

6 May–27 August 2017



starting
from the
self

Lilian Domec – Hackney Flashers
Helga Henschen – Lubaina Himid
Pia Sandström – Billie Zangewa

marabouparken

STARTING FROM THE SELF

Bettina Pehrsson and Jenny Richards

STARTING FROM THE SELF is a group exhibition exploring practices that begin from personal experiences and histories to understand how society is structured and organises us. The exhibition is particularly concerned with how gender, race and class play into questions of private and public boundaries and the different ways people have transgressed and renegotiated these borders and the categorisation of space.

The exhibition includes work by local artist Helga Henschen, a resident of Sundbyberg who persistently and playfully inserted her words and work into the public sphere. Henschen is known for reformulating advertising space to publicly communicate her criticisms of society, and for building an art practice that could be tied to public political work through the Social Democratic Party, where she fought for the rights of political prisoners and children. Stockholm based artist Pia Sandström develops a new commission in the gallery, that explores the urban environment as seen through the eyes and experiences of the other female artists in the exhibition. Pia's work forms a framework to navigate the works of Helga Henschen, Lilian Domec, Hackney Flashers, Lubaina Himid, and Billie Zangewa.

Notions of public and private space and the codes with which we behave in these spheres becomes sometimes painfully evident when entering an art space. Unwritten rules such as quietness, no running, or even where you are allowed to enter the gallery can produce anxiety. At Marabouparken Konsthall, Pia Sandström tries to play with, and breakdown those regulations. Another entrance-way stands ajar, offering a backdoor for the audience to find their way into the space, whilst a series of pillars replicating the original architecture, reshape the main gallery. With these pillars Pia provides a support structure for displaying Helga Henschen's posters, simulating the cultural advertisements you would see outside the gallery strapped around lampposts. Other painted arrows and floor markings suggest connection and navigation for the audience between the other works.

For example, Henschen and Domec's work and life shares many similarities. Both were active in the same period and used their work to stimulate political discussion and debate through drawing and commentary in the public sphere. They both were part of the women's movement and spurred on the implementation of gender equality reforms in the 1970s. Women's rights are discussed in the slideshow by Hackney Flashers, whose campaign around childcare and the isolation of women at home was happening simultaneously in the UK. Questions around how we might understand motherhood and female identity today can also be found in the work of Billie Zangewa and her depiction of the contemporary parent, single and empowered in her home.

But what happens when we move from the home into the public space? What controls and boundaries are in place there? Lubaina Himid's piece *What are monuments for: Paris / London Guidebooks* considers what we see when we encounter a city – what people and names can be seen on city streets or historicised in monuments? And what invisible regulations do these entrench in the narrative of who makes a city and who a city is for? Her piece *Jelly Mould Pavillions* offers us an

alternative sculptural walk through the Konsthall. There you can see a proposal for other monuments for the city of Liverpool, that we might see if it were indeed a place that recognised and represented the contribution of its communities to the place it is today.

Each of these distinct works raise discussions on separation and boundaries based on gender, race and class, which feel ever more relevant to raise today. These critiques have developed from a willingness of the contributors to start from the self, to build upon personal experiences and histories in order to understand how



Helga Henschen,
from the book *Helgas*
flygblad, 1982
© Helga Henschen
sterbhus

LILIAN DOMEK

society segregates us. Yet these works also offer hope, proposals, a way forward in order to provoke debate, change and transgress these preset divides. The city can be seen as a place where these invisible boundaries are intensified yet they are also sites of continuous change and activity, activity that disregards these unwritten rules, and persistently erodes the invisible codes of conduct. As Lilian Domek once wrote in a postcard to her friend and collaborator, 'art must demonstrate, that everything is possible if you let go of habitual thought patterns'.

In connection to the exhibition we open up the Konsthall and present *Spring Clean* – a weekend of events and performances investigating the different ways society structures us to perform in different spaces, from public to private, from home to work. For more information and to find out about our full public programme please visit www.marabouparken.se.

Starting from the Self is the third exhibition within *Acts of Self Ruin* and connects to practices which challenge and question the normalised boundaries between self and society, the personal and political. Practices that can be described as putting themselves risk or ruin in questioning the control (and choreography) of different bodies and actions within public space.

Translation: Maja Thrane

THANK YOU

Afronova
Analogue Optics
Mat Birchall
The Bishopsgate Institute
Harry David Collection
Stefan Dickers

Sindika Dokolo Foundation
Catherine Goffeau
Althea Greenan
Lilian Larsell
Anna Lindblad
Gunilla Lundahl

Laila Nygren
Tris Vonna-Michell
Michael-Ann Mullen
Emily Tsingou
Ebba Ullmann

Throughout her life Lilian Domek was an astute observer of the world. With a subtle and subversive humour she depicted the many absurdities of social life, presenting them as drawings and illustrations in newspapers, magazines or as ingenious and intelligent comments to bureaucratic texts.

