10 April—27 July, 2025

Komtemåtta
A Pioneering Safe Space for Women

Kin Museum of Contemporary Art

Komtemåtta—A Pioneering Safe Space for Women

Petra Bauer, Åsa Elzén, Susanne Ewerlöf, Olivia Plender, Åsa Sonjasdotter, Anders Sunna and Siri Derkert

In this exhibition, six contemporary artists deep-dive into the groundbreaking educational experiment that was the Citizen School for Women at Fogelstad (1925-1954) and Sami women's activism from the early 1900s. Founded one hundred years ago by five headstrong women, the Citizen School was open to women from all corners of society to come and practice citizenship. The artworks in the exhibition interact with archival materials from the school, borrowed from the KvinnSam archive at Gothenburg University, as well as a selection of works by artist Siri Derkert. Who was a course participant. Women from Norrbotten Region who partook in the courses are also presented in the exhibition.

The school's founders were active in the suffrage movement, and two were elected to the Swedish Riksdag in 1921: estate owner and politician Elisabeth Tamm and workplace inspector Kerstin Hesselgren. The other founders were author Elin Wägner, doctor Ada Nilsson, and teacher and school principal Honorine Hermelin. With innovative pedagogical methods, the Citizen School became a meeting place for radical intellectuals and women from diverse backgrounds.

Courses were designed to educate women in how to navigate their responsibilities as citizens. While there was neither a set learning agenda nor a reading list, the curriculum was extensive. Alongside lectures about history, politics and reproductive health, the school was ahead of its time in applying methods centered on learning through self-study, and collective experiences like role play, choir singing and discussion clubs. The title of the exhibition, Komtemåtta, refers to the imaginary municipality created by teacher Ebba Holgersson. Komtemåtta was used as a pedagogical tool for participants to test different societal roles and functions.

Graphic design by Maryam Fanni. Curated by Maria Lind and Hanna Nordell. In collaboration with KvinnSam at Gothenburg University, Norrbottens Museum, Liljevalchs konsthall in Stockholm and the journal Ord&Bild.

A special issue of the journal Ord&Bild has been published in conjunction with the exhibition at Kin. Komtemåtta – A Pioneering Safe Space for Women is part of Kin's multi-year thematic thread Women in the North.

Opening weekend and public events as part of the exhibition *Komtemåtta—A Pioneering Safe Space for Women* at Kin 10 April—27 July, 2025

Thursday 10 April

Floor 2

16:00 Opening ceremony Markerna, work by Carola Grahn and Nils-Johan Labba.

16:15 Welcome speech by Maria Lind, Kin's director with an introduction to the exhibition with curator Hanna Nordell. Emma Pettersson Juntti introduces the women from the north who attended Fogestad.

16:45 The artists Petra Bauer, Åsa Elzén, Susanne Ewerlöf, Olivia Plender and Åsa Sonjasdotter introduce their works.

17:15 Presentation by Jakob Derkert-Rosenberg on Siri Derkert and the Women's Citizen School.

17:30 Release of Ord&Bild's special edition about the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad with an introduction by editor Ann Ighe and writer Annika Öhrner.

Friday 11 April

17:00 Floor 5. Lecture by Sverker Sörlin about the importance of formation.

Formation (bildning) has been a central concept for the era of progress—a way for the individual to learn and grow since the enlightenment in the 18th century. The women who established the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad understood this. Formation makes it possible for us to overcome the limitations that nation, gender, ethnicity, and other identities encompasses.

In a time where dark shadows spread across the world, formation is more important than ever. We have more knowledge than ever before-but we know less and less together. There is a need for an updated understanding about the important history of popular formation (folkbildning), and the role it plays in all our lives. It sets us free and makes for safer societies.

Sverker Sörlin is an historian and author. He is an internationally renowned professor in environmental history at KTH, and a well-liked public educator. He has recently published the book Snö: en historia (Snow: A History).

Saturday 12 April

12:00 Floor 2. Maria Lind and Hanna Nordell introduce the exhibition.

12:45 Floor 2. Round table conversation with the participating artists Petra Bauer, Åsa Elzén, Susanne Ewerlöf, Olivia Plender and Åsa Sonjasdotter. Moderator Paulina Sokolow, Kin's communicator.

