Art is always changing, and institutions should be able to adapt to the conditions of artistic production. We believe that the small or midsize art centre plays an important role in its capacity to adapt and transform according to what artists are doing, while also providing stability and continuity. Thus, these institutions play a central part in what has been termed the ‘ecology’ of contemporary art. Since this crucial stability and continuity is challenged by current political decisions, this report is a timely tool for reflecting on the possible agency of art and its institutions.

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Agencies of Art: A Report on the Situation of Small and Medium-Sized Art Centres in Denmark, Norway and Sweden

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Photos: Jan Khür

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What do kunsthallen (art centres) in Scandinavia do? They are incubators for the contemporary art scene, platforms for social meetings, sites of education and arenas for the production of knowledge — all functions that reflect the flexible and multifaceted kunsthalle format. At the same time, they function as the research-and-development departments of the art world, nurturing artistic experimentation and hosting people from different walks of life.

Building on a series of national reports from the 2010s, this publication dives deeper into the structural presence of the kunsthallen in the cultural and social life of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. It comes out of a collaboration between national kunsthallen organizations and networks in the three Scandinavian countries, for which the first meeting was held in Copenhagen in 2015. Due to different national, regional and local contexts and constitutions, it became clear that, although they share a number of characteristics, the kunsthallen operate in a complex field which still demands further investigation. Our hope is that this publication will not only provide answers, but also inspire reflection and discussion about how to strengthen small and medium-sized art institutions and their cooperation — in the Nordic region as well as in a broader context.
In addition to a series of meetings during which a working group was formed, this process has included the organization of a Nordic Network of Kunsthallen; a gathering in Kassel in June 2017, during the opening of documenta 14; and a two-day symposium in Oslo at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway in March 2018. These events serve both as the backdrop of this publication and as starting points for further development of the kunsthallen and their network internationally.

A first version of this report, written by Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Nina Möntmann, was presented at the well-attended Oslo symposium, which was called ‘The Agency of Art.’ The experience in Oslo is reflected in this publication. We would like to warmly thank the authors for engaging with this topic with enthusiasm and spirit, drawing on their theoretical knowledge as well as their hands-on experience. We would also like to thank Nordic Culture Point for making this financially possible.

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In contrast to pre-existing national reports on art institutions in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, the commission to write this report on small and medium-sized institutions in Scandinavia was given to an art historian/curator and a theorist/curator. This entails a shift of perspective to one of participant-observers — of cultural producers who share the concerns of art institutions and, at the same time, want to pin them down and critically reflect them in the context of the responsibilities of the cultural sector and its institutions in civil society, within a changing political climate.

These three Nordic countries were at the forefront of what was called ‘New Institutionalism’ in the early 2000s, when a few small and medium-sized institutions tried out new models of critical institutional practice. These new structural and operative configurations — initiated by curators, often in collaboration with artists — were based on a self-reflexive critique of institutional organization and curatorial action that aimed at jettisoning the functions and organizational forms of the traditional, modernist exhibiting institution, as well as the market- and image-oriented exigencies of museums that had corporatized within the context of neoliberal social developments. In the
following text, we discuss why this opening-up of institutions to other disciplines and tasks beyond exhibition-making lasted only a few years, as well as what they did achieve in the long run — and what can be done in 2018.\textsuperscript{6}

The commissioners of this report are the three national networks of small and medium-sized institutions in Scandinavia: KLISTER in Sweden; Foreningen af Kunsthaller i Danmark (FKD); and Kunsthallene i Norge of Norway (KN).\textsuperscript{7} Since national reports of these networks have already been conducted recently, one of our aims is to build on the material and findings of these pre-existing reports (which we summarize below) with a comparative Nordic perspective: In what way do the situations differ between small and medium-sized institutions in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and how can they learn from one another? On the other hand, we want to widen this perspective to encompass a European and even global context, as well as outline agencies directed towards the future of these institutions, within a Nordic and global constellation.

Since NIFCA (Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers) was shut down in 2006, the contact between institutions in Nordic countries has been less frequent. NIFCA — an umbrella institution without its own exhibition space — provided extensive possibilities for institutions to collaborate on substantial budgets and make exchanges within the Nordic and Baltic regions, as well as internationally. This included collaboratively curated exhibitions, workshops, long-term projects, a vast residency program and the magazine Siksi, which was later called Nu: The Nordic Art Review. The current lack of an umbrella platform such as NIFCA is another reason why it seems timely to survey
how small-scale institutions in Scandinavian countries relate to one another today, as well as how their agendas and working conditions might be similar or different.

After receiving the commission to write this report, we sent out a questionnaire to more than fifty institutions in the three national networks for small and medium-sized art institutions. In order to understand the landscape, we also sent our questions to related institutions that are not members of these networks, as well as to artist initiatives. We then conducted a number of personal interviews. This text is based on the answers to our questionnaire and how we contextualize them within the larger frame of a current institutional landscape, its conditional framework and the urgencies and potentialities emanating from this. We also refer to the aforementioned reports and a vast body of relevant literature related to institutional practice and its conditions, social practice, museology, curating and the curatorial.

With this report, we attempt to give an overview of the current situation of small-scale and medium-sized institutions in the three Scandinavian countries studied. We hope that this will provide tools for the participating institutions, as well as opportunities for networking and exchange based on the key common agendas that—despite many differences—became apparent through the questionnaires and interviews. The report is potentially also useful as a reference, with practical advice that can be of service during exchanges with civil servants and representatives from the private sector, as well as debates with politicians at a local and national level. Above all, it is intended to inform a growing and interested public about the current conditions of small and medium-sized art
institutions, and how they might understand them as a platform for their own concerns, beyond attending exhibitions.

Art is always changing, and institutions should be able to adapt to the conditions of artists and artistic production. We think that the small or medium-sized art centre plays an important role, with its capacity to adapt and transform according to what artists are doing— that they are able to provide tools and capacities for extensive mediation, engaging in dialogue with diverse audiences while also providing stability and continuity. Thus, these institutions play a central part in what has been termed the ‘ecology’ of contemporary art. Since this crucial stability and continuity is being challenged by current political decisions, this report is a timely tool for reflecting on the possible agency of art and its institutions.

Jonatan Habib Engqvist
Nina Möntmann
Criteria for Membership in the Three Scandinavian Networks

The three networks that were included in this report have similar, more or less strict definitions and guidelines for their acceptance of member institutions. The criteria for membership in Kunsthallene i Norge (KN) are formulated this way: ‘Accepted members are non-commercial Norwegian exhibition spaces that work professionally with contemporary art. It is essential that the institution's artistic director is a curator or has equivalent artistic experience. The director should have a full-time position, and the institution should operate throughout the year. Foreign art centres and art museums can become affiliated as members without voting rights ... The board will consider applications for membership. Membership in the association is only valid and shall be counted from the date dues are paid.’

For the Danish Association of Art Centres (FKD), member institutions are required to be ‘run by an art historian/art professional full-time. The institution has to primarily focus on contemporary art and is not to be a collecting body (in Denmark, collecting institutions often have specific regulations).’

‘These articles are central, on one hand, as many smaller artist-run and project spaces are not able to join the association. But, on the other hand, this is
more of a guideline than a means of exclusion,’ explains Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg, artistic director of Den Frie in Copenhagen and board member of FKD. ‘For example, Kunsthal 44Møen [in Askeby] is managed all year, but open in the spring and summer only, and this institution became a member after some discussion in the general assembly ... We decided to welcome them as a member because of their professional programme and standard.’

In Sweden, there is no clear definition for acceptance as a member of KLISTER. Members range from small institutions such as Konsthall C in Stockholm (with a yearly budget of SEK 2 million but no rent to pay, and one full-time, one part-time and one project-based employee) to medium-sized institutions such as Marabouparken, also in Stockholm (with a budget of SEK 8.51 million, rent included, seven permanent employees, from 60 to 100 per cent, temporary employees in education and interns) and Göteborgs Konsthall, in Gothenburg (with a budget of SEK 8.13 million budget, from which they have to pay SEK 790 000 in rent — which does not include operating costs such as electricity, heat, cleaning, etc. — plus 11 members of staff, including a part-time exhibition host, full-time artistic director, department heads or exhibition and education curators). According to Bettina Pehrsson, director of Marabouparken, what unites most of the institutions is that ‘we work and engage ourselves in our local context (as well as globally), which comes from being situated in smaller cities in the country or in the periphery of the city centre of Stockholm. Aside from one or two exceptions, [none] of us have collections.’

While the physical size, number of staff members and yearly budget of all member institutions are small or medium-sized in relation to larger kunsthalles or
museums, these numbers are only loosely specified and are not strictly applied criteria. Rather, the professional background of the artistic director (an art historian and/or curator), engagement with their local community, accessibility throughout the year and the lack of a private collection are the attributes that most of the institutions in these three networks share.
What Is a Small-Scale or Medium-Sized Institution?

*It is about constantly investigating what an art gallery is and can be. — Göteborgs Konsthall*¹⁴

Since, for all three countries, the criteria for member institutions are not strictly defined in terms of the physical size of the venue or exhibition space, the budget or the number of staff members, there seem to be other criteria that would mark an institution as being small-scale. We were interested in how the institutions themselves would define the role of a small art institution in society.

The most frequently mentioned criteria were that they had to operate on a local level and be experimental. Institutions often have a very strong focus on local work, combined with an international perspective. We find that galleries are specifically interested in opening up — moving from a local focus to a wider, even international, perspective according to their specific local circumstances. For instance, since institutions outside of larger cities are often the only cultural or artistic institutions in their towns or regions, they tend to take over a lot of functions that would be distributed between several different institutions within the context of a regional capital. While also developing an international perspective in their exhibition
program, Rønnebæksholm in Næstved, Denmark, for instance sees the ‘task [as] very much the same for a small-sized exhibition hall as it is for a larger museum when situated outside of the main cities ... We are building an art community.' They add, ‘We have a very strong relationship to the public. We play a leading role aesthetically and cultural and educationally.’

In addition, Tensta konsthall, located in the suburbs of Stockholm, sees itself as a ‘window to the world’ on a local level, offering ‘possible places for people living in the area to connect with the most interesting artists from all over the world’ — a concern that is shared by many of the urban institutions, such as Kunsthall Oslo, Overgaden in Copenhagen and others, as well as some other suburban institutions, such as Marabouparken.

Many of these institutions are experimental in their curatorial approaches, and some see risk-taking as an important aspect of their work. Kunsthall 3.14 in Bergen, Norway, for example, says, ‘The risk-taking aspect is the most important role we believe we can contribute. [We can be] a beacon and reservoir for experimentation and innovation, as well as pushing topics.’ The reason that smaller institutions can do more intense, and — in some regards — more successful local work is because, according to Stockholm’s Index, they have ‘a clearer understanding of specific audiences and their needs.’ This specificity, in an urban context, affects institutions’ programming, allowing them to put on very specific projects that will still be supported by a sufficient number of people. ‘Larger-sized institutions are often both historically and politically obligated to work under a stricter set of rules, and are expected to include the wide range of interests of the public,’ says Den Frie. They see the strength of smaller institutions as the fact that ‘they are often
specialized in a smaller field ... [with] more experimental curatorial freedom.’19 The accessibility that is often mentioned as an advantage of small institutions goes hand-in-hand with the ability to offer a place where ‘contemporary art and its ability to raise urgent issues is’ — according to Tensta konsthall — ‘connecting ... to people’s daily lives.’20

There are also problems that come with being small. Those frequently cited in the questionnaires were a perceived or factual lack of visibility and limited growth. Kristiansand Kunsthall, in Norway, says, ‘It can often be difficult to be seen and taken seriously for the work we do. There is only a small group of insiders who really appreciate our work.’21 This could be a downside of the aforementioned specialization of small institutions, especially those located in smaller towns. Institutions located in urban contexts or capitals, however, mentioned limited growth more frequently. For example, the respondents from Index — an institution with a relatively small exhibition space in relation to its wide programme of local activities and international reputation — clearly feel that its growth is limited.22

In conclusion, we could say that a possible definition of what ‘small’ or ‘medium-sized’ means for the three networks and related institutions lies less in the size of their exhibition spaces or institutions, and more in their shared interest in experimental, even risky, curatorial and artistic approaches, as well as their clear understanding of their local publics and the ability to listen to those publics’ needs. A common way of working and a shared understanding of the mission of their institutions seem to unite most of the networked art centres and galleries.
Sweden

*Inga undantag (No Exceptions)* is the title of a report authored by the cultural journalist Mikael Löfgren. Löfgren’s report was commissioned by KLISTER, in collaboration with the now-defunct Swedish Travelling Exhibition Agency (Riksutställningar). The KLISTER network aims to highlight contemporary art institutions’ functions in their communities.

In *No Exceptions*, Löfgren argues that the demand for measurability and immediate statistics that characterizes contemporary cultural discourse is not suitable for evaluating the work of a country’s smaller art institutions. This pragmatic, economically driven model of analysis is modelled after the New Public Management approach, and it only works if the primary goal of a business is to generate profit. But because cultural institutions in general — and smaller art galleries in particular — work towards other objectives, evaluations of them must also adapt to their language and methods. It is important to note that with measurability comes an expectation of increased audience or revenue. By way of comparison, this is also something that has been noted in Norway over the last year: when increased revenue is the goal, it makes it more
difficult to present younger artists or artists working outside the mainstream. If this trend continues, small-scale institutions will be forced to produce more blockbuster exhibitions. This is not the main remit of the kunsthallen, and it can affect programming in a negative way.