Already in the 1940s, Domek received commissions as a cartoonist and illustrator, and this is how she earned her livelihood throughout her life. Like Helga Henschen, Lilian Domek was one of the profession's female pioneers. With her drawings she applied to and was accepted at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, where she studied from 1943 to 1948.

In the 1960s, Lilian began to produce experimental Super 8 films with improvised content, artists as actors, her own stage designs and costumes and eventually introducing moving animated sequences. When the Filmverkstan [The Film Workshop] opened in Stockholm in 1973 as a pilot scheme for non-established filmmakers and artists, Lilian Domek was a key artist and user of the space which became a base for a number of film

productions until operations ceased in 2001. Her films are funny, playful and dramatic, often with a political undertone. A recurring feature in Lilian Domek's production is a peaceful protest against the state of things in which she offers another perspective to expose underlying and oppressive structures.

From the intimate space of her living room she would draw, paint and write using her own personal experiences as a starting point for criticising Swedish society. From an early age she grew up without parents and learnt quickly the harsh reality of who in fact the Swedish society was prepared to look after and support. It is from this perspective she was able to understand the invisible structures that shape how we relate to one another and live by.



Lilian Domek.
Courtesy of Ebba
Ullman and Anna
Lindblad



Lilian Domec.
 Courtesy of Ebba
 Ullman and Anna
 Lindblad.
 4

The exhibition includes one of Lilian Domec's first animated films, *Höghuset* [The High Rise] from 1976, together with a series of drawings which also deals with the pent-up power of dreams of freedom and community that a high-rise building can accommodate. The film, *Höghuset* was made in collaboration with Annty Landherr and Olle Hedman. All the tenants within the high rise, dream of another life and other circumstances. In the film, Annty and Lilian speak with each about the images and events Lilian draws. We see a high-rise building in which the occupants all harbour dreams of a different life, one not isolated and individualised as constrained by the high rise architecture. The last figure we see is an old lady who kicks down a fence keeping some elephants captive. Annty timidly asks, "Is that her anger surfacing?" "Of course she's angry," Lilian replies, adding "I hope so, anyway."

Translation: Karen Diamond and Hans Olsson



Lilian Domec.
 Courtesy of Ebba
 Ullman and Anna
 Lindblad

■ Lilian Domec, born in 1922 in Stockholm, was an artist, filmmaker and illustrator. She attended The Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm, 1943–48. For many years she worked as an illustrator for the Swedish newspaper Aftonbladet. She rarely participated in exhibitions, but was for many years involved in Filmverkstan where she produced most of her films. In 2015 she started the art project *Bolaget* together with her home-help Thomas Gilek. Lilian Domec died in Stockholm in 2017. ■

HACKNEY FLASHERS



We'll bring you back to the land of the living.

The kids haven't stopped for a minute. You've been on the go all day. And one thing is for certain, your husband isn't going to be greeted with that bright, lively "wonderful to have you home" routine. But cheer up. A deep, warm Radox Herbal Bath could make you a positive joy to come home to.

MORE CONCENTRATED—BETTER VALUE

Now Radox Herbal Bath is even richer and more concentrated. So you'll get more baths for your money.

Just relax and let yourself go. While you're lying there enjoying the fragrance of herbal extracts, warm, lanolised Radox water will be floating away your tiredness and tensions.

You'll come out feeling so much brighter you won't know yourself. Hopefully, your husband will.

New Radox Herbal Bath. Puts new life into you.

Hackney Flashers, *Domestic Labour and Visual Representation*, slide pack 1980



Who's holding more than the baby?

Being a mother and a housewife not only means having kids and looking after them, so that one day they can be workers. It also means keeping men clean and fed and emotionally supported - in other words keeping them in working order, fit for the factory or the office or the dole queue. This maintenance work is unpaid and undervalued. If all women went on strike, our society would grind to a halt.

Hackney Flashers, *Domestic Labour and Visual Representation*, slide pack, 1980

The Hackney Flashers collective was set up in 1974 and created influential agitprop material, including posters, slides, photographs and collages in the 1970s and 1980s. The group described themselves as broadly socialist-feminist and most of them engaged in the creative media as photographers, cartoonists and writers. The Flashers productions were always published as the work of a collective. Individuals were not named; specific images or writing was never credited. This was a conscious, political decision.

In *Starting from the Self* we present slides from their 1978 exhibition *Who's Holding the Baby?* These images were included in a slide pack that was produced as a teaching aid. It contained 24 slides and a booklet with questions and discussion points. It aimed to stimulate an examination of the way women are represented in contemporary society and the absence of affordable childcare provision.