14:00 Floor 2. Siri Derkert, Fogelstad and the art. Presentation by Annika Öhrner, associate professor of Art History and writer.

14:30 Floor 2. Conversation on the archive KvinnSam with AnnaLena Bergquist, University Librarian, Birgitta Andréasson, deputy director, and Hanna Nordell.

15:00 Floor 2. Presentation and conversation about the women from the region of Norrbotten who attended the Women's Citizen School with Karin Tjernström, archivist at Arkivcentrum Norrbotten and Emma Pettersson Juntti, producer and mediator at Kin.

Homestead evenings

The homestead evenings were part of the courses at the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad (1925-1954) and meant that one woman at a time could have a seat in front of the other participants and tell a story from their lives. The chair was placed in front of the fireplace in the lecture hall, or outside if the weather allowed. The person in question could talk about anything- everyone has something important to tell. Kin is arranging three homestead evenings during the spring and summer where women from Kiruna and its surroundings can share their stories.

Thursday 15 April

17:00-18:30. Floor 2. Presentations by Elisabeth Bylund and Karin Westergren

Elisabeth Bylund joined the Kiruna Konstgille association as a fifteen-year-old and has had a lifelong engagement for the art- and culture scene in Kiruna since then.

Karin Westergren grew up within the Folk High School context, and this grew into a long commitment to the field. She is an important cultural figure in Kiruna, and creates relationships between people, associations and institutions.

Thursday 15 May

18:00-19:30. Floor 2. Presentations by Anna-Karin Niia, Karin Stöckel and Yana Tannagasheva.

Anna-Karin Niia is a journalist and presenter. Through her work she lifts up the sami culture and language to a broad audience.

Karin Stöckel is co-founder of the organization Gruvkvinnor (mine women) and fights for women's rights within a male-dominated industry.

Yana Tannagasheva belongs to the Shor people, an indigenous people of southern Siberia in Russia. She writes both poems about homesickness and decolonial texts.

Wednesday 4 June

17:00–19:00 Seminar with Koncentrat

Agneta Andersson, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Lena Ylipää, Viktoria Andersson, Anita Mikko, Anita Ylipää and Lena Stenberg are members of the female art collective Koncentrat, based in Kiruna. This year they celebrate 20 years. The members have worked together or individually on artistic projects and pursued cultural policy issues. The seminar begins Kin's work with Koncentrat and its history, which will culminate in an exhibition in 2028.

Thursday 12 June

18:00–19:30 Floor 2. Presentations by Gunilla Kangas. More participants will be announced.

Gunilla Kangas is chairman of the association Kiruna Konstgille and part of the board at Sveriges Konstföreningar, Norrbotten. She is of great importance to the art-and cultural life of Kiruna.

Guided Tours

Public guided tours every Wednesday at 12:30 and Saturdays 14:00. The tours start at Kin's green reception on floor 0.

Book a guided tour: email info@kinmuseum.se to book a free guided tour of Kin's current exhibitions.

List of works

Petra Bauer

1. Women in Struggles, 2012–2025
Printed posters
Women in Struggles returns to the socialist women's movement in the beginning of the 20th century Sweden. The movement fought for women's participation and political rights in the society, and brought up organization of the household, owner relationships, sexuality, children, marriage and worker's rights. As part of the fight the socialist women used posters to spread information, call to meetings and mobilize women to the movement. Between 1905–1921 the magazine Morgonbris regularly posted group photos of female clubs around the country. In the photographs women are presenting themselves as a socialist, female collective and as active actors that are demanding a change in prevailing social structures.

