Tensta Museum is Tensta konsthall’s multiyear project about history and memory in the Stockholm suburb of Tensta, seen through people living and working there as well as the location itself with its many physical layers. Tensta Museum is the art centre “playing museum”, which has now opened a branch at ArkDes, as part of the exhibition Public Luxury, which will stay open until 13.1 2019. Born out of the exhibition Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden (2013/2014), Tensta Museum has since continued at the konsthall and beyond in the form of a programme focusing on local history and memory, while looking forward and proposing future scenarios for the suburb.

Tensta’s most tangible feature is a large, late-modernist housing area built between 1967–72 as part of the Million Dwelling Programme on old farmland. Homes share space with Iron Age graves, rune stones, one of the Stockholm region’s oldest churches (which dates from the 1120s), a famous baroque chapel, and a former military training area from the early 20th century which is now a protected nature reserve. Around 20,000 people live in Tensta today and roughly 90% have a trans-local background, many from the Middle East and East Africa. Here, the rapid population growth with consistent influx of newly arrived migrants is apparent, as is the high unemployment rate, low income demographics and the fragile state of community services.

Tensta konsthall is a private foundation, founded in 1998 as a grassroots initiative by a Tensta-based artist, working with planetary contemporary art inside and beyond a former storage space underneath the area’s shopping mall. At the same time, the konsthall is decisively embedded in the neighborhood, forming part of the fabric of life there. Funded by both public and private sources, the art centre currently employs seven people. Tensta konsthall likes to call itself “the generous peak”, or “den generösa spetsen” in Swedish.

Within the framework of Tensta Museum some fifty artists, architects, local associations, performers, sociologists, cultural geographers, philosophers, and other practitioners have so far contributed artworks, research projects, seminars, guided walks, workshops and much more. A thematic thread in the project are the artists from all over the world dealing with late modernist housing and suburbs in general. The various contributors simultaneously report on the past and the current condition of Tensta, as a concrete image of what can be described as the New Sweden — a Sweden that must be understood very differently from how it was several decades ago. This is a Sweden containing people of vastly different backgrounds, where economic and social divides are intensifying. Tensta Museum is a richly contrasting patchwork stretching over the past five years, in which manifold interests and expressions together form a narrative. As Tensta is an unusually multi-faceted and complex place, the collective memory of Tensta is splitting at numerous angles; it also means that tensions and conflicts erupt around questions of “whose history?” and “whose heritage?”. Tensta Museum also touches upon the concept of cultural heritage and the complicated matter of how it is used in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe today.

Over the course of seven months, Tensta Museum will evolve as a mini-exhibition at ArkDes. The “summer department” is on view 1.6–23.9 and then the “winter department” takes over

The ArkDes Tensta Museum Branch follows up on the highly acclaimed exhibition Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden which was about the history and memory of Tensta 26.10 2013–13.1 2014 (the Fall Department) and 18.1–18.5 2014 (the Spring Department). During that period, two branches of Tensta Museum opened at the Stockholm City Museum and Stockholm's Medieval Museum respectively. The exhibition travelled in the form of Tensta Museum on the Move to WHW's Galerija Nova in Zagreb (2014), to Survival K(n)it 7 in Riga (2015), and Stockholm County Museum (2015–2016). Tensta Museum is currently present at Tensta konsthall as Art Treasures: Grains of Gold from Tensta's Public Schools, showcasing some thirty works from Swedish art history borrowed from the local schools.

Tensta Museum
Summer Department

1. Sergio Montero Bravo
Spatial design by designer and educator Sergio Montero Bravo (Stockholm) in collaboration with his brother, the artist Alejandro Montero Bravo (Stockholm). The screens are re-cycled from Marion von Osten's 2016 exhibition VietNam Discourse Stockholm at Tensta konsthall.