Through the juxtaposition of glossy advertising imagery and documentary photography the images invite a critical appraisal of the representation of women in contemporary advertising and editorial imagery. Questions are raised about the place of women in society and the gap between how childcare is represented and how caring is done. The set of slides aimed to stimulate a reconsideration of women's traditional roles as mother, housewife, and sexual object and invite alternative readings of the images of women that saturate contemporary society. Concrete suggestions for change such as collective childcare are put forward, whilst motherhood is revealed to cover a vast array of different experiences both positive and negative.



HELGA HENSCHEN

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of a versatile and dedicated artist and writer who persistently and playfully placed her words and works in the public domain. In the midst of quotidian Swedish life, Helga Henschen fought American imperialism at the dinner table and discussed peace and environmental issues in the bedroom. Helga did not allow her work to be confined

to one audience or sphere but pushed it to be encountered in all aspects of everyday life. She was an artist who started from herself, in order to criticise and struggle with the society around her. To reflect the transgression her work had across boundaries of public and private, the exhibition features a range of different posters, flyers, drawings and poems. Each piece combines both her social critique as well as how she connected her personal political engagement to wider politics and her work in the Peace Movement, Amnesty International, the Women's Movement, Opposition to the United States Involvement in the Vietnam War, Animal Rights Sweden and Children's Rights in Society.



In 1940–45, Henschen studied at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm after which she made

a living as an illustrator for newspapers, books, journals and other publications. In the 1960s and 1970s, she involved herself in politics and joined the Kulturarbetarnas Socialdemokratiska Förening, KSF [The Cultural Workers' Social Democratic Association] where she found an outlet for her drawings and annotations. 1973 saw the publication of her book *Min gröna dröm är röd* [My Green Dream is Red] with the subtitle *En bok från motståndsrörelsen* [A Book from the Protest Movement], which was included in the Swedish Social Democratic Party's election campaign that year. In the book, Helga introduces her alter ego *Rebella*, the incorruptible child with lank hair and a giant cap personifying Helga's desire for resistance and encouragement.

Quotes included in these slides indicate that when one starts from oneself you can start to see how the whole society is structured. In the case of women, structures that seek to maintain gendered boundaries between public and private space ensure that women keep *holding the baby*, out of the public space, at home and alone. Today many of these questions are being raised again. Documents in the exhibition demonstrate that these issues were as relevant in Sweden as they were in the UK in the 1970s and continue to be relevant today.

What kind of tools do the Hackney Flashers offer to women today as they continue to struggle for equality?

Translation: Maja Thrane

Hackney Flashers,
Domestic Labour and Visual Representation,
slide pack, 1980

Helga Henschen,
from the book *Helgas flygblad*, 1982
© Helga Henschen
sterbhus



Min gröna dröm är röd [My Green Dream is Red]. En bok från Motståndsrörelsen [A Book from the Protest Movement], 1973.
© Helga Henschen
sterbhus

Helga Henschen's most comprehensive work, which in many ways summarises her entire artistic credo, is the public art commission for the underground station in the Stockholm suburb of Tensta, inaugurated in 1975 and dedicated to the area's polyglot and diverse population. Stylistically, it encompasses a multitude of artistic expressions. A mammoth, seen from the side, painted on the craggy rock walls represents a nod to ancient cave paintings, and quotations about peace, solidarity and our mutual responsibility for each other is a wink to graffiti and the public domain, that is the street.

Part of the commission comprised spray-painted signs with words such as broderskap, systerskap, syskonskap and solidaritet [brotherhood, sisterhood, siblinghood and solidarity] in 19 languages. They are intended to serve as a type of anti-advertising to prevent commercial publicity. On the walls outside the underground station's air raid shelter, there is a space for children's drawings and poems, allowing children growing up in Tensta to enter into a dialogue with Helga Henschen's images and words in a constantly changing exhibition.

Throughout her life Helga Henschen fought for her ideals and beliefs. In 1988 she was commissioned to design the cover of the book *Bekänna färg* [Show One's True Colours] published by the Kommissionen mot rasism och främlingsfientlighet [The Commission against Racism and Xenophobia]. The book addresses issues pertaining to refugee policies, racism and xenophobia and also deals with opportunities and optimism, issues that once again are growing in Sweden. And in her characteristic handwriting, Helga Henschen begins with perhaps the most fundamental questions, to ask ourselves: "Do you see all human beings as equal or not?!"

