

Malin Pettersson Öberg  
Mikaela Steby Stenfalk

# MODEL ARCHIVE

## A WITNESS TO THE CITY

Arvinius + Orfeus



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# 0. The Model Archive

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Malin Pettersson Öberg

WHO BUILDS THE city and for whom? How do we organise our lives together? The miniature world invites us to dream, Bachelard writes in *The Poetics of Space*: ‘The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature. Platonic dialectics of large and small do not suffice for us to become cognizant of the dynamic virtues of miniature thinking. One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small.’<sup>1</sup> But dreams and visions – this ability to look at the world from above and move around its parts – must surely entail a certain responsibility?

A housing inquiry from 1895, presented in the book *Storstockholms bebyggelsehistoria*, shows that every fourth person in the working population at the time lacked proper accommodation, and that seventy percent were estimated to lack the proper ‘air space per person’ which, from a medical point of view, was considered minimal. That is, fifteen to twenty cubic metres or a floor space of five to seven square metres. Eight years later, the housing shortage had worsened and rents had increased by approximately thirty percent. A new inquiry showed that the air space per person in the

newly produced apartments at Östermalm exceeded one hundred cubic metres. But despite the difference in space, the rent levels of the smaller apartments were considerably higher: 3.95 Swedish Kronor compared to 2.92 Swedish Kronor per cubic metre. ‘That is, the most expensive flats are the cheapest.’<sup>2</sup>

In the model archive of the City Planning Department of Stockholm, nearly five hundred models are stacked on shelves, in drawers, and in cupboards. A Stockholm-in-miniature unfolds before our eyes; a city whose parts can be moved around. Can the archive as a space, in its capacity as a model world, time capsule, storage space – for realised as well as unrealised ‘visions’ – become a tool in comprehending the city and our understanding of why it looks the way it does?

Ola Andersson describes modernist city planning and the reconstruction of Stockholm in his book *Vykort från Utopia*. The architects’ obsession with giving the city a new shape: modernist facilities and function separated zones. What do they do to life in the city? What characterises urbanity and how can the city facilitate the exchanges between people that he considers to be its most important function? ‘Any airport that is not a centralised facility, following predetermined routines and programs, is a nightmare,’ he writes. ‘But a city is not a large house and a house is not a small city. The difference between buildings and cities is not a difference in scale but a typological difference. No facility can achieve a dignified or functioning environment for urban life, or create the space of unpredictability that only an urban structure can offer.’<sup>3</sup>

In *Species of Spaces*, a sort of inventory of the rooms and locations that surround us, Georges Perec describes what he perceives as uninhabitable spaces: ‘The architecture of contempt or display, the vainglorious mediocrity of tower blocks, thousands of rabbit hutches piled one above the other. The skimped, the airless, the similar, the mean, the very precisely calculated. Shanty towns, townships, the hostile, the grey, the anonymous, the ugly. The corridors of the *Métro*, public

baths, hangars, car parks, factories, barracks, prisons...<sup>4</sup> The list continues. Perceps never mentions the word *modernism* in his text, and the city he departs from is Paris. But do we not recognise ourselves? Who would really want to live in a modernist facility?

An equally critical, but perhaps more hopeful, image of the modernist project in Sweden is given by Yvonne Hirdman in her text *The Happy 30s – A Short Story of Social Engineering and Gender Order in Sweden*.<sup>5</sup> She describes her fascination with the nearly utopian idea which formed the basis of the Swedish welfare state and ‘The People’s Home’: The idea that it is the duty of a society to produce happiness for its members. But what happens when the few are to define ‘happiness’ and ‘a good life’ for others? Abuse is inevitable, Hirdman claims. In her dissertation, *Att lägga livet tillrätta*, she writes: ‘When people were to be arranged under norms and concepts of “how it should be” there were risks for abuse. When politics were unfolded over previously “dark” areas there were risks for abuse. This also goes for unintended consequences of the good society’s “gifts” that transform citizens into children, clients, “users”. It is about how people are viewed – from above and down.’<sup>6</sup>

To create a form. To press it down over a mass; to make an imprint. To look down over a city and decide which buildings to keep. To create a pattern – perhaps a hand fan – which is only perceivable from above, from a bird’s eye view. To never, ever, dwell at a worm’s eye view. To zoom out, scale down, enlarge, scatter. To surveil, intervene, withdraw, observe.

The model archive at Stockholm’s City Planning Department took its current shape in the 1960s, when the city switched from fabrication of models in scale 1:1000 to 1:500. The models became twice as big and the plan was to construct blocks that could be assembled into one large model of Stockholm, like a giant puzzle. The project was never completed, and in 2010 a huge cleaning operation took place in which around twenty tons of models were

thrown out. Employees at the Model Unit fear that the ‘five hundredth city’ is next in line. It is nonetheless nearly museumlike – a historical relic, having lost its function. When does an artefact transcend from ‘utility’ to the museum’s ‘graveyard’? In this gradual transition, how can we defend an artefact’s value and right to remain, despite a different purpose?

In the 1930s, Walter Benjamin wrote about collecting in his unfinished *Arcades Project*: that it is distinguished by objects that have been detached from their original context in order to enter into another – in a typology of objects with similar qualities. ‘Collecting is a form of practical memory and of all the profane manifestations of “nearness” it is the most binding.’<sup>7</sup> He describes how a new piece arises from the sea like an island to enter into the completeness of the collection. In a cupboard with only churches stands *Engelbrektskyrkan* on a round platform. The original has been painted blue, to be distinguished from the white copies. Almost everything in the archive is white and somehow elevated from its surroundings.

*Haifa, London, New York, Kolonisten, Flygmaskinen, Filmen.* The names open associations and tell of their time. In Frihamnen the blocks were named after other cities in the world, with which trade was taking place. Block names have lived a protected life – many people do not know the name of their own block. Street names create more interest, and have carried many of society’s important functions. In 1920, after a name revision in the late nineteenth century, with the purpose of bringing order to the city’s names, The Place-Names Committee was established. It became part of the vision to construct a modern society and a rationally organised, well-functioning city.

At the entrance level of Stockholm’s City Planning Department there is a sign with a paragraph from the Planning and Building Act. It says: ‘In this act there are regulations about planning of ground and water and construction. The regulations aim at, with



regards to the freedom of the private individual, promoting a societal development with equal and good social living conditions and a good and long term sustainable habitat for the people of today's society and for future generations.'<sup>8</sup>

Future time. Past time. Dreamtime. How does the shape of the city relate to the shape of our lives? Considering the hierarchies that seem to have formed the emergence of Stockholm – visible in the scale of models, in where and how the city has been demolished, built and planned, and by whom, in the obvious separation between centre and periphery – it is difficult to take the paragraph seriously. When are we allowed to be part of building a city that does not sort its citizens into compartments, or push them further and further out in a periphery? In the Swedish model society, when are we invited to dream?

#### NOTES

1. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 169.
2. Ingemar Johansson, *Storstockholms bebyggelsehistoria*, my trans. (Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1987), 313.
3. Ola Andersson, *Vykort från Utopia*, my trans. (Stockholm: Dokument Press, 2012), 43.
4. Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin, 2008), 89.
5. See: Yvonne Hirdman, 'The Happy 30s – A Short Story of Social Engineering and Gender Order in Sweden,' i *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*, eds. Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010).
6. Yvonne Hirdman, *Att lägga livet tillrätta*, my trans. (Stockholm: Carlsons, 2010), 17.
7. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1999), 205 [H1a, 2].
8. The Swedish Government Offices' legal database, The Planning and Building Act Chapter 1:1, my trans. (Stockholm: Government Offices, 2011), <https://rkrattsbaser.gov.se/sfst?bet=2010:900>.



The archive room at the City Planning Department of Stockholm, during the film production of *The Model Archive*, 2017. *Model Archive*, 2017.

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### 0. The Model Archive

Malin Pettersson Öberg

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Mikaela Steby Stenfalk

IN THE DEPTHS of the City Planning Department's brick building at Fleminggatan 4 in Stockholm, a treasure is hidden. There, within locked doors, the city outside is transformed into a sea of models. Inside the Model Unit's rooms, the city is reduced and simplified. At the same time, it unfolds – both forwards and backwards in time, even into alternative realities through forgotten proposals for architectural competitions, or urban development plans that were never realised. In still unrevised plaster models, we can remember a former city and in three-dimensional prints, we can visualise plans for the city's future. A city in miniature, a model and a copy. To move through the model archive is to move through scale, space, time and dream all at once.

Although the archive and its content affects the residents of the city, few people have access to the space of the Model Unit. In some cases, one or two models may find their way out into the foyer of the City Planning Department, but most of the time, the models remain in their deep basement. However, we do have a chance to visit the archive through Malin Pettersson Öberg's film *The Model Archive* (2017).

In the film, the model city not only stretches through time, space

and dream, but also aims to make sense of our time by touching upon philosophy, politics, history and societal debate. During the year of the film's production, the housing issue was highly topical in Stockholm, and although a record number of building permits were granted, almost twice as many were required to meet the city's demand. With a critical and exploratory voice, the film invites us to look at our surroundings through these white, carefully modelled objects.

This book is in turn an elaboration and further development of the questions raised by the film, which, some six years later, are as relevant as when *The Model Archive* was filmed. In the book, Malin Pettersson Öberg and I have invited people working within art, architecture, urban planning, literature and film studies to share their reflections based on fragments of the film script. For almost every fragment, there is an entire chapter in the book.

We begin inside the archive itself, with an interview with the modeller Harri Anttila, a person who, in addition to animating the content of the archive through his words, has been significant for the making of the film (and thus the book). We then move outwards towards the city via another section of the City Planning Department, the Places-Names Committee, where the official Kristian Rosengren opens the door to the names of the quarters and streets. What visions are reflected in the city's names?

Once in the actual city, our thoughts swing back and forth between model and city. In architect Pedro Ignacio Alonso's text *Model Cities* he inquires which of the city's successes and failures we can read in the models? And, is the city in fact an archive of reconstructed models? Next, the architectural trio Secretary takes us inside the dwellings through their comprehensive study of the 14,495 building permits granted in the year the film was made. It turns out that housing policy and its written regulations seep into the most intimate part of our private lives: *Where (and with Whom) You Sleep*.

The importance of the word becomes increasingly apparent in the conversation between architect Malin Zimm and Malin Pettersson Öberg. The conversation begins with the word ‘archive’ and how it etymologically derives from both ‘origin’ and ‘last place’ – just as the model can be seen as an original as well as a copy. Author and dramaturge Magnus Florin then takes us on a journey into the mythical world of miniatures. What associations, worlds and fairy tales can the small, white model quarters take us to? And which stories can help us understand these architectural tools?

From literature, we move on to the world of film, specifically essay films and archival art. Film scholar Olivia Eriksson gives an analysis of *The Model Archive* and the exhibition space *Boxen* at ArkDes – Sweden’s National Centre for Architecture and Design, which was inaugurated in 2018 with the exhibition *The Model Archive*. In her text, Eriksson highlights the question of responsibility in film production, which is reflected within architecture and urban planning. The text introduces the final part of the book in which two further chapters illuminate the origins and context of *The Model Archive*.

A conversation with Axel Wieder, former director of Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation and the commissioner of *The Model Archive*, discusses the origins of the film and the exhibition *The Promise* (2017). Finally, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Head of Curators at ArkDes, takes us all the way from Giovanni Battista Piranesi’s fragmented Rome, via *The Model Archive*, to artist Amie Siegel’s film portrait of architectural offices in contemporary New York. Mínguez Carrasco’s analysis, *Stockholm: Fragmented City*, concludes the book.

Through these texts and conversations, the model city at Stockholm’s City Planning Department is allowed to unfold again – this time in our minds – and brings to life the complex nature of the urban planning process. *Who builds the city and for whom, and how does the shape of the city relate to the shape of our lives?* What is the potential

of the archive today and in the future, and how can architectural models serve as tools for both dreaming and examining the existing city? What are the responsibilities of architects and urban planners, and what possibilities does the citizen have to influence their city?

The film and the book are also a preservation of sorts— a time capsule of the changing model city that is processed daily by the modellers at the Model Unit. As in many other archives, there is a constant threat of clearing out, lack of space and questioning of relevance.

However, this particular archive is unique in its dual role as archive and workshop. As in the real city, the model city is rebuilt, demolished, densified – roads are planned and housing is built. But the work process in the model city is faster and less nostalgic than in the real city, which represents both its strength and weakness. As a tool for urban planners, the model is effective – a sketch that can be discarded as quickly as it is created. But if we look closely, the models can also become a means for something completely different; a tool for examining both the visions that gave us the city we now have (or could have had), as well as the order that will shape its future.



**Models at the City Planning Department of Stockholm, 2018.**









**Model of Kungsträdgården, The City Planning Department of Stockholm, 2018.**





Trees in one of the models, The City Planning Department of Stockholm, 2018.

## 2. Life in the Archive

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### Conversation with Harri Anttila

*A conversation between Malin Pettersson Öberg and Harri Anttila, modeler employed at the City Planning Department of Stockholm for twenty-nine years. The meeting took place inside the Model Unit at Tekniska Nämndhuset in Stockholm, on 23 February 20017.*

HARRI ANTILTA: In a way, perhaps we meet six years too late. Then we had the big ‘cleansing’. I think we threw away twenty tons of models . . . Time catches up with you. Models are very bulky, it is cumbersome work. A slow technique in that way. Then you have to house them, which we did until around 2010.

We then had a storage room twice as big in the house next door. It contained material from old architectural competitions, such as the one for Husarviken in 1989. But competitions are won, prize money is paid out and then, nothing. A competition in itself is just a competition and the best proposal must then be further developed here in the building and by the Urban Planning Committee. That stage can be difficult, as we have seen with all the winning competition proposals for the City Library and Slussen over the years. At the Model Unit, we used to have all the old models that testified

to this difficult process. The idea was that they would remain in case the discussion came up again, but now all of that has been thrown out.

MALIN PETTERSSON ÖBERG: It would have been a fantastic archive to keep. Surely all those ideas and visions that did not happen are just as interesting as what did?

HA: Of course. But there we run out of time. Directors are replaced, have new requirements, and the planning officers who were once involved are retiring. New ones are hired, who do not have the same connection to previous projects and may not realise their value. Suddenly the Model Unit has to be evaluated and a decision taken regarding who will look after all the material, then everything can change. When Per Kallstenius – city architect in Stockholm 1984–1989 and 1994–2010 – left, there was such a rift. He often made links back in history and also thought it was fun. But when he left, loose threads were cut.

MPÖ: Exactly, continuity is very fragile. As in all collections and archives.

HA: But while it was painful, it was also refreshing to make a new selection – deciding what to save and what to throw away. Next clean out will probably concern the cabinets with original neighbourhoods in 1:500 scale. After all, they live in a liminal state. They no longer have the power they once had, but they have not yet reached a museum-like state. They are somewhere in between.

In the cleansing of 2010 we were lucky that the City Museum accepted some of our old plaster models. They have a pretty nice collection actually, not to mention their other collections! They have an entire floor of old doors that can be used for film shoots, or

similar. The City Museum has a mission that we do not have, but that we still end up with – to preserve history. It was so nice that they wanted models from our collection, even if it was just a selection.

Something happens when things become the property of a museum, they lose all their function – become museum-like. They die and go to a green meadow where they cannot be touched . . . But the City Museum is an awesome place.

MPÖ: It is interesting to compare what is preserved in different countries. I am thinking of my own experience in France, where cultural heritage is highly valued and receives a lot of support to be preserved, and Sweden, which feels more pragmatic. I am the kind of person who would like to preserve everything.

Shall we go into the archive and walk around? Talk about what is on display, what I have filmed, and highlight the ideas that the models provoke. I am interested in the modernist construction of society, where the visions for community, equality, welfare and standards were included. Inside the archive, we can try to figure out how this actually worked in Stockholm.

HA: What actually happens in this house depends very much on who the planning officers are and how the work is divided geographically. It has not always been entirely painless. Stockholm has a rather scattered shape with its old suburbs, close suburbs, suburbs further away and central parts. Hierarchies form quickly. The inner city has always considered itself most important, while the periphery is less interesting. The further away, the less important and the less time is spent on details.

MPÖ: It is strange that it works that way in Sweden, in a country where we talk so much about equality. The self-perception often

consists of this idea of a socialist welfare state, whose intentions were good. But in reality it is still much of a hierarchical class society. Can you see traces of these hierarchies and divisions here, in the archive?