2. Adam Tensta
Soundtrack to Tensta Museum: Reports from New Sweden, 2013
A driving, drum-and-bass rhythm goes on for 30 minutes in the gallery space, then dies away and starts up again after 30 minutes. This is a soundtrack, written by Adam Taal (better known as Adam Tensta) specifically for the first iteration of Tensta Museum. One of the things that stimulated Taal's musical interest was Vår teater's break dance at Blå huset (the Blue House), when he was growing up in Tensta. Since he was a child until just a couple of years ago, Taal lived in the same flat at Tensta allé.

3–8. Erik Stenberg
Build Tensta: A constructed archive
Assorted maps, a set of drawings, photographs, books, etc.
Järva Field, part 1–4, four documentaries from 1965–81, produced by the Stockholm City Museum, 150 min.
Interview with Stenberg by Maria Lind, 2013.

Tensta was planned and built over a ten-year period, concurrent with the same frame of time as the Million Dwelling Programme was being carried out. The general plan for the district was adopted in 1965 and the underground train was opened in 1975. Between these years, 5,600 flats with accompanying social facilities were completed. More than 20 building companies were involved in constructing Tensta. In 1969, at Uppingegränd, Ohlsson and Skarne built a number of flats using their prefabricated building system, S66. Erik Stenberg (of Stockholm), an architect, researcher and teacher was born that same year. Together with Thomas Sandell, Erik Stenberg re-designed one of these flats, and in 1999 Stenberg himself moved into it. This is when it was re-discovered that from the start, the many flats of the Million Dwelling Programme were designed to be re-built and adapted to a future society. The floor plans of S66 are flexible because the central pillar and the dividing walls are load bearing and piping is grouped towards the stairwell. Therefore, the inside walls are moveable and can be configured to whomever is living in the apartment.

Since 1999, Stenberg has collected drawings, texts and other material from Tensta's short history as a residential area in an attempt to understand the original ideas which have been obscured by generalisations about the Million Dwelling Programme as a whole. He has looked for specific details, viewing the built environment as constructed rather than planned and has discovered qualities and strengths to build further upon. A selection from his archive is on display here, for example the original sketches by architect Igor Dergalin.
(1929–2013) who created the recognised plan for Tensta along with Joseph Stäck (1918–1998), drawings from Sten Leijonhufvud (1936– ), files donated by BOOM-gruppen (Sonja Vidén 1940– ), and various printed matter surrounding the heated debate caused by the chaos which ensued when the city failed to coordinate between the constructors and the planning of infrastructure. The presentation also includes various material connected with the 2006 housing fair in Tensta which Stenberg co-organised, and material from some of the numerous courses Stenberg has taught at KTH School of Architecture on the different perspectives of the Million Programme Era. There are also photographs documenting some flats that were re-built by Stenberg. Stenberg will conduct walking tours of Tensta during the Summer Departement.

9. Lili Reynaud Dewar
Teeth, Gums, Machines, Future, Society, film, 2016, 36 min.
Lili Reynaud Dewar’s (Grenoble) film is a project resulting from a number of trips the artist took to Memphis, Tennessee, and its suburban cityscape, reflecting on issues of body representation. Memphis’s agitated past involving race and civil rights and struggles, most notably the Sanitation Strike, which led to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, is an important part of the film. Recent musical history features; for example, Three 6 Mafia, on Memphis label Hypnotized Minds, and more than anything, she pays close attention to particular objects: grillz, metallic armour for the teeth, cherished in rap culture since the 1990s. The film incorporates a new performance centred on the symbolism of teeth—a recurring motif in her work—as the bodily representation of the threshold between public and private life. Gathering performers from the local stand-up comedy scene, she presents this group to her long-term collaborator noise musician Hendrik Hegray and to Ashley Cook, who performs a reading of feminist and science theoretician Donna Haraway’s seminal text A Cyborg Manifesto (1985), while the comedians engage in an intense discussion about teeth, racism, and the future.

