

Artistic research at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm is living in the conviction that the starting point for research must be grounded in artistic practice, and not in a pre-formatted definition or general method. The intensification that the research enables, is an intensification that takes place in the making itself. Besides this conviction, the Royal institute of Art does not offer any programmatic idea of what artistic research should be like.

This does not imply that artistic research lacks a relation to science and the academy. It suffices to think about the importance of technological developments and their impact on methods used in art, or about the value of philosophy in moments of self-reflexivity and when making a political standpoint, and also how frequently, in their own developments, philosophy and technology return to an aesthetic sensibility. The point is instead that practice-based research, that starts from what artists do, is undisciplined. It does not configure itself as a discipline and it does not discipline its material into a pre-defined format. It does not abandon its uncertainty and testing attitude even if it would produce knowledge. It follows its ideas and seeks a material manifestation [gestaltning in Swedish], but it does not strive for conclusive evidence understood as adequacy or repeatability.

From an epistemological point of view such a standpoint can be perceived as an extreme form of subjectivism which defines one's own position as 'unconditioned openness'. But what is stated here, is rather that the extended development of artistic practice does not imply disciplining in the sense that it would inscribe itself in a standardized framework to regulate its process and outcome.

As a matter of fact, parallels can be drawn to *The Utopia of Access*, the title of the **Research Pavilion** at the Venice Biennale 2017, and its link to open access, the publishing principle and practice that gives access to materials and knowledge which would otherwise be limited by copyright and license restrictions. Such free access is crucial to enable exchange between researchers and for the relation between outcomes of research and an interested public. It is also crucial for the evaluation of research to be made along other scales than the

one which today repeatedly appears as the only one – monetary value. In this way, open access carries a utopian aspiration for a different order than the hegemony of capitalism with its one-dimensional Man and the commodification of knowledge.

As a publicity principle, open access is thus not a narrow, special interest of Academia, but a visionary ambition for how public discourse should be organized. It falls back on the postulate of the Enlightenment that the public use of reason should always be free. What this freedom offers will nevertheless be up for negotiation, mediation and to some extent transformation, as it filters through the institutions and structures that care for the open access to become formally actualized. We speak about freedom and openness, and we certainly do so for good reasons. But freedom and openness only exist through their embodiment in actual situations and contexts. Thus, there is a tension between ideas and situated practices, and what is deemed open and accessible, may turn out to be half-open and partly inaccessible.

That is where we start when considering artistic research – at the point where something is missing, where the opaque and mute become signs that are possible to combine with others, and where the limitations of a situation become the very material used to influence a change on both the situation and its limitations. For example, it can be about the exploration of a vital phenomenon such as love, starting from a specific situation that is characterized by restriction and oppression. And then, with the aid of literary and critical strategies, to write a document that from the inside performs a new reading of this situation so love can become recaptured as a constructive possibility for the relation to the self and the other. Or it could be about pushing into the very ideas and process, and its moving image documentation, of when a pedagogic model and a language for blind and deaf children, were invented. And with the use of the filmic medium, to continue to develop and formulate the “filmic thinking” present in the original found footage.

In both these examples, it is not about giving an account of a certain content or confirm a proposition, but to express the elementary relations of the world's comprehensibility and incomprehensibility. Thus, we can learn a lot from the presentations generated by artistic research, but what we learn is not becoming intelligible because artistic research follows a model and a given direction; rather, it happens due to how the individual projects are able to reason with the questions that the world poses.

Similar to contemporary art at large, the field of artistic research is hybrid in nature, and will through its restless and uncertain nature, engage in a number of relations, both within its immediate context and also with the world beyond. However, one thing remains constant: The tension itself, as it occurs between the ideality of the concept and the conditions of the context, and how it sits within artistic practice on its way towards the extended format we call artistic research.

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Open Access

In and Through
and Desire
and Touch

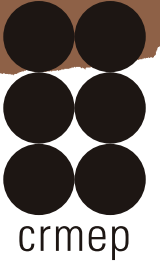
Kungl. Konsthögskolan / Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm presents artistic research projects providing entries into wider notions of open access. Writer and researcher Mara Lee elaborates on ways to imagine agency and accountability through the inscription of desire. PhD candidate Emanuel Almborg screens *Talking Hands*, a film about pedagogy at the Zagorsk school for deaf-blind children, and PhD candidate Maria Chehonadskih lectures on communist individuation in Soviet Marxism and beyond.

