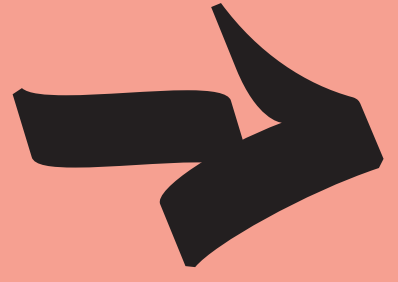


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Place to Place  
9 artists reflection about  
site-specificity and  
place-related processes

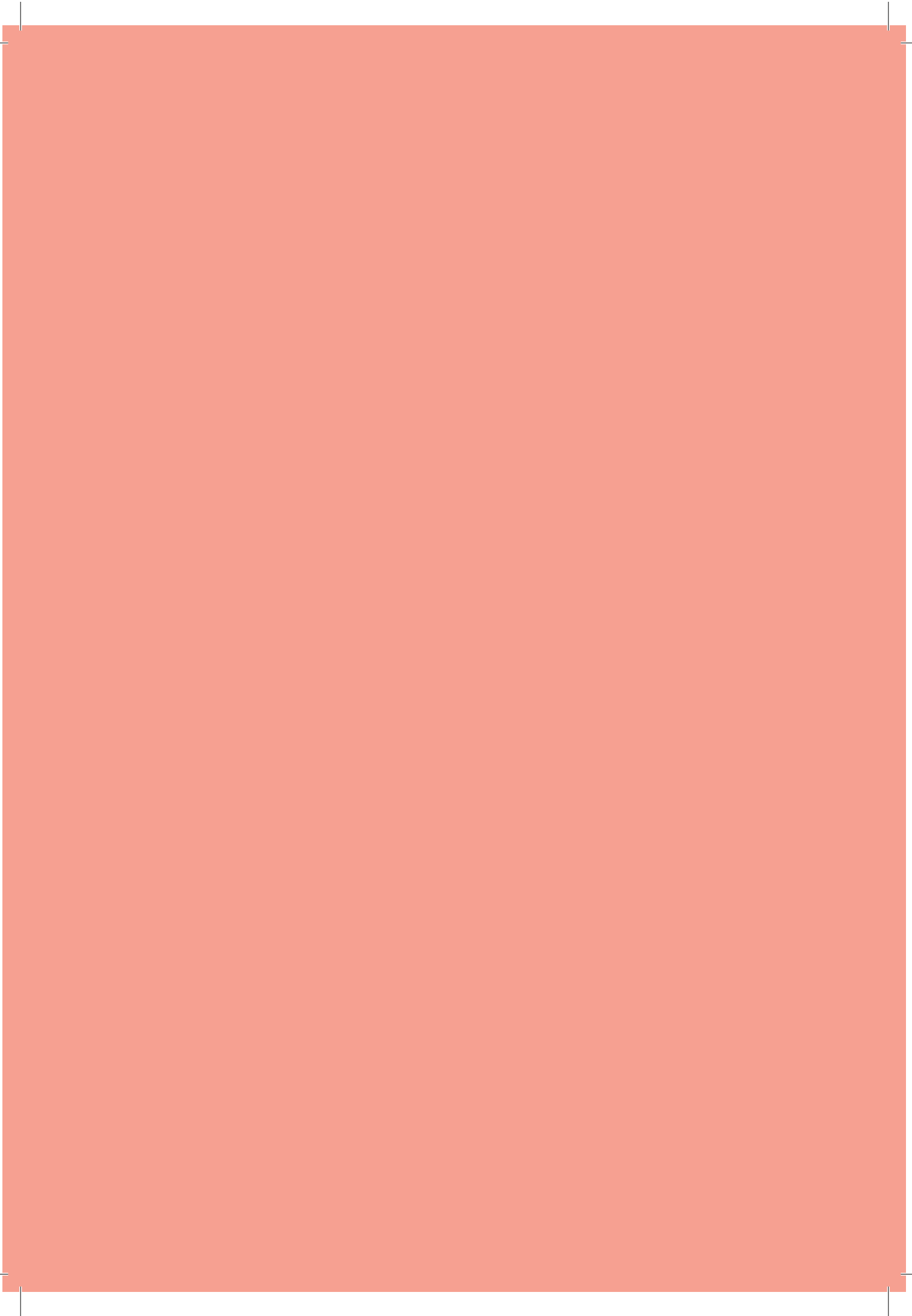
Environment, Location, Site,  
Spot, Space, Room



Editor: Lisa Torell

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Place to Place  
9 artists reflection about site-specificity  
and place-related processes

Preface and introduction by Lisa Torell

Kajsa Dahlberg  
Henrik Andersson  
Annika Eriksson  
Martin Tebus  
Magnus Thierfelder  
Johanna Gustafsson Fürst  
Hans Rosenström  
Eva Arnqvist

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## Kilroy was here

To have been somewhere, to have grown up someplace or another, to have been to school there; the authenticity implicit in having physically experienced a place over time certainly does mean something, although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what. Systems and logic. What informs what? Place is inherently fascinating in as much as it does something to us. Depending on, for example, the place in which I stand or speak, I am judged, perceived and heard in different ways. Even if I am the same, all the while. It is the same with art; its value is determined by the different places in which it is exhibited. Different impact. You could say that place informs identity and value, irrespective of language<sup>1</sup>. The importance of place on how we perceive and think is both complex to understand and difficult to disentangle. But it is clear that it influences and impacts, both personally and politically, locally and globally.

## Then and now

Simplistically, one could say that art's site-specific field grew out of a resistance to art as a commodity. The art and the place became one and art became immobile and hard to sell. The principle at the time was articulated by the American artist Richard Serra in 1985: "To remove the work is to destroy the work." That the material also could consist of a combination of ready-mades, found objects or so called non-material developed the discussion of value in relation to manufacture and the significance of *Who makes what* in relation to quality, originality and idea.

Art, like science, religion and language, is part of a conceptual apparatus that rarely develops in isolation from the rest of society. That the onward march of site-specific practice occurred in the 1960s should come as no surprise; in parallel to this, other disciplines were established which were based on a perspective of relationships between, or within, particular systems, and what they may contribute to, with regard to the understanding of society and the individual. The relationships between place, language and identity, belonging, class, ethnicity and gender were interrogated in everything from sociology, the science of communication, theory of architecture and philosophy, or under the collective name of *Cultural Studies*. The discussion today hinges on the ideas of the pioneers of yesteryear, such as Henri Lefebvre and his thoughts on *the production of space*, and *the right to the city* which is directly

linked to Guy Debord and the development of *Situationism*, Pierre Bourdieu's *social space* and *habitus* and Hanna Arendt's ideas about the meeting of *private* vs. *public*. These days, place as a concept is integral to questions concerning democracy, rights and the public arena, in as much as you become a public figure only once a public space is available, where the public arena is perceived as the common, *shared space*, the space which is shared. As cities grow, societies liberalise and the transitions between private and public become increasingly blurred, making the discussion about public space and function ever relevant.

Today, the site-specific practices are no longer in opposition to the market, but rather place related experience and practice is increasingly included in market demand. This knowledge is sought after in both traditional exhibition contexts as well as questions concerning town planning, sustainable development, citizen dialogue and within emerging disciplines in architecture, design and art. Thus, these days, criticism tends to be reversed and voices concern for whether the field has become instrumentalized as opposed to autonomous. That the artist / the work is used as an instrument to serve a specific purpose for the commissioning agency – the market. The discussion about the artist's autonomy is always interesting, but in order to develop the enquiry, perhaps the questions have to be more general: Is art ever completely free, is it the type of art which determines how free it is, and which agencies or spaces afford it the greatest degree of artistic freedom?

### Place to place

As an artist I have worked for a long time with place and context in many site-related works and texts in Sweden and abroad. Both as an artist and as a teacher of Art, I have been missing a synopsis of the development of the genre since the 1960s to its propagation in the 1990, but also how the inherent processes appear, from initial sketch to completed piece. Even if purpose and causation is different for each work and artist, there are many unifying features.

Much is written, and the contributors to the development of ideas in the field are many, not least Rosalind Krauss, Suzanne Lacy, Nicolas Bourriard, Hal Foster, Robert Smithson, Claire Bishop, Gordon Matta Clark, Douglas Crimp, Miwon Kwon, Paul O'Neill, Claire Doherty or Sven-Olov Wallenstein, Catharina Gabrielsson and Catarina Thörn to name but a few. But what has happened to the contemporary voice from within the field, the artists themselves?

There, the discussion is a constant, among colleagues, about the work between principal and artist. Thoughts concerning context, practice and theory, and society are exchanged frequently. What are we doing and what does it mean to make oneself aware of a place or to dialogue with it? And why make it so problematic, when, in reality, it is quite straightforward?

The thinking behind *Place to Place* is in part to introduce the site-specific field to those who are curious about it but who are not too familiar with it. It also aims to give an overview of the spectrum of methods and manifestations that the practice includes, and to contribute to a dialogue and develop the ideas about the field rather than to present truisms. A place can be anything from a whole area or county, a specific part of town, Northern Norway or a particular part of a museum or park. The concept is introduced in greater depth after the prologue to the text *Place* (2009)<sup>2</sup>.

The shortcomings of the book are momentary and indicate the general dilemma of place related art – a work's dependency upon the place it was originally created for. Understanding of a work primarily hinges on the experience of it *together with* place and context. It goes without saying that a work which is created specifically for a particular place or context completely disappears after the end of the exhibition. What remains can be loose parts and elements without meaning, as well as the memories and experiences the piece brought about. What can *one* picture say, when in reality, perhaps ten are needed? Documentation and information concerning where-what-why is often found wanting, it is too complex and too extensive. The field's communicative advantages in situ sadly tend to be its downfall once removed, in a different context. To transpose material onto *other* material doesn't work either, in as much as it then becomes exactly that; other material. In this light, I decided early on that the artists and the works should be few, that it should be possible to leave space for both closer study as well as reflection: From idea, invitation to finished piece, where the content could be presented as an artist talk, where the space is hierarchically generous and the language can be individually and materially close. Each contribution has been decided individually although I have made suggestions as to which work or works to include. The result is a rather motley crew consisting of everything from fictitious interviews, longer texts, transcripts of conversations, where we primarily describe practice from the artist's point of view, not as writers or art historians, and where the language is ours; consciously, purposely. *Place to Place* contains sketches,

research material and ideas, as well as information about and documentation of completed pieces.

### Artists, rationale and methodology

The artists I have chosen are artists who I have followed in one way or another for a long time, collaborated with, discussed with or exhibited with: Henrik Andersson, Eva Arnqvist, Kajsa Dahlberg, Annika Eriksson, Johanna Gustafsson Fürst, Hans Rosenström, Martin Tebus and Magnus Thierfelder. They all represent something in themselves, but that which unites them is that their collective practice says something about the whole field, where the similarities are global. The works represented in *Place to Place* span the years 1993–2015.

Although nobody declined their invitation, all were reluctant to describe their practice, specific work or practice as site-specific or with any other word to hand, and there are plenty. That which has chafed in my belly, also chafed in theirs, what is it about, categorising art as something other than art?

Site-specific art, relational aesthetics, site-related, contextual, site situ, Genius Loci, working in the Public Realm, with the Politics of Space, with the Aesthetics of Space, site-responsive, site-conscious, community-oriented, context specific, debate-specific, with social housing projects, place sensitive, locality oriented, with centre-periphery, land art, spatial and time-based art, earth art, working with the public arena...

As well as these words, the art historian Miwon Kwon suggests in her book *One place after another – site specific art and local identity* (2002) three definitions of site specific art: discursive, social / institutional or phenomenological. The categories make it easier in curatorial and art historic contexts, to text-efficiently describe the development of the genre and its subgenres such as time, politic and country, when interfacing with the public or in text. Yet, to the artist, the question remains: why these categories? What is contributed by these labels to the work? The categories limit rather than open up. That art is complex is not a weakness, but rather, a strength, even if the emphasis in a particular piece of work is on the local. There are many other layers to it that will be just as relevant. It would be a rare piece or practice which



embodied only the architectural, or only the socioeconomically or only the cultural or critical aspects of a place.

That which connects all these words is that they, as well as describing place, seek to describe a particular relationship to it. And it is these special *relationships between* and *relationships to* which are crucial to both the idea and the artistic license; how the work will be constructed and how it will relate to the place where it will be exhibited – and it will be made for the specific purpose. In addition to working with art, we also work with place. Place as a material like any other, causing us to wonder, for example: What does it mean, there and then, in relation to place, art history, contemporaneity and context – to use plastic chairs for instance, as opposed to hand made ones, to use an actor as opposed to using an amateur?

‘What I do, on transforming it (the pre-fabricated object) into a work, is not simply to make the object ‘lyrical’ or place it outside the everyday, but to incorporate it into an aesthetic idea, making it part of the genesis of the work, it thus assumes a transcendental character, participating in a universal idea without losing its previous structure. Hence the designation ‘Trans-Object’.’  
— Helio Oiticica (Bólidés, 1963)

Now, contrary to what some might think, work is often begun long before a final location is decided upon. We have, like most other artists, our individual interests and motivations, which are gradually built up and repeatedly re-examined. Often, there is an element of activism, an engagement in society, or, it is built up as part of the life-long practice concerning how different kinds of place influence, not least the public space, whether it be the forest, the pavement or the town square, depending on where we currently happen to be, live or work.

That which sets the site-related practice apart is that one cannot ever really finish the work until one is sure about where it is to be shown. It is fun, but hard going, as the real work only really begins with the invitation, or once the final location and context is set, and then the urge kicks in – how and what? It is about paying attention to a language in a place and to make use of it subtly or explicitly, as well as creating a *new – place*. Where language is

form, rhetoric and aesthetic. Everything we communicate with, that which signals and directs. This is when one needs to methodically consider that which *is* – *there*, to keep cool, trust that there is material, structures that speak, which can be translated, mirrored and be used and shared. Material, idea and method must therefore, in part, be built up and upon again and again. Alternately, and in dialogue with or in the presence of the place and research – ahead of each new context. The risk is the drive.

‘How can art in public space emancipate itself from the expectations of architects and town planners who frequently see it only as a means of prettifying their designs, as pure decoration?’ — Lydia Andrea Hartl, *How Much Art Can Public Space Tolarate?* Kunsprojekte\_Riem: Public Art for a Munich District, eds Claudia Büttner et. al. (Vienna and New York, Springer Verlag, 2004), pp.26–27

When I selected the artists, I thought about what their different practices or specific work add to or have contributed to the field and organized them into different focus groups each of which represents current questions, unify or show particular ways of working.

*Ett eget rum / Tusen bibliotek (A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries)* by Kajsa Dahlberg is chosen because it introduces the book as a location, a public space, inherently representing the right to meet. To share something doesn't have to be unified or physically embodied to have significance. The meeting in itself stands above any number of people. In addition, the work by definition puts Richard Serra's assertion on thin ice – obviously, it is possible to relocate a site-specific work without ruining it. The world does not only consist of unique, unrecognizable places but to a great extent, it also consists of places and spaces created to resemble one another in structure, function and aesthetic. A site-specific work, which is made for the *place* and *context* 'library', can certainly be moved to other libraries if the conditions are the same.

Exhibition halls, libraries and churches are among a kind of *semi-public places*, spaces with a public purpose or concern. *Faran över* by Henrik Andersson is a work that examines such a space, Norberg's church. Like few others, he has pursued an interest in society's fundamental organs and soundscape, conceptually as well as in relation to place, history and communications systems. It's about everything from defense and surveillance, to control and

national responsibility. What does it look like, how does it impact on us and what does it sound like? Despite sound often playing a great part in an experience, surprisingly few make use of sound to suggest an element of authenticity and congruence between the society at large and the individual.

Annika Eriksson is a pioneer in Sweden and in the world. This is in part due to her community minded, site-related conceptual practice and also the ease with which she navigates different spaces and media. No value judgement is made in preference for indoor or outdoors environments, the existing perceptions and expectations of a space are used to advantage in her work. To monitor a society and its publicness, to be present, is not only about location, but also about time, epochs – politics. And expression. Without humour and insignificance art would have painted itself into a corner, it must not be faint-hearted. *En fruktansvärd sammansvärjning* is an example of courageous art, which delivers ‘on the quiet’.

The field is bursting at the seams with words that reflect trends and eras; regularly recurring is *production of space* (Lefebvre). Other terms relating to site construction that appear are *re-enactment*, *living history* or *historic recreation*. Today, place and space are things which can, at once, be consumed, be marketed, be transformed and socially constructed. Martin Tebus builds up, and plays with place and the production of space, place, identity and history. His background in roleplay and LARP (Live Action Role Play) adds yet another dimension. Here, he speaks about the background to Home and Market (*Hem och Marknad*), where he, together with the staff at Jönköping Match Museum staged historic manufacture of matches. He stretches the perceptions around heritage, tourism and experience industry and the delivery thereof.

The centrefold is graced by that which is still on-going, a collection that continues to grow. It is a project by Magnus Thierfelder which I have followed on Facebook, where he has, one bit at a time, shared his documentation of his way to his studio. It might be a picture of a pair of spray-painted arrows on the tarmac or some other detail, which he has passed on his way. Perhaps it is not so much of a project as a way of relating to a process of work. It is the persistent curiosity, the interest in aesthetics and systems, which consciously or subconsciously contribute to one’s inclination, irrespective of location, to read and memorise place. Here, the pavement becomes a kind of stage upon which an Allan Kaprowesque happening is played out. Whose curiosity isn’t peaked when the rhythm of the street is interrupted? The photographic documen-

tation of the ordinary is that which becomes the performative, where the image is the evidence of what took place. Someone photographed it. And keeps on doing it. What is the meaning of the momentary action in relation to the repetitive? The exploration draws attention to something central, that art is about lifting one's gaze, and elevating one's thinking by also lowering the same gaze, looking down. A society talks everywhere. Even locally.

How can one break the deadlock of an inflamed 'town planning – them and us discussion, suburbia vs. city centre' and expand the perception of place, of locality? Often, it takes something as simple as changing places. Make the object of the disagreement one's own. Something that the artist Per Hasselberg did in the work *Konsthall C*, 2004, and Johanna Gustafsson Fürst did with her practice, 2008: he in Hökarängen, she in Husby. For seven years, she has been actively working to create meetings and dialogue through the founding of Kista Teater, the organizing of painting workshops, exhibitions and debating evenings at Husby Gård or Träff. Apart from *Konsthall C*, there are currently in Stockholm and surrounding areas, Tensta Konsthall and Marabouparken which continue the tradition of local activism. But a work created in one place can come to include other places, and therefore she is invited to speak about the process behind *White Pillars (Vita Pelare)* at Möllevångstorget in Malmö in connection with *Modernautställningen 2014*.

