

TIME AS THE NEW SPACE

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A Question time lecture transcript

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When is a Christmas tree a Christmas tree? This is a question which artist Philippe Parreno posed in the work *Fraught Times: For Eleven Months of the Year It Is a Artwork and in December It Is Christmas* from 2008. Rather than asking “what is a christmas tree?”, the question is precisely “when is a Christmas tree?”. Parreno is interested in how time can determine the meaning of something, in this case it is an artwork during 11 months and a decorative Christmas tree for one month. He is pushing the perception of an artwork to the point of paradox. The object is affected by the season and its meanings change with time – it is a time-based artwork which is not sound, performance or moving image, not even time-based per se. According to him, time is at least as interesting as place and space, if not more, and it is certainly as concrete as they are.

Here, I will follow the cue of Philippe Parreno, an artist whose practice has had a considerable influence on my own work, not least how he has experimented with the exhibition as a format and the role of time in curatorial work. For example, can we think of time as the new space? How does the notion of time play into artistic and curatorial work? Rhythm, sequence, progression, continuity, endurance and cyclical time will feature frequently as I will bring up some case studies from my professional journey which has taken me to a variety of contexts and types of institution, from the beginning, in the middle and more recently. As I went along, the world changed, with new conditions and more – and severe – urgencies.

At Kunstverein München in Munich, where I was the director 2002-2004, we did a solo exhibition with Parreno in 2004. *Fade Away* was an

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exhibition which at first glance seemed traditional with pictures on the walls, albeit rather minimal in its expression. However, it was an exhibition which could only be seen when you usually cannot see anything, i.e. when it is dark in the exhibition space. Upon entering the main room, which was covered with a light grey wall-to-wall carpet which subdued any sound, you saw theatre floor lights along two staircases and vaguely glowing images on the walls. Then the lights suddenly went on and the room was filled with bright white light. Now the images on the walls rather looked like dirty bed sheets. After a couple of minutes the lights went off and the images were shining magically in fluorescent green, slowly fading away until they vanished and the room was black again. Then the cycle repeated, “charging” the images with light, in a quiet carpeted room. It was a play with how to see and to be seen, using basic analogue techniques; electric light and fluorescent paint.

The pictures themselves document events or statements connected to experiences that the artist wants to share with others. The events had been staged in different parts of the world as discreet interventions into concrete situations by the artist, often in cooperation with others. For instance, mascots at an amusement park which put on a sketch about the idea of a timeless universe instead of their usual greetings. Or a group of Mexican children replaying the 1978 World Cup final between Argentina and the Netherlands for passers-by, as if it was just another football match. “Welcome to Reality Park” reads a text on a rock behind a group of penguins at the Cape of Good Hope in another picture, it is the entrance to the artists own de-territorialized amusement park with reality as theme and attractions spread out over several continents. The events are elusive, almost imperceptible, and yet the exhibition was “in your face”, spectacular and low-fi at the same time.

If Parreno’s *Fade Away* was busy with the exhibition as a time-machine, and simultaneity in terms of the deterritorialised amusement park, *Christine Borland: A Retrospective in Eight Stations*, also at Kunstverein München in Munich, was an attempt at doing justice to the logic of already existing artworks and to the approaches and sensibilities of the artists behind them. The retrospective went on for an entire year inside and outside the premises of the Kunstverein in the very city center of the Bavarian capital, only ever showing one work at a time. At the same time, it was an effort to think and work through some of the typical traits of site-specific, or rather context-sensitive work.

Take for example the first work in this sequential retrospective, *The Dead Teach the Living*, which consists of life-size busts on pedestals, which was installed in the rear space of the art center. The busts are reconstructions from anatomical specimens of human bones, originating at the Anatomical Institute in the city of Münster, where the artist had been

commissioned to make a new work for the Sculpture Projects in 1997. The institute is infamous as a leader in the field of so-called racial biology during the Nazi regime. As any site-specific work, *The Dead Teach the Living* lost that direct connection in Munich but gathered another one, which we will soon see.