Siri Derkert

2. Cows, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

3. Ada Nilsson, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

4. Emilia Fogelklou, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

5. Elisabeth Tamm, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

6. Elsa Stenhammar, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

7. Ebba Holgersson, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

8. Elin Wägner, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

9. Kerstin Hesselgren, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

10. Isabel Oyarzábal Smith (Isabel de Palencia), 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

11. Fogelstad interior, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

12. Fogelstad choir, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

13. Anna Lenah Elgström, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

14. Lecturer, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

15. Portrait, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

16. Group Portrait, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

17. Portrait, 1943–54
Crayon on paper

18. Honorine Hermelin, 1943–54
Crayon on paper

19. Fogelstad Women, Unknown and Magnhild Olsson, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

20. Ada Nilsson and Honorine Hermelin, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

21. Emilia Fogelklou, 1943–54
Charcoal on paper

22. Moa Martinsson, year unknown
Charcoal on paper

23. Elise Ottesen-Jensen, year unknown
Terracotta

24. Female head, year unknown
Terracotta

25. Elsa Stenhammar, year unknown
Terracotta

26. Elin Wägner, year unknown
Terracotta

27. Elin Wägner, year unknown
Equalizer

28. Studies for Portrait of Elise Ottesen-Jensen, 1957–58
Oil

29. Studies for Portrait of Elise Ottesen-Jensen, 1957–58
Oil and charcoal

30. Fogelstad Singer, year unknown
Aluminium

31. Carvings in Natural Concrete
Östermalmstorg subway station, detail, 1961–1965
Photo: Jean-Baptiste Béranger, 2025

Åsa Elzén

32. Why do things when you could leave it?—An attempt, an in-between land, 2019
video, 28 min

33. Transcript of a Fallow, 2019
Appliqué, recycled textile, 470 x 600 cm
Transcript of *A Fallow,* tapestry, wool, linen, 470 x 600 cm, 1919–1920, idea by Elisabeth Tamm, concept and design by Maja Fjæstad, woven by Amelie Fjæstad.

34. A Growing Fallow Archive, 2019—ongoing
Archive material on table
Peace with the Earth, Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner, Bonniers 1940.
This copy of the book was donated by Elisabeth Tamm to Honorine Hermelin, and from Honorine Hermelin to Maren Holebakk.

35. A Growing Archive on the Women's Barn and Livestock School at Fogelstad, 2020—ongoing
Archive material on table
Article from Tidevarvet regarding Women's Barn and Livestock School at Fogelstad *Barn tending—a profession for women,* Elisabeth Tamm, Tidevarvet 1926, no. 36

36. Biography of a Fallow, 2019
Audio work, 15:40 min

37. The Other School, Axel Fredriksson 1930's/Åsa Elzén 2020
Eight prints of ten cellulose nitrate negatives by Axel Fredriksson, photographed at Fogelstad during the 1920's and 30's. Selection, title and adaptation by Åsa Elzén with permission from the Nordic Museum Archive.

In the growing project *Notes on a Fallow—The Fogelstad Group and Earth* Åsa Elzén has approached ideas and contexts that developed at and around the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad since 2019. Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner's message that peace on earth is not possible without peace with the earth is an important starting point for Elzén's work.

In Elzén's work, the concept "fallow" is in focus, both as a method and a metaphor. To lay land fallow means to let it rest from human production for a period of time, in order to counteract the depletion of the soil. In 1919, Elisabeth Tamm commissioned a carpet from the artist Maja Fjæstad with the wish that it would be based on a fallow. The carpet was placed in the library at Fogelstad, where it was left to lie until the end of the 1960s, when torn it was and put in the attic after being worn down by the first wave of the queer women's movement. The historical carpet from Fogelstad is today

too fragile to walk on. In research on the Fogelstad group, Elzén came across various transcripts created with the aim of deciphering and preserving decaying texts for the future. The work *Transcript of a Fallow* is a carpet to once again gather on and think with. While the historical original was made of linen and wool from Fogelstad, Elzén's version consists of recycled fabrics of different origins, materials and years of manufacture.

In the audio work *A Biography of a Fallow,* text fragments from diaries, archives and letters alternate, telling the story of the carpet. In *A Growing Fallow Archive,* material traces are collected, such as Maja Fjæstad's watercolor sketches and photographs and documents from Fogelstad. There is also a copy of the book *Peace with the Earth,* which was donated by Elisabeth Tamm to Honorine Hermelin, and which Honorine Hermelin then passed on to Maren Holebakk.

In the project *Notes on a Fallow—The Fogelstad Group and Earth,* Elzén is interested in artistic processes that have taken place at the site and how they can function as important elements in the writing of history. Maja Fjæstad's carpet is one example. Another is the work *The Other School,* where photographs taken by Axel Fredriksson at Fogelstad form the starting point. Fredriksson was born into a farmer's family at Fogelstad where he came to work with various tasks on the farm and in the forest. As a self-taught photographer, he documented daily life on the estate. In *The Other School,* Elzén highlights a selection of Fredriksson's portraits of people who were active in the barn training that Elisabeth Tamm started in parallel with the Women's Citizen School. As farms became larger and livestock farming became increasingly industrialized, women, who often tended the livestock on the smaller farms, were forced out of the qualified jobs they had previously had on the farms and were replaced by a male workforce.