Translation: Karen Diamond and Hans Olsson

■ Helga Henschen, born 1917 in Stockholm, was a writer, poet, artist and illustrator. She studied painting for Maj Bring and Otte Sköld in the 1930s and attended the Royal Art Academy in Stockholm 1940–45. She published 12 books during her lifetime and participated in several solo and group exhibitions such as *Färg och Form* (1960), Liljewalchs Konsthall (1972), Kulturhuset (1976) and *Doktor Glas* (1983). Among her public works are Tensta underground station (1975) and the fountain Dafne in Södertälje (1978). In 1976 Helga Henschen moved to Duvbo in Sundbyberg where she lived and worked until her death in 2002. ■



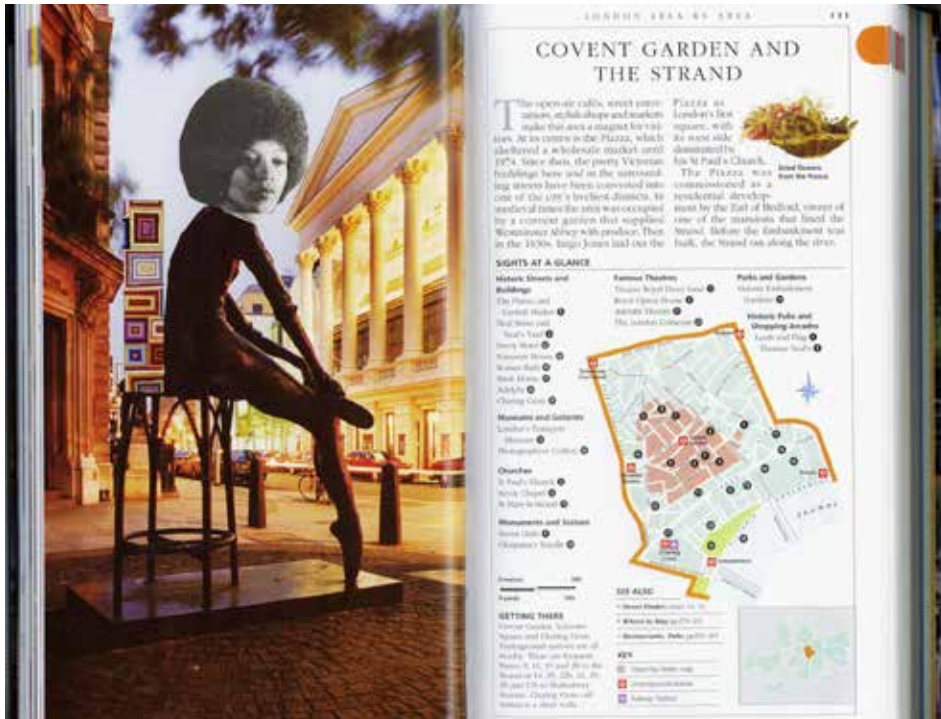
LUBAINA HIMID

Lubaina Himid's work investigates the politics of representation, concerned with making visible the histories of black artists in the UK and from a broader perspective, highlighting the lives of those marginalised from cultural and historical narratives. Her inherently political practice challenges what bodies we are often confronted by in cultural material, the media, the street, and what voices we hear in the recollection of political events. Himid's work reveals the structural racist society we continue to live in and the urgent critique our homes, towns and cities need today.

For *Starting from the Self* Himid shows two works which deal in different ways with how we engage with public space. *Jelly Mould Pavilions for Liverpool* is a work that celebrates the contribution made by people of the black diaspora to the city of Liverpool. Liverpool is located in the North of England and lies upon the Mersey estuary. The buildings there show a historic wealth, a wealth generated through its trading position and its participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade. Since that time Liverpool has prided itself as a diverse city, yet today, the city, sadly like many here in Sweden is wrought with prejudice and discrimination. These inequalities are replicated in the physical make-up of Liverpool with James Clarke distinguished for being the only black individual in Liverpool to have a street named after them.

Jelly Mould Pavilions offers a different picture of the public sphere, through a proposal for 39 public pavilions that would commemorate the contribution made by people of the black diaspora. The work asks us about what is decided to be commemorated in the public space and in extension what kind of city do we aspire to inhabit? Jelly mould's are an object of the British home, used to set jelly for the child's birthday or street party. Here, the domestic object transforms, placed one after the other alongside figurines and model trees to become an alternative sculpture walk through Marabouparken Konsthall.

