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**Crime of the Week: Housing Piffle**  
with Leif PG Tensta by Bernd Krauss  
at Tensta konsthall  
as part of Tensta Museum's branch at ArkDes  
30.10 2018–13.1 2019



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During the summer and autumn of 2018 Tensta konsthall has opened a branch at ArkDes, Sweden's museum for architecture and design, including two different exhibitions (a summer and winter department), each giving an insight into the life and history of Tensta. As a spin-off, Bernd Krauss was commissioned to do research in the archives of ArkDes, to search for documentation from the early years of the Million Dwelling program in Tensta and, in addition, to collaborate with students from Elinsborgsskolan, an elementary school in the neighborhood. The resulting investigation with the children and the study of the archives is presented in the reception gallery of Tensta konsthall.

**Crime of the Week: Housing Piffle with Leif PG Tensta** can be described as a way to navigate in a familiar environment and try to experience it with new eyes. We rarely reflect upon why a street, a bridge or a balcony is placed exactly where it is. Beyond a well-acquainted surrounding, there's an underlying vision, for instance from politicians, city-planners or architects. Then there's the history, which is constantly written and rewritten by the first, second and third generation and so forth. On top of this, the ideas of outsiders' concepts of the place are being projected. Tensta is an example of such a place, where worlds of ideas constantly collide and give birth to totally different images, depending on who you are. Bernd Krauss' method of dealing with these circumstances and budging habitual thinking is to assume the role of a criminal detective or an explorer who would never dismiss a contingency. He draws maps while strolling, he collects apparently worthless raffle, observes people, compares the drawings made by swishy architects with pragmatic results and digs into the manifestos of utopian society builders.

Bernd Krauss is interested in the many levels that can dwell within human creativity and its different manifestations. His practice refers both to everyday life experiences as well as challenges from high culture, combining the explorer and the contemporary artist. Krauss uses methods of classical crafts as well as conceptual modes of procedures. Through embedding his works in different cultural formats, he enhances the tension between form and content. This presents itself as a cooperative model that claims an adaption of the identity of the artist within a variety of circumstances prevailing in different institutions.

Previous exhibitions include **Kontroll 1-2-3** at Polismuseet, Stockholm (2017), **Postsolar**, Shimmer Rotterdam (2018), **Bomassan**, Konsthall C (2018) and the group exhibition **Gaudiopolisat Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst**, Leipzig. In 2013, he did the exhibition we are continuing **BBDG (Björn Borg Design Group)** at Tensta konsthall. For **Tensta museum: Reports from New Sweden**, he and Nina Svensson founded the **Tensta Trotting Association**, of which parts were also exhibited at the **Medeltidsmuseet (Medieval Museum of Stockholm)** and **Hästsportens hus (Horse Sport House)**, Solvalla. In addition, a film by the gaming company **ATG** about the **Tensta Trotting Association**, with interviews by young members, is currently on view at ArkDes. Nina Svensson and Bernd Krauss have also participated in **Tensta konsthall's project Art Treasures: Grains of Gold from Tensta's Public Schools**, to which they have contributed new works for the Tensta schools.

**Elinsborgsskolan**

Elinsborgsskolan was built in 1970 and has ca 330 students from pre-school to grade 6, divided into two classes per grade. Elinsborgsskolan also has a preparatory class for migrant children and a special group, LK. The school offers a specialisation in music for pupils in grades 5 and 6. The younger pupils collaborate with **El Sistema** via the municipal Arts school. The school

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building was designed by Backström & Reinius, architects known for their star-shaped house in Gröndal, tower blocks in Danviksklippan, Vällingby Centrum and Farsta Centrum. Other buildings from Backström & Reinius include the department store Åhléns at Sergelstorg and the fifth Hötorget skyscraper.

Models in styrofoam, photos from the ArkDes archive by Anders Petersen, among others, issues from Crime of the Week, collage, chair, mixed media, wall paper, a print depicting the school of Leif GW (Norra Real), a wine bottle. Some things may be added over time.