Station number 2, *Small Objects that Save Lives*, was presented in the same space, in a similarly dry mode: boards on saw-horses on top of which were numerous small objects and labels. The objects had been sent in by those individuals on the kunstverein's mailing list who decided to respond to the artist's request, namely to submit "an object that can save lives". On the tables were books, CDs, a statuette, glitter and even a McDonald's meal. As an instruction piece, for each iteration *Small Objects that Save Lives* offer a certain "portrait" of the human and collective context, the community, of the institution, as expressed through its mailing list, in this case a motley crew of wealthy Bavarian bourgeois people as well as local art workers and artists.

An important spur to deal with Christine Borland's work in this way was her interest in death and the passing of time, as in "life-times". Rather than displaying the ten works next to each other under the same roof during the two to three months which is customary for temporary exhibitions, the retrospective was stretched out. This gave us the opportunity to focus on each single work and to figure out a location which could resonate with the work itself. *Inside Pocket*, station number 3, was originally made for the shop window of British Council's gallery in Prague in 1996 and the shop window at the Kunstverein, facing the Hofgarten and the former residence of the Bavarian monarchs, seemed to resonate well with the original display.

Another aspect of curating Borland's retrospective in this way, was my own dissatisfaction with the mid-career surveys which some of my peers were having at the time. With site-specific or context sensitive work, it is the site or the context which tends to be the strongest factor. To bundle several such works together in a white cube type space means that something crucial inevitably gets lost. The loss can certainly be "translated" in a later presentation but these works often diminish rather than enhance each other when they are displayed together in such a context. There was also a wish to get the most out of an artwork, to give it maximum attention. Surveys of this type are based on a narrative that we know from art history, where the strongest relation for an artwork is supposed to be with the previous and subsequent work by the same artist. One work is supposed to lead to the next one in a linear manner, as the privileged relationship, instead of in meandering ways through the contexts with which the artist is engaging. By honing in on one work at a time, we felt that we could let each work shine and thereby reveal more of

itself.

A Place Where Nothing Has Happened was the eighth and final station. Borland is one of the artists who already in the 1990s sought access to and knowledge from other professional disciplines, not least scientists like archeologists and medical researchers. In the case of the first iteration of this work, at a site where homeless people used to dwell in Newcastle upon Tyne, the artist commissioned a policeman to investigate it as if a crime had been committed there. The found items were then shown in a portacabin on site. In Munich, it was a detective who carried out the investigation next to the Art Academy, at the heart of the Hauptstadt der Bewegung, the capital of the Nazi movement where the academy was a loud proponent of “Arian Art”. This threw the viewer right back to the kunstverein itself, as it is the location where the Degenerate Art exhibition, which collected rejected and ridiculed modernist art works, premiered in 1937.

If Borland’s retrospective was unusually long, our next experiment with the format with Rirkrit Tiravanija’s retrospective at Kunstverein München, was unusually short: it went on for a week in September 2024. It was preceded by a weekend meeting in the spring of the same year. The idea was to revisit Tiravanija’s way of working in a socially interactive and situation-based way, based on his open-ended settings, often involving cooking, which became highly influential from the early 1990s onwards. His approach went hand in hand with shifts in curatorial practice around the same time. In this way, the retrospective became an extended workshop with students from art schools where he had recently been teaching – Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Munich – as well as artists and curators that he had worked with or was still cooperating with.

One single work was present, the installation *Untitled–Angst Essen Seele Auf* from 1994 which was reconstructed by the participants of the retrospective in the kunstverein’s otherwise empty exhibition space. Based on Fassbinder’s 1974 film *Ali: Fear Eat the Soul*, where a young guest worker from Morocco accidentally meets a middle-aged cleaning lady at a bar during a downpour and they fall in love, the bar replica with its Coca Cola and beer and the Fassbinder film playing on a monitor, became the center point for the events during the week. The original work was conceived in an off-space as a bar for art students and young artists who could not afford the exclusive socializing surrounding the Cologne art fair, at a moment in German history when several deadly attacks were carried out against migrants in the north of the country.

