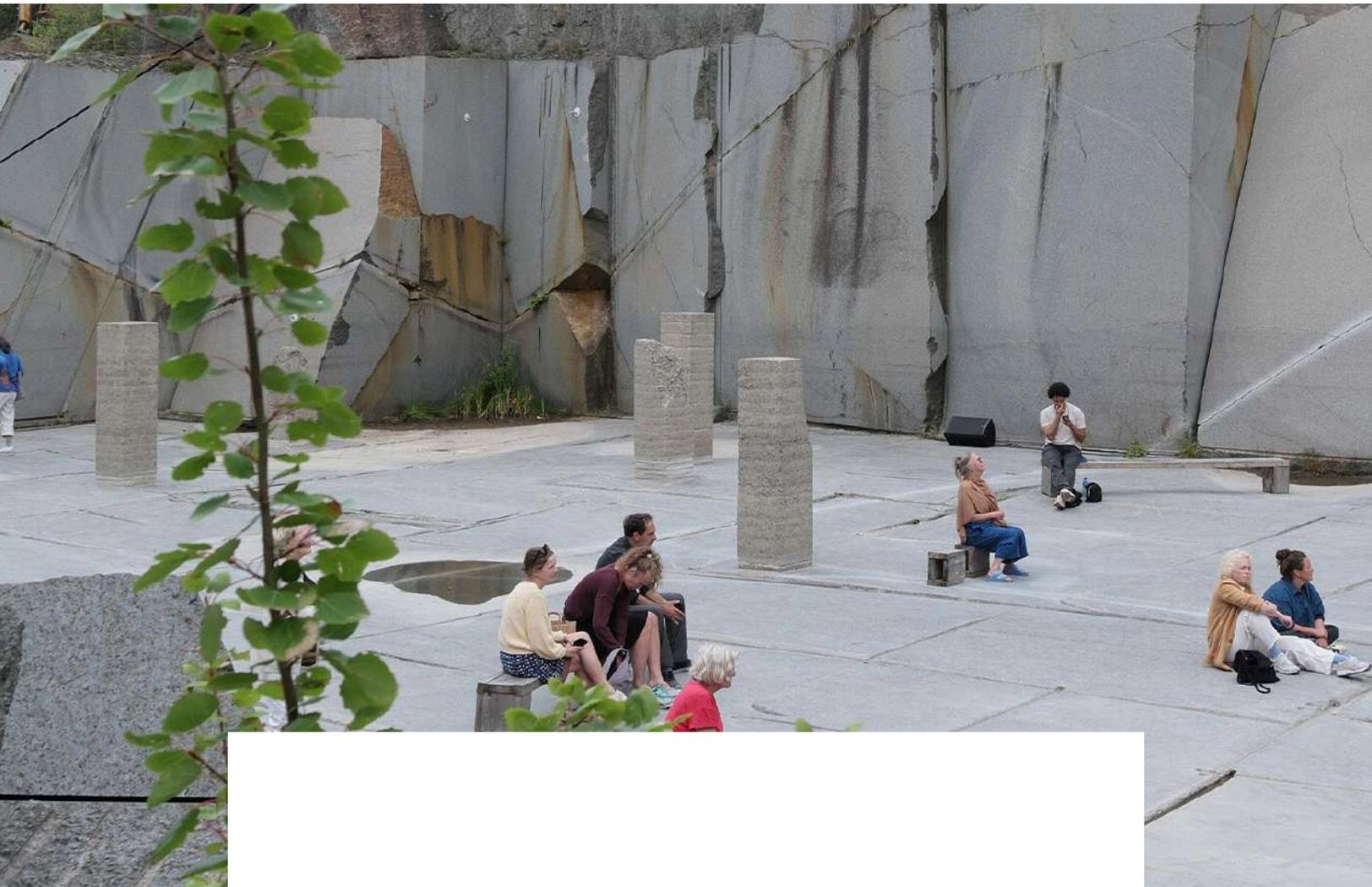
built from materials sourced from a local landfill | image by Sophie Koenig



the weathered columns blend with the quarry | image by Sophie Koenig



layers of soil become architectural forms that echo the geological stratification of the site



name: Borrowed Land

architects: ACT! | @actstudio.eu, CLAYA | @claya_arch, Ask Holmen | @natrboi, Studio Winther | @studio.winther

location: Brøtsø, Norway

volunteers: Maxwell Rodencal, Jona Weissgerber, Sophie Dorn, Alvar Elias Ekhougen Larsen, Malka Gadefait, Aleksandra Volfova, Viktoria Wiese-Hogrefe, Ilse Hviding, Stina Molander Skavlan

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edited by: thomai tsimpou | designboom

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[dec 06, 2024](#)

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INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION (462)





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