

FROM
SOLID
TO
SOCIAL

A MEETING BETWEEN
SOCIAL ART AND
MID-CENTURY SUBURBS

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*Master's Thesis at Chalmers School of Architecture
Master's Programme Design for Sustainable Development
Examiner: Kristina Grange
Supervisor: Julia Fredriksson*

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2020 Karolina Westesson
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Critical Spatial Perspectives



*TACK,
Julia, for your patience and ability to read fragments into a whole,
and Arsenij for helping me keep this sometimes fragmented person together.*



Abstract

The site-specific and the participatory arts are both interested in creating art at sites where there usually are none. Social art started as grassroots movements in residential areas for the less well off. Today it has grown into a great genre, still remaining its main focus on areas of similar conditions. With its roots in the 1950's and 1960's liberation from the exhibition space and feminist theory, the methods of social arts have been implemented in everything from community gardening to large-scale residential projects. The purpose of this study is to explore how social art has affected public space in urban post-war areas.

The thesis intends to explore social art movements through case studies of the two suburbs Rågsved, south of Stockholm and Råby, west of Västerås. The study is done against a historical background of the site-specific and social art field and is guided by two research questions.

The result shows that there are very high cultural values in the post-war suburbs, but also a dissonance between governmental valuation and poor management by the property owners and local politics. The public social art reflects ideas present in the society at large, this study identifies the most distinct idea as the expression of democracy in public space. Highly political goals such as reducing segregation or discrimination have not proved successful and instead risk instrumentalizing the arts. The project format that many of these works use creates precarious working conditions for those in the field as well as a short-term presence on site. On a local level, successful projects can create a good public environment, strengthen social ties within the neighborhood and create visions of spaces with subversive power that wouldn't have the chance to exist otherwise.

Keywords: Post-war housing, social art, participation, public space, site-specific.

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INTRODUCTION

Student background

Bachelor of Architecture Chalmers University of Technology
August 2014 - June 2018

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August 2019 - January 2020

Masters of Architecture Chalmers University of Technology
August 2018 - January 2020



CHALMERS

Introduction and background

According to Riksantikvarieämbetet, there are problems with maintenance and management of architecture and the cultural environment of the urban suburbs of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. They claim that there is a lack of knowledge of the existing cultural historical value of the sites and how it should be estimated (Lindblom & Hermerén, 2014). The large building stock dating to the mid-century record years has come of age and are undergoing or about to undergo great renovations. As a result of social segregation, the dense satellite cities are also faced with other issues than how to manage the physical environment, this boils down to, to say the least, a complex physical and social landscape. A landscape that has been at the center of public and political debate ever since the first ground was broken.

During the late 1950's the construction of folkhemmet was getting more dense and car-oriented. Traffic-separated satellite cities were built further away from the urban city centers on undeveloped arable land. Frequent construction was going on even before the so-called Miljonprogrammet, but increased further during its construction period 1965 to 1975. Today, the mid-century building stock still forms a large part of the total and tells a story of a formative time in Sweden's history.

The building of folkhemmet included ideals of education for the people. Art and culture would be distributed to the citizen's and create employment for the artists. Following a German model, the one-percent rule was introduced which meant that 1% of the costs of new, complemented or renovated construction was to be invested in art for the same environment. Thanks to the one-percent rule, there a great deal of artworks in public institutions such as libraries, schools, governmental agencies and hospitals. During the time of the major housing developments of the 1950s to the mid-70s, further efforts were made to integrate art in the building of residential areas and public landscapes (Konstnärernas riksorganisation, 2018).

In the beginning of the century the public art in Sweden was primarily concerned with figurative art with historical connections (Konstnärernas riksorganisation, 2018). Towards the middle of the last century, modernism's interest in position itself within the white walls of the exhibition space began to fade and took a step out of the gallery.

The social art movement started as a self-initiated project in the local community. The projects often sought to demonstrate discrimination or other injustices. Today the movement has developed into an international art field. The big museums of the

metropolitan cities of the world are inviting architects and artists to create site-specific and/or collaborative artworks in or outside of the museum. But social art is still most commonly used in areas inhabited by the less well off.

During the past decade, Statens konstråd re-drew the map of public art under Magdalena Malm's leadership. By letting the art enter early on in the development processes, Malm says that it is a way of making the art relevant, interesting and creates opportunities for people in the local community to get involved with the process (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 13 February). The change in methods reshapes the public from audience to participants.

Today, the suburbs are yet again a center for contemporary art. The sites form a melting pot of turbulent relationships which catches the attention of the social art. Methods developed in social art contexts are sometimes used as a panacea to create artistic decoration and to solve social and physical problems in the public space. This thesis will explore how the exponential development of social art has affected public space of the mid-century suburbs.

Purpose & research questions

The site-specific and the participatory arts are both interested in creating art at sites where there usually are none. Social art started as grassroots movements in residential areas for the less well off. Today it has grown into a great genre but still with its main focus in areas of similar conditions. Today it has grown into a great genre, still remaining its main focus on areas of similar conditions. With its roots in the 1950's and 1960's liberation from the exhibition space and feminist theory, the methods of social art have been implemented in everything from community gardening to large-scale state projects in residential areas.

The purpose of this study is to explore how social art has affected public space in post-war suburbs. The study intends to investigate this through the following research questions:

- What are the intentions behind the social art projects and what reactions do the project face in the meeting between the involved parties and space?
- How can the social art projects be discussed in relation to contemporary space production in mid-century suburbs and the segregation and democratic issues the artworks concern?



Reading instructions

The focus of this thesis lies in the public space, and how it is created in the intersecting forces of architecture, art and the people who occupies the space. The reader should not limit the reading of architecture and artworks to the physical representation of it, but the relations between the elements.

Methods

The study is divided into two chapters and methods. The first part is a background in the history of the social art. By covering the art history concerning site and space through the 20th century, the thesis strives to create an understanding of the dissolving of the solid sculpture and the creation of concept based and social practices. The chapter studies art history and theory that narrates the changing relation between art and place and key texts that has shaped the social art practices. The second part includes two case-studies where social artworks are put in relation to the physical and social landscape of mid-century suburbs. The thesis is based upon four research questions.

The result of the four questions from the two case-studies are then compared and discussed in relation to the purpose and main the research question.

All translations are made by the author, Karolina Westesson.

Theory

The intention of the chosen theoretic materials differs between the two parts of the thesis. The art-history background creates an overall picture and provides examples of key works, considered formative by the field this thesis concerns. The study is based on Krauss's theories of sculpture in the expanded field, supported by Wallenstein's writing on the return of art to the site-specific following after the modernist ideals. Miwon Kwon's (2004) comprehensive overview of the emergence of the site-specific in One place after another, has been fundamental in formulating the historical background and understanding the field's development.

The study contains a number of recurring concepts associated to social art. Suzanne Lacy's concept of New genre public art provides the link between art and elements of activism and feminist theory. Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics describes an approach that takes the entire physical and social context into account in the production of a work of art.

Claire Bishops (2006) essay, The social turn: collaboration and its discontent, provides

arguments and support for a critical reading of the two case studies, as well as Markus Miessen's architecture dissertation, Crossbenching (2019), that argues for and against the workings of participation in architecture and overall public space.

The case-studies are mainly based on documentation made by the project initiators. PORT - en konstsatellit i Rågsved, by Anders Alpsten (1998) and Den fria leken-modellen, ballongen och konsten som aktion, Katrin Ingelstedt (2017).

Limitations

The theory and background are limited to a west-centered art history. The case-studies investigates Swedish examples of social art projects carried out in residential areas constructed during the third quarter of the 20th century. The areas consists of mainly rental apartments and the art projects are facing themes of what it means to be living in this particular neighborhood.

The historical and theoretical background is based on sculpture above other artistic disciplines. This is to delimit the broad and rich theoretical art field, but mainly because of sculpture's strong position in public art and site specificity. Sculpture did in many ways lead the way out of the galleries and can explain the dissolution from the physical art object to more concept-based practices in art during the second half of the 20th century.

Background

What is public art? When asked what public art really is, you get different answers depending on who and where you ask. "The term is, mildly expressed, in a constant renegotiation" (Selder 2020, p.13, my translation). Mick Wilson, professor at Valand Academy, describes the concept of public art as dependent on its location and context (Wilson, audio lecture, 2018). Wilson compares Statens konstråd's definition with Philadelphia Public Art Association's definition. The Association for Public Art Philadelphia says that public art is not an art form in itself, but can come in all shapes and sizes, it can be large, small, carved, molded or painted. Statens konstråd defines the concept in an even broader sense, less tied to a physical form. According to Wilson, they argue that public art is about the idea of the public. The art can take place in public but does not have to be permanently bound there in physical form. Also art that is not in public space, but addresses the idea of the public fits this definition of public art (Wilson, audio, 2018). The concept of the public art is thus context-bound, just as the works it deals with.

In Sweden, as Wilson points out, public art has a close relationship with the idea of publicness. Building folkhemmet, art became a beautifying and educational element of public life. The so called one-percent rule was adopted in 1936 at a Social Democratic congress. “Art is about to become everyone’s property” said the Minister of Education Arthur Engberg as the new rule were put in use (Konstnärernas riksorganisation, 2018, my translation). By following the rule, 1% of the of the building costs of new, complemented or renovated construction goes to art in the same area. The rule was put into practice in 1937 and was intended to implement ideas about culture and education in public environments. In folkhemmet qualitatively designed environments were a civil right (Konstnärernas riksorganisation, 2018).

In conjunction with the new rule, Statens konstråd was also founded, as the authority that would distribute and manage the artistic ornamentation in public space. The authority’s first commission was an artwork for Karolinska universitetssjukhuset. In 1940 Alf Munthe’s work, Ljusbrytning was completed. A baptismal font in kålmårds marble against geometric mural paintings in light colors (Wahlström, 2008). The room has been open to anyone staying or working at the hospital for cross-religious activities until March 2019 when it was considered to expensive to keep open and is now permanently closed (Karolinska institutet, 2019).

A subsidized loan was developed in 1962 to attract more developers to take advantage of the one percent rule in residential areas as well. Only 20-25% of the available funds were utilized, the reason for this is believed to be poor contact between developers, architects and artists. Konstnärernas riksorganisation pointed to the separation between art and architectural education as a cause. Despite that even greater opportunities existed, the 1960’s and the 1970’s became record years for the one percent rule, due to major housing developments. During this period the language became more nuanced, ‘offentlig utsmyckning’ was considered to make its surrounding to passive receivers and at the request of Statens konstråd the concept ‘offentlig konst’ was put in use. Despite the strong connection with the historic folkhemmet one can say that today, the one percent rule is used like never before. Nya Karolinska, the controversial hospital in Solna, Stockholm, was put back into operation in 2018 after a major renovation. Today, the hospital houses the largest investment in the history of the one percent rule. The art at the hospital thus surpasses the previous record investment in Stockholm’s subway, known for its elaborate artistic platforms (Konstnärernas riksorganisation, 2018).

