

Fall 2011

THE STATION

moving together in time and space



The Bus, Tunç Okan, 1974, film still.

STATION

written by Kim Einarsson & Adnan Yıldız

NOTES FROM OUR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

by Lisa Torell

AND MORE FROM

Aykan Safoğlu, Slavs and Tatars, Sylvia Winkler & Stephan Köperl



The Bus, Tunç Okan, 1974, film still.

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STATION

Kim Einarsson & Adnan Yıldız



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Station is a long-term project based on the idea of moving together in time and space towards a conceptual destination. The project started as a discussion about the contextual references of Konsthall C and was later shaped by curatorial and artistic research around questions of mobility, the transfer of narratives and discourses as well as regulations of the public domain. These discussions can also be applied to the context of the collaborating institution in this project: Künstlerhaus Stuttgart.

The project is based on a relatively long personal history. We (Kim Einarsson + Adnan Yıldız) were both based in Berlin where we worked as freelance curators. Consequently, we often carried projects into new contexts, bringing concepts from one place to another resulting in few opportunities to keep up a long-term dialogue with an audience. Sharing a close friendship, we worked in the same studio in Berlin and made collaborations at different levels. Within a year of each other, we both started working at institutions. Since January 2010, Kim Einarsson has been the director at Konsthall C. Adnan Yıldız started working at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart in 2011. This shared personal history of collaboration and previous mobile and short-term projects motivated us to create a long-term project that would search for alternative forms of exhibition making and developing critical thinking for the transformation of democratic society.

The story begins with questions of audience and public space...

Adnan was attracted by Kim's invitation to make an exhibition at Konsthall C and especially to the idea of investigating the question of the relationship between the roles and positions of an audience and a citizen. Defining Konsthall C as a form of public space, the working process has been based on questioning the process of making discussions public

as well as relating this action to the politics of an institutional setting. By initiating projects that use different formats, temporalities, levels of participation and that involve time-consuming processes and collaborations with different audiences, the program of Konsthall C continuously explores different modes of production and communication. Early on, the artists Aykan Safoğlu (Berlin/New York) and Lisa Torell (Stockholm) were invited to become our fellow travellers. In a number of works, both of them have focused on social movements and the politics of public space, albeit in very different ways.

Through a conceptual mode of thinking, we were interested in taking aspects of empirical thought and everyday reality into consideration. Any exhibition starts in one's mind when one decides to visit it. It begins from the moment we decide to travel to it, both physically and mentally. Departing from this point, the abstracted form of our curatorial idea originated in the artistic experience, the role of the audience, and in Konsthall C as a station - a temporary stop and public site of our working process.

Konsthall C is situated in the Stockholm suburb Hökarängen that was built in the late 1940s and was once a typical manifestation of the Swedish welfare state and Social Democratic policy. The art space was founded on artistic motivations to investigate the democratic aspects of Modernist social planning. The urban plan of the suburb was made by the same architect who later went on to plan *Sergels torg* (Sergel's Square, a public space in the very centre of Stockholm). Organized according to neighborhood planning ideals, Hökarängen consists of smaller neighborhoods with their own sub-centres. Konsthall C is located in such a centre, in a so-called 'centre building'. The 'C' in Konsthall C stands for 'Centre'. The building hosts a number of social services and small enterprises, and the exhibition space can be found in a former communal laundry. Part of the space is still used as laundry for the residents of the area. Konsthall C's historical, geographical, and conceptual connection with the city centre as well as the actual experience of spending time in the public transport (on the green metro line) between the two places - from centre to centre - inspired us and the project.

The First Episode: The Bus At the Station

One of the most forceful motivations behind the project *Station* was the methodological aspect of the production process. The content of the project has been developed by



Poster and flyer design by Basar Önal, 2010.

the rule of learning by doing. Rather than taking already existing schemas, discourses or discussions, the process has been based on the idea of experimenting with the content. During our early discussions around the politics of movement and public domain, a film reference emerged and played a key role in how we approach public space, mobility, and the city.

