Symposium
As part of The Eros Effect:
Art, Solidarity Movements and the Struggle for Social Justice
Saturday 17.10, 10:00–18:00
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The symposium forms the starting point of a multi-year inquiry into the relationship between art and solidarity movements, performed in a series of commissions, exhibitions, workshops, presentations, and film screenings. Faced with fascist parties gaining ground in Europe and an increasingly tough social climate, we see the necessity of returning to the notion of solidarity in order to try its validity today. Will solidarity still be relevant in the future, or is it a historical concept? Do we need to find new ways to describe the political movements of today and their struggles, sympathies, and commitments? What does recognizing the urgency of a situation imply, and how do we act upon it?

The invited speakers are Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc (Metz), Filipa César (Berlin), Kodwo Eshun (London), Peo Hansen (Norrköping), Ingela Johansson (Stockholm), Stefan Jonsson (Norrköping), Kristine Khouri (Beirut), Doreen Mende (Berlin), Bojana Piškur (Ljubljana), Natascha Sadr Haghighian (Berlin/Tehran), Rasha Salti (Beirut), Rojda Sekersöz (Stockholm), Gulf Labor/Ashok Sukumaran (Mumbai), Håkan Thörn (Gothenburg), Dmitry Vilensky (St. Petersburg), Marion von Osten (Berlin), Mathias Wåg (Stockholm), and Aleksandra Ålund (Norrköping).

The Eros Effect project borrows its title from the researcher and activist George N. Katsiaficas’s essay by the same name from 1989. We will continue to build on the analytical tool “Eros Effect,” which is an attempt to acknowledge the emotional aspects of social movements. The concept thus aims to turn away from earlier theories that considered “mass movements” as primitive and impulsive, as emotional outbursts, or as exclusively rational efforts in order to change the norms and institutions of a society. With his notion the Eros Effect, Katsiaficas suggests that social movements always constitute both and that the struggle for liberation is equally an “erotic” act and a rational desire to break free from structural and psychological barriers. Philosopher Franz Fanon made similar observations when he stated that resistance towards colonialism causes positive effects on the emotional life of individuals.

The symposium is a collaboration with REMESO: The Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity, and Society at Linköping University. The opening for Filipa César’s project Transmission From the Liberated Zones 17.10, 19:00–21:00. This is the first presentation within the project The Eros Effect: Art, Solidarity Movements and the Struggle for Social Justice.
Program (changes might appear)

10:00 Introduction by Maria Lind, Stefan Jonsson, and Peo Hansen
10:30 Filipa César:
Notes on Luta Ca Caba Inda
(The struggle is not over yet)
10:50 Marion von Osten:
The Tricontinentale Net – Prospects and Projects
11:10 Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc:
A Continental Drift
11:30 Pause
11:50 Håkan Thörn:
The Meaning of Solidarity: The Case of the Global Anti-Apartheid Movement
12:10 Ingela Johansson:
The Great Miners’ Strike 1969–70 in Sweden and its solidarity actions
12:30 Bojana Piškur:
The Museum of Solidarity in Santiago 1971
12:50 Kodwo Eshun:
Forms of Discontent in Handsworth
Songs by Black Audio Film Collective
13:10 Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti:
In the Labyrinths of Exhibition Histories: The International Art Exhibition for Palestine, Beirut 1978
13:45 Lunch
14:30 Stefan Jonsson:
The Question of Solidarity
14:45 Peo Hansen:
Solidarity Knows Only Borders: Reflections on the Current Refugee Crisis in the European Union
15:10 Natascha Sadr Haghighian:
Left To Our Own Devices
15:30 Mathias Wåg:
The Politics of Self Organization
15:50 Pause
16:10 Aleksandra Ålund:
Swedish Urban Justice Movements – Options Ahead?
16:30 Ashok Sukumaran/Gulf Labor:
The Museum and the Camp
16:50 Dmitry Vilensky:
Rosa’s House of Culture
17:10 Rojda Sekersöz:
The Story in Focus
17:30 Doreen Mende:
Solidarity in Struggle
18:00 Discussion