In the meeting of the public and a piece of work, how does one work interactively? Hans Rosenström constructs interactive, psychological, intimate installations, where the milieus often are staged as *if they always have been*, but that they were perhaps never actually there. A clear now is created theatrically, interactively, separately and individually, each visitor one with the piece. The relationship between body and space is built through experience of sound and a site-specific narrative. What makes the self a self, and what is it that makes me think, and remember? It is a respectful game with the spectator – body and space, which builds up which, and with what?

*Place to Place* concludes with Eva Arnqvist *Chapter 6: Timesheet* and *A Room with a View* at *Slakthusateljéerna*. Eva Arnqvist who is one of the initiators, talks about *A Room with a View* (2011–) and *Chapter 6*. It is a comprehensive artistic project in and about Slakthusområdet (Stockholm's meat-packing district), where the perspectives on place and politics are examined chapter by chapter, and address rhetoric and image, as well as production and reproduction. It is reminiscent of Kjerstin Bergendahls *Tre kronor* in

Roskilde, Wyspa Gallery and Laznia's in Gdansk, and above all in frameworks and concepts with Marta Rosler's *If You Lived here...* (1989–1991) in New York where Rosler through different themed exhibitions and cross disciplinary panel debates together with artists, architects, activists, social workers, residents and homeless persons examined the question of a city in transformation, exactly where the metamorphosis was taking place.

That which occurred in New York around 30 years ago, a time of urban regeneration, which is happening in Sweden and Europe today was foreseen by Friedrich Engels at the end of the 19th century, and later by Foucault and Deleuze in discourses about societal control, freedom and subjectivity. Where that which is personal and local is marketed, sold and manifested, citizens are transformed into consumers and names and signatures become passwords and usernames. *We observe your movements and use it to our advantage.* Experience society, cultural industry and identity politics. The world is moving backwards forwards, you could say. Swiftly and effectively, the shared is abandoned in favour of the individual. Pirate Bay made a radical suggestion about sharing; Google another – *that, which I have searched for, is logged.* Care for and regulation of public space concerns the individual as well as the collective. It is a guardianship of rights, a kind of *allemansrättighet*, or Right of Public Access, as it is known in Sweden. Irrespective of it being cloaked in the aesthetics of resistance, Guerrilla Gardening and the growing of vegetables on condemned land, is not about antagonism and public interest, but about self-interest and identity, albeit in a collective form. And the norm makes everyone alike. Radicalism is perhaps today rather twinned with large-scale organisations, standard and aesthetic which signals *inclusivity*, long, protracted meetings that never progress to action. Invisibility before visibility.

Place is big politics everywhere, anyway. It is words and introductions: international, national, global and local, words which closely determine *who is the most where*. There, it can be about *acting locally in situ*, and *legitimately acting locally on the ground* – It all puts the question about the public arena and the rights attached to it into perspective: the right to be active in a place other than that in which one actually lives, the right to place as mental, private, global, mine and yours simultaneously, irrespective of time, origin, religion or position.

Art is not what these artists are primarily making, to say that would be to isolate their practice and thinking – rather they are

creating a dialogue about place, which through art, they open up, develop and share.

Lisa Torell, Oct. 2015

#### Footnotes

(1) Where language constitutes (*ways of*) communication, that is, verbally, using speech and writing, as well as image and appearance; the clothes you wear, how a room is furnished, its style, and so on; then language is form, rhetoric and aesthetics.

(2) Place (*Plats*) was originally written for the Swedish Jenny Berntsson's KU-project and book *Sandcity / The sites of a site* specific work for The Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm.

## Place – introduction to the concept

What is space? And what is connectivity and context? For me, space is something in relation to something else. It is a delimitation in something bigger. It is a frame within something greater than itself, a kind of definition of something and of someone for someone else; a model which, depending on context and purpose has different rules, appearances and names. The place can be huge and abstract, tiny and incredibly specific. It can be anything and anywhere, indoors and outdoors. A neutral place for me can be an awkward place for you. The place is the form. Form is for many artists the reason why and how. Irrespective of whether it is the content which determines form or form which determines content, place is nevertheless form and thus very important. Perhaps it appears muddled, mingling concepts of form and place, but that is what I'm doing. They are so significantly related that if I am to explain the meaning of place, I must also mention form.

Form is that which limits place. It is what constitutes both limitations and interfaces, what separates and connects. It is what makes place what it is and not something else. Each place has its own characteristics and distinguishing features. Whether they are neutral, natural or artificial, there will be something, which is distinctive, which defines. A place without definition is exactly that, a place devoid of definition and that is what allows it to be categorised, as well as the adjoining place and possibly even the person behind the pronouncement. That which connects, the relationship between place and form and form and place is what is interesting as it in turn speaks of the context, which cannot be left out either. Separating place from form and form from context is of course possible and the result would be:

Place  
Form  
Context

That is where it ends and I do not believe it is possible to develop it any further; they remain static words. Seeing as they exist, they coexist with the rest of the world and the world is influential. Place, form and context constitute family and belonging in the same way that an older sister without a younger sister cannot possibly be an older sister, neither as an individual nor as a concept. Visible and invisible constructs influence and inform

our perceptions and expectations of a place. The meaning of many places is sufficiently apparent for form and context to be seen. Often, a word is enough to illuminate the whole: a word, which, without further explanation, is adequately meaningful to enable us to conjure the greater context. I will mention a few, to elucidate what I mean:

Work place, living place, fire place, parking space, drinking place, birth place, sleeping place, market place, common place, eating place, desk space, gathering place, advertising space, exhibition space, resting place, turning place, beach, aerospace, personal space, camp site, cyber space, studio space, head space, loading bay, reserve place, back space and displace.

Words and place mirror our needs at specific times and were created on this basis, pertaining to the ideals of that time. Some belong in another time and another society and have since disappeared other than as terms describing something which existed in the past, while other places are renewed and recreated perpetually.

In spite of mutual and general similarities, the experience of a work place for one person or a web space for another can differ widely. Yes, not only the experience by the way, but the place, form and context as a whole, could differ totally and yet be called a head space or a web space. Secondary experiences regularly give way to primary reasons and constructs created in order to facilitate and simplify. When a place is created, definition, form and function become linked. Many places are created from scratch, anew, or are transformed from one place into another in a split second, while others, such as parking spaces, are routinely mass-produced. When this happens, combinations of more or less odd elements are created which can, after years of public repetition come to appear completely obvious and natural. Content and place have conjoined, so to speak. The establishment of thought and foundation has occurred, been granted permanence and time. Understood is that all places with the same name are used in similar ways. Drive at the green light and stop at the red, large white rectangles painted in a row mean one thing while narrow, small ones along the sides mean another; agreements which are as useful as they are givens.

There are however consequences for this kind of linking. Consequences, which can be linked to industry, manufacturing and economy as well as to ideas concerning safety, control and future.



There is a risk that we may inadvertently confuse values that do not necessarily have a direct link. For example, most people are in agreement that there is a difference between a permanent solution and one that is merely temporary. But it would be hasty to draw the conclusion that a permanent solution generally is better than a provisional one. Building a permanent staircase to a temporary house might create more anxiety than calm. One could therefore suggest that that which seems most obvious has the capacity to both open up and clarify as well as impose limitations on the way we live our lives.

Hasty conclusions as to place and the values we attach to place can cause us to develop a false idea of what place really is. Supposing you really can say that it is anything. Yes, it is clearly something now, in the present, when we are interacting with the place. But otherwise it is something which is always changing, from yesterday to today, historically and into an uncertain future. Irrespective of what happened in a place yesterday, one's perception is always informed by yesterday and not today. Today provides a different context to yesterday. Although we tend to speak of yesterday as a time comparatively recent, you cannot get away from the fact that it actually was yesterday.

So, referring back to the initial question and principal purpose of this text; why I enjoy working with place, against place, in service of place, with place on location; it's because regardless of what kind of place we are talking about, it has an impact on my behaviour, my way of seeing, my way of walking, my way of speaking and my way of thinking. The place can be either unfathomable or simple, yet it will reflect our culture and temporary order. We identify with it, define ourselves within it, create it and consume it.

We, who exist, are amongst other things one, and also me, the one who is writing in this place to you, in this particular context, in a place which, like all other places, has particular regulations and rules. In this particular construct for instance, a new sentence ought to begin with a capital letter and conclude with a full stop. Otherwise I might expose you to the indefinably eerie, causing you to examine your perceptions of how things should be, allowing seconds, minutes, perhaps days to pass before you finally come to rest and begin to sort and order; fits, doesn't fit, fits, doesn't fit... with expectation and connectivity. I could also

finish right here. Just like that...

not to continue. Already, it would be too late; I would have

contravened the usual norm, and some of you may already have lost interest, although I was only trying to use place, this particular place, to talk about form, content and context in another way, through a direct, practical theorising, specifically, on location, carrying out a little mini-experiment, still pretty conventionally, on a white background with black lettering.

Lisa Torell, 2009

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For the desire to read,  
like all the other desires which  
distract our unhappy souls,  
is capable of analysis.

— Virginia Woolf, Sir Thomas  
Browne, 1923

→

A Room of One's Own / A Thousand  
Libraries. A conversation  
with Kajsa Dahlberg

C E

Kajsa Dahlberg (born 1973 in Gothenburg) is educated at Malmö Art Academy and at the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. She lives in Berlin. In her artistic work, Dahlberg is concerned with how the collective is presented and formulated through image and language. I am interested in how communities and societies are constituted and how they are renegotiated their 'members' or 'citizens' over time. How do political representation, historical discourse and the formation of individual identity interact? Dahlberg's work has been shown in solo exhibitions such as at Neue Berliner Kunstverein, n.b.k, Germany, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde, Denmark, Parra & Romero Madrid, Spain and at Lunds Konsthall Art Gallery. She has also exhibited her work in joint exhibitions and biennales such as 8 Bienal do Mercosul, Brazil, Based in Berlin, Germany, Manifesta 8, Spain and at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden. [kajsadahberg.com](http://kajsadahberg.com)

Lisa Torell: How did the project start?

Kajsa Dahlberg: I wanted to give a copy of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* to my sister Emma Amanda Söderlund<sup>1</sup> who is a writer who had just graduated from Biskops Arnö<sup>2</sup>. I read Woolf's book for the first time when I started at Malmö Art Academy, and it was rather important to me as it encouraged my decision to become an artist. It strengthened me to know that there had been others before me who had found words to describe the things that I myself was experiencing in my life, and who were speaking about the practice of making art while at the same time analysing structures and privileges. For those reasons it felt important for me to give this book to Emma. But when I tried to buy it, it turned out that it was out of print and hence impossible to get hold of. I was scandalised that such a seminal work could be allowed to just disappear from circulation. A new edition came into print after my project was completed in 2007.

How did you proceed?

I borrowed the book at the central library in Malmö, photocopied it, and had it bound at a bookbinder's. It was quite a peculiar project; beautifully bound pages of ordinary, stiff photocopying paper, which refused to part in that elegant way pages in a book normally do, but rather insisted on jutting straight out. The copy I had borrowed from the library contained lots of notes and jottings, and that was how it started. I thought that the jottings were interesting. They caught my attention, traces of other readers. So I began – every time I entered a library, I checked any copies of *A Room of One's Own* for annotations, and copied them. I collected them for quite a while before I decided to use them for a project.

When did you begin, and how long was it before you finished?

A couple of years, perhaps. I was working on it off and on when I was a studio scholar at Iaspis<sup>3</sup> together with Petra Bauer. That was when Iaspis was located at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and Maria Lind was principal, in 2005-06.

A project builds over time before it becomes clear where it is heading. Did you propose the idea of the book to Index<sup>4</sup>, or were you invited to exhibit, and were free to show whatever you wanted?

As I recall, I was talking with Mats Stjernstedt, whom I already knew from Malmö, during a studio critique when I was at Iaspis. He had Helena Holmberg and the whole of his exhibition group with him: Andreas Gedin, Markus Degerman and Niklas Östholm. There are a few things that could be said about the representation in that exhibition group at that time, but they did studio critiques together, the whole group, and I think that was a good and interesting offering. Just before, I had been invited to an exhibition at Museum Anna Norlander in Skellefteå. It was an exhibition called Vive la Resistance curated by Maja-Lena Johansson. She had invited Fia-Stina Sandlund, Johanna Gustafsson, Katarina Nitsch and myself, for a relay exhibition.

For this exhibition, I made, among other things, some posters based on the notes I had collected to that point. It was a kind of first step on the way toward formulating that which would become A Room of One's Own/A Thousand Libraries. During that studio critique with Index, I showed them the posters, and explained that I wanted to create a piece that would become a book. They were very interested, and after a short while, they got back in touch, saying they wanted to be part of producing the project.

So you had already formulated the idea about a book at the studio critique?

Yes, I had.

In Skellefteå you showed four poster pages from the book?

Well, I hadn't made any of the actual book pages at that point, but I showed what I had collected so far.

But as a result of the invitation to collaborate with Index and Momentum<sup>5</sup> to produce the project, all of a sudden, there was a time frame. From this point, I became much more systematic in my search for annotations.

Had you already started going through the libraries?

I had been to a few libraries. I would look through the copies in the libraries I would visit day to day. But when I decided to create the book, I made a sort of system to enable me to contact all libraries.

1700-tal: Kvinnor började skriva

1700  
slut x

terklåda", men det kunde inte förnekas, att de kunde stoppa pengar i sina portmonnär. Så kom det sig att det fram mot slutet av sjuttonhundratalet inträdde en förändring, som jag, till jag skulle skriva om historien, skulle beskriva utförare och anse värdare än förelägen och Rosornas krig. Medelklasskvinnan började skriva. För om "Stolthet och fördom" har något att betyda och "Middlemarch" och "Villette" och "Svindlande höjder" har något att betyda, så betyder de mycket mer än vad jag under en timmes föredrag kan bevisa, att kvinnorna i allmänhet, och inte bara den ensliga aristokraten som satt instängd på sitt lantställe bland foliovolymerna och lismare, utan också kvinnorna i allmänhet började skriva. Utan dessa förelöpare kunde Jane Austen och systrarna Brontë och George Eliot lika litet ha skrivit som Shakespeare skulle ha kunnat skriva utan Marlowe eller Marlowe utan Chaucer eller Chaucer utan de glömda skalderna, som banade vägen och tämjde språkets naturliga vildhet. För mästenverk är inte några enkla och ensliga alster; de är resultatet av många års gemensamt tänkande, av tänkandet inom hela folkgruppen, så att det är massans erfarenheter, som ligger bakom den ensamma stämman. Jane Austen borde ha lagt en krans på Fanny Burneys grav, och George Eliot borde ha hyllat den kraftfulla skuggan av Eliza Carter — den tappra gamla kvinnan, som band fast en klocka vid sin säng för att kunna vakna tidigt och läsa grekiska. Alla kvinnor borde gemensamt strö blommor över Aphra Behns grav, som nog så skandalöst, men ganska skäligt, är belägen i Westminster Abbey, för det var hon som förskaffade dem rätten att säga vad de tänkte. Det är hon — hur tvetydig och kärlekskrank hon än må ha varit — som gör att det inte är helt fantastiskt gjort av mig att i kväll säga till er: Förtjäna fem hundra pund om året på er intelligens.

Därmed hade man alltså kommit fram till det tidiga

77  
Hässelholms  
Stadsbibliotek



Kajsa Dahlberg, page 77, Ett eget rum / Tusen bibliotek (A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries). Photo Mats Stjernstedt



Kajsa Dahlberg, page 77, Ett eget rum / Tusen bibliotek (A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries). Photo Mats Stjernstedt



Almost all libraries have a photocopier, or used to have. Did you use those, or would you take the book home and copy it?

A bit of both, but I did copy lots of books on the libraries' own machines. A bit nerve-wracking to begin with as you're not really supposed to copy entire books. Often, it was whole books I was copying, apart from the odd page here and there, as there was usually some kind of little note or under-lining on every page. I did a lot of copying during that time, and learnt a lot about photocopiers.

In the moment, with those nerves, did you have some way of controlling, or a system in place for if there were, for instance, two books you wanted to copy, which was which?

To begin with, I kept the copied books intact, in order to see which copy I had obtained at which library, in case I should need to know. It was only when I had collected all the books that I began to sort them according to page numbers.

Different editions sometimes mean that the text is sometimes set differently, and that page numbers differ. Did you have to get your head around a lot of that?

That was quite a fantastic thing; There were seven editions, but only one translation, by Jane Lundblad. Now, there is a second translation by Elisabeth Mansén, published by Modernista, from 2012. But back then there was only one, and despite the fact that all the editions varied in size, font and format, the page layout design was identical. This made my work so much easier. Later, I made a version of the project with the libraries of Berlin, and things were very different there! In Germany, there are not only many more editions, but also several different translations, with diverse page layout. In the Swedish version, I could mix pages from different books, which was nice as the pages became quite different. I couldn't do that in Germany. There, I had to choose one edition to use as a starting point. It was also a palaver to navigate the different translations, trying to find a specific place in the text, as they differed considerably. The title alone is translated in three different ways in German. This is why the project's German title is Ein Zimmer für sich / Ein eigenes Zimmer / Ein Zimmer für sich allein / Vierhundertdreiunddreißig Bibliotheken (A Room of One's Own / Four hundred and thirty-three libraries).

Was it these unsophisticated photocopiers which 'set the tone' for your aesthetic? The look of the book is conceptual and very solution focussed, in some ways a kind of constructed ready-made; what were your thoughts around this?

I thought I ought to let the process lead the way, and keep things as simple as possible. To start with, I thought I would be able to scan the pages and put the annotations together on the computer, somehow. But it was far too complicated. Sometimes, a jotting would overlap with the text, and trying to lift each underlined section out of its context and then transferring them to a new page... it couldn't be done. I collated the annotations from the margins using a light table. I transferred all the notes and underlinings by hand, tracing the individual writings at the light table. My original was always at the top, and so went through it, page by page.

How were you able to gain access to all the books?

I had a lot of help from an army of librarians. They were fantastic, they copied the books and mailed me the copies and were unbelievably helpful. It hadn't been possible to complete it had I not received such great help from them.

This makes it historic and political in some way, the democracy of all the small towns, that the work becomes about all the little rooms of one's own all over Sweden, where the countryside gets as much say as the city, somehow.

