



OR THE CONTINUOUS SEARCH FOR A UTOPIA

13.11 - 17.11 2012 STOCKHOLM

This project is not about tangible visions of future social structures. It is inspired by the world wide turbulence and protests, where people in Tunis, Alexandria, Cairo, Madrid, Athens, London, Tel Aviv, Mexico, Chile, New York, Moscow and dozen other cities, demonstrated against dictators or questionable democracies in systems that seemed corrupt and ineffective. The process for this project started from Athens that literally was being torn down and where questions such as “what can be idealised today?” were asked.

The more I travelled between Sweden and Greece, the bigger the gap between these two countries grew, much due to the economical crisis, with its epicentre in Greece. A focus on utopian theories is common in state of crisis, if not always, since the human’s desire for a better life is a most powerful force. Without even formulating a concrete structural change, one person’s thought can end up changing many persons way of thinking. The power and the political force of visionary thoughts are unquestionable. The discussion of utopias is usually a critical tool for looking at our society, where ideas are set to change the present for the future, dealing at the same time with history, since history has given us the tools for all that we are today.

This project is about belonging. All societies are constituted of people belonging to a community, a system, a way of living. We all want to be a part of something; it can be geographical, cultural, or ideological. To examine utopias is to analyse the notion of belonging and what citizens manage to create within an area, a city or a society according to their visions for themselves. It is to think about the future from a present perspective, having yourself and your life as a natural starting point.

Great ideas always start somewhere as a single thought of a dream, a hope, or a belief for something different. As the word utopia is a negation and a paradox in itself, and therefore an impossible unreachable dream, it is also about understanding that this subjective search is about filling one’s life with meaning by aiming towards shaping it however it suits one best, targeting a “perfect state of being” as much as possible.

To spread the exhibition spaces for this project to three different private apartments in Stockholm, gives you as a visitor the opportunity to visit places you probably would never had gone to otherwise. Doors are opened to others’ private spheres in your own city. It gives you a chance to get a glimpse of personal lives, look around, talk to the inhabitants and get a feeling of how they are living their lives, that is, trying to form their life so it will be meaningful, on an entirely personal and subjective level, as we all do. We all form our life differently as we all want different things of life, and we live with the consequences of the choices we make.



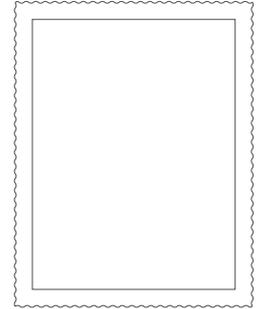
Text by Sofia Mavroudis (part 1 of 2)

Part of the project "Everything is fine, or the continuous search for a utopia",

13.11 - 17.11 2012, Stockholm.

More info at www.curareart.com

EVERYTHING IS FINE, OR THE CONTINUOUS SEARCH FOR A UTOPIA



A home is an important place. Except of functioning as a roof over one's head it can also be an extended part of us, and create or express an identity. Stockholm is a city with one of the world's largest number of solo-apartments. It is also a city facing huge problems in the housing market, leaving people without the ability to purchase a home to the uncertain, expensive and many times black sublet market, with people jumping from one two-month lease to another, from one part of the city to the next. This is part of what forms the city of Stockholm.

Seven artists or art collectives that all have a connection with Greece in different ways, will through their work give their own comment and point of view on the notion of utopia: as subject for conversations, dialogues or reflections in the apartments. The artists contrasting interpretations raise different topics within the subject, illustrating how the concept of utopia is individually perceived.

The two examples, Sweden and Greece, are put beside each other only as a starting point for a discussion about nostalgic times, dilapidated visions, grand dreams, power, dependence and reality versus illusion. Stockholm, being "The Capital of Scandinavia" as the profile slogan goes, is a city within Europe but still mostly outside the economical crisis. The "Swedish system" is looked closely at by other societies trying to unlock the secrets of a successful society. When Greece plummeted into financial peril, The Prime Minister of Greece, Papandreu, talked of the Swedish system as an ideal to strive for. Papandreu himself lived in Stockholm in the late 60's, during the time of the military dictatorship in Greece.