Filipa César
Notes on Luta Ca Caba Inda
(The struggle is not over yet)

In collaboration with the Guinean filmmakers Sana Na N’Hada, Flora Gomes, and Suleimane Biai and with the institutional support of the Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin, artist Filipa César and curator Tobias Hering embarked in 2012 on an ambitious project which included the digitization of the remains of a very fragmentary audio-visual archive stored in Bissau and, subsequently, an ongoing series of discursive events and screenings dedicated to this material. They named the project Luta Ca Caba Inda after the title of an unfinished film in this collection.

Filipa César (Berlin) is an artist and filmmaker interested in the porous boundaries between the moving image and its public reception, the fictional aspects of the documentary, and the politics and poetics inherent to the production of audiovisual matter. Since 2011, César has been researching the origins of cinema in Guinea-Bissau, exploring its geopolitical radiancies, uprising promises, and poetic potencies today, and developing that research into the collaborative project Luta Ca Caba Inda. She is a participant of the project Visionary Archive, 2013–15 by the Arsenal-Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin. Selected film festivals include Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, 2013; Forum Expanded – Berlinale, 2013; IFFR, Rotterdam, 2010, 2013 och 2015; Indie Lisboa, 2010; DocLisboa, 2011. Selected exhibitions and screenings include Istanbul Biennial, 2003; Tate Modern, London, 2007; SFMOMA, 2009; São Paulo Biennial, 2010; Manifesta 8, Cartagena, 2010, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2011; Festival Meeting Points 7, 2013–14; NBK, Berlin, 2014, and SAAVY Contemporary, Berlin 2015.
Marion von Osten
The Tricontinentale Net –
Prospects and Projects

The online platform and journal jtricontinentale.net aims to revisit the historical prospect of the Tricontinental Movement created by activists, theorists, musicians, filmmakers, and artists as a major references point for non-aligned transnational solidarity projects until today. Constituted as African, Asian, and Latin-American anti-colonial and non-aligned resistance, from the mid-1960s onwards, the Tricontinental Movement had immense effects on the constitution of the New Left and various Third World solidarity initiatives in the Northern hemisphere.

The Action Committee of tricontinentale.net consists of Marion von Osten (Berlin), Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc (Metz), Olivier Hadouchi (Paris), Serhat Karakayali, (Berlin) Kenza Sefrioui (Casablanca), Peter Spillmann (Zurich/Berlin), and Daniel Weiss (Zurich).


Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc
A Continental Drift

During this intervention, Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc will look briefly at the history of the creation of the Tricontinental magazine in order to determine the originality of its political and aesthetic contributions. He will specifically focus on the French translation of the magazine published by François Maspero between 1968 and 1971. Abonnenc will try to put these translations in the French political and editorial context of the 1960s and also to explore the gaps and differences between the Cuban and the French magazine as so many productive adaptations of the political and aesthetic project of the Tricontinental. Finally, he will also try to locate traces of the dissemination of these magazines by the copying and/or reusing of articles or images in publications in Mozambique or French Guiana.

Artist Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc (Metz) devotes his focus to the cultural hegemonies upon which the evolution of contemporary societies is based. Through video, photography, installations, drawing, or exhibition projects, Abonnenc explores the principles behind the dominant presence of pre-existent elements and events—notably those linked to imperial history and the colonies of so-called developed countries. Recent group exhibitions include All World’s Futures, 56th Venice Biennale and Personne et les autres, Belgian Pavilion. He was part of the Berlin Biennale 2014, Giving Contours to Shadow. He has recently presented his work in solo shows in such venues as Kunsthalle Basel; Fondation Serralves, Porto; Pavilion, Leeds; La Ferme du Buisson, Noisiel; Marcellle Alix, Paris, and Gasworks, London.
Håkan Thörn
The Meaning of Solidarity: The Case of the Global Anti-Apartheid Movement

The global anti-apartheid movement was one of the largest and most influential social movements during the post-war era. It did not just contribute to abolishing apartheid in South Africa, but it also played an important role in the emergence of a global civil society. It stands today as a model for many contemporary movements. In the lecture, Thörn will particularly emphasize how the movement’s history reflects significant dimensions of political globalization, including the power of solidarity actions (such as boycott and divestment campaigns), of networks, and of symbolic actions addressing the media.

