

**Green Art Lab Alliance—Mid term meeting and an Open seminar on ecological sustainability, exhibition production and design.**

21–24 of May 2014 at Riksställningar premises in Visby, Sweden.

**Participating partners:**

Maria Tuerlings	DutchCultur/Transartist (Holland)
Marie Fol	DutchCultur/Transartist (Holland)
Tamara Janashia	GeoAIR (Georgia)
Sophia Lapiashvili	GeoAIR (Georgia)
Marta Gracia	Art Motile (Spain)
David Franklin	Art Motile (Spain)
Gemma Lawrence	Creative Carbon Scotland (Scotland)
Luke Ramsey	Julie's Bicycle (England)
Marie Le Sourd	On the Move
Gaetano Carboni	Pollinaria (Italy)
Aleksandra Gajda	Ujazdowski Castle CCA (Poland)

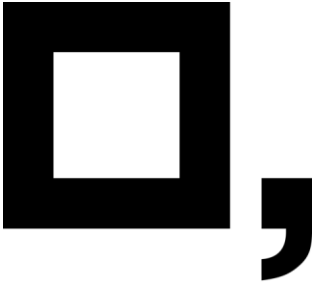
**Participating the open seminar:**

Paula von Seth	Artist (Sweden)
Maria Kotlyachkova	Curator (Sweden)
Eva Svensson	Eskilstuna Folkhögskola, teacher (Sweden)
Mårten Carlsson	Eskilstuna Folkhögskola, teacher (Sweden)
Malin Lobell	Artist (Sweden)
Fredrik Sandblad	Växjö Konsthall (Sweden)
Nicolas Hansson	Växjö Konsthall (Sweden)
Madeleine Näs	Växjö Konsthall (Sweden)
Jinger Bremberg	Artist (Sweden)
Victoria Lagne	Stiftelsen Rosendals Trädgårdar (Sweden)
Ida Hansson	Survival Kit Umeå (Sweden)
Lars-Erik Wahlberg	Sörmlands Museum (Sweden)
Johan Pousette	IASPIS (Sweden)
Ulrika Jansson	Artist (Sweden)
Helena Hildur	Art Lab Gnesta (Sweden)
Mona Malmström	Artist (Sweden)

**Guest speakers:**

Dr TJ Demos	Writer (England)
Eva Bakkeslett	Artist/Curator (Norway)
Gustav Löfgren	Riskutställningar (Sweden)
Mathieu Vrijman	Artist (Sweden)
Sylvia Grace Borda	Artist/Curator (Canada)
Catherine Lee	Bambo Curtain Studio (Taiwan)
Mats Bigert	Artist (Sweden)

In total 34 persons participated in the open seminar and the evening activity.



## **Starting point**

The Swedish climate policy has been developed in recent years towards greater EU integration and deeper international cooperation. Sweden shows leadership both nationally and internationally and is actively working to powerfully reduce their climate impact and rapidly phase out of fossil energy dependence.

Riksställningars environmental policy says that Riksställningar should in all of their activities (production, distribution, dissemination of knowledge and administration) actively contribute to ecologically sustainable development and develop goals and action plans coordinated with Swedish Travelling Exhibitions daily work. Environmental work should permeate the daily work and Riksställningar should continually strive to reduce the environmental impact, especially in terms of car and truck transportation, chemical use in the exhibition production and reduce waste. Being a state agency this policy is connected with the government of Sweden's own ambitions of working towards a more climate friendly society.

## **Summary of the event**

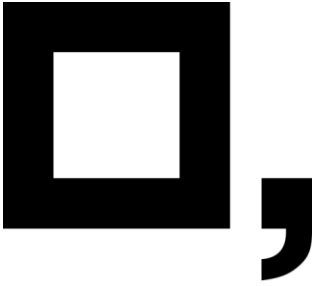
With the seminar on ecological sustainability, exhibition production and design Riksställningar wanted to collect various actors within the contemporary art field in Sweden that, in different ways, are working with issues relating to ecology and sustainable development. By doing so Riksställningar wished to strengthen the Swedish field but above all to help create new contacts with project partners. By bringing together these different people and organizations to contribute to the seminar new knowledge and new networks were created that can foster future collaborations and strengthen Green Art Lab Alliance as such.

### *The open seminar*

All the speakers were invited to bring to the table, different aspects of art and ecology so that the seminar could discuss how contemporary art can function as an active party in issues regarding sustainable development and ecology and how the arts create awareness and concretize these issues to the public. How can artistic practice highlight these issues and can art assist researchers within this field by pointing out alternative routes and solutions to these problems?

Green Art Lab presented by representatives of the two initiating organizations, Maria Tuerlings from Dutch Culture | Trans Artists (NL). Luke Ramsey from Julie's Bicycle (UK). This was a good starting point for the seminar in the way that the participants got a deeper understanding of the projects background, practice and aims for the future.

HIAP - Helsinki International Artist Programme will present their new residency program Frontiers in retreat. The project manager and artist Sylvia Grace Borda



talked about this new program and how it will serve as a platform to promote a multidisciplinary dialogue around issues of sustainable development and ecology. She exemplified with examples from her own artistic practise.

RESPONSE-ABILITY & GENTLE ACTIONS was name of Eva Bakkeslett lecture. She is an artist and cultivator in the crossover between art and ecology. In her work she questions and challenges the social, cultural and environmental systems that surround us. Her lecture focused on the exhibition Gentle Actions that was a process based interdisciplinary happening focusing on art, ecology and actions that took place in Oslo in 2010.

