

GRAFIKENS HUS

Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts Monthly Report #1

Hello! My name is Mmabatho Thobejane. I am an independent curator, with a practice that centres black and decolonial feminisms. I am also the process leader and curator for *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts*, a three-year project undertaken by Grafikens Hus and supported by Kulturrådet. This monthly letter documents the project from my perspective and is one of the ways you, who are interested in the project, can follow its process.

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Collecting has always been practiced, but it was only in modernity that the museum– that is the state collection–was able to attain the central position it holds today.

– Boris Groys, *Logic of the Collection*

I have spent the better part of the first few months of this assignment diving deeper into the already going project *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts*. I have been delving into its questions, its collaborators and planning and coordinating the project's next few steps. Amongst other things *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* is the process through which Grafikens Hus crafts a method for collecting that they can take into the future. This is to be done with a range of collaborators, namely an expert council, artists, and organisations such as Konstfrämjandet and Kvinnohistoriska, to name a few. Important to this project are also the various printmaking collections that the *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* Artists-in-Residence will investigate as part of their residency.

I think of this project as an intentional moment of pause to question and conduct research as means to respond to the world and the planet with justice-intentioned thought and action. The questions I have found articulated within *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* point to this desire, questions such as: *Who is excluded and who is invited? Who today can see themselves as future artists? and how do we create a collection that does not use a colonial methodology but instead becomes a place where the collection enables a rethinking of stories and a sharing of knowledge?* I find that these questions are not too far away from the most recent CIMAM conference theme "Under Pressure: Museums in Times of Xenophobia and Climate Emergency". And like the theme, the questions within *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* encourage one to think the museum and, subsequently, its collections, as institutions and tools that are not only able to respond to crises but as fundamentally implicated in them. In other words, museums play a role in worldmaking, even if at first (and perhaps continually) for and in Western modernity.

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With this in mind, I see in a project like *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* the opportunity to collaboratively rethink and reorganize the museum by primarily focusing on collecting and (printmaking) collections through norm-critical and intersectional lenses. We are also given the opportunity to not only engage this rethinking intellectually, but also, and perhaps importantly, practically. The practicality means sifting these larger matters into actions for the everyday. This has been a lot of work in the first few months. This, of course and inevitably, includes communication amongst the many collaborators and, importantly, meeting each collaborator where they are. The questions that have come as a result of these meetings and communication include but are not limited to: *Why collect? What do we do with collections that we no longer want and can no longer use? What histories of art collecting does Grafikens Hus come out of, and what other histories and voices is that perhaps being reoriented by?* Over the three-year length of this project, we will explore and approach these answers in a number of ways. One I would like to invite you into is a forthcoming reading group, where we will explore collecting, collections and archives through collective study. Look out for more details soon!

Signed,

Mmabatho Thobejane

Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts Process leader and Curator