

The Exhibition is in
transit x The
Ghost Ship and
the Sea Change

Digital Reading Group

September 29

15.00-17.00 (CEST)

Reader

Ephemeral Care

Contents

- The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change
curatorial statement for GIBCA 2021 by Lisa Rosendahl
- Eyes in the Back of Your Head
by Sinziana Ravini for Kunstskritikk
- Art, Curating, Systems and Stuff: Black Performativity Thriving, in Spite of
by Jade Foster (excerpt)
- Interview: Cosmos Carl
- Exhibition in Present Participal
by Martí Manen (excerpt)
- Touching the Gap
by Tal Gilad (excerpt)

Thank you for joining us for The Exhibition is in Transit x The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change: Digital Reading Group. The following is a short reader with some excerpts from the texts which will help us navigate through the discussion. We hope you have time to read it ahead of joining us, but you can also just have it handy during the session and keep up with the discussion that way!

The Exhibition is in Transit is an ongoing series of publications developed by Ephemeral Care and edited by Joe Rowley. The first volume of the series was produced in collaboration with USA based platform fLoromancy which offers month-long digital residencies for artists, curators and projects.

<https://www.floromancy.org/>

The Exhibition is in Transit, as a concept, focuses on the changing dynamics within exhibition making which have resulted - directly or indirectly - from the ongoing COVID pandemic. As we see it these go hand-in-hand with wider access to digital formats and platforms, new technologies such as AR and VR and shifts in mainstream institutional and funding attitudes towards various media's relevance and acknowledgement.

Ephemeral Care as an organisation focuses on ethics, practice and structures in artist-run initiatives. With that in mind, The Exhibition is in Transit also shows a strong desire as a series to frame its content through the lens of artist-run. All of the contributors have some background with artist-run, independent or self-organised projects and that experience has impacted the ways they approach exhibition and exhibition-making.

This session forms part of Ephemeral Care's programme for GIBCA Extended 2021. The idea of this session is to put the contributions from The Exhibition is in Transit together with the contexts of The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change. Through doing this we hope to open up a discussion around the exhibition that forms the core of this year's biennial and think about how it could impact on and develop exhibition strategies in Göteborg over the coming years.

The eleventh edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art is conceived in response to the 400-year anniversary of the founding of the city of Gothenburg. The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change relates to the historical layers of the city, asking how different ways of narrating its past might affect its future. Located at the intersection between the historical and the fictive, the biennial explores artistic practice as a method of critical historiography and change.

Franska Tomten (currently Packhusplatsen), a plot of land in the city's harbor that in 1784 was exchanged for the Caribbean island of Saint Barthélemy as part of a trade deal between Sweden and France, is used as the narrative point of departure for the biennial. How might it change the way we think about Gothenburg if we look at the city from the perspective of this particular plot of land and its colonial history?

Until the 1840s, Saint Barthélemy was governed by a Swedish administration as a hub for the transatlantic slave trade. In 1878 it was sold back to France. Reflecting on this history through the buildings and activities that occupy Franska Tomten today—a court of law situated in a former shipping palace, a casino, and a museum of migration housed in the harbor's historical customs house—the past is made visible as an ongoing present. The interrelated flows of goods, bodies, capital, and ideology connected to the site span centuries and geographies: just as the writing of law is historically bound up with regulations of international trade, the global circulation of capital is directly connected to contemporary routes of migration.

Through the artworks, the biennial traces this plot outwardly from Gothenburg Harbor to where it meets other places, voices, and histories. Taking the form of a polyvocal and multi-sited narration, it suggests that a city founded on transnational relationships can only become legible by looking at other places as well.

Colonial ideology established racism, sexism, and the destruction of nature as the new world order that has come to define the past 500 years. In this process, the discipline of history was used as an imperial tool, drawing boundaries between the past and the present and making other ways of telling about the world seem marginal or fictional. In the biennial, the artworks offer different possibilities for historical narration, making space for critical fabulation and counter-histories.

The double title of The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change refers to the necessity of both honoring the ghosts of the past and finding ways to move beyond them—to acknowledge the violence and begin processes of repair. The exhibition architecture at Röda Sten Konsthall references the West Indies-bound frigate Havmanden, which was shipwrecked outside Gothenburg in 1683. Staged as a metaphorical replica of this ship, it represents how the past continues to frame the present, but also how the ruins of history can be re-purposed.

Opening in June to coincide with the anniversary of Gothenburg's founding, additional artworks will be added starting in September, reshaping the initial exhibition and extending the biennial across further venues and public spaces throughout the city.

The 11th Gothenburg Biennial tells a powerful story about seafaring, colonialism, and racism, but suffers from a certain artistic and intellectual predictability.