Håkan Thörn (Gothenburg is Professor of Sociology at the University of Gothenburg. He is also the co-coordinator for Forum for Civil Society and Social Movement Research (CSM) and Gothenburg Centre of Globalization and Development (GCGD). His research focuses on globalization, social movements, and civil society, and he has published a number of books and articles in international journals on these topics. His books include Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society (2006), The Politics of AIDS: Globalization, the State and Civil Society (2008), Transformations of the Swedish Welfare State: From Social Engineering to Governance? (2012), and the forthcoming Urban Uprisings in Europe: Challenging neoliberal urbanism in Europe (2016).
Ingela Johansson  
The Great Miners' Strike 1969–70 in Sweden and its solidarity actions

This talk will elaborate on how art has reflected the historical event of the strike in Northern Sweden 1969–70. The strike in the state-owned mining companies has been described as the first major cracks in the facade of the welfare state. The outstanding and broad social engagement and activism for the strikers’ cause included different fields of culture workers who mirrored the situation in various works. During the talk, Johansson will give examples of how solidarity was manifested.

Since 2010 artist Ingela Johansson (Stockholm) has been working on her investigation What happened with the art of the strike? in which she examines the great miners’ strike and how it relates to the general radicalization of the artistic and cultural landscape in the wake of the 1968 uprising. The project has taken various forms, each of which makes use of archival materials from the time of the strike.

Bojana Piškur  
The Museum of Solidarity in Santiago 1971

The focus for this talk will be various emancipatory practices within culture, specifically at the Museum of Solidarity in Santiago, Chile. In 1972, an important event was organized under the auspices of UNESCO, a seminar in Santiago—capital of a socialist and non-aligned Chile—debating a new type of museum, one that would link cultural rehabilitation with political emancipation. This museum would follow social and cultural changes closely and be socially progressive without being ideologically restricted by any political representation. An example would be, if observed retrospectively, the Museum of Solidarity in Santiago, Chile. The concept of this museum was the common idea of two people: president Salvador Allende and Maria Pedrosa, a Brazilian art critic in exile in Chile.

After an open letter by President Allende to the artists of the world in 1971, donations from all over the world started to arrive in Santiago. There were 600 works alone in the first year of the museum’s existence, representing a heterogeneous mixture of styles. The act of donation was a political action in itself and considered as a concept of political and cultural solidarity with Chilean socialist project. This museological experiment ended abruptly with the military coup in September 1973.

Bojana Piškur (Ljubljana) graduated in art history from the University of Ljubljana and received her Ph.D. at the Institute for Art History at the Charles University in Prague, the Czech Republic. She is a senior curator at the Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana. She has researched topics including post avant-gardes in former Yugoslavia, absent archives, relationships between art forms and politics of resistance, etc., always in relation to the wider social and political environment.
Godard’s Kino-Eye section in Loin de Vietnam (1967) initiates the institutional critique of cinema as a means for building political solidarity. The kinds of left-pathos yielded by the cinematic auto-critiques of solidarity is elaborated in Nightcleaners Part 1 (1975) by Berwick Street Collective and reaches its zenith with Ici et Ailleurs (1976) by Godard and Kean-Pierre Gorin. Handsworth Songs (1986) by Black Audio Film Collective announces the end, not of cinematic solidarity as such, but of the tradition of Left cinematic critiques of solidarity.


