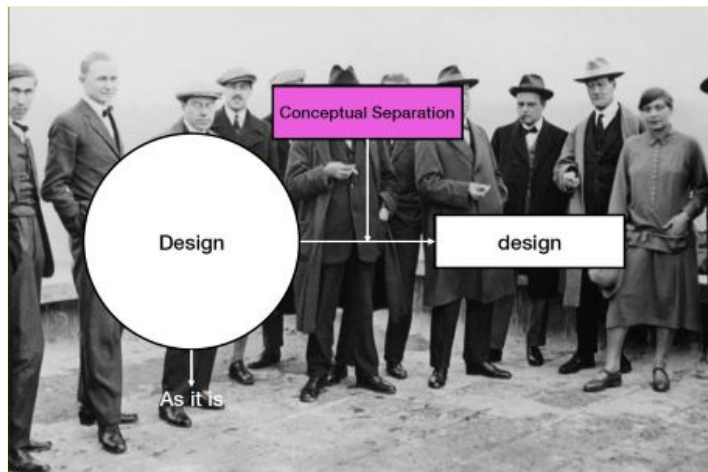


## The Right to design: Another possible is possible

2021-09-21

**An extended afternoon of presentations, readings and discussions on the relationship between design and rights** Date: Thursday 7 October 2021 Time: 13.00 – 19.30 Place: Röhsska Museet, Auditorium Address: Vasagatan 39, 411 37 Göteborg Language: English

The event will be hosted at the museum and broadcast later online. To ensure participant safety, some Covid-19 measures will remain in place. For inquiries please contact Onkar Kular: [onkar.kular@gu.se](mailto:onkar.kular@gu.se)



Participants include **Arjun Appadurai**, **Agency**, **Arturo Escobar**, **Elof Hellström/Mapping the Unjust City**, **Anna Hydén**, **Mahmoud Keshavarz**, **Nina Valerie Kolowratnik**, **Thomas Marriott** and **Christina Zetterlund**, introduction and moderation by **Onkar Kular** and **Henric Benesch**. Please note that participants are both on site and online (see programme below).

Through short presentations, readings and discussions, *The Right to design: Another possible is possible* will begin to collectively unfold the questions of what are design rights now? And what could be the right to design?

Presentations will foreground case studies, approaches, and perspectives to consider how global rights frameworks frequently fail to safeguard folklore and other indigenous knowledge forms, why the right to understand how injustices produced through and with design could be the basis for claiming design education as a special kind of right and how contemporary design and spatial practices can materialise and identify instances where rights fail and exclude.

*The Right to design: Another possible is possible* is part of a series of studies with practitioners, activists and scholars from disciplinary fields ranging from design and architecture to anthropology and law that will not only map designs relationships to rights but begin to imagine alternative framings for how rights could be practiced, made visible and extended through the discipline of design itself.

*The Right to design* is a practice-based platform by Onkar Kular and Henric Benesch. The platform has the dual aim of understanding the entangled historic and contemporary relationship between design and rights and further claiming 'design' itself as a special kind of right that is accessible beyond class background, gender, race, age and disability. The platform aims to understand design as a form of readership, whereby 'design literacy' can be regarded as a prerequisite for informed and active citizenship which cannot and should not be limited to formal institutional settings. Through a 'scale 1:1' approach the platform currently serves as the base for activities such as assemblies, (mis)readings, broadcasting and educational initiatives with partners inside and outside academia.

The event is jointly organised with the Röhsska Museum, IASPIS, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's International Programme for Visual and Applied Art, research publishing platform PARSE and HDK Valand, Academy of Art & Design, University of Gothenburg. The event has received financial support from Göteborgs Slöjdförening.

### PROGRAMME

Part 1

**13.00**

Introduction: The Right to design  
Onkar Kular & Henric Benesch

**13.15 – 14.15**

Roundtable 1: Borders/Institutions/Histories  
Mahmoud Keshavarz & Christina Zetterlund.

**14.15 – 15.15**

Group reading and discussion.

Agency will invoke the controversy Thing 002406 (Jazz Camera).

**15.15 – 15.45** Break.**15.45 – 16.45**

Roundtable 2: Cartographies

Elof Hellström/Mapping the Unjust City & Nina Valerie Kolowratnik (online).

**16.45 – 17.15**

Presentation: Anna Hydén.

Presentation: Thomas Marriott (online).

**Part 2****18.00 – 19.30**

Another possible is possible: Arjun Appadurai & Arturo Escobar. Moderated online conversation hosted in front of a live audience. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions and join the discussion.

Note: Times may vary slightly on the day.

**Arjun Appadurai** is the Goddard Professor (Emeritus) in Media, Culture and Communication at New York University. He is also The Max Weber Global Professor at the Bard Graduate Center (New York). He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is a Member of the UNESCO Commission on The Futures of Education. He is Co-Editor of Public Culture and serves on the Editorial Board of Global Perspectives. He has authored numerous books and scholarly articles, including *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Duke 2006), *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minnesota 1996; Oxford India 1997), *The Future as a Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition* (Verso 2013), and *Banking on Words: The Failure of Language in the Age of Derivative Finance* (Chicago, 2016). His most recent book, co-authored with Neta Alexander, is *Failure* (Polity Press 2019)). His books have been translated into French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese and Italian. He is currently working on a study of the new political lives of caste in India.