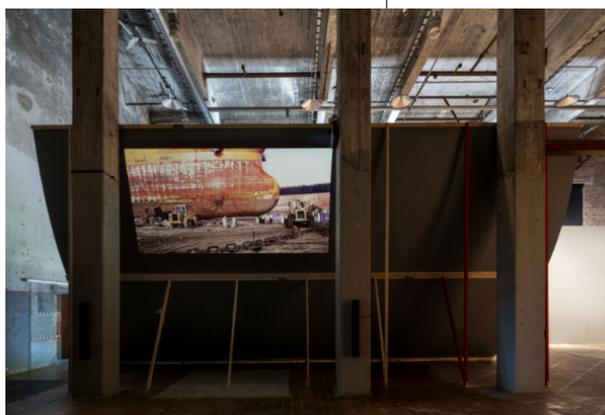
Walter Benjamin once wrote that “every image of the past that is not recognised by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.” He urged us to ignite the spark of hope in the past, to embrace its ghosts that incessantly haunt the present, and to create a state of emergency, for not even the dead will be safe if the enemy wins. He was aided by Paul Klee’s image of the angel of history, who wants to stay, but is driven forward by a storm into the future, while he turns his face to the mounds of ruins behind him. This storm is what we call progress.

Curator Lisa Rosendahl’s two-part Gothenburg biennial, that has just opened the doors of its second installment, makes me think of Benjamin’s angel of history. After the more poetic and philosophical register of the previous edition, this year’s exhibition wants to reflect on Gothenburg’s relationship to the colonial slave trade. The stories that emerge and affect our understanding of both the past and our dreams of the future indirectly reactualise the angel’s dilemma. The biennial’s title, *The Ghost Ship and The Sea Change*, captures this antagonistic battle between past and future. How does one notice the ruins of history? How do you stop mid-progression? And last but not least: How do you get the angel of history to turn his head towards the future?

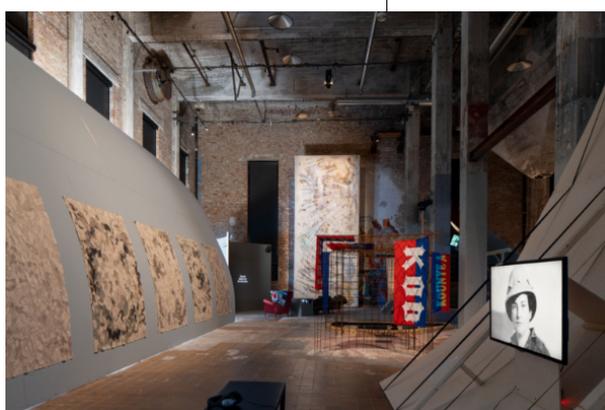
The biennial is on view at Röda Sten, Gothenburg Konsthall, and a couple of other institutions and public places in Gothenburg, most notably on the French lot, the part of the port that Sweden exchanged for colonial rule over the island of Saint Barthélemy in the late 18th century, and which serves as the biennial’s conceptual starting point. Around the city there are also several strong sound works such as HAMN’s (Nasim Aghili & Malin Holgersson) shocking stories about Nazi violence in Gothenburg, Lisa Torell’s sci-fi political reverie about the future we are creating here and now, Meira Ahmemulic’s heartbreaking story about a father who never found a real home in the new country, and Pia Sandström’s polyphonic stories about Gothenburg’s subterranean forests and opportunities for rebirth. There is a strong will to reach out here, to have an impact. But how can art reach those who need it most?

Despite my conviction that the modern concept of art is a racist invention based on exclusions, I have tried in recent years to approach contemporary art via other perspectives than skin colour, race, and ethnicity. I was long convinced that racism was born out of financial despair, but then realised that wealth and a sophisticated culture did not prevent the Greeks in antiquity from viewing the “barbarians” as inferiors.

Given my training in French psychoanalysis, I believe that the source of desire determines our fears and desires when



Hira Nabi, *All That Perishes at the Edge of Land*, 2019. Installation view from Röda Sten Konsthall. Photo: Hendrik Zeitler.



The 11th edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art. *The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change*, installation view from Röda Sten Konsthall. Photo: Hendrik Zeitler.

confronted with the other – long before we have heard of either Marx or Freud. The blind spots of the psyche cannot be accessed by discourses or questions of representation, and people are much more complex than most identity-seeking discourses will admit. The other within us is infinitely more difficult to grasp than the external other, which haunts the bastions of monocultures. This is why I felt so happy encountering Fatima Moallim's work at Gothenburg Konsthall which consists of a framed passport photo of the artist holding a sign with the words "I claim my right to be complex". The description of the work states: "The work insists on the right not to be seen as a representative of simplistic categories such as gender, class, skin colour, or national origin."