It was an intense week of this “retrospective as workshop” with collective cooking, a number of earlier works being discussed, other films by Fassbinder being screened and an excursion in the footsteps

of Fassbinder being organised. Tiravanija's work was thought of and discussed in a roundabout way, through the prism of Fassbinder's practice. Importantly, there was also time for the participants to do their own work, in the spirit of Tiravanija's openendedness. At the end of the week, the doors of the kunstverein opened to visitors who could interact both with the replica and with the workshop participants, what they had done in terms of their own work during the week, and the artist himself. A recurrent topic of conversation that day was how Tiravanija's work be renegotiated at a different time and place, a major challenge for all site-specific and context-sensitive work.

In parallel, in order to make possible consistent engagement with moving image work, the curator Sören Grammel suggested a series of monthly monographic screenings at the kunstverein. It was named *It Is Hard to Touch the Real* and each year of screenings culminated in a festival with the artists from the series inviting other artists to show their videos and films. After two full years, it became a video archive with more than one hundred videos by sixty artists – at a time when VHS and DVDs were still in use – which travelled across Europe. Here, singular screenings were woven together with regular intervals and became a “big” – and rich – project thanks to its continuity.

The most versatile use of time during my tenure at Kunstverein München was the Sputniks. They offered yet another rhythm and way of engaging with art and artists. A dozen artists, critics and curators were invited to be “fellow travellers” for three years, which was the length of my contract, interacting with the institution in various ways to test what an institution for contemporary art could and should be. They were simultaneously invited to realize a “sputnik project”, an open invitation to do anything, almost, which they felt was a relevant contribution to the institution. The resulting projects ranged from an article for the institutional printed newsletter to a group exhibition with the Sputnik Deimantas Narkevicius himself and two other artists connected, like him, to Lithuania, namely Mindaugas Simkus and Peter Watkins.

Consisting of various interventions into the kunstverein's communications infrastructure, Carey Young's two year-long *Viral Marketing* was perhaps the most thorough Sputnik project. With the back thought of wishing to support the institution in a form of “constructive institutional critique”, she sent the team to a negotiating skills course with a consultant usually working with Siemens, with the hope that in the long run this would improve the overall communication of the institution. Four different give-aways associated with creative work and with quotes from revolutionaries printed on them were produced and offered for free in the entrance area, sending a message about the potential of art to the visitors. The membership card – a must at a membership association like a

kunstverein – became a loyalty card: for each visit the member got a stamp and after eight stamps they were rewarded with a gift, the book *The German Revolution 1918/1919*, about a major event in the cities history which was rarely mentioned in the early 2000s.

Within the three-year period, which was set from the beginning, a variety of approaches to time were made possible. The rhythm, and to some extent the location too, was based on the ideas, structure and method embedded in the artwork. As a sputnik, the artist and architect Apolonija Sustersic was invited to reshape the lobby space. She turned the sterile space, the ground floor of a late 18th century gallery built for the royal collection of plaster casts, into a welcoming area with books for browsing and for sale, documentation on artists in the program and a café/bar. A coffee-coloured rubber floor completely transformed both the aural and the visual experience of the space. It was a low-cost make over: the old chairs were upholstered and the tables and walls were repainted in a warm orange color. The bar functioned as a Swiss knife and could be opened and closed, allowing for the screenings of *It Is Hard to Touch the Real* to take place there. Sustersic's sputnik project, entitled *Entrance*, was in use every single day and it stayed for the three years that I was there, offering yet another temporality to the institution.