10. Magnus Bärtås
The Miracle in Tensta (Theoria), film, 2014, 16 min.
Magnus Bärtås’s (Tranås/Stockholm) film, The Miracle in Tensta (Theoria) is a wayward depiction of how the Virgin Mary appeared in Tensta in 2012, based on testimonies on the Internet. With the help of Tensta residents, the testimonies have been visualised and shot with a steady camera in the same room of the gallery in Tensta konsthall where the film was originally shown, as part of the multi-year inquiry The New Model. Theoria in Greek implies that if, during ancient times, someone experienced an extraordinary event, like the Olympics or a religious ritual, a ‘theoria’ was performed when they returned home and gave a witness report, sharing her experience. Philosophers at the time talked in terms of “ritualised visuality” that received a political significance where the person lived. The theoria that is dealt with in the work is based on the events that took place in Tensta in August 2012. On August 22, people in Tensta witnessed that they had seen the Virgin Mary appearing in the sky. Dagens Nyheter’s UFO expert Clas Svahn wrote about the event, and the following evening thousands of people gathered in the Syrian Orthodox church (Santa Maria Church) in Tensta. Again the miracle was witnessed, both in the condensation in the windows and in the trees outside the church. The script for the film is entirely based on online discussions about “the miracle”.

Magnus Bärtås (script, direction, cutting) in collaboration with Marius Dybwärd Brandrud (camera) and Claes Lundberg (sound). Actors/readers: Fahyra Alnablisi, Julia Cechal, Lawen Dehghani, Jonas Grundman, José Tusach, Tanja Tuurala and Peter Åström.
11. Ylva Westerlund
The New Hird, 12 pen-and-ink drawings, 2017
Borderlands, the future, and the relationship between the countryside and the suburb are the focus of artist Ylva Westerlund’s (Husum/Tensta) pen-and-ink drawings The New Hird. Tensta and the surrounding green areas of the Järva Field (Järvafältet), which Westerlund walks through between her home in Tensta and her studio in a cottage on the field, can be recognised as her vision of the future through an ecological lens. On first glance, the cartoon-style images appear dystopian, but in Westerlund’s narrative, the catastrophe seems to ignite positive change by sparking the growth of other perspectives and new ideas. For example Ärvingekvinnan, a wealthy Viking woman found buried in a grave in the middle of a field in 1976, appears as a mystical spider-creature in Westerlund’s story. Several of the images feature Eggeby Farm, where the artist’s studio is located, which has long functioned as a gathering place for all sorts of activities. Once the vicarage for Spånga Church, today, the property is owned by the city of Stockholm and is leased by Järva People’s Park (Järva Folkets Park), and is home to horses, three dovecotes, bee hives, a theatre barn, a small sculpture park, and artists’ studios.

12–13. The Women’s Café
Items made by the participants
Since 2016 women from the Järva area meet regularly at Tensta konsthall to work with different kinds of crafts. Under the rubric of the Women’s Café, they currently meet on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays under the guidance of Muna Alyaqoobi and Asha Mohamed, creating a safe space where conversation and exchange of experience is at the centre of the focus. The craftsmanship skills that the women in the group already have are amplified upwards and reinforced by teachers from Hemslöjden i Stockholm and by the other participants. The embroidered banner was made as part of an embroidery course led by Ulla-Britt Önnestam. Participants also meet visiting artists and make monthly excursions to Stockholm’s various craft sites, museums, and organisations. The Women’s Café is an intimate venue free of constraints, costs, and commercial interests. In collaboration with the Women’s Centre in Tensta–Hjulsta.

14. Marie-Louise Ekman
Fantasy Meeting, lithograph, 2017
Marie-Louise Ekman’s lithograph Fantasy Meeting will be sold to benefit the Women’s Centre in Tensta-Hjulsta (KITH), a cross-ethnic association with approximately 250 members with over 30 different native languages. KITH was founded in 1997 and, among other things, hosts language and computer courses as an association on the premises in Tensta. It functions as an extended living room for women of all ages—a unique and safe meeting place that is shaped by the women’s own terms. KITH is one of Tensta konsthall’s most frequent partners in the area. Fantasy Meeting is available in an edition of 450 and costs 4500 SEK each. While sales are handled by Tensta konsthall, the money is given directly to KITH. For purchase, please email didem@tenstakonsthall.se. Since 2012, when Tensta konsthall showed the retrospective exhibition Doing What You Want Marie-Louise Ekman accompanied by Sister Corita Kent, Mladen Stilinović, and Martha Wilson, KITH has had a dialogue with Ekman and her work. Besides special tours of the exhibition, KITH invited the artist to talk about her life and work as part of the series One Woman, Nine Lives. KITH has also made studio visits, participated in the release of Ekman’s website, and seen her play The Guinea Pigs premiered at the Royal Dramatic Theater.