The Bus / Otobüs (Tunç Okan, 1974) was shot at *Sergels torg* more than three decades ago, yet the story still retains a contemporary relevancy. The film is about a group of Turkish men who expect to arrive in Germany as migrant workers but are left in a bus in the middle of Stockholm without their passports or any money. The film was banned in Turkey for some years after the 1980 military coup but this did not prevent it from becoming a legend. The film starts with the bus arriving at *Sergels torg*, and displays a panorama of the location and of people on the street including the policemen, street musicians,



demonstrators, tourists etc. Operating as a stage for a story about survival and alienation, the city turns into a jungle, a labyrinth or a prison, where the characters get lost and it all ends in tragedy.

As research material, the film provided us with a groundwork from which we could develop a grammar and common vocabulary, especially in relation to the way the film approaches the city. As a reference however, it was not known in the Swedish context. This motivated us to make a screening of the film the first event within the project. Taking this screening as a departure point, the physical experience of watching the film together on the location where it was shot 33 years ago, became a political gesture or a public intervention. We did not position it as an art event or promote it as a film screening. We did not make the director's name public. All communications in relation to the screening were made using one sentence without any other references: "The Bus at the Station, 27 May 2010-21.00 Sergels torg". This was the only information given to the audience. The idea of screening a film in order to develop content for an exhibition made the close collaborative nature of the project on a curatorial, organizational and editorial level very important. The screening was regarded by all of us to be the main experience in order to start the discussion. Lisa Torell had furnished *Sergels torg* with fifty plastic garden chairs of the standardised type you can find all over the world both for public and private use. The screening started with an animated text piece by Torell called *Europe was global*. A young filmmaker from Berlin, Kaan Müjdeci was visiting Stockholm the same week, and after the screening of *The Bus*, we also premiered his short movie, *Tag der Deutsche Einheit*



03 the screening



04 the screening



05 the screening

(2009-2010), a comedy that takes place in Görlitzer Park in Kreuzberg. Müjdeci's film is about migrant thieves, the German attitude towards them and presents a walk through a public park as a daily adventure. Aykan Safoğlu documented both the preparation and the actual event.

During the screening, one of the greatest experiences was witnessing the everyday routine of *Sergels torg* unfold while simultaneously watching the film. There were a certain number of the audience and art professionals who knew about the film screening in advance, however the most striking outcome of the screening was having a lot of passers-by who stopped when they recognised their city, their public space and their sphere on the screen. The director Tunç Okan was there with us as was the producer of the film Gudrun Zachrisson Ones. They had not seen each other since the film was shot.

On the next day an open discussion was organized at Konsthall C with contributions from the director and the producer. An installation by Lisa Torell was exhibited which consisted of the repeated triangular patterns in black and white granite of *Sergels torg* made out of carpeting. The exhibition space also included monitors for the audience to watch *The Bus* and some other films such as *Myglaren* (Swedish for con-artist or charlatan) and *I am Curious (Blue)* as a bibliography for our discussions.

There were two important points that came up during the open discussion. When former actor Tunc Okan was talking about *The Bus* as his first directorial experience, he often used the term *open script* in his statements. He was shooting footage for the film in parallel with

the process of writing the script with the cast. The scenario was developed after he read a story in the newspaper about innocent people being cheated when they were hoping to migrate to Germany. Departing from that story, he used the elements of *Sergels torg* and positioned *the city as an open studio* for his film. Taking a nightclub, a toilet or a metro station as a conceptual base, and providing the space for the actors to improvise, he was again and again testing what would/could happen when people encounter each other without a shared language or culture between them. The film inspired us in terms of how the city could operate as a place for the imagination. The way that the script came about brought us to the idea of focusing on the public space and considering its potentiality for social and political transformation and (un)controllability.

Kleine Reise: Stuttgart

After almost a year, the team (Kim, Adnan, Aykan and Lisa) met in Stuttgart for research meetings and worked at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart for several days discussing the question of what had stayed with them after the screening.