To counteract this, Tamm organized a one-year training course for women only, so that they could work as foremen in barns. Unlike the Citizen School, which was both well documented in its time and thoroughly researched, the Women's Barn and Livestock School is relatively unknown. The work *A Growing Archive on the Women's Barn and Livestock School at Fogelstad* provides an insight into life and relationships at the school through private photo albums and archive material. The photographs come from Maren Holebakk, who came to Fogelstad from Norway and became a barn foreman and teacher at the the Women's Barn and Livestock School at Fogelstad. Holebakk was also an artist and made portraits in unfired clay of the course participants, workers, friends, lovers and refugees who were around her at Fogelstad. The growing archive includes articles written by Elisabeth Tamm about the the Women's Barn and Livestock School in the Fogelstad group's magazine Tidevarvet.

Land and ownership are at the core of the work *Why do things when you could leave it?—An attempt, an in-between land,* that deals with Elisabeth Tamm's advocacy of the so-called "Åbo rights". Åbo rights were an alternative to land ownership and lease and meant that land could be granted by the state to whoever wanted to cultivate it. Whoever cultivated the land was allowed to do so for an indefinite period of time and the right could also be inherited. If the land was not owned but cultivated and managed, both economic speculation and depletion of the land would be avoided. Tamm herself chose to donate a piece of her best arable land to the Swedish Women's Left Alliance and the Swedish Social Democratic Women's Alliance with the condition that it would be handed over to the state to be granted to the unemployed as Åbo rights.

Susanne Ewerlöf

38. Hi Karin!, 2023
Video, 8:35 min

Hi Karin! is a video which captures a conversation between two distant relatives, one being Karin Stenberg (1884–1969), a Forest Sami political activist and teacher from Árviesjávrrie/Arvidsjaur, and the artist herself. The dialogue draws from Stenberg's book, *Dat läh mijen situd—This is our will: an appeal to the Swedish nation from the Sámi people,* written together with Valdemar Lindholm in 1920. Their book has a strong message regarding the political will among Sami people at that time and the video reflects on the century that has passed since its original publication. Quotes from Stenberg's text are read out loud and describe among other things how Sami people have been treated and viewed by Swedes. It has a strong focus on the Sami people's strong will to live on. Ewerlöf's endeavor to address Stenberg directly is a kind of desperate hope that it is possible to bridge the gaps of lost ancestral knowledge

Olivia Plender

39. Kom Te Måtta, 2019
Pencil on paper drawing

40.Kom Te Måtta, 2019
Tryckt draperi

41. Kom Te Måtta, 2019
Poster

This series of works is based on a role-playing game developed at The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School, as a tool for learning about political processes. The title of the game was *Kom Te Måtta,* which is also the name of a fictional town that the women would inhabit,

by dressing up as its citizens and solving political problems within the municipality. The drawing is based on a photograph which depicts the female students cross-dressing as male characters from the role-play. A series of board game like posters show the different societal institutions that the women were learning to negotiate.

The artworks were originally part of the installation *Practicing Politics: The Fogelstad Women's Citizenship School 1925–1954* which was a commission to redesign the classroom space at Tensta Konsthall. It was used on a daily basis throughout 2019, by community groups from the neighbourhood of Tensta. The full installation included a printed fabric curtain, printed posters, cabinet of archival materials, seating, fabric hangings, blackboard with chalk drawing, painted wooden figures, and additional art works by Siri Derkert.

42. Arrest!, 2021—ongoing
Pencil on paper, drawings
The pencil drawings which accompany the video installation are based on early twentieth century press photographs of suffragettes being apprehended by the police. These women are shown in all their individuality, whereas the identities of the men are masked by their uniforms, and the actions they perform are indistinguishable from those of the police officers who violently break up protests today. This is an experience shared by many in the contemporary activist groups that Plender worked with during her research for this project, underlining the violence with which those in power continue to respond to struggles for equal rights.