Löfgren argues that in order to correctly evaluate contemporary art institutions, it is necessary to understand the interactions between business, contemporary art and society. He also argues that what primarily characterizes the work of smaller art galleries is their ability to establish effective networks locally, regionally, nationally and globally. But networking is not just a geographical phenomenon: galleries connected to KLISTER can also act as links between public and cultural life, school and research, the personal and the political.

Reading the conclusions of Löfgren’s report, we find that:

- Smaller contemporary galleries are more likely to invest in new artists. Ultimately, this means that they provide established institutions with new talent, thus serving as important distributors.
- Smaller venues for contemporary art develop innovative approaches and new teaching methods from which the entire art world benefits.
- Schools, public education, civil society and working life could better take advantage of and utilize the skills of the staff at contemporary art centres.
- Bureaucratization and the increasing conditionality of cultural subsidies are wasteful because they steal time and resources away from actual operations.
- The unreasonable market rents that must be paid to housing corporations steal a disproportionate part of small art centres’ budgets, which would otherwise be invested in their activities.
• Support of contemporary art galleries is an efficient and — more important — socially and culturally sustainable way of supporting quality content in the fields of arts and culture.

Denmark

The aim of FKD’s report is to attempt to assess the current overall situation of its member institutions and dwell on a number of more specific questions. This includes asking how kunsthallen differ from commercial galleries and artist initiatives, and how they, as a type of institution, can work on the same terms as museums to gain more visibility and understanding — both from their publics and in relation to governments’ cultural-policy agendas — and therefore ensure their continued activity.24

The FKD report argues that the member institutions’ activities are part of, among other things, an ecosystem, with synergy that reaches far into society. These institutions are a platform for development, elevating experiments to ensure that contemporary art can develop to its highest possible level. In other words, these institutions secure the production, circulation and vitality of contemporary art on a national and international level, while also acting locally.

According to this report, each of these institutions can be characterized as:

• A physical space. It may be an architecturally interesting site, an old location that has been repurposed or part of public space.
• An open environment. Often centrally placed in the city, community or region, these institutions are open to all: students, seniors, migrants, artists, students and tourists.
• A place of activity, with discussions, vision and energy, and often with events taking place on evenings and weekends, when most of the city’s other public spaces may be closed.
• A professional arena, where art, artists and art education are highly valued.
• A workplace. People of diverse social and economic backgrounds pass through these institutions over the course of a year: employees, volunteers, students and interns. These institutions create both long- and short-term opportunities and working relationships.

In light of the developments of recent years, during which museums have expanded and been promoted as a kind of ‘cultural beacon,’ the Danish report argues that their member institutions have a ‘particular position in the cultural food chain. The kunsthallen show artists, formats and concepts rarely exhibited by other art institutions, and contribute to general society. They are a real alternative to the usual art experiences because — being free from commercial constraints and dedicated to contemporary art — they dare to be experimental, allowing the audience to experience contemporary art in completely new ways.’25 Although the point is made that the quantity-based evaluation systems currently deployed do not take these factors into consideration, the report nonetheless makes a convincing attempt to provide some numbers. ‘The cultural debate of recent years has often been about cultural heritage and audience numbers — and isn’t contemporary art also a significant part of our culture that the audience should experience?’ the authors write. ‘As part of the professionalized art world, the smaller galleries belong to the future of institutional art history ... [collectively] in 2013 [they] had 380 299 visitors and thus were the
third most visited art institution [in Denmark]."^{26}

Since FKD’s report was published, the amount of visitors has increased; in 2016, it was over 500 000."^{27}

Norway

The newest report of the three, *Kunsthallene i Norge*, was written by Nanna Løkka for the company Telemarksforskning and was commissioned by Kunsthallene i Norge itself. It has a more descriptive approach than the other two reports and aims to examine the position of member institutions in the Norwegian art world. In her report summary, Løkka states that the current definition of a kunsthalle is relatively new in Norway. Since the early 2000s, she writes, a number of institutions of different sizes have been established in the country, and she argues that they have managed to establish themselves as ‘central arenas within the contemporary art field with clear and defined functions for art, artists, curators and audiences. At the same time, the nature of the art galleries is open and explorative. In this way, they challenge the view of what art is, who can be artists, how art can be displayed and where it can be displayed.’^{28}

As in the Danish report, the member institutions are contrasted with art museums, as well as with regional art centres, commercial galleries, artist-run spaces and state-owned art associations. It finds that the member institutions have made innovative and creative attempts to attract new publics — through general outreach, for example — and have thus increased interest in, and wider understanding of, contemporary art. This outreach has been aimed explicitly at children, young people and other specific groups. The survey also points out that the member institutions
are part of a field characterized by project collaboration across institutions locally, nationally and internationally, and emphasizes the collaboration between different art forms through festivals, cultural events and activities, beyond the walls of the institution.

One of the main features emphasized here, from an artistic perspective, is the capacity of these institutions to capture activities within the visual-arts field and pinpoint current and emerging tendencies. ‘Artistic practices that break with previous traditions are given centre stage in the Norwegian art galleries,’ writes Løkka. ‘Unlike art museums, they primarily focus on less established but academically strong artists at the starting points of their careers, providing a link between the established and emerging and between the local/regional, national and international.’

The report finds that some institutions, such as Kunsthall Oslo, aim at being innovative, spectacular and maybe even controversial, while others, such as Kunsthall Stavanger, attempt to broaden the scope of the art institution. At Bomuldsfabriken in Arendal and Kunsthall Grenland in Porsgrunn, art and cultural heritage are integrated into contemporary society in new ways, while challenging both audience and artists. Løkka also notes that several institutions included in the study are located in historical buildings—for example, in former factories. This is, to a greater or lesser degree, emphasized in the individual art galleries’ profiles.
Geographies — Mapping Differences, or: What to Learn From Each Other

Is it relevant to develop Nordic collaboration in the context of small and medium-sized art institutions, and if so, in what way? Reviewing the questionnaires, we found it remarkable that the sense of urgency that seems to be felt on a global scale does not seem to be experienced by Scandinavian countries in the same way. As it was aptly put in the announcement of a recent conference on curatorial activism held at the School of Visual Arts in New York, the ‘programmatic attacks on civil rights, environmental protections, scientific research and free speech, as well as the reduction and rescinding of cultural funds to suppress diverse expression,’ caused by rising nationalism and political conservatism, require a rethinking of how we curate for and use our institutions. That this situation is not among the chief concerns and ambitions of most of the institutions participating in this report is not, we believe, due to their indifference or lack of knowledge; rather, it is due to a persistent feeling of political stability in Scandinavia (despite the nationalism also fomenting here). It is also a consequence of the particular managerial language that has saturated many of these institutions, to the degree that it has begun to inform the way that problems and visions for the future are articulated.
What does it then imply that these institutions’ focus is on working ‘more with audience development and media strategies to deepen collaboration with local society,’ or on being able to pay artists fairly for their labour? In Scandinavia, this agenda should be seen in light of a public commitment derived from these countries’ histories as functioning welfare states. The question is: do these specific institutions feel obliged to do these things because public structures are no longer fulfilling their own responsibilities, or are there opportunities for them to create their own agendas beyond official public programs? What is the specific relevance of this question for an art institution? In order to know what one is good for, one needs to define what one is good at. (This will be discussed more in detail later on in this report.)

For publicly funded institutions, the language quoted above is a necessary component of communicating with civil servants and politicians at local, regional and national levels. This kind of language could be understood as a symptom of the outstandingly high percentage of time that must be spent on tasks such as auditing and writing applications or reports related to an institution’s daily operations.

Comparing the three countries in this report, it also becomes clear that, with generally smaller budgets than in the other countries, Swedish institutions seem to have a more stable position in the cultural-political context than the Norwegian ones. The kind of security that this entails (i.e., knowing ahead of time whether they will be able to get a reasonable budget on short notice) could be one reason why programming continuity differs between Nordic countries. As Fotogalleriet in Oslo puts it, ‘A major risk is financing, and more precisely unpredictable funding. Spaces like
Fotogalleriet receive annual operating support that does not cover art and exhibition production. The confirmed grant is always announced a few weeks before the budget year or when the projects already have begun. Thus, independent exhibition spaces continuously operate with a high level of uncertainty.33

Due to a similar situation in Denmark, FKD even suggests that art institutions should be treated as equal to museums in the national budget, so that they would be able to expect core funding and the possibility of applying for support from the Ministry of Culture. This position stands out from those taken in the other reports and might require some context. An independent gallery provides a scene for living, innovative and experimental contemporary art, without being bound by historical considerations. According to Sanne Kofod Olsen, rector of the School of Visual Arts at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, and the Danish newspaper Politiken’s art critic, Trine Ross, this forms a progressive approach.34 Not having to store collections or conduct collection-based research allows for freedom of action: ‘We do not just show art — we also convey issues that arise in contemporary social debates. Thus we can mirror everyday life and reality in real time and document it for posterity.’35

This position regarding collecting institutions is noteworthy; however, FKD’s network members do define their common public role as being mediators of contemporary art. None of the members have collections and, after considering a number of different strategies, their current goal is to be able to apply for support from the Danish Arts Foundation’s development fund — which is earmarked for museums — in order to provide stability to their respective institutions. Many of the Danish institutions have previously
received a small amount of operating support from the Arts Foundation, and for the last six years they have been able to apply for programme support on an annual or biannual basis.

Although Norwegian budgets are generally higher, and art centres in Sweden appear to have the most politically stable and widely acknowledged — as well as socially accepted — position among the three countries, the Danish question of these institutions’ legal status might be of relevance for the entire region. At the moment, there appears to be general support for these institutions’ activities from local communities. But, looking at exceptions — such as how Gävle Konstcentrum, in Gävle, Sweden, worries that their programming is ‘experienced by politicians [in a new political landscape] as pure expense’ — one might sense increasing precariousness in the region: ‘Since [our budget requirements are] not governed by law, it is likely that very high saving requirements will hit us hard shortly.’ As we will discuss further on in the report, these are worrying signals which, in order to be addressed collectively, need to be articulated and shared between the networks.
The three countries investigated have a similar demographic situation: they each have a concentration of cultural activity in the capital, vibrant activity in two or three larger cities and a number of art institutions in smaller communities, which are located in regions that often lack higher arts education, or — due to geography and/or national infrastructure — remain sidelined from central nodes such as the capital. Rather than looking at national categories, one might thus categorize the actors as suburban, rurban\textsuperscript{38} and urban. This would promote relevant exchanges between the three countries based on shared particularities, while also efficiently replacing the problematic centre-periphery discourse and allowing a focus on the unique context in which various actors are operating.

Naturally, the regional policies of the three nation-states and the space for manoeuvring within that — as well as the duties they allocate to their municipalities — inevitably affect the budgets and status of sites that find themselves a hub for local cultural life, while being either more visible or off the (international) radar. At the same time, in the last few years we have seen a drastic transformation in the ways that specific approaches and agencies are developing for art, its mediation and institutional activities outside
of inner cities. It is a transformation that we suspect is due to a number of different processes, including a decentralization of cultural funding in Scandinavia in parallel to rising real-estate prices and an increasing corporatization of city centres. This means that even established artists have a hard time finding affordable studio spaces, which in some cases has lead to renewed energy and developments outside of city centres, as well as a slow inclusion of other actors. Another factor is that the artworks being shown and made in these contexts depart from different premises, which in turn have an effect on both the content and the formal decisions made during the artistic process. It is precisely this shift in artistic, curatorial and institutional agency that guides these proposed definitions of suburban, rurban and urban.

Suburban Institutions

Located at commuting distance from the city centre and often with a clear remit to engage with the local community, suburban institutions often operate as local community centres. As such, they share a number of core questions, including those regarding gentrification and Scandinavian integration policies. These instructions are often addressed through the curatorial programming of the different institutions; several of them actively create programming outside their own walls by collaborating with local cultural organizations and other representatives of the neighbourhood. Some examples of these methods include the organization of summer schools for children and young adults, workshops addressing local concerns, and the translation of exhibition texts into the languages spoken by recently arrived members of the local community.
In Sweden, the Syskonsthallarna (sibling kunsthallen network) is an interesting model that could serve as inspiration for the other two countries in this report. The art centres involved are all located on the outskirts of Stockholm (Botkyrka Konsthall, Konsthall C, Tensta konsthall and Marabouparken). Their staff members meet on a regular basis to exchange experiences and ideas, as well as co-organizing cultural events. Syskonsthallarna might be said to primarily function as an advocacy group, building knowledge and solidarity between members, as well as helping them think about how to influence and educate politicians and policymakers. In 2012, for instance, they collectively arranged a series of hearings to highlight and discuss current cultural policy and the possibilities of funding for art institutions and artists. The relationship between gentrification and creative industries is also a common subject of discussion whenever the members meet.39

Rurban Institutions

There has been a curatorial shift in recent years, through which rurban art institutions have started to develop new methods of artistic production. This is partly due to a new generation of directors and curators, and partly to a shift in cultural policy in both national and European regional funding policies. The non-urban institution Skovsnogen, in Kibæk, Denmark, for example, calls itself ‘an exhibition space that is not defined by walls and ceiling, but unfolds under the open sky in a West Jutland forest.’40 More than a sculpture park or remote retreat, Skovsnogen wishes to ‘confront traditional ideas about the encounter between art and audience and convey contemporary art to new
audiences. This art ‘forest’ also exists in order to give artists the opportunity to create, develop and present their work in new ways. (The notion that a different kind of art can be produced in dialogue with a small or medium-sized art centre has, in part, formed our understanding of the categories suburban, rurban and urban, and will be discussed further on in this report.)