Thanks to:

Klubb Elin, students from

Elinsborgskolan:

Melanie Adaysan

Arpita Deb

Thuvarsikah Aravinthan

Elif Daldudak

Maritta Mourad

Maritta Tussiopoulou

Zeba Islam

Thanks to: Peter, Martin and Salim from the after-school centre Klubb Elin at Elinsborgsskolan, to Ockie Basgül Dogan at Tensta konsthall, Frida Melin, Curator for the collection, ArkDes.

### Self-presentation

When I was seven years old I went with my mother to a ceramics class at the very first "Kulturladen" in Germany, KURO. I thought that I needed military equipment in the form of tanks for playing in the sandbox. The course leader acknowledged this remark with astonishment, but a few weeks later I was able to pick up the armed vehicles and use them to play war games in my family's garden. Approximately eight years later, when puberty hit, with my still-childish brain, I stopped using my mother's folding bike to replay national speedway competitions as Egon Müller with my friends on the street. Instead, I glued different cardboard boxes onto the back of the bike to imitate the body of a heavy motorcycle. During my first semester of university in January 1991, the Gulf War started and students went on strike. After the strike was over I understood that university still works without going to seminars. Two years into my studies I participated in an "art recall" at my former high school, where I installed fireworks with matches in the school toilet. Meanwhile my art teacher Karl Kellner, along with a group of pupils, painted the asphalt football field green like it was made of grass. That made the classrooms in the main building glow like aquariums when the sun hit the newly green ground. After watching our peers learn how to play theater for five and a half years, we decided we'd better do it ourselves in 1998. We would only have toilet paper when Pier Luigi Tazzi would visit us in London. Then Nicolaus Schafhausen visited the flat I shared with Stefan Kalmár and I got a solo show at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart. Oh, that's why I did the dishes for a year. When you're a carpenter and you need to install a shelf at a customer's house, you need to go there. But if you have a laptop, you don't need a shelf.

## Conversation with Bernd Krauss and Paulina Sokolow

**Paulina Sokolow:** What do we see in your exhibition?

**Bernd Krauss:** It's things that I've done together with Klubb Elin, an after-school centre for fifth graders at Elinsborgsskolan. First, you will probably notice a styrofoam model of the school. It's both a part of and the result of the research that we did together around their school – a concrete building from 1970, when Tensta's Million Dwelling program had just been completed. In many ways, it's a typical school building from this period: modern, without any dangerous stairwells – the opposite of the palace-like buildings from the old days. It's single-decked and divided into sections. What's special is that it is designed by a famous architect firm, Backström & Reinius, who's did several prestigious projects in Stockholm, of which the most well known is Vällingby Centrum. On the exhibition walls, there are photos showing views of Tensta from when it was under construction in the late 60s – photos from the ArkDes archive. One wall is covered with wallpaper imitating a concrete facade. Then, we mustn't forget the ever-present Leif PG, whose ghost is manifested as a worn chair and a hunting vest! Among the stuff in the installation you'll also find some recent news from the popular but somewhat suspect journal Crime of the Week, which had its heyday in the 70s and 80s but no longer exists.

**PS:** Who is Leif PG?

**BK:** Leif Pernd Grauss. He is a criminal detective and a doppelganger to the more known TV detective Leif GW. We needed someone to help us look at the building and the time in a new and sober way. Architects and planners see it in one way, while a detective has a different perspective. Through his eyes, we tried to notice new things. Our starting point was the scene of a crime. At first, the children thought that Leif was really grumpy. But I told them he had a cold. It's interesting with professions that

begin with the capital letter K: konstnär (artist), kurator (curator), kriminalare (detective)... Here, I'm his assistant and he uses the children to get insight to their perspectives.

You could say that the ArkDes archive is similar to a criminal database and that I have gotten the task of digging into the Tensta case. In that sense, his character simplifies my perspective in order to let go and try another attitude.