HA: In the past, the scales showed traces of what was considered important. On the outskirts of the city, it was considered sufficient to have a general plan; at best, a model was made at a scale of 1:1000. In the inner city, however, if something had to be rebuilt, 1:100 scale models were commissioned and studied very closely. This is a clear sign of the hierarchies.

This is one of the older models we have, lower Norrmalm in the 1930s, made sometime in the 1960s. They wanted a big model. It is cast in one piece, all at once, in araldite using a glue or silicone mould. It is incredibly challenging to cast such a large mould, this model is almost like a priest showing that the impossible is possible. It was so challenging to make that it had to remain, despite the clean-up.

MPÖ: It is funny how models have always been white. That you should not get caught up in details. It gives a very special aesthetic and atmosphere to the archive that everything is white..

HA: It gives a nakedness, it is difficult to hide unwanted parts. It might be objectionable if a planning architect has commissioned a model covered with a lot of trees. The trees become like a curtain that hides everything, it communicates that something should not be seen.

MPÖ: A bit like the Greek sculptures, which we have become accustomed to thinking were white. What happens when we find out that they were actually painted in the first place? That we have built



an ideal of beauty on the white, which does not match the originals. After all, if a house is supposed to be black in the end, the reality is completely different and communicates something else than these white models do.

HA : I do not know if I told you, but these brown moulds are original. The originals were made in colour so that they could be distinguished from the white copies. For example, this brown model of Sofiakyrkan is the first one that was made, then a glue mould was constructed to cast copies of the original. These particular ones were made in the 1940s and 1950s and were actually laid out by students at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design (Konstfack), who probably had to do them as practice assignments. At the time, the houses were cut out of plasticine, which is quite unlikely. When you look closely you can see that they are handmade, even though they are so sharp. But in some details you can see that the plasticine does not work as well as plaster – the shapes get a bit rounded.

This model of Engelbrektskyrkan was made by the modeller Oskar Berchtold, an old colleague of mine. He was from Germany, but stayed in Sweden after a biking trip with his brother. He was a trained stucco artist who first worked at the model workshop in Gustavsberg. Eventually he ended up here in the Model Unit and we worked together for a few years before he retired. I saved all his drawing material during the big clean-up. They are really masterful drawings of how to build a model, how all the problems can be solved technically. As long as I am still at the Model Unit, the drawings will be there. But what happens when I retire?

MPÖ : The next person might not understand what it is or why it is important.

HA : Exactly. Maybe I am inspired by what you are doing with your film, but I think I will try to do something with all this material. As a closure also for me.

MPÖ : That is so great to hear. It is a craft, an art form, that is dying. (If you compare it with today's models that are cut out in a machine or pressed out by a printer.)

HA : Yes, it is difficult to cast plaster against plaster so many times and still maintain sharpness. You have to know exactly what you are doing.

On these shelves are 1:500 scale models of the existing city. The idea with them originally was that they would be updated once the working models were set and everything was built. That the existing model city would change with the real city.

MPÖ : So the larger models are of neighbourhoods, while the smaller ones are models for specific projects?

HA : They are working parts in projects, yes. Starting in the city centre, then pretty much the whole of Kungsholmen, Norrmalm, Östermalm . . . But over Östermalm we have very few models, because when was the last time a big project was built there? Since there have been no projects there, there has been no need for models.

The idea was to continue building models across Stockholm until the whole city was represented, but the energy ran out. One idea was to make it possible to buy the castings, for example if someone needed a model of Moderna Museet. It was a very ambitious plan.

MPÖ : So systematic. It is striking that systems are replaced – they become outdated and obsolete, even though someone has put so much work into them. It is a shame not to try to preserve such

things, from the perspective of knowledge or cultural heritage. Was it in the late 1960s that the decision was made to make this large interlocking model across all of Stockholm?

HA : Yes. The models we had from before were at a scale of 1:1000, but it was probably considered too small a scale, even though those models were used for a very long time.

Here is my first house: The Naval War School on Skeppsholmen. After the clean-up in 2010, some models of that area went missing, so much of our work became recreating models of buildings and houses. We also recreated Moderna Museet and the Admiralshuset. Some parts are made of wood and others of plaster – they are like chocolate pralines.

MPÖ : What is it like to work with the city in this way? What kind of relationship do you get with Stockholm as a city? You drive past these houses. It must be special to have made them in miniature.

HA : Yes. I cannot visit the new Moderna Museet without thinking ‘What were the angles on these domes again? What about the lighting here, which never really worked? You could see from the plans how it was intended...’ and so on. It definitely affects my relationship with the city.

# 3. The Names of Stockholm

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3.

## Conversation with Kristian Rosengren

*A conversation between Malin Pettersson Öberg and Kristian Rosengren, official in the Places-Names Committee at Stockholm's City Planning Department. The meeting took place inside the department at Tekniska Nämndhuset in Stockholm, on 13 March 2017.*

MALIN PETTERSSON ÖBERG: At the model archive it is visible how block names and property designations bear witness to their time. Identity, values, dreams and visions are reflected in the names. For example, there are models with names such as *Filmen*, *Flygmaskinen* and *Kolonisten*. I am intrigued by the significance of language here and would like to know more.

KRISTIAN ROSENGREN: I can begin by telling you how we work here. I am an official in the Place-Names Committee here at Stockholm's City Planning Department. We are the ones who come up with the proposals for names, even though it is the City Planning Committee that decides on the proposals. They can decide on a different name, but in practice it is almost always our proposals that are established.

The Place-Names Committee was established as an institution

in 1920 because there was a perceived disorder among the city's names. But as early as 1885 the major name revision took place. Before that, there were four or five instances of 'Hamngatan' in different places in Stockholm. Other streets had more than one name. The name revision was an ambition in line with the construction of a modern society, to which real addresses – where mail could be delivered – belonged. They 'cleaned up' the names and made sure that there were no duplicates. As a result of this work, the Place-Names Committee came into being.

The first thing was to go through the deficiencies of the names and find principles to follow. Names had to be linguistically correct and work well. The street names had the function of being address carriers, just as before the name revision. But it was also considered dangerous if two names could be confused, for example in an emergency. This is still our guiding principle, while also taking into account cultural, historical and linguistic aspects.

As far as the block names are concerned, they are decisive for the property designations. All land has been divided up like a large patchwork across Sweden, and each small part has a unique designation. It is important that these cannot be confused with each other, as they are mortgage objects and largely form the basis of the economy. Countries that lack a system of land division easily fall behind in terms of investment. For example, if it is unclear who owns a property, how big the property is, or if its size can suddenly change. This can discourage banks from using the property as a security for mortgage. Names have important societal functions and connect with everything else.

The Place-Names Committee consists of ten members, eight of whom are experts who come here six times a year. Between meetings, I receive suggestions and prepare documents to which the members respond. My task is to make sure that the name proposals do not already exist in the same or neighbouring muni-

icipalities. Almost all the new names we prepare are developed because the City Planning Department has drawn up a new zoning plan.

MPÖ: Who is on the Place-Names Committee? Is it only people connected to universities and research or can it include artists and writers?

KR: Two of the members are political representatives appointed by the political blocks. The other eight are proposed by the Place-Names Committee and then elected by the City Planning Committee. In the actual work, all are equal members and long discussions about certain names can occur. On one occasion, a political representative wrote a reservation stating that they didn't want to support a certain proposal.

MPÖ: What could this be about?

KR: Discussions usually arise around street names – they create interest. It is good that you care about the block names, because hardly anyone does.

MPÖ: Yes, it is mainly street names that the citizen encounters. But down at the model archive the block names are more visible.

KR: Most people are not aware of the name of the block in which they live. People rarely come into contact with block names. The political representative's reservation concerned whether a certain place should be called 'street' or 'road'. In this case, the politician preferred street to road as they thought it sounded more urban.

MPÖ: Yes, there has been an urban trend. How do you come up with new street names? It seems that many are variations on a theme, like flowers or celebrities.

KR: That is correct. Categories, or group names, are a good support. These started to be used already in the early twentieth century. In certain categories there are many words to choose from, but sometimes they can become narrow or technically complicated. For ‘Kabelverket’ – a development site near Älvsjö – we sat for hours studying cable manufacturing. But either the names were too long or too difficult. To simplify things, we used different types of cables, but then we were approached by the local community association. They were upset because one type of cable that we had used had never been fabricated there and so they thought we had done violence to their history. But we take into account linguistic functionality, not only cultural history.

MPÖ: Do you often begin with the site when you select a theme?

KR: Yes, but it presupposes that there is something historical to depart from. There are many examples of when a category has just been picked – all the author names in Fredhäll for example. As far as I know, none of the authors actually lived there.

MPÖ: Do block names tell us more than street names about a certain place, and the history of that place?

KR: Yes, it might. Block names can be longer and more complicated, because they are not crucial in an emergency. But, as you mentioned earlier, the names reflect their time. For example, there is a lot of discussion about Ernst Ahlgren’s road in Fredhäll because Ernst Ahlgren was a pseudonym for Victoria Benedictsson. Most

people want the name to be replaced by her real name, which I agree with. Unfortunately, there are restrictions on changing the name due to a paragraph in the Cultural Environment Act. The act says that you cannot change traditional place-names unless there are strong reasons, which there are not in this case. Moreover, changing the name means a lot of practical work; signs have to be replaced, maps altered, people have to change their addresses, and so on.

MPÖ: Are there examples of when a name change has occurred?

KR: Yes. We recently changed 'Bällstaåvägen' to 'Bällstaågatan' as the street name was new and turned out to be problematic for the companies registered there. They received many deliveries from abroad where the address was written without å, ä and ö. So 'Ballstaavagen' was often confused with Bällstavägen, a few blocks away. As the name had only existed for a few months, we decided to change it.

Another example is when a part of 'Tunnelgatan' was changed to 'Olof Palmes gata' after Palme's assassination when he was prime minister. But that was a very special event. It was basically a political decision and the change went very quickly. You might think it a bit strange to name the very street where he was murdered.

MPÖ: A bit macabre, yes. But maybe it was part of a collective grieving process that was actually needed.

KR: It is called 'memorial naming' when you name after a person. Today, there are guidelines from the United Nations saying that you should wait at least three to five years after a person has died. Only so that it doesn't happen in affect or trauma. However, we usually say that it is better to wait twenty-five years, to see which people become significant in history.



MPÖ: Is there anything here that defines Sweden? Like the fact that many names are taken from nature, unlike in Paris where many streets are named after politicians, leaders, authors and artists. France has an identity linked to the humanities, while Sweden might be more linked to nature.

KR: In Stockholm we are quite cautious about memorial names. There is a list of criteria that should be met, although they are just guidelines. It is hard to decide who is 'meritable' enough to have a street named after them. Then we have to take into account how easy the name is to spell – if someone has a really special name, it unfortunately falls aside. In the guidelines there is also a funny wording saying that you have to be of Nordic descent or a 'well naturalised foreigner'. We often receive proposals that depart from that rule, for example to name a street after Salvador Allende, the former president of Chile. Many people fled from Chile to Sweden after he was overthrown in the military coup in 1973. There is a strong group of people with Chilean origins who want to get that name through. But we try to avoid memorial names, as I said, as they often become conflictual. Perhaps that is something in the Swedish mentality, that we prefer other types of names to the ones highlighting a unique individual.

MPÖ: One may also think of naming as a kind of historiography – a way of remembering and spreading knowledge. Interesting people might then be worth highlighting for educational purposes, even if they are not very well known.

KR: Yes, we often consider a popular education aspect. For example, there is a block named 'The Housing Lottery' in Äppelviken. It refers to the own-your-own-home period when citizens could win a plot of land from the state. To someone unfamiliar with the story it may

seem like a funny name. But if you look it up, you will learn something. As such it is successful.

MPÖ: How does fiction and fantasy become part of the naming? It is funny with names that arise by themselves. For example, the part of Vasastan that people started calling ‘Siberia’, due to its remote location.

KR: Those names belong to a group of unofficial names called ‘spontaneous names’. ‘Birkastan’ and ‘Röda bergen’ do not exist on the maps either, but the people who live there use them. Spontaneous names get their vitality from people adopting them and they do not need to exist on the maps. They have no address function, but their function is to create a sense of belonging.

Another type of unofficial name is the commercial one, for example ‘Västermalm’ that Skanska tried to launch a few years ago. It was really big in the local papers. Last week a woman called me to ask exactly where the boundary of ‘Lower Kungsholmen’ was, but there is no such definition. She was starting an argument with her friend who said that one of them actually lived in Lower Kungsholmen. It was so amusing! Naming and language really do engage.

MPÖ: Yes, they really do.

KR: Speaking of names that have changed meaning, have you heard of the block ‘The Negro’ in Karlstad? It was created in the mid nineteenth century in the aftermath of the Civil War in the United States. As in Stockholm, documentation is scarce. But there are theories from ‘Språktidningen’ that the block was given its name when the Swedish translation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* came out. The book was about black people’s precarious situation, but today we perceive the name quite differently.

MPÖ: Just like any name that alludes to colonialism. In retrospect these names are often negatively charged and interpreted in a different way than intended.

KR: Exactly. As the block names are more anonymous, the block was called 'The Negro' well into the 2000s. Until they made a new zoning plan for the area and advertised it in all the libraries: 'New zoning plan for the area and advertised it in all the libraries: 'New zoning plan for the Negro block'. There was – quite rightly – a big debate. Then, Karlstad's Place-Names Committee sent a referral to the National Heritage Board, the Land Survey, and the Place-Names Council – all the heavyweight institutions. And they all agreed that the name should be kept for historical reasons. This decision was widely criticised in the media, especially regarding political representation in the public realm.

MPÖ: Aha. It was misperceived, although the ambition was to be open with the past.

KR: Exactly. They actually ended up removing the name without creating a new one. The block is called nothing today. It is complicated with these shifts in meaning. It should never be offensive of course, but you often end up with difficult trade-offs.

Another example is in Rinkeby and Tensta. There was a political ambition to name new pedestrian paths after various nationalities. The Place-Names Committee advised against it as these names could be 'charged'. There was a risk of fuelling antagonism, especially as antagonism already existed between ethnic groups in the area. Finally, it became names with a mill theme – everything is called something with 'mill' in it. Quite inoffensive.

MPÖ: Haha, what fear of conflict.

K R: The mill theme probably existed since the area was built, but more names were needed. Why? Because the police often ended up in the wrong place during their operations. There are several different ground levels on the site and the bridges were used to throw stones down at the passing cars. Since the bridges had no names it was difficult for the police to communicate. So there was a sad background to that naming. In the context, politicians wanted to emphasise multiculturalism, which was a nice thought. But when thinking a few steps further, one realised that instead there was a risk of reinforcing antagonisms.

M P Ö: Everything happening in an uninformed way can go wrong. The question of representation is tricky, especially in an area undergoing rapid change, in terms of new groups moving in and out.

K R: Exactly. Who is to choose which groups should be represented? Representation of male and female names is also debated. There is a bias of course, but this reflects another era – most names are very old. Even though men still have a prominent position, historically it used to be even worse. Since we cannot easily change the names, we have to live with them. Only about four percent are actually memorial names, but they are often debated as they leave a big imprint.





The archive room at the City Planning Department of Stockholm as shown in the film *The Model Archive*, 2017 (still image reconstructed in 2018).





The archive room at the City Planning Department of Stockholm as shown in the film *The Model Archive*, 2017 (still image reconstructed in 2018).



## 4. Model Cities

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Pedro Ignacio Alonso

What is the relationship between the model of a city and the city itself?

There are a number of possible answers to this question. The first that comes to mind (without exhausting the problem) is the proposition that the model shall always be an idealisation of a city; not the city as it is, but the city as it should be.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of city planning and urban design, models relate to projects, and projects are, by definition, abstract tools belonging in the realm of representation. This abstraction reduces reality to only a few elements, and, too often, just to the problem of external form. Cities built from projects are the projection into the urban space of idealisations that were first conceived as models. Because they are cast into the actual scale of the city, models do not represent cities, but cities represent models. The (new) form of the city shall therefore hold a resemblance to the form of the model. This leads us to think that the correlation should be reversed: the model is not the representation of a city, but the city is the re-enactment of the model. In other words, while the model conveys the ideal, the city is its simulacra.

Another question arises: How can we foresee the complexity of

urban life only from considering its resemblance to the shape of an abstract model?

This question is particularly central for the modernist city, conceived as a model for the realisation of a new and ideal world that was to be achieved through the instrumental logics of representations projected into reality. It is instrumental, given that the modernist project was supposed to be a rational, and ultimately scientific endeavour. No doubt, therefore, that the role of representation in the modern city was tinged by experimental research, and the notion of the laboratory became a fundamental paradigm in architecture.