The rurban category also includes institutions located in smaller urban areas where there are often elements of farmland, fishing industry, countryside or woodland. They are outside capitals but nonetheless work internationally, pursuing a different set of local, rural or small-town questions particular to the regions in which they operate. For example, Kalmar Konstmuseum in Sweden has, under the recent leadership of Joanna Sandell, explored themes of equestrianism, farming, centres and peripheries, and collaborated with initiatives such as Residence-in-Nature, in Småland and Norrbotten, and Kultivator, on the island of Öland. Tromsø Kunstforening, in Norway, has addressed the intersections between contemporary art and indigenous life through long-term research projects with Sami artists, with whom it has been collaborating since the 1970s.

Much as with suburban institutions, rurban institutions are filling a social and cultural need. There is rarely a place of higher arts education in their regions, and, through new practices they have developed (such as locally rooted residencies, international exchanges with other non-urban and rurban art initiatives, and collaborations with local artists), these art centres serve as an educational platform for the local artistic community. One major asset of a rurban setting is access to space and time; rurban institutions can develop methods that extend over longer periods
and take up more space, without necessarily running into the same economic difficulties that they would in an environment with higher rent for their institutions and more expensive accommodation.

This combination of factors allows for process-based or on-site production and collaborations with local residencies, as well as situations in which the exhibiting artists may also have the opportunity to spend more time on-site. The proximity to cultural decision-making processes is both an asset and a challenge: it is easier to establish close dialogue with local politicians, but it also requires a lot of effort on the part of the institution to ‘educate’ both their funders and the local community about the value of contemporary art. Personal relationships become instrumental to sustaining goodwill with the local community and politicians, and their processes must constantly be communicated in order to justify the use of smaller municipal budgets. The production of more investigational practices can at times require diplomatic skills from institutions’ directors beyond what would be needed in a context more accustomed to artistic experimentation.

Norway, with its generous regional politics and unique geography, is a strong actor in the category of rurban art institutions. Tromsø has a population of 70,000 people, and, as mentioned above, many of the artists with whom Tromsø Kunstforening has a long-standing relationship are part of the Sami community. In the last few years, some of these artists have received international attention, not least through representation at documenta 14 and because of the new focus of the Office for Contemporary Art Norway under the directorship of Katya García-Antón. Tromsø Kunstforening has a yearly budget of NOK 3.7 million and is a member of several networks. As with many
rurban institutions, they say they have collaborated extensively with ‘20-odd institutions from other countries the last three years.’

Urban Institutions

A combined meeting place or cultural centre and space for artistic experimentation is something we find in suburban and rurban settings. But the situation is slightly different in urban areas. Outside of cities, an institution can often fill a niche as the only cultural centre in the area and the main node for the local arts community; however, more centrally located venues often act in relation to a cluster of other cultural institutions. This often entails a more collaborative position. For instance, Röda Sten Konsthall, in Gothenburg, maintains that it plays an important role for artistic development, and as a meeting place and public space; it ‘can be important for democratic processes and meetings between people with different backgrounds,’ its directors write. ‘We are also an important part of the ecosystem of the art world.’

In an urban setting, small and medium-sized art institutions fill a social and artistic function in relation to larger, often national institutions in proximity to their venue. ‘The larger institutions are often both historically and politically obligated to work under a more strict set of rules and are expected to include the wide range of interests of the public,’ writes Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg of Den Frie in Copenhagen. ‘As a small institution, Den Frie believes in its function as a strong platform for contemporary art production and experiments. Through our approximately ten exhibitions each year, we are able to give our audience the experience of a wide range of artists and art works.’
Marianne Hultman from Oslo Kunstforening says, similarly, that she thinks urban institutions’ ‘role is crucial, but difficult to measure.’ She continues:

‘We often work organically, we follow the artists closely, our programme is narrow, and probably does not reach out to the ‘general’ audience. We fill the gap between the artist-run spaces, the large museums and institutions, and the commercial field. Perhaps we could be described as an undercurrent in society? Without an undercurrent, society would stagnate and no new ideas would come up to the surface. All societies need a platform for creativity and experimentation, in science as well as culture. Culture is part of society as well as an observer and mirror of that same society. We are both included and excluded at once. That’s a tricky position, which constantly needs to be negotiated and renegotiated carefully, and sometimes even defended — also in a careful manner.’

"
Working Outside the Walls of the Institution

Much of the most interesting and innovative art is present today between artists, commissioners and audiences in rooms other than the traditional art gallery. In these rooms, the roles can start shifting—the audience becomes a participant, the recipient becomes a contributor. —Bettina Pehrsson, Marabouparken

A major difference between institutions in suburban, rurban and urban contexts is apparent in the way that they, in practical terms, relate to local publics or users, as well as to the history of their locations.

Suburban Example

Regarding the specificity of working in the suburbs, Haninge Konsthall, in Sweden, says, ‘Because the artists we exhibit tend to be emerging rather than very well-known, and [because] our institution is placed outside the city centre of Stockholm, the artists seem to dare more. Our aim is to give artists freedom to choose what they would like to express within our given frame, the space and the resources that we can provide. We find it very positive that many artists who use our space dare to take new steps and try new experiments.’ Haninge Kulturhus is a small municipal
institutions with a total annual budget of SEK 390,000. As is often the case for Scandinavian municipal art galleries, Haninge Konsthall is part of a cultural centre called Haninge Kulturhus, which houses their gallery, a municipal library, an arts-and-crafts space and a foyer with a café and newspaper corner.

They say that being part of a municipality is a means to an end, ‘because it is such a large organization that other parts of it can also be involved.’ For example, they’ve been part of a project within the municipality of Haninge that promotes gender equality in cycling, which includes workshops where local girls learn what their bicycle-related needs might be. By working with the municipality, they managed to achieve sustainable results; it became possible to ‘borrow a bike with your library card, and [the dissemination of this art project has] also raised the issue in a general way,’ they say. ‘Because we tend to start projects and have more freedom to choose how we want to work, it is easier to raise issues and start conversations that, later on, someone else can continue.’

Rurban Example

On the rurban side, one might take an example from Kalmar Konstmuseum and their 2017 incorporation of Kultivator’s programme New Horse Cultures. This programme was thematically linked to the geographic location of the institution, an area where equestrianism is deeply rooted, yet culturally isolated and often segregated; with it, they attracted a large audience that previously had not been taken into account, and were able to discuss questions of power, gender and representation. More importantly, they used a methodological approach to representation, including a
collaboration between Kultivator, a Swedish collective of artists and organic farmers, and newly arrived immigrants. Immediate access to land, a network of people trained in taking care of horses, and even the basic logistics of the project would not have been possible in an urban context (or would have required a substantially larger budget and extensive administrative efforts).51

Another strength of rurban institutions is that, due to small regional cultural budgets, they can apply for support outside the narrow realm of cultural funding — for instance, from both national and European regional development funds. This, paradoxically, can allow for more artistic autonomy. There are exciting challenges inherent to producing contemporary art in rurban contexts, in terms of transport, sustainability and discourse — where proximity to, for instance, farming practices can require refreshing tangibility in how we talk and think about what we are producing. In the words of Mathieu Vrijman of Kultivator, who initiated the New Horse Cultures project as well as the recent exhibition You Have Two Cows: ‘You can’t bullshit when you’re being observed by a cow.’52

Urban Example

Urban institutions are often located in historic buildings and engaged in collaborations with other cultural institutions in the city centre, such as city festivals in Copenhagen, or Gothenburg’s International Biennial for Contemporary Art. Another example is Oslo Kunstforening’s Oslo Art Walk 2020, an initiative created with the Oslo Art District. Marianne Hultman describes it as ‘an art walk starting at Ekebergparken, crossing the new Munch Museum at Bjørvika, the new opera building, up Rådhusgaten where we are located, going
past city hall and the new National Museum, and ending at Aker Brygge and Tjuvholmen. Oslo Art Walk will accentuate the contemporary art institutions along this axis and hopefully, in the long term, all art institutions in Oslo. This is a city development project, initiated by the contemporary art institutions themselves.\textsuperscript{53} Whether located in a suburban, rurban or urban setting, what all these institutions have in common is their participation in several national and/or international institutional networks; they consider these to be strong and important support structures which are part of their institutional self-conception, as well as a confirmation of their praxis. We believe that the three countries could learn a great deal from each other through sister institutions that share the concerns of their local situations, strategically, conceptually and in terms of artistic production.

This conscious networking — as an active exchange, as well as an amalgamation of small power assets into a bigger one — is a key condition for the exertion of influence in the cultural field. Whether this potential has already been exhausted or there's still some left untapped will be the subject of discussion in our final chapter. There have, of course, already been several examples of collaborative projects between institutions in different countries, with exhibitions such as the lens-based exhibition \textit{Nordic Delights}, curated by Kristine Kern (director of Fotografisk Center, Copenhagen), Marianne Hultman (director of Oslo Kunstforening) and Anna-Kaisa Rastenberger (former chief curator of the Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki); it was shown at the curators’ respective venues, as well as at Kalmar Konstmuseum in 2016–17, and is currently being developed into a co-publication.
Over the course of writing this report, the culture political situation has changed to some degree. As summarized by Simen Joachim Helsvig in the online journal Kunstkritikk, artists’ organizations won substantial victories in Norway and Sweden ‘when the national budgets for 2018 were passed in their respective parliaments in late November.’ As Helsvig explains:

‘The Swedish budget increases the funds allocated to the Ministry of Culture by SEK 745 million. In Norway, the government’s supporting parties have ensured that most of the artists’ union’s demands regarding the cultural budget have been met. In Denmark, the government parties and its supporting party have agreed on the Danish national budget after weeks of scuffles between the government party Liberal Alliance and Dansk Folkeparti. The cultural scene in Denmark finds little to cheer about in this budget: all Danish art institutions are subject to the government’s overall policy of cutbacks up until 2020, and the few increases in the budget are mainly concerned with preserving cultural heritage and with events with national and/or historical leanings.’

Although, in Denmark, this is a symptom of a longer trend for state-funded institutions where, in the words of Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg, ‘the cuts in the cultural budget have been 2 per cent, then 2 per cent, then 2 per cent, then 2 per cent, which is actually absolutely devastating for a state-funded and subsidized institution,’ it mainly applies to museums. The small-scale and medium-sized institutions we considered have private foundations as a major source of income, to a degree, which distinguishes them from the funding situation of the institutions in Sweden and Norway.

In the budget allocations by Arts Council Norway for 2018, they have chosen to support a smaller selection
of art institutions, rather than distributing increases as evenly as in previous years. This means that, among the members of Kunsthallene i Norge, some members received budget increases of up to NOK 1 million, while others received none. This is a new direction for the Arts Council; the question is, what does it mean? Could it be read as a demonstration of power, or an attempt to smooth out the differences in the overall budgets of small and medium-sized contemporary art institutions? The Arts Council has been discussing the term ‘quality-specific assignment’ over the past couple of years. Is this a demonstration of how they measure ‘quality’? In Oslo, two institutions received considerable budget increases of up to NOK 1 million: Kunsthall Oslo and Kunstnerforbundet. Oslo Kunstforening received NOK 65 000. Fotogalleriet received none. Trafo Kunsthall did not manage to make it into the budget. At the moment of editing this report, some institutions had been notified that their support was expiring, or that the funds may change by 2019. However, in many cases, it is unclear what these warnings were based on.56

These shifts mean that both Norway and Denmark are experiencing some major changes. In Sweden, the entire cultural field is already concerned about the potential effects of their autumn 2018 elections — not only due to changes in Central Europe and the current political climate nationally, but also because of what’s happened in neighbouring countries. At the moment of editing, it is not yet clear how the Danish cutbacks will play out — but in Norway last November, for instance, Akershus County, outside Oslo, proposed to cut 2018 support for Trafo Kunsthall almost in half, from NOK 615 000 to 330 000. The cut is part of a total savings of about 1 per cent (NOK 1.6 million,
of 158 million in total) of the county municipality’s cultural budget. In total, the county council in Akershus has proposed cuts in various operating budgets of NOK 69 million, with the intention of creating room for future investment in a high school.57

In Sweden, the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats party has clearly stated in its cultural vision that, given the chance, it would slice budgets for contemporary art. Given the political situation in the Gävle municipality, the plight of Gävle Konstcentrum might serve as an example of what to expect, especially in parts of the country where the ultra-right-wing agenda is stronger: the arts centre can no longer stay in the black without entirely jeopardizing its own exhibitions. Gävle director Eva Asp writes that even if their activities are well-received by press and television, she hopes that, in ‘a stronger perceived and concrete situation of threat, there would probably be support and defence with some strength, as the institution has strong, loud, opinionated, influential friends.’58

In order to know how to act in these circumstances, we believe that it is important to understand the role that these institutions play for the entire field, and how to best use this position in order to act on and within a changing cultural climate.
Ecologies and Food Chains

Both within the art world and in terms of funding, the institutions in this report often seem to defy categorization. The ranges of activities stemming from the different actors are obviously varied, due to the particular circumstances of each institution. As a whole, they are understood to have an established and specific function in the field, and the role they play differs from that of artist initiatives or major institutions. It is interesting to note that, in the last decade, the notion of an ‘ecosystem’ as the organizing principle of the art world and cultural sphere has come to replace the term ‘infrastructure’, depicting the positions of the various players within a relatively wide field—stretching from individual institutions and artists to the cultural field at large, and even to funding structures and politics.