Now, all of this happened more than 20 years ago and it feels as if at least my perception of time has changed. Like many people, I am constantly living with a number of rhythms – simultaneity being central to this experience. One effect of that is a wish to slow down, and to stay longer with issues, questions, art works and people. It is a desire to avoid rushing from one project to the next. This also applies to artists – it is important to develop sustained exchange with the ones with whom you share certain interests and concerns. Sustersic is one of the artists that I have been working with since the 1990s, 1998 to be precise, when I was a co-curator of Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg where she was one of the participants. At the same time, it is necessary to be open and continuously make research, learning about new positions and projects. Ideally, old-timers and newcomers sit side by side and through projects they get to know each other.

An inquiry at Stockholm's Tensta konsthall in 2015-2018, *The Eros Effect: Art, Solidarity Movements and the Quest for Social Justice*, when I was the director there, is an example of trying to “stay with the trouble” as it were, to go deeper with a certain issue or topic. In doing that, it was a different take on, and use of, time. Simultaneously, it was connected to the location of the art center: a late modernist suburb where 90% of the population has a migrant background, many as political refugees. The inquiry was thematic, looking into the relationship between art and solidarity movements, performed in a series of commissions, exhibitions,

workshops, presentations, and film screenings over a period of three years. Faced with anti-migrant, fascist parties gaining ground in Europe and an increasingly tough social climate, we saw the necessity to return to the notion of solidarity in order to try its validity today. Will solidarity still be relevant in the future, or is it a historical concept as some of our peers claimed? Do we need to find new ways to describe the political movements of today and their struggles, sympathies, and commitments? What does recognizing the urgency of a situation imply, and how do we act upon it?

The Eros Effect project borrowed its title from the researcher and activist George N. Katsiaficas's essay by the same name from 1989. The concept is an attempt to acknowledge the emotional aspects of social movements. "The Eros effect" thus aims to turn away from earlier theories that considered "mass movements" as primitive and impulsive, as emotional outbursts, or as exclusively rational efforts in order to change the norms and institutions of a society. With his notion the "Eros effect", Katsiaficas suggests that social movements always constitute both, and that the struggle for liberation is equally an "erotic" act and a rational desire to break free from structural and psychological barriers. Franz Fanon made similar observations when he stated that resistance towards colonialism causes positive effects on the emotional life of individuals.

When the inquiry at Tensta konsthall was kicked-off by a symposium by the same title as the series itself: *The Eros-Effect: Art Solidarity Movements and the Struggle for Social Justice* we did not have a masterplan for its development. Neither did we know when and how it would end. The symposium was conceived as a collaboration with REMESO: The Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity, and Society at Linköping University, another expression of attempting at thinking and acting longer term. A university clearly has a solidity far beyond a small private foundation like Tensta konsthall. The symposium laid the ground for further explorations through lectures, screenings and discussions by some of the leading artists, researchers, thinkers and activists in the field. Among them were artists Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Kodwo Eshun, Natascha Sadr Haghighian and Dmitry Vilensky of Chto delat; researchers Peo Hansen, Stefan Jonsson, Håkan Thörn and Aleksandra Ålund; activists Rojda Sekersöz and Mathias Wåg; as well as curators Doreen Mende and Bojana Piškur.

An artist who contributed to the symposium, and who throughout her practice gave considerable attention to cultural production and solidarity movements, whether through post-war panel architecture in Northern Africa or the journal *Tricontinental*, was Marion von Osten (1963-2020). Her *Viet Nam Discourse Stockholm*, an exhibition and a summer course in 2016 with Peter Spillmann, formed a central part of *The Eros Effect*,

exemplifying how artists today can shed light on forgotten moments in the past, and bring urgent aspects to the present. She did so with one of her signature “project exhibitions”, i.e. a slow, research-based, intensively collaborative, process which then culminated in a display at Tensta konsthall. The exhibition held original art works, research material from the 1960s, footage of crucial manifestations of solidarity during the same period, many of them shown on mobile wooden screens designed by Spillmann and later used by further iterations of *The Eros Effect* and other activities of the konsthall, prolonging their institutional life.