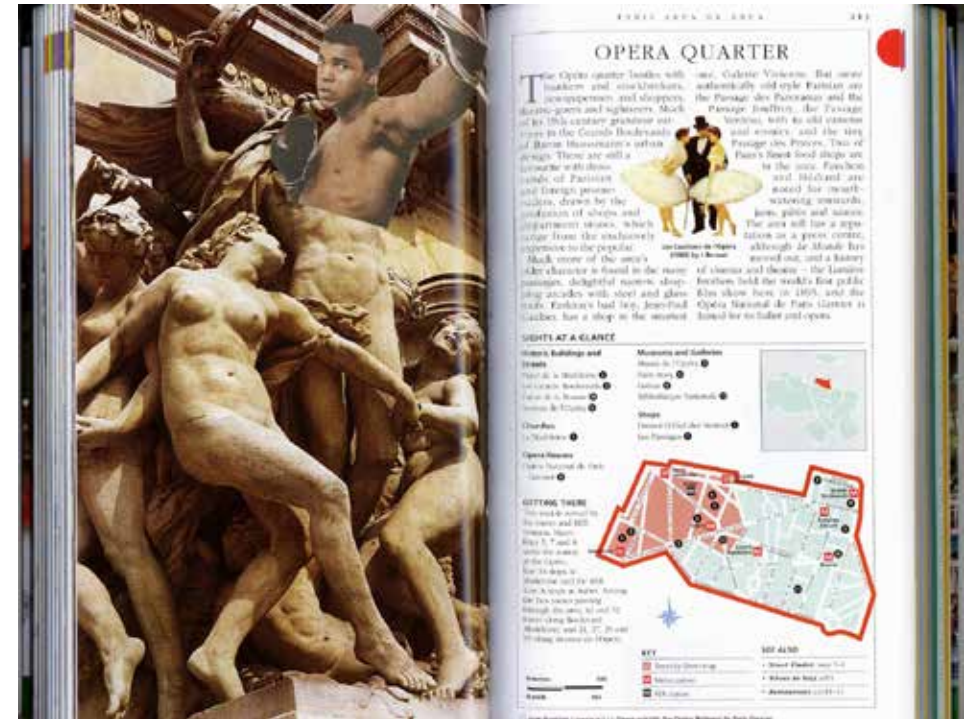
Himid's second work, *What are monuments for: Paris / London Guidebooks* builds on questions of the city monument through a slide show and voice over. The piece is developed from a performance



lecture Himid presented in *TCAAR 2009 Bremen: "Black Knowledges – Black Struggles – Civil Rights: Transnational Perspectives"* at the University of Bremen, Germany, 2009, and retells of two unique city guide books Himid found on Paris and London which commemorated the great contribution of the black diaspora to these capitals. In Paris the Pompidou Centre is described as known for its exhibitions dedicated to black modernist masters and contemporary black artists whilst in London a tribute to novelist Zadie Smith is said to be erected in front of The Royal Court of Justice, on the Strand and near Fleet Street.

The city guide book, can be said to be designed for the tourist, the figure who can wonder the street; the contemporary of the Parisian born flâneur who is free to pass time soaking up the experiences of the urban. The histories and voices *What are monuments for: Paris / London Guidebooks* references, reminds us of the often hidden structures that operate and control these cities; structures that demarcate who is allowed to go where and when, and indeed who is able to flâneur