The two basic principles In Swedish public art production are the one-percent rule and

the principle of ‘armlängds avstånd’. They are created to integrate art into the public and maintain artistic freedom. First, the one percent rule is not really a rule, but rather a recommendation used by the state, many municipalities and regions around Sweden. Stockholm Konst, the municipal unit responsible for public art in the Stockholm region, describes the one percent rule as an opportunity to create strong identities when exploiting land or buildings as well as an enriched environment for everyone staying there (Stockholm Konst, 2020). The rule creates a connection between architecture and contemporary art and can be seen as parallel discussions on publicness by the two disciplines.

The second principle is the principle of armlängds avstånd, that is meant to describe the autonomy of art towards political interests. Like the one percent rule, the principle of armlängds avstånd is neither binding nor controlling. The purpose is to maintain freedom of expression for art and other cultural expressions. In 2019, Nacka municipality received a great deal of media attention when the artistic freedom of the artists was restricted by limiting the art to what they called “positive messages”. Another example from Nacka, were murals that should have contained commercial logos and reflect the values of the client (Sverige Television, 2019). As a result of this and other similar examples, an investigation is now underway on how to strengthen the principle of armlängds avstånd and thus protect the freedom of expression of art.



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

From solid to social

Just like urban space, sculpture is a three-dimensional form. Traditional definitions of sculpture describes it as physical processing of material into shape (“Sculpture”, 2020). The very image of the plastic works is the Renaissance marble sculptures, sculptures that occupied streets and squares, independently or integrated in the architecture through different time periods and styles. The basic physical accessibility to public sculptures and other public art, allows us to follow its history as we move through urban spaces and residential areas. Artistic ornamentation and works of art communicate the ideals of the time. In this coalition architecture and art become a rebus for what life and ideals have looked like throughout history. A story that is not always in consonance, when the dreams of what life could be and the reality go separate ways.

“We all know what a sculpture is”, Rosalinda Krauss(1970, p. 33) writes in her influential essay *Sculpture in the expanded field*. The sculpture has its own rules, logic and historical categorization. It can be placed in different situations, but Krauss thinks that the format itself is no longer open or elastic. The sculpture, like the monument, is associated with memory or recognition of a place, its history or its use. As a work of representation, the sculpture is usually a figurative form anchored to the physical place through a pedestal. Krauss argues that the pedestal is an important link, a link that has been represented in Western art for centuries. However, as mentioned earlier, concepts and categorization are in constant motion, and by the end of the 19th century, the monument’s logic begins to crack (Krauss, 1979).

During the late 19th century, artist Rodin received a commission to make a monument in memory of the great French writer Balzac. The sculpture got rejected because of its subjective interpretation of the author, but Krauss argues that the real failure in producing a ‘monument’ lies in the fact that the work appears in several copies around the world but never succeeded to occupy its originally intended site. The work took on a negative form, became an anti-monument. Rodin’s Balzac is sometimes considered as one of the first modernist works and this has to do with its relation to the place, or rather its placelessness and nomadic character.

The curator and art-historian Miwon Kwon writes about the paradigm of modernism, “If you have to change the sculpture for a site there is something wrong with the sculpture.” (Kwon, 2002, p. 11). The modernist sculpture swallows its pedestal and stands indifferent to the site by asserting its autonomy and acting self-referencing (Kwon, 2002). Modernist architecture was successful in creating the conditions for modernist

art. Inspired by the simple and reduced forms of the factory, the elements of modernist architecture were fused together into uniform bodies. Light, smooth walls that turn into a sealing in a seamless manner, roof lanterns or fluorescent lighting illuminating the rooms, ensuring visibility, readability and dissection. The architecture of these rooms is controlled and the conditions are constant, closing out the variability of the outside world. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is a refinement of the ideal with its introverted gaze and uniform external sculptural form. “The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space occupying bodies are not – or are tolerated only as kinetic mannequins for further study.” (O’Doherty, 1976, p.15).

The modernist anti-monument distancing from time and space made it, for a period, a field for new, explorative sculpture. By the 1960’s, it had entered a no man’s land, which was easier to define through its negative form, not landscape, not architecture, writes Krauss (1979).

The break with modernism occurs when the work opens up to its surroundings. The frame that separated the viewer from the artwork and maintained its autonomy falls and it becomes dependent on the surrounding factors, writes Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2005, p.19). In the late 1960’s, several artists together takes a step out, into the expanded field of sculpture. This is mainly American artists. The early works intended to claim an inseparable relation with the site and were completed by the physical presence of the viewer. This comes from a shift of value from the art-‘object’ to a phenomenological, bodily experience of art (Kwon, 2002). In 1970, Robert Smithson created *Partially covered wood-shed*, along with his students at the Kent State University campus. A shed was covered with soil until the supporting beams began to show signs of overload. In this state the shed was no longer usable as a shed. The work itself is neither in the shed nor the earth, still it is entirely dependent on its physicality, in the initialized process, the slow decay of structure and the wait for the collapse (Kwon, 2002). “Site-specific art initially took the site as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; scale and proportion of plazas, buildings, or parks; existing conditions of lighting, ventilation, traffic patterns; distinctive topographical features, and so forth” (Kwon, 2002, p.13).

Next page, Partially Buried Woodshed, September 2018.



Social, relational and under critique

The expansion of the arts was not limited to spatiality, but also included other fields of knowledge such as anthropology, sociology, psychology and philosophy, cultural history, architecture, urban planning and politics. Art also came to strengthen its contact with popular culture (Kwon 2002, p.26). Artistic practice together with social and political intentions was very eminent during the 1970's in American feminist circles. Questions on audience, relationships, communication and politics helped to shape social art rather than those on materiality (Lacy 1995, p.28).

Social art was a fragmented and barely documented field before the 1990's when, Suzanne Lacy, among others, formulated parts of its history and contemporary expression in the anthology *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art*. At the San Francisco Museum of Art, Lacy, together with students and other artists, organized a series of events, public performances and talks in 1991. Artists, curators and theorists participated in the talks. They shared experiences of social public art and tried to formulate its history as well as a possible future. The definition as New genre 'public' art, was inspired by the 'New genre art' of the 1960's, when artistic media was renegotiated and expanded. "Not specifically painting, sculpture, or film, for example, new genre art might include combinations of different media. Installations, performances, conceptual art, and mixed-media art, for example, fall into the new genre category, a catch all term for experimentation in both form and content." (Lacy, 1995, p.20). The new art scene of the 1960's expanded the artistic medium. What distinguishes New genre 'public' art is the added layer of awareness of the audience and social strategies of the visual arts. The theoretical foundation of New genre public art comes from feminist art practices, a field Suzanne Lacy herself was part of in the early 1970's. Led by feminist slogans such as "the personal is political" artists used their context as material to activate the viewers, making them participants or even collaborators. New genre public art strived to act outside of the art institutions. The practical engagement of the viewer created a different situation and experience of the work than for example work by the earth artists who also were engaged with site-specificity. The audience and the artists created a relationship that was at the center of the work or the work itself (Lacy, 1995, p. 37).

Relational aesthetics, like New genre public art, emphasize the relationship between art, social conditions and its context. The French curator Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term in conjunction with the exhibition *Traffic* which he curated in 1996. The concept differs from the New genre public art in that it is less concerned with social responsibility



and political change. Bourriaud's exhibition relates more to a middle-class perspective and has humoristic elements (Glasberg Blomqvist, 2017). "Artistic activity is a game, whose forms, patterns and functions develop and evolve according to periods and social contexts; it is not an immutable essence." (Bourriaud, 2002, p.11).

Traffic took place mainly at the CAPC Musée d'Art contemporain de Bordeaux, but some works took place outside the exhibition space. An example is Jens Haaning's work, which through speakers sends jokes in Arabic over a square, thus creating a situation for interpersonal contact (Glasberg Blomqvist, 2017, p.22).

Social art has received strong criticism from the art world. Critics mean that social art risk to become instrumental for commercial or political purposes as well as performing works of low quality. Claire Bishop, art historian and author of the essay *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents* addresses this issue. The essay summarizes many movements that worked with the social, participatory and relational art during the 1990's.

Many of these projects work in socio-economically challenged contexts, this has made it difficult to evaluate the quality of these works, in some cases to such a degree that all of them are perceived as important acts of resistance. This creates an inhibited environment where nothing can be perceived as failed, unresolved or boring work of participatory art (Bishop, 2006, p.3).

To take advantage of, or misuse the participatory methods can cause serious consequences for the civil society. Bishop writes that by implementing social art projects in their business, municipal and commercial actors can increase attractiveness and trust in their activities. In this way participatory projects creates citizens who identify themselves with structural changes, for example taking responsibility for cuts in public services. The fact that they identify themselves as participating doesn't change the structural conditions, it only helps them to accept it (Bishop, 2006, p.4).

A critical artwork takes into account both the conditions for its production and reception. "It is to this art - however uncomfortable, exploitative, or confusing it may first appear - that we must turn for an alternative to the well-intentioned homilies that today pass for critical discourse on social collaboration" (Bishop, 2006, p.17).

Social art practices have not been particularly well represented in the art world historically. Bishop argues that this has to do with the market's and the audience's

difficulty in accepting multiple authors. It is easier to understand and sell a work of art that is a representation of an individual author (Bishop, 2006). The context of the work is then intervened with the artist as a persona, which is more complex in a collectively produced work.

