



HDK-VALAND – HÖGSKOLAN FÖR KONST OCH DESIGN

Rewinding Internationalism

An Exhibitionary Inquiry on the Political Imaginary

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Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i konstnärlig gestaltning vid
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Fakultetsopponent:

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Abstract

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'Rewinding Internationalism: An Exhibitionary Inquiry into the Political Imaginary' investigates *the relationship between exhibition making, processes of inquiry and the political*. The project originates from, and takes place through, my own practice as a curator and aims to articulate how this relationship can be understood as mutually generative. It focuses on the affordances of exhibition making, its operations and processes; its spatial, formal and experiential possibilities. As these affordances, it is proposed, can both facilitate inquiry and engage the political, this project seeks to contribute to the relatively limited existing discourse in this area.

The broad terrain that these three related frameworks (exhibition, inquiry and the political) demarcate can be loosely understood as a discourse on the curatorial that has emerged since the 1990s in a globalised art system of exhibitions, institutions and biennials. The principal contours of these debates include early claims on the political through the epistemological processes of the curatorial as distinct from the 'practical tasks' of exhibition making, the development of the 'research exhibition' as genre, through to recent experiments in exhibition making that overtly resist representing ideology. Recently a renewed focus on the exhibition through both discursive registers and specific practices has broadly distinguished between the 'onto-epistemological' claims made for exhibition in more generalised terms from the detailed discussion of exhibition's practical 'field of operations'. This project takes account of, and sits within, the context of these discussions and practices. It identifies an imbalance within the discourse whereby an overemphasis on the onto-epistemological does not take account of the numerous fields of operations of exhibition making: its strategies of analysis as well as its specific spatial, scenographic and experiential conditions.

The central contribution of this project to the field lies in a proposed rebalancing of these two registers – the onto-epistemological and operational – when considering the relationship between exhibitions, processes of inquiry and the political. Through detailing an unfolding practice (specifically the realisation of the travelling museum exhibition *Rewinding Internationalism*) the project proposes a complex *interaction* between them, foregrounding how exhibition making enacts and instantiates a process of inquiry while engaging the political.