15–16. The Spånga Local Heritage Society
From the Archive
The Spånga Local Heritage Society (Spånga Formminnes- och Hembygdsföreningen), founded in 1932,
documents the history of Spånga parish. Tensta is also part of the parish and was first mentioned in 1292. The area has a wealth of settlements and graves from the Iron Age and the Viking, but has most likely been occupied since the end of the ice age. The name “Tensta” comes from the word “tena”, a sort of fishing implement, and “sta”, a sort of enclosure. “Spånga” has to do with water and a passage over water.

Spånga church, which is located in the middle of Tensta, is arguably the oldest building in the Stockholm area, parts of which date back to the 1120s. Two rune stones in the church’s yard attest to the fact that long before E18 and the ring road around Stockholm, people went through Tensta—rune stones were primarily placed at crossroads and on bridges. Where the residential area is situated today there were three farms: Hjulsta, Lilla Tensta and Stora Tensta, which were torn down to make room for the new housing blocks. Erikslund, where the Kurdish Association Spånga currently holds their premises, is an old shoemaker dwelling, one of the few remaining older buildings.

17. Ahmet Ögüt & Emily Fahlén
Same Time Next Day, video, 2016, 15 min.
This film explores Tensta’s continuities and repetitions, the ongoing processes that lack defined beginnings and ends, by considering the daily routines of the founder of a news network for the Eritrean diaspora, the industrious enthusiast behind a local women’s association, and the most famous poet of Kurdistan who smokes every waking hour. They all move in the same spaces in the neighbourhood, the single largest area of the Million Dwelling Programme. Developed by artist Ahmet Ögut (Istanbul/Berlin) and mediator Emily Fahlén (Gothenburg/Stockholm) on behalf of the 2016 Oslo Architecture Triennale on the theme of belonging in relation to forced and selected migration, it is about the passage of time in Tensta and the iconic poet Sherko Bekas’ poems once written on site. With Hatice Akalinli, Halo Bekas, and Nuranden Mohammed Ali.

Art from Tensta Upper Secondary School
Tensta Upper Secondary School (Tensta gymnasium), founded in 1984, can (by taking into factor the school Norra Latin) date its origins back to medieval Stockholm. In fact, Tensta gymnasium could celebrate 702 years since the story of the village school in Stockholm’s Old Town can be documented to date back to the year 1315. The village school is said to have been located just north of Storkyrkan, the cathedral, where the Royal Palace now stands. Teaching in the village school (Byskolan) was undertaken by the church’s priests. The first known headmaster, or “scolemaster” was Arvidius, in the 1310s. The most famous of them, Olaus Petri, who under the aegis of King Gustav Vasa, made Sweden into a Protestant country. In conjunction with the Reformation, the monastery was closed, including the Franciscan monastery on Riddarholmen where the school had moved. Byskolan, which changed its name to Stockholm’s trivialskola, remained at that address until 1666, when it moved back into the centre of the Old Town.

In 1814 the school moved once again to Riddarholmen, to Birger Jarls torg 7 and in 1890 it moved into a new grand building at Norra Bantorget. This was the start of a brilliant period in the school’s history. Norra Latin was considered the best and most prestigious school in the whole country, but it was exclusive for boys—girls were first admitted at the end of the 1950s. In 1983–84, classes at Norra Latin were closed down and moved to Tensta. The Tensta upper secondary was purposed, following its predecessor, to excel and be a model for future upper secondary education. The Tensta school was designed by the architect Gösta Uddén to be modern and light, with a façade of oiled wood panels. The winter garden attracted special attention when the school was opened. Today, the school is closed for renovation. One of the things that quite directly materialises is the school’s history and its art collection which has survived all reorganisations and moves from previous locations. Two
works from this collection are included in Tensta Museum's Summer Department.

