
This Place is Every Place
By Ane Hjort Guttu
As part of The New Model
22.10 2014—11.1 2015



This Place is Every Place is a new film by Ane Hjort Guttu consisting of a dialogue between two women in the suburb of Tensta in Stockholm. The Arab spring is a backdrop for their conversation, and the film puts forward a connection between the global protest movements of the past three years and the riots in the Swedish suburbs. **This Place is Every Place** is a seductive, beautifully shot study of the relationship between political and personal crises, pointing to a widespread loss of faith in alternative social organization. The Oslo-based artist Ane Hjort Guttu works poetically with fundamental existential and political conditions, often in the form of video and installation. The project is a part of **The New Model**.

Ane Hjort Guttu, b. 1971, is an artist, filmmaker, and writer based in Oslo. Over the last several years, she has been working with issues of power and freedom in the Scandinavian post-welfare state through video works, picture collections, sculpture, and photography. Guttu also writes analytical as well as poetic texts, and several of her projects discuss historical art and architecture. Her most recent projects and exhibitions include: *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 19th Biennale of Sydney, 2014; *In These Great Times*, Kunstneres Hus, Oslo; *Bergen Assembly*, Bergen, 2013; *Learning for Life*, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter 2012–2013; *The Rich Should be Richer*, Kunsthall Oslo, 2012. Her forthcoming projects include: *Urbanisme Unitaire*, Le Quartier, Centre d'Art Contemporain de Quimper, 2014; *Play Time*, Les Ateliers de Rennes, France, 2014; *The Shadow of War*, Kunstneres Hus, Oslo; *Festival Exhibition*, Bergen Kunsthall 2015.

The work is produced with the support of Norsk Filminstitutt, Tensta konsthall, Fritt Ord, Bildende Kunstneres Vederlagsfond, Akershus kunstsenter, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, and Nordic Culture Point. The film will be shown for school classes at Tensta Gymnasium, Tensta's senior high school.

This Place is Every Place (2014)
17 min
Ane Hjort Guttu (script, direction, and production)
Cecilie Semec (photography)
Actors: Damla Kilickiran and
Gülay Kilickiran

Tuesdays and thursdays, 14:00
Introduction This Place is Every Place

Wednesday 22.10, 18:30
The New Model: A conversation
between Gunilla Lundahl, Ane Hjort
Guttu, and Dave Hullfish Bailey

Ane Hjort Guttu's film **This Place is Every Place** and Dave Hullfish Bailey's installation **School Section** have both been developed within the investigative project **The New Model**.

The project was initiated in the fall of 2011 and uses Palle Nielsen and others' legendary work **The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society (1968)** as its point of departure and historical reference. The Model was exhibited at Moderna Museet in the form of an enormous playground for children that included elements of urban activism. It questioned the possibility and form of the qualitative society. The work was made in a political time very different from ours, a time with a preserved confidence in a utopian future. Today the situation is more ambivalent. But the question of how to create a qualitative society lingers. How can art engage with these kinds of issues today?

The cultural journalist and writer Gunilla Lundahl, who was in charge of the exhibition **The Model** in 1968, is invited to moderate the conversation. Palle Nielsen's installation was part of **Aktion Samtal**, a series of urban interventions that took place in Stockholm at the same time. Lundahl, who has been following the research project **The New Model** from its inception in 2011, thus holds a unique double perspective. She will join Dave Hullfish Bailey and Ane Hjort Guttu in a conversation on the creation processes of the two exhibitions, their relation to the utopian '60s, and thoughts on new models that art can propose today.

The New Model was initiated by Lars Bang Larsen and Maria Lind, who invited the artists Magnus Bærtås, Ane Hjort Guttu, Dave Hullfish Bailey, and Hito Steyerl to make new works. The project has resulted in a series of

seminars and workshops (2011–2012), the group exhibition **The Society Without Qualities (2013)**, and Magnus Bærtås's work **The Miracle in Tensta (Theoria) (2014)**.

Onsdag 17.12, 18:30
Book release for Phantom of Liberty: Contemporary Art and the Pedagogical Paradox. With Tone Hansen, director of Henie Onstad Art Center in Oslo and artists Ane Hjort Guttu.

How does contemporary art engage with issues like childhood, play, and pedagogy? And how is the act of learning affected by today's obsession with efficiency within governmental schooling and education? In an era increasingly characterized by competition and instrumentalisation, the reformed pedagogical concept "free play" is lost. The new book **Phantom of Liberty: Contemporary Art and the Pedagogical Paradox** addresses childhood and the policy of education during the 1900s in relation to the current debate. With contributions by Allan Sekula, Magnus Marsdal, Dave Hullfish Bailey, Carsten René Jørgensen, Ane Hjort Guttu, Marit Paasche, Carl Hegemann, Nils Christie, Adelita Husni Bey, Emanuel Almborg, Lars Bang Larsen, and Sharon Lockhart. The anthology is edited by curator and art critic Lars Bang Larsen and Tone Hansen, director of Henie Onstad Art Centre in Oslo.

