

Dear readers,

The final year of *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* is here. This year our work culminates into a materialization of methods for acquisition and collection. Meaning what? I have been giving it a great deal of thought. To materialize something can mean to provide it with a body, make it tangible, even physical.

I hope that a materialization will generate something that we can refer and return to, but that is still open to flexibility and renegotiation. It could entail developing a policy document where the method, consisting of several methods, is summarized. But what does it mean to bring about a policy document? What kind of space does it create? We know it's a bureaucratic space, deciding how an organization should work with a certain issue.

In "Altered values, searching for a new collecting," (2004) museologist Simon J. Knell writes that the introduction of collecting policies has rationalized and intellectualized how museums acquire objects, referring primarily to ethnographic museums.

"Collecting policies are the gatekeeper documents of the collection, though there may be acquisitions committees which interpret these documents and thereby hold the keys to the gate /.../ Most policies lack a deeper intellectual rationale for collecting and, by definition and rather illogically, collecting policies isolate the object from other perspectives /.../ Yet collecting policies give a deceptive sense of rationalism, another illusion which separates safe practice from efficient, sustainable and meaningful activity."

It is interesting to reflect on how such spaces are formulated. How do policy documents affect our understanding of collection and acquisition? I plan to explore this issue through a postcolonial and intersectional perspective together with our expert council and Olivia Berkowicz, curator at the Röhsska Museum of Design and Craft in Gothenburg. Using our respective organizations as starting points, this small study will go on to analyze the collecting policies of other organizations. What can these documents tell us about the narratives that surround collections?

In September we launched the third year of *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts* with an expert council meeting at Afrang Nordlöf Malekian's exhibition *Suddenly it happens!* at Statens konstråd (Public Art Agency Sweden). Afrang spoke about the

exhibition, and I led a workshop that brought up a few different questions:

What did the artist do with the collection of prints at Statens konstråd?

How did the artist approach the collection?

Should Grafikens Hus acquire the work? If so, how? If not, why?

Finally, I prompted the expert council to write a few sentences about *Suddenly it happens!* as a method for selection and acquisition. I think Afrang's work with the exhibition suggests a possible method for acquiring from an existing collection. It proposes an artistic method of approaching and even gathering around a collection. Afrang did this by exploring a past event at Grafikens Hus and connecting it to the history of the lottery ticket. Between 1995–1998, Grafikens Hus collaborated with Penninglotteriet, a state-owned and well-known scratch-off lottery. A group of artists created 75 graphic prints for Penninglotteriet, which reproduced these works in miniature on each scratch-off ticket. Using this collaboration as a starting point, Afrang went through Statens konstråd's graphics collection and selected nine prints that he felt conveyed themes of dreams, desire, and anticipation. This selection put Afrang in dialogue with new works created specifically for *Samlande tankar/Collecting Thoughts*: a series of fictional lottery tickets, poems, audio works, and a performance. In his exhibition he explored how capitalism exploits human hopes and dreams, pointing to the living conditions of other possible worlds still present in Statens konstråd's graphic prints. Like ghosts, they haunt the collection in anticipation of blooming in a democratic society beyond capitalism.

I am about to start planning the last year of the project while also producing the publication for year two. The publication will discuss the relationship of presence-absence in collections and archives through the lens of artistic processes and through dialogue with the Arab Image Foundation.

Hoping you are enjoying the fall leaves,

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