Whose dream has managed to influence the conditions we live in? And are we content with it? To have a house and to live in a society is to belong somewhere, but that does not necessary mean that we feel that we belong there, or that we are not searching for something else. Are we ever satisfied?

As a visitor, you are allowed to quietly judge and compare while entering these strangers' homes. Possibly, it will also make you think about your own dreams, hopes and practical attempts for your own life, or some of the dreams you have already given up on.

Except of the artists participating in this project, I also invited a political scientist, a cultural anthropologist, an artist and an architect to further reflect on any perspective of this project they wish for this publication.

Sofia Mavroudis, *curator*
Curare art



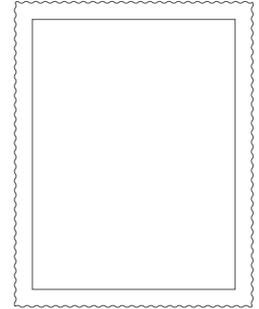
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THE PROJECT TAKES PLACE IN THREE APARTMENTS IN STOCKHOLM:

Malena Norlin

Klippgatan 14 (cross street to Bondegatan), Södermalm

Bought apartment

Malena Norlin is a Master Student in Architecture. Eight years and different constellations of living alone or living together have left their marks in this 26 sq. meter apartment in the heart of Stockholm.

Maria Muhrman

Sjösavägen 22, Högdalen

Sublet apartment

Maria is an art historian and Gallery Host Coordinator at Bonniers Konsthall. She came from Norway in 2011 and found this apartment, partly furnished, after some searching on the usual channels for sublet apartments. She has been living alone, but in October her best friend Viktor moved in from Finland.

Klara Lundholm

Duvholmsgränd 2, Vårberg

Collective living, first hand apartment

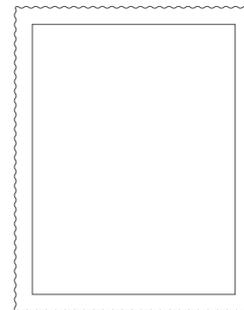
Klara Lundholm is a Political Scientist, Project Manager and Activist. Tired of the loneliness of living alone, and with the times of collective living years ago fresh in her mind, Klara recently left her apartment in central Stockholm and established a duo-collective with Viktoria, that she found through common friends and who shared the same desire of living together.





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Georgia Sagri, *New York/Athens*

Sagri works on performances and installations using various media (video, sound recording, text) that often deal with issues of displacement and the condition of the subject in search of social engagement. Her piece in this project is ten tracks of live recordings made during the performance Gardens in May 2012 at MelasPapadopoulos Gallery in Athens. Through movement, sound sampling and the use of her voice, she presents a variety of characters located individually though share heterotopias and raise questions on the current social and political state. Sagri offers the theories of French philosopher Alain Badiou's text "What is love?" as a perspective for addressing the situation differently. According to Alain Badiou, *love* is the space for negotiation of the paradoxical.

Georgia Sagri was one of the organizing forces behind the Occupy Wall Street movement. She has recently been exhibiting at the Whitney Biennial 2012, Guggenheim in Bilbao and at the MoMa. (Thank you Georgia Sagri and MelasPapadopoulos gallery for providing the sounds.)

Photoharrie, *Athens*

The black and white photo blog "Hangover Diaries" by Photoharrie has been a part of "Lifo", the biggest free press in Athens, since 2011 and depicts his current life in the city and his recent experience in the Greek army.

Artist, fashion editor, art director, DJ and freelance photographer, Photoharrie's pictures from the blog recently participated in Naff Athena and Amateur Boyz party "Queers in Crisis" in London.

THREE NUBS, *Athens/London*

The three architects Alkmini Petraki, Tassos Govatsos and Sotiris Vasiliou are the team THREE NUBS, whose interest in exploring the interplay of constructed environments, crafting, research and social studies, sometimes result in critical projects, written or visual, addressing contemporary or historical issues about design and social instances.

In their animation project presented here, Athens is depicted as a city on the verge of total physical dilapidation, as a city of ruins. Simultaneously, it becomes a place to fly away from in search of a future, and a place to fly to in search of a picturesque antiquity. It is an imaginary story where time goes backwards visually, in search not of a future but also of a present to live in.