I haven't seen such a simple and powerful work with such a beautiful dialectic between surface and depth in a long time. The ID document, invented by German nationalists in the 19th century, is inverted by Moallim to paradoxically mean a liberation from the compulsion of identity. description of the work states: "The work insists on the right not to be seen as a representative of simplistic categories such as gender, class, skin colour, or national origin."

I haven't seen such a simple and powerful work with such a beautiful dialectic between surface and depth in a long time. The ID document, invented by German nationalists in the 19th century, is inverted by Moallim to paradoxically mean a liberation from the compulsion of identity.

But this heroic attitude only serves as an exception. Sometimes you have to look at which bodies have been allowed to inhabit art spaces. Salad Hilowle's spectacular video installation *Vanus Labor* (2021) is on view in in the kunsthalle's main gallery, featuring a couple of hypnotically beautiful scenes with a Black woman singing opera intercut with images of Black people wandering around in a Neoclassical museum hall and a painting by the seventeenth-century Swedish painter David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl from which Hilowle has borrowed the work's title. The painting depicts a Black child being washed by a pair of white children, and the title, "vain toil," could refer to the vanity in the children's desire to wash away the child's skin colour. But the painting could also

be interpreted as a loving act of care for the Black body, and the title as the futility in reducing the painting to just one interpretation.

Tondo-shaped plasterboards depicting Black men also hang on the wall. The plaster cast has rendered them white, which makes me think of how Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* resented how the colonised embrace the cultures of colonial power. Is Hilowle's work also a story about Black skin seeking white masks? Maybe, if you look at the Black people in the galleries filled with Neoclassical art; their presence is almost inconceivable in a country as segregated as Sweden. But perhaps the work depicts a future when a Neoclassical art gallery will be considered a document of a barbarism among others, as opposed to an art space where Black people are no longer an exception?

Hilowle manages to break out of the Manichaeian master-slave dialectic that has been so typical of artists of an older generation, such as Fred Wilson or Yinka Shonibare, by creating a space for thought that renegotiates history, present, and future, while nevertheless emphasising history. The latter also applies to Conny Karlsson Lundgren's poetic film about an

Salad Hilowle, *Vanus Labor*, film still, 2021.



underground gay community from the 1970s shown in the gallery next door. A document about a utopian time that has passed, the film follows a group of gay men who withdrew from the world like a Decameron society to live as freely as possible on a French farm. This deeply nostalgic and tender, but also optimistic, work brings us back to the place of both physical and mental bareness and alternates images of past and present. Where are these places of exception today and what really happened to the sexual revolution?

A work that has a revolutionary feature to it, albeit not in an obvious way, is Lisa Tan's *Little Petra* (2021), an armchair upholstered in cream-coloured sheepskin, with an accompanying brochure. The text tells of how, one day, while in a department store in Stockholm, the artist sat down in this expensive chair that she had desired for a very long time, to suddenly hear a woman nearby say to someone over the phone: "I cannot stand society today. And now this Japanese, Korean, Chinese woman or whatever she is, thinks that she is free to sit wherever she wants." In her deeply moving text, Tan describes how this racist incident eats into her and draws comparisons to how Adrian Piper one day had enough of confronting everyday racists and made a business card reprimanding people with a very polite, but thoughtful text. Tan meets the other with the same finesse as the chair's comfortable softness. Tan meets the other with the same finesse as the chair's comfortable softness.

A similar finesse is found in Oscar Lara's work which, together with a video lecture by theorist Ariela Aïsha Azoulay, constitutes the biennial's contribution to the permanent collection of the World Culture Museum. Lara has had a pair of Peruvian textiles from a 2000-year-old desert tomb copied so that the museum's original pieces could be returned to Lima. The dependence of ethnographic collections on colonialism and the laborious efforts of decolonisation are captured in a meditative video work about the Swedish textile workers who produced the replicas. Like many other sites outside the main exhibitions, this part of the biennial is more subdued and reflective.



Oscar Lara, *Within Heritage Movements*, 2013–2021. Installation view from the World Culture Museum. Photo: Hendrik Zeitler.

At Rödå Sten, the biennial's spectral maritime theme is literally realised in an exhibition architecture designed by Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik in the form of a deconstructed ship's hull that makes the large space look like a giant shipyard in the making. On the walls are several video works depicting both ideological shipwrecks (Tabita Rezaire), high-functioning and dysfunctional cargo ships (Benjamin Gerdes), and Kafkaesque misuses of justice and quests for order and meaning (Marysia Lewandowska). One of the highlights is Hira Nabi's painterly video installation *All That Perishes at the Edge of Land* (2019), which shows a cargo ship that has arrived at the foggy Gadani ship breaking yard in Pakistan for scrapping. We get to follow the low-paid workers, their toil and joy, but also the ship itself, which reflects on its voyages in a kind of magical realist lament over the sublime of terror and the possibilities that come with disaster.