Yes, it felt important that all libraries were represented. But, at the same time, the detail is made invisible in a different way: I remember finding a copy of the book at a library I visited myself, in Tollarp in Skåne. Someone had underlined all the times Woolf had used the word 'rage'. Such a gesture disappears in my book.

Did you personally telephone the libraries?

I sent a round robin email in which I detailed the project to all libraries. I devised a kind of timetable so that I wouldn't miss anything. It was a real job keeping track of which libraries had responded and which ones had not, quite a lot of admin. At the same time, it appeared as if a rumour spread amongst librarians, and after a while it seemed as if the librarians I contacted were already

aware of the project. It started to flow and many librarians even copied whole books and mailed them to me without charge. In some cases, they sent books through the post straight to my home, which I copied and mailed back. But right at the beginning, I received a few cross replies from some who insisted it was forbidden to annotate library books and that their books were not thus afflicted. But generally everyone was incredibly helpful and enjoyed helping out.

Have you still got the emails you sent to the libraries initially? It would be fun to show how a piece of work can begin, with processes which begin and go on in parallel with the development of method and idea, where the approach to the material – way of working is that which contributes to its and many other works' often direct and generously simple aesthetic.

I'll have a look, I think I have it... As a side-effect of working with the project for so long, I developed an interest in different classification systems. I suppose you could say I nerded out a bit, and among other things I edited an issue of Shifter Magazine on this very topic, together with Jane Jin Kaisen and Sreshta Rit Premnath, who is also the founding editor of the magazine. We were fellow participants at the Whitney Program<sup>6</sup> in NYC at the time. The issue we edited together was titled 'Unassigned' and was based on the American classification system Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDCS). Dewey Decimal Classification System was developed at the end of the 1800s and is an attempt to organise all knowledge into ten main classes, which in turn are subdivided into one hundred hierarchical divisions, and a further one thousand sections. It classifies all areas of knowledge numerically and infinitely rationally. But in spite of this, the DDCS is perpetually revised as, inescapably, even this rational system must reflect how culture, ideology and perception of knowledge changes overtime. As a result of this, but also in order to leave room for potential future changes, 89 out of the 1000 sections of the system are classified as 'Unassigned'. So, we invited artists, writers, activists and researchers to comment, interrogate and re-structure the logic of the system by adding new categories, and thereby fill up these 'unassigned' spaces.

After I finished working on A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries, I also tried to get Woolf's book reclassified in the Swedish system 'SAB'<sup>7</sup>. A Room of One's Own, is classified as fiction together with Woolf's other books, which is probably logical in

some ways... perhaps from the point of view that it ought to be straight forward for people to find a specific book.

From: kajsa dahlberg [mailto:kajsadahlberg@hotmail.com]  
Sent: the 24th of March 2008 19:05  
To: Bibliogr; LIBRIS customer service  
Subject: Question regarding classification in LIBRIS

I am writing to you as I would like to suggest a change of subject category for the book *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf. The book is currently classified as fiction (H) (with a few exceptions, where it is classified as General and miscellaneous (B), however, I believe it ought to be classified as Literary Studies (G).

*A Room of One's Own* is based on a series of lectures Woolf gave in 1928 at Newnham and Girton College, two colleges for women at Cambridge University and it describes Woolf's search for women's representation through literary history. The title sums up Woolf's thoughts about how writing is linked to material conditions such as health and money and the buildings we live in, and so she concerns herself with the relationship between social structures and ideology. She points toward how public and private spheres are inseparably connected, and describes, not only a search for literature authored by women, but the conditions under which this literature is produced. *A Room of One's Own* continues to be a central point of reference, not only for feminist studies, but for critical theory as a whole, and on these grounds I would like to argue that it should be classified accordingly.

Awaiting your response.

Kind regards,  
Kajsa Dahlberg

I was very engaged with this, and felt strongly that this wasn't a work of fiction, but a literary study, and an important feminist pamphlet. I thought it was important for the book to be classified among other books which had been part of influencing feminist theory, giving it its correct place in history, so to speak.

I wrote to the library, asking: 'Is there a way for a person

to have any kind of influence if one believes a book is misplaced within the SAB system? Who can one contact / write to?' As the reply I received made a big deal out of explaining how they rarely mis-categorised books, and that it is virtually unheard of for a single person to influence the system, I responded by trying to write as persuasively as I could about the book and my work with it. In the end, I received a tired reply which was so honest and to the point, revealing something of the inherent conditions of the library service, that my crossness lost momentum, and didn't pursue it any further after that.

It's great that you got your point across?

Yes, at the very least my thoughts were acknowledged. That was satisfying.

How is your book classified, where can it be found in libraries?

I think my book is classified a bit differently at different libraries. Sometimes it can be found in Art, by my name, and sometimes by Virginia Woolf.

Getting back to the emails to the library staff; what did they say?

Let me see if I still have one. Here: 'Have just photocopied the under-linings, posting them today.' And under that is my message, shall I read it to you?

Please.

'Hello, my name is Kajsa Dahlberg and I am working on an Art project in preparation for an exhibition in Norway this autumn, and I wonder if you could possibly help me out. My project requires me to collect and document the (possible) annotations people may have made in the copies of Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own which are held in libraries up and down the country. I am of course aware that it is not permissible to make annotations in library books, but I once borrowed a copy of A Room of One's Own from the central library in Malmö, and found it to be full of notes and jottings.

As A Room of One's Own is a book which has been of great importance to me, I became interested in investigating (Hm, there is a lot of investigating) whether similar annotations could be found

elsewhere. I will collect and collate these comments and notes in a new publication. As I have noticed that you have one or more copies of the book I wonder whether you could help me by leaving through the book – books, to see whether there are any annotations. I would be very happy if you would email me and let me know whether any such annotations exist or not, so that I can either get copies or borrow it remotely. Whether it is a single note in one book, or several, they are just as important to me.'

I understand the interest, jottings are something librarians normally don't want, but here it is suddenly opening new rooms.

I remember one librarian I was in touch with who told me he had entered made-up books into the library's computerized catalogue.

That relates to your thoughts around pirate copying and activism as action as a vehicle for influence.

Which opens up new spaces in a system which can seem very total and impenetrable. Opens up new rooms, as you say, at least metaphorically.

What do the personal meetings mean, do they generate content for the project itself? One of the reasons why I seek out different places is all that is generated by the personal meetings. How do you relate to this?

I work quite slowly, and that is because I often find it difficult to separate project and process, all that which has been so important during the course of the project over a period of time. I always find myself seduced by those processes and exactly that which you say, the people you meet and what they share, the ensuing relationships, the correspondence. For a long time, for instance, I was considering whether to include the information about from which libraries the annotations had been collected. For example, I had a list of all the libraries which stuck around for the whole of the design process, it was intended for the very back of the book. But it was rejected right at the end. The idea of all the libraries was what was important, it felt bigger, more relevant and more open than actually seeing a long list of libraries. It might seem like very insignificant decisions with hindsight, but it was important then. So, there comes a point at which it is good

to get some distance and to say: OK, this is here, and it has been important, but it isn't part of the work. It isn't important in the context of what I want to convey through the project. That process takes a long time.

The culling takes time?

Yes, the working it through, it takes time.

A thousand libraries, how many libraries were there really?

That is something I have thought about a lot afterwards, as in the German version, which was published by Reclam, the title refers to the number of libraries that there are in Berlin, 433 to be precise. As they always have the most of everything, they obviously have the most libraries. But there aren't that many libraries in Sweden. I still think the title is nice. Perhaps, conceptually, it had been more logical to refer to the exact number of libraries. But, I like the poetic address of 'A Thousand Libraries'.

I understand what you mean, it is a very conceptual work, but simultaneously A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries, it's a bit like throwing out a horizon, it creates such space. If it instead had read 485 Libraries, the thought had somehow been restricted.

Yes, precisely, and my thought was that the title should create a movement between the personal space and the public. The number 'thousand' was meant to symbolize something unfathomable, rather than something as factual, concrete and comprehensible as 433 libraries. I was happy with the title when I decided on it, and I have since regretted it, but now I am back on thinking that it was actually quite good. I often do this to old projects. I still brood over them.

Was it you who suggested that the book was all white? I was a little disappointed that it was all white.

Yes, I have thought afterwards that one might think that it is white and without text in order to make it a nice looking object. But that wasn't my thinking at all, and not the reason why I made it like that. I wanted it to exude secrecy and anonymity. The project was all about giving space to the readers and reading itself, so it felt

wrong to write Virginia Woolf in large letters on the cover, as in this book she was not the central figure. It was also a reference to the pirate-copy, or Copyleft<sup>8</sup> publications. Because it was a pirate edition. It wasn't legal to use the text then. In 2006, the text was still copyrighted, as it had not yet been 70 years since her death. A Room of One's Own entered the public domain in 2012. But I know that I also wanted it to be white because I wanted to give the book back to the libraries, and I had an idea that my book would remain unclassified, and sort of disappear among the other books on the shelves. But of course, that's not what happened.

At Index, the work was installed upon a white shelf along the wall, is that what happened at Momentum in Moss?

Yes, there it had its own room in Gallery F-15 which is on the outskirts of Moss. It was a beautiful room with large windows overlooking the park. I had installed a bench in front of the windows and a shelf which ran along the whole wall, filled with books... and so, you were able to pick up a copy of your own.

In my opinion, it is a site-specific work, in which you use the book as a place. Even if you have constructed the book, the relationship to the source is obvious, the library book. The work develops-Richard Serra's<sup>9</sup> idea about not being able to move site-specific works to another place. Many places are constructed along similar principles, of the same relationships, which have the same names and the same meaning. A site-specific work made for a library and its principles can for example fairly easily be installed at another library, as all libraries have specific general principles which enable us to recognize them precisely as libraries. In your work A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries, the place is both the libraries and the book - books. The under lined sections are site-specific inasmuch as the both relate to, and are just below the specific meaning which is meant by this or this. Place can be both a mental place and a physical one, large or small. It is a big concept.

Yes, and my thought was also that the project would have a grounding in Virginia Woolf's own intellectual legacy. Perhaps this can be viewed as a kind of site specific-ness. My book wanted to be loyal to a kind of searching - in Woolf's case, a search for women's representation in the history of literature, and in my book a search



for other readers, for other readings. But I also wanted the projected to align itself to a feminist genealogy. Not like a mother / daughter generational thing, but more as a continuum of a feminist political practice.

Do you annotate books? Personally, I'm too secretive, I make lots of notes in my own books, but never in others'.

Yes, it is private, and no, I would never annotate a library book. But I do understand that it is common, for many it is a way to remember what one has read, and then it hardly matters whether it is a book of one's own or a library book.

Where has A Room of One's Own / A Thousand Libraries been shown?

It has been shown in lots of different places, actually, and when I have exhibited it abroad I have almost always shown the original pages as an installation. It is in part due to the fact that the books have run out, but also that it is a bit odd with a book in Swedish which people can't read. It is really quite remarkable that it has been shown such a lot abroad, despite it being in Swedish.

Have you had to stand your ground there, or is that just the way it's worked out, so to speak?

This particular project has, in many ways, had a life of its own. Many have wanted to show it, and I haven't had to do much. It has looked after itself. But I thought a lot about it when I was invited to do the German version for the exhibition Based in Berlin<sup>10</sup>. Really, I wasn't particularly interested in remaking the project elsewhere, so I was quite hesitant to participate in the first place. I had many long discussions about it with Jacob Schiller who was assistant curator. We'd been on the Whitney Program and spoken a lot about the book and he was very fond of the project. It came up in conversation that we could investigate whether we would be able to publish the book at Reclam. That's when it fell into place for me, Reclam is a well-known publishing house in Germany, which specializes in reference books. All the books look the same, bright yellow and small enough to fit in your pocket. They had never printed Virginia Woolf, overall there are very few women among their publications, so all of a sudden, it felt very meaningful to go ahead with the project.

Then you progressed the project along the lines you'd previously considered, but lost track of.

Yes, the project got yet another dimension yet it didn't feel as if I was merely repeating the same thing. The book was printed in 10,000 copies, and was free of charge.

The fact that you are showing it the world over could be a phenomenal statement even if 'it just happened that way', as it strengthens the book and that room of one's own, in some way.

Yes, I'm sure part of it has been about forming a perception of limitations. Through this project, I have seen evidence that it comes along anyway. It was a really interesting experience to see that it works, and that the book can be in Swedish and still be of interest abroad. Only a conceptual work is left when the language is unknown, but with the possibility of borrowing it in one's mother tongue to access the content.

The work comprises many democratic aspects which are incorporated both in Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own and in the libraries as places. The complexities which these rooms embrace are elucidated through your work, both through the annotations and also through the presentation of the work as a whole.

In addition, it reflects a specific time, there might be many more, or completely different jottings, these days. Many of the librarians also said that they used to have the time to sit and erase annotations in books. They just don't have the time anymore. There have probably been many more jottings in the past, all of which have been erased.

#### Footnotes

(1) The first novel which Emma Amanda Söderlund had published by Opal was titled Ett eget golv (A Floor of One's Own)

(2) Nordens Folkhögskola Biskops-Arnö is a further education college in the Folkhögskola tradition, situated at Biskops-Arnö in Lake Mälaren. Its principal is Föreningen Norden, (The Nordic Association, founded in 1919, is a politically and religiously independent organisation promoting Nordic co-operation across all fields).

(3) Iaspis is Konstnärsnämnden's international program for professional artists, designers, artisans and architects.

(4) Index, the Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, gallery in Stockholm where Mats Stjernstedt was director 2001-2011.

(5) Momentum is a Nordic biennale for contemporary art in Moss, Norway.

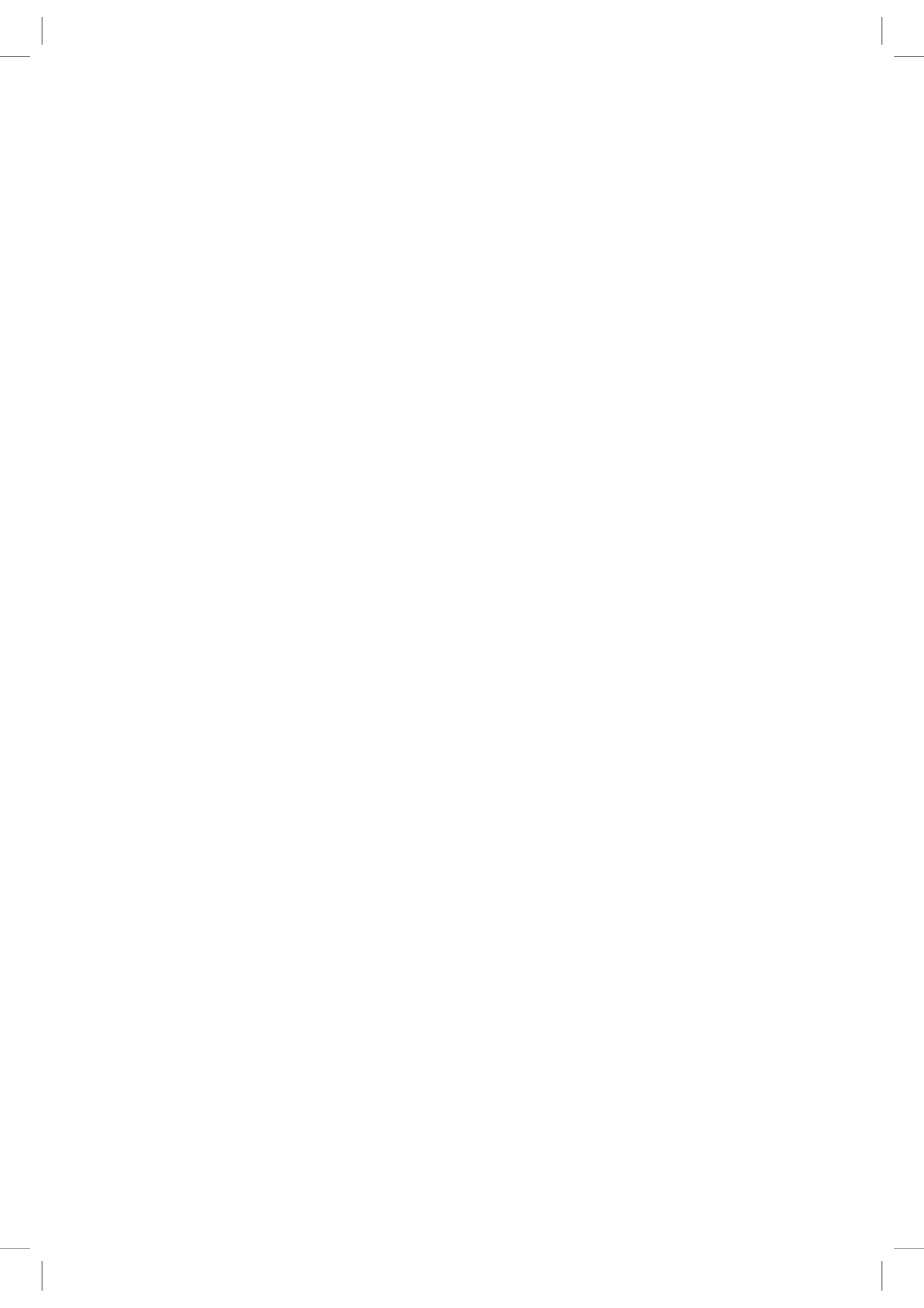
(6) The Whitney Independent Study Program (ISP), is a post graduate program for artists, theoreticians and curators located in New York City, USA.

(7) The SAB system is a classification system for libraries in Sweden.

(8) Copyleft is a group of licences for free software and other free cultural works (a form of open content), which gives the user far-reaching reaching rights to modify and circulate a work as long as it is done in accordance with the original conditions. Copyleft differs from more permissive open licenses so that the spreading effect (in original or modified form) must do so under the same copyright league conditions, and thus to 'pay' the original contributor by sharing their improvements.

(9) Richard Serra is an American minimalist who has said that if you move a site-specific work, you ruin it, as the work is both the sculpture and its relationship to its surroundings. (My translation) Nick Kaye, Site Specific art, performance, place and documentation, 2000

(10) Based in Berlin, an exhibition which was shown in Berlin in 2011, curated by Angelique Campens, Fredi Fischli, Magdalena Magiera, Jacob Schillinger and Scott Cameron Weaver.



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A meeting with  
Henrik Andersson  
about Faran över

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Henrik Andersson (born 1973 in Gothenburg) is educated at Konstfack in fine art and at the curator program. He lives in Stockholm. Henrik has been part of the publishing team for Paletten magazine until 2015, and has previously worked as curator at Röda Sten in Gothenburg, and as lecturer at the School of Photography. In his artistic work, Henrik reinterprets and re-frames different places and stories using photography and other methods of annotation. He has exhibited at Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Index, Stockholm and Tirana Biennale 3, Albania. During 2013–2014 he worked with the project Museum Jorn at the Baltic Art Centre in Visby. In 2014-2015 he had a studio at Marabouparken Lab which resulted in the exhibition Participant Observers, which centres on the National Defence's previous research station at Ursvik, Sundbyberg.