Signe Johannessen, *Stockholm*

Working with sculptural objects and drawings, Norwegian artist Johannessen examines evolution, the human race and the life on our planet in general, by looking at our coexistence in order to interpret the behaviour of our culture. To re-connect and close a circle of a childhood memory, Johannessen offered to put a friend's stallion out of its misery after a time of sickness. In a ritual where man's power over nature is clearly pronounced, she decided to keep the head, which is depicted in the sculptural portrait, as a fallen monument over the ambivalent and paradoxical relationship man - nature. Can a society or life not exist without something predominating over something else? Or maybe nature is required as a sacrifice for our human existence? Using a perspective that extends beyond the personal construction of meaning in our lives, Johannessen reflects over a future farther away, with questions around moral, power, balance and dependence.

Signe Johannessen recently exhibited in Botkyrka Konsthall and will be the premier artist of the Museum of Science and Technology's opening of a new exhibition space. Johannessen was the first artist-in-residence of Curare art's new residency program in Chania, Crete in August 2012.



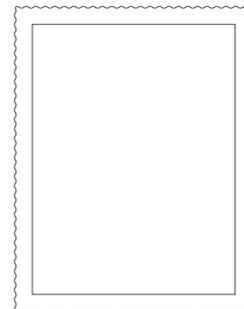
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Antonis Choudalakis

Stockholm/Chania, Crete

With research around memories of places, trying to understand the present through the past, Choudalakis examines the history of a place and how it shapes our lives today. After recently having moved partly to Stockholm, he has been observing the society, the culture and the structure of Sweden from a critical point of view. Using the creation of the modern nation states in Europe in the middle of the 1800 as a starting point, a new series carried out in Stockholm, combines poses of cabinet portraits of Swedes from the 1890s from the Nordic Museum's archive with random faces from today's Swedish press. His approach, rather spiritual than rational, scratches the surface of the successful model of Sweden and forms a question on the notion of national and cultural identity, especially on the one of the Swede.

Antonis Choudalakis received a scholarship by B & M Theocharakis Foundation for his drawings and is also working organizationally with Curare art's residency in Crete.

Etten, *Stockholm/Athens*

The sound project by Etten is an exploration of a possible vocal soundscape similar to what we would experience if different people's thoughts were revealed simultaneously to us, synchronized around something which is considered ideal but unsynchronised conceptually. People's common need for something ideal, not only as a general concept, but as the pure and involuntary act of thinking about it itself, occurs uncontrollably in our minds. *Almost* being able to pronounce it and *almost* getting there, Etten's sounds pulsate like heartbeat in a feeling that is most certainly a bodily one.

As a performer and as part of the established electronic music scene in Athens, Etten has released two solo albums since 2009, the second one, "Lappuggla", was released in October 2012.

Lefteris Kiourtsoglou, *Athens*

With inspiration from the manifesto of the Futurists, Italo Calvino's book "Invisible Cities", origami, and Japanese animation from the 90's with its spaceships and moving cities, Kiourtsoglou creates transparent sculptural installations as well as detailed ink illustrations as presented here, interpreting cities, societies and dreams.

Lefteris Kiourtsoglou is a recent graduate from Athen's School of Fine Art and was selected for participation in StartPoint Prize in Prague.



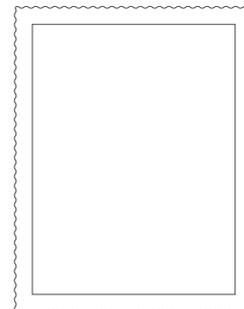
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**“But love, I believe,
does not take the place of anything [supplée].
It *supplements*, which is completely different.
It is only messed up under
the fallacious supposition that it is a relation.
But it is not. It is a *production of truth*.
The truth of what?
That the Two, and not only the One,
are at work in the situation.”**

- Alain Badiou, *What is love*, 1992



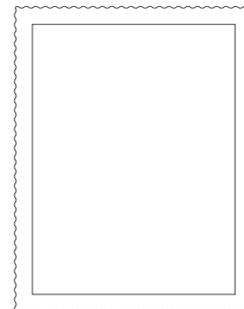
Georgia Sagri

A quote from Alain Badiou, complementing "Gardens", live recordings from performance in May 2012 at MelasPapadopoulos Gallery in Athens.