The work that shines the brightest, which manages to point both backwards and forwards, but perhaps most of all towards a possible reconciliation, is Alberta Whittle's *RESET* (2020). In one corner of Rödå Sten's main gallery, this sensual and rhythmic film shows a divinely beautiful Black woman moving like a sundial in a white house. Wearing white trousers and a

crocheted medallion-like top, she wraps white ropes with seashells around her ankles. A voice says: "I am trying to learn how to heal. Take a big breath. Think of your heart. Send love to that heart." Pictures of flowers, exotic fruits, and images of clouds are interspersed with scenes from Black Lives Matter marches and police violence. The woman rolls a small yellow ball along her body and in and out of her mouth like a giant playing with our planet, a female Atlas making the earth bearable again. Reset. Everything can be restarted. Everything is possible.

I get the same warm gut feeling from 'Comforting the Machine' on the venue's third floor, one of the biennial's side events. There is a lot of joy and affirmation in the air both at the opening and in the voluptuous and absurdist works of artists from the region, such as Trinidad Carillo and Kasra Seyed Alikhani. Joy and humour are otherwise virtually non-existent in this year's edition of the biennial – as are acute fear, ambivalent desires, visceral corporeal and emotional outpourings. The idea of the future does not feel sufficiently processed. The biennial's distant intellectualism and focus on colonial history can come across as a way of circumventing the complex and unpleasant societal changes we face today.

Yet, Lisa Rosendahl has, despite a certain degree of predictability, managed to create not only a biennial that is rich in compelling stories that look both forwards and backwards, but also an overall feeling that encompasses both reconciliation, trust, and affinity. Can the angel of history turn its head towards the future? Can we? To succeed, you probably have to, as one of the protagonists in Seyed Alikhani's film says, "have eyes in the back of your head." have to, as one of the protagonists in Seyed Alikhani's film says, "have eyes in the back of your head."

Comforting the machine
- GIBCA Extended 2021.
Install view from 3:e
Våningen. Photo:
Hendrik Zeitler.



<https://kunstkritikk.com/eyes-in-the-back-of-your-head/>

Also available in Swedish at: <https://kunstkritikk.se/ogonen-i-nacken/>

Art, Curating, Systems and Stuff: Black Performativity thriving, in spite of. – Jade Foster (excerpt)

Stuart Hall articulates simply within his essay *Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse*: "Before this message can have 'effect' (however defined), satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded". He continues, "It is the set of decoded meanings which 'have an effect', influence, entertain, instruct or persuade." (1)

You could compare this communication model, which is about television discourse, with durational artworks that use appropriated media and speech. Through art-making, digital content such as memes, news broadcasts or reports are decoded into meaningful discourse through oration and storytelling (whatever artistic form that takes). When working with sound and moving images, the artist could be considered as a decoder, undergoing close semiosis and establishing meaning with a complicated set of signs for audiences. A curator then further decodes the artwork or material and considers how the message can be presented and disseminated.

Within Aria Dean's *Eulogy for a Black Mass* (2017), she speaks "memes have something Black about them. This something is complicated and hard to make recognisable. It has to do with a lot of Black people making memes, caressing them, carrying them to and fro, spreading them'...' all the creative labour of the Black collective being aside, there is a palpable Blackness to much of this viral content, especially memes that circulates independently from actual Black people. There is something Black about this content that goes beyond its scope. This something seems to require an infinite loop of referral to describe and is itself infinitely self-referential." To thrive within new visual language forms and envision Blackness as plentiful, not defined or tethered to a corporal experience is transformative. Black performativity within the digital realm is an unfathomed and complicated system of signs with emancipatory and liberatory qualities. Why would we want to fathom Blackness as something that can be contained, manipulated, and controlled? Black visual life is constantly exhibited, in transit and within constant transmission on the internet at a rate that cannot be held within or clearly defined. From TikToks to Memes, Black bodies aren't experienced within the binary of pain or joy but within an emotional spectrum that isn't bound to the singular.

The narrated stories artists produce within a digital sphere, through broadcast, have the potential to evolve into an act of refusal or hope (speech acts). As Toni Morrison states, "We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal." Black cultural practitioners are thriving in new visual languages, doing language, reclaiming and disrupting—as they have always been. We practice affirmation, negation, refutation and refusal. For the Practicing Refusal Collective co-founded by Tina Campt and Saidiya Hartman, "practicing refusal" names the urgency of rethinking the time, space, and fundamental vocabulary of what constitutes politics, activism, and theory, as well as what it means to refuse the terms given to us to name these struggles." (2) This is not inactive or idle work to undergo in a moment of crisis.