We were all a bit disappointed with the director's current political agenda; a strong artistic mind was now more interested in market politics and telling sexist or nationalistic jokes. This was also a new challenge for us; to face artists as survivors of struggles from the legendary seventies, which was the "real" time of politics and art. Listening to him when he was talking about how they made the movie in high quality / low budget conditions, we were impressed by his experimental approach. He was working with both amateur and professional actors in something akin to

a workshop process and developing the script in relation to the architectural, social and political aspects of the film set. Today, he is based in Europe and his life has changed after he moved here. The nostalgic effect of the movie has definitely created an illusion for us; we expected him to be a sort of *Che* figure, but maybe we found him to be more like our parents, neighbours or elders who talk about money, sex and politics in an offhand manner and without any critical concern.

We read *Image and Violence* by Jean Luc Nancy, got drunk at a karaoke bar called Monroe's, and talked about the Hauptbahnhof situation in Stuttgart (*Kein Stuttgart 21*). The terms political consciousness and political imagination have been released as crystalline concepts for future destinations...

Station C (Station at Konsthall C)

On Wednesday 31st August 2011, we are opening the exhibition project Station C, which is the second episode in our series of public presentations. Artists Lisa Torell, Aykan Safoğlu, Sylvia Winkler/Stephan Köperl and Slavs and Tatars are contributing to the exhibition at different levels.

Lisa Torell is interested in the social and political changes of public space and freedom of speech. She studies the aesthetics and language of spatial and contextual conditions in order to both elucidate them and to bring them down to something we could all be part of or relate to. In her work for *Station C*, she deals with how the public space is regulated and organised and how it's visual codes communicate with us. Vinyl photo prints that you normally would find on the streets as large advertisements are transformed in this instance into acrylic paintings in an exhibition space.

In relation to his academic background in film studies, Aykan Safoğlu (Berlin/New York) brought another reference from Iranian cinema into the project; Cafer Pahanî's *Ayneh/The Mirror* (1997). The film is about a little girl, Mina, who waits after school for her mother to pick her up. Her mother doesn't show up and Mina takes off across Tehran in search of her home. Halfway through the film, the little actress takes off the fake cast and then her headscarf announcing that she is not acting any more. She quits.

In Sylvia Winkler's and Stephan Köperl's (Stuttgart) project, *STIEFKIND ZOB / Stepchild central bus station* (2011) the point

of departure is the new bus terminal -in Stuttgart- which has been relocated to the periphery of the city in an area largely defined by its marginalised community. Functioning as an iconic stage and demonstrating how public space is controlled and regulated by neo-liberal politics, the artists' performance focuses on the organisation of space, through a song composed of lyrics about the bus schedules scored to the popular melody "*Ich war niemals in New York*".

Slavs and Tatars define their practice as the study and creation of factional polemics and intimacies devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. For *Station C* the collective has created a new series of work called *Not Moscow Not Mecca* that addresses the notion of cities as destinations. It also refers to the two major narratives of the 20th and 21st centuries, that of Communism and of Islam. *Not Moscow Not Mecca* is inspired by a policy of the Soviet Union in the mid 20th century, called "To Moscow Not Mecca", of communising the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. This experiment inevitably failed, but it was a rare collision of culture, politics and ideals that took place without the mediation or triangulation of the West or capitalism.

Station C will also include a lecture and screening that will run in tandem with the installation at Konsthall C.