Lubaina Himid,
What are monuments for: Paris / London Guidebooks, 2009

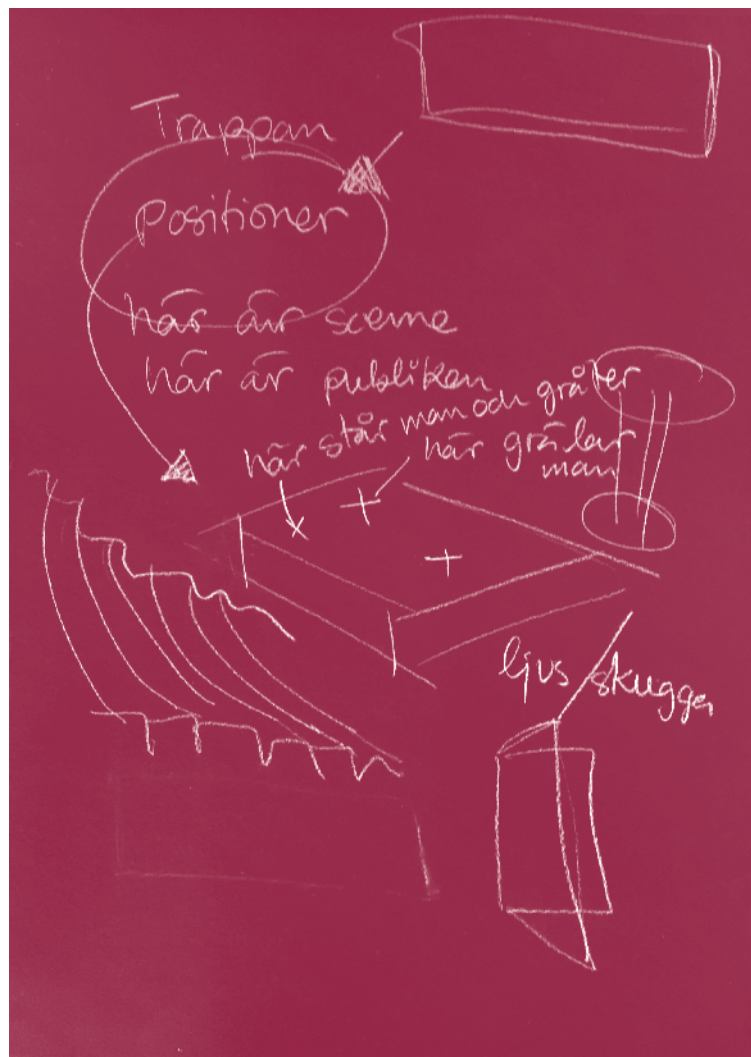
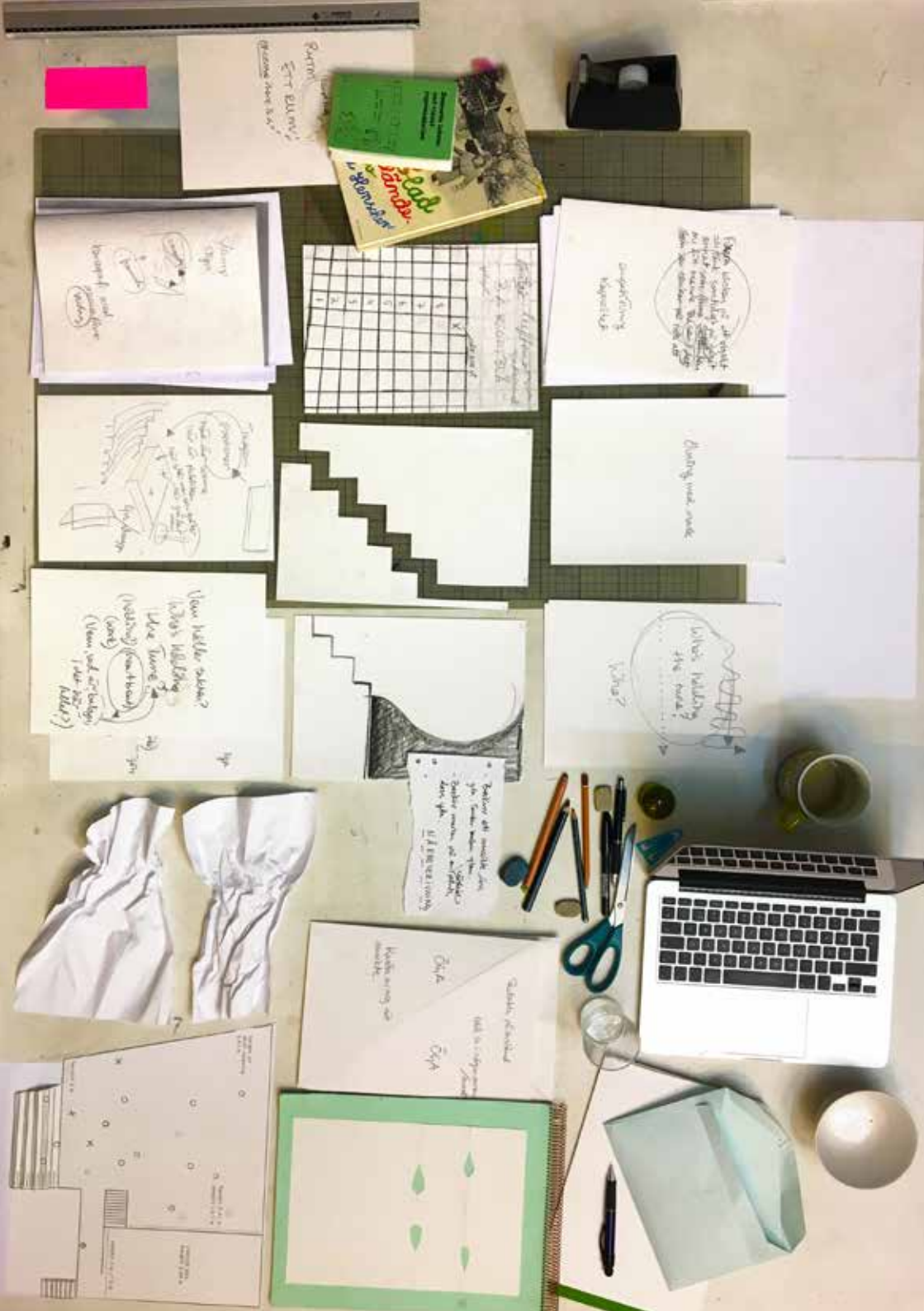


Lubaina Himid,
What are monuments for: Paris / London Guidebooks, 2009

across the city streets at ease at all. For who is a monument for, and who is this tourist that the city guidebook speaks to? But beyond this, Himid's work pushes us to question who are those who made and continue to make our cities day after day, and where are the public monuments and the guide books highlighting their contribution?

Translation: Karen Diamond and Hans Olsson

■ Lubaina Himid is Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire. During the past 40 years she has exhibited widely, both in Britain and Internationally, with solo shows that include Tate St Ives, Chisenhale London, and Modern Art Oxford. Lubaina represented Britain at the 5th Havana Biennale and has shown work at the Studio Museum in New York, Track 17 in Los Angeles, the Fine Art Academy in Vienna and the Grazer Kunstverein. She is currently part of the touring exhibition *The Place is Here*. ■



Pia Sandström, *Who's Holding the Tune*, 2017, studio images

WHO'S HOLDING THE TUNE?