This is clear in Le Corbusier's book *Urbanisme* (1925), where he proudly boasted, regarding his grand urban projects of the early twentieth century, that 'proceeding in the manner of an investigator in his laboratory, I have avoided all special cases, and all that may be accidental, and I have assumed an ideal site to begin with.'<sup>2</sup> That is to say, in order to place an ideal model into the actual city, he needed to conceive the actual city as an abstract model – depriving it from all that would seem accidental, namely, the complexity and unpredictability of urban life. This almost one-hundred-year-old quotation reveals that Le Corbusier 'elaborates first a *solution-type*, in the abstract, [while] its real-life application can wait.'<sup>3</sup> Life has to be suspended until the model of a city finally becomes a city built from a model. Implicit in his approach is the fact that models conveying optimistic visions of social progress are expedient to deny the present with its pressing material necessities. Hence, from this critical approach, models would work as a pure inversion of reality. In such modernist terms, for the model to succeed, the city shall be regarded first and foremost as an abstraction of sorts.

What is also present in Le Corbusier's quotation is the modernist whim to remove architects from the subjectivity of art, turning them towards the objectivity of scientific research. This objectivity

is needed for them to persuade themselves that the model of a city and the resulting city are, somehow, related. Although neither instinct nor human perception would automatically make that connection. The link between the model and the city requires a number of intellectual leaps to be understood; fundamentally including a social convention where we all must agree that a small object made out of cardboard (or plaster, etc.) is equivalent to the city. While today the objectivity of science (so idealised by modern architects like Le Corbusier) has been challenged, the lure of laboratories and (design as) research seem more alive than ever in contemporary architecture.

As pointed out by Ola Andersson, the modernist facility cannot hold ‘the space of unpredictability that only an urban structure can offer.’<sup>4</sup> The same goes for the abstraction of models. Consequently, true experimentation does not occur in the models, but only emerges once the city has been built and lived over a number of years. In other words, for architecture and urban planning, the experiment is no different from reality. The laboratory is the reality. But the reality is nothing but a simulacrum of a model. The experiment, therefore, happens in the simulacra. This should be fine, but when architecture declares itself to be experimental, the guinea pigs consist of people, not form.

The modernist city, however, seems to have followed an idea of a laboratory that may never have existed. This is what we learned from Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar’s well-known contribution on laboratory life and the construction of scientific facts: Through ethnographic work and an anthropological approach to the culture of scientists, they help us to understand the mythical nature of architectural understanding of laboratories.<sup>5</sup>

Further elaborating on Latour and Woolgar’s seminal work, Albena Yaneva and Kostya S. Novoselov’s investigation on the new material graphene demonstrates that labs are far from tidy tokens

of objectivity.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps paradoxically, laboratories are like cities, in a literal sense, in the complexity of manifold encroaching agents, situations and mundane human relationships that are inseparable from the final results of scientific research and experimentation. Dethroned from its modernist idealisation, and freed from the magic spell that modernised cities across the globe in the name of science, cities are still built out of re-enacting a variety of models, becoming a huge accumulation of simulacra. It is, ultimately, an archive of re-enacted models.

This understanding would cast new light on our ways of approaching model archives, such as the one held at Stockholm's City Planning Department in Sweden. This is the contingent relevance of Malin Pettersson Öberg's cinematic essay *The Model Archive*, where she reveals such a space as an archive of originals contesting their scaled-up copies. Perhaps this is the reason why model archives are rare. Together with consuming large amounts of space with objects prone to accumulating dust, they are uncommon because their sheer existence undermines the city's claim to pre-eminence. Stockholm would be a city that bears resemblance to a stack of models. For the city to claim primacy, the original models must be hidden (or destroyed).

A model archive works as a mirror where the city sees itself in horror, realising how different it is from its original model. For this mirror to work, conservation is needed. Not of the actual city, but of the original models. As wonderfully summarised in literature (we may think of Alexandre Dumas or Oscar Wilde), this is the problem of the undesired double that must be concealed, precisely because its very existence reveals the forged status of the impostor. As with mirrors, the ideal image in the reflection is pure representation, an outline that is free from the burdens of reality. The model, that is to say, the abstract image, takes no responsibility for the distortions that its re-enactment will suffer once life is released

from suspension. This is all the more painful when we realise that the experiment was a sounding failure, and the modernist city, like an ugly face in an ageing body, is neither liked, nor desired, by the people it was supposed to home.

Desired futures that are based on optimistic visions of social progress are only capable of gaining strength as they become shared by a community. These imaginaries are not exclusive to architects, but can be propagated by nation states, companies, social movements, and professional societies; and multiple imaginaries can coexist in constant tension. Some imaginaries are supported by public policies, but also by other institutions of power such as the media. In this way, what models convey are socio-technical imaginaries that, in Sheila Jasanoff's terms, are 'collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order'.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, problems arise when these visions are conceived as experimental results of laboratory work, and therefore, they are not shared with anybody by the imposing authority. Deprived from that possibility, optimistic visions of social progress become weak. The city itself becomes a vast accumulation of weak simulacra.

Despite their understandable infrequency, this confrontation between the model and the city would reassert the significance of archiving models. Where else could we keep the idea of the city as it should be? Where else will we have the *primigenius* outline of our dreams and desires for a better city, and by large, society? Where else could we go in search of the lost track of our ageing modernity? Model archives hold the actual modernist dream where their images still stand for its original principles.

As Israeli political scientist Yaron Ezrahi has pointed out, political imaginaries 'refer to fictions, metaphors, ideas, images, or conceptions that acquire the power to regulate and shape political be-

haviour and institutions in a particular society.<sup>38</sup> Architecture and urban planning play an active role in the shaping of society as long as they are first imagined through models. Model archives are preserving something that, therefore, is thoroughly political. Especially so, if, as Ezrahi continues, ‘politics consists of the enactment of imaginaries that legitimate power and authority.’<sup>39</sup> This legitimation survives in the model archive, even if it does not reflect in the actual city. It is a legitimation of the most cared-for phantasies of modernism that makes the archive the place where modernity seizes itself, both its successes and failures.

#### NOTES

1. The term ‘model’ is used here to refer to physical mock-ups, understood as scaled representations of the modern city. It is not proposed in more general terms, such as mathematical models, digital models, etc.
2. Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, *Urbanisme* [1925], cited in Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: The Architectural Press, 1960), 253.
3. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age* (London: The Architectural Press, 1960), 253.
4. Ola Andersson, *Vykort från Utopia* (Stockholm: Dokument Press, 2021), 43.
5. Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* [1979] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
6. Albena Yaneva and Kostya S. Novoselov, *The New Architecture of Science: Learning from Graphene* (London: World Scientific Publishing, 2020).
7. Sheila Jasanoff, ‘Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity’, in *Dreamscapes of Modernity. Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power* eds. S. Jasanoff and S. Kim (London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4.

8. Yaron Ezrahi, *Imagined Democracies: Necessary Political Fictions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.
9. Ezrahi, *Imagined Democracies*.

# Where (And with Whom) You Sleep

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5.

Secretary (Helen Runting, Karin Matz  
& Rutger Sjögrim)

DO YOU CARE about architecture? Could you learn to love it, even?

In exploring this question – which connects quantitative issues of *space* to qualitative issues of *life*, via a short sojourn through a study of floor plans that we compiled in relation to Swedish residential architecture<sup>1</sup> – let us start close and personal. Consider the space that you call home, what we might, in programmatic terms, in aggregate, refer to as ‘housing.’ Do you feel anything? It is hard to imagine a person who has no relation (positive, negative, or other) to housing, even if that relation constitutes a *lack*. Homelessness and housing precarity are both dire situations, which put the body at enormous risk; but even when access to housing has been secured, it is rarely settled forever – housing is an ongoing task that demands significant financial and emotional investment over the course of a lifetime. As philosopher Judith Butler writes, ‘Without shelter, we are vulnerable to weather, cold, heat, and disease, perhaps also to assault, hunger, and violence.’<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises ‘ade-



quate housing’ as part of the right to an adequate standard of living.

Whilst the programmatic concept of ‘housing’ might feel somewhat abstract, developing a relationship with *our own home* seems at first glance rather natural. We spend, after all, a significant portion of our lives within housing, if only to rest weary bones in between other activities and other spaces. Within housing, we sleep, eat, have sex, take care of others, dress, and bathe; we fight, cry, dream, socialise, and hide from the outside world. Housing is also a space for work – this has become a normal state of affairs for many cognitive workers during the COVID-19 pandemic who have been required to ‘work from home’, and many professions (nurses, carers, cleaners, personal assistants, gardeners, physiotherapists, and others) count other peoples’ homes as their workplace, pandemic or not. Even seemingly mundane acts like doing the dishes or putting children to bed constitute acts of social reproduction; as several generations of feminists have argued, these also constitute important forms of labour that muddle the distinction between home and the workplace.<sup>3</sup>

As architects and planners, ‘the home’ emerges as something a little different again: it is a *product* of labour, the outcome of long days and long weeks and long months and long years of collaborative effort and salaried work. It is the result of countless drawings, phone calls, mouse clicks, keystrokes, and negotiations. ‘This is *my* house’ can mean many things for architects – rather than a reference to their own dwelling, this phrase can just as well refer to an unbuilt project or a building that they once drew, rediscovered on a street or in a photograph years later. For architectural historians and theorists, the home is an object of study, or sometimes a testing ground for speculative ideas. For these scholars, housing speaks a secret language, revealing the inner workings and hidden norms of our societies, of what we consider okay and what we consider unac-

ceptable. Housing is thus a mirror and lens that can be used to think with. It is in this capacity that we approach the theme of housing in this short essay.

A space for work, a space away from work, and the outcome of work, housing thus emerges as a complicated technology for living that we might love, hate, appreciate, and lust after in equal measure, depending on who we are, what we do, and who we want to become. But do not be misled by this apparent definitional ‘freedom’. Under neoliberalism, caring is less an option than a responsibility when it comes to the home, and you may have little choice in the matter. Under neoliberal economic theory – which, having come to prominence in the second half of the twentieth century, arguably now saturates many aspects of the governance of society and of self in Sweden – success is secured by the *performance of market logics* by government, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals.<sup>4</sup> Within such a worldview, housing emerges as an ‘economic space’ in which we generate, perform, and communicate success, and our affective relations to home, and to the world around us, are thus reframed as an ‘investment’ upon which we might even expect a future return. Feminist scholars like Melinda Cooper, amongst others, have pointed out how this ostensibly economic position, when expressed in notions like ‘human capital’, has not only radically reframed our relation to markets, but also to home, family, reproduction, and thus to life itself (this is what we might term neoliberalism’s ‘biopolitics’).<sup>5</sup> This has several consequences. For one, we suddenly find ourselves to be the producer, consumer, and product of our homes all at once, where our tastes and accomplishments are put on display. In chasing success, we must also work hard to avert failure: this not only means working hard to pay for housing (ironically increasingly spending time ‘not at home’ as a result), but also working hard to either ensure that our home maintains or increases its value (as in owner-occupied and cooperatively

owned housing) or alternately trying to prevent price hikes that see rents rising unsustainably (a constant concern for renters). Suddenly, from being a human right – and thus a ‘given’ – housing appears to be something that demands enormous amounts of energy, love, time, and money from its inhabitants.

Is *apathy* something to strive for, then? Not exactly. Not caring about architecture is not really an option for anyone. It is especially not one for architects, despite the accusations levelled at the profession that it does just this – here, we might consult Joan Tronto’s recent claim that ‘most architects only care about using ‘things’ to give voice to particular sentiments, especially to power and capital – for this reason, they might care, but they care wrongly.’<sup>6</sup> That is not where we are heading with this, and this is a statement that does more harm than good.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps we started on the wrong foot. Instead of asking you if you think that you could care about architecture, we should have asked you another question: Do you think that architecture could care for you?

At present, in the Stockholm metropolitan region, the answer is: maybe (if you are (very) lucky). A close look at the region’s housing can reveal the dreams and nightmares that haunt the present. Just as we are placed under pressure by the expectations of success and the work of averting failure, so is our housing. In Stockholm, we can definitely say that housing is an infrastructure that is severely under-resourced for doing the work that is expected of it. There is, for a start, on a purely quantitative basis, simply not enough of it. Our region, like many others in Sweden, is officially in the midst of a serious housing shortage. Over three years, Secretary compiled a collection of plans documenting 356 buildings and 14,495 apartments. That material indicates that in 2017, the height of a recent building boom, and based on the 2018 housing projection issued by Boverket, the number of apartments that were approved by the municipalities of the Stockholm Region was 12,382

apartments *short* of what was needed.<sup>8</sup> To compound matters, the painstaking quantitative analysis which we conducted of the 14,495 apartments that were approved also reveals that 25% of all these apartments were studio apartments and 39% were one-bedroom apartments; further, over half (56%) of all apartments were designed for one-person households (that is they were studios below 35 square metres and one-bedroom apartments below 55 square metres).<sup>9</sup>

Shortage intensifies the use of finite spatial resources: when there is not enough to go around, we have to share. When proponents of ‘vacancy chains’ argue that ‘in reality, we are not really lacking housing. The problem is that we do not use the housing that exists optimally’,<sup>10</sup> in many ways they are correct: one can always optimise limited spatial resources by intensifying use. What level of ‘intensification’ do we all agree is survivable, though, at the scale of the metropolis and the population, with respect to the individual body?

The line between ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ intensification might be summed up in the concept of ‘overcrowding’. Overcrowding is measured by way of two different norms in Sweden, both of which revolve around the rather intimate question of where you sleep (and – importantly – who you sleep with). Norm 2, which stems from the 1960s, specifies that not more than two people should have to sleep in a room in an apartment, and there should be a kitchen and living room); Norm 3, which has its roots in the 1980s following the completion of the Million Program, specifies that all household members (including children) should have their own bedroom, except couples (who can share a bedroom), and there should be a kitchen and living room.<sup>11</sup> Under Norm 3, the living room is not counted as a potential bedroom, making all studio apartments by default ‘overcrowded.’ While this latter standard might seem overly strict, it represents a radical form of regulatory generosity. What is most interesting, though, is that no matter which norm you use, overcrowding turns out to hinge on a rather intimate

question: how should we sleep at night – where and beside whom? This, again, is a deeply biopolitical question, particularly if it is a decision being made on our behalf. Sleeping in the lounge room has become so normal in Stockholm that it seems odd to ask the question: Is this (really) okay? In the 1980s, in the heydays of Norm 2, the answer would have been ‘kind of, but not really’: whilst it was fine on an individual level, it was considered problematic as a norm, particularly for some kinds of bodies (the ageing, for instance) who didn’t have the economic means to choose otherwise.<sup>12</sup>

Archival studies expose norms and allow us to problematise objects that we otherwise take for granted. Sometimes they can allow us to peek into the future. When we tell you that 56% of all of the apartments approved in 2017 were designed for one-person households, we are also telling you that in the future, this chunk of housing will not offer the possibility to sleep comfortably in collective forms beyond that of the couple or the single person. It may perform well financially, but what about other performances? Beyond sleeping, what about eating, sex, taking care of others, dressing, bathing, fighting, crying, dreaming, socialising, and hiding from the outside world and others? What happens when these spaces become other people’s workplaces? The spatial precondition for asserting the possibility to *do more than the minimum* is rather simple: you have to *raise your standards*. Within today’s pressurised architectural climate in Stockholm, this might require a sober acknowledgement that minimums are, effectively, norms, and that if it is allowed to ‘run its course’, neoliberal doctrines of the home as an economic space will always push towards a form of zero.

So, if you do not care about architecture, that is okay. Our dreams are of a city where you would not have to, and a housing stock that rather than demanding our love as object, facilitates it as a practice. As such, we imagine an architecture that makes living together possible without sleeping together, just as it allows for

sleeping together without living together, and to work together without disturbing each other's sleep. Radical regulatory generosity is, in other words, once again required.