In this context, an ecosystem—which could also be referred to as ‘relational infrastructure’—is a productive metaphor, as it shows that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Just as funding systems have an effect on discourse, smaller, experimental arenas are just as important as large museums. Short-term demands have an effect on programming and, in the case of the surveyed institutions, this means their smaller scale is both an asset and a risk: they may be
more nimble, but their dependency on external funding can swiftly come to define their content.59

‘Deferred value’ was a key concept in a survey of small-scale institutions conducted in the United Kingdom. Introduced in Sarah Thelwall’s report *Size Matters*, the concept has spread throughout the Nordic region as a means of clarifying the role of the small or medium-sized art institution within this larger ecosystem. The concept can, for instance, be used to describe how small art organizations often premiere or launch artists who will later go on to become established through an international biennial or museum exhibition. It is seldom recognized that small, understaffed and risk-taking actors enabled these eventual ‘discoveries’; instead, it is large institutions that get the attention, as well as (sometimes) the economic benefit. The reasons for this situation are myriad, from lack of media coverage of smaller galleries to funding systems that demand audience numbers and shortsighted economic gains.

In the questionnaire, we asked institutions about their experiences relating to this issue, and asked them to provide examples of deferred value that they have helped to create. This might include the professional trajectories of specific artists, social effects (such as providing meeting places or engaging in community building), exhibitions or event formats, or their staff (such as trainees who might go on to have a career in the arts after leaving the institution).

A common response was that they had shown artists who had gone on to show in larger, more prestigious contexts. Unfortunately, artists who get to a certain point in their careers tend to drop earlier exhibitions from their cv’s, even though these exhibitions were often important to them at the time; this deletes the
role of small and medium-sized institutions from the historical narrative. This becomes a problem when art institutions’ lack of funding also makes it impossible for them to produce books and catalogues, further obscuring their accomplishments from a contemporary, as well as historical, perspective. For example, the now world-famous American artist group Guerrilla Girls had their first solo exhibition at Oslo Kunstforening in the 1990s — but that’s not part of their official history, since there is no record of the show in books or catalogues.60

Nevertheless, it is still crucial to understand the art world as an ecology, rather than a food chain. In Denmark’s case, for instance, we believe it is vital to clarify and acknowledge the different respective roles played by museums, commercial galleries, artist initiatives and art centres, in order to provide arguments for their individual importance within that system (and why more long-term funding guarantees are needed). By contrast, a food-chain mentality would risk creating false opposition and antagonism within the field.61
Delayed Value and Pseudo-Quantity

In order to answer the question of value, we find that Mikael Löfgren’s text on value creation, ‘Om värdeskapande kulturorganisationer,’ coincides with and clarifies a number of our findings. In this text, he suggests that we need to analyse three factors:

- What are the institution’s challenges?
- What is the institution good at?
- What is the institution good for?

To explain current challenges, Löfgren articulates three contemporary trends that could be useful for understanding the current position of the institution within a larger context:

1. The notion of culture is expanding. It has become central in party politics, and questions of identity, territory, common values and heritage are on the daily agenda.

2. Culture and creative industries are no longer seen as the economic model of the future. This is, on the one hand, an effect of dramatic cuts made after the fiscal crises of 2008; on the other hand, it is because the influential New Public Management model questions publicly funded culture on an ideological basis. By distributing responsibility (but not power), the public sector’s knowledge and proficiency have been hollowed out. Affected are ‘teachers at various levels within
3. Due to the two factors described above, the discussion about the values of art and culture has intensified since the turn of the century. As Löfgren writes, ‘Think tanks from the right (Rand in the US) to the left (Demos, UK) find the current situation precarious and are trying to find methods to define and describe the values created by cultural and artistic organizations. They all seem to agree that the discrepancy between instrumental value and intrinsic value, which the discussion so far has often been locked into, is both unfortunate and improper. The value of culture cannot be described in such an either-or manner.’

Given the tendencies described by Löfgren above, developing an understanding of what an institution is good at, as opposed to what it is good for, is a balancing act. These are two questions of qualitative character. We choose here to speak of ‘delayed’ rather than ‘deferred’ value to accentuate the temporal interval between the value created and the situation that created it. Both the present and delayed values of the institutions in this study stand in proportion to their size. Some of these values are indeed due to the scale and size of the institutions; size must, in other words, be primarily understood as a quality— as should the value created. Understanding the notion of delayed value entirely in terms of numbers can lead to misinterpretation of these qualities as quantifiable units. Here, Löfgren points to the Swedish historian Sven-Eric Liedman’s notion of ‘pseudo-quantity’:

‘A pseudo-quantity is a spurious quantity that purports to indicate the dimensions of something but is actually arbitrary and, if taken at face value,
misleading. A real quantity informs us about the number, weight or velocity of something and is, in this respect, always more exact than even the most exhaustive verbal description. By contrast, a pseudo-quantity is less nuanced and less exact than a well-informed and conscientious verbal evaluation.66

One might compare this to changes that have taken place in universities in the region, where emphasis on credits has led to a bureaucratic and administrative burden that, in the end, also defines the content produced: responsibility is delegated, while power is centralized. This is, in other words, a general societal phenomenon that has appeared in response to increased demands of auditing, reports and evaluations that can be traced from health care to schools. As many of the institutions we are studying also receive funding from municipalities (with corresponding demands), it can easily lead to a catch-22 in which both the institution and its funders are despondently discussing pseudo-quantities, rather than engaging in direct dialogue. On top of this, these processes eat up time that could otherwise be used — in the case of art institutions — for research and creative practice.

To be clear: we are not making the case for measurability, or suggesting that institutions should locate and monitor truly quantifiable entities. On the contrary, we are concerned that the use of pseudo-quantities might even be counterproductive when arguing for the importance of small and medium-sized art centres, as their primary assets are of a qualitative character.67 Let us, for instance, return to delayed value: Tromsø Kunstforening mentioned the artist Joar Nango, a local artist with whom the institution has worked on several projects over the last few years. Last year, Nango participated in documenta 14, an
exhibition that had over one million visitors. For his ambitious project *European Everything*, the Sami architect undertook a 50 000 kilometre journey through Europe from Sápmi (the Northern European region previously called Lapland in English), collecting material for his installation and inviting several people along the way to collaborate with him in a kind of stage for cultural events. This was first set up upon his arrival in Athens and later in Kassel, Germany.68

As mentioned above, the Office for Contemporary Art Norway has provided support and promotion of the Sami community internationally, which has led to a lot of attention for a group of artists with whom Tromsø Kunstforening has had a decades-long relationship. Taken at face value and understood as a pseudo-quantity, the delayed value would be that a small institution acts as a kind of incubator which should receive investment because it will generate revenue (i.e., have an impact further up in the food chain). This view reinforces the power of larger institutions, rather than truly depicting the institution’s position within a larger ecosystem. A more qualitative understanding would put the institution at the forefront, better corresponding to its value as a place for experimentation and innovation— with larger institutions following its lead.
A focus on delayed value as a means of understanding the role of the small and medium-sized art institution within a larger ecosystem can easily neutralize the power of this concept, if understood in terms of quantity. Following Sven-Eric Liedman’s argument above, it would indeed appear to be a qualitative argument disguised as one of quantity. Beyond demonstrating the correlation between a project in a medium-sized contemporary art institution and the crowds of visitors that will later be affected by an exhibition when the same artist who made that project is exhibiting at the Venice Biennale, how the intern of a small gallery will later become a museum director, or why money invested into a suburban or rurban institution will generate extraordinary revenue, this concept can allow for a transformation of discourse from quantity to quality. (A simple, yet easily overlooked, rule of thumb to distinguish between quantity and quality is proposed by French philosopher Henri Bergson: if you say ‘much,’ it is a question of quality, whereas ‘many’ is a quantity; i.e., too much coffee is a judgement of quality, or pseudo-quantity, whereas too many cups indicates quantity.)

Understanding the position of these institutions as part of an ecosystem is different from seeing them as
part of a food chain. Given the aforementioned political shifts, as Eva Asp from Gävle Konstcentrum says, it is pertinent to understand the value of ‘strong, loud, opinionated, influential friends’ within our art-world ecology, beyond statistical correlations. A clear example of this could be the turbulence at Kalmar Konstmuseum in 2015, when the museum’s board, on short notice, fired the director.69 Massive national attention led to the director’s temporary reappointment and the election of a new board. The mobilization of various actors — including artists, other institutional directors, curators, critics and the general public — was key in bringing attention to what was going on and changing the course of events. The situation also brought more local awareness to the precariousness of the institution, leading to a restructuring of the organization.

Lunds Konsthall, also in Sweden, is another example. Shortly after the dramatic events in Kalmar, on 10 December 2015, the City of Lund commissioned the Cultural and Leisure Services Department to handle the ‘reconstruction’ of Lunds Konsthall in order to change and modernize its activities. This included drastic alterations to the current programme, and many feared that it might result in the Konsthall’s closure. Again, mobilization through petitioning and public debate from both national and international actors was able to curb the situation. Reading Lunds Konsthall’s response to our questionnaire in light of these events, the choice to refer to the entire programme rather than individual examples is encouraging, and important to understanding the relevance of (long-term) planning that is conscious of delayed value: ‘We believe the exhibition programme, as such, creates delayed value. Continuous collaborations with well-established art institutions, locally and internationally,
are extremely valuable for a small institution like Lunds Konsthall. It gives Lund access to the best artists, curators and other specialists within the art world.” These institutions’ membership in both international and local networks is indeed an example of their importance and relevance. In the words of Corina Oprea, director of Konsthall C, participation in these networks is a way to make the public programme ‘a source of pride for residents (participants and non-participants alike) in their community, increasing their sense of connection to that community.”
Future Perspectives — From Social Imaginaries to Structural Pragmatism

I don’t know about you, but the New Year has only just arrived and I’m already exhausted. — Cait Flanders

Normalization

At the end of our questionnaire, we asked: ‘How do you imagine the future of your organization? What would be the ideal conditions for your organization in the future?’ We were anticipating that we’d receive visionary ideas and proposals, in line with the experimental spirit that these small and medium-sized contemporary art venues represent. To our surprise, many of the answers were written in language reminiscent of the kind used by municipal governments. We suspect this is an indication of how the everyday bureaucracy required to sustain daily operations for institutions is actually changing their communication style. It also clearly has to do with economic parameters — not in terms of having to do a lot with a small budget, but in terms of the demands of constant auditing, reporting and box-ticking.

In the early 2000s, in the spirit of what has been labelled ‘New Institutionalism,’ the ‘social imaginary’ was a common leitmotif in the practice of experimental and multifunctional institutions. The concept,
popularized by the philosopher Charles Taylor, was applied to institutions as places which allowed people to imagine their existence as part of a larger social structure, as well as influencing their social relationships, what they expected from them and which normative pressure these relationships would be subject to. Correspondingly, Charles Esche stated, just after he took over the direction of the Rooseum in Malmö in 2000, 'An art centre, perhaps as opposed to a museum, should create a space for artists, creative groups and individuals to give social change some form of expression that allows for reflection and discussion.'

However, since ‘corporate institutionalism’ has arrived at small-scale institutions, pragmatism seems to rule the agendas of most small and medium-sized institutions. The normalization of neoliberal ideology, strategies and managerialism — described by writer Mark Fisher as ‘capitalist realism’ — has taken over the art field in its entirety, down to the tiniest art initiative. As Fisher writes, ‘With the triumph of neoliberalism, bureaucracy was supposed to have been made obsolete ... [but] instead of disappearing, bureaucracy has changed its form, and this new, decentralized form has allowed it to proliferate.’ As a result, economic logic has encroached on all aspects of work and life, affecting educational as well as art institutions, which now spend a significant amount of their time labouring over endless applications and self-assessments.

Under the pressure of having to constantly reapply for yearly budgets — which are often not guaranteed soon enough to confirm planned programmes (see our example of Norway’s Fotogalleriet under ‘Geographies’) — nearly all the surveyed institutions said their ideal future would entail a substantial increase in their budget and a guarantee of their continued
existence for the next couple of years. Also frequently mentioned was a desire to be more widely recognized and expand their audience. These answers point towards an internalized neoliberal impulse — something which most of the institutions are aware of and even criticize, but also accept as unavoidable if they want to continue to exist and do work. Although the formats of their programming, exhibitions, collaborations and social events can rarely be subject to speculation, managerial rules form the backdrop for each of these institutions. In this regard, their institutional visions, as described in their answers to the questionnaire, don’t differ very much from those of larger, established institutions: they want to reach out to larger audiences and receive more recognition with a programme of successful exhibitions.