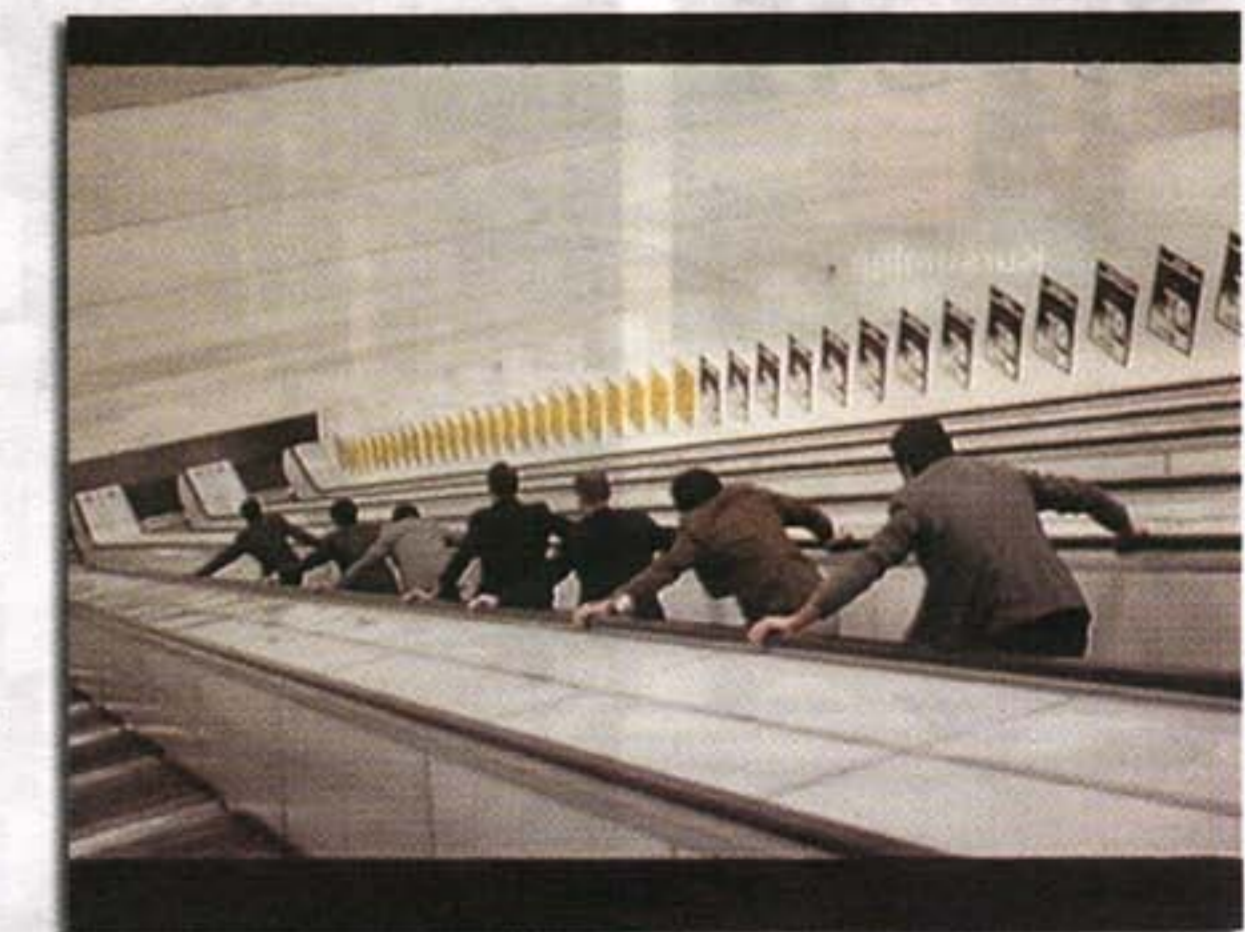


06 Tunc Okan & Gudrun Zachrisson Ones



07 Konsthall C

Photos as numbered 01-02-03-04-05-06-07 are taken by Aykan Safoğlu during the screening and the discussion, 27-28 May 2010, Stockholm.



The Bus, Tunç Okan, 1974, film stills.

NOTES FROM OUR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEETINGS

by Lisa Torell

Official: Kim Einarsson, Aykan Safoglu, Lisa Torell and Adnan Yildiz
Personal: Lisa Torell

Edit of transcription: Kim Einarsson

We were: Kim Einarsson, Aykan Safoglu, Lisa Torell and Adnan Yildiz. I had met Kim and Adnan but not Aykan before the 27 of May 2010. This was when the project really got started and the moment when we made things public. What things and what thoughts were we going to show? We should work, as if there wasn't anything before, as if we didn't have a script, no thoughts, nothing more than a film. We should start by using the back door and after that take the reaction to the next and then to the next project. None of the projects should be a continuation of the last one, at least not in the normal sense: each should be a new project. I was invited in 2009, as was also the case with Aykan. We were no longer only artists but collaborators. But were we? Did our roles really change? Did we transform our positions? And in reality, how open-handed were we? Wasn't my official title always contributing, affecting?