2015 Tensta konsthall Writing Prize. For the second year in a row, Tensta konsthall is presenting a writing prize for young people from Tensta. This year's competition is related to the theme in Ane Hjort Guttu's film **This Place Is Every Place**: how to create a qualitative society through specific sites of meaning and poetry. The prize aims to encourage creative writing and to contribute new stories from the area to the area itself. The jury is composed of the August Prize winner Lena Andersson, poet Meron Mangasha, publisher Björn Linnell, journalist Rouzbeh Djalaie, Tal Lewinsky from Tensta Library, and Emily Fahlén from

Tensta konsthall. For contributions or more info, contact emily@tenstakonsthall.se.

In collaboration with ABF.

A conversation between Ane Hjort Guttu and Maria Lind

Maria Lind

What distinguishes the film **This Place is Every Place** from your other recent film works?

Ane Hjort Guttu

This Place is Every Place is the first film I have scripted and directed as a traditional short film, including actors who perform a screenplay. My earlier films have had a more direct and documentary style. It's a film about political and religious faith, which is also new to me.

ML

What is the plot in **This Place is Every Place**?

AHG

The protagonists are two young women of about twenty-five and twenty: a big sister and a little sister. It's not explicitly said in the film that they are sisters, but they are half sisters in reality and I think this comes through in the film. In the film they were born and raised in Tensta, and talk about their sense of belonging to that particular place. We understand that they articulate two different political positions: while the little sister claims that everything should change, the bigger sister loves the world as it is; or as she says, "Everything should be as it is, it should only be a little— brighter."

ML

The film begins with a quote by the German critic Walter Benjamin that echoes the big sister's stance.

AHG

Yes, it's a quote by Benjamin from 1932, when he was in Ibiza. He speaks of an old Jewish myth about "the world to come"; where everything is almost exactly the same as in this world, only "a little different." Hasidic Judaism has as a central dogma: the immanent divine presence in everything. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben elaborates on this in his book **The**

Coming Community, particularly on what this difference is in the world to come. As he sees it, it's not that something is a little bit altered or changed, but rather, that everything has a holiness to it, a halo. For Agamben, this is the halo of potentiality, or possibility: that the world we dream of is a world where things are possible.

ML

One thing that stands out for me in **This Place is Every Place** is how it is filmed. There is an emphasis on each scene and each frame which makes it very pictorial and almost epic, with the location and its landscape where the protagonists move around: Tensta and the nearby Järvafältet. There are scenes where you can see the residential area at a distance. Can you speak about some of your formal considerations?

AHG

I wanted it to be beautiful in a cinematic sense. I think Tensta is a beautiful place; I always thought so from my first visit. It's planned with traffic separation, which makes it quiet. There is also a particular light in Tensta. I don't know exactly what it is. Maybe it's because it is open, with space between the buildings. So I wanted it to be a beautiful film about a beautiful place, and I didn't want to go into the whole problematization of Tensta and other suburbs within the Million Program in Sweden.

ML

How did you reach the conclusion that doing this for you meant that it had to be fictional?

AHG

I was actually thinking of the project **The Model** at Moderna Museet in 1968, and the idea of faith in the future. In 1968, they had this faith, and you could talk about and imagine a "qualitative society." I have the feeling that this is no longer possible, at least not for me. The starting point was to walk around in Tensta and think about what such a qualitative society could look like. It

is a very natural starting point to look at your own surroundings and see if that could be the qualitative society, but then it would somehow have to be fictional because we know that Tensta is not really a "qualitative society" today.

The two young women remind me of the characters in **Waiting for Godot**, Samuel Beckett's play. They just walk around in the neighborhood, without a history or a purpose. We don't know where they come from or where they will go—they are just expressing philosophical thoughts in this environment.

ML

So they are contemporary versions of Vladimir and Estragon, but they're women and much younger. How did you decide to work with these two actors?

AHG

We were looking for young women of Middle Eastern origin because I also had the idea that I wanted to say something about lost faith after the Arab spring. We did a traditional audition, and we were also street casting in Tensta and other places in Stockholm to ask people if they wanted to join in. These two young women, Damla and Gülay Kilickiran, popped in—they were the first to come to the audition. They happen to be sisters, and both are very talented, I think.

ML

I would like to return to Tensta and your observation that Tensta is beautiful. What is it more specifically that is beautiful in Tensta for you?

AHG

Places that consist of a lot of people from different places are beautiful to me: more beautiful than old and wealthy areas like Östermalm or the inner city in general. I've always been interested in suburbs. I worked in those contexts before as well, and I think my interest has to do with how you feel when you are there. These places are not finished; there are still things to do there. And to me Tensta konsthall is a very particular and hopeful place, too.

ML

Do you have any personal experience from areas like Tensta from suburbs of Oslo for example?

AHG

I live in a suburb myself, from the '50s. It has some of this utopian character too, at least a kind of hope that was there when it was built. I have made numerous works from such places, particularly photographic projects.

ML

Can you describe some of these works?

AHG

For example one of the first substantial works I did after graduating: **Modernistic Journey** from 2002. It is a photo series in which I try to apply the eye of a nature photographer onto the satellite towns. A high rise can become a mountain if you just look at it and photograph it in a particular way. The roads can become rivers. This is a rather romantic idea, which is still alive for me.