#### NOTES

1. This is an observation that we explore at greater length in: Helen Runting, Karin Matz, and Rutger Sjögrim, *14 495 Lägenheter: En bok om bostadsbristens bostäder* (Stockholm: Secretary, 2021). This essay draws on material developed in the context of that project, which has been reframed to address the concerns of the present publication.
2. Judith Butler, 'Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance,' in *Vulnerability in Resistance*, eds. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 13.
3. 'Every abortion is a workplace accident', Silvia Federici famously declared in her feminist manifesto 'Wages for Housework', thereby emphasising that for the housewives of the post-War period, the home was not just a workplace, but a site of a particular (affective) kind of unwaged labour. Silvia Federici, *Wages against Housework* (Bristol: Power of Women Collective and the Falling Wall Press, 1975), 2–3.
4. Lecturing in 1979, Michel Foucault described the market under neoliberalism as something that is not simply there, but something that must be actively produced: a logic that is constructed through its practice. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. M. Senellart (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
5. See for instance Melinda Cooper, *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism* (New York: Zone Books, 2017).
6. Joan C. Tronto, 'Caring Architecture,' in *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*, eds. Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2019), 27.

7. Helen Runting, 'Book Review: Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet,' *Journal of Architecture* 26, no. 4 (2021), 559-565.
8. Runting, Matz, and Sjögrim, *14 495 lägenheter*.
9. Runting, Matz, and Sjögrim, *14 495 lägenheter*.
10. In the original formulation in Swedish: 'Egentligen är det inte så ont om bostäder. Problemet är att vi inte utnyttjar de bostäder som finns optimalt.' Maria Pleiborn, 'Använd dyrkarna till att öka flyttkedjorna,' *Fastighetstidningen* (September 2, 2019), <https://fastighetstidningen.se/anvand-dyrkarna-till-att-oka-flyttkedjorna/>.
11. Helen Ekstam, 'Trångboddheten i storstadsregionerna' ('Overcrowding In Metropolitan Regions') (Karlskrona: Boverket (The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning), 2016).
12. This last condition was introduced because 'a large proportion of elderly lived in studio apartments', and whilst 'people living in studio apartments were not seen as a problem, the goal was that you should not for financial reasons be forced to live in a studio as the result of ageing.' Helen Ekstam, 'Trångboddheten i storstadsregionerna', 11.

# The Archive as Original and Copy

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6.

Conversation with Malin Zimm

*A public conversation between the architect and researcher Malin Zimm and Malin Pettersson Öberg, organised at Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm in connection to the exhibition The Promise (2017). The text has been revised and updated through an email conversation in 2020.*

MALIN ZIMM: A model is a sort of structural dreaming – it holds the potential of being realised; and it will stay in that state of holding potential. In preparation for this talk, I did something I always do when there is a very particular issue: I look at the etymology of words. I am such a nerd. One of my most visited websites apparently is *Etymology Online*. Looking up the word archive, and continuing further down the line at the roots of the word, I found some surprising and yet contradictory meanings. If you search for ‘arche’, in a Greek traditional sense, it means ‘beginning’, ‘origin’ and ‘first place’. Somehow, in another depth of the etymology, it means ‘last place’. It equally has elements of ‘governance’ or ‘government’ to it, ‘arche’ being one of the nine pillars of the Antique Roman government of a city. Could you in your work relate to any or all of



these meanings? How would you relate to the question of a first or last place – the archive being either or?

MALIN PETTERSSON ÖBERG: For me, the archive as a ‘first place’ is connected to this idea of potentiality. That it could be a starting point for new visions and ideas for the city, for dreams or a critical reflection. As these models are small and moveable, they give me the impression of a tool box full of possibilities.

MZ: Speaking of form and method, there are explanations for most of your works. I think you call them essay films – ‘essäfilmer’? I love the idea of the essay – the word means ‘attempt’ – and in terms of trying out things or searching the tool box, you have consistently worked with tracking shots. Do you have any thoughts to share about your methods, in terms of the visual language of your work?

M P Ö: In this particular film, and in a few others, I have applied these slow tracking shots along the shelves of the archive. The point is to reveal the space bit by bit rather than all at once, and to create a tension of scale (we might wonder if we are looking at a real city or a model). On top of that, I have worked with the essay format and with weaving together fragments: visual fragments and text fragments. In the film, these visual fragments are made up of trackings along the shelves, through the corridors and the workshop, and of black gaps in between. In the voice-over, the fragments are more ‘seamlessly’ interwoven and consist of twelve chapters. These point in various directions, towards topics and source material relevant to the film’s theme, and contain open questions directly posed to the viewer.

MZ: I understand that this production was made during a quite focused, short time – only a few months – and yet it is a very meditative and tranquil experience for the viewer. You are almost

carried, or guided, by the voice. You deal with time in all your productions, but in this case you deal with time on a double scale. The pace and time of your work, and the pace and time of your narrative production. The tracking shots in your film are so meditative – it makes you travel through the archives of your own mind, if you allow yourself. Yet the reality behind film-making can be quite hectic. Am I right?

MPÖ: Yes, this film was made in a short period of time. I started working on it in November (2016) and it was ready for the opening at the beginning of June (2017). That is quite a short time to produce a film, depending on how you work. I prefer to do a lot of research, but in this case I decided to portray the archive as it is – in its existing state – instead of looking too much into specific models. I chose to make a portrait of the space itself. And the slow camera is for me a way to create focus, a meditative state for the viewer to perceive the work. The spoken comment is quite dense, full of information and references, so it was natural to leave the image material rather ‘simple’.

MZ: Time is the essence of both motion and change, all film-making brings time to the forefront of the work – you need to relate to it. Could we explore the model as a mode of representation, and an aspect, of time? The model as an artefact could either be a representation of something that is to be, something that for some reason will never be, or it could be a representation of something that is already there. We see examples of all three. The model holds the potential of repetition; certain scale models can be repeated and sold, others reproduced as a particular part of the city. The model is an artefact that illustrates time, in a present and future tense. All those temporal aspects are embedded in the artefact. How have you been thinking about the relationship between time and the model?

MPÖ: One thing I come to think of is the aspect of what we choose to save or not save. For instance, when the Model Unit had a large cleaning in 2010, they threw away around twenty tons of models.

MZ: Two thirds of the archive.

MPÖ: Yes. It was mainly models of buildings, proposals for competitions and things that do not exist anymore. It is interesting to reflect on why we keep certain things and not others. Why keep the city that is already out there, and not the city that could have been? The proposals that were actually *not* built might have been more valuable. I am interested in history and in preserving almost everything – I have a very emotional relationship to archives and artefacts. It might be an act of resistance; we have the power to either keep or throw away, and my impulse is always to keep. Archives and artefacts often represent an important function of providing knowledge of our past and about ourselves.

MZ: In terms of deciding what to save, I agree that it can be an imposing situation when it comes down to a selection process in the hands of the people currently working at the City Planning Department. We lay our trust in them to choose whether to keep this artefact of the past or not. In this case, thirty containers of them. Stadsmuseet [The Stockholm City Museum] had the chance to make their selection from this material and they picked a few, but there is still a feeling of great loss. Even though I do not know exactly what was lost, I know that the making of those models required a lot of labour. One loss is that of knowledge, in the long line of craftsmanship related to making plaster models. Here we go – twenty tons later, and not a lot wiser.

MPÖ: Harri Anttila, who has been my contact at the Model Unit through the production of the film, has been working there as a modeller for nearly thirty years. He mentioned that the large clean-out depended a lot on single individuals who were in charge at the time. One of the former city architects of Stockholm was very invested in preserving history, through acts and documents, film-making, et cetera. Under his term of office, everything was kept. Later the decision was made to clean out the models. So, the continuity of the archive is in a fragile state.

MZ: Your film is not a debate article, it is an essay. You bring in the voices of others in your script, and there are quite long quotes at times. The voice-over further enforces the presence of voices, with the wonderful reading of Helena Lopac – one of my favourite voices in Swedish public service radio. I imagine your work as a form of resistance against oblivion, where the script and voices form a choir which tries to keep oblivion at bay.

MPÖ: Yes, in my work it has often felt important to refer to other people's writing, ideas and experiences. We are always relating to what is already existing; what others have written or done before us. In a generous way, I try to show that collective mind: show that we are part of something greater than ourselves, rather than trying to profit from somebody else's work. My intended statement is that we are dependent on each other. I then try to rephrase these quotes and reflections into a new narrative.

MZ: I think that explains very clearly how your film relates to the other pieces in the exhibition *The Promise*: They are all great examples of strategies on how to take care of each other, manifestations of a collectiveness. Your work brings this together beautifully. Thank you, Malin, for sharing your thoughts and showing all of this.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE: You are articulating this whole topic very nicely, Malin Pettersson Öberg. Some of your work reminds me of aphorisms. In Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* there is something beautiful, about a philosophy – a material philosophy – made without having to concretely relate one idea to the next. That 'randomness' I see in your work with the model archive, where it is arbitrary how one model fits to the next, there is no rhyme or reason.

MPÖ: True. Walter Benjamin is one of my references in the film. I love *The Arcades Project*, among many of Benjamin's works. It is a great work of fragments, and an unfinished piece: the mouldability of what is not finished – of what is open to interpretation and might take different paths – becomes visible. I appreciate the lack of a didactic message, the sketch-like qualities. Somehow it also illustrates the difficulty of his mission: to document a city such as Paris, in the midst of a technological revolution. (We must remember that *The Arcades Project* was posthumously edited and published, and we do not know if this was Benjamin's intention. However, we are very grateful for it today.)

MZ: Something we can retrieve from Walter Benjamin here is his thoughts on destruction, finding that the great cities, such as Paris, were created in the same era that also invented the means of destroying them.<sup>1</sup> What we see in the film is a perfect rendering of these two forces at work, in the same frame. The models on the shelves are objects of discontinuity, a destroyed model if you wish. They are at once representing the great city and its inherent destruction. The archive is a 'sleeper' – and this is my own vision into which I am allowing the Benjaminian 'dreamer' – and Malin's camera examines its features while it is sleeping. The dreamer is the viewer, who floats between the states of destruction and of potentiality of these models.<sup>2</sup>

I also enjoy your reference to Gaston Bachelard: the idea that things are enchanted and make us talk in different ways. That the models in the archive can open up a discussion around city planning and decision making more easily than, let us say, a drawing. When thoughts leave the paper and stand up as volumes, they make us talk – how is that?

MPÖ: The three-dimensional experience, perhaps? Because we have bodies and we experience these environments through our bodies. In *The Arcades Project*, that bodily experience is very strongly described.

MZ: Additionally, it is a question of scale. How you relate to the model depends on what scale it has. When the scale is large enough, you can dive into the model more easily. You can see how things stand in relation to each other, where streets disappear and how the landscape meets the buildings – it is a very physical experience. Although when the scale of the model is too small, it becomes too abstract. At that moment, the model turns back towards a two-dimensional sensation and loses its magic.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE: Speaking of the archive and purposes: there is a presentation space at the entrance of the City Planning Department, where current construction projects of the city are on display, through models. The point is to allow a public discourse and enable public participation. In a way, I agree with the fascination of models as something people can gather around and discuss: both as visions and possibilities of space. Exhibited models can become important points of a public negotiation of space and architecture.

There is a legacy to these kinds of representations. Unfortunately, what often happens is that they turn into a more forced process of inclusion. The discussions that take place could potentially be

useful for the decision making, instead they become a tool to legitimise city planning in a more efficient way. Consequently, there is an ambivalence to participation: a process that has an important tradition of democratising development of the public realm becomes a technocratic tool and instead enforces top-to-bottom decisions. Is that something you thought about while making the film – the contemporary purposes of the models as we see them in the archive?

MPÖ: It is something that I often think about, and I agree with you. The process of involving people – letting them see and be part of decision-making – is complex and does not always coincide with the moment when decisions are made, in the end.

MZ: Being an architect, I think it is at least harder to lie – to be deceitful – in the shape of a model than other kinds of representation. Of course, you can use materials to make something look more appetising than it really is, but there is a much larger potential for lies in a two-dimensional visualisation. The model guarantees a more objective representation than what you can get otherwise.

#### NOTES

1. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1999), 97 [C 7a, 4].
2. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 389 [K 1, 4].

# Miniatures about Miniatures

# 7.

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Magnus Florin

Translated by Harry Watson

THE PHILOSOPHER AND historian of science Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) devoted a large part of his life to defining the domain of the scientific way of thinking, which he saw as formed by rational systematisation and theoretical method. But in parallel, there developed in his mental universe a complementary domain – vague, intuitive and difficult to grasp with ordinary concepts. This is what he saw as the realm of the poetic imagination, grounded in immediate spatial and sensual experiences, and at the same time most vivid to us in waking dreams and via literature and art. He investigated this first-hand way of knowing beyond the boundaries of science through the four elements of fire, water, earth and air; and also examined it in his study *The Poetics of Space* [*La poétique de l'espace*, 1958].<sup>1</sup> He writes there about how people's thought-worlds are drawn to and nourished by staircases, cellars, cubby-holes and cupboards, as well as birds' nests, plants and mussel-shells. He devotes one particular passage to miniatures, to the 'miniaturisation' of the world which he sees shaped in stories and in the literature that tends to be called 'fantasy'. As he points out, it is easier said than done to miniaturise in reality, but then the imagined miniature has a strange power to overthrow our imaginative world's stable sense of proportionality.

In the *Natural History* of the Roman writer Pliny the Elder I read



a rather difficult to interpret item about a manuscript of the *Iliad* so small that it could be fitted ‘in a nutshell’ (*Historia Naturalis*, 7:21).<sup>2</sup> ‘In a nutshell’ – a form of words that sounds so familiar we hardly think about it. Something can be summed-up in what is small: popular science offers us international politics, Buddhism, history of music, Africa and the whole cosmos ‘in a nutshell’. But where does the expression come from? For most people it will not be Pliny that comes to mind, but Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. After the whole world has been described as a prison, the play’s eponymous hero, the unhappy prince, cries out: ‘O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams’ (Act 2, Scene 2).<sup>3</sup> If only Hamlet could be free of his nightmares he could, from the smallest place on earth, be free to exercise control over himself and over the boundless expanses of his thoughts.

The *Iliad* in a nutshell – but a small child’s first letters are written large. An S, an L and a T take up space on the white paper. Later in life the letters can be written very small, sometimes out of necessity and compulsion: in wartime captivity and in prison camps, lines can be written in cipher and in miniature on scraps of paper that may be smuggled out. Sometimes miniature writing can be developed into a special art form with its own name: ‘micrography’, the ability to write the smallest letters possible on the smallest possible surface. The philosopher and author Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was such a micrographer. In the Jewish Museum in Berlin I see some of his little notebooks and preserved scraps of paper, with a stream of trains of thought noted with miniscule written characters. I get the impression that the method of writing is bound up with the methodically loose formulation of his great work: the mighty, unfinished and labyrinthine *Das Passagen-Werk* [*The Arcades Project*] about Paris as a nineteenth-century capital city.<sup>4</sup> Another micrographer (with even smaller writing) was the remarkable Swiss author Robert Walser (1878–1956). At the age of about fifty he had

himself committed to a mental hospital and remained there for the rest of his life without doing any more writing – but during the preceding years he produced an immense amount of scribbles, often noted down on envelopes and receipts and written in pencil in millimetre-sized letters. In this way he created for himself a living alternative world, expressed both in the act of writing itself and in its stream of observations, extracts from plays, commentaries, short prose pieces and even a novel. Only long after his death was his handwriting interpreted and the manuscript deciphered – a mass of text corresponding to 4,000 book pages.<sup>5</sup>

The American criminal investigator and crime technician Frances Glessner Lee (1878–1962) has been called ‘the mother of forensic science’ – we recognise the concept ‘forensic’ in Sweden from, for example, the ‘National Forensic Centre’ in the Police Authority. She grew up in a very well-heeled family and as their daughter she received tuition from private tutors and learned traditional female accomplishments. These included sewing, embroidery and interior decoration but also making small miniature objects and dolls’ houses. After her parents died she inherited the family fortune and had the opportunity to get herself a higher education at Harvard in the budding but underdeveloped field of crime technology. It was here, during the 1940s, that she began to utilise her special ‘female’ accomplishments to build small models of interiors where a sudden death had taken place: a murder, an accident or a suicide. The point of the models was to use them as teaching material in regular week-long seminars. Photographs show her teaching around fifty male participants. She built twenty different dioramas in the normal doll’s house scale of 1:12 based on known criminal cases. A few examples: a man, a woman and an infant are lying on the floor, a gun lying alongside them, blood can be seen around their dead bodies; in a bath-tub lies a drowned girl, fully dressed; in the attic a dead woman is hanging from a noose; in a kitchen a dead woman is lying

with a knife in her back. Everything is minutely arranged: carpets, rugs, flower vases, matchboxes, saucepans, radios, paintings, murder weapons. The members of the seminar were required to study the settings and to find in them the correct clues to solve the case. Dioramas are still used in teaching techniques of criminal investigation, but over time they have come to be seen more as a combination of exquisite artefacts and objects for cultural history studies. One observation is that in them, as a working modern woman, she returns to the domestic interiors that she once broke away from – and depicts them as scenes of crime and death. She continued to construct normal dolls’ houses with typical interiors as she had done in her formative years, but there are no dolls in them – no murder victims. The nutshell in Pliny and Shakespeare recurs in the overall title she chose for her forensic dioramas – *The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death*: their intention was to ‘judge the guilty, free the innocent and find truth in a nutshell.’<sup>6</sup>

Solar eclipse, partial. An event I would not like to miss seeing. But I know that even when the eclipse is only partial, it is not advisable to allow one’s eyes to look directly at the sun, not even behind powerfully darkened glass. Therefore I employ a very simple method: I watch the phenomenon in the reflection created by the sunlight on the leaves of a tree. Each leaf becomes a mirror that reflects the image of the partly eclipsed sun onto the ground. While the sky grows dark and the birds fall silent I see the hidden sun multiplied. And no eclipse is needed for that sight. August Strindberg describes the phenomenon in his story *Taklagsöl* [*The Roofing Ceremony*, 1906]: ‘When the garden plot was newly-dug, thousands of fragments of glass emerged into the light of day, and each one reflected the sun in clear weather, each of them forming a little sun. And in the moonlight the soil lay sown with moons in miniature.’<sup>7</sup> Precisely this is my vision too: a conglomeration of sun-shards spread out before me.