The Royal Institute of Art, in collaboration with Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP), Kingston University London. Between 2014–2017, RIA and CRMEP ran the course Philosophy in the Context of Art in conjunction with Visiting Professors Peter Osborne and Catherine Malabou, as well as jointly holding two international conferences and a series of PhD seminars.



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Research Pavilion *The Utopia of Access* at the 57th Venice Biennale

A presentation by Emanuel Almborg, followed by a screening of *Talking Hands* / *Говорящие руки*, (2016, 48 min), a film about the 1960's Zagorsk school for deaf-blind children outside Moscow and its

Emanuel Almborg
Talking Hands

This event is organized in the framework of Emanuel Almborgs PhD project, *The Utopian Image* at the Royal Institute of Art, and will comprise of two parts. The first part is a screening of the film *Talking Hands* / *Говорящие руки* and a presentation of the research and work behind it. The second part will be a talk by Maria Chehonadskih, a PhD candidate at CRMEP, Kingston University London, on related historical and philosophical concepts. Almborg's project takes its starting point in the theory and practice of cultural-historical psychology and Marxist philosophy in 1960's Soviet Union, while Chehonadskih traces related concepts back to Soviet literature and psychology of the 1920's, an inquiry that creates a dialogue between the two research projects and raises questions for art philosophy and politics today.

Emanuel Almborg, Maria Chehonadskih
Talking Hands
Film screening and talks

15.00-17.30

Mara Lee is a Swedish poet, writer and scholar, living in Stockholm. Her most recent works include the novel, *Future Perfect* (Albert Bonnier, 2014) and her PhD thesis *The Writing of Others: Writing conceived as Resistance, Responsibility and Time* (2014). She currently runs the senior level research project *Loving Others. Othering Love: A Toolbox for Postcolonial and Feminist Artistic Practices*, funded by the Swedish Research Council, 2017–2019, and hosted by the RIA.

We are not epistemologically equal. Those of us who embody otherness, know that situatedness matters. This presentation is a poetic performance-lecture that will present agency as embodied beyond the neo-liberal individual and independent subject. Instead, it aims to provide alternative ways to imagine agency in terms of accountability through the inscription of desire.

Mara Lee
Dark Situatedness and Feminist Imaginaries
Performance lecture

12.00-13.00

This talk will address Soviet writer Andrey Platonov's concept of "poor life" and psychologist Lev Vigotsky's theories of "mediation" in subject formation developed in the 1920's. Chehonadskih will argue that Vigotsky overcomes stultifying conceptions of the social and collective, and outlines a political theory of communization as an "adequate form" of individuation. By doing so, she brings him in contact with the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon, Etienne Balibar and Paolo Virno.

Maria Chehonadskih
Dedicating Poor Life: Communist Individuation in Soviet Marxism and Beyond

Emanuel Almborg is an artist based in Stockholm. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Royal Institute of Art, with the research topic, *The Utopian Image: Absolute and Incomplete – the Conditions of a Utopian Function in Art and Artist-Film*. Other works also include photography and publications.

pedagogy, established together with Soviet philosopher Evald Ilyenkov and based on a social and cultural-historical understanding of consciousness and development. Inspired by Spinoza and Vigotsky, in theory and practice Ilyenkov began developing ideas of how human consciousness emerges. The school was successful in educating deaf-blind children and in 1977, four of its students graduated from university, one of them Alexander Suvorov with a PhD in psychology. The film is based on two main components. One is a staged conversation between Suvorov who now lives outside Moscow and Almborg, a dialogue that was scripted together with Suvorov. The other part is a 16 mm film recovered by Almborg. The archive film documents teaching and activities around the Zagorsk school sometime in the late 1960's – early 1970's but filmmaker and exact date is unknown, the only information attached to the film was a title: "Talking Hands".

Q&A with Emanuel Almborg and Maria Chehonadskih.
The session concludes with a

Maria Chehonadskih is a writer and philosopher who lives and works in London and Moscow. She is a PhD candidate at the CRMEP, Kingston University London. Her research is focused on the problem of Soviet epistemologies across philosophy, Marxism and art of the 1920's.