Pia Sandström's works are based on her interest in social relations and how people are influenced by the world around them. She expresses this in different media, including text, sound and spatial installations, and in examinations of the relationship between a physical location and a more abstract, linguistic and sensual space. Sometimes, a work is created in dialogue with another artist, as in *Siri, the Root and the Observed Humidity of the Air*, a permanent installation Pia Sandström made for the school Gullingskolan in Tensta, Stockholm which responded to Siri Derkert's last public work, *Clean Air – Clean Water* (1976) in the same location. Or, as in her work *Dikt, Blick, Strata* (Poem, Gaze, Strata) at Kalmar Konstmuseum, where, prior to embarking on the exhibition, she read Anna Rydstedt's poetry and drew on their shared interest in the expanse of a landscape and the physical experience of a space.

In the exhibition *Starting from the Self*, Pia Sandström enters into a dialogue with Hackney Flashers, Helga Henschen, Billie Zangewa, Lubaina Himid and Lilian Domec, in a new site-specific piece that provides the framework for the entire exhibition. In Pia Sandström's hands, the potential of the exhibition space changes. Established boundaries and movement patterns are undone. With words, instructions and drawings, Pia Sandström illustrates how we relate to our own and others' experiences of rooms, places and movements, in the public and in private. The space becomes a map for navigating and a possibility to change one's perspective – to see the world through someone else's eyes.

Översättning: Gabriella Berggren



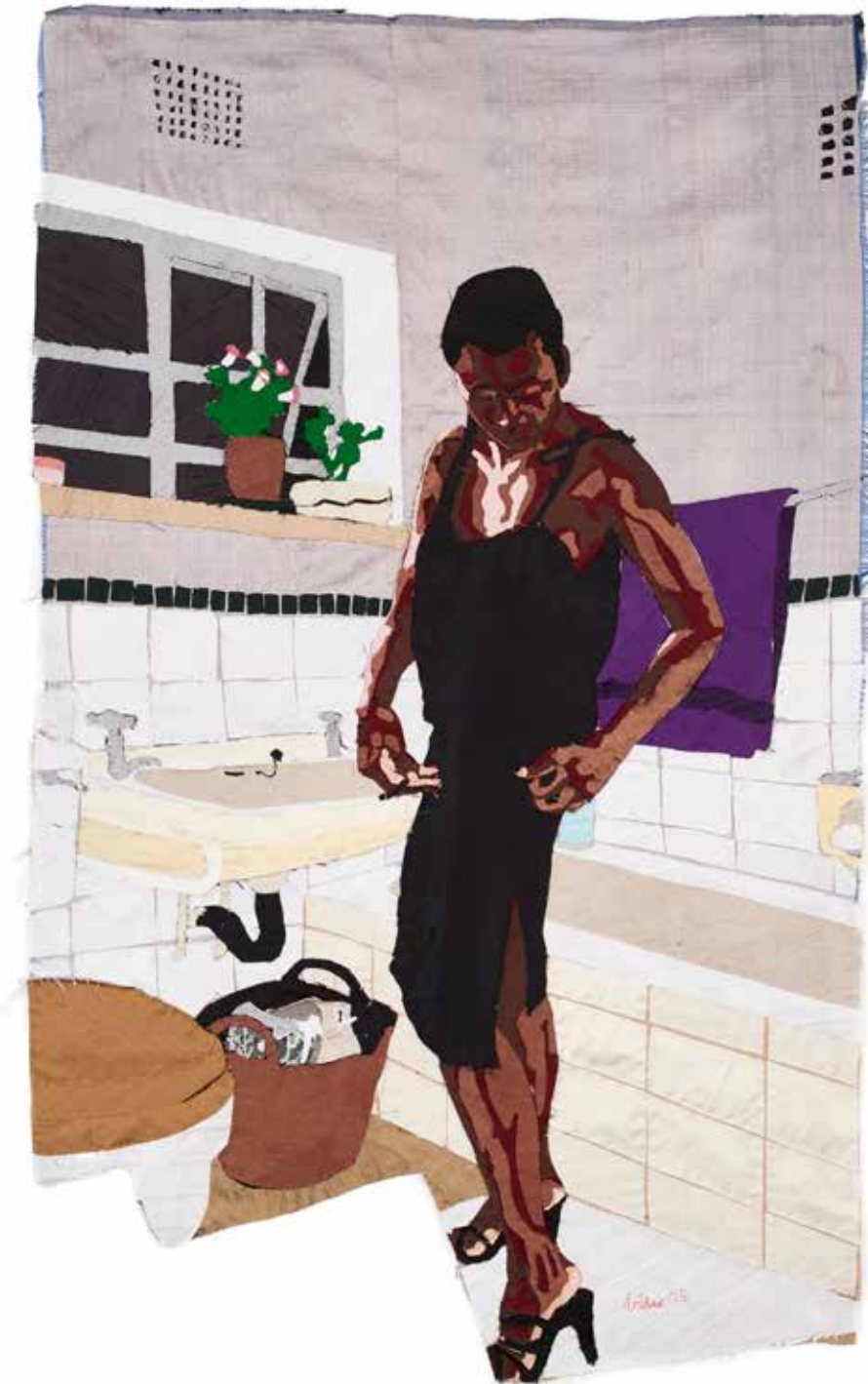
Pia Sandström, *Blick Dikt Strata (mellan två ögonblinkningar)* [Gaze, Poem, Strata], installation at Kalmar Konstmuseum, 2016. Photo: Michelangelo Misculin