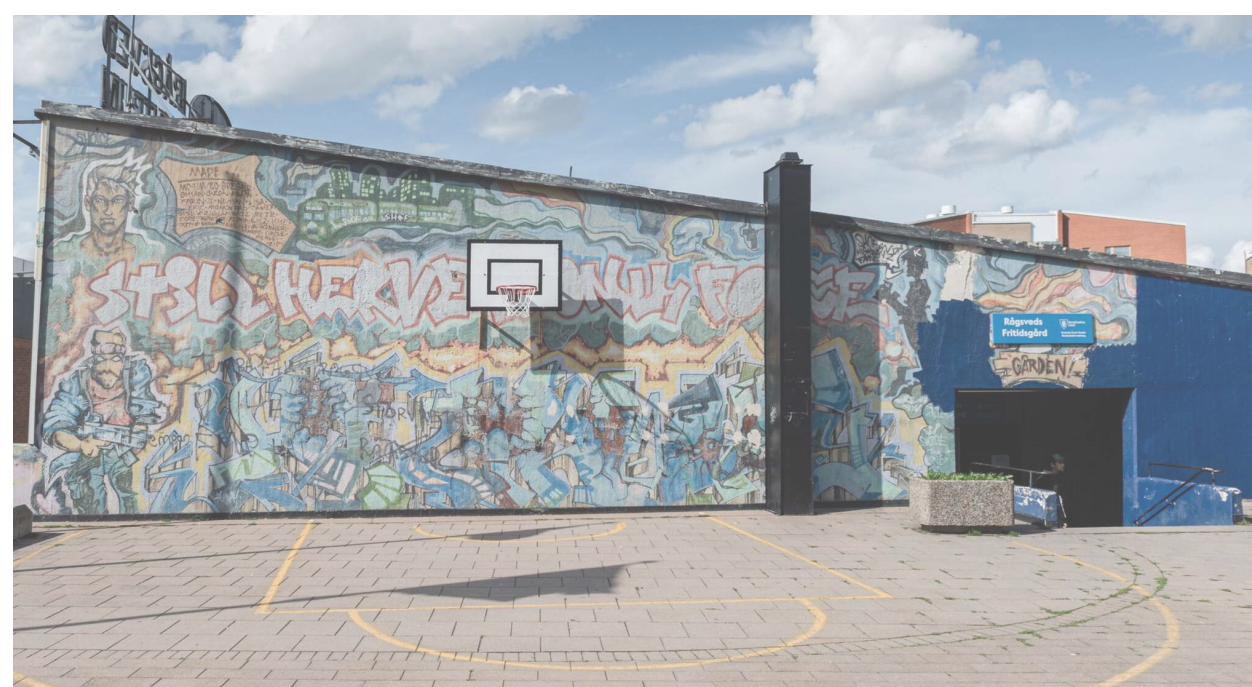
CASE STUDY: RÅGSVED



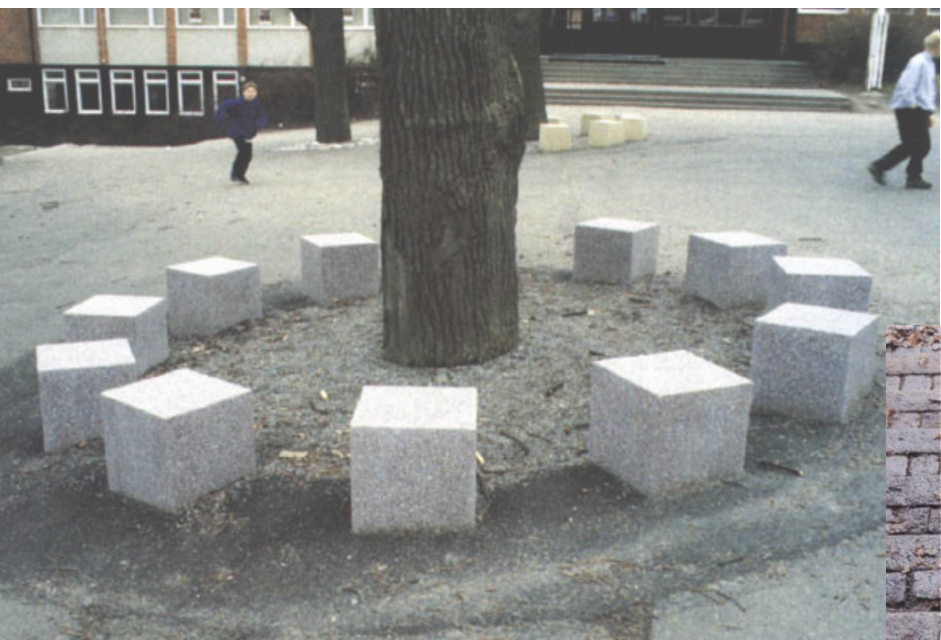
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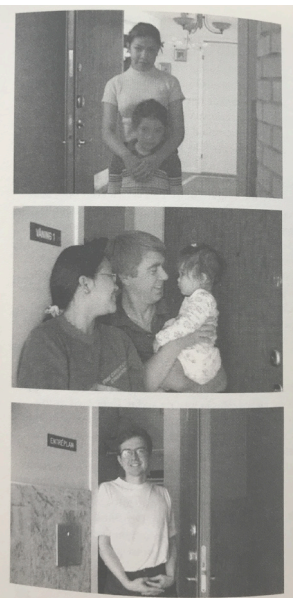
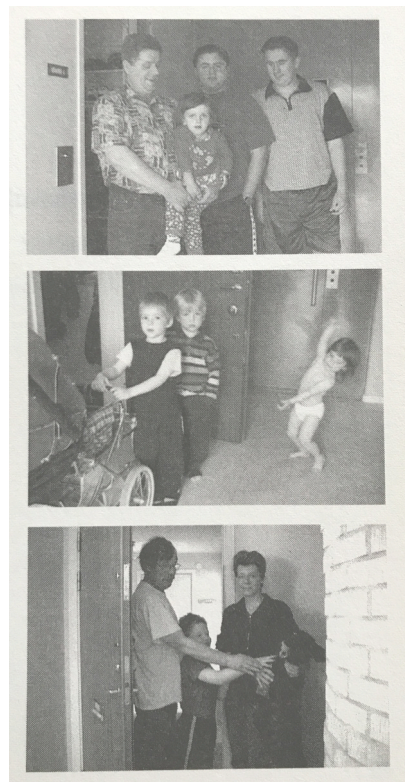
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5-19.

Till Stockholmshem och till konstnären Carl Michael von Hausswloff.

PROTEST !!

Vi hyresgäster på Askersundsgatan 6 protesterar mot den konstnärliga utsmyckningen i vår portgång. Vi protesterar av följande skäl:

1. Vår portgång är så snygg efter Stockholmshems upprustning att något som helst konstnärligt arbete behövs inte. Vi vill absolut inte att dessa fina väggar beklås med något annat.!
2. Den föreslagna utsmyckningen verkar helt absurd: inramade fotografier av olika slag, och kommer vi inte med ett foto, får vi en svart bild i ram i stället.

Brevet var underskrivet av 36 hyresgäster.



20.

21.



22.



1. Willy Gordon, Rågskörd, 1959. Brass. Photo: Bengt Oberger
2. Björn Selder, Fågel Grön, 1983 eller 1988, Brass. Photo: CC
3. Still Heavens Only Force, Highway, 1989. Mural. Photo: Kevin Chang
4. Hanns Karlewski, Sittkub, 1997. Terazzo & Vattentrappa, 1997. Concret and granite. Photo: www.hannskarlewski.de
5. Still Heavens Only Force, Highway, 1989. Mural. Photo: Kevin Chang
6. Arijana Kaifes, Untitled, 1998. Ervallakroken 27 (PORT).
7. Christian Partos, Piccolo, 1998. Ervallakroken 5 (PORT).
8. Gunilla Kihlgren, Offentlig konst, 1998. Ervallakroken 1(PORT).
9. Rebeckha Hydman, Lysande, 1998. Askersundsgatan 20 (PORT).
10. Ulla West, Det godas idé, 1998. Askersundsgatan 14 (PORT).
11. Carl Michael von Hautwolff, Untitled, 1998. Askersundsgatan 6 (PORT).
12. Roger Andersson, Välkommen, 1998. Askersundsgata 2 (PORT).
13. Olle Borg, Untitled, 1998. Bjursätragatan 5 (PORT).
14. Gunnel Pettersson, Untitled, 1998. Bjursätragatan 25 a-c (PORT).
15. Anders Boqvist, Deltar - deltar ej. Bjursätragatan 25 d-e (PORT).
16. Camilla Bergman, Ett oerhört långsamt fyrverkeri, 1998. Bjursätragatan 23 a-b (PORT).
17. Maya Eizin, Saknad, 1998. Vallhornsgatan 28 (PORT).
18. Tomas Liljenberg, Diptyk, 1998. Vallhornsgatan 26 (PORT).
19. Nils Claesson, Öppnas om tusen år - ett meddelande till framtiden, 1998. Vallhornsgatan 26 (PORT).
20. Linnea Rygaard, Untitled, 2017. Mural. Photo: Stockholm Konst
21. Hanna Hedman, Med Risk att Försvinna III, 2018. Photo: Sanna Lindberg.
22. Charlotte Gyllenhammar, Dörrhandtag, 2019. Brass. Photo: Mattias Ek.

Rågsved

During the late 1950's the construction of folkhemmet was getting more dense and car-oriented. Traffic-separated satellite cities were built further away from the urban city centers on undeveloped arable land. The small farm of Rågsved was such a place south of Stockholm, before the high raising buildings and the subway were built and became the suburb we see today. The construction begun around the farm, on the seven hills, in 1956. In 1959 the residential buildings, schools, subway and city-center was finished and 12 282 people had moved in. Many of the families who settled down in Rågsved came from single room apartments in the city center of Stockholm. The standard in the central parts of Stockholm was low, it was not uncommon with only cold water and an outhouse in the courtyard. In Rågsved, the three room apartments had dishwashers and bathtubs (Westerlund, 1998).

Rågsved was planned and built before the intensive construction of the Miljonprogrammet 1965-1975. Miljonprogrammet meant that a million homes would be built over a period of ten years. The project was pushed through at a Social Democratic congress in 1964. The project ran alongside what has been called the record years, a time of strong economic growth and was finished during the oil crisis. Rågsved could be seen as a foretaste of the type of residential areas that would be built all over Sweden a few years later.

The local city-center with supermarket, preschools and playgrounds in the large courtyards between the houses served as meeting places for Rågsved's children and many housewives. The square, designed by Kjäll Åström has a distinct and characteristic shape of a horseshoe. In a photograph of the square you can read: café, men's and women's hairdresser, pharmacy, optician, clothing store, bike shop and florist on signs along the round facade. The photograph is taken from a terrace above the square and the photographer looks down over the square with its butterfly-shaped pond. From the pond contrasting fields of pavements are spreading like rings on water towards the edges of the horseshoe. Multiple scales are present.