Which scale is natural? Alberto Giacometti (1901–66) often pain-

ted and sculpted after models, but found it painfully difficult or completely impossible to accurately convey what his eye saw. The very fact of looking at the model changed it in his eyes, so that it eluded reproduction. But he has himself described how he found a way forward via miniatures, and how this happened as a result of an event equally decisive as coincidental. He was about to meet with his friend and model Isabel Nicholas (later Rawsthorne) – and when he saw her in the distance he was struck by how her very smallness as a result of the distance between them depicted her more accurately. The upshot was Giacometti's work with a series of extremely small sculptures. He tried with larger material, but it was reduced each time. 'To my terror, the sculptures became smaller and smaller, they had a likeness only when they were small.'<sup>8</sup> One of the anecdotes from twentieth-century art history tells how immediately after the end of the War he took the night train from Geneva to Paris with his total production of recent years as minimal baggage: it all fitted into six matchboxes.

A miniature painter needs to have a calm temperament, to not sleep too much, not indulge in energetic dancing or sport, they must use the finest sable-hair brushes, look out for loose hairs, only touch the work with a soft feather and apply their paint in a place free of dust – dust is the scourge of miniaturists. Or so I read in old guides for 'miniaturists', professionals as well as amateurs.

The word 'miniature' derives from *minum*, the mediaeval Latin word for red lead, which in the Middle Ages was used to give the desired red colour to the initial letters and the ornamentations in manuscripts. Over time the meaning changed from colour to smallness through a perceived connection with Latin *minor* and *minimus*. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, miniature painting developed into a highly-regarded art form and the royal courts employed special artists with the sole task of painting rulers' portraits in miniature, designed as exclusive tokens of favour to high-ranking guests and foreign emissaries. During the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, miniatures were appreciated in broader circles, first among the aristocracy, then by the growing bourgeoisie as part of a special culture of intimacy. Then the use of miniatures spread in the increasing production of small-scale goods, souvenirs and knick-knacks. On chocolate boxes, perfume bottles and florists' cards, personal portraits were replaced by small, fluffy ducklings, newborn foals in the sunshine and Scottish castles by moonlight. Miniature painting lost its earlier status; it was transformed from a token of high culture into cute handicraft.

The figurative miniatures had their real glory days during only a few decades around the year 1800 – the age of bourgeois sentimental romanticism. Sometimes they were commissioned portraits of family and relatives, for all to see as wall or table decorations or decorative brooches and boxes. Sometimes they were secret presents to friends and love tokens inserted in small watch-cases, medallions with a secret opening, or trinkets to wear under a dress next to the heart and perhaps to take out when alone on going to bed.

During this time miniature portraits also became part of a particularly sophisticated 'culture of looking', revolving around approaching and retreating, attraction, prohibition and permission. Looks could be shy but inviting, proper but at the same time incontrovertibly affirmative. Looks were given and returned – and by analogy miniature portraits were intended to be looked at, but painted so that the persons portrayed often looked back. The miniaturists became more and more skilful at devoting special care to the eyes in particular. The pupils, eyelids, eyelashes and eyebrows were drawn so as to combine into a look that could transmit to the viewer a carnal message. For a time such portraits were cultivated to only portray the eye itself, perhaps with a suspicion of an edge of cheek, nose or forehead, or so that a lock of female hair could be glimpsed at the upper edge. These pictures of eyes often formed an unashamed erotic agreement between two lovers, but there were also

depictions of a tear-filled or weeping eye, with a crystalline tear or two just on the point of falling. Not only a love affair but also sorrow and loneliness were cherished for the sentimental zeitgeist that coincided with the golden age of the miniature portrait.

I wander for several hours through the galleries of the Louvre then sit down in one of the museum's cafes and look at people. Young, elderly, slow, quick. Many go into the museum shop and buy some postcards, a reproduction or a catalogue. I go there myself and choose ten cards, miniatures in their way, of the paintings I have just been looking at. On a shelf behind glass are the shop's more expensive objects. In bronze with a green patina one of the four Byzantine horses from Constantinople. I want that one. But buy postcards, and a little thing to put on my bunch of keys. The Eiffel Tower in miniature.

Strindberg wrote his *Historiska miniatyrer* [*Historical Miniatures*, 1913].<sup>9</sup> Why did he call them 'miniatures'? Because he was planning an edition in a little so-called duodecimo format. But also for its contents – the book consisted of short passages independent of each other. So, without pretensions to being a 'Great Work'. Even the remuneration was decidedly modest, at least as an initial offer. 'Fee of course in miniature, as you suggested' (letter to Karl Otto Bonnier 22 May 1905). But the author hints at a greater ambition in the very title. The author's stage may be small, but it includes the whole world and all eras, the miniatures are after all 'historic'.

Through the connections between similarities the small can be transformed into the large – Strindberg noticed such correspondences.

The eye is first misled by a thicket resembling a wild olive grove in miniature. The same capriciousness in the twisted stems and the branches spreading in all directions, the same lancet-like shape and silver-grey colour of the leaves. But on closer examination the count-

less yellowish-red berries reveal that it is sea-buckthorn, native to northern Asia, but also wild and uncultivated in central Europe.<sup>10</sup>

We see two opposite movements: the yellowish-red berries root the sea-buckthorn bush in its Scandinavian habitat, but the author's gaze pulls up the roots and transports it to the south, wild like the wild olive-grove. It is the composite optics of the miniature: the small and the large in an accelerated exchange that both misleads us and makes us see and know.

Carl Jonas Love Almqvist liked drawing and painting geographical maps, both during his childhood and as an adult. There survives from his schooldays – when he was twelve, thirteen years old – a coloured-in map of the Roman Empire, carefully and attractively traced on semi-transparent paper. I have seen it in the manuscripts department of the Royal Library. Seen it and held it. There are also two fascinating geography books there, 'Geography of the Confederated States of Germany' (1805) and 'Geography of the Whole Earth' (1807), also hand-made by Almqvist during his childhood. In the latter there is a very finely-drawn map of Portugal and in the foreword it says: 'the maps in this book are very small – but the accompanying captions are so detailed that they are nevertheless sufficient'. He seems to be amused by the proportional contrast of the maps, which let 'very small' reproductions cover the geography of the whole earth. And Almqvist retained his love of maps throughout his life. He talked of their special 'charm', their ability to reproduce not only what exists but also that which the eye alone can never see and survey: continents, oceans, spaces.

One day the Sicilian artist Adalberto Abbato (b. 1975) saw a fight outside his window. He had an impulse to make a miniature of what he saw: two men fighting on the street, surrounded by people looking on. In his series *Microsculptures* he went on to scenes where contemporary violence broke out. In one scene a man dressed in

brown is standing with a weapon shooting down children in a school playground. A white-painted fence, five green trees and a yellow letter-box express a suburban calm that contrasts brutally with the murderous violence. Some children have tried to flee before they have been killed. Blood colours the grass red. Another of the artist's miniature scenes portrays a four-storey house behind a highway. There is a man lying on the kerb who apparently has fallen or thrown himself from one of the floors of the house. Blood has splashed from his head out over the asphalt.

I see some of Adalberto Abbato's scenes in Marc Valli's and Margherita Dessanay's book *Microworlds* (2011), with twenty-seven contemporary artists who all work in the field of miniatures, dioramas and peep-shows.<sup>11</sup> Many of them are working on collisions of proportions. Several small human figures can be seen in front of a, for them, gigantic tobacco pipe; a man is standing cleaning the glass of a, for him, huge table alarm clock; a man is cycling up a hen's egg. There is also a woman who, giant-like, is lying stretched out over a street between two rows of houses. It is the Gulliver-effect, Gulliver among the little people in the land of Lilliput and with the giants in the land of Brobdingnag. The artists also often mix the proportions together and sometimes inspire in me a pleasurable astonishment at being able to see something unsuspected, but just as often an insecurity and unease: where do I actually belong? Some of the scenes are overwhelmingly hellish visions of war and terror – as if the artist had wanted to give us a roundabout way, via the miniature, of being able to comprehend the incomprehensible.

I read about a miniature which should probably be reckoned among the greatest: 'The Large Waterloo Model' at the National Army Museum in London. It is a remarkable creation comprising twenty-five square metres, planned and built by the military historian William Siborne (1797–1849). Thirty years after the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, where the Emperor Napoleon's victorious army had



finally lost, the thirty-two-year-old Siborne was given a commission to create a model of the battlefield with its different forces placed exactly where they stood on 18 June at 7.45 p.m. It was a particularly prestigious task – the result would be not only a patriotic expression of the military victory but also a political demonstration of the British monarchy’s grandeur and position as a world power. But Siborne took the task more seriously than its commissioner had foreseen. As a historian he wanted the model to be absolutely reliable, he spent a great deal of time on the sites where the battle had taken place and collected almost a thousand answers to enquiries he made of officers who had taken part. He put together the model itself with extreme attention to detail, including the construction of 70,000 tin soldiers who were all painted in the correct colours. The work took time and was first presented in 1838 at a large exhibition which went on show, and travelled to Berlin among other places. But the model exhibited differs on one decisive point from Siborne’s plan. As a careful historian he had come to the conclusion that Britain’s allies, the Prussian army, had played a decisive role in the outcome of the battle, without coming under the Duke of Wellington’s direct command – and that reality suited neither the British government nor Wellington himself. The national mythology demanded Wellington in the role of personal nemesis of Napoleon – and no Prussian army was allowed to complicate the picture. Therefore Siborne was forced to change his planned model in such a way that the Prussian army was substantially reduced, from 48,000 men to 8,000.

The Large Waterloo Model powerfully evokes the nation’s ideology, but not historical truth. Wellington won the battle for memory and posthumous reputation, Siborne lost and died afterwards a poor and broken man.<sup>12</sup>

*Frog*, body of baroque pearl, head and legs of gold and enamel, sitting on a leaf of gold, base of green-black agate, height 4.4 cm. *Lucretia*, bust of white agate, set with diamonds, base of tortoise-shell and gold,

height 5.7 cm. *Portrait* of Sigismund III of Poland, polished in amethyst, height 1.5 cm. *Pendant*, gold, in the form of a mouse-trap, set with diamonds, rubies, pearls, decorated with variously coloured enamel, length 3.9 cm. *Fiddle-playing monkey*, body and head of baroque pearl. Other body parts and base of gold and enamel, height 5.9 cm.<sup>13</sup>

I am holding a little tourist brochure from the Dutch city of Madurodam and browsing through the pictures. In most regards it looks like a quite normal old city centre. But it is a miniature city built to a scale of 1:25 and fitted into another city – in the Scheveningen quarter of The Hague. Since 1952, over 100,000 tourists have travelled there annually to walk round among the models of neighbourhoods and buildings from all over the country. The pictures in the brochure show some tourists in summer clothes wandering through the town, like curious giants on a visit. A girl is as tall as the royal palace in Amsterdam. Some boys measure themselves against the tower of the Grote Kerk [Big Church] in Middelburg. A couple out walking take only a few steps to pass Rotterdam's harbour. Some children kneel to look in through the small round windows of a plane at Schiphol.

With its charming littleness Madurodam can be seen as an idyllicising reflection of Holland. But its background is not idyllic. With its name Madurodam recalls and pays tribute to George Maduro, a Second World War resistance fighter of Jewish origin who died in a camp before the end of the war. He was the only child of parents who donated the funds that made it possible to build the town. This makes Madurodam at once a Dutch miniature town and a gigantic mausoleum.

There is a departure in fantasy which is also a homecoming to reality. Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* [*The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson*, 1906] was a school textbook of Swedish geography, but also a lesson in the power and the limitations of imagination.<sup>14</sup> Nils is a little boy, but must become even smaller for the great journey to become possible. Only after

the magic of his downsizing does he gain access to the great adventure. But when, having returned home, he becomes big once again he no longer understands the language of the geese. He is a human being, not a manikin, and no longer one of them. The wonderful journey, recently so real, is a fantastic memory. An impenetrable wall cuts Nils off from what a moment ago was true.

*Gösta Berlings saga* [*The Saga of Gosta Berling*, 1891] opens with the famous and oft-quoted words ‘At last the priest stood in the pulpit.’ But the ending is perhaps not so often evoked? It is a story about the little drummer-boy Ruster, who comes home after having walked at the head of the Swedish army when it invaded Germany in 1813. Ruster never tires of telling stories about the wonderful land in the south, where people are as tall as church towers, the swallows big as eagles and the bees like geese. – Bees as big as geese? What about the beehives then? – They were like our normal beehives. – How did the bees get into the hives then? – That, said little Ruster, was something they had to find a way round!

Selma Lagerlöf then turns to you and me, just before we turn over to the last page of the book: ‘Dear reader, must I not say the same? The giant bees of the imagination have now been swarming around us for years and years, but how they are to get into the hive of reality, that is something they really have to find a way round.’

There is surely a moral in the author’s words? So it is written anyway. But I wonder: what, in that case, is the lesson? Something about scales, miniatures, enlargements and differences? We will just have to find a way round.<sup>15</sup>

Bachelard led me on the track of the world of miniatures and I stay there for a while. In everything small that we cannot become and where we don’t fit in with our bodies and only thoughts can slip in. With Thumbelina, Little Claus and the smallest billy-goat Gruff. In flea circuses, in ships in a bottle, in the pull-out drawers in little dolls’ houses and the water-filled glass globes with snow fal-

ling over angels. In the Bates House Model Paper Kit with the house on the hill from Hitchcock's *Psycho*. In the miniature guillotine on the writing desk. In the cardboard theatres from the magazine *Allers Familj-Journal* with the heading 'Not only for fun.'

#### NOTES

1. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994).
2. See: *The Elder Pliny, The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History Book 7*, trans. Mary Beagon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 77.
3. William Shakespeare, *Complete Works*, eds. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (New York: Modern Library, 2007).
4. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1999).
5. Robert Walser, *Microscripts*, trans. Susan Bernofsky (New York: New Directions, 2010).
6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutshell\\_Studies\\_of\\_Unexplained\\_Death](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutshell_Studies_of_Unexplained_Death)
7. August Strindberg, *The Roofing Ceremony and The Silver Lake*, trans. David Mel Paul and Margareta Paul (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).
8. Letter to Pierre Matisse (1947), *Exhibition of Sculptures, Paintings, Drawings* (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1948).
9. August Strindberg, *Historiska miniatyrer, I-II* (1905), *Samlade Verk 54*, trans. Harry Watson, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1997).
10. August Strindberg, *Vivisektioner* (1887), *Samlade Verk 29*, trans. Harry Watson (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2011), s. 261.
11. Marc Valli and Margherita Dessanay, *Microworlds* (London: Laurence King, 2011).
12. Peter Hofschröder, *Wellington's Smallest Victory*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2004).
13. Catalogue of that part of the Swedish Treasury collection kept in the Royal Collections. *A World in miniature. Documents from the Royal Collections 2*, 1982
14. Selma Lagerlöf, *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils Holgersson*, trans. Paul Norlen (London: Penguin Classics, 2018).
15. Selma Lagerlöf, *The Saga of Gosta Berling*, trans. Paul Norlen (London: Penguin Classics, 2009).