In March 1968 the play *Viet Nam Discourse* premiered at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt, a performance that would shake the foundations of the Western theater world. The drama was written by the Stockholm-based author, filmmaker, and artist Peter Weiss (1916–1982) who was one of the most influential German writers of the postwar period. It was arguably the first documentary theatre piece ever, addressing the day’s burning issues on the stage with forceful set design by Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss. In a harsh tone, *Viet Nam Discourse* attempted to teach the theater audience about the rich history of Vietnam and the long liberation struggle of the population, beyond stereotypical images of them as victims of US-American aggression.

Palmstierna-Weiss designed both the stage and costumes for *Viet Nam Discourse*. Historical experts and advisors were involved in the production of this early “documentary play” addressing topical issues, which gave an account of Vietnam’s occupation history from the ancient Chinese to French colonization, Japanese occupation and, finally, US war. The premiere caused heated debates and antagonisms. The dialogue was demanding with its objective, declaring content. In addition, Frankfurt student’s movement was trying to occupy the stage and boycott the theater performance, while police forces were protecting the theater. Nevertheless, for Weiss, the stage functioned as a device for political mobilization: the Western bourgeois society should be confronted with histories of Vietnam that point towards an anti-colonial and non-imperialist future.

For the project *Viet Nam Discourse Stockholm*, von Osten and Spillmann revisited the drama’s complex production history as well as the political and cultural context in which the play was created, partly guided by Palmstierna-Weiss herself. Their research created a virtual archive of the radical politics of the 1960s and how they became a part of film, theater, and art, presented in the main exhibition space of the art center. Few international solidarity movements have been as influential as the Vietnam liberation movement – it deeply engaged several generations and formed the breeding ground for future political involvements. At the core of *Viet Nam Discourse Stockholm* stood the importance that Tricontinental—

as in the case of North Vietnam—liberation and solidarity movements had for the emergence of the New Left in Europe and the emergence of radical political art in the 1960s and 1970s.

During the summer of 2016, with *Viet Nam Discourse Stockholm* at Tensta konsthall the artists were creating a platform for conversations, interpretations, and readings about and of the entangled histories of art practice and solidarity movements. The play's legendary set design by Palmstierna-Weiss was presented in the form of sketches, photographs, texts, and testimonies. The film documentation of the play's premier in Frankfurt 1968 and private and press photographs from trips by Weiss and Palmstierna-Weiss to Vietnam, demonstrations, and meetings were included. Film maker Staffan Lamm's documentation from the much-debated Russell Tribunal held in Stockholm in 1967 was on view as well. The tribunal investigated and judged the US foreign policy and war in Vietnam, led by more than twenty leading intellectuals, among them Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre, Isaac Deutscher, Sara Lidman and Weiss himself.

Through a series of conversations during the year leading up to the exhibition, with Palmstierna-Weiss, Lamm, film maker Lennart Malmer, and film scholar Malin Wahlberg, Marion von Osten selected exhibits, documents, and materials in dialogue that were activated and built upon through film screenings, talks, lectures, and personal guided tours of the exhibition. As part of the project, a summer course in collaboration with the University of Dance and Circus (DOCH), Tensta konsthall, and Center for Post-Colonial Knowledge and Culture (CPKC) was organized. The choreographers Stina Nyberg and Nadja Hjorton and their students examined the historical material in relation to contemporary contexts, studying transnational meetings between art, solidarity and choreography. This was yet another example of how to think about art and time: cooperating with educational institutions, in this instance through a summer course, can plant seeds with the participants, allowing for art works and their resonance to potentially carry on across generations.

It was essential that *The Eros Effect* also would allow for new art to come about. Like *Viet Nam Discourse Stockholm*, extensive research underpinned the commissioned film *Transmission from the Liberated Zones* by artist Filipa César. Since 2008, she has explored the colonial history of Portugal, focusing on the 11-year liberation struggle (1963–74) lead by PAIGC, a political party aiming to free Guinea and Cape Verde from the colonial power of the Portuguese government. The leader of the party was the charismatic Amílcar Cabral, who pursued a low intensity warfare, which included not only armed struggles, but also the construction of a new society with schools and bureaucratic systems. Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde were declared independent in 1974.

