

Lina Persson

Book Withdrawal of *New Reactive Earth – Story-world Bible*

September 18 – November 30, 2025

BIBLIOTHEKET, Gothenburg

This gathering celebrates that an artist's book was never printed, never released. Instead, we celebrate the library as a space for reconfiguring our assumptions, for honouring imaginations kept in flux, and blank pages as potential surfaces for expressions yet to come.

New Reactive Earth: Story-world Bible was a planned publication consisting of maps, prompt cards, and a booklet, encapsulating Lina Persson's inner fictional story-world. The publication was fully prepared for print when the artist suddenly halted the process and cancelled production.

At this withdrawal event, you are invited to view a test print of the planned book and listen to a sound piece reflecting on refusals, withdrawals, and shutdowns. Reflecting together with this space, with Clara Törnvall, Carolina Jinde, Mari Lagerquist, more suitable forms than that book, continue to emerge.

Email bibliotheket2x2@gmail.com for an appointment to experience the Bibliotheket in solitary silence.

Exhibition text by Clara Törnvall:

My conversation with Lina began in a shared sense of the library as a place. Before the start of my first internship as a librarian, I wrote an Instagram post in which I promised to hush every visitor who disturbed the quiet of reading. "Hereby begins my struggle to reintroduce the culture of silence in the nation's libraries," I wrote. It was wordplay, but beneath it ran something earnest. Lina, who stumbled upon the post by chance, immediately understood what I meant. To her the library is a space for reconfiguring our assumptions, and for blank pages as potential surfaces for expressions yet to come.

When I began my library studies, I dreamt of the refuge of childhood, the silent library where I could breathe and was permitted simply to be. But in the forty years since I sat in the school library during recess, memorizing bird species to escape the chaos of the schoolyard, the libraries themselves have changed. Someone decided they should no longer be quiet rooms for reading and contemplation, but open arenas – part democratic square, part community hall – where conversation was welcome, visitors talk on the phone and readers were expected to share space with book clubs, performances, panel discussions, and boisterous children. The hushing librarian faded into the past.

Today quiet spaces are gone. There are no doors to close upon oneself. The places where you could once retreat, be absorbed, collect your thoughts — they no longer

exist. Everything is loud, visible, measurable, and streamlined. What used to be space for contemplation has been rationalised away.

Public life as we know it has changed in that the amount of sensory stimulation – and especially the noise level – has increased dramatically. Today you can't move through a shop or restaurant or cafe without being exposed to loud music. In the playgrounds outside preschools staff lug out loudspeakers, on the bus passengers are watching videos without headphones. A student who is bothered by their classmates' talking is told to wear hearing protection. Talking always comes first. But deep attention needs silence. How are we meant to truly experience if chatter and music press into every corner? Silence is crucial in order to absorb, to process, to feel, to understand.

The power of the soul lies in being attentive, Simone Weil wrote. To her, this attention was key to both action and knowledge. She saw the highest degree of attention as a kind of prayer. Second only to guaranteeing freedom, she thought the most important task of a government was to provide for an atmosphere of silence and attentiveness. A good society protects silence and attentiveness so that its citizens can learn to express themselves.

In Lina's decision to cancel her storyworld bible – partly because the original form of a bible is that of a manual, with fixed categories designed to mirror predetermined templates – I sense a resistance to ordering knowledge from the top down. Lina prefers to begin in the void, to associate, to stitch fragments together, to attune, to meet, to merge, to engage in dialogue, to shift, to uncover what is not yet known – rather than to pin down or hammer in. She wishes to explore and peel away, not to press or confine.

Read through the lens of the library, her unpublished bible may instead become the seed of a thesaurus. A thesaurus grows out of usage, literature, and new phenomena. The system bends and adapts to new words and shifting expressions, weaving connections among them; the whole emerges as detail is laid upon detail. Unlike top-down structures, where one begins from a pre-fabricated framework and the subject must conform to an existing hierarchy, a thesaurus is supple, responsive, and allows terms to arise from lived use. The library, alive with its documents, is a gateway to new ways of thinking and imagining. Such openings require emptiness. Therefore the library must safeguard the conditions that allow visitors' inner spaces to unfold. For this, silence is indispensable.

Shh.