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PHOTOHARRIE

Photographs from the blog "Hangover Diaries",

www.lifo.gr/team/hangover_diaries

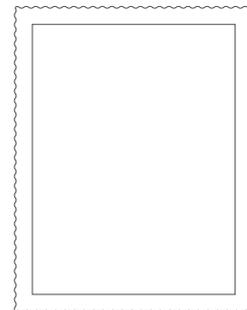
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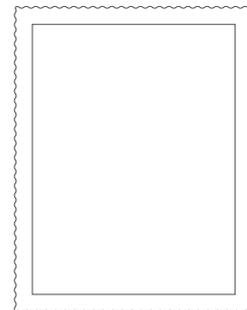
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THREE NUBS

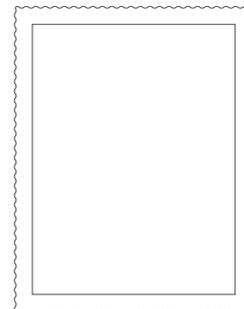
Still from animation

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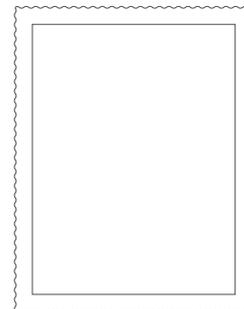
Signe Johannessen

The dead stallion's head that Signe Johannessen depicts in the sculptural portrait. Photo documentation.

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Signe Johannessen

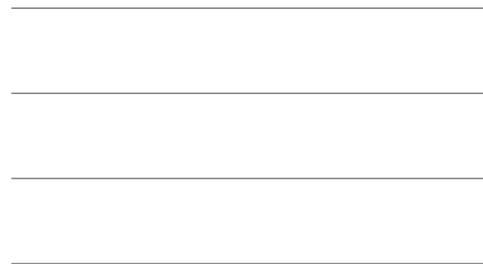
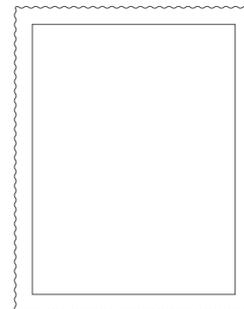
Detail of sculpture installation

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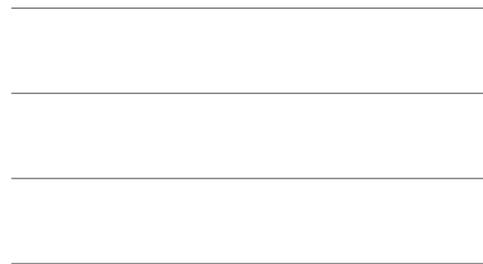
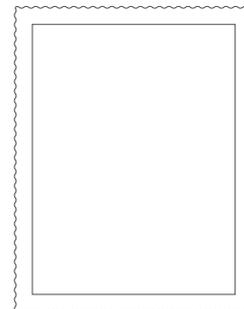
Pernilla August, ink on paper

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Στις 20 Μαΐου 1941 ξεκίνησαν οι βομβαρδισμοί από τα γερμανικά αεροπλάνα στη Δυτική Κρήτη. Η σφοδρή αεροπορική επιδρομή ήταν εντονότερη στην παλιά πόλη των Χανίων, αφήνοντας πίσω της ένα πλήθος ερειπίων και προκαλώντας μεγάλες καταστροφές σε αστικά κτίρια και μνημεία. Στο σημείο αυτό (οδ. Σουρμελή 26), το τριώροφο κτίριο της φωτογραφίας, το οποίο βρισκόταν σε άμεση επαφή με το βυζαντινό περίβολο, είναι ένα από τα πολλά που καταστράφηκαν ολοσχερώς από τους γερμανικούς βομβαρδισμούς του Β' Παγκοσμίου πολέμου.