The scale of being in the square, the central pond within reach of your hand, is enclosed in the larger scale of the entire square being an even greater pond contained by the horseshoe. The doorway that leads to your house and the block of houses that slowly turns before your eyes as you pass by on a subway train. The only public artwork that this study managed to derive to the period when Rågsved was built is Rågskörd, by Willy Gordon. The sculpture depicts an abstracted figure in bronze with a bunch of rye in its arms. It stands on the square next to the pond. The sculpture remembers Rågsved

as an agricultural land, a story that feels far away today.

The center building is now, in March 2020, for sale. The building that contains shopping and service has for the last sixteen years belonged to Rågsved Fastigheter AB. The owner has been criticized by local residents and the City of Stockholm for neglecting the maintenance of the buildings. The local newspaper Söderort Direkt writes that Rågsved is one of the most worn-out centers in Stockholm and that the owner has only made the absolutely necessary to keep it alive (Tonström, 2020, 27 February). At the same time as the sale of the Rågsved center, the newly-opened Östermalms saluhall was announced (Kazmierska, 2020, 8 mars). The renovation of the building from 1888 was intended to cost SEK 585 million but landed at SEK 1,35 billion and was financed by the City of Stockholm. In comparison, the renovation of the National Museum, completed in 2018, ended up at a cost of SEK 1,2 billion (Sandholm Hellner, 2018, 12 October). In several newspapers, the examples of Östermalms saluhall and Rågsved center have been compared. Today, there is no current buyer of the Rågsved center and the City of Stockholm has declined the offer. The current owner claims that renovation would increase rents which in turn would increase prices in the stores. In the local newspapers some voices are saying that at higher prices, many in Rågsved would no longer be able to shop locally (Tonström, 2020, 27 February).

In this stark comparison, the possibility of luxury consumption financed by the city is put up against the preservation of local everyday grocery shopping. There are various spatial hegemonies at play in this case. First of all, the inner city's dominance over the suburb. Second, the late 19th century brick building against a worn out modernist one, a celebrated historical architectural style against a despised style. In the presence of these spatial hegemonies, dissatisfaction with the society that exists in Rågsved will not be difficult to derive. The police compiles a list of "utsatta områden" (areas of vulnerability) each year. Outward dissatisfaction with the society is one of the criteria that Rågsved meets with 59 other areas around Sweden. Other factors to qualify are public acts of violence that risk harming third parties as well as openly conducted drug traffic (Lidstam, 2019, 5 June). This is not a new development for Rågsved. The rumor as a "problem suburb" is something Rågsved has been experiencing for a long time. Already during the seventies, Rågsved experienced a loss of residents with greater financial opportunities. New tenants with social problems were actively placed in the available apartments. During the oil crisis unemployment in the area raised and a drug culture was established among Rågsveds youth, for some the drug trade became an income in the absence of employment. The chain of relocation continued through the

1980's when the children who grew up in Rågsved became adults and moved away. The parents did no longer need the three room apartments and did the same. Refugees came to the vacant housing in the mid-1990's (Alandh, 2008). Today, about 70 % of Rågsved's residents have a foreign background and the median income is low in comparison to the national average (SVT Nyheter, 2018).

PORT

The first case study takes place in Rågsved and, more specifically, an exhibition project from 1998. The stairwell (port), a semi-private, semi-public space was the exhibition space

for the fourteen invited artists to fill with contemporary art for a couple of weeks. The initiators Anders Alpsten and Ann Rosén chose the location Rågsved and the stairwell on the basis that they were lacking the presence of contemporary art.

In PORT the artists had the freedom to create a work of art that represented them as artists, like they would have done in a gallery. The project took place in the stairwells of fourteen apartment buildings. The only mandatory criteria was that the artist would involve the tenants in some way. The case study is based primarily on the book PORT, konstsatellit i Rågsved, by Alpsten (1998). The book was printed before the artworks were completed and was not proofread by the artists, the financiers European Capital of Culture, Familjebostäder or Stockholmshem. Alpsten's book describes the background to the project and the individual artworks. In a radio show from 1998, some of the artist are interviewed about the project and describes their own work (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 5 February).

The stairwell, a gallery

The intentions of the organizers are "to show contemporary art where it traditionally does not exist" and to reach an audience that otherwise does not see contemporary art (Alpsten, 1998, p. 38, my translation). The intentions are not "social aid", Alpsten means that it is easily perceived so when many in the area are in need of the public support system. Instead, the intention of the art is to fill a void. There is no contemporary art in Rågsved and the project aims to introduce it. It seems that the site is of main interest, the relation between the stairwell and the art. The site is, as Alpsten means, both public and private. A place in between, just like the suburb, he argues. Involving the tenants in the process of creating the artworks is perceived as a secondary concern to many of the artists. "They do not have to participate, but are given a possibility to affect the sequence of events. This will, nevertheless, not ensure their

appreciation of the outcome. The intention is to involve them, we can only hope that they will like the result” (Alpsten, 1998, p.40, my translation).

Ann Rosén tells Sveriges radio that traditional artistic ornamentation has many actors and can be very time-consuming. Those artworks can with time lose the relation to their context. In this project the artists would treat the stairwell more as a gallery where the artwork will take a temporary form, but then remain within the memory of the tenants. She says that this is an exploratory project that strives to stir up a dialog about the location of contemporary art (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 5 february).

PORT is financed by the European Capital of Culture in 1998 in collaboration with the public housing companies AB Familjebostäder, AB Stockholmshem and Vantörs stadsdelsförvaltning (Alpsten, 1998). It is difficult to find information about the intentions of the financiers’ regarding the project. Alpsten believes that the project has an element of political correctness that is attractive both for the European Capital of Culture and the public housing companies (Alpsten, 1998). It should also be added that at the same time as the PORT project, the City of Stockholm implemented the Ytterstadssatsningen. Ytterstadssatsningen was a financial aid of SEK 500 million from the City of Stockholm and municipal property owners to lift the suburbs of Stockholm. This means that there is a greater parallel effort to upgrade both the public space and the reputation of the suburbs going on. One of the projects in Ytterstadssatsningen was to convert a warehouse in Tensta city-center into a space for contemporary art, today Tensta Konsthall.

The housing companies made the stairwells available for the artistic process which took place sporadically during six months before the two-weeks long exhibition. A few of the works left small, permanent imprints inside our outside the stairwell. The housing companies’ contribution to the project consisted in that they allowed a third party into the space they otherwise share with the tenants. The stairwell and the entrance can be read as a place of communication between the landlord and the tenant but also between the tenants themselves.

It is important to point out that the tenants in no way chose that their stairwell would be part of PORT. The first information about the project that reached the tenants was a letter from the landlord, saying that PORT would take place. Most of the artists made took contact with the tenants in the same way by sending a follow-up letter, describing their plans for the upcoming artwork. Few chose to carry out this communication in person by knocking the door of the tenants. The artists who met up with the tenants

seemed to develop a closer contact with them, which also helped them to carry out their work collaboratively.

What is participation?

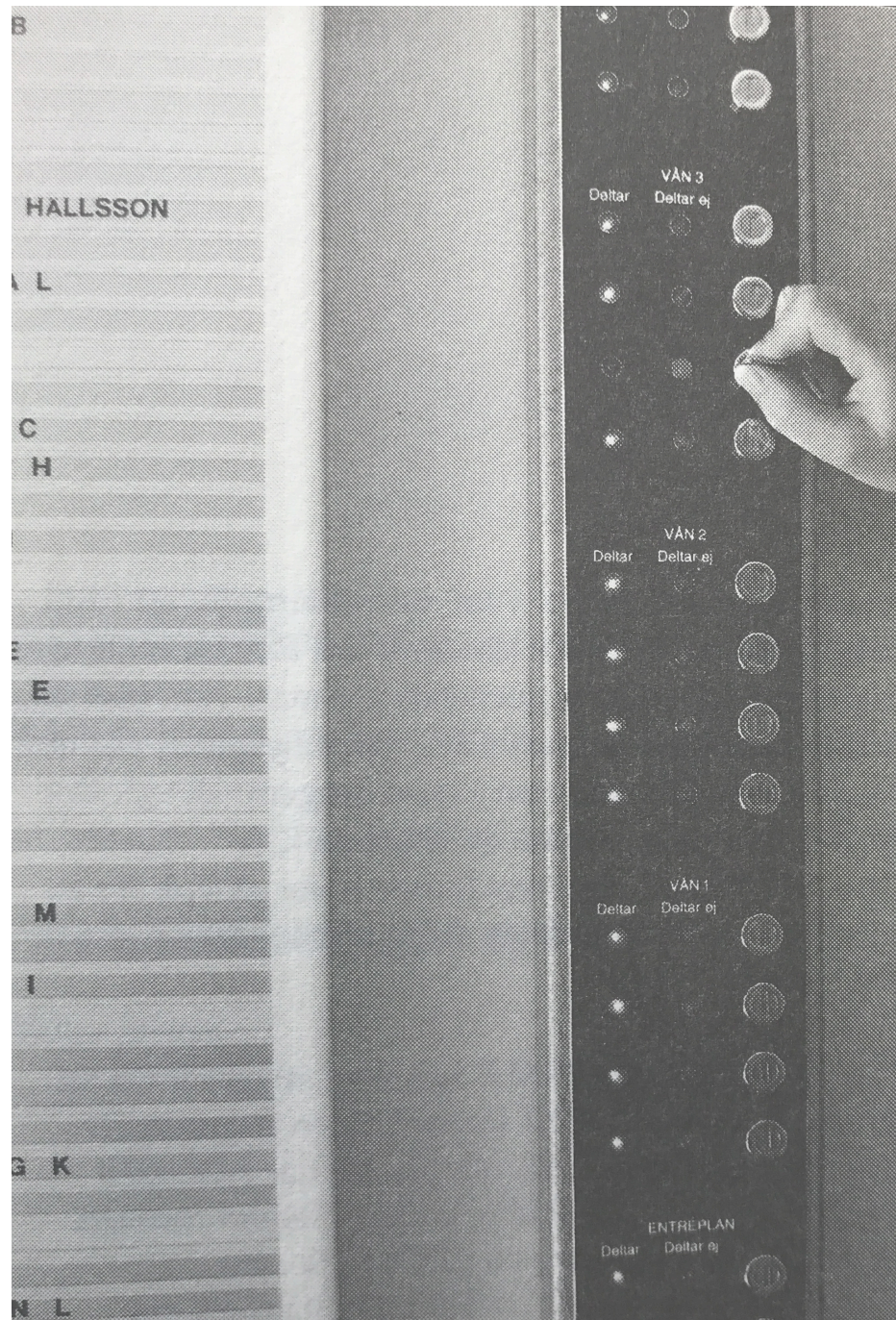
The fourteen participating artists had all an individual interpretation of what they wanted to contribute with to the project, resulting in fourteen different approaches. Still it is possible to read some similarities in methods and themes in the artist’s works. Below is a summary of the methods and themes of the fourteen artists.