Kristine Khouri and Rasha Salti have conducted research about and around an exhibition of an exceptional scale and scope that took place in Beirut in the midst of the civil war and whose archival and documentary traces have been almost entirely lost. The International Art Exhibition for Palestine opened at the Beirut Arab University in March 1978. It was comprised of some two hundred artworks donated by artists hailing from thirty countries, including Matta, Tàpias and Miró. The exhibition was intended as the seed collection for a museum in exile, taking the form of an itinerant exhibition that was meant to tour worldwide until it could be repatriated to a free and de-mocratic Palestine. The size and scope of the exhibition was unprecedented in the region.

Kristine Khouri (Beriuot) is an independent researcher and writer. Her research interests focus on the history of arts circulation and infrastructure in the Arab world. She curated The Founding Years (1969–1973): A Selection of Works from the Sultan Gallery Archives (2012) at the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait. Rasha Salti (Beirut) is a writer, researcher, and curator and an international programmer for the Toronto International Film Festival.

Together, Khouri and Salti are co-founders of the History of Arab Modernities in the Visual Arts Study Group, a research platform focused around the social history of art in the Arab world. Their current work is focused on the history of that was opened in Beirut in 1978. The research of the International Art Exhibition in Solidarity with Palestine was transformed into an exhibition, Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts of the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, 1978, which opened at the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) in 2015.
Stefan Jonsson
The Question of Solidarity

The presentation will provide some thoughts on the September 2015 surge of refugee solidarity in Sweden and around Europe. Why now? What does it say about the future? Is this an example of the Eros Effect? If so, who is the object of desire here? To continue, he will look at the history of racism and the history of solidarity in post-World War II Sweden. Theories of Swedish exceptionalism, that is, of Sweden’s unique status as the internationalist nation—are they in any way plausible? Theories of Sweden as the run-of-the-mill racist European nation—are they plausible too? Jonsson will then elaborate on the Swedish manifestations of solidarity with the anti-colonial struggles and the third world in the 1960s and 1970s, after which he will move on to the debate about structural discrimination and multiculturalism of the 1990s and 2000s. In which ways can these two tendencies elucidate one another? Are they successive or concurrent with one another?

Stefan Jonsson (Norrköping) is professor of ethnic studies at the Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity, and Society (REMESO), Linköping University and a critic at Sweden’s major newspaper Dagens Nyheter. He has written widely on European modernism and modernity, focusing especially on representations and fantasies of crowds and collectivities, as well as on racism and on colonial and postcolonial cultures and aesthetics. Among his recent books are A Brief History of the Masses and Crowds and Democracy (2013) and, co-authored with Peo Hansen, Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism (2014).

Peo Hansen
Solidarity Knows Only Borders: Reflections on the Current Refugee Crisis in the European Union

In response to the current refugee crisis in and around the European Union, calls for solidarity have been abundant. Many EU leaders, intellectuals, and others been eager to invoke “European solidarity” and “European values” as remedies for the crisis and for nationalist resurgence. Yet, since EU cooperation on asylum and refugee matters has always claimed European solidarity and European values as its guiding principles, this talk seeks to understand why this same EU cooperation has proven so utterly detrimental to refugees and so ill-equipped to deal with the global refugees crisis.

Peo Hansen (Norrköping) is Professor of Political Science at the Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity, and Society, REMESO, Linköping University. His main research interests revolve around European integration, EU migration policy, postwar European geopolitics, and the history of colonialism and decolonization. His most recent publications include The Politics of European Citizenship: Deepening Contradictions in Social Rights and Migration Policy (2012) and Eurafrica: The Untold History of European Integration and Colonialism (co-authored with Stefan Jonsson, 2014).
Natascha Sadr Haghighian
Left To Our Own Devices

This talk will recount two incidences of violence whose investigation and prosecution seems unfinished. The first case addresses an incident that occurred in Stockholm’s Husby neighborhood in May 2013. Lenine Relvas-Martins, a 69 year old resident of Husby, was killed by the Piketen police in his own apartment. The presentation will try to connect the incidence to questions about the militarization of police, systemic racism, and the hegemony over violence. Why do certain violent acts stay legally unaccounted for? Often we find ourselves left to our own devices, as there seems no legal instrument to charge police, secret service, or other government entities. Natascha Sadr Haghighian’s upcoming project Fuel to the Fire at Tensta Konsthall recounts and contextualizes Relvas-Martins’s killing.