We meet at Henrik Andersson's home at Hornsgatan in Stockholm to discuss the work *Faran över* (Danger Averted) from 2006.

Henrik opens his laptop and shown pictures of Norberg, from the research trip in preparation for the exhibition *Västmanland – Bergslagen – Sweden – Scandinavia – 27 July at Lunchtime*<sup>1</sup> which we both participated in, curated by Malin Ståhl and Lisa Panting from Hollybush Gardens Gallery. The process from invitation to opening was quick. We met in connection with their visit to Iaspis<sup>2</sup> in the autumn of 2005. But it is always so uncertain, and irrespective of how these meetings turn out, it is rare for them to lead to an instant result. Already in February or March, it was decided. In April we all went up for a rekkie and the exhibition opened in July.

Lisa Torell: The pictures are from when we walked around as a group during the tour which Malin and Lisa had organised. The guide spoke primarily about the mining village of Norberg, its history since the 13th century, the productive times until the mines were decommissioned, and up until the unemployment of the 1980s. What were you thinking as you walked around, and which places caught your interest?

Henrik Andersson: The curators' idea was that we artists would activate Norberg's public spaces and we did look for public areas and... Because one does think, when working on developing new

Research  
Norberg



project and a new work, about how it will actually work. What is possible, and if there is an institution where there is staff, in which case that becomes a circumstance that makes the whole thing so much easier. I'm not sure whether it was going to become a sound, or what it was going to develop into, it is almost ten years ago, but I did work with sound a lot then. Among other projects, on Gotland, in the work *Repetition* (2005) where I created a sequence

of peals for the bell ringing in Visby cathedral in collaboration with BAC<sup>3</sup>, built on Arabic scales. That which tempted me with this project was gaining access to and existing architecture distributing art (music) and takes ownership a whole city. The starting-point for Repetition was an interdisciplinary ambition, where the values of different institutions were to be integrated. In this case, they consisted of the church and the art, which broadly share a common history. In the same way, the historic relationship

Norberg's church



between European and Arabic musical tradition respectively, was revived as their common ground was elucidated through the classical legacy. The cathedral in Visby has its roots in the middle ages and in those days it was the influence of Arabic music which caused music theory in Europe to flourish.

The authority of an institution such as the church has a strong pull and to use this has a kind of critical potential. Somehow it was easy to continue to work with that. In Norberg there was an old church, something I wanted to continue to develop in order to refer to previous works.

Did you decide on the church already in April?

No, I think that came later. I can't recall being in the church then, I don't think I was. It was probably later. All artists stayed around for quite a while, we worked for a week or two in situ. I think I knew in the summer that I wanted to be in the church, and spoke to Malin and Lisa at once.

I must have gone in to look inside the church, and seen the grand piano. There is something about these spaces which just





Faran över, the complete installation as seen from the entrance to Norberg's church.



Faran över, installation in Norberg's church.

# Faran över

Henrik Andersson 2006

30'' x 259200

Pno.

A picture of sheet music The Score.

In this church, the artist Henrik Andersson is exhibiting the work *Faran över*. The installation is a part of the international art project *Norberg, Västmanland, Bergslagen, Sverige, Skandinavien 27 juli vid lunchtid* which is showing from 27/7–30/8 at different locations in Norberg.

The installation makes use of two Ebows (electronic bows) inside the grand piano, which generates a continuous F chord. Andersson's work is often concerned with problematizing public communication systems. The note 'F' is the one used in the typhoon (Hesa Fredrik) which can be found in every densely populated area in Sweden, installed to convey important messages to the public.

*Faran över*, the information text from inside Norberg's church.



Faran över, detail from the installation in Norberg's church.



Faran över, detail from the installation in Norberg's church.

exudes authority. The music and the sound is so intrinsically linked to these places, and to somehow get to work with it is a kind of temptation. To take on this church, its traditions and the authority in the church. It felt good to develop something there. In addition, one must remember the church employs predominantly progressive people. People who are interested in complexity.

It was fun to be able to work there, and as I remember, they were very accommodating, I presented my idea for what I wanted to do, and then it was pretty much done. It is possible that Malin and Lisa were in touch with the vicar and other staff a bit more, but I don't really think so. Previously, I had been experimenting a bit with using electromagnets to create notes with strings.

#### What are electromagnets?

It is best described as putting a bit of a current through a magnet which is placed slightly above the string, and which then makes the string move. It then produces a note which will reverberate as long as the electricity is switched on.

I thought about what sound signals in a public space and how earlier societies may have been more dependent on sound in order to reach its inhabitants. In a small place like Norberg, the church has probably been instrumental in public mediation and information.

Sure, Norberg's church had a parish hall, and that functioned on many different levels. However, the church itself didn't get much use other than for sermons, christenings and weddings. It was always open, anyone could come in to worship, but it was usually empty.

Anyway, when I began to study the church and work on the construction of the story around the work, at the stage when one tries to create some kind of context, the questions arose: There is this room and this grand piano, I can use the piano -but how shall I use the material? What should be played is it music or what? What is meant to happen, what kind of transmission will be made? I thought a lot about the role of the church, its music and its bells, who worked as a warning signal in days gone by. It was them that rang out if there was a fire in the town or if war loomed, that their duties comprised sharing public information as well as raising the alarm in the event of fire or war. This suited a framework I was looking forward to working within. And if something was to befall

in Norberg, the church bells would most likely be rung again.

In modern times, the ringing has been replaced by Hesa Fredrik<sup>4</sup> which is a signal which was first at 15.00 across the country the first Monday of every month and thereafter on the first Monday of each quarter, and which now being replace by a new SMS system.

These were the founding thoughts, and then I began by listening to the sound and understood that the Hesa Fredrik closest to where I lived played the note F. Ok, so then I started working on playing the note F. I was interested in finding something poetic in it and realised that the long not, which emerges at the end of Hesa Fredrik, was interesting. Hesa Fredrik starts with a few short notes and finishes with a 30 seconds long note. That's the note, which signals that the danger has passed. I thought it would be beautiful, almost sublime to have an infinite 'the danger is passed' note in the church in Norberg for the duration of the exhibition period.

Faran över consisted of a single long note, despite it reading as 30 seconds on the score. As it repeats, you never hear the break, but it sounds like a continuous not which never stops. The note was generated by a hymnbook on two wooden blocks which weighed down the keys of the grand piano. The electromagnets kept the vibration in the strings going with help from the electrical current. Much of this technique which I am using, you can use on a guitar and other string instruments. The technique is used by many people and there is a tradition with for instance John Cage<sup>5</sup> and the prepared piano, where Cage performed a concert during which he drops scrap metal into a piano and bangs away. There is a long tradition of this kind of thing among composers.

You knew this would work.

Yes, and there was a certain temptation to install sound over time, over such a long period of time. I thought a lot about the work standing there by itself, being a part of an exhibition, that it in some way becomes more *image*, than if it is just experienced through the ears there and then. That, I thought, the whole installation with the grand piano etc. also worked as *image*, not just sound, but rather as a complete experience.

The way that Faran över was installed, does it refer in equal measure back to a conceptual idea as to sound – the art sound tradition visually, in as much as there needs to be some leads and some kind of machine together with some real life props, which in this

context consist of the grand piano, the music-stand and the hymn-books. Were you thinking that you would reclaim that simple, direct way of presenting?

There is one... it feels as if during the 1990s with the technological art of the day, there was this tradition of accounting for everything, and sort of aesthetic of accountability; all leads should be visible, nothing should be hidden. I felt sympathetic to that. No secrets and no surprises, I suppose you can say. Where everything visible has a function – if a lead is visible, this is where it leads, and there an electromagnetic current is started at this time. There was, one could argue, a kind of infiltration afoot in this milieu, through the work and its aesthetic.

Faran över, detail from the installation in Norberg's church.



The text and the sheet music were positioned on a music-stand, it contained a short presentation of the work, along with the sheet music. At the piano was only the sheet music, the score. The sound, which grew stronger and stronger the closer one got to the piano, wasn't loud, rather I could say that its monotonousness and lacklustre tone gave an impression of purity. A sinusoid, sounding a little like the test image on television. It is these properties which makes the note intense, even if the volume thereof isn't particularly loud. I have wondered with hindsight how they got it to work, whether the staff would occasionally turn it off every so often. We did decide that they could turn it off during a service.

It was a fun project, I also seem to remember every one being so positive toward us when we went about our business there. It was fun, the end of the 90's also meant that there was an upswing in public art, with projects around the city, quite socially engaged art.

As we had grown up with this, so to speak, we didn't have any trouble being in the white cube or outside it, or anywhere else for that matter. There wasn't any real opposition, Norberg was a place among others, with its heritage to which one could relate.

At the same time, if I have to think of a problem, it is always tempting to have a brief, but also difficult. What occurs to me is that it is tricky to work as an artist in a public space. What you really want is perhaps to make a small intervention which ends up having a big impact. But it isn't really possible to dominate the public space, to drown it out in the same way that a fireworks display costing Skr 100 000 might do.

No, and nor is it comparable with an exhibition in a gallery which as set opening times and fees, in the public space we can't control from which direction the public will approach the work or when a visitor will come or who they might be.

No, it is a completely different situation.

I'm thinking that curators sometimes make mistakes when they invite artists, or perhaps rather in the ways they try to direct the work. Now, in this project, we were able to work freely, but I'm thinking of Malin and Lisa who invited a guide to shed light on Norberg's history. In the end, I don't think anyone actually worked with it. It's as if you as an artist is placed in a position of instant opposition: OK, now we are going to work with a public place in a historical context.

No, then we won't! As soon as freedom is limited in any way, you take a new turn. The difficulty in these processes is perhaps that the inviting party often has an idea of what they think one should do. And then you want to do something else. One's own freedom, the will to freedom, is perhaps the biggest problem.

Faran över is in my opinion a sincere, possibly a bit dry, generous but not particularly flirtatious work. For the purpose of the book, it was important to include a sound work, despite sound 'taking up so much space' there are only a few who work with sound in a place related way.

I have shown Faran över twice, first in Norberg 2006 and later the same year at the exhibition Konst i offentliga rum (Art in Public



Space) by Per Hasselberg in Konsthall C<sup>6</sup> in Stockholm, then in Hökarängskyrkan.

Despite it being almost 10 years ago, I see parallels with the work you do today, and it relates to the work you are doing at Marabouparken at the moment, and I'm mostly thinking about the military, the public and its function and overlap.

I think I'm still concerned with various things public. In my work at Marabouparken Lab<sup>7</sup> the archive itself and the archive material have been more important than before. But it is still the possibility to connect histories and stories to a personal synthesis which is the driving force.

#### Footnotes

(1) Västmanland – Bergslagen – Sweden – Scandinavia – 27 July at Lunchtime. An exhibition produced by Hollybush Gardens Gallery (UK) Lisa Panting and Malin Ståhl, a summer exhibition in Norberg.

Contributing artists: Henrik Andersson, Magnus Bårtås, Dave Carbone, Bryan Griffiths, Eline McGeroge, Jesper Nordahl, Pia Sandström, Milly Thompson, Lisa Torell, Emily Wardill and Åbäke

(2) Iaspis is Konstnärsnämndens international program for professional artists, designers, artisans and architects.

(3) BAC – Baltic Art Centre is a workplace on Gotland for artists, curators, writers etc. focussing on contemporary art, it is an international meeting place in the Baltic providing a range of production and residency programs. ([balticartcentre.com](http://balticartcentre.com))

(4) Hesa Fredrik or Viktigt meddelande till allmänheten (VMA) (Important Message to the Public) is the warning and information system which consists of outdoor alarms and messages in radio and television.

(5) John Cage (1912–1992) American composer, music theorist, author and artist who among other things introduced the phrase 'the prepared piano'.

(6) Konsthall C, in 2004 the artist Per Hasselberg and Hökarängens stadsdelsråd (an ideological organisation) founded Konsthall C. The gallery is located in Stockholmshems old laundry facility.

(7) Marabouparken Lab: initiates Marabouparken Konsthall longterm collaborative projects, which develop through connections with artists, commissioners and residents outside and inside the gallery.

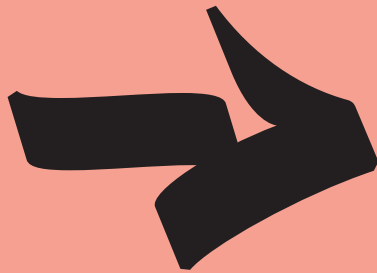


**P**

Time and art, a conversation  
with Annika Eriksson

**L**

**A**



**C**

**E**

Annika Eriksson (born 1956 in Malmö) is educated at Malmö Konstskolan Forum. She lives in Berlin. During 2015 she has been developing works for institutions which focus on art in public spaces such as Public Art Agency Sweden with the video work Övning inför ett psykodrama, Gymnasium in Lincoln, USA, with the video installation Adventure Ahead and Ljuslådan (The Light Box) Something is here nothing is here (horror) for BAC Site Residency in Novosibirsk, Russia. She has been exhibiting internationally since the middle of the 90s and has participated in, among others, the biennale of Wien / Future Light, Austria, the Istanbul Biennale, Turkey, the biennales of Shanghai, China, São Paulo, Brazil, and Venice, Italy. Since 2011 she is a professor at Bergen Academy for Art and Design, Norway and from 2003 to 2011 she was a professor at Malmö Academy of Art.

Lisa Torell: Can you tell me about En fruktansvärd sammansvärjning (A Terrible Conspiracy)<sup>1</sup>

Annika Eriksson: The works which emerged during the early 90's are the foundations for what I am still working on. When I moved from Malmö to Stockholm 1992 I used to walk around a lot in order to get to know my new home town. I came across a lot of remarkable and grand things, which I experienced as a kind of super-reality in all its beauty, and it changed my artistry. The big difference between Malmö and Stockholm at the time was the sheer number of commercial messages in the public space. I was invaded by messages prompting me to live a life I did not want for myself. Out of this sprung the thought of finding a way of sneaking into people's minds with an ambiguous message, little stickers which read En fruktansvärd sammansvärjning (A Terrible Conspiracy). I ordered five hundred to start with and put them up here and there, be it on billboards, ATMs, on cars, groceries in the supermarket. For many years, I would run into my stickers, and there nothing that says I can't order another 500 for a new round.

Picture reference: En fruktansvärd sammansvärjning, stickers, put up in Stockholm (1993-).



Can you say something of your method?

My ideas need to work in parallel, but there needs to be a clear seminal thought, a clean concept. I weed out all impressions and ideas until I reach that stage. The work also has to have a method, a way in which to conduct itself, it should be activated with these aspects as a starting point. I have long periods of preparation during which I gather impressions. The production itself only takes a few days. When I know how to execute it, I just do it without changing a thing. Sometimes I think I am looking for something which was within me already, but which I have to look outside in order to find.

Can you tell me about Wir sind wieder da?

I have lived in Berlin since 2002 and had wanted to work on a project based on that city for some time. In Berlin, time and history are intensely present; the wars, the wall, the city is full of ghosts. It was, and continues to be a city in transition, a time in-between clear systems, especially in the former east Berlin. I wanted to describe this in-between time through speaking of a past and a future scenario.

Picture reference: Wir sind wieder da, punks in Berlin 2009.



Picture reference: Wir sind wieder da, Berlin, 2000.



Can you tell me something about how you relate to time?

Most of my work, not least the more recent projects, has circulated a lot around time in the form of loops, time pockets and time warps. In Wir sind wieder da the punks are either ghosts from a time gone by or they belong to a future scenario. I used the aesthetic of 80's sci-fi movies such as Bladerunner and Escape From New York to get a sense of how the future looked when those punks enjoyed their peak in Berlin's street life. So they can be ghosts from another time or belong in a future which hasn't happened yet. I worked with the punks and placed them in a milieu which very much represents a



I am the dog that was always there, HD video, seven minute loop, Istanbul Biennale 2013.



I am the dog that was always here, HD video, seven minute loop, Istanbul Biennale 2013.



Wir sind wieder da, installed at DAAD gallery, Berlin, 2010.



En fruktansvärd sammansvärjning from the exhibition Tillvaratagna effekter curated by Mats Stjernstedt and Niklas Östholm, Oslo konsthall, 2002. Photo Niklas Östholm



particular time in Berlin. The punks in the film are a metaphor for a city in transition.

Can you expand a bit on your thinking around the use of metaphors?

Arnold Böcklin describes it so well when he talked about how he, at Berlin Alexanderplatz, creates a metaphor as he writes about the digestion of a man sitting in a restaurant, eating far too much. How the man's body is processing all this food becomes a metaphor for a complicated and hard to indigestible city, which is what Berlin was in the 1930s. The whole story is a parallel tale of the political situation in Berlin and Germany. And when Rainer Werner Fassbinder talks about his TV series, based on this book, where the main character Franz Biberkopf wants to do right, but absolutely everything goes wrong. That is starts out wrong becomes an example of how Fassbinder uses this story to illustrate a Germany which remains dysfunctional into the 1980's. The same story can be used as a metaphor for something greater, over time. These are examples of relating to metaphor, it happens all the time in film and literature. I think it is an effective way to avoid being blatant, to make multi-layered works which, through their openness, also allow space for the audience.

What does being present on location mean to your work, being in the place the work is based on?

It depends on the project, but with regard to the works we are talking about, it has been of great importance to me to immerse myself in the place and to spend a considerable amount of time there. But it isn't always necessary for me, I work on and produce much of my work from home. I have welcomed this more in the last few years, it simplifies my existence and I notice that I still move in the same space wherever I happen to be.

Can you speak about I am the dog that was always here?

I was invited through the Tarabaya Academie and the Goethe Institute in Istanbul, and had the opportunity to develop a project. As I was invited to participate in the Istanbul Biennale 2013, it gave me a chance to work on a project based on the city over a longer period of time.

My rather vague plan was that I wanted to work with street animals as a way to examine the city's transitional phase, where big societal and economic changes are taking place. During previous visits I had been fascinated with how closely the street animals, the dogs and the cats have coexisted with humans, every bar or restaurant with a shred of self-respect, for instance, would have a menagerie of cats living there and being fed by the staff. It was as if the presence of the animals made people more humane. But in step with an aggressive restructuring and cleansing on many levels, the animals are effected, and so also the people. The place where we were filming is an area where street dogs are taken to essentially starve to death, and where an organisation is very active in trying to stop this and to help the dogs. I imagine it to be a place before or after the city's existence as the film occurs on so many different planes. I worked closely with an animal rights' organisation which also took me to the protests in Gezi Park and Taksim in the early stages and this made a big impression on me.