Filipa César's research has focused particularly on the position moving images hold for the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau and on the way film was used as a strategy to make the people aware of the struggle and as a tool for visual nation building. For her ongoing project *Luta ca caba inda* (The Struggle is Not Yet Over), César works in close collaboration with a group of filmmakers in order to restore and make available the national film archive and its imaginary to the public. Through this research, César came across recordings by Swedish filmmakers Lennart Malmer, who had already been involved with Marion von Osten's contribution to *The Eros Effect*, and Ingela Romare and reports and documents referring to the presence in the country of high-ranking Social Democrat Birgitta Dahl and UN observer Folke Löfgren.

At different times, the four Swedes each set off into the tropical jungle where the guerrilla war raged between 1969 and 1973. In conversations with Dahl, Löfgren, Malmer, and Romare, the Cesar's linear story is mixed with documents, photographs, and clear memories. They reminisce about scents, endless marches, and the meaning of wearing the guerrilla uniforms. These memories are channeled through physical objects, photographs, and videotapes and linked together by an experience of an embodied solidarity. The international presence allowed an insight into the specific conflict in Guinea-Bissau, which thus functioned as an example for many other coeval African liberation movements.

Cesar's new work, the single channel video *Transmission from the Liberated Zones*, became a film experiment bringing together Swedish statements and documents accessed through a low-fidelity feedback channel and a young presenter in front of the camera. The film renegotiates the mechanisms of history writing by combining established and subjective perspectives with the poetics inherent in moving images, spanning a period of more than forty years. As a part of the program devised by the artist, Malmer was invited to present a selection of his film projects recorded in Guinea-Bissau.

In this way, the notion of the "Eros effect" became an analytical tool for us to investigate various forms of solidarity, and its formation and negotiations in a variety of contexts over a longer period of time. Essential for the project was the duration, which from the beginning was set to be extended beyond a conventional exhibition period. Without knowing when and how the series of events would evolve and be concluded, the main idea was to allow ourselves to stay with a set of questions, being able to twist and turn the different iterations of solidarity. The end of the project in 2018 was affected by the leaving of a crucial team member, Emily Fahlén, who worked as a mediator at the konsthall and who was deeply involved with *The Eros Effect*, as well as myself moving on to new challenges.

I will conclude with a final example, *The Benevolent Food* (Den goda maten), from my current position, as the director of Kin Museum of Contemporary art in Giron/Kiruna in the Swedish Arctic, indicating that the question of time in curatorial work remains crucial. This example shares an important factor with *The Eros Effect* – we do not have a master plan for how it will evolve or when it will end. Continuity and endurance are key, just like the ability to adjust budgets to support procedures which are out of the normal procedure. Like the inquiry at Tensta konsthall, the one at Kin springs out of a sense of urgency, this time around food and climate change. Solidarity is also there, but in the background instead of the foreground.

The subject of food is as eternal and universal as anything gets. Food nourishes and beyond daily sustenance, it brings us joy, offers connection and maintains human labours. It is deeply connected to our sense of self and identity. But there are also darker sides to food, feeding and eating: in the context of intensifying violent crises in the world and accelerating climate change, questions of food security are becoming more urgent. How do our food habits affect not only our bodies but the planet too? In grappling with this question, self-sustenance and new ways of eating have come to the fore, as are indigenous and traditional forms of knowledge surrounding food. They are recognised as crucial to past, present and future food sovereignty.