ML

The new work, **This Place is Every Place**, is part of the project **The New Model**, referring to Palle Nilsen and Gunilla Lundahl's visionary project **The Model** from 1968 at the Moderna Museet. Can you talk a bit more about your own take on the original project?

AHG

The Model was a fantastic project. I exhibited documentation from it myself in an exhibition in 2012, which was called **Learning for Life**. **The Model** seems to be typical for that time: full of hope and energy as well as innocence. It seemed easy to ask then-director Pontus Hultén to transform the museum into an adventure playground, and yes, they got the permission and built it over a few weeks in the summer. Then there is the idea that children are able to tell us or show us another world in a very concrete way, which is also ambiguous because I can imagine there were a lot of people screaming and fighting in the space, running around in chaos.

ML

You are not working with children in this particular film. But you have indeed made works with children, quite directly. Can you say something about that in relation to **The Model**—your approach in for example your 2007 work **How to Become a Non-Artist**?

AHG

Maybe I use children in the same way as Palle Nielsen used them, as symbols for a more direct or pure relationship to the world. I believe that children can show adults how the world really is. **How to Become a Non-Artist** is about learning to understand the world. In 2007 my eldest son was four years old—a very particular age when you work with the passage from understanding the world to mastering it. He was arranging small things around our house—everyday objects—and organizing them in particular ways that seemed to be based on aesthetic considerations. I started to photograph these interventions and made a slide show where I show his “works” and comment on them in a voiceover. The comments are based on aesthetic judgment, and psychological judgment as well, because I try to understand how he thinks. Eventually, he starts photographing instead of making works, because he sees that I do it. So we both end by photographing things which are less and less processed, or designed. In the end we just look at the world: we enter a zone where everything is art and non-art at the same time. That is very similar to how Palle Nielsen described his project: “It is only an exhibition for those who don't play.” The adults had to stand outside the playground and look at how the children use the world. I think there is a lot to learn from that.

Maria Lind is the director of Tensta konsthall.

Initiated in 2011 at Tensta konsthall, over a period of two years **The New Model** investigated the heritage of **The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society** through a number of projects, seminars, workshops, and exhibitions.

Participants included Lars Bang Larsen, Magnus Bærtås, Ane Hjort Guttu, Dave Hullfish Bailey, and Hito Steyerl.

Past

8.10 2011 Presentations by Lars Bang Larsen, Magnus Bærtås, Dave Hullfish Bailey and Hito Steyerl. At Blå Huset in Tensta.

By transforming Moderna Museet into an adventure playground, Nielsen wanted to give children a chance to “be themselves” and express their own reality. The children would be able to play in an environment that was free and separate from the adult world in general and from the urban milieu in particular, and that was also adapted to their own energetic activities.

In contrast, nowadays, more or less every aspect of our lives is capitalized and culture is dominated by entertainment. Our lives in 2010s do not share much in common with the social and cultural upheavals of 1968. Today, not even play is an unspoiled, intact freedom; it is in part a function of the creative industries. How can we re-articulate and renew the questions Nielsen posed with his Model? How can we create a qualitative society out of a totally other reality?

11.3 2012 The Model and the City: A Seminar on Palle Nielsen’s project The Model (Moderna Museet, 1968) and Tensta. With Palle Nielsen, Gunilla Lundahl, Erik Stenberg.

In 1968, the artist and architect Palle Nielsen initiated **The Model: A Model for a Qualitative Society**, a children’s playground that was installed at the Moderna Museet. The event was part of **Aktion Samtal (Action Talk)**, a series of urban procedures that took place in Stockholm at the same time. Although the model was a spectacular manifestation at one of Sweden’s most prestigious museums, it has taken a long time for the project to find its way into the history books. The reason for this has undoubtedly been the project’s dual nature as a mixture of artistic research and activism, and the manifestations of collective authorship that built on Palle Nielsen’s activist network.

With some of the key players from the *The Model and Action Talk*, the seminar at Tensta konsthall explored the project from an art and cultural historical perspective as it was understood then, as well as its historical context. An important aspect is the project's relationship to postwar urban development, especially the new suburb's emergence. In addition, the seminar was about how contemporary experience and theory can formulate historical events that are still important and relevant for us today.

14.2–26.5 2013 The exhibition *The Society Without Qualities* with works by Søren Andreasen, Archi Zoom, Thomas Bayrle, Samuel R. Delany, Ane Hjort Guttu, Dave Hullfish Bailey, Jakob Jakobsen and Anders Remmer, Charlotte and Sture Johannesson, Jakob Kolding, Learning Site, Sharon Lockhart, Joanna Lombard, Palle Nielsen, and Xabier Salaberria. Curated by Lars Bang Larsen.

11.6–28.9 2014 The film *The Miracle in Tensta (Theoria)* by Magnus Bærtås is a wayward depiction of how the Virgin Mary appeared in Tensta in the summer of 2012, based on testimonies on the internet. With the help of Tensta residents, the testimonies have been visualized and shot in the same room in the gallery where the film will be shown.

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