- Collecting information and opinions
- Portraying the tenants
- Treating the tenant as a client
- Treating the tenant as a force of labor
- Participation as the theme of the work

Among the artists who chose to collect information about the tenants, one can read a desire to learn more about both those who live in the stairwell and Rågsved in general. Most of the artists seem to be very unfamiliar with the place and the people. Collecting information becomes a way to get to know the context. Roger Anderson puts up a list in the stairwell where tenants can give suggestions on common greeting phrases in different languages, with the result of nine phrases in different languages and the racist phrase “only Swedes” (Alpsten, 1998, p.106). Collecting information can be read as a way of portraying the tenants without establishing personal contact. The artist Carl Michael von Hausswolff, for example, informs the tenants that they should all contribute with a picture that will hang in the stairwell, and for every tenant that does not participate, a black picture will be hung instead.

Collecting information differs in the approach between the personal and the impersonal meeting. In three of the projects, those living in the stairwell are portrayed through photography, painted silhouettes and recorded voices. It is in these projects that the greatest effort is required in the interaction with the tenants, which is highlighted by Alpsten’s text about the works. The majority of the artists did not meet the tenants in person, but contacted them by letter. The artists who knocked the doors of the tenants, presented themselves, had a conversation and asked questions, seem to have come close to the tenants and established their trust (Alpsten, 1998).

The artist Thomas Liljeberg lets the tenant act as a client. Everyone in the stairwell



can fill in a form about what they like and dislike. A diptych representing what the tenants like and dislike was painted. The painting depicting what was liked was hung in Rågsved. The painting depicting the disliked was donated to a private art collector. The art collector can then freely do what he wants with the painting, including making a financial profit at the tenants' expense, says Liljeberg. In the form, many people fill in that they dislike contemporary art, probably because of the ongoing project. "The idea was that they would be able to participate, if an artist came into my house and I was not allowed to take part, I would not enjoy it" (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 5 February). Liljeberg says in the interview at Sveriges radio that he wants to describe an economic relationship where someone else makes profit on the Rågsved residents' work.

A number of artists use participation as a theme in the work. Without greater interest in the tenants' involvement and influence on the process, participatory themes are used. An example of this is Anders Boqvist's work *Deltar – deltar ej*. Boqvist manufactured a box, resembling the design of the laundry room booking system. Each household received a key that fit into a keyhole on the box, representing each apartment. Next to each keyhole was two lamps, one glowing green and one that was turned off to begin with. By using their key, tenants could turn off the green light and instead turn on the second red light as an answer that they did not wish to participate in the project. Boqvist says that through his work he wants to highlight the ethical and social complications surrounding a project such as *PORT* (Alpsten, 1998).

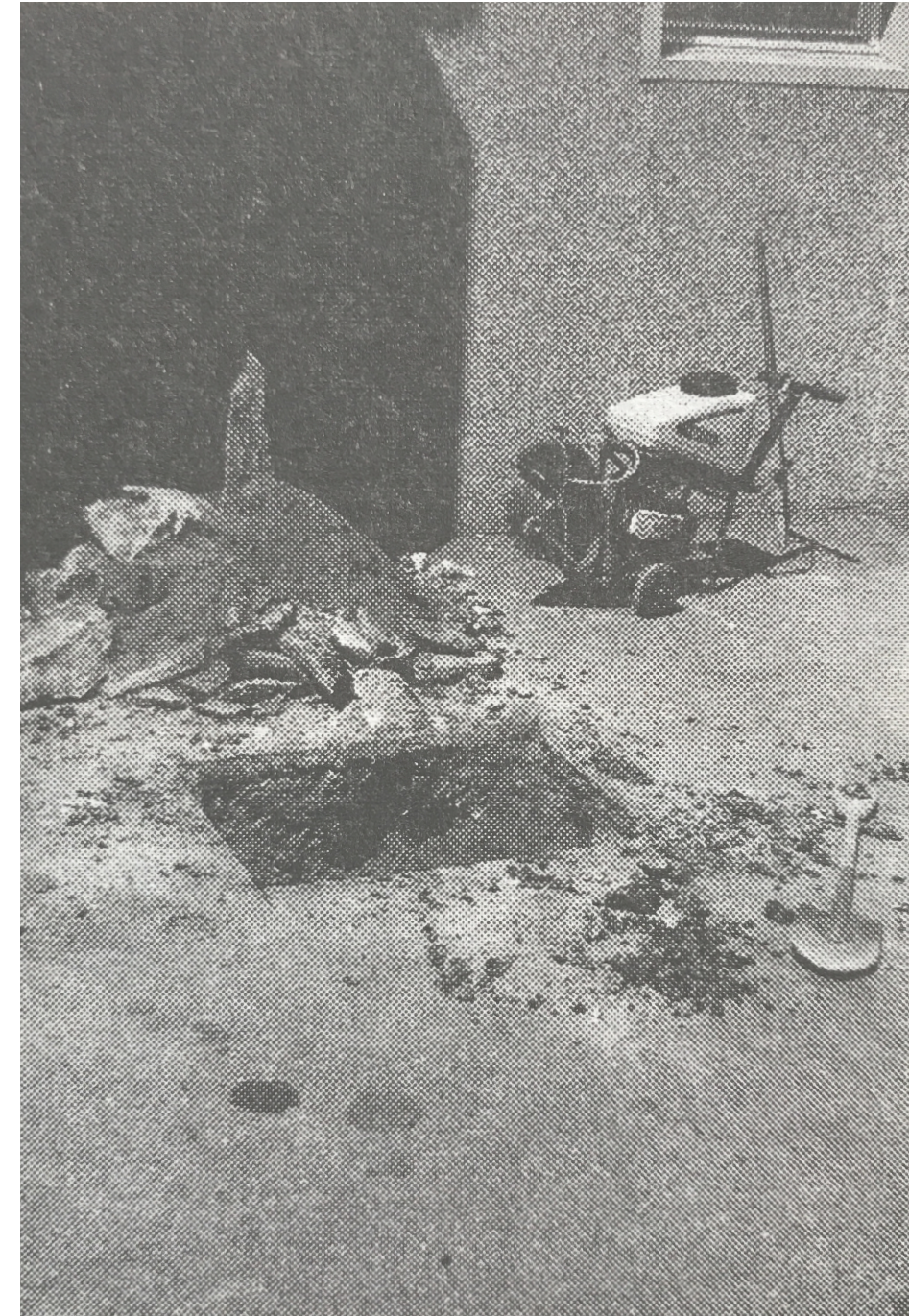
Camilla Bergman writes to the tenants inviting them to plant flower bulbs in a predetermined formation outside the stairwell. Too few, unclear how many, if even any, respond to the invitation. The artist then turns to the Hyresgästföreningen asking for help (Alpsten, 1998). The participating element in Bergman's work can be perceived as voluntary labor, and would then perhaps suggest the reason for the poor response.

Arijana Kajfes says in the interview with Sveriges radio that she is concerned about the tenants reactions. That they will be provoked by the fact that she as an artist comes to Rågsved and problematizes the suburb. Especially when there is not enough money left in Rågsved for maintenance. Kajfes believes that many steps are skipped and that contemporary art is not a primary need for those living in the stairwell. Nils Claesson does not agree, "it's pretty fun when people get angry", explaining that many people perceive their art as provocative, not just the people in the suburb. "Many people think that art should be something nice to hang above the sofa". Kajfes agrees and adds that "Some art does not fit in the home environment, but is instead something that you take

home with you as a thought or a feeling” (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 5 February, my translation).

Carl Michael von Hausswolff doubted to participate in PORT. ”It’s a bit popular to work with the suburbs, a bit cultural-politically correct to come up with different projects that should be in different Stockholm suburbs, or any suburbs really” (Sveriges Radio, 1998, my translation). What changed his mind in the end was the space itself, the intermediate position of the stairwell. Hausswolff tells about the artwork in an interview, ”It felt as an intrusion and was difficult to handle correctly. When I accepted, I didn’t understand why I felt so irritated. Did you understand that later? Yes, it was that intrusion, and that the landlords wanted to be part of the cultural year 98, look what we do for our tenants, and then force them into something” (Sveriges Radio, 1998, my translation). Hausswolff’s proposal was that all tenants would participate with a picture, those denying the invitation would be represented with a black picture. The tenants’ reaction to the proposal was a protest against all forms of artistic contribution in the stairwell signed by 36 out of a total of 40 tenants. Hausswolff responded with joy to this protest, suggesting that this indicates that you can’t just run over people however you want, and at the same time feeling struck of finding himself in that position. ”I experience myself as someone who often stands in opposition, in this situation it was instead I who was the bully and in position of power. If I had worked at another place, say Östermalm, Södermalm then I think the same reaction would have arised. Since everyone was happy with their stairwell, we decided to exhibit it as a readymade” (Sveriges Radio, 1998, my translation). Those who wanted to show a picture could now do so in a common room together with the documented exchange of letters between the artist, the tenants and the landlord. ”They have driven the artist from their territory to another place, no intervention has been tolerated” (Dahlgren Svanevik, 2018, 5 February, my translation).

The purpose of PORT was to set up an exhibition that would be dismantled after the exhibition period. In some cases, physical material was handed over to the tenants or, like in Nils Claesson’s work Öppnas om tusen år - ett meddelande till framtiden left an almost invisible trace. Claesson let the tenants hand in an item for a time capsule he then buried and paved over outside the stairwell, to be opened in a thousand years. Claesson’s art consists primarily in the relation between him, the tenants and the objects that they hand in, rather than some physical qualities.

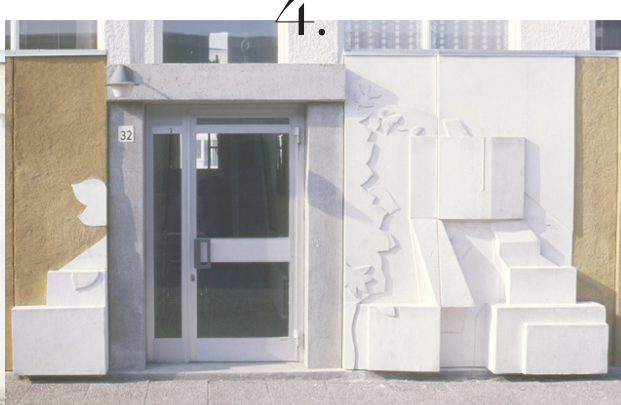


Summary

Multiple concepts of participatory art are present in PORT. The invited artists problematize what participation and art in a place like Rågsved can be, but they also use participation as an extension of their own artistic practice, and sometimes purely as manual labor. The fact that participatory art was relatively new in Sweden makes the different approaches coexist and collide in an interesting way.