**Agency** constitutes a growing “list of things” that resist the radical split between the classifications of nature and culture. This list of things is mostly derived from juridical cases and controversies involving intellectual property (copyrights, patents, trade marks, etc...) from the start of the enclosures of the commons in the 17th century until today and from various territories of world integrated capitalism. The colonial concept of intellectual property relies upon the fundamental assumption of the split between culture and nature and consequently between expressions and ideas, creations and facts, subjects and objects, humans and non-humans, originality and tradition, individuals and collectives, mind and body, etc... Each “thing” or controversy, included on the list, witnesses a resistance and a hesitation in terms of these divisions. Agency calls these “things” forth from its list via varying “assemblies” inside exhibitions, performances, publications, etc... Each assembly speculates around possible inclusions. Agency looks at the operative consequences of the apparatus of intellectual property for an ecology of diverse art practices and aims at generating their singular modes of existence.

**Arturo Escobar** is an activist-researcher from Cali, Colombia, working on territorial struggles against extractivism, postdevelopmentalist and post-capitalist transitions, and ontological design. He was professor of anthropology and political ecology at UNC, Chapel Hill, until 2018, and is currently affiliated with PhD Programs in Design and Creation (Universidad de Caldas, Manizales, Colombia) and in Environmental Sciences (Universidad del Valle, Cali). Over the past twenty-five years, he has worked closely with Afro-descendant, environmental and feminist organizations in Colombia. His most well-known book is *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (1995, 2nd Ed. 2011). His most recent books are: *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (2018); *Pluriversal Politics: The Real and the Possible* (2020); and *Designing Relationally: Making and Restor(y)ing Life*, with Michal Osterweil and Kriti Sharma (forthcoming).

**Elof Hellström** works at the point of intersection where art, architecture and pedagogy meet, often with text and radio, and through collaborative and collective practice. The body of work of Mapping the Unjust City is a collaborative process exploring aesthetics and pedagogy in relation to ownership and capital flows in cities. By tracing the interrelationships between the abstract and the concrete, the ambition is to visualize and distribute information to promote consciousness and action. The group was formed in 2015 in Stockholm with members working in the fields of art, design, architecture and aesthetics. Since then the group has worked with mappings and cartography in the form of sound pieces, video essays, photography, text, and maps. Group members include Maryam Fanni, Elof Hellström, Åsa Johansson, Sarah Kim, Paula Urbano.

**Anna Hydén** works with participatory and pedagogical processes within the expanded field of design. She studied at the Child Culture Design Masters programme at HDK, The Academy of Art and Design, The University of Gothenburg and has since worked for the city of Gothenburg with city planning, dialogue and co-design. Anna is currently a project manager at Röhsska museum, developing design pedagogical methods together with children and youth.

**Mahmoud Keshavarz** is a Senior Lecturer in Design Studies at the University of Gothenburg and a Research Associate at the Engaging Vulnerability program, Uppsala University where he holds docent in Cultural Anthropology. His research focuses widely on the politics of design and the design of politics with a

particular focus on the violent yet imaginative capacities of materialities of borders and (im)mobility. He is author of *The Design Politics of the Passport: Materiality, Immobility and Dissent*, Co-editor-in-chief of the journal *Design and Culture* and founding member of *Decolonizing Design*.

**Nina Valerie Kolowratnik** is an architect, researcher, and PhD in Law candidate at the Human Rights Centre at Ghent University. Her research focuses on Indigenous peoples' knowledge in settler-colonial legal and human rights frameworks, forced migration and notational systems. She's the author of the book *The Language of Secret Proof: Indigenous Truth and Representation* (Sternberg Press, 2019). Since 2014 she has been teaching on borderlands, migration and counter narratives at Columbia University GSAPP and Vienna University of Technology. In 2016 Kolowratnik received the Outstanding Artist Award in Experimental Tendencies in Architecture by the Austrian Federal Chancellery. Kolowratnik holds an MArch from TU Graz (2010) and a MS in Critical, Curatorial and Conceptual Practices in Architecture from Columbia University GSAPP (2013).

Thomas Marriott is a PhD candidate in Design at Goldsmiths University, London. His PhD research, which examines use of body-worn video cameras by police in England and Wales, draws on design, sociology, and science and technology studies and sits at the intersection of design and social research. The project has involved the design and production of research devices which have been used with police officers during fieldwork as a way of facilitating and prompting conversations about the multiple roles of capturing technologies within policing. He is interested in how design can be used as a tool to critically question the role and implications of technology in societies.

**Christina Zetterlund** is craft and design historian with history writing practices where craft and design become a perspective for analysing social conditions. She is active as associate professor and researcher at Linneaus University (Växjö) and as curator for the project *Re-learning the archive (Lära om arkivet, at Designarkivet Pukeberg)*. She continuously works with various collaborators among them is Hälsinglands museum (Hudiksvall) in forming the archive of the jewellery artist and the Roma human rights activist Rosa Taikons workshop. In 2018 she worked together with glass workers, *The Glass Factory (Boda Glasbruk)*, and *The Peoples House in Kosta* to stage the exhibition project *During the Lunchbreak* about the workers skills and agency and how this was expressed in the 'frigger making', in the free-time experimentation. In 2018 she collaborated with Magnus Ericsson in curating *Slöjd Stockholms* craft residence *Plats för det handgjorda* at the Ethnographic museum in Stockholm and Husby. *Konst & Hantverksförening*. Christina is also active as researcher and publishes her research widely. Currently she conducts the research project 'Design history in other geographies' in collaboration with *Åjtte Museum (Jokkmokk)* writing histories from Småland and Sápmi.

---

Updated: 2021-09-21

Address: IASPIS, Maria skolgata 83, 2nd floor

Phone: +46 8 - 50 65 50 00

E-mail: [info@iaspis.se](mailto:info@iaspis.se)