STATION 27, 28 AND 29 MAY 2010

"Station", alludes to station, a stop on the way, in a shared space, a public space, a joint adventure. Every exhibition or event should only be a stop on the way to the next one.

Thursday 27 May; Screening at Sergel's Square

The first step in the project is based on the movie "The Bus/Otobüs", a Turkish film from 1973 that was enacted in an installation at Sergel's Square in Stockholm 2010. Aykan took the photos of the screening. His camera equipment had been stolen just days before and he wasn't really comfortable with the one he got to borrow, but he did great as always. "Europe was global", was the title of my video that was shown just before the Turkish film. It was a text based on public responsibility and was about the silence in Europe. The video was finalized before all the demonstrations in the Middle East

and a year before the dramatic changes in Egypt. All of us were interested in questions concerning public space, now and then, and the changes of it. Our collaboration was built only on the respect for the other's freedom. That's why it's so complicated; it's the meetings and the reactions not the dialogue and the compromises that force forward.

Friday 28 May; Post Scriptum at Konsthall C

The director (Tunc Okan), as well as the producer (Gudrun Zachrisson Ones), were invited to talk about the film at Konsthall C in an open discussion. Finally the director would let us know: the movie is still interesting! Even today, more than 30 years later. It's about immigration, refugees, symbolisms for dystopia – utopia, welcoming, excluding, national identity, the present and the past. We were sitting on a carpet, in an installation I had made. Was this important in my new role as a collaborator that I had made it? Yes, it was. My role, as an artist was not left aside. In all situations, I guarded it. I think this was the same for Kim, Adnan and Aykan, no matter what we temporarily defined ourselves as. The shared is still based on egoism. The public space is egoistic.

The carpet was cut and placed in the same pattern as Sergel's Square – the public symbol for freedom of speech and democracy in Sweden. The aim was to highlight and lift it into the art space, another public space with the same purpose. This was a simple way to emphasize these questions without mentioning them. Adnan was the moderator; he was good, although I got pissed off anyway. The director was not the conscious, politically marvellous person that I had expected. He was straight the opposite; macho, unconscious or at least did not talk about the subjects that I thought the movie was intended to discuss. Aykan took pictures, said something. I stayed quiet. Kim was also lightly provoked, although she managed to ask questions. This meant that none of us really changed our positions, but it was a kind of collaboration where our different positions became official.

EDIT OF TRANSCRIPTION

Curator 1: It was great to see the film yesterday, because I remember the first time I came to Stockholm, when I came out of T-Centralen and saw the public square. Immediately I saw

the film in my head. The screening could be seen as a public intervention or performance.

Curator 2 (to the Producer): How was it for you to see the film again, because you haven't seen the film since it was shot? And how was it to see it in the public space of Sergel's Square?

Producer: It was a very strange experience actually. I have not seen the film in this version; I saw an older version. And the last time I saw it was 37 years ago, in 1973. I love the part of the film that was about the bus and the Turkish men in the bus. I never told you Tunc (she turns to the Director), that I did not like the part you have added with the history about the driver or smuggler. I think that took away the force and concentration of these men: they are immigrants, refugees. I like very much this simple way of telling a story. We see the driver smuggling the men into Sweden and leaving them on Sergel's Square, and that is what we want to know about him. Nothing else.

Curator 1: I think what is interesting here is the bus and what possibilities it opens up. It is a box, but, it is also about survival because they return to the bus all the time.

Curator 2 (to the Director): Tell us a little about the background of the making of the film.

Director: You know, that was a production that was very unprofessional on my part. I was an actor before in Turkey, but I left Turkey, and I was very interested to work as a director. As a coincidence I met Tuncel Kurtiz, a friend of mine. He had done a couple of films. I ran into him in Switzerland and we talked about doing something together. He lived in Sweden. So what can we do? Let's make a movie. And then I read this thing in the newspaper, a Turkish newspaper, that something happened, I don't know where exactly, if it was in Germany or.... The same story, about some men that were left in a bus. And when I came to Sweden at that time, I found it very strange and I saw the square and fell in love with it, with all the shops and everything. I could really imagine the bus on this square. It would be a fantastic starting point. The problem was – I had no experience. And my script was very unprofessional, because I had never written a script before.