Picture reference: I am the dog that was always here, Istanbul, 2012-2013



The film is a story about a dog which has always been there and always will be there. He is history personified, he represents all times and all voices. He refers to old street names but also to what is happening in the present and that which is imagined in the future. The work was developed during my stay, the preparation of research, ideas and the formulation of the text took perhaps six months, and then the actual production was very quick, we only filmed for a day.

To emphasise that the dog speaks through many times, and has many voices, I have used a range of sources, such as science fiction references, quotes from history books, news clips and song lyrics.

My text is the glue which holds the different parts together. Then he loops himself, repeats himself, and the text also loops on the whole.

'A place which can be all cities' is what you said during our conversation in connection with site-specific works and their relationships to a particular place. Do you want to expand on what you mean by that?

Every place is unique, yet part of a greater context. Istanbul, which is the place I relate to in I Am the Dog That Was Always Here (loop) is also the city as a concept, as in 'the city', where most of us now live our lives.

What are you working on now?

I am working on a video project for Statens Konstråd which will be set in Grängesberg. I knew from the start that I wanted to work with video, the moving image is as close as I am going to get to time, which is important in this piece as I am also looking at the aspect of time. The working title is Övning inför ett psykodrama / In preparation for a Psychodrama and it will use as its starting point the last few decades of change that Sweden has seen.

Picture reference: Övning inför ett psykodrama, a page from my notebook.



What does the research look like?

This old industrial town is in many ways representative of how Sweden has changed after the industrial society and 'folkhemmet' ('the people's home', an expression of the development of the

Swedish welfare state). The mine was closed in the 80's but is still present as an unintentional memorial.

The past is present in a way that it isn't in Stockholm, for instance. The place as a whole, and that which it represents, interests me. But I'm focusing on central Grängesberg. I am going to... the shooting of the video to Folkets Hus (the community centre), and the premiere to Folket's Park (the public recreation ground), two places which, these days, are largely abandoned. They are old institutions with a great symbolic significance and they represent, to me, the Sweden I grew up in.

Picture reference: Övning inför ett psykodrama, Folkets Park.



#### Footnote

(1) Lisa Torells' translation.

**P L A**

Lisa and Martin Tebus talk about  
matchbox production and art



**C**

**E**

Martin Tebus (born 1976 in Uppsala) is educated at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. He lives in Stockholm. Martin has a background in theatre and architecture and for over ten years, he has made documentary works where he has been concerned with how history is staged through roleplay, for instance through the cultural heritage pedagogy of open air museums. He has previously exhibited his work at, among other places, Jönköpings Match Stick Museum, Tate Modern, London, UK, Trondheim Art Museum, Norway, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Index, Stockholm, Signal, Malmö and at Norrköping's Art Museum. [martinkarlsson.net](http://martinkarlsson.net)

Lisa Torell: What did the invitation look like?

Martin Tebus: The work Hem och Marknad / Home and Market began with an invitation to enter a competition for a public art commission in Jönköping. It was Helena Holmberg who mentioned my name to the board of culture in Jönköping, this was when she worked at Index where I had just done the exhibition Gamla Stockholm, in collaboration with Index but at Stockholm's City Museum, about their collections.

The area for which the public art commission was intended was an area of high priority, which was going through comprehensive modernization, renewal and gentrification, where amongst other places, the waterfront was due to be updated, perhaps a little bit like B001, the housing exhibition in Malmö, 2001. I didn't win the competition and perhaps my proposals were deemed too regressive. What I had wanted to do was to emphasize and gather together old but still functional structures and features from the area to create a market place environment of these relics which would otherwise be removed as a result of the renovation. I wanted to keep a crane which had been used to load ships, as well as a pair of park benches and railings which were from different times, one from the 1940's and another from the 80's. There was also a sculpture, a 1980's abstract sculpture in pastel colors standing overgrown in a shrubbery, which I wanted to bring out and renovate.

With hindsight I can understand that there perhaps wasn't much interest in emphasizing what was already there and putting it on a pedestal, which was essentially what my proposal was about. However, in a small or medium sized town, everyone who's anyone in culture know one another, so even though I didn't win the competition for the public commission there was still an interest in some kind of continuation. They thought my proposal had qualities which could work even better in a museum setting. Quite simply, they asked me if they could hook me up with the Match Museum, perhaps as a bit of a compensation.

But before that, it was quite a close call, and there were many discussions and in the end, they even asked me if they could use parts of my idea for the commission.

How did you respond?

I told them that I couldn't stop them, I don't own the existing exterior, but that I would know where they had got the ideas if they

decided to go ahead with them. It would probably work quite nicely, the old industrial structures beside the new glass pavilions. It wouldn't surprise me if they have preserved a few of the exterior remains. But I haven't actually been there to see that area of Jönköping since it was completed. Some of the things which they were particularly interested in are things which I've seen crop up in other places since. For instance, leaving an old crane by the docks to create a certain ambiance.

After a while, I received a message about a possible new project at the Match Museum and in connection with that, I went there. The museum arranged a guided tour for me, walked me through the site and the exhibition space and expressed that they felt it would be fun if I did something there. And that is how it came to be that contemporary public art intended for a freshly renovated waterfront promenade instead became an archive based project at one of the town's museums.

Did you have a free hand or were they interested in you somehow relating to the idea of the public commission?

No, not at all, this was a completely new project and the old idea was so obviously centered on a specific place, where the artwork would have been. Now, there was a new place, although there were a few details in the initial sketches which I reused, references that were included in part to help anchor the concept in the local context, which in some way legitimized the public work. I think that was what it was that made them sit up and take notice. Among other things, how creatively they work with local history in the area. There is, for instance a flat from the 1970's perfectly preserved in a suburban milieu, which is like a museum; and there's that cowboy place High Chaparral out of town, and then there is Allmogemarknaden. Allmogemarknaden is an annual 19th century market which is a mixture of roleplay and shopping. The market is interesting from a commercial viewpoint, as some of the stock consists of items which are not usually in demand these days, such as handmade ropes etc., but which in the context of play and time travel still seem to sell.

Normally, perhaps High Chaparral wouldn't be connected with a reconstructed flat from the 1970's or 1800's, but to me, it's pretty much the same thing. It is just different types of staging and reconstruction, and that was what I wanted to work with in the public commission too - in the public space, imprinted by this kind





Documentation from staged match-box-making. Photo: Frida Tebus



Documentation from staged match-box-making. Photo: Frida Tebus



Documentation from the exhibition Hem och Marknad / Home and Market at Jönköping's Match Stick Museum.



Documentation from the exhibition Hem och Marknad / Home and Market at Jönköping's Match Stick Museum.

of manifestation, where uncertainty can arise concerning what is art and what isn't – is this thing before me an ordinary park bench, or is it a work of art? The idea was that it would contrast with the waterfront's updated freshness, to enter a space in which are lots of different things from different eras. That was the thinking I brought to the museum. I was probably invited in order to do something about the market, and to use it to stage one of my works.

At the museum there was a particularly fine reconstruction depicting a worker's home from the mid 1800s. This attracted me visually and I thought it would be fun to view it as a kind of experimental place, another stage set. Later I found out that it was Eva Londos who had made the worker's home set, and we were in close contact during the working period. She had worked at the museum previously and is an ethnologist and anthropologist. Sometime in the 70's she reconstructed and staged the flat in order to emphasize the conditions workers lived in. This was not divulged in the museum context, probably for the simple reason that there was no documentation. She was actually key note speaker at the opening. It was really fun.

Documentation of a staged room  
– matchbox manufacture



The workers were actually sat in their own homes making match boxes?

Yes, that is how it was done until the mid-1800's; workers would make matchboxes which were then delivered by the sack-load to the factory.

So, not quite a factory, so to speak?

Yes and no, it functioned more like a collection point. They may have had lithography presses with which the labels were printed, and machines which cut veneers which were turned into boxes. It

goes without saying that the matches were made on site. The workers finished the boxes in their homes and then they were gathered into sacks and returned to the factory as completed matchboxes. That is how it was done, and there was no documentation of the production in the workers' homes. Eva had found this interesting in the 70's and it interested me too. Generally, I am interested in the presence of documentation or the lack thereof in different contexts.

I began to look at what was missing at the museum. My starting point was the workers' dwelling, and that which, in my eyes, held most interest - the lack of documentation of the home labor, so ubiquitous in the 1800's. My thinking was to try to stage this labor process in order to create the documentation which was missing. The museum guides said that a working household could make a certain number of boxes by hand each day (although I can't recall the exact number), and I wanted to begin by putting this assertion to the test.

Documentation from staged matchbox making.  
Photo: Frida Tebus



It meant that the staff and I first of all would sit in the workers' home and make matchboxes by hand, as a kind of workshop. We'd sell these at the Allmogemarknaden a few months before the opening of the exhibition. And everything would be documented and shown at the exhibition.

We filmed and photographed what we had staged. The photographs were meant to be stills from cine film footage we shot, as production stills. The clothes came from the museum and from a theatre that neighbored the museum. To complement these photographs, we collaborated with Jönköpings Länsmuseum (Jönköping's regional museum) to pick out archive pictures of what the town looked like in those days, during the mid- to late 1800's. I made a selection and they made new copies for the exhibition, like a kind of historical source material. I was quite free with mixing up my photos with theirs. If you looked closely, you could see which picture was old and which was new. The principle was to mix old pictures with new

ones. From their archives I had selected old photos of 'market trading in the street' architecture and street views, as well as a few pictures of a factory setting and ones from a workers' flat, perhaps not one where matchboxes were made, but where they were manufacturing something else.

The film played a key part in the exhibition coming together, in fact for the whole work?

Yes, it did. It tied the project together and created a bridge between the first and the second set, i.e. the reconstructed workers' home and Allmogemarknaden.

Documentation from staged matchbox making.  
Photo: Frida Tebus



Documentation from staged matchbox making.  
Photo: Frida Tebus



What did Home and Market finally consist of?

It consisted of a couple of sets of worker's clothes in the style

of the 1800's, the same as the ones the museum staff and I had used during the filming and the workshop, as well as at Allmogemarknaden. The clothes: The 'Emil-caps' (peaked cloth caps, typical of the era), the brewers' shirts and the wadmals trousers with braces were hung on hooks from a newly constructed wall in the middle of the exhibition space, perhaps not so elegantly, but more like a porch where some-one had just hung their clothes up. The clogs were below on the floor. A short text on a wall plaque presented the project and there was also a sheet of paper with a longer text, explaining in more detail, which one could pick up and take away. On the other side a ten minute long, silent, black and white 16mm film was projected, bearing the aesthetic hallmarks of an archive film. The film described how we, step by step, manufactured the matchboxes in the museum's reconstructed workers' flat, and how we subsequently sold the matchboxes at Allmogemarknaden to other 19th century enthusiasts. Along the walls of the room around one hundred photographs were displayed, partly taken from the documentation of the staged matchbox production and mixed with archive photos from Jönköping's regional museum. There were also display cabinets containing hand-printed labels, wooden veneers, wrapping paper and bone glue, that is to say, the materials we used to make the matchboxes.

What was your thinking concerning context, history and present; did you just focus on the Matchstick Museum and its particular context, or did you consider the art scene's relationship to these ideas as well?

I wasn't particularly interested in relating to the art scene in this case. My suspicion was that rather few people from the art scene would actually be visiting the exhibition, so my focus was on the museum scene there two are, however, connected. As the exhibition was shown at a historical museum and not in a museum for art, it was not afforded quite the same status. But the insecurity which arose in connection with this was, as always, exciting and fun to work with. The reconstructed workers' flat at the Match Museum which was constructed in the 1970's, for instance, ties in with reconstructions and staging in contemporary art. Similarly, the museum staff, took on somewhat skewed and actor-like roles; which through the lenses of a pair of art-spectacles connects to relational aesthetics and performance, but which, in the museum context is referred to in terms of living history pedagogy. That is where

traditional tools, activities and costumes are incorporated and where, through staging, historical events or everyday life is recreated, like at Skansen, the world's first open air museum in Stockholm, for instance.

Did you divulge your background in live action role-playing in connection with presenting your idea to the museum staff?

I probably did. A thing like that can free up these kinds of situations, especially as I would be part of acting it out. But there was never really a problem, because everyone wanted to participate and were very enthusiastic. It was made even easier as the focus wasn't on the exhibition, but on the attempt to recreate the production, and not just the matchboxes, but the whole experience. I presented the idea as a learning-by-doing workshop, something which could enrich their guided tours of the museum afterwards, as they would now get to experience the feeling of the bone glue on their fingers, sticking and fiddling about.

In order to understand how the boxes were actually made, and how we would replicate the process I dissected one of the original matchboxes. I reconstructed the components, checked how it had been glued, what the veneer looked like and so on. I performed the same function as the factory would have done: Cut the veneer, labels and matches, and then the workers (the museum staff) fetched the finished components and the glue and took it with them home (to the reconstructed workers' flat) where they assembled them.

I had practiced a little beforehand so the manufacturing process was basically a workshop where I explained what we would be doing, how it would be done, and then we practiced, making matchboxes together in full staging and costume, more or less successfully. During our production, I think we assembled approximately one hundred matchboxes. I know this wasn't close to what the ethnologists' calculations of how many boxes would have been made during such or such a time. One of the reasons for the workshop was to test their notion, to see whether it was correct, which it turned out not to be. The work has two sides to it, not only to develop the material and begin filming, but also to understand how matchstick boxes are made by hand, what it entails.

Do you still have a box?

Yes, one, perhaps two.

Did the staging influence your topics of conversation?

It wasn't really a role play as there was no sound. We were shooting a silent movie. But we did chat about what we were doing and what it might have been like in those days, and did probably drift in and out of roles after all. But it wasn't quite as convincing as it may appear in the film, there were lamps and cameras all around. It was fairly low-tech, we went on for a couple of hours, no more. My wife, Frida Tebus, who is also an artist, was filming and taking pictures at the same time.

Normally exhibitions are promoted through press releases, information texts and conversations. But in this case, the context was developed in collaboration with the staff who simultaneously got the opportunity to create their own stories in connection with the work. I think this will have a bearing on how the work is subsequently conveyed and received.

Yes, and I do think that it was great fun and team-building for the staff, as certain hierarchies were erased. Suddenly the boss was sitting there, in a funny costume, folding boxes and sticking.

Documentation from  
Allmogemarknaden.



But they did say that they usually have a stall at Allmogemarknaden every year, so it wasn't completely new, although it wasn't usually as much roleplay involved, where they were, in this case, required to go around and peddle their wares, as opposed to just standing at the stall, talking about the museum. We were trying to carry out a kind of re-enactment, a historical recreation with the help of role-play and historical attributes, where we both sold matches and informed about the upcoming exhibition.

They loved the idea of selling the boxes we made and we even considered collaborating with a youth theatre in the area in order



to lend some credibility to the project, as child labor was a very common occurrence in the 19th century. But as Allmogemarknaden

Documentation from Allmogemarknaden.



happens on a weekend, and there are a myriad of restrictions surrounding child labor as well as the photographing of children, we scrapped the idea.

I'm not sure whether I mentioned this before but one interesting thing is speaking of these different arenas, that historically, it would be the same people making the matchboxes who would then sell them in the street or at the market. Perhaps, back then, their own children were also running around selling them, a bit like the little girl in HC Andersen's 'The Little Match Girl'.

It elucidates the authentic, in some peculiar way.

Yes, ha ha, you can say that again! We made the matches and we also went around selling them! I am always fascinated by such side effects – or byproducts – which always seem to occur in these situations. A new matchbox costs about two kronor at Ica, but I think we sold ours for twenty or twenty-five kronor. It wasn't a problem, we sold out in about an hour. We didn't say anything in particular about the boxes, they were just very handmade and a little wonky. It's funny that it works in this way. Quite simply, it becomes so much more than just a matchbox, it becomes an experience as well. The production was similarly exciting when I had to reconstruct all the parts, and print the labels, which in itself became a kind of graphic sheet.

Did you print the labels at the museum, or did you use a graphics workshop?

No, I didn't use a graphics workshop, though perhaps I should have done. It is a monochrome print, and I was primarily interested in the one label which actually said Jönköpings tändstickor (Jönköping's Matches), which is a great brand if you have to recreate one. It was scanned, and then I let a stamp makers stamp all the labels like a kind of relief printing process. Originally, they may well have used relief printing; I know they used multi-colored lithography later on. But I used relief printing with a stamp, on colored paper glued to a wooden veneer.

How long did you work on the project before the first public presentation?

It was about six months between the original idea to the finished presentation. They had a budget and I got quite a good advance for the whole project.

How important was it to be able to work on site?

It wasn't crucial, but of course it made it a bit easier. Together with my newly created picture material I showed the few photographs which were in the regional museum's archive about street and market life in Jönköping in the 1800's, as well as life around the match stick factory. It had been tricky to do from Stockholm even if quite a lot of archived material is available on line these days.

Even if it often is quite apparent that an artist is working within a specific genre, such as site specific art, most artist are reluctant to label their work other than, perhaps, to say that it is art. Categories arise most commonly in the process of dissemination, in order to place the work in the history of art, in an artistic context. I perceive that you are working with the relations of place and place as a material like any other; do you agree?