Notable works that speak to this are *Notes on Gesture* (2015) by Martine Syms and *RE:seeding*, in correspondence *Performance to Camera* (2020) by Jade Montserrat and Webb-Ellis. Syms' work focuses on the language of the hand, which is "inspired by a riff on a popular joke, 'Everybody wanna be a black woman but nobody wanna be a black women' " The video work uses the 17th Century text *Chirologia*: Or the

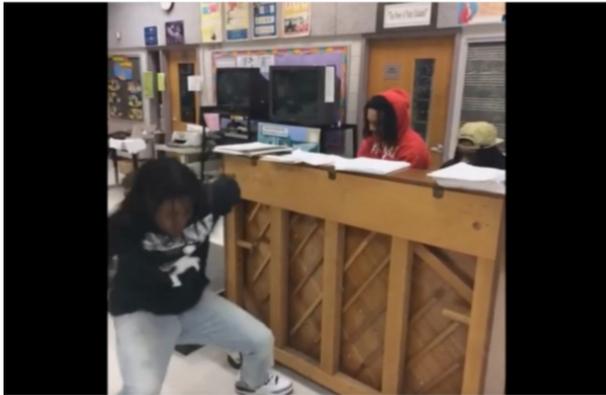
(1) Stuart Hall, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, University of Birmingham. Accessed 7 April 2021.

(2) See <https://www.womenandperformance.org/ampersand/29-1/campt>

Natural Language of the Hand as a guide to the creation of an inventory of gestures for performance. RE:seeding, in correspondence Performance to Camera, explores the “notions and lived experiences of body, land, and ownership while exploring modes of online and offline communications with migrant communities in times of health, social and political crises.” (3)

(3) See here <https://performingborders.live/residences/east-street-arts-residency-jade-montserrat/>

Aria Dean, Eulogy for a Black Mass (2017). Digital video, 5:54 mins.



Martine Syms, Notes On Gesture, video still (2015). Digital HD video, 10:30 mins, United States, English, 16:9.



https://ephemeral-care.com/ex_in_tran_vol_1_jade_foster.html

JR: Cosmos Carl has been around for a good number of years now and felt like it was right there in the front of the pack in the resurgence of internet art in the 2010s. How did Cosmos Carl start? What was the impetus for the project?

Cosmos Carl is a project by Frederique Puisisse and Saemundur Thor Helgason - <https://cosmoscarl.com/>

CC: Initially we wanted to establish a project space in our shared flat in New Cross in London just across the street of Goldsmiths, where we were studying at the time. Soon into the process we decided to open an online project space for practical reasons.

We wanted to find a way of showing art with the least coding involved and out of this thinking the idea of only sharing hyperlinks to external platforms came into being. At first we did not find it significant but as the idea grew on us we started to appreciate the model for its simplicity and elegance.

JR: How do you think digital exhibition-making has developed as a field of practice since you started with Cosmos Carl?

CC: Nowadays it is more common to see works of art infiltrating existing commercial platforms than back in 2014 when we started Cosmos Carl. As online platforms have become an intricate part of our daily routines, their usage has become more diverse and in many ways misused for their intended purpose.

JR: What do you look for when selecting folks to work with as contributors?

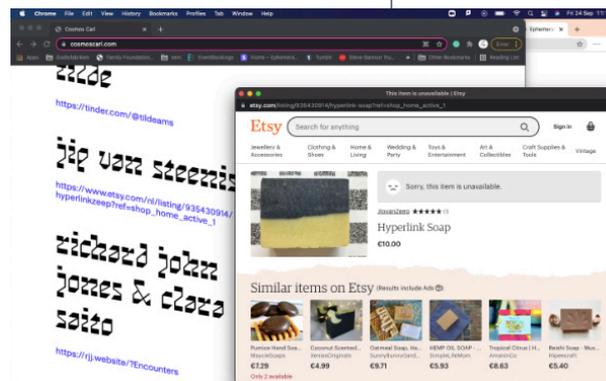
CC: We generally reach out to people who we think can respond interestingly to the framework of Cosmos Carl. Sometimes based on their previous works incorporating online platforms. Sometimes we ask people from other continents to recommend artists to reach beyond our own knowledge of artists working today.

JR: Presumably, you have a predominantly digital relationship with many of the artists featured in the project, especially over the past 18 months. How do you build relationships and develop working practices with that in mind? Do you find it challenging?