On May 20th 1941 began the bombing of western Crete by the German airplanes. The intense aerial attack had major effects especially at the old town of Chania, leaving behind numerous ruins and causing extensive destructions to the civil buildings and monuments. At this area (26th Sourmeli str.), the three-stored building of the photograph, adherent to the byzantine walls, is one of the many that has been completely destroyed by the German bombs during World War II.

20. Mai 1941 fing die Bombardierung auf dem westlichen Kreta von deutschen Bombern. Der intensive Luftangriff hatte viele Ruinen an der alten Stadt von Chania gelassen und er bewirkte massive Zerstörungen an Zivilgebäuden und Denkmälern. Die dreigeschossige Wohnung am 26. Sourmeli Strasse (Foto), die neben der byzantinischen Befestigung gebaut wurde, war ein aus den vielen Gebäuden, das während des Zweiten Weltkriegs, von den Bomben völlig kaputt gemacht wurde.



Antonis Choudalakis

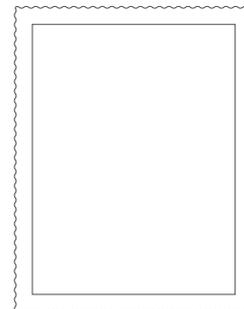
Excerpt from research around memories of places

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Etten

All'n'all





Etten

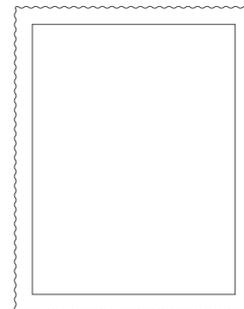
All'n'all

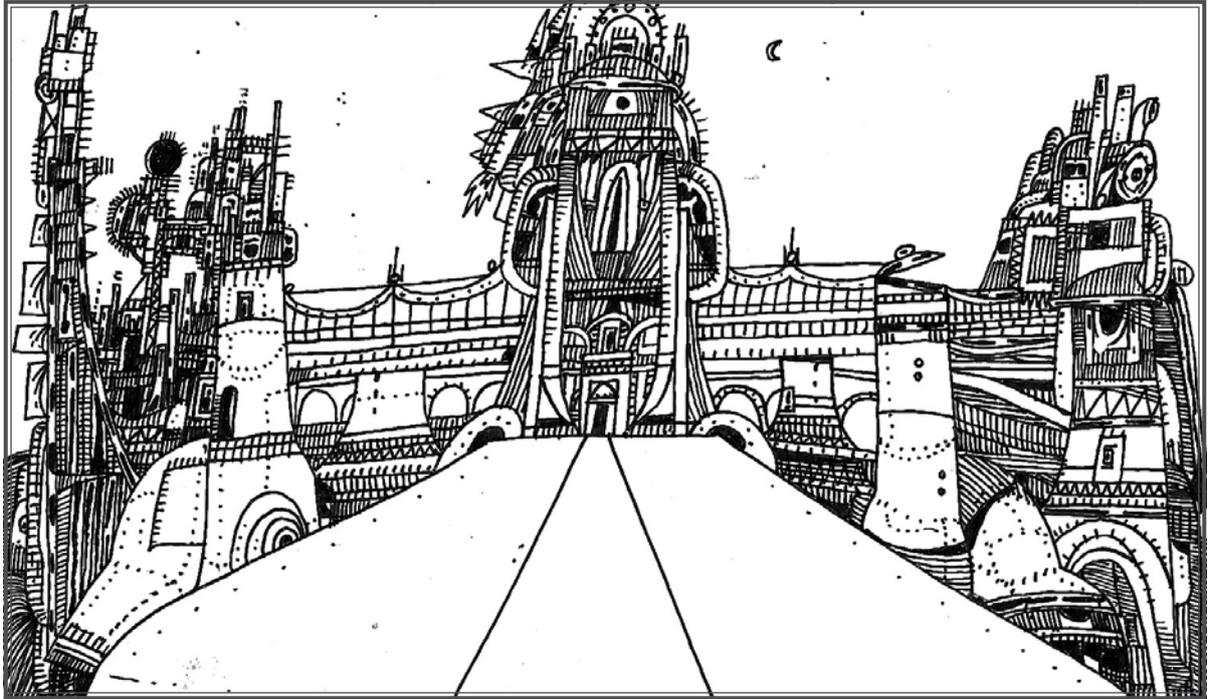
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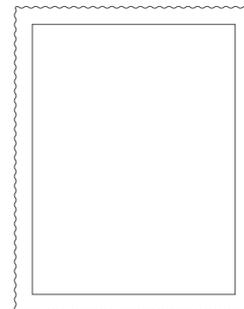
Lefteris Kiourtsoglou