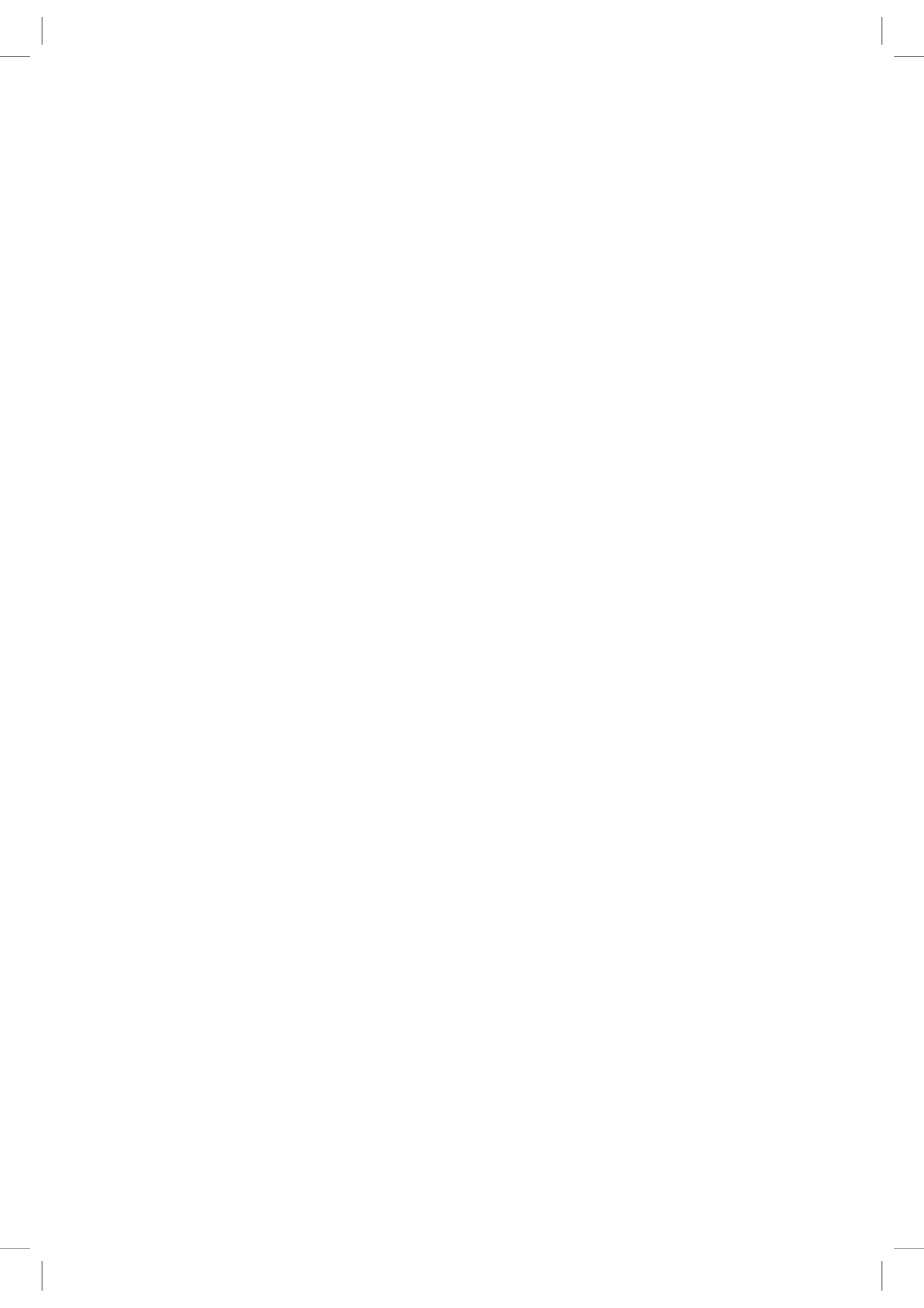
Yes, instead of having cadmium red on my palette, for instance, my color is that 'there is a deficit in documentation from the 1870's' or Allmogemarknaden. One creates different components, circumstances or programs which are then developed.

Yes, it is a different sort of palette, where color has the same significance as, in your case, 'the lack of 19th century documentation'. If the 'lack of x' is missing, you add x next to the other colors on the palette.

That is how I see it too. Now I am working on the exhibition 'Collection' at Trondheim Art Museum, so I am working with the museum's collections, partly with Aby Warburg (1866-1929) as a role model. He has, amongst other things, done a piece of work called Atlas of Memories, which is a wordless description of art history, and many different themes in art history. He has taken illustrations from various books and pasted them on large cardboard boxes. I came across him in 2008 when I was living in England, where his archives are kept, and it is with these resources as a starting point that I have been doing my work at Trondheim Art Museum. A student from the institute of art history was there in connection with her Masters dissertation about bring museum collections to life. She wanted to speak to me, and was really into Warburg as an art historian. I wasn't, I'm interested in his work, which I think is art, and which they probably think is a kind of inventory of history of art, but peculiar discussions arise when you view things so differently. I have no interest in appearing to be all theoretical and knowledgeable about everything that Aby Warburg has done, but I'm interested in the visual element, how he has linked certain images, and the relationships between them. His work has been a source of inspiration for my work with 'Collection' at Trondheim Art Museum, but my stance almost led to a little friction between us, as if 'Can it really be that simple?'

Do you know how the work with Home and Market was received?

They were very pleased. A small article was published in Hjärnstorm (a Swedish Culture Magazine). It was noted that the work had been incorporated in to the museum's collection and that I had donated it.



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Magnus Thierfelder

A site specific walk (many places in one)

A pattern-adjusted hole punch



C

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Magnus Thierfelder (born 1976 in Glumslöv) is educated at Malmö Art Academy. He lives in Malmö. His work is centred around everyday observations which amongst other things reflect dissent and creativity and the nuances in between, which are expressed as an intricate blend of sculptures, installations, film and sound. He has previously exhibited at Elastic Gallery, Malmö, Forever & Today, New York, USA, Montehermoso, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, Ar/Ge Kunst, Bolzano, Italy, Index, Stockholm, Sweden, Christina Wilson, Copenhagen, Denmark, The Breeder, Athens, Greece, Malmö Konstmuseum, Sweden, Göteborgs konsthall, Sweden. He is one of the founders of Signal in Malmö.  
[magnusthierfelder.com](http://magnusthierfelder.com)



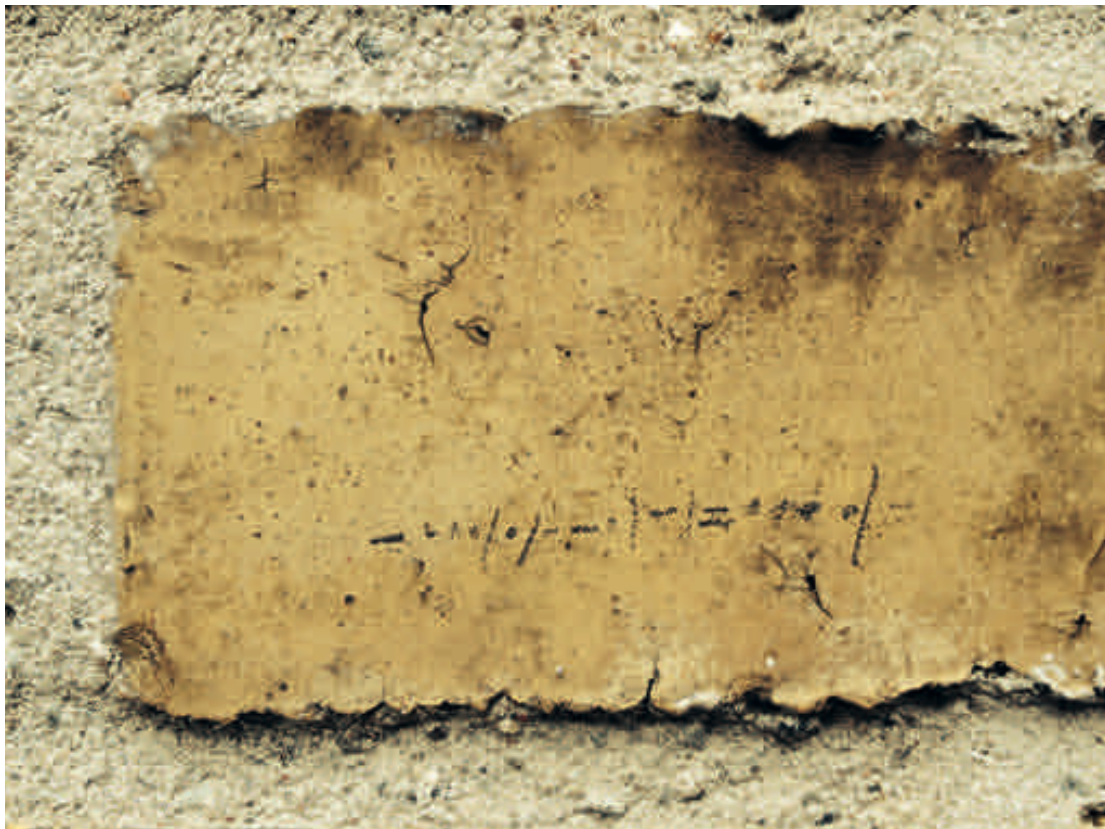












numbers, number

ambulating effect

pattern-adjustment

1917

distance

from

droned

geotomy

expelling

hole punch

the present

growth

inherited history

P

L



A

Johanna Gustafsson Fürst  
White Pillars, laminate and  
NCS S8010-G10Y

C

E

Johanna Gustafsson Fürst (born in 1973 in Stockholm) was educated at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, Sweden. She lives in Stockholm. In a practice that originates from sculpture in a wider sense, Johanna interrogates the individual's interaction with political and social systems and the way in which these meetings become things, relationships, places and events. Johanna is represented by Gallery Belenius. Her latest and upcoming exhibitions include Consonni, Spain, Moderna Museet Malmö, Sweden and Kalmar konstmuseum. [gustafssonfurst.se](http://gustafssonfurst.se)



The work *White Pillars* was made especially for Möllevångstorget in Malmö in the south of Sweden. The piece was part of an exhibition, *Society Acts* at Moderna Museet in Malmö 2014.

Inside the museum, I exhibited three sculptures, *Europe*, *Public Green Bark* and *No!* but I also wanted to create a piece of work in a different sort of public space. A central tenet of my practice is that I use the amplification of the different relationships between the bodies (the audience), the objects and the spaces as my material. A kind of silent theatre in sculpture, often with an open story in connection with the relationship between the individual – society – groups and how these relationships materialize. I re-arrange the spatial aspects in order to bring them to the fore. Since 2008, I have been concerned with how and when something that *holds* transforms and becomes totalitarian, and how the privatization of the public space erodes this holding. When I use the expression *holding*, I refer to it in the wider sense; social security, schools and day care, how a road gets fixed when it is broken and how a street light illuminates a dark passage so that I can walk home safely, but also in human relationships, such as friendship and parenthood.

In the case of *Society Acts*, the starting point was that I wanted to connect the spaces; the museum and the square, and to show that they belong, or at least ought to belong together. The title of the exhibition, *Society Acts* called for that kind of activity. It asks questions of what society is, and how it acts. Society consists of us, but also its administration, which we are not directly in control over, but which is managed by representatives. It manifests as something good, which holds us and consists of us, but which always risks switching to an impossible, bewildering bureaucratic process and oppression. Between these polar opposites hovers society, at once ungraspable, ubiquitous and concrete. I wanted to create a piece of work that carried this complexity and fluidity and that embodied a process of action.

Andreas Nilsson, the exhibition's curator, together with Maja Rudowska, suggested that I should work with Möllevångstorget in central Malmö. Möllevången is an area which is the subject of gentrification. Smart coffee bars and sourdough bakeries appear and cause increased prices on properties and rents. Möllevångstorget is a centre for political activity, it is the place where people gather to march. The square is an open space with benches and trees along the edges. The large, un-programmed surface at its centre is a space for meetings, conflict and friction. At one side is a

sculpture, *The Honour of Labour* (1929) by Axel Ebbe in bronze and granite. It depicts figures holding up a granite block with a bronze relief of Malmö's skyline. In the daytime market traders sell vegetables and flowers. All around the square are high lamp-posts. In the middle of each post, an extra lamp has been installed, which has a blue light. Those of a conspiratorial disposition are certain the blue light is there to prevent IV drug use.

I decided at an early stage to work with pillars built around lampposts. To begin with, we discussed a single pillar and lamppost, with signs and texts, close to the museum, and for a while we thought about surrounding the whole square with pillars. I travelled to Malmö for research in the early summer; the exhibition would open in September. For me, that is a short time to approach a new place. The approaching entails carrying out everyday tasks, spending time, chatting, asking people about what they're up to and what they consider the ambiance of the place to be.

Working on Vita Pelare / White Pillars.



An important part of the approaching process is to talk about what I plan to do and why, have a cup of coffee, go shopping. Simply being there is central.

Having considered the budget, time and the place itself, we agreed on three twelve meter tall pillars constructed around three of the lampposts. It was important that they would stick out as individual gestalts and coincidences, while simultaneously being a grouped together. I wanted them to be seen as something which has crept up, and multiplied themselves invisibly. They were constructed from white laminate with a perfect surface at the beginning of the exhibition, but which would subsequently rot, like short-sighted thinking and cheap solutions. White fake-holding which



Vita pelare / White Pillars, Malmö. Photo Johan Österholm



Vita pelare / White Pillars, Möllevångstorget, Malmö



Vita pelare / White Pillars, Möllevångstorget, Malmö  
Photo Lotten Pålsson

after just a few days would begin to crack and swell and get covered in posters and scribbles. White pillars are, in this context, symbols of power, weight, oppression, institution, but also for sustaining, maintenance, insistence and stability. The pillar is at once body and gestalt, building and structure. There was a picture on the wall in my family home, which made a great impression on me. It was a poster for the International Year for Women 1975, made by the artist Yvonne Claesson. It shows three pillars, painted slightly fuzzily, which slowly transform into women's bodies. One woman is a bit more visible, and in red paint it is written Let's Leave Now. She takes a step forward, out of the pillar and out of the picture.

Scene 1, Husby. Photo Lars Arned



Since 2008 when I began working in Husby, a residential area north of Stockholm, I have been thinking about public infrastructure such as park benches, fences, streets and lampposts. All the things which, almost invisibly, ensure that the urban spaces function. In Husby, this infrastructure is not looked after in the same way as in central parts of Stockholm. A broken bench can remain broken for a year before it is finally replaced. The condition of the infrastructure is a material indicator of politics and issues of justice. The politics of a space can be read in its park benches and lampposts. In this context I also noticed the green paint which covered most of the public infrastructures. It was the dark green (NCS S8010-G10Y). The green paint is fascinating, it makes the objects invisible and is a signifier for the communal at the same time. A shared, functioning society which designs itself to be invisible. A camouflaged hand that holds us, without us even noticing it. It doesn't market itself, we're meant to take it for granted. The ambiguity of something so central being invisible is

fascinating. I also see how its use has changed and how it disappears in recent years.

In one work, Scene 1 (2001), which I created for Husby square as part of a theatre performance Antigone, which took place at twelve different sites in Husby, I used the green paint as a signal that

Scene 1, Husby



White Pillars and Public Green Bar, Open studios, Iaspis 2012. Photo Jean Baptiste Béranger



the work should be utilized. The square was lacking a space for public notices, political discussions and public seating. I built a kind of hybrid which filled all these functions, a mixture of a lectern, notice board, bench and stage. It was about two hours before it was made an official base for local activists and a space for local advertising. I removed it when the exhibition was over, but was asked by residents to give it back. It remained there for another couple of years.

In 2012 I created a piece of work, White Pillars and Public Green Bar for Iaspis open house in Stockholm. A white pillar was erected around a lamppost outside. The pillar hid and enhanced the lamppost at the same time.

Inside the exhibition space at Iaspis I installed five metres of green fence I had borrowed from a playground. The fence protruded perpendicularly from the wall at knee height. Two actions, which privatized, directed, promoted and hid, simultaneously. I borrowed from the public and exhibited it as objects and by that made it visible. When the exhibition was over, the fence was returned. White laminate is a material we do not respect. It gets replaced. All over the city, on pavements outside doorways, lie countless kitchen units and shelves which have been turfed out. They fill BigBags portable containers, a familiar part of the cityscape since the rush to style the private sphere has intensified. White laminate as a sign of poor taste. It's impractical, can't stand damp and dirt shows up instantly, like sheets of white paper. For this reason, it has potential; nobody is afraid of white laminate.

In Malmö, the green colour is called 'Malmö Green' and in Stockholm 'Stockholm Green'. It was invented in the mid 90s in Stockholm whereas in Malmö it is quite new. The lampposts around Möllevångstorget are hand painted in situ. I quote from the text about the green colour at Malmö City web:

"The selected dark green colour is a traditional urban colour, that for a long time has been used on canal railings and lampposts. In a simple and obvious way, the colour assists in profiling the city and to create a historic and timeless identity. [...] The purpose of giving Malmö a unified colour is to create a restful cityscape and simultaneously set a good example. [...] Malmö Green is one component of an urban environment program, developed to give Malmö a clear and enhanced identity. [...] For this reason, Malmö City Council welcomes and encourages the use of Malmö Green by private property owners in order to make the city appear more uniform. In order to avoid many different 'interpretations' of the green colour, it is important to use the right colour code: NCS8080G10Y-S." (Source: About Malmö Green at Malmö.se)

Here, the green colour has taken on a different meaning, it is not seen as invisible. It says that the green colour creates a restful urban environment and that it strengthens identity. Identity as a singular? It also says that the green colour sets a good example. Colour as example? Suddenly, the green colour has become something oppressive, and when private property owners also are encouraged to use it, a scenario is created whereby society blurs around the edges and slips into something one cannot get a grip of.

What if, instead, it had said that the green paint has been developed in order to be practical so that we don't have to repaint

too often and that is thought to be a colour which is not particularly visible. For the communal keeps a low profile so that everyone can concentrate on other things.

During the construction process I borrowed a flat near Möllenvångstorget so that I, while constructing the pillars, would be able to pass by and spend time on the square every day. The pillars were built as ready made components in the workshop at the museum together with the team who built the exhibition.

The building process on site is important to me. I often create situations in which my work demands it. For three days, three of us were working with it, two up in the Skylift doing the construction, and one was on the square. That person made sure that people wouldn't get hurt if we dropped something, but mainly the job was to answer questions and to discuss the work. We spoke to over one hundred people. Their reactions can be split into three main categories. The first reflected a fierce suspicion that we would erect advertising spaces and was careful to point out that it was not wanted. Others suspected we were mounting surveillance cameras, and they knew with absolute certainty exactly where the cameras overlooking the square were placed. Some people were convinced we were putting up communal notice boards which they would soon be able to avail themselves of. The conversations centered on the square, public space, ownership, and politics. We spoke about the green colour and some expressed that they regarded it as ugly and totalitarian, and that they mourned a time when all benches and lampposts in Malmö were different. Many wanted to show how a few structures around a cycling track had been painted pink, and that it looked nice. Someone else was cross about the 'eager-to-please' nature of the pink paint. Differences are made visible through reactions to design.

I want my site-specific works to be objects that grasp and create situations where the body, the space and the physical manifestation collaborate. That they can be a place for the constant preoccupation with the relationship between the self and the world, the individual and society and the will to examine both overlaps as well as the boundaries in between.