CASE STUDY: RÅBY



1. Lars Petersson, Untitled, 1966. Stainless steel. Photo: Västerås Konstmuseum.
2. Leif Bolter,, Mänskligt formspel, 1968. Concrete. Photo: Västerås Konstmuseum.
3. Leif Eriksson, Färgaffärsfönster, 1966, enamel. Photo Västerås Konstmuseum.
4. Björn Sven Jonsson and Klas Patrik Söderquist, II.2, 1968. Concrete and stainlesssteel. Photo: Västerås Konstmuseum.
5. Lennart Aschenbrenner, Stadens Tecken, 1968. Plastic and concrete. Photo Västerås Konstmuseum.
6. Ulla Zimmerman, Vägguksmyckning, 1968. Ceramics. Photo Västerås Konstmuseum.
7. Råby fritidsverksamhet/Palle Nielsen, Ballongen, 1968-1969. Photos: Jan Jansson.
8. P.O Larsson, Dans, 2003. Concrete. Photo: Mohammed El-Masri.
9. Anders Hultman, Blomma, 2004. Metall and paint. Photo: Mohammed El-Masri.
10. Catharina Warne-Hellström, Tittut, 2004. Glass painting. Photo: Mohammed El-Masri.
11. Michael Beutler, Ballongen, 2017. Multi media. Photo: Ricard Estay.

Råby

West of the city of Västerås, the residential area of Råby is located along with the woods. Västerås is an industrial city that grew increasingly during the middle of the 20th century. Between 1951 and 1975, 33 000 apartment units were built, which in the year 2000 was more than 50% of the apartment stock in the city. When talking about Milljonprogrammet, the buildings that comes first to mind are high rising apartment blocks made out of concrete. In Råby, the buildings only stretches from one to three floors (Stadsbyggnadskontoret Västerås, 2004). As early as 2004, Västerås urban planning office came up with a document of guidelines for how to manage, preserve and highlight the special qualities of the post-war building stock. The neighborhood received some complementary buildings in 2001. Tanks to the spacious design, with a lot of green areas, the new buildings do not interfere with the old in a disturbing way. Among the new additions is a combined shopping mall and community building containing functions as library, supermarket and sport activities among other things. In Råby there is a mixed tenure status of households. The housing consists mainly of apartment buildings but also some row houses in the outskirts of the neighbourhood.

Råby has been the place for several social, participatory and permanent artworks ever since the first tenants moved there in 1968. To walk through the central square or between the three story apartment buildings is a public art exhibition. As a relatively small neighborhood with 3650 inhabitants, Rågsved has a striking amount of public artworks (Västerås stad, 2016). In addition to the permanent art, temporary art-related activities took place there in the late 1960's as well as today. The renowned art exhibition The Model that transformed Moderna Museet into a huge playground in 1968 was, when the exhibition closed down, moved to Råby (Ingelstedt, 2017).

Råby has been a center for a discussion about the free play of children, where and how it can take place in an urban setting. The events that took place in Råby during the 1960's have inspired contemporary artistic activities. Between 2015 - 2018, three separate art projects was carried out that all drew a lot of inspiration from Råby's history. The works were produced in collaboration with Konstfrämjandet Västmanland, Västerås konstmuseum, the Statens konstråd and the residents of Råby.

Child's play in the urban landscape

In the summer of 1968, alongside other political debates, a heated children's culture debate was stirred up, writes Mats Eriksson Dunér and Rolf Olle Nilsson in Den fria leken (2017, p.45). The child's day was an initiative to collect money for summer

camp activities. There was a critique of the child's day to be nothing more than a commercial stunt. The critics main concerns was with the consumption based activities and high prices. The organizers of the activities accepted the criticism and contacted the theater group Skrotmånegruppen to try something else. The children's theater group Skrotmånegruppen, had been recognized for their untraditional theater ,where scrap, foam plastic, car tires and planks were dragged onto the stage and the children were encouraged to become co-creators of the show. Skrotmånegruppen named the theme of the child's day of 1968 Trash hill. A truck dumped planks and tools on a slope in Vasaparken. All the material and tools were there for the children to use without the interference or limitations set up by the adult world. Telefon poles were used as bearing structure as the construction site grew day by day, at its final stage the tree-house-like structure reached six floors. The event was a great success. Inspired by the event, parents federations were formed to organize their own adventure playgrounds in- and outside of Stockholm.

The Model

Palle Nielsen, artist and activist, was invited from Copenhagen to inspire the Stockholm's activists and share his experiences of city actions. Nilsen came in contact with Gunilla Lundahl, a member of Aktion Samtal and journalist with a lot of involvement in Stockholm's alternative cultural life. Together, Nilsen and Lundahl came to the concluded that their action would reach a much larger audience if it were to be performed at the Moderna Museet. Lundahl and Nielsen wrote a letter to Pontus Hultén, the head of the museum, where they suggested a great play-exhibition that could take place in the museum's biggest hall. Carlo Derkert, art-pedagog and deputy head of the museum was consulted and then took on the project together with Nielsen and Lundahl. In late September 1968 the exhibition opened. The Model - a model for a qualitative society took place in the old exercise hall and became an instant success and the most visited exhibition up to that point (Ingelstedt, 2017).

A great number of people took part in the development of the exhibition, witch had a lot of similarities to the urban actions carried out earlier the same year. The main element of the exhibition was the construction site, but also included a pool filled with foam, typewriters and music players. In a photography, the minister of education at the time, Olof Palme is caught in free-fall as he jumps into the pool.

In 2017, Gunilla Lundahl was invited to a partake in a conversation about The Model at Tensta Konsthall. The other two partaking in the discussion was Maria Lind, head of

Tensta Konsthall at the time, and Lars Bang Larsen, curator and author of a book about the exhibition. Lundahl says:

“The model did what we wanted it to, it lifted the kids out of the instrumental world in which they were placed and showed completely new possibilities... What made The Model unique was that it took place in an artistic institution. I was a creation as well as an action, not an object. It didn't belong to anyone. it belonged to everyone. It rid itself from the perception that artists are the people who make things at an art museum”(Lind & Bang Larsen, 2020, p.176)

Some considered the exhibition provocative and not fit for an art institution. Staff members at Moderna Museet tried to sabotage the exhibition by sending submissions to the newspapers and calling the fire brigade (Ingelstedt, 2017). And discussions about the children being used for political purposes had been passed around ever since the child's day activities (Lind & Bang Larsen, p 116). But in the talk at Tensta konsthall in 2017, Maria Lind, Lars Bang Larsen and Gunilla Lundahl, claims the opposite, the most important aspect of The Model, was to claim the child's subject. Bang Larsen describes the exhibition as a mass mobilization of child power. The Model was a claim to increase the mobility and freedom of the child. The conditions of children today is severely limited compared with the 1960's and 1970's. The view of the child has changed back, where it is now again a private matter, back within the nuclear family (Lind & Bang Larsen, 2020, p.126)

An art magazine published the same year as the exhibition attributed Palle Nilsen as the creator of The Model as well as the founder of Action Samtal. The reduction of the work carried out by multiple participants into one authorship creates a false picture of the process and the artwork in its entity. The actions and events that lead up to The Model are of a dualistic nature and difficult to place, document and archive within traditional logics of art. This proves why the actions, unlike the praised exhibition carried out within walls of the museum, tend to fall outside of the history writing. A reacquiring blind spot of history writing is the presence of women. The women who were part of the actions, The Model but also other parallel political movements have been completely erased from its history. Lundahl says that the women were constantly present but that there was a tendency that the men did the talking and claimed the authorship. The work was extensive, rich and complex in a way that would not have been possible to achieve for a single agent (Lind & Bang Larsen, 2020).



The Balloon

In 1969 the newly built neighborhood Råby still had some empty apartments to fill with residents. Children's theater consultant Irma Sohlman worked in the city of Västerås and had recently moved to Råby. When Moderna Museet announced that the material from The Model could be transported and handed over free of charge to anyone who wanted to take care of it, Irma Solman got in contact with the museum. She convinces the landlord, that the adventure playground would be good PR for the neighborhood that still had room for more tenants. The playground moved into a huge inflatable tent, where the children could play freely despite the winter outside. The playground was named after the big inflatable, the Balloon. By moving the exhibition to the neighborhood Råby, the play, yet again reclaimed the space it was originally intended to occupy (Ingelstedt 2017). The Balloon was only part of the neighborhood temporary, but closed the circle of the urban action-groups of the late 1960's and created a link between the local life and an internationally recognized art-historic event, that still inspires today.

Contemporary art in Råby

Three individual, but in many ways interconnected art projects were carried out in Råby between 2015 and 2018. The artworks all drew a large portion of inspiration from The Model, the Balloon and each other. The three contemporary artworks of Råby is the main focus of the second case-study of this thesis.

The first project phase, Den fria leken, was organized in a collaboration between Västerås Konstmuseum, Västmanlands länsmuseum, Konstfrämjandet Västmanland, Folkrörelsernas Konstfrämjande and Knytpunkten Råby between 2015 and 2017. The Participating in the project were artists and children, young people and adults at Råby. Katrin Ingelstedt works as a curator at Västerås konstmuseum and edited the anthology that documented the contemporary artworks and history of The Balloon, the main part of the second case-study is based on the book, Den fria leken (2017).

The second stage took place in 2017-2018. Råby then participated in the state-initiated project Konst händer. The project was implemented through a state commission to take place in "certain areas" and aimed to promote democratic values. The project was process-based and led by an international artist in collaboration with local art associations and ended up in a festival-like celebration.

Den fria leken & Råby Planet

In the fall of 2015, artists Max Green Ekelin and Marcus Ivarsson began their activities with an art-party, followed by weekly art workshops for Råby's children to partake in. Ekelin and Ivarsson says that they wanted their contribution to be a place that was a different form of learning than school. Where there were no predetermined goals and the children could create freely. The project ended with an exhibition at Västmanlands länsmuseum, where the works of the children was presented to the public.

