



PASS newsletter

Center for Practice-based Art Studies

Dear reader,

As it's been almost five months since we last sent out a newsletter, I'm going to give myself a bit more space than usual this time.

PASS - Center for Practice-based Art Studies is now a full and vibrant house, with seven staff members and two master students in internships until the end of the year. We have been very busy this fall, teaching, mentoring, instituting, articulating our research profile, establishing new partnerships, and, finally, offering a dense program of research training activities in the form of courses, seminars and workshops, as well as supervision and doctoral examinations. Here are some highlights.



Rosa Marie Frang in her studio. Photo: Birk Thomassen.

New appointments

Martha Fleming and Stine Hebert have been hired as joint associate professors since September 1. In other words, they both hold an associate professorship half time, while spending the other half of their time on other (but highly relevant and related) projects.

The division of the lectureship between two very experienced researchers, practitioners and teachers, whose time will be divided between work at PASS and other practices outside the university, is fully in line with the mission and purpose of PASS, namely to act as a bridge between university research and practice-based research and related institutions (freelance curators, museums, art galleries, artist-run project and exhibition spaces, etc.).

Stine's curatorial research and development work is associated with [Heirloom - Center for Art and Archive](#), which has become a collaborative partner for PASS. Martha is PI (Principal Investigator, i.e. leader of an externally funded research project) for a project at the Natural History Museum of Denmark on colonial and cultural histories of herbaria. The project is entitled Field/Work in the Archive: Herbaria as Sites of Cultural Exchange and is nearing completion: [read more about it](#) at the website, or [listen to this podcast](#) to get a sense of the scope of the project.

We also welcomed visual artist Rosa Marie Frang on September 1st. During her residency, Rosa will create a podcast work that focuses on conversations with people engaged in practice-based research. Like Stine and Martha, Rosa is employed on a half-time basis, allowing her to pursue her artistic practice outside of PASS. Visual artist Mia Edelgart, who was employed for one year from November 2023, has successfully completed her project with PASS. Her work, done in collaboration with visual artist Eva la Cour, culminated in the exhibition [Heart on the Tongue](#) at Heirloom in the fall of 2024. [Read the review in Kunstkrættik](#).

For a complete list of center staff, [please visit our website.](#)

Recent activities

Following the three-day conference *Museum Why? Practice, Agency and Knowledge in the Art Museum* in May (see summary and recordings of the conference on Youtube and [at the website](#)), there was fertile ground for a follow-up half-day seminar, which took place at the University of Copenhagen's South Campus in November under the title *The Art Institution as an Expanded Social Field*. Here we were joined by Maria Hlavajova, founder and director of BAK in Utrecht, who as keynote speaker argued that institutions and actors in the field should start talking about "future publics" instead of "communities," which she argued did not exist, or at least was a harmonizing notion rather than a sociological and political reality. And then, under the title "Instituting otherwise, or Navigating towards the Not-Yet", she championed institutions at a time when neo-fascism is putting them under pressure and criticism.

PASS was also visited by critic, writer, academic and curator-organizer Paul O'Neill, who runs the exhibition platform *Publics* in Helsinki. We invited Paul to give an intensive day-seminar on his processes and practices with local PhD students, curators and artists from the community. The exchange was moderated by postdoc Anne Julie Arnfred, and the event was organized in collaboration with our near-neighbour exhibition space [Simian](#) further down Ørestad Boulevard.

In November, we launched the result of a collaboration with the Queen Mary Center at the University of Copenhagen in the form of a themed issue of the journal *Økonomi & Politik* entitled *Værdiskabelse i kunst og kulturliv*. The launch took place at and in collaboration with Gammel Strand, where several of the authors of the themed issue gave presentations, performances, readings and participated in panel discussions. [The issue is freely available online](#) (in Danish). We saw a lot of interest from the community (well, the future publics) in the question of art and value: where and how can art create value and impact - and what kind of value - in contexts both inside and outside the institution? Should we go beyond the measurement regime and insist that value is undocumented, or are there ways to capture the non-financial value that art also contributes? Approximately 100 people attended the event.