18. Veronica Nygren
The hare in autumn, woven, 1984, Stockholm City Museum
The hare in autumn is a wall hanging produced in the ryta technique in its wildest sense. It is anything but evenly clipped, with the ends of yarn instead forming a vertically rolling autumnal landscape, where the wool looks as if it has grown at its own discretion. But where is the hare? The ground smacks of damp and vegetation. Veronica Nygren (1940–2006) was a textile artist, specialising in weaving. Between 1989–1994 she was professor of Textile Art at Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design. It was especially during the late 1960s, during the first feminist wave in art, that weaving arose as an artistic technique, on equal terms with painting or sculpture. At the same time, things began happening likewise in fashion. In 1967 Veronica Nygren became one of the founders of the clothing company, Mahjong, after encountering Kristina Torsson and Helena Henschen, all participants in a fashion happening that took place at Moderna Museet in 1965. Their common goal was to design beautiful, colourful and easily cared-for basic garments made in Sweden. They clothed a left-wing, politically conscious generation and the expanding women's movement.

19. Carl Larsson
Headmaster Lundberg and two teachers, sketch for a wall painting in Norra Latin, water colour, 1890, Stockholm City Museum
At the time that Norra Latin was opened in 1890, a school was considered one of the most important buildings for which the local society could have. The king himself, then Oscar II, and his son, Prince Eugen, inaugurated the building. Carl Larsson (1853–1919) had at this time not achieved his great breakthrough, which came in 1896, with the commission for the magnificent fresco paintings in the National Museum—Midvinterblot. But he was on his way to being a monumental painter and just before the commission for Norra Latin he had made a wall painting for a girls’ school in Gothenburg. The Norra Latin water colour is a sketch for a larger wall painting, whose composition was used again at the National Museum. People are together for a formal gathering outdoors, to witness a school boys’ service (the finished painting's title), which refers to a church service that the military carried out in the field and which the school boys should practice. The sketch shows the highly respected headmaster Lundberg, surrounded by several teachers. The painting, which had no religious references, was considered very modern for its time.

20. Meron Mangasha & Senay Berhe
Blue Blood, video, 2 min 36 sec, 2013 shown in the main exhibition space of Public Luxury
Blue Blood portrays the Blue Line in Stockholm’s underground, narrated visually, powered by words. It is an attempt to reflect and immortalise the time and environment in which we now live. Blue Blood was recorded along the route of the Blue Line on two occasions, and it shows places and environments that belong to all. In order to avoid connecting a face or a particular group of people to the place, the film has been made at night, in empty places. During the day these places are full of people with different backgrounds and cultures, but in the film they are now pared down and anonymous. Inspired by a quote from the poet Arthur Lundqvist at the Näckrosen underground station, Meron Mangasha (Stockholm), who works with poetry and the spoken word, wrote a poem which was then interpreted visually by Senay Berhay (Stockholm), who works with film, both as an artist and commercially. Blue Blood is a celebration of the Blue Line but that also conveys mixed feelings in regards to the places along its own tracks.
21. StreetGäris
Residency at ArkDes
StreetGäris is an intersectional movement for women and non-binary people, who are supporting, teaching and inspiring each other through empowerment, solidarity and sharing. The goal of StreetGäris is to challenge and re-distribute the formal powers, as well as to work for popular education and opinion-making. StreetGäris will hold a residency position at ArkDes as part of Tensta Museum’s Branch, obtaining a workplace with access to meeting facilities and other infrastructural support.

Activities

Introductions to Tensta Museum
Once a week, either on Wednesdays or Saturdays at 12:00: Introductions will be held by Tensta konsthall’s team.
Dates: 16.6, 20.6, 30.6, 4.7, 14.7, 18.7, 28.7, 1.8, 11.8, 15.8, 25.8, 29.8, 8.9, 12.9, 22.9

The Silent University: Language Café with Fahyma Alnablsi and volunteers
The Language Café will hold their meeting sessions once a month at ArkDes, while the Tensta Museum’s Branch is open.