Ruben Wätte's artwork Dungen was an independant continuation of Ekelin and Ivarsson's activities. In the summer of 2016, materials and tools were provided in a grove (dunge) located between the houses of Råby. Dungen was a temporary playground inspired by the Ballon. Some of the first visitors at the site were surprised when they arrived at the appointed time, "but nothing is ready?" (Ingelstedt, 2017, my translation). Wätte and some artist colleagues explained that everything was in order and invited the participants to partake in the construction of the playground. After a few days children and adults had built an obstacle course that stretched up the trees, huts of wood and fabric, hammocks, pennants and flags. In the evenings they all gathered around a campfire.

Råby Planet was initiated by Statens konstråd in 2017-2018 under the wider project Konst händer. The project was a state commission aimed at "creating good conditions for increased influence, participation and a range of culture and artistic expressions in certain residential areas" (Statens Konstråd, 2018, my translation). The national project wanted to reach a broad age group and places with smaller access to contemporary art, to see an increased democratic participation within the targeted communities. All together Konst händer provided participatory art projects in fifteen places between 2015-2018. The German artist Michael Beutler was invited to create an artwork together with the residents of Råby. Just like Den fria leken, Beutler's work was inspired by Råby's past. The first part of Beutler's and the residents work was a series of workshops. In the end the workshops resulted in a game, where a ball, five meters in diameter was to be rolled through Råbyskogen. The game required teamwork to make the ball reach its final destination. The goal was a falu-red construction that would also contain the ball till the next game. The container is the permanent artistic remain of the project (Statens Konstråd, 2018).

With the artworks included in Den fria leken, Västerås konstmuseum wanted to connect with a modern Swedish art history and build a narrative for an exhibition in their



museum facilities as well as outside of the institution. The projects works as a bridge between contemporary art movements and historical references. Kristina Ingelstedt, curator of the exhibition *Den fria leken* and the initiator of the project says, "it is unusual today, to be part of the process of starting something new and to influence your surroundings" (Wätte, 2017, my translation). The intention was to provide the children with meaningful activities as well as to demonstrate the possibilities of play and the ability of the children, inspired by "a movement that uses artistic actions as a method to create societal change" (*Den Fria Leken*, 2017, p.7, my translation).

Max Green Ekelin, Marcus Ivarsson and Ruben Wätte all have a similar approach to their works. With the Art workshops and *Dungen*, they wanted to create a place where they could let go of the control and embrace the uncertainty, a place where children could be creative without being held back. The three artists speak of this space as an act of resistance in relation to the increasing boundaries in children's everyday lives. In the Art workshop the children explored that space in a small scale with paper, glue and glitter and in *Dungen* as buildings of wood and fabric.

In the accessible material of *Den fria leken*, the reactions upon the projects have been exclusively positive. Children and adults proudly display their creations in the documentation film from *Dungen*. Ekelin and Ivarsson's blog from the Art workshop shows excited children next to their artworks at Västmanlands länsmuseum. The format of the participation was inviting and non-compulsory. The participants were invited to partake in the activities, those interested did, others didn't or just hung around as an observer. The reactions and response from the participants thus controlled which direction the work would take. If no one had been interested in building an obstacle course, no obstacle course would have been built.

There were multiple roles for the participants to take on. They could act independently, ask for help, help someone else, or just hang around. The roles seemed to circulate, depending on mood and newly acquired knowledge.

Wätte witnessed participants who, for example, accompanied their children or grandchildren to the activities with the plan to be a passive observer, but then was encouraged by other participants to take on a more active role. In this way, the project seems to have created a genuine commitment in which the participants wanted to engage their neighbors (Ingelstedt, 2017). An adult participant in *Dungen* says in the video documentation that she will remember something different, "It differs from what we usually do. It's a lot about challenging yourself" (Wätte, 2017, my translation). In



the same video four children are interviewed. They are excited and interrupt each other as they tell the person behind the camera about their creation. They say that now they have time to build, play and talk, but otherwise they only play football. “First we built the floors, then we painted the floor and the windshield, and here we have a table, a cup holder and then a staircase so you can go up” says one of the children. “And then we tied it up like this in the tree so it sits extra well. It is a little more nature friendly with threads instead of nails” another one fills in. The children wish that Dungen could be carried out every year and preferably all summer (Wätte, 2017, my translation)

Personal statements from the participants of Beutler’s work, Råby Planet are very few. But the festival that was organized in 2018 became a big event that attracted many of Råby’s residents (Konstfrämjandet, 2018). One person says to Statens konstråd that it is a good idea to create an artwork that end up in an event, and that the process leading up to it has been good for the kids in the neighborhood (Statens konstråd, 2018)

Traces of the art

The two initial projects that were presented under the collective name Den fria leken have left no physical traces. The adventure playground was carefully removed, leaving the forest area as pristine as possible. As for the participatory methods, the two works seem to have come into good contact with the immediate area. Den fria leken contributes to the rich history of Råby as a place for participatory and public art. Walking through the area the art makes itself visible all over the cityscape. ”It is very special, probably unique to the whole of Västerås,” says an elderly man and points to the 300m long wall relief in the city-center. I reply that it is probably the only one of its kind in the all of Sweden.

As a reminder of Råby Planet, the grand falu-red goal sits on a hill close by Råbyskogen. Råby Planet was supposed to be a recurring event, but today there are no such plans. In email contact with Konstfrämjandet, Anna Törrönen replies that Råby Planet was only carried out once in 2018 and that the future is uncertain. Konstfrämjandet which was a partner in Konst händer has taken over some of the contacts that was established during Råby Planet and plan to continue working with artistic participation in Råby.



Summary

The subversive force of public art is the ability to carry out the unimaginable. Political, practical or aesthetic ideas is tested out, by realizing the idea it comes to life and becomes a part of our shared reality. The architect profession has been deprived of some of the opportunities to work site-specific and interdisciplinary due to systematic economic effectivisation. Local cultural institutions are important agents in urban development, through their insight into the local culture, and close contact with both politics and citizens. Short-term projects come with many pitfalls, pitfalls that could be avoided through a well-established local network that manages the contacts and knowledge, and implements them in long-term operations.



DISCUSSION

Art?

To define what is art and not art, has rarely proved sustainable in the long run. Also anti-art is art, says Lars Bang Larsen about The Model's attempt to oppose the art institution. The fact that The Model becomes a work of art, has to do with the context, the action is played out in an art museum and the attributed author is an artist (Lind & Bang Larsen, 2020). If we would categorize contemporary activities at Råby, few would name them art. But the fact that the art workshop becomes an artwork, and not just an activity open to children's creation, has to do with the conditions of the site, although completely different from those at Moderna Museet. Establishing an artistic workshop and building tree houses at Råby is unthinkable in relation to the normative expectations of the place, to such a degree, that the action becomes a work of art that questions spatial and political conditions. The artist's role is to explore spatial and social conditions together with the children active in the workshop, but also to present it to the local art institution and its audience. Markus Miessen, architect and author of a series of books on participatory architecture writes in his doctoral dissertation that we must "enable forms of critical optimism and celebrate the complexities of the physical world we live in" (Miessen, 2019, p.79). Social art accomplishes this when it reaches its full potential. The architect's opportunities to explore and relate to site-specific conditions are on the other hand shrinking, according to Miessen. He argues that it has to do with a systematic economic effectivisation of the discipline. Today, quick results must be achieved under pressured economic conditions. Opportunities to question existing structures or approaches are low or non-existent. Without the possibility of forming visions and interdisciplinary collaborations, the architect has been degraded to a position limited to delivering form only. Developers can design and build without architects, and this is done at lower prices. The described situation jeopardizes the profession, but above all the quality of our physical environments. The architect has become an unnecessary position, reduced to "the one who places ornamental cherries on top of the finished cake" (Miessen, 2019, p.78). The idea of Kwon's description of the nomadic modernist sculpture that stands indifferent to the place is not far off.

Participation?

The main argument for the project PORT is the statement that there is few opportunity to see contemporary art in Rågsved, says Alpsten (1998). Contemporary art tends to take place mainly in galleries or museums and to a smaller extent in residential areas. Alpsten's point of departure, that there is no contemporary art in precisely Rågsved, then becomes both true and false. There are no galleries or museums in Rågsved, but there is little evidence that there would be more contemporary art in other residential

areas that do not constitute the city-center. Even if the organizers considered the fixed public art as outdated, it has a presence in the urban space. As previously stated, the concept of art is interpreted differently in different places and situations, something that perhaps is overlooked and not explored in PORT. It is possible that art was produced/ is produced in Rågsved. Instead it is perhaps a question of visibility and recognition. The actors in PORT are more interested in Rågsved as a place than finding its artistic channels and performers. Rågsved becomes a fertile source for the relational art that takes as its departure the spatial and social relations. In this sense, there is no reason to believe that PORT is "social aid", as genuine interest in the place is evident in the artists' and Alpsten's projects. However we should ask for whom the art of PORT is being made?

The audience in the stairwell is not asked before they receive a letter stating that the project will take place. For the tenants, it is an unforeseen event that takes place directly in connection with their home and which desires their attention and commitment. There are no interviews with the tenants available and Alpsten's documentation is done before the works are presented in a complete form to the tenants. The way PORT is documented, without the perspectives of the tenants, creates a suspicion that the art galleries in the stairwells are not primarily dedicated to the residents of Rågsved."To create a link between the center and the periphery" the works from PORT are presented on a screen in the premises of Statens Konstråd in the Stockholm city-center (Alpsten, 1998, my translation). Even if it happens unintentionally, the exhibition for the central parts of Stockholm, the housing companies and the European Capital of Culture, overshadows the local art happening that was the starting point. Claire Bishop writes that by implementing social art projects in their business, municipal and commercial actors can increase their attractiveness. The cultural activities do not necessarily promote culture for the sake of culture. Art may instead compensate for social exclusion under a banner of social inclusion (Bishop, 2006).

The site is used in a different way in Rågsved. Where a greater focus is on the creators and shows a change in the view of the audience that PORT sought but did not really reach. "In architecture, public art, design and cultural heritage, there has been a clear shift in the last decade from a focus on physical objects to an interest in processes and contexts. This shift in focus has broadened the perspective on design and made it clear that social dimensions are also crucial for achieving high qualities in planning and building common environments. " (Statens konstråd, 2017, p.3) As Statens konstråd writes in the report on art in residential areas from 2017, interest in a practice that

mixes physical and social aspects has increased and characterizes contemporary urban development.