Several of us at PASS devote considerable time to supervising and assessing PhD dissertations and thus attending defenses. It is rewarding and meaningful to read both theoretical and practical dissertations. We also spend a lot of time helping to mature the projects of some of those who apply for doctoral fellowships. If you are considering applying for a practice-based PhD (also understood as a PhD project carried out in collaboration with an institution, e.g. a museum, outside of a university) and would like some kind of affiliation with PASS, please contact us well in advance, preferably one year before the deadline for submitting your application to one of the foundations.



From the Freedom in Practice workshop. Photo: PASS.

This semester we have organised two 2-day workshops.

The first workshop was entitled Gestures Towards 'Commoning' the Art Institution and was led by postdoctoral researcher Kathrine Bolt Rasmussen. The workshop was partly based on Kathrine's own curatorial research and work with Astrid Noack Atelier (ANA), but was more broadly concerned with the many smaller and larger institutions, small exhibition venues and project spaces, museums, art centres and projects that operate with resource and knowledge sharing, participation and community care, often combined with various forms of collective or flat management models. Although several of the sites presented and discussed, from Casco Art Institute in Utrecht to Hosting Lands on Møn to Trampolinhuset in Nørrebro in Copenhagen, are sometimes inspired by each other, it was also clear that 'commoning' encompasses a broad range of aims, practices and forms of collaboration from which established museums can learn. Tone O. Nielsen, curator and co-founder of the community centre Trampoline House and its exhibition space CAMP, spoke about working with art and migration. Dea Antonsen and PhD student Ida Bencke presented their project [Hosting Lands](#). Part of the workshop took place at ANA, where visual artist Arendse Krabbe gave a performative introduction to her exhibition '[Invitation to Listen: Sound of Becoming Another Kind of Being](#)'.

The second workshop of the semester, 'Freedom in Practice', was organised by postdoc Anne Julie Arnfred and myself. As the title suggests, we were interested in the ways in which the pursuit of freedom in practice - such as freedom of method in research, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, artistic freedom, freedom from oppression and freedom to choose where to live - often, but not always, involves an awareness of the connection between freedom, constraint, restriction, responsibility and care, something that more ideological concepts of freedom often overlook. Israeli visual artist, dancer and choreographer Arkadi Zaides, who is doing a practice-based PhD in Antwerp, opened the first day,

which took place at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. He spoke about 'social choreography' and the 'political-rhetorical performance' of the Israeli authorities in relation to video footage of the authorities' staged attempts to prevent illegal settlements in the West Bank, which he has used in one of his works. It was a heated and moving discussion about the possible role of art in using human precarity and politically complex and ambiguous images. On the second day, literary author, critic and academic Ida Marie Hede visited, spoke about her genre-transcending fictional work (freedom from genre requirements and other formal constraints in artistic work etc.) and challenged the group with a writing exercise.

Our workshops are offered to PhD students and postdocs all over the Nordic region, and as such they are posted on a Nordic course platform. But we also see Masters students, visual artists and curators outside the formal research education system among the participants.

Descriptions of other study activities and events can be found on our website where you will also find the lists of readings for all our workshops.



Office hours. Post doc Anne Julie Arnfred and center coordinator Christian Hald Foghmar. Photo: PASS.

Collaborations

PASS is a center that thrives on and promotes inter-institutional collaboration within (and beyond) the field, preferably also in the Nordic countries. [Astrid Noacks Atelier](#) (ANA), [Heirloom](#) and Simian are already project-based partners, and other partnerships are in the pipeline, including a performance event and reading group in collaboration with [SixtyEight](#). More on that later. PASS has been invited to become a permanent partner in the [Museum Why?](#) network, with whom we have already organized two seminars. We are very much looking forward to further discussions and events on the future of art museums with this important circle of medium-sized museums and exhibition spaces in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Estonia.

If you have suggestions for cooperation (we engage in equal partnerships, and are not a granting organisation), please send us an email.

This is what space allows. In the next newsletter I will have more to say about strategic development, research activities, PASS on SoMe, new study program plans and a significant intensive seminar taking place between Copenhagen and Berlin.

Happy New Year to everyone reading!

Mikkel Bogh

Professor of Art History

Director of PASS - Center for Practice-based Art Studies.