I started to imagine pictures, scenes, and started to number them 1,2,3 etcetera and then send/ then I sent them to my friend. He said, this is not a script; you cannot make a movie like that. And I said: I don't know how to do it in another way.

Ok, we had no money and no team, but I wanted to make it anyway. I wanted to make it realistic.

So first I bought the bus and then I found the actors. I found this bus in Switzerland and bought it. I did not know how to drive the bus, because I did not have a drivers licence. On the way I bought a book on how to make a movie, because I really wanted to learn.

Director: So we decided to not work with actors. And this was not easy. We also had an accident after 10 days. When we developed the film it was totally dark, so we had to shoot everything again.

Director: This film is about a confrontation and has nothing to do with Swedish people or Sweden. From time to time I felt myself a stranger here. I lived in Switzerland at this time. Sweden was Olof Palme and Social Democracy etcetera, and I found that very interesting.

Curator 2: How did you find the people who acted in the film?

Director: The non-actors I found at the railway station. I went there and was looking for certain types. I was very impressed to see the movie after so many years at this place. But I

could not stop asking myself, how would I do this movie today?

Curator 2: How was the film received in Sweden?

Director: It was not very well received. It got understood as a critique of Swedish society. But the first public screening of this film, in this version, was in Italy, in Sicily. It was a big open air Roman theatre with lots of people and a big screen and I was very excited. And I thought, "wow, I made a very socialist and hard core political movie". But then when the film started after some scenes people found it funny and started to laugh. And I was so astonished.

Later, it was a very big success in Turkey and we won a prize and went around the world with the movie, and I'm glad for it. But in Turkey, I heard they had fights in the movie theatres. Some people found it funny, but others did not. "Why are you laughing?", "It's funny", "No, it's not, can't you see these people are suffering", "I do what I want, that's not your problem".

Curator 1: But there was also a story behind the sex scene that was censored?

Director: Yeah, we had censorship problems,

but now it is solved. Oh, this is a funny story; I imported the reels by hiding them when I went to Turkey. I put them in my bag when I came to the plane; it was very dangerous because it was political and critical...

Curator 1: Towards the military coup?

Director: Yes. So...

Producer: But may I return to the question about how the film was received in Sweden? I think about how it was received by the professional film community when it was shot. When they knew that this was going to take place, there was an interest to take part. I was the one that took care of all the extras and the Swedish actors etcetera.