In PORT you can distinguish a connection to the New genre public art's involvement in the local community. By using participation as material, political projects are created. In the highly politicized environment that the socioeconomically weak suburbs constitute, the artworks are faced with responsibility and dilemmas that other genres of art do not face in the same way. Several of the works problematize the economic and spatial segregation that takes place in Rågsved. The artists takes on a two-sided role between the tenants and the landlords. They communicate with both parties. The artists are formally inferior to the client but have been assigned some of their authority of the stairwell. At the same time, the role of the artist possesses the ability to uncover structures and possibly criticize existing conditions. Thomas Liljeberg succeeds in this two-sided role. With his diptych of the liked and the disliked, Liljeberg establishes contact with the tenants and creates a work of art for their stairwell. At the same time he reflects on the monetary and social value of work and art produced in Rågsved compared to other places.

The frequency and type of participation in the fourteen works varied widely. The only work that failed to get the tenants involvement was *Ett oerhört långsamt fyrverkeri*, in which the tenants were invited to plant flower bulbs outside the stairwell. In this project, participation was mainly limited to manual work. Bishop writes that this is not uncommon when artists and cultural projects are aimed at groups considered unfamiliar with art. She means that when the middle class produces art for consumption within the group, they assume that they have the time and space to 'think'. On the other hand, many projects with participants from socio-economically weaker groups are not given the confidence to consume art intellectually but are instead limited to participate in manual work and therefore further cementing class structures. Markus Miessen quotes an email conversation between Thomas Hirschhorn and Claire Bishop, Hirschhorn writes: "I am not for 'Participative-art', it's so stupid because every old painting makes you more 'participating' than today's 'Participative-art', because first of all real participation is the participation of thinking!" (Miessen, 2019, p. 32).

The time of the PORT project in 1998 is before participatory art, design and architecture develop into the great genre it is today, when it is used on a small scale as well as part of state democratization projects. The projects in Råby can be set on the opposite side of that development curve, which makes the conditions for the two projects very different.

Alpsten makes a hopeful prediction that the digital development will be positive for the suburbs "On the computer network everyone is equally central, electronics are developing a democratic geography" (Alpsten, 1998, p.51, my translation). The democratic geography didn't really come out as Alpsten imagined, but to get in touch with people is easier since PORT was carried out. Social media and other digital tools that today are part of our everyday life make the collaborative elements of social art logic as we are used to participate and comment on what is happening around us. At the same time it distances us on a physical level. Personal service of both public and commercial type is dismantled and replaced by digital platforms. Documentation and information about the projects at Råby is unlike PORT in Rågsved not only stored in the participants' memories but also in blogs, social media and on the institutions' websites. The digital information becomes a second-hand source that creates a distance between the audience and the artwork. On the other hand, it is a way to seek out the permanent parts of the project or to find information about the public art. This information would in a gallery or a museum be found in a catalogue or an exhibition text. In this way, permanent public artworks are also made available, making them easier to find and extract information about them.

Looking at the audiences in the case-studies, it seems more difficult to engage an adult target group compared to children if we compare the projects in Rågsved with the one in Råby. But as we see in Ruben Wätte's documentation of *Dungen*, the adults are also participating in the creation and construction. Inviting them along with their children creates roles for the adults as well. Perhaps it has to do more with questions asked and the expectations of the answers in relation to the two different target groups. Another important factor is, of course, time, where more hours in the lives of the adults are already occupied with scheduled chores. Targeting children can be a way to reach groups that would otherwise not participate, such as mothers with many children. Activities in which only adults can participate, on the other hand, reduces the chance of including this group.

Local life and local institutions

The organizers of the art projects in Rågsved and Råby differ. In Rågsved, the works were organized as a private initiative, financed primarily by project money from the European Capital of Culture year (Alpsten, 1998). At Råby, there are recurring collaborations between the organizers of *Den fria leken* and *Konst händer*, between Västerås Art Museum, *Konstfrämjandet Västmanland* and *Statens konstråd*. *Den fria leken* was part of Västerås konstmuseum's ordinary activity and was arranged as an

exhibition and a public work of art. Konst händer was a state commission by Statens konstråd. The reading of the artworks will be different depending on the organizer. Was it worth giving project money for that specific project? Was it successful as an exhibition? Do the residents of the place feel that they are more involved now?

Västerås konstmuseum and the local division of Konstfrämjandet had a great influence in getting the events started and to create connections at Råby. Helena Selders (2020) report *Utanför de institutionella väggarna* comes to the conclusion that the local art institutions plays a key role in shaping public space. They act as a link between those who work with public art, urban development, local community and politicians. This makes art institutions an important resource for transparency and development of public environments (Selder, 2020, p.5). Konstfrämjandet's local unit was a partner during Statens konstråd's project Konst händer. When the project ended, Konstfrämjandet continued on the site to take care of the commitment that was created. The presence of a local unit made continuation as well as development possible within an already existing infrastructure, positive or negative effects are identified and can either be used in long-term activities or archived for future use.

Jonna Bornemark is a professor of theoretical philosophy at Södertörn University and has written a research report on Konst händer. Bornemark writes that Statens konstråd sees a risk that Konst händer would be perceived as yet another project that comes from the top and then quickly leaves the site. The word "project-fatigue" is used and that this is a widespread phenomenon in the post-war suburbs areas (Bornemark, 2019, p.2, my translation). The project format not only provides temporary activities, but also creates many temporary forms of employment for those who work with them. Bornemark raises criticism from an anonymous person who states that the form of employment becomes a problem if you do not agree with the projects. You will be rendered as a difficult person, and that will affect your chances the next time you apply for a project based job in a small Swedish field like this. In this sense, the values of democracy and openness that were intended to run through the project do not apply everywhere. In addition, valuable critique that could have improved the project or the cooperative work is left out. Bornemark asks whether the project fatigue can be a sign of a healthy response to a system that does not work (Bornemark 2020, p.6).

A long-term effort to create real influence and exchange of knowledge between the residents and space production would be to increase the presence of students with personal experience of the post-war suburbs in the art- and architecture schools. Today,

those schools have homogeneous student groups. My observations from Chalmers University is that almost none of the architecture students have the experience of living in the mentioned environment. The number of students with a foreign background at the art and architectural educations are at a few single percentages (Statistiska centralbyrån, 2018, p.51-79). This creates a great loss of knowledge in society at large, but also presents a large-scale and complex project, like the spatial management of the post-war suburbs before a profession without personal experience of the site.

Democracy?

Social art processes that started as an avant-garde art and political grassroots movements have spread widely and are used as we see in Rågsved and Råby by different organizers and for different purposes. Claire Bishop calls the increased interest in spatial and social relations "The social turn" (Bishop, 2006). In the case studies it is possible to follow a professionalisation of the social methods in the arts. Reading Alpten's texts from the late 1990s, you are surprised by the slightly prejudiced language and sometimes quick conclusions. At the same time, his straightforward honesty has turned into a somewhat obscure rhetorics in contemporary projects. One example of this is Statens konstråd's commission to carry out Konst händer in "certain areas". Art should enrich the public environment but also meet aims of a democratic influence in areas with documented low voter turnout, aims that can go over the participants heads (Statens Konstråd, 2018). What is the purpose of the social art projects from the perspective of the state? Is it to take part of the thoughts and ideas of the citizens or to pedagogically show how to be another kind of citizen? Bornemark says in her study of Konst händer that the projects create a tension that also contains a high risk of instrumentalization of art "where art with a very small budget should solve society's problems" (Bornemark, 2019, p.4, my translation). A similar reflection is made by the Statens offentliga utredningar after Ytterstadssatsningen, "there is a clear gap between aim and inserted effort" (SOU 2005:29, p.6, my translation). The investigation believes that the aim of breaking social, ethnic and discriminating segregation is impossible to achieve at the local level and that the rhetorics of lifting the bottom-up perspectives risks moving the responsibility downwards in the social system (SOU 2005:29). The social art thus have an influence in the expression of democracy were it is practiced, but do not have impact on a structural level.

Public dissonance

Reflecting on the totality of the projects, I perceive a strong dissonance between how Riksantikvarieämbetet, Statens konstråd, Kulturdepartementet, the Statens offentliga

utredningar and local art institutions perceive the value of the post-war suburb's spatial and social publicness and the way this environment is managed and prioritized by the city, local politics and property owners. The authorities describe a unique environment with architecture and art that should be preserved for the future. Unfortunately, the management of these environments has been very inadequate and suffered from politics that disadvantaged areas with weaker purchasing power.

The architectural style in residential areas such as Rågsved and Råby has in general a low status in the society. In the contemporary housing market, it can be a mistake to raise the standard and status of an area too much and too fast. Gentrification and push-outs as a result of cultural initiatives and upgrading are well known today. The large housing stock from the mid-20th century is at the same time in need of renovation and complementary building to meet today's needs of housing and public environments. Preserving the cultural heritage of these environments in a way that respects the original expressions and details as well as meets the new needs, seems to me impossible without resulting in gentrification. But no one said this would be easy. Markus Miessen means that the only way to meet such a project is with a non-judgemental approach open for the complex challenge (Miessen, 2019). The complex challenge involves both the work with the public environment as well as the development of the conditions for those performing that task.

The story of Miljonprogrammet and the other post-war areas is one worth telling. It is a story about aiming high and creating changes you couldn't imagine possible a decade later. It also tells that places are not permanent but can quickly take on new expressions. Art can perform unimaginable expressions and ways of living. A life where the neighborhood decides to build an adventure playground in the forest. Where walls appear to be made of soft, undulating fabric, but when you lean against them they are hard concrete and do not give way when you sit down in their deep folds. It can be poetry about freedom and unfreedom in the spaces that we share.



Conclusions

Social art has affected publicness in the post-war residential areas in many ways and the effects are not unequivocally positive or negative. The social art has, like art during all of the 20th century, reflected ideas that circulate in society in general. This study identifies the most distinct idea as the expression of democracy in public space. To what extent the projects succeeds in creating democratic influence varies. Projects with the aim to bring people together and contribute to the local public space production have achieved great success with participatory methods. However, this study argues that segregation and discrimination are issues that cannot be resolved at a local level and that addressing these with participatory projects risks moving the responsibility downwards in the social system.

The audience's reactions towards the social art projects are not uniform. Contemporary art can be perceived as both elitist and goofy for those who have not been engaged before. But it can also create a space for events that otherwise would be difficult to carry out. It can produce new types of spaces, that would not have been developed by commercial interests.

By using participatory methods one can contribute in creating physical and social environments that are anchored to the place and meets its specific needs. The methods can be useful for contemporary architectural production but are in many ways difficult to reconcile with the market's way of producing architecture.



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