One part of the process was to find a solution for the dissemination of the work after we had finished building and left the scene. How could we communicate that the pillars were art and that they belonged to an exhibition at Moderna Museet? I dithered with signage and texts, but the declaration of the pillars as art became a limitation; if I put a sign on the pillars with a title



and referred to the exhibition, they would become advertising space for Moderna Museet. The notion of art explained their presence and removed the little drama of wondering and speculation which they inspired in the absence of a sign. I wanted to leave the square in peace and for the pillars to be a not-so-visible intervention. The pillars would be just as open as the square, where people's doing and being creates the square. The pillars became an extra crevice for interaction in the city, they became graffitied and were used for postering. Many people didn't notice them, but through the interaction and engagement they encouraged; a white, blank and open surface, they became a materialisation of the urban life around them -an experience which can neither be measured, nor controlled.



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Skype with Hans Rosenström

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Hans Rosenström (born 1978 in Lohja) is educated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. He lives in London. His latest group exhibitions include: The Vanishing Point of History, L'Été Photographique de Lectoure, France, Theater of the Mind, Cranbrook Art Museum, USA, Nouvelles Vagues: The Black Moon, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Minneskonst, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden. In 2015 Rosenström created the 10th anniversary exhibition for the Finnish Swedish foundation ProArtibus, and in the same year he was nominated for the Ars Fennica prize. [hansrosenstrom.net](http://hansrosenstrom.net)

Mikado is a text based sound installation for a single viewer, which was first shown at the Kluuvi Gallery in Helsinki in 2009. The main focus was to create a work which would direct the viewers gaze inward. Mikado is really about the individual who listens to the work, which also means that everyone who experiences it will understand it through their own story.

The work isn't site-specific as such, but highly site-sensitive. By that I mean that the content isn't directly connected to the place, and that the work can be presented in different places, but every formal and audible decision has to be reconsidered every time the work is shown someplace new. It is about building credibility, and it is especially important whenever the work is shown outside the gallery space, in places with their own character and history. Simply being aware of the site's identity and figuring out the method which will work best for each place.

Is this the work you showed at Iaspis?<sup>1</sup>

Exactly, that was in 2010 and a reworked version. Since then I have done fifteen different versions of Mikado in nine different languages. They are all the same work, but they sound and look different.

Mikado. What does it mean?

In Japanese it is a title bestowed upon an emperor, but that's probably not why... Mikado is also the name of a game, 'Pick-up-sticks', where the objective is to carefully pick apart an entity, piece by piece without the construction falling apart.

The text in the work is a scene from Ingmar Bergman's film Cries and Whispers from 1972. The reason for choosing Bergman was probably mostly because I liked this scene and the way he uses the language, carefully and succinctly. Through reworking the dialogue from the scene and turning it into an installation and an inner monologue which strips down the viewer, my goal was to create a situation in which the viewer meets themselves and has to make a stand. Who have I become over the years? Why do I behave the way I do?

I fell for the work when I saw it at Iaspis open studios and Sinziana Ravini was curating. It felt important to include Mikado in the book, since it, with its theatrical set design, stage and audience, presence and directness also includes the theatre as a place, with its strong presence and crisp boundaries.

Mikado has been received warmly in theatre circles which I assume is because even though it is theatrical in its presentation, it is actually playing on the presence of the viewer as a way to successfully breaking the fourth wall. There is no space between stage and viewer, but rather the whole thing occurs within the viewer themselves.

I think that the theatrical aspect also arises from the control I bestow upon the work, that it can only be experienced through a certain choreography. It is time based and has a linear structure with a beginning and an end. Perhaps I should say a few words about the work and the recording process for the purpose of clarification. Mikado is a sound installation which is heard through headphones in a room, one person at a time. I use a binaural<sup>2</sup> recording technique, which in my case means that I put small specially made microphones in my ears and record in the room in exactly the place where the work will be accessed through headphones. In this way I can capture the resonance of the room and position the sound of the actor very specifically in the room and in relation to the listener. The actor performs directly for me, and the recording process is greatly influenced by the relationship which arises between the two of us. The work toys with recognition, that we automatically register the room's atmosphere from the sound. This means that the viewer instantly recognizes the recording of, for instance, the actor moving about in the room, as one is reminded of the sounds of one's own steps one made when entering the room. A fascinating thing about sounds recorded this way is that they can be experienced in such a physical way that you can feel the weight of the person on the floor or their breath on your neck. However tangible it may sound it is still only the brain's interpretation of changes in air pressure.

To perfect the illusion, it is important to work well with the space at hand, so that which I bring to the installation blends in and becomes a natural part of the real space. The whole point for me is to create convincing invisible presence in order to uplift the physical and sensual presence of the viewer in this very moment, here and now.

I prefer to record the work in the local language so that the text doesn't have to be translated by the viewer, but so that the words can just soak in. The recording phase is important; in order for the work to become an intimate and private experience, a relationship has to develop between me and the actor during the recording. Most often we don't know each other, but have only just met,



Du utan jag, (You Without I) Sound installation for a single viewer  
4'38", The Studio, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2011



Mikado, Sound installation for a single viewer, 3'58", Kluuvin Galleria,  
Helsinki City Art Museum, 2009. Photo Juuso Weterlund



Mikado, Sound installation for a single viewer, 3'58", Iaspis, Stockholm, 2010



Tillsammans, (Together), Site-specific sound installation for a single viewer 5'17" from the exhibition Street View, Mobile Art Production, Gothenburg, 2010



and then it is important to get the actor to trust me and to understand what it is I am after. I usually begin by letting them listen to a previous work, which has been recorded in another room so that they get a better understanding of the piece. Then we just take it from there, and I try to be extra sensitive to this particular actor's voice and personality, their pace, and try to build the dramaturgy around this person in this space.

In what way would you say the presentation in Helsinki differed from the one at Iaspis?

In Helsinki, it was shown at Kluuvi Gallery which is owned by Helsinki City Museum of Art. In Stockholm, I showed the work in a dressing room next to the dance studio at Iaspis.

A noticeable difference is of course that the gallery is a neutral space which is purpose built to show art and convey an experience, whereas the dressing room is a place with a specific 'everyday' function, not trying to be anything other than what it is. Mikado works in both spaces. The difference is perhaps that in the gallery, I worked with the installation like scenography where I staged a situation and at Iaspis I used that which was already there and tried to adapt to the character of the dressing room.

Six months before Iaspis I participated in a MAP (Mobile Art Production) exhibition *Tänk på döden* (Think About Death) curated by Magdalena Malm. There I did a version of Mikado in an old office in Jakobsgatan in Stockholm. Even though the room had long since been

A Site-specific version of Mikado made for the exhibition *Tänk på Döden*, 3'4", (Think About Death), Mobile Art Production, Stockholm, 2009.



abandoned, I reinstated the office. The furniture which we hired from Sveriges Television (Sweden's Television) were so innocuous that it was hard to tell what was part of the installation and what belonged to the room itself. With hindsight I can see that it was

a step forward for me, where the installation became a thing between staging and reality. At Iaspis there was no more staging, rather everything was created using that which was already there, thereby integrating the work totally with the room, thus becoming a part thereof.

The version of Mikado created for Tänk på döden brought about another development for me inasmuch as I worked on the text in relation to the space. This led to a new way of working whereby I would write the script specifically for the space, where the role of the script is to construct and enhance the experience. One question I came across with more narrative texts is that they so easily made the viewer no more than a listener, a receiver who ultimately remained outside the work. I was more interested in finding a way to engage the viewer and the moment as part of the work.

After the exhibition Tänk på döden, in the summer of 2009, Magdalena Malm invited me to another exhibition which she was organizing in Gothenburg. The show was called Street View and took place on the street and in alternative venues along Avenyn, the main boulevard, in April 2010.

During the autumn I travelled to Gothenburg to scout<sup>3</sup> for a space to work with along Avenyn. I think scouting is very interesting and necessary, but it can also be tricky as you walk down a street where you don't quite know what is possible or how much you can request.

We didn't really have a budget to work around at this stage, rather the idea was to figure out what one wanted to do and if MAP felt it was a good starting point, they would begin to think about how it could be solved practically and financially.

I really appreciated working with Magdalena as she had a great deal of trust in and respect for the creative process, which is not always crystal clear or linear. She provided a lot of space for thinking and developing, and if one wanted to bounce ideas off someone, she would be there, but never pressurizing, just trusting the process and giving it time, which is so important.

In the beginning, it was my aim to work with the flow of pedestrians along Avenyn, its rhythm and the gazes of the passing people. I sketched thoughts around an audio walk for two participants, where the two people would begin at exactly the same time from the opposite ends of Avenyn. Perhaps even unaware of each other's existence, they would each follow a trace of sound, until for a fleeting moment, across the street, they would meet each other's gaze.

A bit like Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller, of Documenta 13?

Yes, they are pioneers in audio walks and have made fantastic works which are of course very inspiring, so it is impossible to do something in that medium without relating to them.

My goal with a walk for two participants was that it would all lead up to the moment when one meets another's gaze. Simply using Avenyn's busy crowds as a contrast to creating a short, still moment, when one stops and suddenly sees someone else looking right back. It was something along those lines I was planning as I walked along and looked at different venues, like the library and other potential sites for a stationary work. Magdalena has a real talent for finding interesting places and she caught sight of a shop by Avenyn, a chocolatier and café which was about to shut down, just

Tillsammans, (Together), Site-specific sound installation for a single viewer 5'17" from the exhibition Street View, Mobile Art Production, Gothenburg, 2010.



prior to the exhibition was planned to open. And suddenly I had access to a fascinating and rather charged venue, which was more manageable and possible for me to fully control. So I decided to give up on the audio walk and focus instead to this new opportunity that felt more tempting.

During my site visit, the shop was still in operation, and even if I spent time in the shop, I elected not to connect with the staff, mostly as it felt a bit unnecessary to remind them of the imminent demise of their shop, but also perhaps because I wanted to avoid finding out the reason for their fate, enabling me to approach the site neutrally, from the outside. This is also why I don't have any pictures of the shop while it was still operational, but that all the documentation has been done at a later stage.

Instead, I envisaged what the space would look like after the business has ceased, when all the personal details had been swept away and all that remained was an empty shell. This served as the entry point for my manuscript, the venue which has lost its purpose

and found itself in a state of limbo, where the décor was reminiscent of the place's old identity, but the future was yet unclear. It was at once a place of broken dreams as well as new possibilities, and this very point made the space so tangible for me to work with. I wanted to use this embedded melancholy as the primary ambiance of the text. To, in some way, convey the feeling of a kind of uncertain existence, to the moment the viewer would find themselves in. Isolated from the safety of the street, alone with the invisible presence, the voice and the space. As much as I wanted the work to be about the experience of the present moment, I also wanted it to be

A Site-specific version of Mikado made for the exhibition Tänk på Döden, 3'44", (Think About Death), Mobile Art Production, Stockholm, 2009.



a crack in it. A kind of fault in reality which transports the viewer from what is known and safe to something else, another place.

The finished manuscript was recorded together with the actor Jakob Höglund in the same room. Me, sitting with the microphone in the same chair in which the viewer would sit and experience the recording. The work was to be called Tillsammans (Together).

During the exhibition it went like this: the audience were admitted into the shop one at a time. The first room, where the chocolate had been sold previously, was unlit and gloomy, and strategic lighting encouraged one to move further in to the shop, all the way to a backroom which had been used as a café, the furniture of which still remained. Headphones hung by a chair. The journey through the shop into the room at the rear set the mood and was an important part of the work. When the viewer put the headphones on, the recording automatically began to play and the lighting faded. And so it sounds as if someone is in the room, around the corner, behind the counter, putting cups in water and moving over to the covered window (you can't see the window where you sit at the table), pulls off the black-out paper covering the window, lets the light into the room (hidden spotlight is lit from the direction of the window), and the voice begins:

'It is so bright outside. Perhaps that's why there are so many people out in the street. A play between bodies, taking space and acquiescing. Their gazes meeting at a distance, seeking connection and ignoring. Nice to be away from it all.'

He lets the paper back down again, (the spotlight goes out), the room rests in the half-light once more. The voice moves into the same room as you, getting closer step by step. The more intimate the situation becomes, it becomes increasingly clear that the invisible presence, the voice, is playing with the distance between his invisible body and you; through this illusion, the voice is making you very aware of your body on the chair, in the room.

I must point out that the texts I write for specific works are not meant to be read, or even listened to in contexts other than the very spaces they were written for. The work is not the text, not the recording, not the room nor the lighting. They are, one could say, the very situation which arises when the viewer experiences the totality.

The whole piece is about 5 minutes long. When the recording is over, the lighting is restored, and the viewer walks out onto Avenyn and blends among all the other people out and about.

Did you construct an 'identity' for the site at Moderna Museet?

Yes, you could say that. We built a new room and everything that happened in the room also stemmed from the character of the space. The studio was located in the lower floor of the museum, discretely by the toilets and the exit to the carpark. For this reason, the installation of a room reminiscent of a storage room seemed natural to me. The work, which was titled Du utan jag (You Without I), was created during the winter of 2011, and was a direct follow on from the leads from previous works we have spoken about. A sound work for a single viewer.

The Studio at Moderna Museet had a bit more experimental program and was managed at the time by Camilla Carlberg and Lena Malm. What worked well for me about the Studio was that it was outside the Museums galleries and therefore felt as a part of the 'real' world. The room was not under surveillance so it was possible to simply enter, enabling the creation of an installation which, if possible, would be experienced a bit unexpectedly, like you just happened to find yourself in it. In my eyes, this was optimal, it felt like a good way to work with the real world around us. In order to isolate

the viewer, we built a room and a corridor leading to it. The corridor's lighting was regulated by motions sensors which principally functioned like traffic lights; when the lights were on in the corridor, you could enter. If the lights were off, it wouldn't be so tempting to enter, and you would probably notice a small illuminated instruction stating: 'If the corridor's lighting is off, please wait your turn. The installation is for one person at a time. Duration 4:38'

Du utan jag, (You Without I),  
The Studio, Moderna Museet,  
2011.



Du utan jag, (You Without I),  
The Studio, Moderna Museet,  
2011.



The room was built so that it from the outside would appear as a natural part of the real architecture of the museum, the corridor was made to look very authentic, albeit a tad smaller than a real corridor would be, in order to plant a seed of uncertainty in the viewer. Once one entered the room, it was obvious that one had come out behind a screen, that one had passed through a polished façade and entered an unidentified room, something somewhere between a storage room and a stage. A place which just as well referred to a preserving as an acting out.

The text I wrote for this work was really about how a voice which is born in a body travelled the room, invades the personal space and eventually slinks in to the viewer in one way or another.

For this reason, it was a conscious choice to make the route which the viewer would take through the corridor and into the room a similar route to the one a voice would travel as it winds its way through the ear canal and the cochlea, and from there is transported into the brain. Excerpts from the audio installation Du utan jag:

‘For a short moment, we merge together. Your nervous system transports my words into your brain. Where they are stored, in the bottomless. Tenderly turned into all that which you have ever heard, but probably no longer think about. Until finally, it is but a faint, distant murmur. The lights come on, you take off the headphones, get up... and leave. After a while someone else comes in... and takes your place.’

#### Footnotes

(1) Iaspis is Konstnärdsnämndens international program for professional artists, designers, artisans and architects.

(2) Binaural refers to recording technique where dual microphones are used which imitate the way our ears function and so create a spatial audio experience.

(3) Scouting: When I go scouting I take with me a sketchpad, a pen, a camera, and sound recording equipment, or other materials which might come in handy. I walk a lot but follow no set routine, it is about trying to, in one way or another, experience the place in as many ways as possible. Mostly, places require different entry points, but the goal is to absorb as much as possible in order to process the material at a later date, and one can only hope that some of the impressions will have fallen by the wayside, and that only the most significant particles have embedded.





Lisa and Eva Arnqvist on:  
A Room With a View, a field study of  
Slakthusområdet (Stockholm's meat-  
packing district) and an encounter  
with a place in transition.

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Eva Arnqvist (born 1973 in Linköping) is educated at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. She lives in Stockholm. Through different collaborations and individual projects, she investigates how contemporary perceptions and ideas of society are formed and function. Earlier exhibitions and projects: Grand Tour – A Travelogue (OEI Editor), Norrköping Art Museum, Grazer Kunstverein, Reykjavík Art Museum, Marabouparken and Konsthall C, Stockholm.

A Room With a View is a work in and about Slakthusområdet in Stockholm (Stockholm's meat-packing district) initiated and run by the artists Maria Andersson, Eva Arnqvist and Karin Lindh, along with the architect Adriana Seserin.

### Slakthusområdet

Slakthusområdet is located in Johanneshov, just next to Globen arena. It was opened in 1912 and was built to enable large-scale practical and hygienic meat-packing, but was never quite the success the city had hoped for. In 1950 the area was opened up to other enterprises and today there are around 200 businesses operating out of the area, of which around 125 are in the food industry. The meatpacking has remained important and the area is still northern Europe's largest centre for meat packing, supplying Stockholm with 70% of its fresh and cured meat products.

Discussions about moving Slakthusområdet have circulated for a long time, but for years nothing has happened. The plans don't become concrete until 2010 when Stockholm City adopt Vision Söderstaden 2030. It is decided that the food industry will be relocated further out of town, and for the Slakthus- and the Globen areas to transform into new residential and entertainment districts with 'world class experiences and entertainment'. Today, planning is in full swing and in situ next to Globen is already the new Stockholm arena.

### The Slakthus Studios

For some time, a few of us had dreamed of finding a venue where we can work together as well as enable and engage with public projects. In the spring of 2010, the artists Karin Lindh and Maria Andersson happen upon what we all felt was the perfect venue; a whole floor in a house designed by Ralph Erskine at Hallvägen 21 in Slakthusområdet.

It is in the late summer of 2010 when we, some twenty artists, move in and Slakthusateljéerna (the Slakthus Studios) are founded. The rooms are full of windows and from our communal kitchen and project room we overlook a large part of the Slakthus and Globen area. From here, we see a new landscape take shape. Houses are demolished, pits are dug in order to make room for the new Stockholm Arena, and at the same time, close by: trucks and lorries ceaselessly loading and unloading; men in white blood splattered uniforms; smoke billowing and the smell of sausages which finds its way through our windows.

## A Room with a View

For me, the move to Slakthusområdet entails an encounter with a part of the city I am not familiar with. Like many of my colleagues, I am soon captivated by the place. There are quite a few of us at the Studios who, in a variety of ways, have worked with questions

In this house, at Hallvägen 21, the Slakthus Studios are founded in the summer of 2010. We are able to work here until the late autumn of 2012 when Brostaden give us notice. We move on to new premises just outside Slakthusområdet's gates.



Our room with a view; that is, the Slakthus Studios communal project room.