**Boxen**, exhibition space by Dehlin Brattgård Arkitekter, inaugurated with the exhibition *The Model Archive* at ArkDes, 2018.

et d'ailleurs nous ont raconté,  
à un moment donné, comment  
difficile était pour lui de se faire  
prendre en compte et de s'exprimer  
dans les médias français.

Avant de nous quitter, il nous  
a dit que son fils était très  
intéressé par son travail et  
qu'il espérait qu'il puisse un  
jour travailler avec lui.

Il était très touché par son  
histoire et nous a dit qu'il  
était fier de son fils.

Il nous a dit qu'il était  
très touché par son travail  
et qu'il espérait qu'il puisse  
un jour travailler avec lui.

"Je suis très fier de mon fils"



*The Model Archive*, exhibition by Malin Petterson Öberg, curated by Mikaela Steby Stenfalk, ArkDes (Boxen), 2018.







Models and shelves from the City Planning Department of Stockholm, in the exhibition *The Model Archive* at ArkDes, 2018.



SOKOL 1: 1:500 1-50

LIMKAKAN 1:500 126-243

122 SKUTAN 1:500 45-199

GEN 3 27- 522 1



Models from the City Planning Department of Stockholm, in the exhibition *The Model Archive* at ArkDes, 2018.

## 8. A Certain Responsibility

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Olivia Eriksson

‘To zoom out, scale down, enlarge, scatter. To surveil, intervene, withdraw, observe.’

THE ABOVE QUOTE is derived from Malin Pettersson Öberg’s film and installation piece *The Model Archive* (2017). There it is presented in a segment reflecting on the relationship between the shape of the city and a hierarchical social order. But the verbs that are listed could just as well be used to describe and conceptualise various aspects of the film-making process. Not least from a documentary film-making perspective, where the idea of the camera as a fly on the wall (surveil, withdraw, observe) can no longer be equated with an untainted truth claim. Instead, perhaps it is precisely through the very intervention of the film-making process that reality becomes more comprehensible and transparent to us. Through the moving image, previously overlooked or forgotten historical events and phenomena can take on new proportions and be disseminated to a wider audience. In Pettersson Öberg’s film, the Stockholm City Planning Department’s model archive is used as a projection surface to contemplate the inequalities of class society. On the one hand, a place where visions are created and model

societies can be pieced together from an elevated position; on the other, a storage space for obsolete objects that may have outlived their usefulness, but which nevertheless fulfil their purpose as part of a collection of cultural and historical value. The archive as presented here is a spatial and delimited place. At the same time, the models represent an idea of a public space, something that de facto exists 'out there'. In this way, they could be said to hold an indexical relationship to reality. The tension between the world as we know it and the miniature world presented here is central to the argument about urban planning in the monologue, and the models seem to point both outwards, towards a larger context, and inwards, towards the enclosed space depicted in the film.

If the film suggests that the model archive can become 'a tool for understanding the city and why it looks the way it does', the film itself can be understood as an attempt to approach and critically reflect on the principles of the archive. Therefore, the quote that opens this text can also be read in terms of the limitations and possibilities of the archive. The idea of the archive as an active agent that not only harbours but also produces knowledge and thus exerts power and control, emerges at the intersection between 'zooming out' and 'scaling down', 'surveilling' and 'intervening'. The piece thus ties in with post-structuralist thinking on the archive as a discursive concept by highlighting its political and social significance. In this way, the responsibility attributed here to urban planning and architecture, in relation to the design of the city and the construction of society, can be equated with the considerations that characterise archival practice. At the same time, the act of documentation entails a number of standpoints that assert themselves, from the stage of production to the context of display. These interact and resonate in various ways with the knowledge processes and power positions highlighted in relation to archives and urban planning.

The archive, much like film, is capable of incorporating or depict-

ting several different events or temporal levels simultaneously. In *The Model Archive*, it is the consistent movement of the camera, together with the monologue, that activates the inherent temporality of the archival object. While the soundtrack raises questions, draws parallels, and alternates between inside and outside, the camera settles for a relatively seamless documentation, inventory, and distant investigation that paves the way for an archival aesthetic. The slow but decisive and essentially lateral camera movement dominates the visual expression. Metre after metre of the archive shelves unfold in the image. It displays itself, shows off its handwritten numbers and name tags that testify to an internal structure that remains incomprehensible to the external spectator. Nevertheless, when the eye is allowed to wander between the shelves, an awareness of the nature of the space and the specificity of the collection emerges. Each model is unique in its own right, but at the same time clearly linked to the others. In the book *Staging the Archive: Art and Photography in the Age of New Media*, Ernst van Alphen explains how this kind of connection is what distinguishes a collection, that there is an organising principle that structures its inherent logic. ‘On the basis of articulated principles of organization each element works in combination with the other elements toward the creation of the specific identity of the collection.’<sup>71</sup> Tactility, the physical and tangible nature of a model or miniature, is here subordinated to the collection as a whole. Together, the models realise the idea of the traditional (and bulky) archive that resists digital society’s demand for instant accessibility. From this perspective, the collection might be perceived as museum-like or almost archaic. Therefore, the idea of the models’ value as cultural artefacts also becomes central, while their functional task is downplayed. In other words, the archival space that we are allowed to enter through the film cannot be easily categorised in terms of utility versus nostalgia or affection. The archival concept is thus presented as unstable and non-static.

In an influential 2004 article, art historian Hal Foster describes what he perceives as an archival tendency in contemporary art. In particular, he highlights a fascination with the materiality of the archival object and a desire to make historical material available to the viewer in physical form. Often these practices involve activating or questioning the meaning and legitimacy that historically has been assigned to a particular archival material by placing it in an unexplored context where it can be seen in new light. Foster also mentions how archival art often aims at creating an engaged audience that actively participates in the meaning making process around the material.<sup>2</sup> To see the great in the small, without striving for totality; highlighting the complex, the unfinished, even the ghostly; relating and contextualising, are all aspects that tend to be present in archival art to varying degrees and that figure in *The Model Archive*. However, it also puts public institutions under the microscope by exploring gaps and missing pieces in the archive and by reassessing forgotten or obscured material. Pettersson Öberg's work also pinpoints the exclusionary qualities of the archive by reflecting on who decides what is worth preserving. The model archive, one can sense between the lines, leads a tenuous existence. The film can therefore be interpreted as an elegy to the model archive and as a documentation of an analogue era that is about to come to an end.

Archival art itself is not a new phenomenon, but Foster's article drew attention to a newfound interest in the dynamics of the archive that continues to make itself heard in contemporary art, and that goes hand in hand with the exploration of archival material in gallery film and experimental documentary. In these cases, it often becomes clear how the very medium of film functions as part of a public practice of remembering, and how film as an art form is interwoven with memory and historiography, along with processes of knowledge and history-making. When the moving image is installed in an art context, these qualities are inserted into another kind



of knowledge tradition, represented by the ideology of the gallery or museum. The institutional and curatorial framing of the image is central in this respect. Cultural theorist Mieke Bal describes it as creating an ‘event’ or an activity.<sup>3</sup>

The theatrical staging of the image in the exhibition space shifts the focus from film as a reproducible medium to the moving image as part of a unique art event. That film is a recurring element in archival art is not only a result of its documentary qualities but also has to do with its ability to reflect and, through its technological basis, incorporate the transformative paradigm shifts that characterise our times, such as the transition from analogue to digital. This transition has fundamentally altered the ontology of film and filmmaking in the same way that it has essentially renegotiated the archival world.

In *The Model Archive*, we move between micro and macro levels, in a constant exchange between what we see, the small miniature world, and what we hear, the large world. The relationship between sound and image is thereby central. The argumentation delivered through the voice-over drives the film forward and consists of different segments or chapters, which are clearly announced through the editing. In this way, *The Model Archive* inscribes itself in the essay film tradition and the idea of the camera as a pen.<sup>4</sup> According to film scholar Laura Rascaroli, essay films can be understood as ‘performative texts that explicitly display the process of thinking and engage reflexively with their object.’<sup>5</sup> The tone of *The Model Archive* is didactic, essentially distancing, explanatory, reasoning. The monologue does not overtly relate to the images, but hovers as though above its object – that is, the archive, both as a theoretical concept of knowledge and as the actual archive depicted in the film. While the ideas and theoretical references presented are eloquent and factual, the monologue is nevertheless characterised by a tentative tone, as if to involve the spectator in the issues that the film wants

to raise. This too is typical of the essay film as a genre. Film and media scholar Nora M. Alter explains:

Essay films perform a kind of estrangement. They draw the spectator into an intricate process whereby the perspective of the filmmaker is folded onto the spectator's own in the production of signification. The meaning generated is not only relational but also open-ended, an area of possibility where the spectator plays an ever-greater role. Unlike the relatively clear line of argumentation developed in documentary productions, the essay film's order calls into question the very possibility of a single narrative logic or perspective.<sup>6</sup>

From this quotation it is also evident how the essay film can be linked to Foster's description of archival art as relational and concerned with opening up, in consultation and through mutual exchange with the spectator, a reassessment or reinterpretation of the material being presented. In this way, countering the idea of the temporality of the archival object as equated with the past and its meaning embedded in a particular historical context, and focusing instead on its future status and translation into new contexts, is fully in line with the uncertainty attributed to the fate of the model archive in Pettersson Öberg's film.

Also worth noting, is how the film critic André Bazin, in a historically influential text on the essay film, expresses what he considers to be a new approach in Chris Marker's films in terms of a 'horizontal' montage. Instead of focusing on the temporal relationship between shots, it is the lateral relationship of the image to the word that is emphasised.<sup>7</sup> This relationship might be described as accentuated in *The Model Archive* by the aforementioned lateral camera movement, which is also a recurring stylistic feature in Pettersson Öberg's films.<sup>8</sup> The music, created by Samuel Nicolas, also helps to

underline the meaning of the words by forming recurring accents that seem to punctuate a line of thought or become, within the context of what is being said, a question mark in the form of wistful piano chords or electronic squeaks. The soundtrack, as well as the camera technique and the editing, is generally characterised by a low-key, lingering quality that is crucial to creating the ‘area of possibility’ that Alter describes above. What is portrayed is a place of tranquillity and reflection, far from the wired and fragmented everyday life that has become the norm of digital society. In this way, it also reinforces the idea of the traditional and the artisanal, that which refuses to be inserted into a digital database.

At one point, we get a glimpse of classical filing cabinets, whose countless drawers, all of the same modest size and with uniform handles, bear witness to the past. In this respect, it is also symptomatic how the workshop is presented in the film: straight ahead and with a target increasingly apparent to the camera eye – a filing cabinet with an open padlock whose doors nevertheless remain closed to the spectator, as if to clearly mark the workshop as a place only for the initiated as well as the archive as an exclusionary practice. In this sequence there is also a distinct narrative turn, announced by the music’s wait-and-see attitude, when the monologue goes from being reflective to suddenly becoming inclusive or openly evaluative. After reproducing Georges Perec’s description of ‘uninhabitable spaces’ from the book *Species of Spaces* [*Espèces d’espaces*, 1974], the spectator is here addressed with a clearly formulated question and as part of a collective ‘we’: ‘Perec never mentions the word *modernism* in his text, and the city he departs from is Paris. But do we not recognise ourselves? Who would really want to live in a modernist facility?’ Although the latter question may be perceived as purely rhetorical, this stylistic break is remarkable as it shifts focus from the more theoretically oriented problem constructed up to this point in the film, to a more concrete position that requires the

participation of the spectator. Rascaroli is eager to emphasise how the essay film speaks to the individual spectator and not to a general audience. She describes it in terms of an ongoing interpellation and a dialogical relationship between the film's 'enunciator' and the individual spectator.<sup>9</sup> Here it becomes clear how this dialogue is maintained by including the spectator in the collectivity from which the narrator starts. This approach returns in the film's epilogue where the spectator is addressed once again, this time as part of a more implicit community as a citizen: 'In the Swedish model society, when are we invited to dream?'

The question is, however, what happens to the idea of an individual appeal when the film becomes a spatial installation. *The Model Archive* was created for the exhibition and programme series *The Promise* (Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, June–September 2017) with an explicit focus on the city as a political space. As part of a larger group exhibition where the question of who has a right to the city was a common theme among the diverse artistic expressions, the question of responsibility in the film also emerges as all the more clear and central. In this context, the film was shown in a so-called black box, a secluded and darkened space with a clearly delineated single-channel projection surface. In this way, it occupied a fairly conventional cinematic screening space, although within the more experimentally oriented exhibition space of the art institution. At ArkDes, where the film was shown June–August 2018, its components had instead become independent modules in the exhibition space. What does such a displacement imply for the experience of the work? How does the viewer engage with the different perspectives and viewpoints offered by the installation, and how does this connect to the critique made in the film? When the work is allowed to spread out in a physical space, questions about the accessibility of the archive are brought to the fore. In what way is the viewer expected to interact with the material

presented here? And how is the movement that characterises the film translated into the site-specific installation?

At one end of the room were two of the archive shelves featured in the film. Filled with the three-dimensional 1:500 scale models, they contributed greatly to the physical staging of the film's material. In the centre of the room, a free-standing screen had been placed on the diagonal, as if to emphasise its dual function in the exhibition space – a projection surface for critical thinking about the conditions of the archive that the monologue expresses, but also a sculptural object in itself. Art historian Kate Mondloch has written about the kind of spectatorship that characterises the experience of the moving image in screen-based installation art. In this context, she reminds us how the screen is essentially an ambiguous thing: 'Screens are decidedly ambivalent objects – illusionist windows and physical, material entities at the same time.'<sup>10</sup> Film installations often take issue with this double logic by writing movement into the site-specific experience of the work. By forcing the viewer to move between different screens or to circulate around a screen, he or she becomes part of the work's realisation in the moment. In this way, the spectator's position becomes crucial for understanding the image in the exhibition's here and now. At ArkDes, the monologue was projected in the form of text directly onto the wall on either side of the large screen. For the viewer, this division meant, in concrete terms, that the gaze could move back and forth between image and word, drawing attention to how camera movement and monologue work together to activate the archival object at hand. The aesthetics of the exhibition space were subdued and adapted to match the consistent environment shown in the film. Two benches of a simple model provided seating, one on each side of the screen. On one side, the piece was displayed mirrored, thus reversing the lateral movement so distinctive of the film. This created an interesting tension between the two projection surfaces and added another

dimension to the consistent cinematic language of the single-channel film. It also served as a reminder of how the archive is created and activated in the movement between the past and the present and from our own imagination, in the interaction between ‘future time, past time, dreamtime’.

Despite the fact that film and moving images nowadays occupy an undisputed position in contemporary art, it is nevertheless important to note how the spatio-temporal specificity of the gallery space affects the film experience, not least in the case of a piece that has been actively reworked to be exhibited in a new context. In this case, moreover, the displacement is particularly relevant to consider given the work’s focus on the archive. The museum as a public institution with a clearly articulated societal function can be said to grapple with the same sort of considerations as archival practices regarding selection and classification. These practices converge in their common interest in the potential value of an object, as an art object or as a cultural historical artefact, and whether it qualifies for inclusion in a collection. Therefore, it is also worth noting that the closed archival space as shown in the film could unfold both spatially and temporally in its new shape at ArkDes. At the same time, it was subordinated to a new architectural setting in the form of the then brand new exhibition space *Boxen*. A room within a room – voted as the winner with the proposal title ‘A Room with a View’ (Dehlin Brattgård Arkitekter, 2017) in the competition announced by the museum for this purpose – the *Boxen* serves as a ‘vibrant and ever-changing space for experimental and exploratory exhibitions on contemporary design and architecture.’<sup>11</sup> The title of the proposal seems to allude to how museum visitors, by walking up an external ramp and staircase, reach a platform from which it is possible to look down on what is going on in the exhibition space.