43. Constance Markievicz, 2020
Pencil on paper drawing
Constance Markievicz (1868-1927, née Gore-Booth) was an Irish republican and the first woman to be elected to the British parliament in the general election of 1918, on behalf of Sinn Féin—although she

did not take her seat, in line with the party's abstentionist stance. She was a founder member of the Irish Citizen Army, took part in the Easter Rising in 1916, and held a cabinet position as Minister for Labour from 1919 until 1922, in the newly formed Republic of Ireland. In her earlier life, Markievicz had trained as a painter at the Slade School of Art in London and it was there that she became active in politics, joining the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

44. Nelly Thüring, 2021
Pencil on paper drawing
Before the popular lecturer Nelly Thüring (1875-1972) became a social democratic member of parliament in 1921 she sat in the Gothenburg City Council. She had been active as a photographer with her own studio, first in Gothenburg and later in Enskede. Beyond the international questions, she used her time in the parliament to work for a non-denominational school, child-and maternity care and sex education.

45. Bertha Wellin, 2021
Pencil on paper drawing
Bertha Wellin (1870-1951) was the first female member of the parliament for the right wing party, elected in 1921. She sat in the Stockholm city council for fourteen years. She was educated as a nurse and was engaged in the Swedish nurse-association, specifically working with Nordic collaborations. Additionally, she was a member in various hospital boards around Stockholm, and 1935 she was awarded the Red Cross highest award: The Florence Nightingale-medal.

46. Agda Östlund, 2021
Pencil on paper drawing
The social democrat Agda Östlund (1870-1942) belonged to those who were actively campaigning for women's suffrage. She was the

first ever female to speak in the second chamber of the parliament. As a 14-year old she started to work as a seamstress, and later she built up her own sewing studio in Stockholm. In the parliament she raised questions of domestic abuse, women's right to pension and better care for women and children. When she tried to speak on the issue of abortion, many male members left the room.

47. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School
—Kerstin Hesselgren, 2021
Pencil on paper drawing

Kerstin Hesselgren (1872-1962) was Sweden's first female housing inspector, school kitchen inspector and vocational inspector. In 1922, she was elected to be an independent representative in the Swedish Riksdag, where she held her seat until 1934. Between 1934-1944 she joined as a liberal and left-wing part of the people's party (folkpartiet). In addition to social policy and gender equality in the labor market, she devoted herself to international politics. She sat as the Swedish delegate and expert in the League of Nations, the predecessor to the United Nations. In 1919, she was appointed as Sweden's representative in the ILO, the International Labor Organization, where she worked for social justice, human rights and labor law.

48. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School
—Elisabeth Tamm, 2021
Pencil on paper drawing

Elisabeth Tamm (1880–1958) became Sweden's first female chairwoman of a municipal council, in Julita in 1916. By then, she had taken over the family estate, Fogelstad, where she farmed in an ecological manner until her death. She believed that women where better suited to take care of animals and therefore only employed female barnmen. As a result, she started a barn training course for women. She was free-sprited independent in the Riksdag from

1922-1924. In addition to women's contributions to society and politics, she pushed for land and peace issues. Together with Elin Wägner she published Peace with Earth, in 1940, a pioneering ecological publication about sustainable agricultural farming.

49. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School
—Ada Nilsson, 2025
Pencil on paper drawing

Ada Nilsson (1872–1964) was a doctor specializing in women's diseases. In that capacity, she opposed double standards, secrecy, and ignorance about sexual life. She was positive about contraception, which was only decriminalized in 1934. In 1914, in connection with the so-called Borggård crisis, she took the initiative to found the Free-thinking Women's Association. It was non-partisan and worked for equality between the sexes, international solidarity, and peace. The issue of peace was to follow Nilsson throughout her life.

50. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School
—Elin Wägner, 2025
Pencil on paper drawing

Elin Wägner (1882–1949) became one of the most important Swedish writers of the 20th century and a pioneer of ecofeminism. She became involved early in the struggle for suffrage and participated in the famous peace congress in The Hague in 1915, which was arranged by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Her work for peace and disarmament intensified over time and gave her many international contacts. She wrote Peace with the Earth in 1940 together with Elisabeth Tamm, and the following year her own book Wake-up Call, was published, which deals with women's history, the environment and peace.

51. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School —Honorine Hermelin, 2025
Pencil on paper drawing
The principal of the Women's Citizen's School throughout the years was the charismatic educator Honorine Hermelin (1886–1977). She combined radical and conservative positions, humanistic and scientific interests, and practical and theoretical talent. Her motto was "Women—wake up, dare!" The combination of imagination and self-activity was typical of the school, as was seriousness and play, conversation, and celebration. The hand, the brain and the heart were to be present everywhere.

52. The Fogelstad Women's Citizen School —Ebba Holgersson, 2025
Pencil on paper drawing
Ebba Holgersson (1885–1966) was the only permanent teacher at the school, apart from the principal Honorine Hermelin. She was a trained teacher and had been involved in the suffrage movement. Her friendship with the author Ellen Key was important for her commitment, not least to children and young people. Her special area at the Citizen School was municipal knowledge and social legislation. She was the one who invented both the mock municipality of Komtemåtta and the discussion clubs.

Åsa Sonjasdotter

53. Peace With The Earth, 2021
Publication
Reprint of *Peace with the Earth* by Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner, 1940. With a contextualizing conversation by Åsa Elzén, Ros Gray and Åsa Sonjasdotter. Translations by Katarina Trodden and Jennifer Hayashida. Editing and foreword by Åsa Sonjasdotter. Archive Books.

54. Peace With The Earth, 2021
Video, 59:53 min
Filmed conversation that took place as a part of the launch of the English reprint of the book *Peace with the Earth.* With artist Åsa Elzén, university librarians AnnaLena Bergquist and Sanna Hellgren and editor of the publication Åsa Sonjasdotter. At Kvinnsam, the National Resource Library for Gender Studies, The University Library of Gothenburg.

Peace With The Earth was written at the outbreak of the World War II by the Swedish suffragettes and peace activists Elin Wägner (1882–1949) who was an author, and Elisabeth Tamm (1880–1958) who was a politician and a practising farmer. This English translation is the first edition in another language. It is published by Archive Books, a community invested in de-archiving and re-archiving through non-hegemonic models.

The wish to translate and make this pamphlet available to a wider audience today has several reasons. It gathers experiences made in the interrelated movements for women's suffrage, peace, and organic farming taking place as resistance-from-within the European war-initiating imperial powers during the first half of the twentieth century. The activists of this movement recognized that war and war-like relations cannot be undone until patriarchal and colonial relations are overcome. They also recognized that, as Wägner states in the introductory chapter: 'This involves a paradigm shift and all that it entails in terms of social change'. What have stirred the wish to re-visit the debates of this movement is the analysis of how, in order to overcome violent, extractive relations, peace not only between all people on the Earth is necessary, but as much with the Earth itself.

Anders Sunna

55. Elsa Laula Renberg, 2016
Mixed media

Since 2010, Jokkmokk-based artist Anders Sunna has returned to the combative Elsa Laula Renberg as a motif in both graffiti and painting. Born in 1877 into a family of pure nurses from Tärnaby, she graduated from high school and trained as a midwife. At the same time, she founded the first Sami national federation, the Lapland Central Federation, and became its first chairman. During her studies in Stockholm, she associated with, among others, the suffragette, feminist and socialist Anna Lindhagen, who was part of the network around the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad. Elsa Laula Renberg's activism primarily concerned better education for Sami children, land issues and the right to settle, something she addressed in the book *Inför lif eller död? Sanningsord i de Lappska Förhållandena* from 1904. Renberg was one of the initiators of the legendary first Sami national meeting in Trondheim in 1917. She died of tuberculosis at the age of 53.

Anders Sunna highlights Elsa Laula Renberg as an important person for all Sami. Through his graffiti project where he used his Elsa Laula Renberg stencil along the roads in Sápmi, he made the Sami presence in colonial society visible. He writes that it is about "daring to take back the place and show that we exist, but also to encourage the Sami people to stand up for themselves and above all for each other".