From the serie based on the invisible cities, ink on paper

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Everything that has happened in a space, in a home.

I wonder if the walls remember it?

There is a Swedish saying “It’s in the walls,” meaning that something happened in a space that still fills the air, the atmosphere. You can get a sense of what is been going on in that space, even if the people who lived there no longer remain.

All moments lived in a home, do the walls remember them all? The laughter, the tears, the words, the quiet, the calm, the yearning, the restlessness, and the concern. Nostalgia, anger, joy, sadness and stillness. Not to mention the loss of words, but it is, by definition, nothing that we are able to talk about. When we sleep, have the walls absorbed every breath? How come the room is not shrinking from all the memories?

I am touching the wall, it is hard and quite cold. I stroke my hand gently over it and discern small bumps and potholes with my warm fingers. The memories may have such low density that it can fit an entire year in each small cavity of the wall. Here is my entire life, at least the years lived in this room. Layers on top of layers, stacks and rows of memories. All of the sudden a fear emerges. What if the room has shrunk? More layers appear gradually, the room is shrinking and I am suffocated by all the crises and non-crises. A terrible but relevant question: Are we choking on our own breathing?

But then I think of some bright streaks that appear on my wall a certain time of the day, a certain time of the year during special weather conditions. They show up, stay a while and disappear. As light trough a prism almost, a light that you only notice when the room is very still. They come from outside, through the window, travel through the air and settle on the wall. Vibrant, transient. Fragile.

I fantasize about these lights. When they touch the wall they bring order to all the memories stored there. Smooth them and make them less angular and more pliable, so that they blend in and become one with the wall. Then gather surplus memories, pull them out of the wall and carry the difficult stuff through the window again, to another site that is specialized in handling unmanageable experiences, where they can be processed further. This means that I still fit in here, in my room.

My room, what privilege to be able to utter those words! But that is another story.

Malena Norlin combines Master Studies in Architecture with her own art projects. She broadcasts a podcast about r'n'b music and is also interested in feminism and horses.



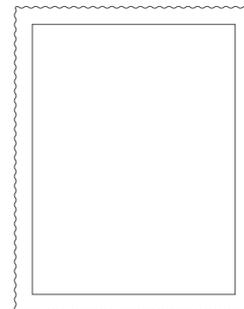
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H i Sofia,

In our recent e-mail conversation I like the way you emphasis on the personalization of place in order to look for the “better” and “good” in social structures; you choose an ethical approach in responding to sociality, and you act affirmative in a critical sense.

I feel encouraged to respond to your emphasis on personalization by asking what “filling a space” means. Referring to your apartment condition of exhibitional structures, you create scenarios in which we can reflect how the personal forms the private, and how public is represented again in the private. The private here is becoming public when subjects enter the apartment. To the socialization within foreign, yet personal spaces, as evoked by the apartment condition I am responding to your invitation by quoting a statement by Lawrence Liang I recently came across. In response to the lines written above I visually demonstrate his claim by emphasizing on “filling” as both a personal and political process.

As an example, I refer to the daily practice of note-taking as an economic, yet personal form of management.