Returning to the appeal of the essay film, Rascaroli underlines that it is the individual spectator and not an anonymous audience

that serves as the intended recipient of the interrogations of the essay film. In the shared space of the gallery, however, the meaning making process is not left to the individual visitor but rather takes place in the social space of which the exhibition is both a part, and actively participates in creating. In the spectators' collective exploration of the work, it is impossible to ignore the emergence of temporary spectator collectives where experiences may be exchanged. In this case this is a worthwhile task, as the objects of the model archive so obviously and appealingly invite spectators to engage in a dialogue about the design of the city, often from a purely personal perspective and with a childlike curiosity and joy of discovery, similar to 'look, that's where I live'. Therefore, the presence of some of the models glimpsed in the film was crucial to the experience of the piece at ArkDes. By circulating around the two archival shelves, it was possible to see details in the models that the camera lens had not managed to capture. Up close, it was easy to see why these models hold a special place in the offices of the City Planning Department. Their sculptural qualities and (perhaps imaginary) fragile status as archival objects became even more apparent in the exhibition space. At the same time, the placement of the archival shelves at one end of the room provided a natural place to dwell even after the film had reached the end of its loop.

'To look at the world from above and move around its parts,' the narrator points out in the film, entails 'a certain responsibility'. Although the responsibility referred to here concerns the long-term consequences of urban planning, it may be argued that the filmmaker sees the world from the same elevated position. Rascaroli suggests, for example, that the position of the essay film outside the mainstream and economic system of the film industry has political implications: 'To say "I" or "we" is, first, a gesture of responsibility and accountability, in filmmaking too.'<sup>12</sup> In archival art, the frequent recycling of existing material carries similar implications

in terms of ethical standpoints or moral considerations. Through montage, film is capable of rearranging the elements of reality and of restructuring or distorting our mental memories or understanding of historical events. In *The Model Archive*, the viewer is denied a clear overview of the material presented, and instead we are left with sweeping images of the models that make up the collection. The camera keeps its distance and refrains from placing itself above or mastering its material, even when the monologue is referring explicitly to a specific model. The material is thus presented as intertwined with and dependent on the place that sustains its *raison d'être* and, ultimately, as a result of the knowledge-producing practice of the archive. It is therefore worth noting that the curatorial staging of the film at ArkDes, through the architectural design of *Boxen*, enabled a top-down perspective in which the viewer was allowed to embrace the privileged position described in the film. *The Model Archive* as a film installation thus stages the problematic elevated position attributed to the invisible authority within the narrative's argumentation. From there, the spectator is in control of the space below and is virtually all-seeing – with the possibility to spatially 'zoom out, scale down, enlarge,' to 'surveil, withdraw, observe.' With this, one might argue, comes 'a certain responsibility'. Which position do you choose?

#### NOTES

1. Ernst van Alphen, *Staging the Archive: Art and Photography in the Age of New Media* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 56.
2. Hal Foster, 'An Archival Impulse,' *October*, nr. 110 (Autumn 2004): 3–22.
3. Mieke Bal, 'Curatorial Acts', *Journal of Curatorial Studies* 1, nr. 2 (2012): 180.



4. Alexandre Astruc, 'The Future of Cinema' [1948], in *Essays on the Essay Film*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 93–101.
5. Laura Rascaroli, *How the Essay Film Thinks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 170.
6. Nora M. Alter, *The Essay Film After Fact and Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018), 7.
7. André Bazin, 'Bazin on Marker' [1958], in *Essays on the Essay Film*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 103.
8. See for example, *Reading Glass* (2015) and *Ögats vandring* (2018–).
9. Laura Rascaroli, 'The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments' [2009], in *Essays on the Essay Film*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 186.
10. Kate Mondloch, *Screens: Viewing Media Installation Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xii.
11. The ArkDes website about the exhibition space, *Boxen*: <https://arkdes.se/boxen/>.
12. Rascaroli, *How the Essay Film Thinks*, 5.

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## Conversation with Axel Wieder

*A conversation between Axel Wieder, former director of Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation, Mikaela Steby Stenfalk and Malin Pettersson Öberg in Stockholm on 16 November, 2019.*

MALIN PETTERSSON ÖBERG: One of my starting points for the film *The Model Archive* was your abstract for the exhibition *The Promise*, for which the film was commissioned. The exhibition took place at Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm in 2017, and my interpretation of its theme was that it concerned the idea of a ‘failed promise’ from modernist city planners to citizens.

*[from the abstract]* How do a city’s inhabitants live together, and how does the city’s design – its architecture, urban design, landscape, and infrastructure – impact on the conditions of living? Since the early modernist movement, design has often been considered to have a critical social function. Revolving around a minimum standard of living and equal access to space, air, light, and water, modernist planning was a promise for a better society for all. On the other hand,

planning can only create frameworks for living, and the power of design to shape a new reality has been overestimated, neglecting the many and diverse relationships between people and their environment, and creating in many instances a feeling of failure.

I thought that we could start this conversation by discussing your vision for the exhibition, and whether it turned out the way you had expected it to?

AXEL WIEDER: To address the topic of modernist planning and its failure or disappointment first: I still consider this an active promise. Some of the radical proposals, for example Ernst May's 'new Frankfurt' or *Der Kollektivplan* for Berlin after 1945, remain important anchoring points for thinking of future cities that might work better, even today. Therefore I would not speak about failures – it did not go as intended, but there is still a value and a reality to these proposals.

For the exhibition, the location of Index at Kungsbros strand was an important point of departure. I was very impressed when I first found out that the institution is located in the centre of a modernist housing complex, a beautiful set of 1930s high rise buildings designed by Sven Wallander on Kungsbros Strand, just a few minutes away from the central railway station. It seemed like a typical planning project of the Swedish welfare state: a large-scale housing complex with relatively small flats in the middle of the city, which I read as an aim for a mixed city centre with working class living modules. Eventually, I realised that the houses are now fully privatised and people in fact own the houses. Contrary to my first impression, the neighbourhood is very expensive and a privilege of mostly retired or young and successful homeowners. It still looks like a modernist planning ideal on the surface, but it has developed in a very different way. This made me curious about the history of

Swedish modernism and the capitalisation of the city since the 1980s, which is obviously not only a development in the classic capitalist parts of the world, but also within the Nordic social-democratic states. One of the results is the heavy segregation that we experience today in the Stockholm region, where low-income housing is pushed further and further out from the centre. On the other hand, I was interested in concepts such as Folkhemmet [The People's Home], which were developed with a stable and rather homogenous demographic in mind, and how these were challenged by changing demographics. Some of the critical discussions on suburban housing in Stockholm revolve around the normative family constellations and lifestyles that these flats propose in their optimised floor plans. Swedish modernist ideals are consequently being challenged by the neoliberal development of cities as well as the opening or diversification of society in Sweden. And finally, what should be the role of an art organisation based in the exclusive city centre? In terms of outreach, who is actually our audience? And are we able to adjust, or at least respond, to these realities in a critical way?

MIKAELA STEBY STENFALK: Could you expand on your statement that the modernist promise is still active, and that the utopian potential remains?

AW: Historically, modernist architecture and other utopian visions of city planning are based on the idea that societal change can happen through architecture and, in a broader sense, design. A design which seeps into every aspect of life. This has been rightly challenged by activists, citizens and also architects, at least since the 1950s, because of its paternalistic approach: Someone – often a male, master architect – tells society how to live their lives in a better way.

When curating the exhibition, I wanted to use architecture as a

tool to understand the social reality of a city. Through discussions around architecture, I try to understand how a city works and what kind of social dynamics are at play. Architecture and buildings can be seen as traces or testimonies of such discussions. In this case, the utopian promise of modernism becomes a reminder of the social responsibility of architecture, planning and design – and also art, at least if we think of its public function. I think that there should be an ambition among these practices to keep, follow up and try to help implement the promise that social change is possible.

*MSS*: My experience as a (rather young) architect and designer is that I sometimes feel an external pressure to deliver a solution. The pressure of answering to a promise that I did not myself make. Who do you think should be held responsible for this promise?

*AW*: I think this particular promise starts with a social and political ideal, which is perhaps different from today's situation, where many design disciplines respond to client demands. A demand that is often not questioned or understood as a question that could be attacked in design. In my experience, architecture education is very different today than what I know of the discourses half a century ago. Today the need is often defined by demographics of a market survey, rather than of intentional design decisions where architects try to find more of a proposition than a solution. We can find different approaches in design discourses – for instance, about the flexibility or adaptability of buildings – in trying to loosen the tightness of an architectural brief. This is still a fairly unexplored area.

*MPÖ*: I think the Bauhaus school and its era, 1919–33, is an interesting turning point, historically. As a moment when design started to have a more social function and a more elevated position. That kind of vision – which was also pervading Sweden in the 1930s

– is quite impressive. The political and social belief in design and architecture as something that actually *would* help redefine society and lead to more equality.

In my work with the film, I was inspired by the possibility to explore places – such as the model archive at Stockholm’s City Planning Department – where you can find opportunities to reflect on this topic. Places where we can try ‘other versions’ of the city, through rearranging the parts of the archive. The miniature landscapes and buildings open for a variety of ideas, which makes this archive a particularly rich and inspiring place – not least worth capturing on film.

AW: I really enjoyed the discovery of the model archive. On the one hand, because it is an amazing space where architecture can be negotiated – not as a solution to a problem, but as a panorama of options. The archive is a place where something that seems so stable and long-term as architecture suddenly becomes fluid and open, by showing all the routes not taken and buildings not built. Also, we get an insight into the decision-making process. On the other hand, I enjoyed the archive as a space of knowledge and a starting point for research, where history materialises through very concrete stories, small details. I always find archives helpful to understand...

MPÖ: ... contemporary situations?

AW: Yes, and the past through concrete fragments, not through a master narrative. In that sense, your film becomes a reflection on space – in terms of providing opportunities for thinking and understanding how the built environment is made. But also, a reflection on social political imagination and how that is connected to space, because the archive covers such a long time-frame.

MPÖ: Yes. The main part of the model collection was constructed from the 1960s and onwards, but the City Planning Department also has a few models from the late 1800s.

AW: When walking through the archive with Harri Anttila, the previous modeller at the Model Unit, he told us so many stories about the models. Often proposals for architectural competitions, which can be read as different expressions of an urge to make a change. The competitions usually contained an indication of a political shift or a different understanding of the city. For instance, how city planning today is very much economically driven by a belief in growth and the potential value of real estate or land. That is very different from the city planning of the 1960s, which is again different from the 1920s. The competition proposals in the model archive represent the larger understanding of a city at a given time. Consequently, the archive and your film become a moment of political imagination – an occasion to reflect. This also means that some things are *not* imaginable, because the space of what we can imagine is limited to a given set of notions. In ideal moments, these limits are pushed and expanded further.

MS: When examining the models in the archive more closely, you can see traces of this imagination – footprints of someone's trials. Also traces of experimentations that were never meant to take place in the real city.

MPÖ: Yes. The archive is not, in any sense, a correct or complete representation of the city. Unfortunately, many of the more experimental models, of competition proposals or of plans that were never realised, were thrown away in the cleaning in 2010. This is one of the questions I wanted to raise with my film: Can the models

be seen as a cultural heritage – a collective memory – belonging to the citizens of Stockholm? And have the right models been saved? Perhaps the ‘unbuilt versions’ of the city would have been more valuable to save, precisely because they were never built.

*M S S*: There is also a fairly clear difference in attention to detail in the models of the inner city, compared to the ones representing the periphery. That could also illustrate a shift in approach towards city planning in the different parts of the city. Coming back to that division between the city centre and the suburbs in terms of the exhibition at Index, are you happy with how the exhibition turned out? How did you feel that it responded to the questions you started out with?

*A W*: At some point in the process, it became very urgent for me to focus on the relationship between the centre and the suburbs. I could sense how my initial fascination with the legacy of modernist planning gave way to a critical inquiry into some of the contemporary outcomes. It was a quite tough and long process working with the constellation of activist material and commissioned artworks. Particularly the work with the activist groups became very intense, because we needed to build up a trust together and a common understanding of what an exhibition can do.

*M P Ö*: I remember that there were some critical notes in the media about discrepancies between activist material and artistic commissions in the exhibition. What would you say in regards to that?

*A W*: That is actually a curatorial approach that I still feel very strongly for. I find it incredibly productive to include different perspectives and ways of dealing with materials or images in the same exhibition and let them speak to each other. There is a possibility



for artworks to say one thing, then another potential in publications and activist material to tell something else. In an exhibition, they can eventually speak together.

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Carlos Mínguez Carrasco

IN A 1967 conversation between Robert Smithson and Allan Kaprow about the role of museums, Smithson defends the idea that one of the major assets of a museum is to be completely inactive, a place where objects are deposited to be immovable, or as he puts it, ‘nullifying in regard to action.’ He says to Kaprow: ‘The museum tends to exclude any kind of life-forcing position. But it seems that now there’s a tendency to try to liven things up in the museums, and that the whole idea of the museums seems to be tending more toward a kind of specialized entertainment.’ He later adds: ‘It seems that your position is one that is concerned with what’s happening. I’m interested for the most part in what’s not happening, that area between events which could be called the gap’.<sup>1</sup>

Years have passed, and some museums have indeed become only spaces of entertainment, but Smithson’s words about that gap between events, or about ‘what’s not happening’ seem to resound in the silent archive rooms of the City Planning Department of Stockholm that Malin Pettersson Öberg captures in her film *The Model Archive*. The camera travels across subdued rooms, showing a seemingly endless series of shelves filled by white models of city neighbourhoods of Stockholm. The models, archived far from the

light of the public eye, seem to be held in a limbo between actions, waiting for someone to pick them up, dust them off, and activate them. They appear left behind, forgotten, without use.

Stored on metallic shelves, the models are sometimes stuck one on top of the other, some protrude outside of the shelves. It all seems like something from another time, a sort of post-apocalyptic supermarket, where the products have lost their taste, outdated, with only ghosts accompanying them. A museum of models without visitors. Labels inform about scales, names, located either on the models or in the shelf structures. Sometimes you just see boxes, presumably with models inside, which are also numbered, indicating a position marked with an X in a series of Ys. Numbering, codifying, organising, seems to be part of the enigma. The codes and numbers imply an order, a predetermined, secret organisation of things, which remains foreign to us, watching from behind the camera.

But you stop worrying pretty fast. Gustave Flaubert expresses indirectly, through his 1881 novel ‘Bouvard et Pécuchet’, that:

The set of objects that the Museum displays is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated metonymic displacement of fragment for totality, object to label, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a representation which is somehow adequate to a nonlinguistic universe. Such a fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can produce a representational understanding of the world.<sup>2</sup>

And it is indeed the world that the models seem to try to understand and represent. According to the film, the archive of models at the City Planning Department of Stockholm took its current shape

in the 1960s, when models started to be produced in scale 1:500. The models were meant to conform to a giant model of the city of Stockholm, but the project was left unfinished.

The image of these stuck pieces of a giant white puzzle that reconstruct an incomplete city is one of the most powerful images evoked in the film. The voice over says: 'A Stockholm in miniature unfolds before our eyes, a city whose parts can move around'. We can imagine a group of model makers trying to achieve the full representation of a city, an impossible effort eventually left incomplete. A moving archipelago of pieces of Stockholm, floating three-dimensionally in a room in which we do not see the beginning nor the end. A city within a city; an endless room full of infinite pieces of the city, or any city, frozen in time and space, separated, their segments unsuccessfully trying to fit on each other. There seems to be magnetic forces trying to piece the models together. This magnetism is made of invisible roads that circulate through the space between the models, streets in the air that connect neighbourhoods, electric lines that bring light between them, a force constantly attracting and repelling each other.

This fragmented city reminds me of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's slabs of Rome. Under the reign of Septimius Severus in the third century AD, a plan of every major building and monument in Rome hung in the Temple of Peace (*Templum Pacis*), located nearby the Colosseum. The plan was made of 150 slabs of marble, measuring a total of eighteen metres wide by twelve metres long. The marble plan was severely deteriorated after the partial demolition of the temple in the fifth century AD and lost many of the slabs to theft. It was first in 1756 that Giovanni Battista Piranesi saw some of the marble slabs and included a drawing of them in his collection of drawings titled 'The Antiquities of Rome'. He decided to draw the slabs accepting their fragmentation, rather than trying to restore them in a complete image of the marble plan. The resulting drawing

is an extraordinary representation of a new Rome, with portions of the city side by side with other portions of the city, without any kind of continuity. Rome, in the drawing, appears fractured, reorganised in an arbitrary order inside a box. A discontinuous monument, the fragments of the marble reinvent the city of Rome, reconstructing an alternate urban space, a ‘mosaic of episodes confronting each other.’<sup>3</sup> Rome is now a modern city made of ruins, buildings and undetermined spaces between them.

Piranesi’s fragments of Rome evoke the fragments of Stockholm in the archive room of *The Model Archive*. The city emerging from these works is unrepresentable in its totality. The forces that it contains are bigger than its fragments, and the sum of its fragments is bigger than the city itself. This incomplete representation of the city forces the viewer, now transformed into an architect, to redesign new city plans, new connections between their remnants, made of existing and imagined parts of a city.

