This paper discusses Utøya and its vernacular responses to the commemoration processes in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Oslo and at Utøya in 2011.

This paper shows that violent events – the future heritage to be for generations to come – change humans through human and non-human entanglements of landscape, affective moods and commemorative practices at in-situ sites of mourning. Violent events producing difficult heritage (MacDonald 2009) are immediately followed by a strong social and political consensus in which everybody works for the benefit for the whole community. This is what some have called a post-political state of affair (Rancière 1998, Swyngedouw 2011, Badiou 2005) But soon after such a period, political dissensus takes over in which political divides and particular interests again appear but now with changed premises: the dissensus has to take a “hard” fact, the new memorial landscape, the hauntings in the form of victims’ voices (Blackmann 2015 forthcoming), narratives and changed reality into consideration.

The paper investigates how places are contested in the aftermath of Breivik’s terror attack in 2011 and how affective ecologies change (Davidsson et al. 2011). The fate of the island Utøya was caught between the alternative of actualizing the virtuality of suffering and sorrow by turning the whole island into a memorial landscape or of clinging to the hope attached to the past by removing/tearing down the material traces of the event as was the original plan of the legitimate owners (AUF) of the island.

Which voices are predominant and who have the legitimacy of changing a landscape’s ecology? How to bridge between the main opponents, the local residents opting for “their” place and everybody else claiming Utøya to have become a global common (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013) that anybody owns?

Keywords: post-political, Utøya, dissensus, affective ecology