Correspondingly, Sanne Kofod Olsen notes that even the ‘literature on new museology emerging over the last 20 years is mainly concerned with how museums can improve their presentation/communication/education/learning activities to attract more visitors and transform themselves into socially relevant and/or successful income-based enterprises.’ These ‘guides’ are aimed at the burgeoning number of museums — whose ranks began to increase in the 1990s, in parallel with the stock-exchange boom — and their specific function as a marketing tool within a privatized public sphere, as well as (especially in the United States) part of the entertainment industry. It is interesting in this regard that ‘development’ in institutional work, especially in the US, is often synonymous with ‘fundraising.’ By contrast, in the United Kingdom, the term ‘investment’ designates financial support for art. According to this logic, art institutions develop when companies and foundations invest in them.
A number of institutions mention research as a field they would like to expand in their institutional practice. Kristine Kern of Fotografisk Center says that they would generally like to include research as a natural part of institutional practice. Corina Oprea wants to ‘establish Konsthall C as an institution for artistic and curatorial research and innovative exhibition formats.’ It is telling to weigh this intention—apparently a core initiative—against this institution’s yearly budget for research and development: SEK 11 000.

Including (artistic) research as a central concern for smaller art institutions could also be seen as one attempt to escape the managerial logic of neoliberalism. Since the discourse on artistic research and its definition in the academic context are appealing to bureaucracy and economic applicability—motivating many of the research facilities at Scandinavian art academies as well—many smaller art institutions turn to alternative, free and self-organized forms of research as a tool for their own curatorial work, as well as for the events and workshops they offer. Paul O’Neill, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson recognize the significance of research for the formation of new and progressive institutions when they ask: ‘What are the models, resources, skills and knowledge-bases needed to develop a new, innovative and progressive research-led institution?’ This can, to some extent, be seen as an attempt to at least partially escape not only normalization, but also instrumentalization. But what does this mean?

Instrumentalization

In 2005, Iaspis—the Swedish Arts Grants Committee’s international artists programme—published European
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*Cultural Policies 2015*, a book that tells us in its first sentence that art has become ‘almost completely instrumentalized — regardless of whether its financing is private or public.’80 This now-13-year-old anthology points to several tendencies in European cultural policies that have advanced since it was published. One of the more uncanny essays in the book is Tone Hansen’s text ‘2005–2015,’81 which notes that debates which, to a large extent, originated in the public realm would be later left to committees; how projects would become outsourced in a way that would open the gap between artists and institutions; and how the influence of extreme right-wing politics would impact cultural policies. In a European context, it is worth noting that her text also predicts an increase in state subsidies — money that, to a greater degree, is employed through means such as culture and business forums ‘and directly initiated, temporary projects.’82 She means that money is offered in return for obeying orders, and that ‘the culture sector must also put up with management by objective. Management by objective has become a natural thing: the State gives support, and expects social effects back.’83

Returning to Hansen’s text today, it is clear that the polarization of the art field due to ‘management by objective’ — which we have witnessed in Sweden, Denmark and Norway since 2005 — creates ‘a need to protect the art institution against a growing bureaucracy, as there is no choice not to become politically engaged.’84 ‘So, how can you say “Thanks, but no thanks,” to this delicate form of interdependence, which, one way or another, always succeeds in making you a partner-in-crime, even without your consent?’ asks Elena Tzotzi, of Signal Gallery, Malmö, in her text ‘Small is strong, or is it the other way around...?’85.
Caring about how you do things is, above all, caring for the artists you work with, which means that you constantly push, challenge and question, but you’re always there to take joint risks and enjoy shared successes. It is a commitment that goes far beyond the carefully calculated moves of a mapped-out strategy. Sometimes it throws you headlong into trouble; more often, it rewards you with a companion with whom you’ll share each conviction and doubt throughout the process of collaboration. Paying attention to each detail is showing that you care, and trusting each other is daring to stick your neck out despite the extreme anxiety of a trend-following logic so dominant in the art world. To be confident enough not to compromise in any direction is not an easy thing to do on your own; it always helps to have friends along the way who will listen to your concerns, support your efforts and question your choices. To operate a space, based on these values, is what makes the difference, and the smaller scale allows you a whole other room for manoeuvring.86

It may be relevant here to stress the simple fact that institutions — while they have a mandate to represent the general value system of a society — are also composed of and shaped by people: individuals working in and around the institution and their surrounding social environment.87 An institution might thus be understood as an organized set of social structures and relationships in a state of constant becoming.88 This is particularly clear when observing small institutions, which are often shaped to a considerable degree around a single individual’s artistic vision and network. While larger institutions are stuck in the present hegemonic-corporatist institutional structure and logic, it becomes evident that, for many of
the smaller institutions in this study, the programmatic interests and curatorial profile of their current directors directly inform their self-conception. This is interesting from both a Swedish and Norwegian perspective, where on several occasions it has been claimed that there are no people with ‘artistic leadership material’ on the national level, which is why they are ‘forced’ to source directors for their institutions abroad. The leadership of small and medium-sized institutions should be accounted for here.

This is primarily a qualitative, not quantitative, aspect of the small or medium-sized art institution. Naturally, it is not a distinction that resolves the question of funding or working conditions, but might be significant to bear in mind when they are sandwiched between the larger art institutions, as Tzotzi writes, ‘in the quest for larger audiences and more funding, and the commercial galleries, operating within a totally different economic logic.’ Tzotzi recognizes that budgeting is a problem for smaller spaces: ‘But, even if a smaller scale might seem to be a disadvantage in this case, the only reason these initiatives exist is precisely because of a manageable scale that doesn’t allow the economic structure to overshadow the content.’

This in turn requires an immense and, at times, exhausting amount of dedication from curators and artists, who are already working under precarious conditions in order to realize their ideas about art and give space to the dialogue it produces.
Sarah Thelwall’s idea of ‘deferred value’ confirms a number of findings from both the three national reports and our questionnaire, thus proving relevant to the Scandinavian context: almost all of the institutions mentioned that they are among the first to show younger or less established artists, who are then invited to show at biennials or appear in the exhibitions of bigger institutions. (Often, the original institution does not receive due credit for this.) Staff members, mainly curators, also make their way from smaller institutions to bigger ones, and even move, in some cases, from local to international.

The question, now, is: how could small institutions use the fact that they produce deferred or delayed value for the art field, and sometimes even beyond that? The attention they apparently get from bigger institutions and other actors might, for instance, be consciously directed and used to spread values that undermine forced complicity with the neoliberal operational models of the art system at large (of which most of the curators are tired, as well as critical). This might be done, for example, through slowed-down or long-term organization models, which would allow
time for more thorough research (a desire that was mentioned explicitly in several questionnaires), adequate fees for interns and artists, generous planning and deeper ethical responsibility.

If they in their role as ‘trendsetters’ collectively refused to reproduce organizational practices derived from neoliberalism (as well as funding from unethical sources) in favour of creating new operating strategies, they might produce delayed value which would potentially impact the cultural field beyond just artistic and curatorial careers. As in the more successful examples of boycotting or downscaling from the past couple years, it seems relevant to distance themselves collectively and perform criticism in creative ways.90 For example, as part of the ongoing #MeToo anti-sexual-harassment conversation, large institutions in Scandinavia have seriously struggled with the reorganization and exposure of power structures, whereas small and medium-sized institutions have the advantage of being swifter and more efficient. Representation (the strength of being locally rooted and in touch with local publics) can transform structures more easily than could be done within the sluggish structures of corporatized larger institutions. Seeking allies outside art networks can also help with efficiency, as can getting the attention of the public.

In a review of the conference ‘Humans of the Institution,’ which took place in Amsterdam in 2017, organized by Anne Szefer Karlsen and Vivian Ziherl, Ina Hagen writes, ‘One needs to step outside of the economy of recognition that fuels the art system at large.’ Although she directs this at the practice of freelance curators, it also applies to small-scale institutions; as she continues, ‘This is a bold and risky move that can only be made if an international support system of
some kind is in place.” This is true in many ways, and it is here that organized networks — regional, national or international — play their most important role: as hubs and support structures for ‘bold and risky’ undertakings.

The Potential of Organized Networks

Bettina Pehrsson of Marabouparken explains the crucial role, or even the necessity, of small or medium-sized galleries’ organization networks: ‘As a smaller institution, we must work with networking and in interaction with others: in the art world, with schools and universities, local communities, politics and research. Networking takes place at local, regional, national and international level. The different networks and partnerships become an asset to use in our operations.’

As a signature strategy of the neoliberal working world, networking is intended to make and maintain profitable relations: individuals can successfully climb the career ladder, and corporations can gain power and monopoly positions based on competition with and the exclusion of others. But networking has a different implication when it comes from below, initiated by actors with little power. Then mutual support, common interest and solidarity are the key elements that make a network run.

In what way, then, would networks of small institutions — with little economical muscle, but a lot of networking value within the art field — ideally operate, and how could these networks be set up effectively to benefit their members in various ways? At best, the existing regional, national and institutional networks that have already been formed can operate as ‘organized networks,’ with a strategic plan that will
strengthen diverse smaller, independent institutions and activities, as well as setting up temporary and collaborative platforms.95

In his 2006 book *Organized Networks*, Ned Rossiter argues that the key institutions of the modern era — such as the state, firm, university or union — have been sidelined by neoliberal economic reconfigurations at a global level. Political change is no longer initiated by the representational procedures of these institutions, but rather by the relational processes of new institutions, which are ‘responsive to the logic of social-technical networks and non-representational democratic processes.’96 These form the basis of distributive, non-linear and project-based organized networks that work against the bureaucratic sclerosis that threatens even the most radical networked organizations.97 As became apparent from the questionnaires, many art institutions struggle with the dysfunctionality of old institutional operational modes. A ‘transdisciplinary, distributive and collaborative institutional form’— an organized network— would offer a timely, necessary platform to recompose life and labour, against the rising threat of precarity.98

Today a model of ‘processual democracy’ is needed. According to Rossiter, this would be the product of constant interaction among diverse interest groups and social actors in a real-time, networked context. Rossiter draws an analogy between institutional networks and the operating modes of digital media. This could be a helpful way to think about how to set up a flow of collaboration between the Scandinavian institutions, especially when paired with the collective performance of a critical position towards the normalization of managerialism and unethical
business — for example, in well-argued and creatively staged protests. It is most relevant for our discussion that organized networks ‘form the backbone of new supranational civil movements that are gradually taking over the role of traditional social institutions, focusing on working conditions, education, health care, the environment, minority rights and so forth.’ The aforementioned success of #MeToo is just one example. In the art field, networks of organized collaborations could initiate public discourse and offer distribution channels for civil demands. This is especially fruitful when one takes into account the proximity to (local) publics and their demands, which were stated as a core interest by most of the art centres in the questionnaires. The networks could then serve as an information pool: a platform for sharing individual resources such as access or visibility; a hub for various transdisciplinary forms of collaboration; in legal matters, as a sort of union; and as an entry point for audiences to participate locally and exchange internationally.

A New ‘New Institutionalism’?

One of the findings of this investigation is that small and medium-sized institutions’ specificity is being used to advance the kind of art being made. Rather than merely transporting and exhibiting artworks, new methods of both making and showing art are being developed at a local level. This is partly due to the competence of the individuals working in the institutions, but it could also be an effect of their smaller, more ‘human’ scale. This specificity becomes even more apparent when examining the distinctions between urban, suburban and rurban institutions. The exhibitions being produced in the institutions — as
well as through local collaborations with artistic initiatives and native resources—are both artistically pioneering and socially sustainable.

This proximity of small-scale and medium-sized institutions to their local audiences and places—as well as the corresponding specificity of artistic and curatorial activities, which engage people to participate on a local level and learn from an international or global perspective—could benefit from public support that recognizes the civil qualities and benefits being produced. Instead, these institutions are increasingly struggling with insecure, short-term funding and unnecessary managerial effort, as described more closely in the previous chapters.

At this point, it is crucial to remember the central concerns of the previously mentioned ‘New Institutionalism’ of the early 2000s, in which curators and artists tried out a self-critical institutional practice that transgressed the norms of a modernist institutional canon and the limitations of a corporatized managerial institution. The institution was intended to flatten, becoming less hierarchical and more interactive, as well as operating as a versatile production site on all levels, incorporating curatorial criticality and multifunctional rooms adapted to a flexible, interdisciplinary programme. It was to produce a participative ‘public’ rather than reach a consuming ‘audience’; integrate the process of artistic production into institutional activities, with residencies, workshops and studio space; and initiate discourse, or at least admit critical debate into institutional practice at various levels, rather than reactively depicting and commenting on what is happening in the world. With the introduction of ‘New Institutionalism,’ the viewer was to become an active participant in a
creative and discursive process. Non-bureaucratic organizational transparency and participative openness in the planning of programs were thus considered to be fundamental factors for the functioning of ‘new institutions.’

The concept of New Institutionalism derives from sociology. In the art context, it describes, first and foremost, an institutionally political, organizational and curatorial method, but the method has also given rise to ‘new institutions.’ It is a somewhat open concept that avoids the misunderstandings of other -isms while also admitting a range of curatorial approaches. As with all summaries of phenomena and developments, the individual actors differ to a greater or lesser degree, yet the common tendencies outlined above are discernible in all their activities.

Size and regional context, as well as the specific history of each institution, are the main factors influencing the scope of activity for directors and curators. Although many of these approaches were affected by strong political headwinds, this institutional-political, organizational and curatorial method has also successfully established a critical vocabulary. Institutions must be able to adapt to various developments of artistic practice, and it is clear that small and medium-sized art centres have the capacity to do so at a much higher degree than do large museums, and with more consistency than artist initiatives.