CC: As Cosmos Carl has a relatively rapid programme of new upload every two weeks and is entirely commentary run, we try to keep the correspondence to a minimum. We ask the contributors to share a link to a work which is parasitically hosted in a commercial platform, write a short description of the work and send us some visual material for promoting on social media. We offer our feedback in the process if the contributor wishes for that.

JR: The motif of “parasite” is a notionally negative one, at least in a biological sense, however, when framed as “para-site”, as in a site besides, analogous to or parallel, feels way more generative and activist. It’s a super fun liminal linguistic space that I have always enjoyed about the project. How do you position yourself between these two possible definitions and how has that influenced the development of Cosmos Carl?

CC: Cosmos Carl lives in symbiosis with the platforms available on the web. It leaches onto platforms which in return gain



Hyperlink Soap on online marketplace Etsy by Jip van Steenis

visitors. The motif of the parasite has helped us with clarifying and communicating the curatorial framework of Cosmos Carl to the artists that we invite.

There is also something around the ethics of access in the various capitalist/consumer platforms that Cosmos Carl's contributions inhabit that potentially becomes hard to navigate from a couple of perspectives. It feels simultaneously like a super exciting and effective way of reclaiming a digital commons but at the same time play into the hands of tech corporations in terms of the collection of user data. How do you deal with the situation of corporations like Google collecting the data of the audience as they visit the artworks and has this become a more prevalent concern in recent years?

Cosmos Carl emerged as a non-commercial and non-profit online space for redirecting visitors to art. Our website does not harvest or sell data about the visitors, but leeches on to commercial platforms that are busy with this. However, these platforms do not have access to our collection of links. As a result, they have no access to the valuable data of individual users and they cannot group and profile our visitors. Our visitors are redirected traffic and do not necessarily behave like regular users of the platforms. Their data is therefore obscured and useless.

What is your advice for folks initiating digital art/culture projects?

Keep on leaching! :)

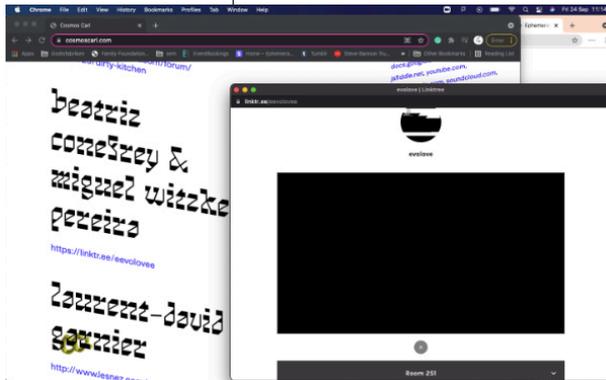
JR: There is also something around the ethics of access in the various capitalist/consumer platforms that Cosmos Carl's contributions inhabit that potentially becomes hard to navigate from a couple of perspectives. It feels simultaneously like a super exciting and effective way of reclaiming a digital commons but at the same time play into the hands of tech corporations in terms of the collection of user data. How do you deal with the situation of corporations like Google collecting the data of the audience as they visit the artworks and has this become a more prevalent concern in recent years?

CC: Cosmos Carl emerged as a non-commercial and non-profit online space for redirecting visitors to art. Our website does not harvest or sell data about the visitors, but leeches on to commercial platforms that are busy with this. However, these platforms do not have access to our collection of links. As a result, they have no access to the valuable data of individual users and they cannot group and profile our visitors. Our visitors are redirected traffic and do not necessarily behave like regular users of the platforms. Their data is therefore obscured and useless.

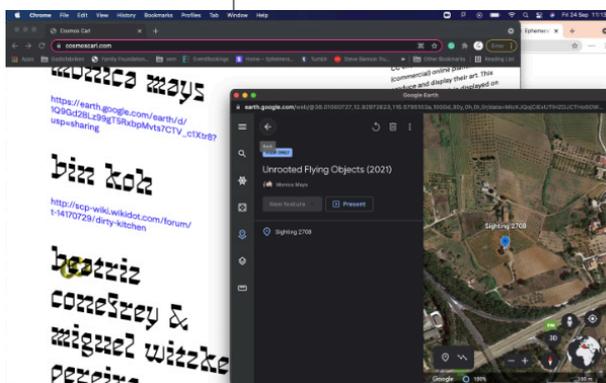
JR: What is your advice for folks initiating digital art/culture projects?