**PS:** Backström & Reinius are the architects behind several flag ship buildings in Stockholm: Stringhuset at Nytorget, the tower block at Danvikstull, a parish house in Spånga and last but not least, Vällingby Centrum and Farsta Centrum. What are your thoughts concerning Elinsborgsskolan?

**BK:** Their architecture is labelled as brutalism, a style that emphasizes different materials instead of hiding them with some kind of varnish. Concrete and construction materials are openly declared. But this is not valid for this school, I believe. Rather, it's a systemic construction. In this case they have conjugated into a system that is both economic and adapted to some kind of educational politics that people believed in back then: Developments would cut the costs and logistically effectivize architecture. Sure, it was utopian, but on the way it lost its soul. The school has nothing of the richness in detail as Vällingby Centrum, even though you can spot traces of it if you look carefully. I am familiar with their background and visions – I can understand where those details derive from. But by the time they built Elinsborgsskolan they had been struck by megalomania.

In 1968 there was a symposium at Stadsmuseet (the Stockholm City Museum) called We Build School (Vi bygger skola). The new weapon was System construction (Systembygge), which was associated with the reform of a pedagogic ideology. The ideology built a massive foundation for the collapse, which came later in the 00s. The collapse of the school system can be

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terribly exemplified by what happened to Tensta gymnasium, or high school. Norra Latin in the city center was a school with a proud history. It was shut down and reopened in a brand new building in Tensta 1984. For some obscure reason the school is now closed. That's really sad. When architects enter into an alliance with the construction industry, the politics that comes with it is only the beginning of a slaughter that we have to live with up until today. During the last decades there were similar European systems, such as PISA – yet another bureaucracy that negotiates with reality both politically and virtually, but which at the same time is detached from the everyday life of students and teachers. They have a responsibility to educate every single individual in a humanist way.

**PS:** What was it like to work with the children?

**BK:** The first day they drew sketches of their school with pencils and then we transferred the drawings into three-dimensional renderings. As an artist, you have a choice: do I want it to be pedagogic or do I want it to be “art.” For me, it is both, to use this free space. I find it interesting to work with the unstable, both in the sense of configuration as well as in the social sense. As soon as you provide children with paint, it looks like stuff made by children. With my method, I force them into brutalism in a way that brings them out from their childishness without losing the creative energy within them. For instance, if you to want to play golf and the mower is broken, what to do? You simply have to sit on the ground and cut the grass with a pair of scissors.

**PS:** Has the investigation leader reached any conclusions?  
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**BK:** That was not part of the mission, really. I'm surprised of how I initially had my own picture of Tensta that was partially based on the description of the media. Now that I've moved here, to the Tensta konsthall guest apartment and lived here for a while, everything is back to normal again. This soon became

my new everyday life. I've gotten a new network consisting of doves and rats, basically. Sometimes I say hello to a squirrel or two.

**PS:** Are you critical towards the Million Dwelling program?

**BK:** Not at all. I want to get a grip about reality. The one thing I'm critical about is the illusion that this program, according to some older men and women, is so good. They don't live here, but rather wealthy suburbs such as Tallkrogen or Enskede. For them, it's about an ideological nostalgia that they dream others living in.

Paulina Sokolow is Tensta konsthall's communication officer.





**Dates:**

**Thursdays and Saturdays 14:00**  
Open introduction to current exhibitions  
and projects.

**Tensta konsthall staff**

**Ailin Moaf Mirlashari**  
host  
**Didem Yildirim**  
production coordinator  
**Fahyma Alnablsi**  
reception and Language Café  
**Fredda Berg**  
host  
**Hanna Nordell**  
producer  
**Henny Josefsson**  
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**Isabella Tjäder**  
communication  
**Makda Embaie**  
assistant  
**Maria Lind**  
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**Nawroz Zakholy**  
assistant  
**Nina Svensson**  
mediation  
**Paulina Sokolow**  
communication and press  
**Rasmus Sjöbeck**  
host

**Interns:**

**Ockie Basgül Dogan**  
**Aya Urhammer**

**Installation:**

**Ingrid Jansson**  
**Johan Wahlgren**  
**Mario Fjell**