A number of issues formulated here have been adopted largely by smaller and medium-sized institutions (such as close collaboration with artists and other cultural producers in formats and processes beyond the exhibition space, collaborative and dynamic archives, and processual exhibition formats). Some of the issues are still central, but have been obscured
by the effects of normalization and instrumentalization — for example, when an institution is treated as an entirely separate entity from its own exhibition venue. However, curating and institutional, political and administrative work are — like software and hardware — not separate, but rather mutually dependent; that’s why the interdependencies of institutional working processes should be developed through an open, transparent process. The separation between curating and these other kinds of work is essentially promoted by neoliberal forces, and has caused what a group of prominent French intellectuals called — in a critical manifesto on the occasion of the opening of the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris — the ‘code of silence.’ This means that even curators of the most critical exhibition programmes may clam up when it comes to revealing and debating the details of their own funding.100

As a general situation of institutional realities, this balancing act creates an absurd theatre of criticality: an exhibition programme that is contradicted by the politics of its own institution. It is a tricky game with no simple resolution. But in comparison to large institutions, small and medium-sized institutions are in a much better position to speak up about this problem and introduce more ethical models of curating for consciously directed delayed value. These institutions’ aforementioned distancing from the operating modes of larger institutions is both necessary and the result of an institutional practice denouncing the unethical business dealings behind institutional work. Although this situation applies, to a larger extent, to curatorial and institutional work in many countries outside of Scandinavia, the tendency to withdraw from public responsibility is already apparent in many
institutions also in the Nordic region, and is peeking above the horizon for many others. This trend is just a foreshadowing of what could follow.

Another important pursuit — which was explicitly missing from the questionnaires, but necessarily applies to institutional work in Scandinavia — would be opening up the scope of interest and operation of the networks to global concerns. Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez formulates the main question as follows: ‘How do we engage various institutional constituencies in countries of the Global North, when [it is] precisely their governments [that] cause and contribute to inhuman civil wars and drone strikes in certain regions of the world … ?’101 An example of this could be the project Wata don Pass/Looking West, 2015, a collaborative curatorial project by Bisi Silva of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, Nigeria; Marianne Hultman of Oslo Kunstforening; and Elin Lundgren and Petter Pettersson of Lilith Performance Studio, Malmö.102 Four large-scale performances by Taiwo Aiyedogbon (Nigeria), Bernard Akoi-Jackson (Ghana), Christian Etongo (Cameroon) and Odun Orimolade (Nigeria) were accompanied by a seminar at Moderna Museet, Malmö.

Petrešin-Bachelez further reminds us that ‘art institutions today should not pretend they are built out of the neutrality of the white cube and its Western Enlightenment legacy, as if these have no material or cultural link to the centuries-long exploitation of the Global South.’ In order to attend to these issues, she appeals to ‘new ecologies of care’ and asks that we ‘radically open up our institutional borders.’ Doing this simply involves communicating and exchanging with other networks — for example, in the Global South — and giving their concerns attention in
Scandinavia. Building the sustainability of an institution in Scandinavia would then imply opening up to a larger history which is neither linear nor local, but, instead, complex and global.

There are early examples of curatorial projects that dealt with the specific colonial history of Nordic countries, such as the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art’s *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism: A Postcolonial Exhibition Project in Five Acts*, curated by Kuratorisk Aktion (Frederikke Hansen and Tone Olaf Nielsen) in 2006. The project, organized in parts all over Scandinavia, was aiming to shed light on history and ‘why this past has been forgotten in some parts of the region, to show how this history continues to structure Nordic societies today and how our contemporary problems of intolerance, xenophobia and nationalism have their roots in this history.’ What would naturally follow an important project like this would be an analysis of the continuation of colonial power structures within a contemporary, globalized world order, as well as the implementation of these questions into curatorial and institutional practice, with the aim to develop a sustainable and binding institutional policy. This remains a more recent endeavour and is largely still incomplete.

Organized networks of small and medium-sized institutions have the multifaceted flexibility and plurality of voices to deal with these questions and claims in comprehensive ways. A notable project was Konsthall C’s yearly programme for 2017–18, dedicated to the topic ‘the decolonial turn’ (*Den dekoloniala vändningen*) and including the exhibition *Nordic Trouble*, as well as the symposia ‘Decolonizing the North’ and ‘Decolonizing the Curatorial.’ Due to the scale and size of Konsthall C, this programme
depended on an international and interdisciplinary network to take place. This makes it not only fully possible to work with these questions as a basis for curatorial and institutional work, beyond the selection of artists — it also means that the programme is shaping what the institution is and how it works.
Conclusion

As it was put by Maria Lind, director of Tensta konsthall, at the symposium ‘The Agency of Art’ at the Office for Contemporary Art Norway in Oslo (March 9–11, 2018), where a first draft of this report was presented: contemporary art is the only discipline that can talk about everything in the world, and culture can be a way for society to talk to itself. We believe that as many people as possible should partake in this dialogue, and that small-scale institutions encourage people to participate both as individuals and as part of a community. In that sense, these institutions create an active public sphere. While large museums reach out to audiences, smaller galleries generate publics, constituencies or contact zones. Through their approachability and openness toward specific local publics, they offer the ideal platform in which civilians can partake.

A closer look at the situations of small-scale and medium-sized institutions in Sweden, Denmark and Norway has revealed clear differences between the three. A primary observation we have made is that institutions in these countries differ greatly in terms of budget security, as well as in terms of institutional agendas and self-conception as societal platforms. A second observation is that the geographic/
infrastructural categories of urban, rurban and sub-
urban might prove more relevant than nationality or
size when looking for common denominators and
connections between kunsthallen.

In our comparison, we have found that Swedish
institutions have a more stable position in the cul-
tural-political context than Norwegian ones, despite
lower budgets. The ability to know ahead of time
whether they will be able to get reasonable budgets
for their upcoming programmes could be a reason
why programming continuity differs between Nor-
dic countries. Although Norwegian budgets can be
higher, Swedish art centres appear to have a more
politically stable and better-acknowledged position,
as well as higher societal support. Of the three coun-
tries, Denmark is where kunsthallen are more likely
to rely on private funds for sustenance and where
state-financed institutions have suffered under pol-
icy changes for the longest time; as Simen Joachim
Helsvig has written, Danish institutions have now
become ‘subject to the government’s overall policy of
cutbacks up until 2020, and the few increases in the
budget are mainly concerned with preserving cultural
heritage and with events with national and/or histor-
ical leanings.’

Although there currently appears to be decent sup-
port for most of the activities of the institutions sur-
veyed from local communities, regardless of statistics,
the exceptions point towards an increasing precari-
ousness, as well as a political shift toward directing support
to national and historical projects in the region. These
changes will require collective effort in the future.

Finally, we see two current and pressing difficul-
ties for the continued work of small-scale and medi-
um-sized institutions in all three countries:
1. The institutions’ budgets are often only confirmed one year at a time, and communicated to the institutions by their funders at short notice.

2. Corporate forms of organization have been normalized through obligatory managerialism and New Public Management models.

Hence we believe that it might be useful to take a look at how the activities of networks could be improved in order to strengthen the position of each institution in its local context. The institutions can make the following requests of politicians and stakeholders, which, if fulfilled, might protect them from further precariousness and its disruptive consequences:

• Politicians and stakeholders should be open to being advised on the concrete needs and desires of the institutions.
• Politicians and stakeholders should recognize and support small and medium-sized art institutions as resources for learning and the creation of civil society.
• Politicians and stakeholders should be supportive — and make public announcements of support — to help work on the societal acceptance of institutions.
• Politicians and stakeholders should think and speak in terms of quality rather than quantity.
• Politicians and stakeholders should allow a longer period of time to pass before evaluating the delayed value of institutions, and they should acquire a broader understanding of the qualities that these institutions bring to the local environments in which they act.
• And, most important, politicians and stakeholders should introduce new systems that guarantee long-term funding, to secure the existence of these institutions and ensure constructive, far-sighted programming.
The following can also be done by the institutions themselves:

• Talk about quality instead of quantity when describing the role and potential of the small or medium-sized institution.

• Tap the potential of consciously directed ‘delayed value,’ and, as a consequence, further differentiate their own profile from those of larger institutions.

• Similarly, be aware of the words they use in terms of artistic quality and the artists with whom they work—for instance, the slight difference between being ‘at the forefront’ (which refers to quality and ecology) and simply being ‘first’ (which refers to quantity and a food chain). This will be helpful in shifting the discourse from competition to reliance—from one of quantity to one of quality—as well as encouraging self-knowledge and their ability to make a case for themselves, supporting the experimental character of their own programmes and creating relevant networks.

• Organize networks to actively influence society on various levels. Examples might be: cultural politics, forms of organization and participation in civil society, education or the rights of women and migrants.

• Look at the specificity of the institution in terms of the means of production. (Urban, suburban and rural geographies are part of this.)

• Look at new models of co-production—for instance, by defining non-monetary assets.

• Get in dialogue with your local politicians. Remind them of the arm’s-length principle. As Simen Joachim Helsvig writes: ‘Discussions about rights, such as the right to appoint members on a committee, has no place in budget negotiations. The issue has also been difficult to address properly in the media because it
is so complex and because the politicians know so little about these systems.’ This kind of dialogue can be facilitated by, for example, shaping yearly reports to reflect qualitative issues, explaining the general program or organizing events with other institutions.

To consciously direct and utilize their capacity to create delayed value, small and medium-sized institutions could present a model of how to respect the desired values formulated in the questionnaires: more ethical approaches to budgets and fundraising, decelerated working modes and the disintegration of managerialism. In order to implement these values successfully and combat the trend towards normalization of neoliberal logic, a new form of organized networks would be supportive—what Ned Rossiter calls a ‘transdisciplinary, distributive and collaborative institutional form,’ in order to initiate public discourse, offer channels of distribution for civil demands and create models for processual democracy. Given the continuation of colonial power structures within a contemporary, globalized world order, a new New Institutionalism might also go beyond the improvement of immediate working conditions, and extend the value perspective to include a conscious analysis of how to live together.

2 Mikael Löfgren, *No Exceptions: Value Creation in Small and Mid-sized Galleries of Contemporary Art*, 2015. This report was commissioned by KLISTER, a nationwide network of small and medium-sized contemporary art institutions in Sweden founded in 2012, in collaboration with the Swedish Exhibition Agency (Riksutställningar). The network seeks to convey the social function of institutions of contemporary art.

3 *Kunsthallen: En afgørende aktør i samtidskunsten og for samtidskunsten* (The art gallery: A crucial participant in contemporary art and for contemporary art), Denmark, FKD, 2015.


5 Frequently cited examples of ‘new institutions’ in this sense are the Rooseum in Malmö (under Charles Esche and later Lene Crone Jensen, 2000–2005); Kunstverein München (Maria Lind, 2001–4); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (Nicolas Bourriaud and Jérôme Sans, 1999–2006); Platform Garanti, Istanbul (Vasif Kortun, 2001–10); macba, Barcelona (Manuel Borja-Villel, 1998–2007); BAK Utrecht, the Netherlands (Maria Hlavajova, 2000–); Bergen Kunsthall (Solveig Øvstebø, 2003–13); and United Nations Plaza, Berlin (Anton Vidokle and Julieta Aranda, 2006–7). As this (incomplete) list shows, New Institutionalism is a European phenomenon that has developed chiefly in Western and Northern Europe since the end of the 1990s.

6 We are aware that this is an ambitious endeavour in a rapidly changing milieu. To clarify our position, we pose both general and more specific enquiries in our questionnaire for the institutions (see appendix), as a means of placing ourselves between the general question’s invitation of a general answer and the specific’s means of providing many examples. All answers to the more general questions are also specific, since they are posed to a specific situation. Being situated is always present, since the answers to the general questions connect to other questions about which roles an institution can take in relation to its exhibition space, the role it plays in a specific local context, day-to-day politics and so on.

7 The members of KLISTER are Alingsås Konsthall, Bildmuseet at Umeå University, the Borås Konstmuseum, Botkyrka Konsthall, Gävle Konstcentrum, Göteborgs Konsthall (Gothenburg), Kalmar Konstmuseum, Konsthall C (Stockholm), the Art Gallery at Bohusläns Museum (Uddevalla), Haninge Konsthall, Konsthallen i Luleå (Kulturens Hus), Lunds Konsthall, Malmö Art Museum, Museum
Anna Nordlander (Skellefteå), Marabouparken (Sundbyberg), Röda Sten Konsthall (Gothenburg), Signal—Center for Contemporary Art (Malmö), Skövde Kulturhus, Tensta konsthall (Spånga) and Örebro Konsthall.

The Danish Association of Art Centres (FKD) was established in late 1992, and currently comprises the following art institutions: Brandts 13 (Odense), Den Frie Udstillingsbygning (Copenhagen), Fotografisk Center (Copenhagen), Galleri Image (Aarhus), Gammel Holtegaard (Holte), KunstCentret Silkeborg Bad, Kunstforeningen Gl. Strand (Copenhagen), Kunsthal 44Møen (Askeby), Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen), Kunsthall Aarhus, Nikolaj Kunsthall (Copenhagen), Ronnesbækholm (Næstved), Sophienholm (Kongens Lyngby), Kunsthall Nord (Aalborg), Overgaden — Institut for Samtidskunst (Copenhagen) and Viborg Kunsthall. FKD’s members are all exhibition spaces that organize art exhibitions but do not have permanent collections.