■ Pia Sandström studied at the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm and the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. She has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at several art institutions, including Moderna Museet (2013), where she showed an audio work commissioned for the Hilma af Klint exhibition, Bonniers Konsthall, Botkyrka Konsthall, Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, ARTES in Porto, and at the Venice Architecture Biennale (2014). ■

BILLIE ZANGEWA

Billie Zangewa's practice is characterised by compelling silk collages depicting scenes of urban life in Johannesburg often focusing around a central female figure. Images reveal women in the public sphere, outstretched and relaxed on a patch of green while the towering capital skyline can be seen behind, whilst other works focus on domestic life and show a well dressed mother standing powerful in her apartment. The common thread within Zangewa's work is her representation of the female body and more precisely the black female body. Her work explores black women across private and public spaces and depicts characters that are empowered and autonomous in their surroundings; strong women, that seem to disregard the rules of how a women must engage and behave in these distinct spheres.

As a single mother based in a metropolis, Zangewa is aware that the public space and indeed the private can be sites of gender based violence. Like many city streets across the world, they are places of unknown threats, where women are not meant to spend time idle but move with purpose – taking children to school, buying food for the evening meal. And the home behind closed doors can also conceal many oppressions, aggression and exploitation. Zangewa describes her wish to throw all these controls away in her work and highlight images of powerful women who transgress the discriminative boundaries of public and private space. In *Exquisite Fantasy* shown here at Marabouparken a women as ease in a park educates herself in pedagogic pleasure, whilst the city looms behind her. *Back to Black* in contrast shows us the interior of an urban apartment as a women gets herself ready for an evening out. Heels and a black dress show a single women enjoying the pleasures of independence. In both works a feeling of self care resonates; that empowerment develops from an attention to one-self, something that can feel like a rare thing for many women who's time is spent 'holding the baby' or working to struggle against a system that disregards their concerns.



¹ Ref: *In Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics.* (Boston, MA: South End Press, Chicago, 1990).

In bell hooks' essay *Homeplace (A Site of Resistance)*¹ she highlights how the separation between public and private and the gendering of the private as a site which women must emancipate themselves from, needs to have an intersectional analysis. For many white western feminists of the 1970s the imperative to emancipate themselves from the home, the site of childcare and cleaning, in order to enter the public domain, was central. Yet, for many women of colour this narrative does not apply. The home in fact can be a site of resistance and sanctuary from the racialised violence of the public sphere. What might be possible to see in Zangewa's work is that the perpetuation of a separation between public and private, seems to only further gendered and racist discrimination. Rather Zangewa seems to pose that a politics of empowerment across the different sites we inhabit is necessary. A practice that can only begin if we start from the self; from an attention to ourselves, from care for our bodies and mind, which as shown by the women in these works offer hopeful role models for a future without boundaries.



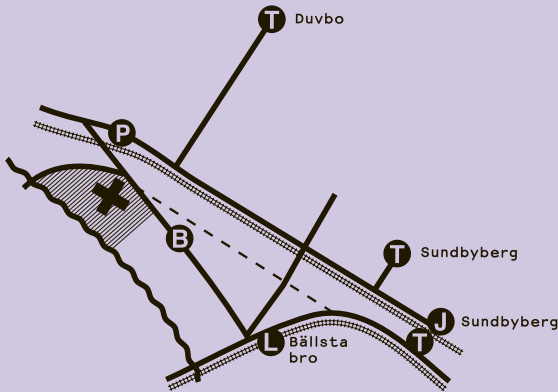
Billie Zangewa, *Exquisite Fantasy*, 2014, silk tapestry 138 x 105 cm. Courtesy of Sindika Dokolo Foundation.

Billie Zangewa, *Back to Black*, 2015, silk tapestry 97 x 58 cm. Courtesy of Harry David Collection.

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Translation: Maja Thrane

■ This is Billie Zangewa's first presentation in Stockholm. Born in 1973 in Blantyre, Malawi, Billie Zangewa lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has shown internationally including the solo exhibition *Black Line*, Afronova Gallery (2010), *Women's Work, Crafting Stories, Subverting Narratives*, IZIKO South African National Museum, Cape Town, (2016) and *Hollandaise*, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2012). In 2004 she received the Gerard Sekoto Award, Absa Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa. ■



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