The Silent University is an autonomous knowledge exchange platform by and for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. The Language Café was first initiated in 2012 at Tate Modern by the artist Ahmet Ögüt. The Language Café is Tensta Museum’s version of The Silent University, which has since 2013, on a bi-weekly basis welcomed those who wish to learn the basics of Swedish, meet new friends and share experiences and ideas. Especially welcome are those students who are currently outside the Swedish education system while awaiting asylum. Once a month excursions to other parts of Stockholm take place.

Saturday 1.9, 13:00–16:00 Women’s Café at ArkDes open for everyone
Tensta konsthall’s Women’s Café will hold their meeting sessions once a month at ArkDes while the Tensta Museum’s Branch is open.

Saturday 16.6, 13:00–15:00 Walk in Tensta with the Million Programme specialist Erik Stenberg
Meeting place: Tensta konsthall
What were the ideas behind Sweden’s extensive Million Programme areas, and what kind housing policy is required today for the suburbs of the future? As a large part of the construction of the welfare state, a million homes were built in Sweden during the period between 1965 and 1974. In 1968, there were 16 different types of prefabricated building systems with 15 percent of the total building stock that was built implementing those systems. Three of these systems distinguished themselves with their built in flexibility and adaptability, making them able to account for the challenges of today. Questions about how the very ambitious million programme relates to politics, sustainability, and segregation are once again pressing as we face a new housing crisis, which again requires a vast production of homes.

Tuesday 19.6, 14:00 Arts and Literature walk in Tensta with Emily Fahlén
Meeting place: Tensta konsthall
In the Tensta subway, Helga Henschen conjures up an image of the 1970s using words like solidarity and sisterhood. When the poet Meron Mangasha makes a contemporary depiction of the same site, the metro’s blue line becomes the royal blood. On the adjacent Järvafältet, the Taikon family once upon a time set up their camp as illustrated in the childhood portrayal of the young Katitzi, furthermore Siri Derkert produced her last public art work at Gullingeskolan. Tensta emerges through a motley and interesting patchwork of literary and artistic narratives. Join us on an alternate walk through Tensta’s settlements, lookout and public spaces. The tour will begin at Tensta konsthall.
Friday 29.6, 14:00
Friday 24.8, 14:00
Walk on the Järva Field with artists and Tensta residents Mats Adelman and Ylva Westerlund
Meeting place: Tensta konsthall
Twice this summer, Ylva Westerlund and Mats Adelman will lead guided walks in the nature area The Järva Field. They describe the biotope, and the birds and other animals in the area are mapped.

The Winter Department
26.9 2018–13.1 2019
The Women’s Center in Tensta-Hjulsta; Action Arkiv with Sara Brolund de Carvalho, Meike Schalk and Helena Mattsson; Ane Hjort Guttu, video This Is All Places; Claudia del Fiero, video El Complejo #2 with the Tensta profile Ricardo Osvaldo Alvarado; Brita Landoff, 1989 documentary on a class in Tensta upper secondary school; Tensta konsthall’s text prize; Adam Tensta with Silvana Imam, radio program SR Urbania; and more

Complete list of artists and organisations involved in Tensta Museum (2013–ongoing):
Tensta konsthall Staff

Ailin Moaf Mirlashari
host
Asha Mohamed
assistant
Didem Yıldırım
production assistant
Fahyma Alnablsi
reception and Language Café
Fredrik Berg
host
Hanna Nordell
producer
Isabella Tjäder
communications and press
Makda Embaie
assistant
Maria Lind
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Muna Al Yaqoobi
assistant Women’s Café
Nina Svensson
mediator
Rasmus Sjöbeck
host

Interns

Felicia Edström
Jasmina Saric
Karolin Grahn

Installation

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Johan Wahlgren
Niklas Ajiling
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Special thanks to

ArkDes Team
Monika Wallin
Samir Latif Hafiz