The other case addresses the many inconsistencies and unsolved questions around the terror acts committed by the rightwing underground group NSU (The National Socialist Underground). The group killed 10 people in Germany and injured many more over the course of 13 years. Allegedly, they had support not only from different rightwing groups but also from within the Federal Intelligence Service, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the Military Counterintelligence Service, and the police.

Natascha Sadr Haghighian’s (Berlin/Tehran) research-based practice encompasses a variety of forms and formats, among them video, performance and installations and is primarily concerned with the socio-political implications of contemporary modes of world-making, especially in the field of vision. Her project Fuel to the Fire will take place at Tensta konsthall in 2016. Rather than offering highlights from a CV, Haghighian asks readers to go to www.bioswop.net, a CV-exchange platform where artists and other cultural practitioners can borrow and lend CVs.

Mathias Wåg
The Politics of Self-organization

Over the last ten years, a new kind of district organization has emerged in the suburbs of Stockholm. The organizations are not only working for the conversions of their own neighborhoods, but also using their structures to work practically and in solidarity to help EU migrants. They support transit refugees, and arrange anti-racist manifestations, and provide help during, for example, fire disasters. But despite the positive experiences, these local initiatives are met with skepticism by the authorities and seen as a “noisy minority” trying to undermine the legitimacy and interests of the authorities. A paradoxical situation has arisen where grassroots organizations are labeled as extremists and conflict-creators and actively thwarted by the new authority, the National Coordinator Against Violent Extremism, even while these organizations are filling in where the authorities have failed and are, thereby, preventing catastrophic situations.

Mathias Wåg is the publisher of the anarchist magazine Brand. Wåg began his activist years during the struggles to save the Hansta forest in the Järva field in the late 80s and in the resistance to the building of highway constructions around Stockholm in the 90s. He has published the anthology I stundens hetta (In the Heat of the Moment) (2011), which summarizes ten years of international mass mobilizations from globalization movements to crisis protests. During the 00s, Wåg has lived intermittently in Italy and been active in the movement for the autonomous social center. He is currently contributing to the anthology Nutida politiska teoretiker (Contemporary Political Theorists) (2015), with a chapter on the Italian autonomous thinker Antonio Negri. Wåg won the Guldspaden (Golden Shovel) Journalist Award in 2014 for his investigations with the journalist collective the Research Group into anonymous racist hatred on the internet.
Aleksandra Ålund
Swedish Urban Justice Movements—Options Ahead?

This presentation will summarize an ongoing research project on Urban Justice Movements (UJM) following the youth uprising in Swedish cities in 2009 and 2013. The project investigates how UJM relate to the established Swedish civil society organizations, what social imaginaries are produced, and how UJM constitute themselves as public voices in mass media, cultural politics, popular culture, etc.

Aleksandra Ålund (Norrköping) is professor at REMESO, The Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity, and Society at Linköping University. She has published widely in Swedish, English, and other languages on international migration and ethnicity, identity, culture, gender, youth and social movements.

Ashok Sukumaran/Gulf Labor
The Museum and the Camp

Since 2011, Ashok Sukumaran has been part of the Gulf Labor Coalition, whose struggle to ensure workers’ rights has led to concrete results, with the private institutions and businesses involved in Saadiyat Island agreeing to a minimum set of commitments, including the right to change jobs, an end to passport confiscation, and the refunding of recruiting fees. Sukumaran has been to Saadiyat Island and its construction sites and worker camps many times as an artist-researcher and translator. In March this year, for reasons described only as “security,” he was thrice denied a visa to enter the UAE.