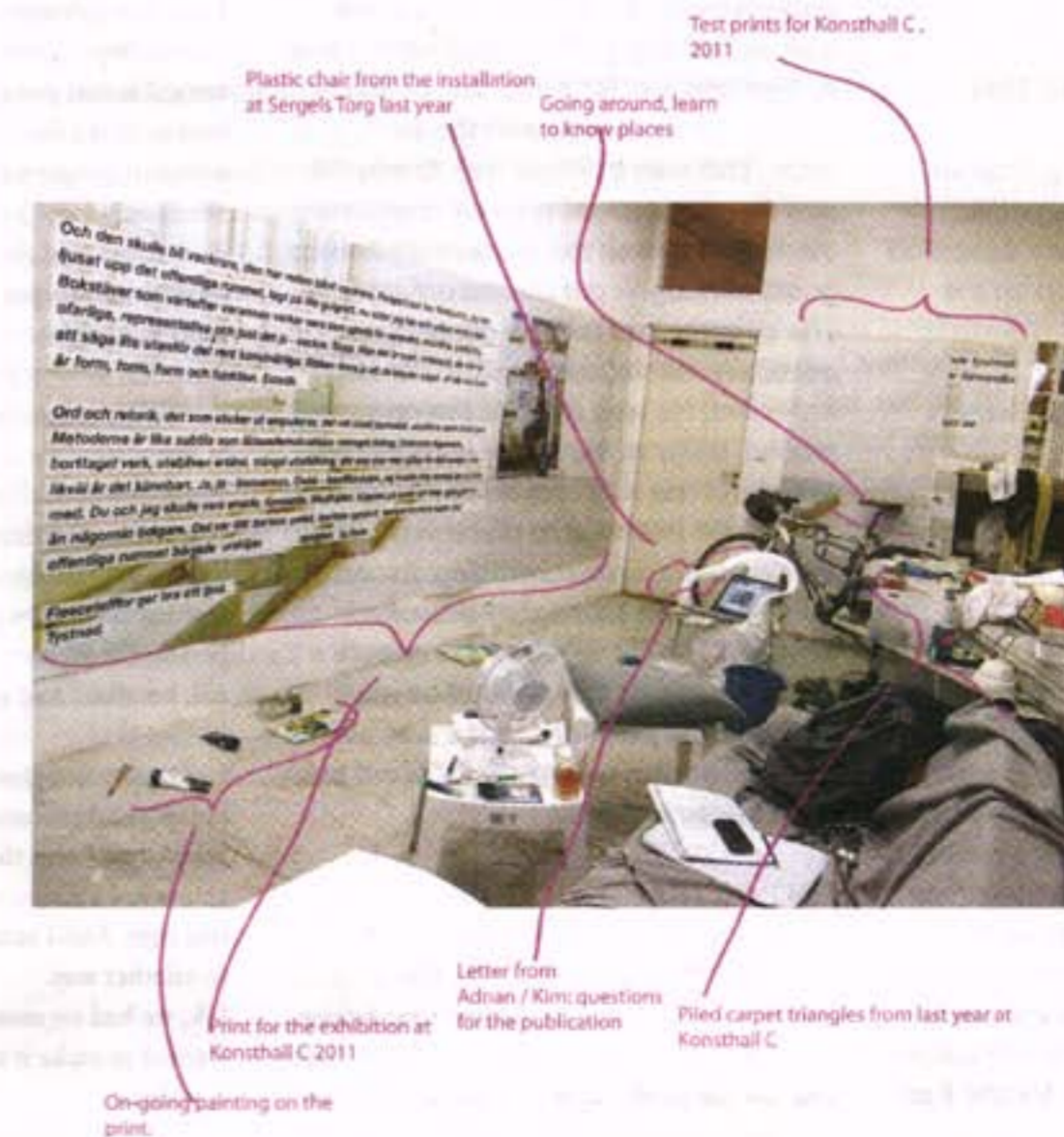
Artist 1: But where was it screened? Was it only in Stockholm?

The Producer: It was screened for one week at a cinema in Stockholm.

Director: But I think that was the first cut, and it was too long.

Curator 1: What would happen if you dubbed the film in Swedish?

Everyday Life / Lisa Torell / Studio
10/8 2011 21:55



experiences from' now and then' could be aired.

Director: It's more about feelings than directing.

Curator 2: What triggered you to make the scene with the dressed-up and masked people dancing in the subway station?

Director: You know, sometimes you have so many problems and you are so tired that you don't know what to do, and suddenly you have an idea. We had permission to film in the subway at four o'clock in the morning. I had no idea what to do there. I was so tired. I just knew that we had to be there and do something. But when we got there I just got this very simple idea. The idea was that they are so lost in this country, that there is no hope for them and this was a cheap and symbolic way to show it. I think this scene is much better than many of the scenes we did that were well prepared.

Curator 2 (to the Producer): Gudrun, how was it to work on this production? You mentioned before that it was quite chaotic.

Producer: It was very non-Swedish. The working language was Turkish, since most of the participants were Turkish, and then also some English. I had the role of organizing eve-

rything locally in Stockholm. We spent almost all the time together.

Curator 2: Was it problematic to get access to all these public spaces? You filmed in the subway, on the square etc. I guess it would be much harder to get permission to the film in the subway today.

Producer: The most problematic thing was Sergel's Square.

Audience: It is interesting because Sergel's Square is often used for political demonstrations and other manifestations. Being there and seeing the film and this scenario taking place in a space that is so politically loaded, is very strong.


Producer: Yes, and I think that's why people were very supportive.

Director: When I saw the square it was so perfect. It was like a studio for this movie. You JUST put the bus there.



Photos by Aykan Safoglu, 27-28 May 2010

Lisa Torell's project is supported by:

 THE SWEDISH ARTS GRANTS COMMITTEE