Johanna

(In)Productive Memory / Illegibility

“A placeless place is never a place without content; it simply breaks the contract of what a filled place is, and what filling means” (Lawrence Liang)

Space for notes, On the personalization of place

Note taking is one of the principle acts on the making of new knowledge. Personal note taking, though nearly impossible to read or understand by the outside, is a bureaucratic force in its everyday life; it is based on the personalization of organizing and economizing the structure of our work; the personalization of the managerial. These “word places” are sites in which epistemes collide and overlap, semiotics connect in an arbitrary way. Referring to Foucault’s concept of Heterotopias, they bring together heterogeneous traces of thoughts composed together in an unusual order, without unity nor established through resemblance. Their ordering, however, is derived from a process of similitude that produces, in an uncertain space combination that destabilizes and unsettles the flow of discourse. Communication and production overlap. Another example is the empty pages of a passport saying “notes for

observation” – Sichtvermerke – that emphasizes the personal as a political space. Observations are noted on the basis of law, judgment and municipal bodies, often in codes that others cannot read, nor understand.

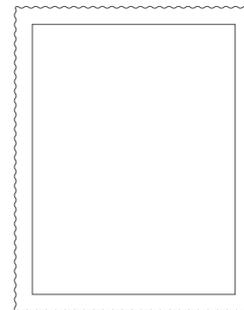
Illegibility challenges us to think about the production of knowledge and the materials by which results are served. The function on the transmission of knowledge as well as the formats and rules of making knowledge true, are put in question.

Johanna Bruckner is an artist and a cultural anthropologist who recently graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the HFBK Hamburg (MA, MFA). She has also been working on an artistic research project at the Royal Art Academy, Stockholm.



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We are abandoned to weather but also part of the weather; dreams of controlling it have persisted throughout time. Air is the part of the atmosphere we are most commonly in contact with, the one we use for breathing. Life starts and ends with a breath. We have air both inside and outside of us constantly. And were we to examine our individual breath, we would find a composition of nonhuman organisms living in our nasal passages and oral cavities. The human body is in itself a trans-species environment, and air a space where species meet. Air and atmosphere have been and are environments of conflict, not least because they affect our biological body.

A famous painting “An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump” depicts one of natural philosopher Robert Boyle’s experiments, demonstrating the reliance of living creatures on air for their survival. Natural philosophers had been disagreeing on the possible existence of vacuum since Aristotle, and the vacuum pump had recently been invented by Otto von Guericke. In the Magdeburg experiment 30 horses failed to pull apart two copper hemispheres, from which the air had been sucked out using Guericke’s pump. Held together only by a joint with a diameter of 50 cm, the experiment demonstrated the force of the surrounding atmosphere’s air pressure. Boyle commissioned the construction of an air pump after he heard about the experiment and soon began studying the properties of air. Experiment 41, the one represented in the painting by Joseph Wright of Derby, was designed to study the respiration of living things. Different creatures were placed in the vessel of the pump and observed. As the air was extracted they all died, and occasionally, when after a few minutes the vessel was opened up, some of them came back to life.

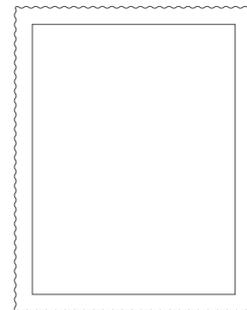
In the late 17th century air pumps were rare and extremely expensive, but a century later they had become more affordable and the “animal in the air pump experiment” was taken up by itinerant “lecturers in natural philosophy” regularly becoming the highlight of public demonstrations. Another popular discovery was nitrous oxide, a gas first synthesized by British polymath Joseph Priestley. The gas was experimented in the Pneumatic Institute, a new medical research faculty, operative in Bristol for three years, where Humphry Davy discovered its euphoric qualities and named it “laughing gas”. Davy introduced nitrous oxide as a recreational drug to the British upper class and the expression “it’s a gas” was soon coined. Laughing gas would be the first anesthetic to be used for surgery, but only 50 years after it was proposed by Davy, possibly because pain was widely accepted and even considered beneficial.

The procedure for the production of nitrous oxide was published in Priestley’s Experiments and Observations on Different Kinds of Airs, but the chemist and natural philosopher is better known for his discovery of oxygen, named so by Antoine Lavoisier. Priestley described oxygen as being five or six times better than common air for breathing and probably also for every other use of atmospheric air. He also carried out research with plants, putting a sprig of mint in the closed spaces of his experiments with candles or mice. The candle would burn out rather quickly as it consumed all the oxygen in the confined space, but after some weeks Priestley, by focusing the beams of sunlight onto the candle wick, managed to light it again. He also showed that a mouse kept in a sealed space together with a plant would survive. His experiments were the first to prove that plants somehow change the composition of air.