Kunsthallene i Norge (KN) is a Norwegian association that aims to safeguard the interests of the country’s art galleries and convey knowledge about art and art in society at a national and international level. The members of KN are Kunsthall Stavanger, Kristiansand Kunsthall, Bomuldsfabrikken Kunsthall (Arendal), Kunsthall Grenland (Porsgrunn), Trafo Kunsthall (Asker), Oslo Kunstforening, Kunsthall Oslo, Fotogalleriet (Oslo), Kunsthall 3.14 (Bergen), Kunsthall Trondheim and Tromsø Kunstforening.

In addition to these networks, our questionnaire was sent to UKS in Oslo. We also spoke to independent actors throughout the region.

8 See earlier footnote and the list of participating institutions in the appendix.
9 It proved difficult to obtain answers from several Danish kunsthallen, and on the other hand to receive their answers on time. This might also be understood as part of the complexity described in the section Normalization in this report.
10 Marianne Hultman in an email to the authors, 5 December 2017.
11 Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg in an email to the authors, 6 December 2017.
12 We are aware that comparisons like these could be misinterpreted. To further clarify: when comparing Konsthall C with Marabouparken, for instance, one might note that Marabouparken’s staff of seven people amounts to five full-time workers (only two work full-time while the rest are employed part-time — at 50, 70 and 20 per cent, etc.). To compare Konsthall C’s budget of SEK 2 million and Marabouparken’s of SEK 8.51 million can also be misleading, if all factors are not taken into consideration. For instance, Marabouparken’s budget includes the funding they get for the cost of the building, which is approximately SEK 4 million, whereas Konsthall C’s space is rent-free.
Perhaps a more accurate comparison would be to say that Marabouparken’s budget after costs of the building is SEK 4.51 million, whereas Konsthall C’s amounts to SEK 2 million.

13 Bettina Pehrsson in an email to the authors, 6 December 2017.
14 Stina Edblom, Göteborgs Konsthall, in response to our questionnaire.
15 Rønnebæksholm in response to our questionnaire.
16 Tensta konsthall in response to our questionnaire.
17 Konsthall 3.14 in response to our questionnaire.
18 Index in response to our questionnaire.
19 Den Frie in response to our questionnaire.
20 Tensta konsthall in response to our questionnaire.
21 Kristiansand Kunsthall in response to our questionnaire.
22 Axel Wieder, director of Index, in response to our questionnaire.
24 *Kunsthallen*, FKD, p. 5.
26 ‘De seneste års kulturdebat har ofte handlet om kulturav og publikumstal — og er samtidskunsten ikke også en væsentlig del af vores kultur, som publikum bør opleve? Som en del af den professionaliserede kunstverden er kunsthallerne et stykke fremtidigt institutionelt kunsthistorie, der i 2013 havde 380 299 besøgende og dermed var den tredjestørste besøgte kunstinstitution,’ *Kunsthallen*, FKD, p. 27.
27 Dina Vester Feilberg, chairperson of FKD, email response to an earlier version of this report, 21 March 2018.
28 Løkka, p. 2 (our translation).
29 Ibid., p. 31 (our translation).
30 Ibid.
31 ‘Curatorial Activism and the Politics of Shock’ was organized and convened by Steven Henry Madoff at the School of Visual Arts.
in New York on 18 November 2017. Of course, the situation in the United States under Donald Trump’s presidency is not comparable to the situation in Scandinavia; nevertheless, the international roster of speakers from the US, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Singapore, Hong Kong, Italy, Mexico, and Jerusalem — as well as Sweden, with Maria Lind and Mick Wilson — drew a picture of all-encompassing anticipation of a changing role for art institutions as micro-political agents. See www.macp-curatorial-activism-summit.sva.edu.

32 Haninge Kulturhus in response to our questionnaire (our translation).

33 Fotogalleriet in response to our questionnaire. Another factor could be that very few of the members of KN own their own spaces. Oslo Kunstforening has, for example, rented space from the city of Oslo for over 100 years (including more than 80 years at its current address). Yet its finances are still unpredictable since it does not own its own building. Fotogalleriet is another example, as is Kunsthall Oslo.

34 Both as quoted in the publication 5 Grunde til at Støtte Kunsthallerne, FDK, 2017 (our translation).

35 ‘Kunsthallerne har fokus på udstilling og formidling, og har ikke som museerne samplings- og forskningsopgaver.’ Sanne Kofod Olsen, both quotes from 5 Grunde til at Støtte Kunsthallerne. Our translation.

36 Eva Asp, director of Gävle Art Centre, in response to our questionnaire (our translation).

37 Ibid.

38 The term ‘rurban’ is defined by Merriam-Webster as ‘of, relating to, or constituting an area which is chiefly residential but where some farming is carried on.’ As defined by Singaporean architect and planner Tay Kheng Soon, rurban settlements can be conceived as infrastructural cells within a web of nature, farms, transport, communication and informational interconnectivity. The concept is relatively commonplace in Southeast Asia, and has certainly influenced Tay’s notion of ‘rurbanization,’ which is an attempt to re-conceptualize the way we speak about human settlements; the city and the countryside are considered as one space, rather than the ‘city’ and ‘country’ being considered as separate realms. See for instance: www.vimeo.com/20598953 (accessed 23 April 2018).

39 There are also many institutions operating in the suburban context in Denmark, but we might specifically mention Dias and Tranen, both in the Copenhagen region for the purposes of exchange between the three countries on the basis of these categories.

40 See www.skovsnogen.dk.

41 Ibid.

42 Tromsø Kunstforening in response to our questionnaire.
Röda Sten in response to our questionnaire.

Den Frie in response to our questionnaire.

Marianne Hultman in response to our questionnaire. This position is furthermore confirmed by the report *I skvis — Om mellomsjiktet i kunstbyen Oslo*, by Emil Flatø and commissioned by the network Curator Jour Fixe, looking at the role of professional, medium-sized and non-commercial spaces in Oslo, in conjunction to the seminar *Kartlegging av det visuelle kunstfeltet i Oslo* (5 March 2016) at Kunstnernes Hus.

In response to our questionnaire.

Haninge Kulturhus in response to our questionnaire.

The aim of the project was to improve equality in youth cycling, and create equal conditions for young girls and boys to cycle through Haninge and the central area of Handen. The project investigated which factors affected young people’s cycling habits, with a focus on gender equality. The result was tested in creative dialogue in the gallery and became an exhibition. The conclusions of the dialogue were articulated in a number of proposals, one of which became the bike room in the city park Eskilsparken. During the spring of 2017, the project was reactivated with a group of girls through an onsite workshop. For more detailed descriptions of the project’s various stages, see the final report: www.haninge.se/bygga-bo-och-miljo/klimat-och-miljo/orten-i-rorelse-jamstalldhet-och-cykling.

Ibid.


For example, the seminar ‘Central Peripheries and Peripheral Centres’ included two miniature ponies that were present during the talks, together with their trainer. The horses could graze on the lawn outside the museum before taking the lift to the exhibition space where the seminar was held. The horses were transported from another town and stayed the night in the museum director’s stable; their manure was donated to Kultivator’s compost.

In conversation about the exhibition *You Have Two Cows* at Kalmar Konstmuseum (2 December 2017–28 January 2018), during the retreat ‘Mariannelund Syndrome’, organised by New Småland (22–23 November 2017), www.nyasmaland.se/22.

Marianne Hultman in response to our questionnaire.

Read the entire comparison here: www.kunstkritikk.no/nyheter/not-one-nordic-model/. According to our research, the date of 2020 is not explicitly mentioned in official governmental statements.

In conversation with Jonatan Habib Engqvist, February 2018.

Telephone conversation between Jonatan Habib Engqvist and Marianne Hultman, 12 April 2018 and answers to questionnaire.

Fortunately, the majority in Akershus County voted to only cut Trafo’s support by NOK 85 000 in 2018, not the NOK 285 000 originally
suggested by the county council. In 2019, the cut will be larger: a total reduction from the 2017 budget of NOK 140 000. See Nicholas Norton, ‘Slipper å avlyse utstillinger,’ Kunstkritikk, 7 December 2017, www.kunstkritikk.no/nyheter/slipper-a-avlyse-utstillinger/.

In response to our questionnaire (our translation).

This also applies to artist-run spaces and artist unions such as UKS in Norway (report forthcoming in 2018).

Marianne Hultman in conversation with Jonatan Habib Engqvist, 26 January 2018.

The term ‘food chain’ is, for instance, used on p. 26 in the Danish report: ‘I lyset af de seneste prioriteringer inden for kultur sektoren er der sket et skred i de danske kulturinstitutioners former og funktioner. Museerne bliver større, udvider og bliver samlet set et kærkommnet kultuertelt fyrtaarn. Man kan i den forbindelse spørge sig selv hvilke formater, der afspejler det nye — lokal og internationalt? Når museernes format og funktion er at have en historisk bevarende rolle i er det kunsthalsformatets opgave — som væsentlig medspiller på den aktuelle kunstneriske dagsorden — progressivt og utraditionelt at kuratere og kvalificere de samtidskunstneriske udbud ... Kunsthallerne udstiller kunstnere, formater og koncepter ikke særlig mange andre kunstinstitutioner udstiller, og bidrager til samfundet i almen forstand: De er et reelt alternativ til gængse kunstoplevelser, fordi de, fri fra kommercielle begrænsninger og en bevidst satsning på samtidskunsten, kan og tør være eksperimenterende. Herved får publikum præsenteret samtidskunst på helt nye måder.’

Even if the aim is to argue for a different financing structure for FKD’s member institutions, we worry that, within the current political climate, one might interpret this kind of formulation as a model in which institutions all get a piece from the same budget. Less money for larger institutions to work with contemporary art, give commissions, etc., would not have the desired effect, and could potentially create less diversity within the relational infrastructure of contemporary art. One reason for this food-chain argument is a funding system that also often operates on parameters of quantity, or even pseudo-quantity (discussed later in this report).


Ibid., p. 235 (our translation).

Ibid., p. 237 (our translation).

This is also a feasible explanation for why, when looking at the criteria of the various networks, they are not primarily connected to questions of budget, staff or square metres; this could be developed further.
Endnotes


67 A point that was accentuated by Lars Strannegård from the Stockholm School of Economics during his talk at the conference ‘The Agency of Art,’ where this report was first presented (Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo, 9–11 March 2018).


70 Åsa Nacking and Debora Voges, Lunds Konsthall, in response to our questionnaire. Some examples stated are the Chris Marker exhibition *A Grin Without a Cat*, in collaboration with Whitechapel Gallery (London), Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris) and Kunsthernes Hus (Oslo), 2015; *Body Talk*, curated by Koyo Kouoh from Raw Material Company (Dakar, Senegal), WEILS Contemporary Art Centre (Brussels) and Frac Lorraine (Metz, France), 2015; and the upcoming 2018 exhibition *Qiu Zhijie: Journeys Without Arrivals*, in collaboration with Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, the Netherlands) and Centre d’Art Contemporain Genève.

71 Corina Oprea, Konsthall C, in response to this question on our questionnaire: ‘How do you imagine the future of your organization? What would be the ideal conditions for your organization in the future?’


73 Charles Taylor’s concept of the ‘social imaginary’: ‘I am thinking rather of the ways in which people imagine the whole of their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met and the deeper normative notions that underlie these expectations.’ Charles Taylor, ‘Modern Social Imaginaries,’ in *Public Culture* 14, 1, Winter 2002, p. 92.


77 Email to the authors, February 2018.

78 In response to our questionnaire.

79 Paul O’Neill, Lucy Steeds and Mick Wilson, eds., ‘Introduction,’


82 Hansen, p. 79.

83 Hansen, p. 80.

84 Ibid.


86 Ibid.

87 In her text ‘From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique’ (2015), Andrea Fraser writes that it can never be a question of being for or against an institution. We are the institution, and the question is what kind of institution we want: which values we institutionalize, embody and perform as individuals.


89 Elena Tzotzi in response to the questionnaire.

90 In February 2014, an open letter was published by the artists of the 19th Biennale of Sydney, Australia, calling for a boycott of the biennial because major sponsor Transfield Holdings was also a contractor for Australia’s network of immigrant detention centres. As a result, the biennial cut all ties with Transfield; this, as well as the debate (which was publicized internationally), could be seen as a success. Although the longer-term effects of the boycott are unknown — and have already produced some ambivalence — this shows how a well-staged refusal can shake up a seemingly static system. Related links can be found here: www.biennale-of-sydney.com.au/blog/2014/03/03/related-links-biennale-boycott.


92 There are, of course, several existing examples of initiatives in the region that could be developed further — for example, the network of photographic centres called the Nordic Photography Network, which was founded in 2012 by four photo institutions. The network today consists of Gallery Image (Aarhus, Denmark), Pohjoinen Valokuvakeskus (Oulu, Finland), Centrum för Fotografii
(Stockholm), Fotogalleriet (Oslo), Forbundet Frie Fotografer (Oslo), Fotografisk Center (Copenhagen), Galleri Format (Malmö), the Icelandic Photography Festival (Reykjavik) and the online magazine Verk. (Sweden). Another example is the discussion that has been initiated between Kunsthallene i Norge and the Association française de développement des centres d’art contemporain (DCA). In November 2017, a number of small and medium-sized institutions met in Paris to start discussing a pan-European network.