Another fragmented city can be found in Amie Siegel’s 2014 film *The Architects*. The camera travels across the work-landscapes of a series of architecture offices in the United States, some of them in New York. The uniform work stations, the endless tables with models and versions of models, and the ubiquitous pale screen reflections on un-mattered faces looking at AutoCAD screens and BIM databases portray a corporate profession that has long left behind the romanticism of the architect as an artisan of building.

Siegel refers to the film as a ‘transversal cut’ of the architect’s office. A ‘section’ of the spaces that design the city, both reinvented through the models and drawings and Excel sheets, as well as framed through the windows, out there. The camera’s sustained parallel tracking – *The Model Archive* also pans from left to right – looks at a seemingly endless production space of global architecture.<sup>4</sup>

*The Architects* help us think about *The Model Archive*. Both films are complementary essays of contemporary life, in which ci-

ties with their tangible and intangible shapes and networks, their projections and representations, their workers and caretakers, are simultaneously objects of emancipation and control, of attachment and disorientation, of estrangement and intimacy. Both films portray an uncompromising image of the architect as a complicit agent in the production of biopolitics.<sup>5</sup>

If we follow the thread running through Piranesi, Amie Siegel, and Malin Pettersson Öberg, the cities of Rome, New York, and Stockholm become fragmented, distorted, incoherent cities, still operative and full of life and possibilities. These cities come forth as confusing, in dispute, often contradictory. They include local realities and global networks operating simultaneously at several scales, absorbing digital and physical dimensions. They render continuous updated versions of themselves by the minute, proving models to be necessary but obsolete representations of their conditions.

*Who builds the city and for whom?*

Confronted with the silent shelves of the City Planning Department of Stockholm, we must decide what to do. Is the space of the archive a tool box for the coming generations of citizens? A reminder of a time to never repeat? A collection of models, which, in the words of Paul Valéry, are brought to the archive and ‘left to die’?<sup>6</sup>

We learn, after all, that the models are on occasions reviewed and discussed as needed by the municipal architects and other professionals when the lots are under analysis, as states Karolyna Keyzer, former city architect of Stockholm, and Malin Pettersson Öberg, for the opening of the exhibition *The Model Archive* at ArkDes – The Swedish National Centre for Architecture and Design in 2018.<sup>7</sup> The models are not exactly the forgotten bodies of an empty morgue. They are, when needed, reanimated.

As a matter of fact, *The Model Archive* places us at the crossroads between forgetfulness and reanimation, between reification and action. If there is a challenge today for the archive rooms, it is to both

build a common memory of the city, and to open up their meaning and agency to the context it responds to. The schizophrenic nature of the objects of the city archive splits up between their objecthood and their symbolism, between their narcissism and their legal and political power.

We cannot look at the streets, buildings, plazas, and quarters in the archive room as neutral white cardboard objects. Instead, they represent the most elevated ambitions to serve society, responding to local needs while producing spaces and urban landscapes of democratic and social value. But the very same buildings simultaneously serve as tools to produce inequalities, and segregation, and societal imbalances, perpetuating class differences and reinforcing scenarios for violence.

*The Model Archive* confronts us with the need to look again to the city represented in the models and rethink our values. To own our complicit role in the construction of the city. The film calls upon us to reconfigure our understanding of what is the meaning of public life, of solidarity with those less privileged. Ultimately, it forces us to address the ways in which we privilege economic growth above all else.

When watching the film, one cannot stop wondering where the humans are. Where are those who work at and make use of the archive? And this absence brings you to the absence of those citizens that animate the models and live in the miniature quarters. As the film tells us, the models not only represent the buildings that make the city, but also the people that live in it.

Judith Butler, in her *Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, points out that we need to be aware of the power collective actions have in the spaces they inhabit. She says:

demonstrations take place on the street, in the square [...] bodies congregate, they move and speak together, and they lay claim in

public space. [...] but that formulation presumes that public space is given, that it is already public and recognized as such. We miss something of the point of these demonstrations if we fail to see that the very public character of the space is being disputed, and even fought over, when these crowds gather. So though these movements have depended on the prior existence of pavement, street and square [...] it is equally true that the collective actions collect the space itself, gather the pavement, and animate and organize architecture.<sup>8</sup>

*The Model Archive* makes us think about how the collective actions of those who inhabit the models at the archive room of the Stockholm City Planning Department should not take their housing and streets as given. The film makes us recognise the inherent conflict that exists between the designed city and what is ultimately experienced, lived, furnished, and disputed. It makes us wonder at which level urban planning influences the challenges and struggles of our current society. It reflects on how the professions of architecture and urban planning can respond to the collective actions, growing alliances and resignifications that have recently taken place: From the political, medical, and civic crisis of the global COVID-19 pandemic, to collective movements like 15M, Me Too, School Strike for Climate, Decolonize This Place, or Black Lives Matter, among many others.

This is where space for experimentation in architecture and urban life becomes urgent. It is the responsibility of architects and urban planners to imagine alternative futures, design spaces where things can be done differently, and construct other forms of collaboration and mutual support. We cannot forget that the owners of the city are its citizens, in all their precious and wild, fluid diversity, endlessly animating and signifying its architecture, despite and within the economic and political forces pulling in different direc-



tions. If the models in the archive are in danger of being discarded soon, let us urgently return to Malin Pettersson Öberg's film and refresh our memory.

#### NOTES

1. Robert Smithson, 'What is a museum? A dialogue between Allan Kaprow and Robert Smithson' (1967) in *Arts Yearbook 9* (1967), 94–101.
2. Eugenio Donato, 'The Museum's furnace: Notes towards a Contextual Reading of Bouvard and Pécuchet, in *Textual Strategies' Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Hararu (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 223.
3. 'A mosaic of episodes [...] that contest each other' is the way Rem Koolhaas refers to the Manhattan grid in *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for New York* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1994), 21.
4. For more information about *The Architects* see: Helmut Draxler, 'Amie Siegel's *The Architects*', *ArtForum*, October 2015, and [www.amiesiegel.net](http://www.amiesiegel.net)
5. The term interpreted as in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, (New York: Vintage, 1978), 143.
6. Quoted in Hal Foster, 'Archives of Modern Art,' in *October*, Vol. 99 (Winter, 2002), 81–95.
8. Karolina Keyzer, in conversation with Olivia Eriksson and Jacek Smolicki, moderated by Mikaela Steby Stenfalk, included in the *Model Archive* exhibition's brochure at ArkDes, 2018.
8. Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), 70–71.

# Biographies

HARRI ANTTILA worked as a modeller at the City Planning Department of Stockholm for almost thirty years, 1990–2019. Previously, he worked at *Hushållsporslinsfabriken* [the household porcelain factory] in Gustavsberg, with colleagues from Sweden, Finland, Italy and the Czech Republic, a period he describes as ‘the best six years of his career’. Anttila highlights the craftsmanship, the hands and the transfer of knowledge between older and younger colleagues as central to the modelling profession: ‘It has always been about the hands and what you can make them do’. With his vast knowledge of the City Planning Department’s models, Anttila was central to the creation of the film *The Model Archive*. He also co-organised a guided tour of the archive in August 2017.

CARLOS MÍNGUEZ CARRASCO is an architect and curator based in Stockholm. He is Chief Curator at ArkDes – Sweden’s National Centre for Architecture and Design. Between 2012 and 2017 he was Associate Curator at Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York. He organised the 2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale with the After Belonging Agency, and was Assistant Curator of *OfficeUS*, the U.S. Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Biennale.

At ArkDes, Mínguez has organised the exhibitions *Flying Panels: How Concrete Panels Changed the World* (2019), *Kiruna Forever* (2020), and Joar Nango's *Girjegumpi – The Sámi Architecture Library* (2023) at the Nordic Pavilion of the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale. His texts have been published in *Domus*, *Migrant*, and *Código* and he is editor of publications including *After Belonging: The Objects, Spaces, and Territories of the Ways We Stay in Transit* (2016), *Flying Panels* (2019), and *Kiruna Forever* (2020). He has taught at Columbia University and lectured in several universities and cultural centres in Europe, Latin America, and the United States. Mínguez Carrasco contributes to this book through a new essay.

OLIVIA ERIKSSON holds a PhD in Cinema Studies and is based at the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University. Her dissertation, *Gallery Experience: Viewers, Screens and the Space In-Between in Contemporary Installation Art* (2021), focuses on contemporary film installation and examines the notion of embodied spectatorship in relation to the specificities of the gallery space. Research interests also include the construction of space and questions of migration and displacement in contemporary art and film installation, as well as archival art practices. In this book, she contributes an in-depth analysis of both the film itself and the exhibition at ArkDes (2018).

MAGNUS FLORIN is an author, literary critic and dramaturg. He made his debut in 1989 with *Berättelsens gång* (How the Tale Goes) and was nominated for the literary August Prize for his works *Trädgården* (The Garden, 1995), *Syskonen* (Siblings, 1998) and *Ränderna* (The Stripes, 2010). He was awarded the Swedish National Radio's Novel Prize for *Syskonen* and nominated for *Ränderna*. He is also a librettist, most recently for *Syskonen i Mantua* at Drottningholms Slottsteater. His latest novel is *Descartes dotter* (Descartes' Daughter,

2023). Magnus Florin was invited to contribute to this book through a new essay, exploring the potential of miniature worlds.

PEDRO IGNACIO ALONSO is currently Head of the PhD Programme in Architecture and Urban Studies at PUC (Universidad Católica de Chile). He is an architect, educator and curator. Ignacio Alonso was one of two curators behind the exhibition and book *Flying Panels: How Concrete Panels Changed the World*, at ArkDes in Stockholm (published by Dom Publishers, 2019) together with Hugo Palmarola. The two have curated exhibitions and presentations at the Architectural Association in London, the Pratt Institute in New York, the São Paulo Cultural Centre, Lisbon Architecture Triennale, Istanbul Design Biennial and Princeton University. Ignacio Alonso and Palmarola are also the authors of the book *Panel* (Architectural Association, 2014) and *Monolith Controversies* (Hatje Cantz, 2014), which was awarded a DAM Architectural Book Award from the Deutsches Architekturmuseum and Frankfurt Book Fair (2014). Ignacio Alonso contributes to this book through a new essay.

KRISTIAN ROSENGREN is a Civil Engineer and has been an Official in the Place-Names Committee at the City Planning Department of Stockholm since 2009. Kristian Rosengren contributes to this book through a conversation with Malin Pettersson Öberg, which took place prior to the production of the film *The Model Archive*.

SECRETARY is an architecture practice run by Karin Matz, Rutger Sjögrim, and Helen Runting. In 2019, they published a short report in advance of their 2021 publication *14,495 Flats: A Metabolist's Guide to New Stockholm*, which led to their invitation to contribute to this book.

HELEN RUNTING is an urban planner (B.UPD, University of Melbourne), urban designer (PG. Dip.UD, University of Melbourne; MSc.UPD, KTH), and architectural theorist (PhD Arch., KTH). She has worked with masterplanning projects in Australia, Vietnam, Finland and Sweden. Her research interests include policymaking, real estate, and aesthetics, and she has published widely in a range of international journals and anthologies.

RUTGER SJÖGRIM is an architect (MSc. Arch, KTH). His work focuses on early-stage concept development in relation to architectural competitions, urban development projects, commercial events, exhibitions, film/media, and the production of architectural imagery and visualisations. Rutger is a lecturer at the School of Architecture at KTH in Stockholm.

KARIN MATZ is an architect (Edinburgh College of Art, the University of Queensland, and KTH (MSc. Arch)). She has designed a series of widely published smaller projects (Karin Matz Arkitekt), and was Project Architect for the Haganova development in Hagastaden (Vera Arkitekter). Karin is a lecturer at the School of Architecture at KTH in Stockholm.

MIKAELA STEBY STENFALK is editor of this book together with Malin Pettersson Öberg. She curated the exhibition *The Model Archive* at ArkDes in 2018. In fragmented sculptural works, texts and spaces, she moves between the concepts of cultural heritage, representation and belonging in our common spaces. The collective memory of institutional, unofficial and ephemeral archives is often the departure point for her work, which explores the relationship between image, object, person and place. With a background in Architecture (KTH/ArkDes) and Visual communication (Design Academy Eindhoven), Mikaela's artistic practice has received

recognitions including the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's IASPIS residency grant in Stockholm, Arvet's Architecture Prize, the World Heritage Grant from UNESCO/Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland, and has been displayed both internationally and nationally at institutions such as the French Institute/Royal Art Academy in Stockholm and during the Venice Art Biennale.

A X E L W I E D E R is a curator and writer based in Bergen, Norway, where he is director of Bergen Kunsthall. He was previously director of Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm (2014–2018), where he commissioned the film *The Model Archive* for the exhibition *The Promise* in 2017. Prior to Index he was the Head of Programmes at Arnolfini in Bristol (2012–2014), artistic director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2007–2010) and in 2010 Visiting Curator at the Goethe-Institut New York. In 1999, Wieder was part of founding Pro qm in Berlin, a bookstore and a venue for experimental events in the field of art and urbanism. He has published numerous books and contributions to catalogues, anthologies and magazines such as *Texte zur Kunst*, *Frieze*, *Mousse*, and *Spike*. For this book he contributes with an interview made in Stockholm in November 2019.

M A L I N Z I M M is an architect PhD, researcher and writer. Zimm has been a freelance writer, researcher and architecture critic since 2000, contributing to numerous Swedish and international publications in the fields of architecture, art and urbanism. She was the Chief Editor of the architecture magazine *Arkitektur* (2019–2022) as well as Chief Editor of *Rum* magazine (2007–2009). Zimm was Director of Research, manager of ARQ research fund and Research strategist at White Arkitekter (2014–2019). She worked as Senior Advisor in Architecture at ArkDes (2010–2014). Zimm presented her PhD dissertation at KTH School of Architecture in 2005, with

the title *Losing the Plot – Architecture and Narrativity in Fin-de-Siècle Media Cultures*, discussing the concept of virtuality, not primarily as a technology but as a cognitive ability. Together with Mattias Bäcklin she has run the mobile art and architecture gallery Zimm Hall since 2015. Her contribution to this book is through a transcribed panel talk between her and Malin Pettersson Öberg at Index – The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation in Stockholm in 2017.

MALIN PETTERSSON ÖBERG is the artist behind *The Model Archive* and the initiator of this book. She is a Swedish visual artist and filmmaker, and a teacher in the arts. Pettersson Öberg's narrative based-films and installations are grounded in a sincere curiosity and engagement with the surrounding world, through multi-disciplinary knowledge exchanges. This manifests in meditative and intimate works, where ordinary dialogues, poetic detours and extensive research figure. Her in-depth investigations often address existential, social and political issues, such as the complex urban planning-process of a city like Stockholm. Pettersson Öberg has taken part in exhibitions and film festivals in Sweden and internationally, including OEI (2020), Rencontres Internationales (2018), ArkDes (2018), Index (2017), Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (2016, 2014) and Bonniers Konsthall (2011, 2007). A selection of her films are distributed by Filmform. She is a recent recipient of a two-year working grant from the Swedish Arts Grants Committee and currently has her studio at Slakthusateljéerna in Stockholm.

# Thank you

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*Malin Pettersson Öberg & Mikaela Steby Stenfalk*



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# Colophon

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***Model Archive – A Witness to the City* is an interdisciplinary anthology that explores urban design and planning through the collection of models kept at the City Planning Department of Stockholm. The anthology elaborates on questions posed in the film *The Model Archive* by artist Malin Pettersson Öberg, and from the exhibition of the same name curated by Mikaela Steby Stenfalk at ArkDes – Sweden’s National Centre for Architecture and Design.**

**In essays and conversations, a dozen authors and dialogue partners reflect on the relationship between model and city, complexities of the urban planning process, housing issues, and more. Who builds the city and for whom? How does the shape of the city relate to the shape of its inhabitants’ lives? And can the archive’s models serve as tools for memory and historiography, as well as for reflecting and challenging the city we now have?**

**This anthology is the result of a multi-year collaboration between Malin Pettersson Öberg and Mikaela Steby Stenfalk. Contributors are Pedro Ignacio Alonso, Harri Anttila, Carlos Mínguez Carrasco, Olivia Eriksson, Magnus Florin, Kristian Rosengren, Secretary (Helen Runting, Karin Matz & Rutger Sjögrim), Axel Wieder and Malin Zimm.**

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