Text by Hanna Husberg (part 1 of 2) Color from the video "Color of a lake"
Part of the project "Everything is fine, or the continuous search for a utopia",
13.11 - 17.11 2012, Stockholm.
More info at www.curareart.com

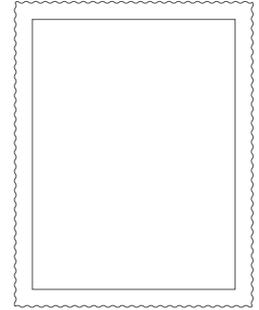
EVERYTHING IS FINE, OR THE CONTINUOUS SEARCH FOR A UTOPIA





Text by Hanna Husberg (part 2 of 2) Color from the video "Color of a lake"
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EVERYTHING IS FINE, OR THE CONTINUOUS SEARCH FOR A UTOPIA



When I talk to the person who is trying to understand my motives of moving from an apartment close to town to one in a suburb, I see the crisis of incomprehension passing through that person's mind. Trying to understand the reason that I choose voluntarily to leave the area that that person long to live in.

When did our homes become places of status instead of a place where we live?

Your home could be a place where you sleep, rest, eat dinner with your friends, watch TV and play with your children. In Stockholm, your home is a topic of conversation. During lunch break at a random work place, your apartment is what constitutes the most important thing to talk about. It is either a conversation of the hunt for the "apartment of your dreams", with the soundtrack of incoming text messages, updating the status of the bidding of a too expensive apartment. "Should you renovate it yourself and would black colour on the glazed tiles generate a higher profit?" On the other hand, it can be a conversation that cut deeper into a reality: the conversation of the endless moving to another sublet apartment, in a new suburb on the other side of town. Without the "old money" that your parents can give you, you are not in the position to ask, but to accept any place offered.

The map of habitation in Stockholm has been re-written the past twenty years. An apartment in the quarters of my childhood home, Södermalm, now costs millions, but was once a worker's district. In 1990, 75,5 % of the apartments in Stockholm Municipality were let to rent, either owned by private owners or the municipal housing companies and only 24,5 percent where tenant-owned apartments. Twenty-one years later, 82 000 municipal apartments have been sold, resulting in a re-written map. In 2011, 46 % of the apartments in Stockholm are for rent and 54% are privately owned*.

Today I get lost in the shining corridors of the new mall they are building in the area at Södermalm that used to be rough and grey at the time my father lived there.

The re-writing of the map is not only a change in the legal terms of ownership. As you need a certain income to be able to buy an apartment for several million Swedish kronor, the re-writing has resulted in a segregation that will be more and more visible as the years pass on. In down- town areas, or their suburbs close to the city centre, there are almost no rental apartments left. In the suburbs far away from the city centre, the people have not been able to afford to buy their apartments, so they remain rentable, low status areas.

"Was it too expensive so you had to leave?" The person tries to grasp why I choose to live in this by the white middle class considered low status area far from the inner city, especially as I am not even staying in a house. What other logic can there be to live in the suburbs? Yes what? I choose to live where my friends and I can afford good housing. In an area where we have space, forests, sea, sea view, green gardens and, most important, each other. We don 't want to have apartments as the topic of our conversations. This is where we can live. This is where we bring art, life and social gatherings. It is comprehensible.

* Report Lagerrenning – sista chansen (Sale – last chance) by Edvin S. Frid, 2012

Klara Lundholm is a political Scientist with gender studies, Project Manager, Activist. Lundholm is involved in issues related to minorities, injustices, integration and globalization, working with RFSL, ABF and development projects in Africa.



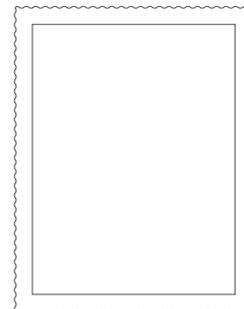
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