CC: Keep on leaching! :)

A series of "rooms" on linktree with various different videos in each hosted by YouTube by Beatriz Conefrey & Miguel Witzke Pereira



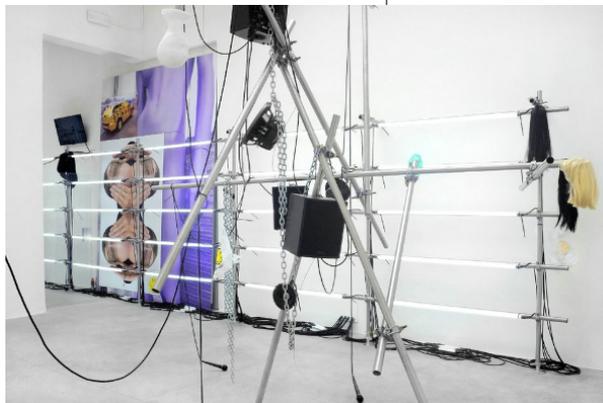
Pinned location "sighting" of an "Unrooted Flying Object" on Google Earth by Monica Mays



https://ephemeral-care.com/ex_in_tran_vol_1_cosmos_carl.html

We could understand the exhibition as a space for experiences (discursive, emotional or physical) to become then a fragment of time. The two main axes of the exhibition are, then, time and space. A space that was first limited and a time that is a fragment. The exhibition is a situation, is an activation, is a moment needing connection with a context. The context will react to the specific situation of the exhibition and is through the situation that the context can be affected. But what happens when there is no space and time is stopped. What happens if we liberate the exhibition from space and time.

The traditional goal of the museum was to stop everything. To keep a series of objects safe for a possible future. Objects were selected to become memory, history. They were a reminder of a past that was constructed as a past and selected from a present. Objects in the museum left present-time to occupy a limbo based on faith. Faith in a future to come, faith in a language to continue, faith in humanity not ending. The exhibition was then out of present-time; it was a system to show a continuity or a way to make the invisible visible. And more than the exhibition, the museum was the collection. The exhibition was there to inform us about this process of selection, to show this power within marking history: writing history for the future means to define a way to read, a specific vocabulary, a series of words. Means also to leave some more objects aside, forget them, discard them as these dogs abandoned close to gas stations.



The Subjects curated by Martí Manen for the Spanish Pavillion at the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015 featuring works by Cabello/Carceller, Francesc Ruiz, Pepo Salazar and Salvador Dalí. Photo: <https://www.hisour.com/the-subjects-spanish-pavilion-venice-biennale-2015-54935/>

But, again, we can observe the contemporary experience as being permanently in process. What happens now -again, 2021- is that the experience has been modified and its temporality is in question. The experience of a digitized version of the world (with lockdowns due to corona in many parts of the world) offers a different frame. Time is a continuous flow of repetitions with no clear definitions or lengths. Work and life happen in the same grid and screen, emotional dialogues become part of professional meetings and kitchens become visible office spaces. A Zoom meeting can be the everyday life of many people (not everyone, of course) and the specificities of a context disappear as the format is predefined: The grid is the standard. Same distance to the camera. The fragments of time are unclear, and a mutated schedule creates new structural definitions. Suddenly it was accepted to work after working hours, suddenly it was tolerated to be part of a habitat with no distinction between private and public, suddenly we lost control. And what is the role of art or the exhibitional experience in this unstable time? Would the role of art continue to be this remnant of a present to become history in the future? Is the role of art to be a representation of our times? Or is art and contemporary art a container that can give us an opportunity to formulate something beyond the grid? Exhibitions were something still in definition with its flexible grammar and a performativity always in negotiation. Still are.

In 2020 I wrote (1) : The many decades of critique and institutional analysis have allowed to name and detect options, but we seem to be now in the face of a likely next step: that change can affect the structure and that institutional critique isn't made from an existent reality, but rather generates it. Institutional critique was able to add up a vocabulary, a desire, a map for a rethinking. But most institutions still have the same

(1) <https://a-desk.org/en/magazine/new-new-new-institutionalism/>

institutional analysis have allowed to name and detect options, but we seem to be now in the face of a likely next step: that change can affect the structure and that institutional critique isn't made from an existent reality, but rather generates it. Institutional critique was able to add up a vocabulary, a desire, a map for a rethinking. But most institutions still have the same DNA with the same rhythms and formats, they share the idea of what is public, but understanding public function as something unitary and democratic in itself. If identity is variable, if history cannot be written with the same words, if the relationship with the world is different, if politics are also calling for a reformulation, isn't it time to do so from the artistic institution? Isn't it time to reformulate structures?

And today. 2021. How to continue? How to react? How to find a way to think about the exhibitional? We have a general stop on time within a context of speed, we have contradictory ideas about temporalities, we feel emotional distances and navigate with new terminologies. The exhibition, the previous idea of space also then became a time frame, now to be a series of glimpses and possible encounters.