93 In response to our questionnaire.

94 In a similar vein, a number of networks have recently been founded internationally, mainly consisting of smaller institutions. This includes Arts Collaboratory, which was established in 2007 by the Dutch organizations Hivos and the DOEN Foundation and self-organized by 25 independent visual-arts organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America (including Raw Material Company, Dakar, Senegal; ruangrupa, Jakarta, Indonesia; teor/éTica, San Jose, Costa Rica; and Sàn Art, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam — see www.artscollaboratory.org); Cluster, a network of visual-art organizations located on the outskirts of mainly European cities (including Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; Casco — Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, the Netherlands; Les Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers, France; Tensta konsthall, Stockholm; the Israeli Center for Digital Art, Holon; and the Showroom, London — see www.clusternetwork.eu); Common Practice in London, which consists of art spaces, a public arts agency focused on film and small publishing houses (including Afterall, Chisenhale Gallery, Electra, Gasworks, lux, Matt’s Gallery, Mute Publishing, the Showroom and Studio Voltaire — see www.commonpractice.org.uk); or Common Practice in New York (the founding members of which are Artists Space, The Kitchen, Light Industry, Participant Inc., Printed Matter, Triple Canopy and White Columns — see www.commonpracticeny.org).

An outstanding example is the network L’Internationale, which consists of six major European institutions led by similar interests in art and politics, such as Moderna galerija mg+msum (Ljubljana, Slovenia); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid); Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp; Salt Galata (Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey) and Van Abbemuseum (Eindhoven, the Netherlands). It also functions as a discursive platform, organizing shared conferences and running a text-based online magazine and website — see www.internationaleonline.org.

95 In such an investigation, there might be some common historical threads well worth exploring further, perhaps even a ‘Nordic model.’ Defining these is not the task of this report, but we do sense that we should mention the long tradition of artist associations in each of the three countries and their connection to the small and medi-
um-sized art centre. In Denmark and Norway, a substantial number of prominent art centres have grown out of such organizations, while also inspiring scepticism from other parts of the field. Similarly, in Sweden, several of the institutions have developed from *centrumbildningar*, centres for art and culture.


97 Rossiter, p. 49.


100 ‘Is Art a Mere Luxury Good?’ Manifesto co-signed by Pierre Alféri, Giorgio Agamben, Jérôme Bel, Christian Bernard, Georges Didi-Huberman, Xavier LeRoy, Jean-Luc Nancy and Catherine Perret. The article was originally published in *Mediapart* on 20 October 2014, as ‘L'art n'est-il qu'un produit de luxe?’ English translation by Anna De Filippi and Lucie Mercier, *Kunskritikk*, 27 November 2014, www.kunskritikk.no/kommentar/is-art-a-mere-luxury-good/.


102 See http://www.oslokunstforening.no/wata-don-pass/.

103 This is also something that would require a change of policy from national arts councils. For example, when Marianne Hultman was invited to be a guest curator at the Dakar Biennale in Senegal, she soon understood that any funding she received from Norway would be minimal. Any independent curator in the Nordic region can also see a lack of international funding, in particular in support of more experimental practices from artists in countries of the Global South (and in weak or developing democracies, such as in Turkey or Egypt). There seems to be little interest from states in collaborating with countries outside the Global North on a cultural level, beyond the more rhetorical ‘embassy exhibitions.’ In the aforementioned example, the Dakar Biennale would not provide any production funding, nor would the Norwegian funding system—which, rather paradoxically, indicated that, although Norway is considered a wealthy country when it comes to supporting Norwegian artists and curators in the South, it would appear that Norway is less apt to support Norwegian cultural workers when they go to the Global South than to elsewhere in the Global North.

104 See www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org.

105 The exhibition was on view from 9 December 2017 to 25 February 2018. It included work by Anawana Haloba, Cecilie Ullerup Schmidt and Camilla Aviaja Olsen, Corina Oprea, Ellen Nyman, Katarina
Pirak Sikku, Minna L. Henriksson, Saskia Holmkvist and Santiago Mostyn with Luise Kimme. We also point to the previously mentioned co-produced exhibition *Nordic Delights*, which addressed thematically similar issues.

106 On 7–8 December 2017, with Lesley-Ann Brown, Gurminder K. Bhambra, Gunilla Larsson, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, Tone Olaf Nielsen and the respondents Ylva Habel, Patricia Lorenzoni and Stefan Helgesson.

107 On 16 March 2018, with Temi Odumosu, Pauliina Feodoroff, Mathias Danbolt and Nivi Christensen.


109 The principle of staying at arm’s length when it comes to arts funding, i.e. that decisions should be made without interference of current political governments is a well-established and foundational premise for public funding structures in the Nordic Region. In all of the countries discussed, direct state support for artists and the type of institution discussed in the report, is allocated by expert bodies nominated for periods of three to four years and acting at arm’s length from the ministries responsible for cultural affairs. Most of the members of these bodies are professional artists or representing the artistic fields covered by the support schemes. However, there is some variation in the degree of influence these organizations have. Also it is clear that municipal and regional funding in all countries often divert from the principle due to lack of both resources and knowledge.

110 Ibid.

111 One of several positive examples is the several different local actors in the Swedish region of Småland — including Jönköpings Län, Vandalorum, Kalmar Konstmuseum and Växjö Konsthall — which have, on several occasions, organised bus rides to the large art events documenta and Manifesta, with local directors and curators of art centres, local artists, regional art advisers and local cultural politicians. This has been very positive, leading to a deepened dialogue not only with politicians, but also between the different actors themselves.
Dalborg, Karin and Mikael Löfgren (eds.), *På något sätt är vi med o matt skapa världen på nytt...*, Gothenburg, Näverkstan, 2016.
Flatø, Emil, *I skvis — Om mellomsjiktet i kunstbyen Oslo*, commissioned by Jour Fixe, Oslo, 2017
Fraser, Andrea, ‘L’1% C’est Moi,’ *Texte zur Kunst* 83 (September 2011), pp. 114–27.


List of Institutions Participating in the Survey

Sweden
Stockholm and suburbs:
  Botkyrka Konsthall
  Index, The Swedish Contemporary Art Foundation
  Konsthall C
  Marabouparken
  Tensta konsthall
Malmö:
  Signal Center for Contemporary Art
Gothenburg:
  Röda Sten Konsthall
  Göteborgs Konsthall
Other cities:
  Alingsås Konsthall
  Bildmuseet, Umeå University
  Bohusläns Museum
  Borås Konstmuseum
  Gävle Konstcentrum
  Haninge Konsthall & Kulturhus
  Kalmar Konstmuseum
  Konsthallen i Luleå
  Lunds Konsthall
  Örebro Konsthall
  Skövde Konsthall & Konstmuseum
  Varbergs Konsthall, Kulturhuset Komedianten

Norway
Oslo:
  Kunsthall Oslo
  Fotogalleriet
  Oslo Kunstforening
Bergen:
  Kunsthall 3.14
Other cities:
  Bomuldsfabriken Kunsthall, Arendal
  Kunsthall Grenland, Porsgrunn
  Kristiansand Kunsthall
  Kunsthall Stavanger
  Tromsø Kunstforening
  Trafo Kunsthall, Asker
  Kunsthall Trondheim

Denmark
Aarhus:
  Kunsthall Aarhus
Copenhagen:
110 Engqvist & Möntmann

Den Frie Udstillingsbygning
Fotografisk Center
Overgaden Institut for Samtidskunst
Kunstforeningen GL Strand

Other cities:
Gammel Holtegaard, Holte
KunstCentret Silkeborg Bad
Rønnebæksholm, Næstved
Viborg Kunsthall
1. What is your yearly budget?

2. How are the following posts distributed?
   - Expenses (administration)
   - Production (exhibitions)
   - Staff costs
   - Venue costs
   - Education programs
   - Marketing
   - Research and development costs
What are your main sources of income and how are they distributed: public funding (state, region, municipality), sponsorship, entrance fee and income from sales?

3. What is the structure of your organization?
   - History
   - Form of organization
   - Structure (artistic director, chairmen, board, memberships, etc.)
   - How are decisions made and executed?

4. What are your material assets?
   - Venue (contract or ownership)
   - Café/restaurant — if yes, is it your own or run on contract by someone else?
   - Shop — if yes, is it your own or run by someone else?
   - Collection
   - Archive — if yes, how is it organized (digital, library, other)?

5. What are your immaterial assets?
   - Level of proficiency, education and capabilities of employees
   - What kind of network are you a part of?
   - Does your organization’s name or ‘brand’ entail ‘cultural capital’ value?

6. How many employees (full-time, part-time, project-based)?
   - Do you have interns? If so, how many?
   - Volunteers? If so, how many?

7. What are your methods and strategies?
   - Examples might be: how you work towards audiences (local and other, children and youth, digital strategies)
   - How you work with artists, and if you define the kind of artists you work with
   - Collaborative partners nationally and internationally
   - Cultural life, including schools and universities
   - Media strategies
   - How you work with various funders
8. How do you perceive your organization’s place and value in relation to:
   The artistic community (aesthetic/artistic value): locally, regionally, internationally?
   Culture (cultural value): locally, regionally, internationally?
   Society (societal value): locally, regionally, internationally?
   Businesses (economic value): local, regional, international?

9. ‘Deferred’ or delayed value was a key concept in a survey of small-scale institutions conducted in the United Kingdom (Sarah Thelwall’s report Size Matters). This can, for instance, imply that small art organizations often premiere and launch artists who later go on to become very established, but they seldom receive credit for these ‘discoveries.’ Instead, it is the large institutions that receive attention, and sometimes also the economic benefit. What are your experiences relating to this question, and in what way does your organization position itself relating to this? Can you give examples of delayed value that you have helped to create? This might be: specific artists, social effects (meeting places, community building), exhibitions or event formats, or staff (i.e., employees who go on to have a career after training with you).

10. Have you recently internally or externally evaluated what you do? How did you work with the findings?

11. How would you define the role of a small institution in society?

12. What do you want to achieve with your work (in society, on a local basis, etc.)? Do you have a ‘vision’ for your institution?

13. How do you imagine the future of your organization? What would Abe the ideal conditions for your organization in the future?
Jonatan Habib Engqvist is a curator and theorist with a background in philosophy and aesthetic theory. He was previously the project manager for visual art at Iaspis (2009–14) and curator at Moderna Museet (2008–9), and worked at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm (2005–7). He manages Curatorial Residency in Stockholm, is editor-in-chief of the online journal tsnoK.se and has curated a number of large international exhibitions, including Survival Kit 9, Riga, Latvia (2017); Sinopale 6, Sinop, Turkey (2017); Tunnel Vision, Momentum Biennial 8, Moss, Norway (2015); and (I)ndependent People, Reykjavík Arts Festival (2012). He is curator of the forthcoming edition of Cycle Festival for Music and Arts in Iceland, the exhibition Children of the Revolution at Färgfabriken in Stockholm (April–August 2018) and the interregional art project New Småland, commissioned by four art museums and one university (2016–19). He occasionally teaches at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, and Stockholm’s Royal Institute of Art, and his writing is frequently published in catalogues and art books. These publications include Big Dig — Om passivitet och samtidskonst (CLP Works, 2018); Studio Talks: Thinking Through Painting (Arvinius + Orfeus Publishing, 2014); In Dependence — Collaboration and Artists’ Initiatives (Torpedo Press, 2012); Work, Work, Work — A Reader on Art and Labour (Steinberg Press, 2012); and Dharavi: Documenting Informalities (Royal University College of Fine Arts, 2008).

Nina Möntmann is an art historian, curator and writer. She has been a professor of art theory and the history of ideas at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and curator at the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art in Helsinki. Her curatorial projects include Måns Wränge: Magic Bureaucracy, Tensta konsthall, Stockholm (2017); Fluidity, Kunsthverein in Hamburg (2016); Harun Farocki: A New Product, Deichtorhallen Hamburg (2012); If We Can’t Get It Together: Artists Rethinking the (Mal)functions of Community, The Power Plant, Toronto (2008); The Jerusalem Show: Jerusalem Syndrome (with Jack Persekian, 2009); Speaking of Others: Impossible India, Parallel Economies and Contemporary Art Production, Frankfurter Kunstverein (2006); and the Armenian Pavilion for the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). She participated in the long-term Israeli–Palestinian art and research project Liminal Spaces, and in 2010 she was a research fellow at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid. She has organized a number of symposia, including ‘Beyond Cynicism: Political Forms of Opposition, Protest and Provocation in Art’ (2012) and ‘New Communities’ (2008), both at Moderna Museet, Stockholm; ‘We, Ourselves and Us,’ The Power Plant, Toronto (2009); and ‘ReForming India — Artistic Collectives Bend International Art Practices,’ Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, New York (2007).

Her recent publications include Kunst als Sozialer Raum (Walther König, 2002/2017) and the edited volumes Brave New Work: A Reader on
Harun Farocki’s Film ‘A New Product’ (Walther König, 2014); Scandalous: A Reader on Art & Ethics (Sternberg Press, 2013); New Communities (Public Books, 2009) and Art and Its Institutions: Current Conflicts, Critique and Collaborations (Black Dog Publishing, 2006). Her essays have been published in numerous critical readers and catalogues.