Gustav Löfgren works as material and design technician at the Riksställningar and he talked about the complexity of questions that arises when one adopts a sustainability perspective on exhibition production. With his experience from working with touring exhibitions he gave the seminar some concrete examples on what one can think of while planning an exhibition and to decrease the impact on the environment.

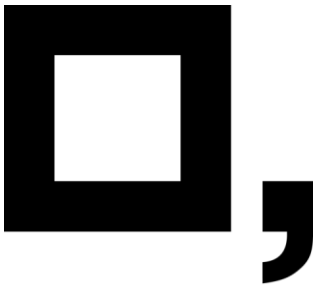
Kultivator is an experimental venue for organic farming and visual arts with its headquarters in Dyestad, Öland, Sweden. Since 2005 they have initiated and pursued various art projects both locally and globally. In this lecture Mathieu Vrijman, co founder of Kultivator, gave examples from the collectives practice and how they combined art, ecology and activism.

Catherine Lee from Bambo Curtain Studio talked about the Plum Tree Creek Project in Taiwan that aims to promote cross-cultural exchanges by providing a meeting point for visitors from national and international art related fields, for short visits or specific projects. This lecture gave an insight in how contemporary art can function within a local community and help to draw attention to the changes in the environment.

Mats Bigert from the artist duo Bigert & Bergström talked about their artistic practice, often located at the intersection of man, technology and nature. He illustrated this with examples from their art production. Since the seminar had seen the screening of Weather War the evening before the discussion became even more in-depth.

T.J. Demos writes widely on modern and contemporary art and his essays have appeared in journals such as Grey Room, October, Third Text, and Nka. Attendant to developments in environmental crisis, postcolonial studies, and artistic practice, he has recently edited a special issue of the journal Third Text on "Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology". This project was the starting point for TJ Demos lecture.

On the evening of May the 23<sup>th</sup> Riksställningar arranged a screening of Bigert & Bergström's film The Weather War at Folkets Bio. The screening was followed by



dinner buffé. This activity was an excellent way for the seminar to get to know each other more and engage in networking.

#### *Optional day*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May Riksställningar organised a trip to Fårö in the north of Gotland. We visited the Bergman Center where we had a guided tour at the museum dedicated to the life and work of the filmmaker Ingmar Bergman. We had a Bergman safari where we by bus visited a number of locations where Bergman filmed some of his movies.

The participants were:

Peder Wennersten	Riksställningar
Marie Fol	Transartist
Marta Gracia	Art Motile
David Franklin	Art Motile
Tamara Janashia	GeoAIR
Sophia Lapiashvili	GeoAIR
Catherine Lee	Bambo Curtain Studio

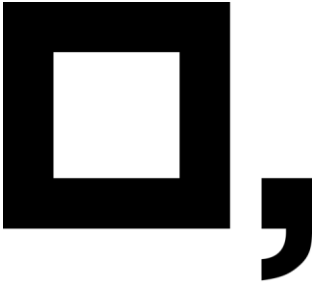
#### **Summary**

One of the overall goals for Green Art Lab Alliance is to create new networks that can strengthen the work within the creative- and arts sector in Europe towards a more sustainable world. The open seminar allowed this to happen by letting the Swedish sector get an opportunity to meet with people and organisations that deal with similar issues in their practice. For Riksställningar it was a great way to increase our own awareness of how one can work as an organisation to become more environmental friendly. After all Riksställningar environmental policy states that these issues should permeate the practice on all levels in the organisation.

#### **Main outcomes**

Riksställningar wanted to bring together Swedish practitioners within the discourse of art and sustainability, that often work isolated from each other, to meet at a seminar that would give a broad description on how different actors work nationally and internationally. By doing so Riksställningar wished to help to create new networks and encourage new collaborations with the partners of Green Art Lab Alliance. Riksställningar has learned from this that the Swedish sector needs a long term support in deepen these relations and we hope to continue doing so. Riksställningar has noticed though that the new networks have lead to actual interactions between the Swedish participants and the partners. For example was Kultivator invited to attend a conference hosted by GeoAIR in Georgia. Riksställningar will continue its dialogue with the Swedish sector to understand more how we as an state agency can support the development of further collaborations and projects.

#### **Communication and PR**



The seminar was communicated directly to the Swedish sector via email, social media and meetings. Riksställningar also send a press release communicating the seminar to the public. Our target group was people and organisations that are working within the discourse of art and sustainability. The target group consisted of about a hundred people.

During the open seminar Riksställningar communicated via twitter and Facebook. Riksställningar filmed and live streamed the open seminar and it is also documented on our website.

### **Reflection**

Riksställningar always conduct a survey after each activity that we host. The response for the open seminar was overall positive. Here are some quotes from the participants:

"The seminar was a very good opportunity for art professionals from different parts of the world to meet. I think it is favourable if an organisation as Riksställningar, who have good connections, continues to initiate and conduct similar meetings."

"Meet all the participants from the other organisations. The evening activity with film and mingle afterwards was a great way to get to know the others. I enjoyed most of the lectures."

"It was good to gain insight into other artists practice which was inspiring and it was a very inclusive atmosphere which supported an open conversation"

### **Film documentation**

<http://www.rikstallningar.se/greenartlab>

### **Press release**

<http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/rikstallningar/pressreleases/green-art-lab-om-ekologisk-haallbarhet-och-konst-som-paaverkar-998761>

### **Riksställningar**