Editorial Thinking, Index, 2021. Installation view. Photo: Index Foundation



Hanni Kamaly, THE MIGHT THEY HAVE, Index 2021. Installation view. Photo: Index Foundation



Touching the Gap – Tal Gilad (excerpt)

While stranded in Stockholm, I took a long hiatus from going to exhibitions. Sweden's response during the pandemic has not been as strict as in many other places, forgoing lockdowns in favor of public health recommendations. During March/April 2020 I was self quarantining by choice and didn't meet any people, use public transportation, or go to enclosed spaces besides making short trips to the supermarket once a week to stock up on supplies.

I decided to go to an opening event at Tensta Konsthall on September 25th. It was my first time taking tunnelbana (metro/underground) and going to a public event in many months. I was supposed to go with Merja, a former colleague of Inbar, who followed CuratorLab 19/20 and was interested in socially engaged art. I usually go to these events alone, although I do find it reassuring to share the anxiety. However, Merja had to cancel at the last minute because she got sick with covid. Instead, I asked my friend Isabella to join me. She accepted and suggested we drop by and later go on to some queer noise event happening the same night.

I took the train from Odenplan on the green line towards Alvik to exchange in Fridhemsplan to the blue line toward Hjulsta, which is one stop after Tensta. The cart was full and I was the only person wearing a mask.

I always go to openings at Tensta. I first met Isabella at the Konsthall when she was doing her internship there and my best friend Didem also works there as a producer. It was the opening of Åke Hodell: Resistance, an exhibition of the work of the Swedish avant-garde driving force curated by the music journalist Elena Wolay and the artist Fia Backström. I was not aware that there was a list. We were not on it. Didem always signs me up. I guess it was my fault because I never told her I was coming. I asked Hanna if we could go in and was told we could be on a waiting list and watch from outside in the meantime. I thought she was kidding and giggled a little -How can that work? I thought and found what happened next so surreal. I looked around to see there were tables outside and a monitor inside turning to the glass wall to televise the event happening in the gallery. I started to understand. So we got here but will not be allowed in.

We sat outside watching the inside. The sound was not working well, and anyway, I only understood half of the Swedish. I felt so awkward. We were supplied with blankets and warm tea, an attempt to make up for the guests sitting in the cold weather. I was restless - as if openings are not uncomfortable enough. Before we sat, I softly ranted that the art world finally got what it secretly wanted: a perfect excuse to create classes without worrying about bad optics. Without the need for crowds decorating photos proving the success of the event to the public. We considered cutting our losses and moving onto the queer noise event we had tickets to, this way we at least don't miss that one. The new employee at the Konsthall - a tall guy sat outside by the door reading out names from the list as if it was a hip new restaurant. He almost looked like a bouncer and it was



#Domestictourism.
Photo: Permanent
Vacation/Dana Lev
Levnat



#Domestictourism.
Photo: Permanent
Vacation/Dana Lev
Levnat

as if we were all doing a 20 minutes long queue. Just as we were ready to leave, the guy called Isabella. We wanted to go in but hadn't arrived together and so our names were not called at the same time... She insisted on not going without me, even though I told her it was ok. We noticed some people going out to smoke. The system broke. It was all chaos, a big mess. After half an hour he read out my name, finally, so I said to Isabella: 'now we can both go in!' He said he already gave her spot to another person. I obviously couldn't go without her. I suggested we leave. Seeing it's frustrating, the guy gave up and let us in any way.

As we were leaving, I got to thinking, Is this the way openings will be like from now on? It seemed exhausting. It wasn't an error in the organization. It was simply the result of trying to adjust to the health guidelines for the first time. In the end, it wasn't so bad. The exhibition was cool, we got to see most of it and still made it to the sound thing that took place in the Baltic Sea port part of town.



#Domestictourism.
Photo: Permanent
Vacation/Dana Lev
Levnat

Ephemeral Care would like to thank all of the contributors involved in The Exhibition is in Transit up to this point-

Tal Gilad, Cosmos Carl (Frederique Pisuisse & Saemunder Thor Helgason), Martí Manen, Winnie Herbstein, Jaakko Pallasvuo, Jade Foster and P*D*A* (MC Coble, Andreas Engman, Jeuno Kim and Kjell Caminha)

-for their generosity and the wonderful thought-provoking contributions they have all provided.

Ephemeral Care is Giulia Busetti, Connor Brazier, Felicia Robertson, Hanna Skoglar and Joe Rowley.

This reader was edited by Joe Rowley and Hanna Skoglar

Design by Joe Rowley

Cosmos Scrift font by Gnax Type for Cosmos Carl

©Ephemeral Care 2021

Ephemeral Care