The Benevolent Food is a multi-year inquiry into art, food and the environment hosted by Kin in collaboration with the Food Art Research Network, initiated by curator Madeleine Collie. The inquiry will evolve over the coming years, through commissions, screenings, events and publications with invited artists, architects, researchers and cultural workers including Åsa Sonjasdotter, Cooking Sections, Elia Nurvista, Fernando García-Dory and Sergio Montero Bravo (INLAND), Keg de Souza, Kultivator, Myvillages, Olga Tsaplya Egorova, Natalia Shapkina and Victoria Harnesk. *The Benevolent Food* is in turn part of Kin's ongoing thematic thread *The Critical Zone*, which highlights artists and projects concerned with what is going on between the crust of the earth and the end of the atmosphere.

Ten of the participants, who come from different parts of the planet, gathered in Giron/Kiruna to kick off the physical part of *The Benevolent Food* in August 2025. We discussed things like the fact that the Swedish word 'god' means both delicious and good; in translating it as 'benevolent', we draw attention to the interdependent relationships between bodies and land in the cultivation of food. At the same time benevolence suggests something darker, because something that is offered can just as freely be taken away. To speak of food as a benevolent gesture is to ask; how do we recognise and participate in reciprocal

actions towards places, people and more-than-human lives that sustain us often over great distances?

During the week in Giron/Kiruna we learned about each other's work, talked about local food traditions with retired Sámi reindeer herder Gunnar Östman Inga and spent a day on the land with Kerstin Nilsson, a Sámi tourism worker. Together with her, we picked blueberries, baked bread the traditional way and discussed various food practices in the vicinity of the world largest underground iron mine, which is located on traditional Sámi land. The mine is the reason for the town to be placed there, and as the mine is growing the town is forced to move and the reindeer then have less and less space to migrate from the summer grazing lands to the winter ones.

A situated community-based meal was then curated by the participants based in Sweden for Kin's three-day event Konstfesten in February 2026, in response to two historical factors that have significantly influenced food traditions and other forms of exchange in the region: love and trade. The evening also included an introduction to the location, the Sámi community center Samegården and the Sámi Museum located in its basement, presented by Siv Labba from the Kiruna Sámi Association, which runs the museum. The guests were encouraged to bring a dish from their home region to contribute to the buffet, which was based on freshly baked gáhkku (bread).

With "community" we did not refer to identity and belonging, but rather the real meaning of the word which has been lost with modernity and refers to individuals who make themselves useful for a common duty. Here duty is understood as a gift and mutual aid in relationship with others. In many peasant and nomadic traditions around the world this is a form of *communal work celebration* which is practiced under different names such as *minga* (Quechua *minka* for coming together) in the Andean region, *lumbung* (Granary) in Indonesia, *Moba* in the Balkans, and *Sita* among Sami reindeer herders. These are ways of caring for a common good and the land through mutual aid, resource sharing, and collective governance with hosting and food practices always in the centre. Influenced by a recent online talk with Katherine Gibson (Gibson-Graham), we put together this communal meal celebration to engage with each other in a conversation through food experience around what stands in our way from thinking and acting differently, to reimagine livelihoods in Giron/Kiruna (Giron=Pitarmigan) and the Arctic region beyond the discourse of capitalism. What benevolent food ways of knowledge and traditions are there that challenge the representations of capitalism, before, during and after the extractive iron ore mining?

Before and after Konstfesten, *The Benevolent Food* has been manifested through closed online gatherings every other month when different researchers and other practitioners have presented their work. Among the presenters are curator Joud Al Tamimi and anthropologist Elisabeth Povinelli, in addition to Gibson. How it will continue, time will tell.

Maria Lind is a curator, writer, and educator from Stockholm who is currently the director of Kin Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiruna. She was director of Stockholm's Tensta konsthall (2011–18), the artistic director of the 11th Gwangju Biennale, the director of the graduate program, Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College (2008–2010), director of Iaspis in Stockholm (2005–2007), and director of Kunstverein München (2002–2004). In 1998 she was co-curator of Europe's itinerant biennial, Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg. She has taught and published widely since the early 1990s, including as professor of artistic research at the Art Academy in Oslo (2015–2018) and is currently a lecturer at Konstfack's CuratorLab.