Ashok Sukumaran (Bombay) is co-founder of the collective studio CAMP and the footage archive Pad.ma. His artistic interest has been in aspects of contemporary existence that recede from our senses and from cognition. CAMP’s collective artistic projects since 2007 include films, exhibitions, and books nestled in electrical systems, surveillance systems, archives, and maritime worlds among others. A six-year project on the Indian Ocean recently resulted in the film From Gulf to Gulf to Gulf and two publications, Wharfage (2009) and M.S.V. (forthcoming, 2016).
Dmitry Vilensky
Rosa’s House of Culture

In this talk, Dmitry Vilensky will focus on Rosa’s House of Culture, a recent initiative of the St. Petersburg-based collective Chto Delat. It is the space and process in which art is building its new engaged public. At this moment, art exists under pressure from state structures, new laws, and aggression from the general public and, at the same time, risks all forms of instrumentalization from the side of neo-liberalism. Rosas’s House of Culture questions the legacy of the Soviet tradition of Houses of Culture, which was a well-spread, state-supported infrastructure for leisure and educational activities of people in Soviet Union. What can we learn from that experience, and how can we imagine a new model of the House of Culture in composing a counter-public sphere?

Dmitry Vilensky (St. Petersburg) is an artist and educator who works mostly in collective practices and focuses on developing large-scale architecture constructions, learning plays and films. He is a founding member of Chto Delat (What is to be done?), a platform initiated in 2003 by a collective of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. Vilensky is also an editor of the Chto Delat newspaper and main facilitator of a School of Engaged Art in St. Petersburg. He has participated with Chto Delat in their recent exhibitions and performances, including the San Paulo Biennale 2014; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2013; Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, 2012; Chto Delat Perestroika: Twenty Years After: 2011–1991, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, 2011; Ostalgia, New Museum, New York, 2011; Study, Study and Act Again, Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, 2011; and The Urgent Need to Struggle, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 2010.
Rojda Sekersöz
The Story in Focus

As part of the so-called “second generation of immigrants” from Bakur (the Kurdish part of Turkey), Sekersöz makes work that revolves around political events in Kurdistan and Sweden and experiences from her own childhood in the northern suburbs of Stockholm and the village of Älvdalen in Dalarna. The presentation will focus on stories that link together artistic work and political pressures, including meetings with activists from Rojava (the Kurdish part of Syria) and the work to collect 170 000 SEK for medicine for the region. In the newly started project the Bakur Committees, Sekersöz wants to draw attention to the critical political situation in the region through digital campaigns and tangible solidarity actions.

Rojda Sekersöz (Stockholm) studied film directing at the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts. She is also a poet in the poetry network Revolutionary Poetry. She is currently developing her first film with the working title "Dream on", about a girl who dreams of a different life, but constantly forced into in the existing system. Sekersöz is also working on the short film Carnita in the Making about Carlos and his drag persona Carnita Molida.

Doreen Mende
Solidarity in Struggle

This talk will depart from an image that was taken in a room in the Hotel Beau Rivage in Beirut in 1980 while the East-German photographer Horst Sturm and his Palestinian-Lebanese bodyguard took a rest. It was taken in a political moment when, for the people, the Palestinian struggle changed from armed resistance against Israel's occupation to the continuation of the militant struggle by the means of photography. It is a moment when the revolutionary image that portrayed the strength of the people’s struggle changed to a humanitarian image that exposed the people's defeat as an economy of suffering. The talk will put “solidarity” in question by unpacking the social-collective necessity for image production to move below official solidarity declarations, while being situated exactly inside those structures.

Doreen Mende (Berlin) is a curator and theorist. Recent exhibitions include KP Brehmer Real Capital – Production, Raven Row, London 2014; Travelling Communiqué, 2014–13, Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade, Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. Mende is co-editor of eflux journal 59 Harun Farocki (2014), resident writer of the blog for Manifesta Journal (2013–14), and editor-in-chief of the publication series Displayer at University of Arts and Design/ZKM Karlsruhe (2006–09). Since 2015 Mende has been the responsible professor for a research-based program on the practice and theory of curatorial questions in geopolitics at HEAD Genève.
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With organizational funding from the Swedish Art Council, the Stockholm County Council, and the Stockholm Municipality.