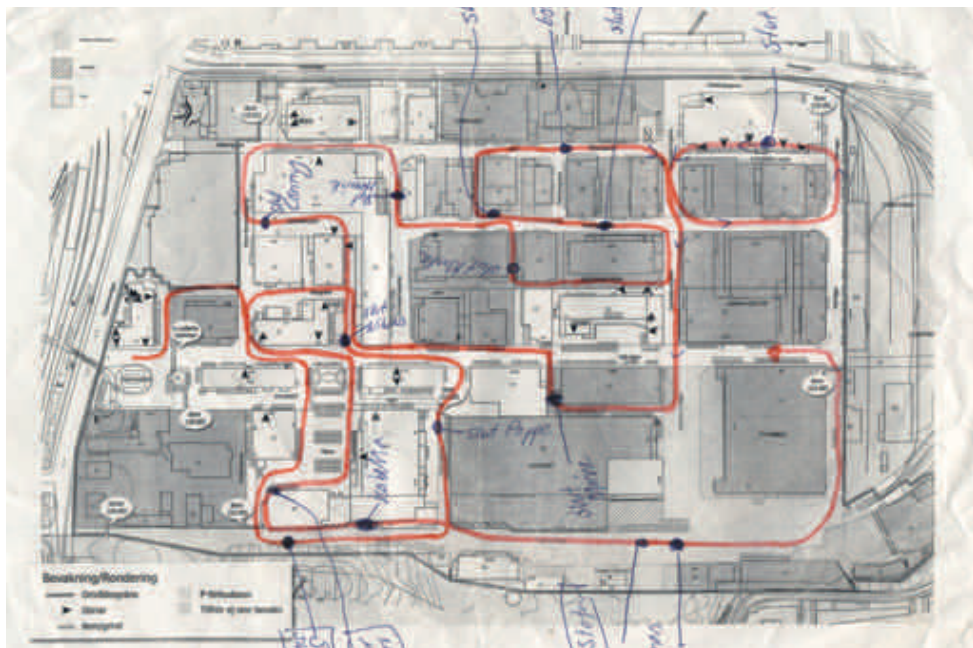


connected to city, architecture and public space, and our conversations drift, with increasing regularity, onto the subject of the place we find ourselves at, and that which is before our eyes.

What will yet another new arena mean for Slakthusområdet? What do the city's vision and plans for the area actually look like? How are they communicated? What is meant by world-class experiences and entertainment? What does it mean that we, a group of artists, have moved in? The urge to get to know the place we are in more closely grows stronger, and by autumn 2010, three of us have decided to collaborate and together develop a public work in connection with the transformation of the area. It is I, the artist Karin Lindh and the architect Adriana Seserin. Maria Andersson has also been participating in the conversation, and soon, she too has become part of the project.



We went to the countryside to see and try the train.



Map of Slakthusområdet with the route for Timesheet.



The tour began and finished at the Slakthusområdet's main entrance.



Food industry, Slakthusområdet (Stockholm's meat-packing district).

A Room with a View takes shape as a site specific work for the Slakthus and Globen areas with the view from our communal project room forming the starting point, which is also what comes to give the project its title. We want to explore a concrete chain of events, but also, not least, the ways in which we as artists/architects can influence, intervene and act in the development of the city and urban planning issues. We see the work as an experimental field study where we, through different artistic methods, collaborations and public events try to grab hold of the current, yet become aware of a much greater context. Right from the outset we are in agreement that this is a work that must be allowed to take its time and (which must be allowed to develop) and change along the way. At the same time, we are keen to aim for a clear beginning and ending in order to avoid it fizzling out. We search for a framework which can be both enabling and limiting, and so decide on the format of the book. A Room with a View is structured as an investigation and a story in ten chapters, where each chapter is structured around a theme related to the transformation of the area, to subsequently be presented as one or several public events somewhere in the Slakthus and Globen areas.

#### Chapter 6: Timesheet

Since the beginning of a Room with a View, we have explored a range of different questions and subjects related to the area. We have looked at the architecture, researched ideas about the post-industrial city, architectural renderings, the relevance of language in shaping a place as well as alternative visions. It has materialised in collaboration with a number of different players; companies and the local Chamber of Commerce for Slakthusområdet, artists, researchers, poets, choreographers, politicians, town planners, architects to name but a few. We have moved around the area and feel we are getting to know it quite well. At the same time, we can't shake the feeling of remaining at a distance. How much do we really know of the activities and the people who work here? The work around Slakthusområdet is predominantly carried out behind closed doors. We decide that our sixth chapter is going to focus on those of us who work in the area. What do we work with? What does a working day look like? When do we start and when do we finish? What do we eat for lunch? How are we effected by the transformation, and what do we think of it? We feel that people and work are subjects which are rarely talked about in relation to the transformation

of Slakthusområdet. Logistical solutions, economics, architecture and façades dominate discussions, but the people behind them rarely get mentioned. We see more and more companies move out of the area, and realise it is high time to gather all the stories which can be heard in the places behind the walls. Soon it will be too late and the stories mostly lost forever.

We decide that we want to interview people in the area about their daily lives, and so begins a process with many intense discussions. Firstly: How will we go about it? How many should we interview? What questions should we ask? When it comes to interviewing, we are all amateurs and juggle everything from sociological studies to

View from Slakthusateljéernas  
project room.



Maja Ekelöf's novel Rapport från en Skurhink (Report from the Mop Bucket). Next: How do we think the material ought to be presented, and shown to the public? Now we feel more confident and the idea of a guided tour soon takes shape. We decide it will happen by tourist train, one of those you see in funfair grounds. In this train, we see the perfect solution to our desire to harbour the clash between the here and now, and the city's vision for the Slakthus- and Globen area as Stockholm's new entertainments district.

There are still many questions hanging in the air when we decide to take the bull by the horns and begin interviewing. Somewhat hesitantly we go out, two by two, clutching tape recorders and questionnaires. We pound the streets, knock doors and catch people in passing. Our worrying about not finding enough people to participate turn out to be unfounded, despite us being artists without the backing of a particular institution. Only a few decline, and the interviews are often long (perhaps the warm reception has something to do with us being women in a male dominated workplace, but we can't tell). The goal is to capture the width of industries and enterprises operating out of the area, and for a couple of weeks we



interview everyone, from vegetable choppers to gym instructors, sausage manufacturers and burger bar attendants. Altogether, we make 23 taped interviews, many more than we had planned in the beginning, ending up with a lot of material, far too much to fit into the guided train ride.

Our original idea for the tour was to collate and play selected parts of the taped interviews, but with the material in hand we realise it simply won't work. Many interviews are made in noisy environments, and the sound quality is variable. In addition, some interviewees have requested to remain anonymous. Instead, we decide to use one actor to give voice to all the interviewees. We begin transcribing the material and create a manuscript while searching for a suitable voice. Should it be a woman or a man? We listen to loads of voices online. We finally settle on the actor Magnus Eriksson, whom has been suggested to us, and the recordings take place in a recording studio in Slakthusområdet.

Getting hold of a tourist train turns out to be harder than we thought. We make calls up and down the country, until we finally find a company near Stockholm, which deals in most things related to the events industry. We go to the countryside to test it and strike a deal. The train is parked in a barn, and we go for a test drive across the yard. The train turns out to be in part a home build, and it doesn't quite look the way we had expected, but it is a train and it has a sound system, not perfect, but in working order, and the driver is also very pleasant.

The tour was 30 minutes long and began and finished at the Slakthusområdet's main entrance.



We make invitations, mail-outs and posters, and on the 23rd of September, 2012, a brisk and bright Sunday, our guided tour of Slakthusområdet begins. The tour is 30 minutes long, and free of charge. Altogether we have arranged four tours, all of which, to our delight, are fully booked\*. The tour starts at Slakthusområdet's main entrance, and zig-zags through Slakthusområdet along main

roads, back streets and alleyways, all according to a carefully planned route (which we have established by cycling around the area at the speed of the train with the audio track in our headphones).

From the train's sound system stories of people's everyday lives can be heard. Sadly, I am never able to experience the tour live. My colleagues and I are, as so often when arranging an event, too busy with various tasks. My job is to keep an eye on the route so that sound and place are synchronised, as the engine lacks a sound system. During the tours I sit crammed in with the driver in the little engine, clutching a map, with the recording playing on my phone, counting minutes and seconds, and instructing the driver to speed up or slow down accordingly, ensuring the trip runs according to plan.

\* As with all our public events, we can never be sure how many people will actually turn up. This time we have limited number of places and in order to not have to turn anyone away, we have arranged a pre-booking system.

In dialogue — a conversation between  
Eva Arnqvist and Lisa Torell

Lisa Torell: You have worked as independents. What has it meant to not have a principal?

Eva Arnqvist: I think it has made all the difference, really.

Was this something you discussed before you got started?

Yes, absolutely. Both in the setting up of Slakthusateljéerna and in this work, independence has been a strong driving force. To us, it has been important to be able to control the conditions for our work and how it was made public. This sprung, in part, out of a critique of how we felt many councils and institutions work with artists concerning urban spaces and town planning. Often, the timeframes are narrow, and the artist is either expected to solve a problem or comment on a situation, and the result isn't always, in our opinion, that successful. We asked ourselves: How can we work differently? How can we create space for a process which doesn't have to be result driven, or tied to a point in time at which it must be made public? The amount of time a piece of work is supposed to take has been an important question for us.

How did you think concerning economy and financing?

We began working completely without funding, and as we had our own space, we had a certain amount of freedom. But we had big ideas, and in order to pursue them, time and engagement wouldn't suffice; we'd need money too. So as we got started, we also started to look for funding. The first chapter was pretty much self-funded, and with a great deal of help from our colleagues at 'Slaktis'. It is important to mention that throughout this process we have had incredible support from everyone in the association with everything from lugging equipment at public events, making sandwiches or manning the bar, to participating in the program, which has made it so much easier and more fun to pull off a work of this magnitude.

In terms of purely economic support, we have received funding from the Swedish Arts Grant Committee and Stockholm City Council's board for art and culture. Altogether quite a large sum, as far as we are concerned, which has made it possible for the work to develop and grow in such a way as we had hoped.

Have you felt obliged to define your work in any way according to the funding you have received?

No, we haven't. We have applied for money where we have seen that it has been possible for us to realise our ideas in the ways we ourselves wish.

Is financial support without micromanagement or narrow time frames a prerequisite for the development of bigger projects?

It is really important. To me, the willingness of politicians to trust the competence of artists is Alpha and Omega. Too much micromanagement can lead not only to culture drained of its content, but also its function as a space in which it is possible to think and act outside the confines of the status quo. In order to be such a space, culture does not only depend on its freedom, but also on an investment in engagement and also money. When it comes to time and money, there are today very few places, apart from Swedish Arts Grant Committee which enables financing of longer, artistically explorative works, which sit outside the established institutions frameworks or artistic research. I think it is incredibly important that there are funds for this kind of exploratory work, in order to endure a breadth of so called research-oriented works. To access

funding without conditions being placed on when a chapter needs to be finished, or what needs to be in it has been a deciding factor in how our work has developed and taken shape. Each chapter has been a long and slow process, and we have never had to decide beforehand exactly how long; but have been able to wait with publishing until we have all felt ripe. Just as much as A Room with a View is an exploration of the area, it is also an exploration of how we take on a subject artistically, like politics for multi-sports arenas, for example.

How have the timeframes seemed for the artists which you have invited, and how have those collaborations worked?

It has varied a lot. It has been anything from several months to a few weeks, depending on what it is that we have wanted to do. In some instances we have invited artists to present existing works, but mostly it has been about creating site-specific new pieces on a particular theme for one of our chapters.

It has always been important to us to treat those we invite in the way that we ourselves would like to be treated as artists, that is with trust and respect. Those we have invited are all people whose practice and professional competence we have a great deal of trust in and we have never felt a need or desire to get in the way of their choices and processes. We have, however, always strived to maintain an open dialogue, and to be clear about our thinking, the context and any economic prerequisites. Despite us working with small economic resources, it has always been a given that we pay for production costs and pay all of those who contribute.

It is difficult to answer more specifically as the processes look so different for each chapter. Many of the artists we have invited we know from before, and this will obviously have effected collaboration and conversation. Generally speaking, we have strived to engender a free and open-minded environment. It has been an explorative work, and a collective learning process together with all those involved.

Did you ever consider bringing in a curator?

No. In a way, it has been the essence of the whole work; taking control of all of its parts; from the way we invite collaborators, or engage with the public, to how we formulate our invitations or work with graphic design. In many of these roles we have been amateurs

and it has been time consuming. An experienced curator could no doubt have done the job considerably quicker, but the question is what that would have meant for our work. To us, it has been important to find our own tone and voice and our way of doing things and this runs through our process in the creation of a chapter and works through the whole work at all of its stages. In particular, I find the way communication happens is problematic for art, and at least in part I believe it has something to do with the professionalization of the curator's role. Often, exhibition texts and explanations of artists' work, are formulated in a similar way, using similar language. I regularly feel that it does the work an injustice, as well as being apparently exclusive to large groups. Overall, I feel that there is a preoccupation today with doing it 'right', instead of reflecting on how the things we do actually work. To me, that last bit is most interesting, and it is that which we have wanted to explore in A Room with a View.

Perhaps it can be said of the project that it was born out of a sort of consequence, quite a few curator trainings established themselves in Sweden and a kind of power-play arose (between artists and curators) where it was suddenly more important to have been invited, rather than to have started something yourself, or invited someone. Over the last few years, artists have developed many initiatives, perhaps this can be seen as a fullness or a levelling off, where artists once more seek opportunities to take responsibility also for the outcome - audience and results.

Yes, in part. To provide the framework entails a privilege of formulation, an interpretative prerogative. Today, the common practice is that an artist is invited in to / placed in someone else's idea, framework or context (the curator's, the institutions's and so on). It isn't the artist who comes up with the overarching starting point or frame. There's nothing inherently wrong with this per se, but for me, or all of us, I should probably say, it had been interesting to be the ones who drive the discussion, formulate the questions and frameworks, who set the tone.

Much of the time, a work is created in one place, only to be presented or contextualised in another. To us, Slakthusområdet has not only been the context for our work and the place in which it has been presented, but also an extension and part of the shaping, or the shaping as an extension of the area, where certain aspects are highlighted. We have maintained a reflective stance. In this

context, the project room at Slakthusateljéerna has felt unique. For us, the space has been a catalyst for thinking and new ways of working. Collaboration was not something we had discussed until we came to Slakthusområdet, but it was here, in this very room, that the idea first arose.

Hm, I don't want to detract from what you are saying, but I actually think the idea was there even before you found the venue, that the seed was already planted, but that it perhaps took root, once it became a real possibility. The site-related practice is so much about being present in the here and now, in society, in the places you find yourself, and to make something of the thoughts which arise. There and then.

Yes, of course that is true. The work or the collaboration had probably never come about if we had not already, in various ways, been concerned with the kinds of questions which the transformation of Slakthusområdet encompass. In this respect, the idea for the work did not come as a bolt from a clear blue sky. We also had experience of working independently, organising ourselves, and as it happened, we also shared an interest in *how* it is possible to work exploratively and critically with town planning issues in art. But to collaborate did not feature as a conscious thought when we moved there.

But it has been important that there was a group of you.

Absolutely. It would have been both uninteresting and impossible to carry out this work alone. The fact that we have different backgrounds, experiences, opinions and competencies is what has made the work with A Room with a View so exciting and evolving for me. Working together makes such a difference in terms of what it is possible to think and do. It has meant that we have been more courageous, and that we have been able to find strength and reassurance with each other.

What were the greatest challenges with the work on A Room with a View?

They have been many and diverse, everything from finding practical solutions such as for instance 'How do we get the cardboard costumes depicting Globen, Hovet and the Stockholm Arena to stay put on the dancers', to questions about employer's liabilities and budgeting.

For me, the greatest challenge and concern, has perhaps been the collaboration itself. To collaborate for a longer period of time, rarely passes without conflict. One source of friction is often time and money. We have had great ambitions, and at the same time a limited budget, and for the most part, the work has depended on us working without remuneration. The idea that everyone devotes an equal amount of time might work as a theoretical model, but rarely in practice. To begin with, we didn't really think about it much, but the longer the project progressed, the more important it has become. Through keeping an open dialogue we have been able to find solutions and ways forward when it has felt like heavy going.

Prior to each public event, we have worried about how many people might come. Not so much for ourselves, but for the sake of all the people whom we have engaged in the making of each chapter. Overall, it feels like a great responsibility when you invite others to work for you. Of course you always want the participants to feel welcome and as if they are part of a relevant context. Perhaps we have worried a little bit extra as we in many ways have been amateurs in the role of organisers. To work independently with such a large project means you have to shoulder a number of new, if temporary, roles. The role of the amateur is fantastic, and in many ways very liberating, but to be an amateur in a range of parallel areas, and to also be ambitious enough to want to perform each aspect of the project with seamless precision is a big challenge. However, this has probably led us to approach all situations with extra humility and care.

Another challenge has been to handle expectations of the work: What is your work about? Where do you want it to lead? Perhaps questions which have arisen as a result of having a wide audience, with everything from people working in various cultural fields, town planners and architects, to those working in the area and the local residents. The tricky thing about the work seems to be that the exploring in itself cannot really be the end game, but that there is an expectation that there has to be a concrete outcome at the end. Which of course there is, in the shape of the different chapters and the stories, situations and discussions, which open up through them. But we are not coming up with an alternative plan, and this has never been our intention.

How would you categorise the project?

To me, an important part of art's value and function is that it

isn't always easy to categorise, but that is sits between or outside already established conceptions and categories. Categorisation usually happens from outside, it is rare for an artist to think of themselves as working in a particular field or category. For us, A Room with a View is an exploratory work, which spans many genres. Perhaps this reluctance to label ourselves, has been another important part of the work, that we have allowed ourselves to be a bit straggly and questioning. Having a quick and simple answer to the question of what you are working with can sometimes feel crucial if you want to get attention in the art world, but for us this has never been the goal, but rather to try to open new ways of thinking around place, city, method and function, and to gather and meet many different groups at the same time.



## Colophon

Place to place – 9 artists reflection about site-specificity and place-related processes. This book has been made possible by support from Folkrörelsernas Konstfrämjande and Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art and Creative Writing (UiT).

Editor: Lisa Torell

To translate is to destroy, change something. It is also a beautiful tool to be able to share. Links for buying or downloading this book, or the Swedish original: Plats till plats – 9 konstnärers reflektion kring platsrelaterat arbete, published in 2016, is find at: [lisatorell.com](http://lisatorell.com).

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