Archive material from KvinnSam, Gothenburg University

56. Photo album summer 1925, dedicated to Elisabeth Tamm, 1925

57. Photo album belonging to the course participant Edit Granvik, year missing

58. Protocol book, the discussion club Nebulosan, 1928

59. Printed matter Women's Unarmed Uprising, 1935

60. Down with Weapons by Amelie Posse-Brazdova, offprint Tidevarvet, 1935

61. Cover page Kom te Måtta, photos by Gerhard Bäckdahl, 1931
Drawing on paper

62. The dean, portrait by Gerhard Bäckdahl, 1931
Drawing on paper

63. Sister Ingrid, portrait by Gerhard Bäckdahl, 1931
Drawing on paper

64. Komtemåtta-kuriren, midsummer issue, 1928

65. List of voters, Komtemåtta, 1931

66. Registrated in Komtemåtta municipality, year unknown

67. Songs. Combined for the Citizen school for women by Elsa Stenhammar, 1944

68. Prospect Fogelstad citizen school, 1932–33

70. Protocol book, 1935
Notebook

71. Songs, 1942
Printed matter

In July 1975, a number of boxes of material from the Women's Citizen School in Fogelstad arrived at KvinnSam at Gothenburg University Library. Since then, new material has been added through donations and the archive today contains a rich collection of photographs, documents and notes from the years the school was active. Here you will find, among other things, the course participants' protocols, private photo albums, the school's accounts, course prospects, programs, memorial books, letters and printed matter. Since the collection was created, it has attracted researchers, artists and writers and is an important basis for the accumulated and constantly growing knowledge about the Women's Citizen School.

In a number of thematic volumes, parts of the material from the archive are presented, which, together with texts, tell about both pedagogical methods and moments and insights from the school's history.

In collaboration with the Norrbotten Museum, an addition has been made that deepens knowledge about the participants from Norrbotten who visited the school. Here you will also find the story of the Hermelin family's connections to the region.

Artist's presentations

Petra Bauer is an artist, filmmaker and Professor in Film & Media with a responsibility for the Profile Area Art Technology and Materiality at the Stockholm University of the Arts. In her artistic practice and research, she is interested in how film cab be approached as a space for social and political explorations. Her work addresses how women organise, resist and refuse by using both aesthetics and politics. Bauer has formed long-term collaborations with several different feminist organisations including Southall Black Sisters in London, the sex worker led organisation SCOT-PEP, Edinburgh, and The Women's Centre in Tensta-Hjulsta, Stockholm. She is one of the initiators of the feminist platform k.ö.k (Women Desire Collectivity). In the last few years she has been working on a four part film series which take the figure of Jeanne Dielman, in Chantal Akerman's film Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles from 1975, as a point of departure. The latest film in this series was made together with Marius Dybwad Brandrud and is titled *Fifteen zero three nineteenth of january two thousand sixteen.* The film explores how everyday routines and gestures are transformed when a mother loses her child in the violence impacting Swedish outskirts since the early 2000s. It depicts how a home can hold both mourning and resistance.

The artist **Siri Derkert** (1888–1973) is a prominent figure in international modernism whose oeuvre encompasses cubistic painting, fashion illustration, children's portraits, sculptures and large-scale public artworks. Born and raised in a middle-class home in Stockholm, she would spend time in Paris, southern Italy and Simpnäs in the Stockholm archipelago before settling on Lidingö. In 1960, Derkert was the first woman to have a solo exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Her political engagement with women's, peace and environmental issues would lead her to the Citizen School for Women.

Siri Derkert first set foot in Fogelstad in 1943. She would subsequently return practically every year to give lectures about art. When she was not participating in discussions, Derkert would be sketching the other participants, the school and the estate. Throughout the years, she created hundreds of drawings that serve as some of the most vivid witness statements from Fogelstad. The "Fogelstad constellation" appears many times among the depictions of the Fogelstad women, as are Derkert's fellow course participants and international visitors and guest lecturers invited to the school. Evidently, sedentary models were of no interest to Derkert, who preferred to capture the women in motion, during lectures or when they were arguing or playing. Attached to several of the images are written notes from the lectures. Among the selection of drawings shown in the exhibition are depictions of the school grounds: the attic rooms where lectures were held and the estate's surroundings, with fields of cows that turned out to be one of Derkert's recurring motifs.

All of the drawings shown here were created at Fogelstad, but Siri Derkert would return to the subject matter many times even after the school was closed. The Fogelstad group and the Fogelstad choir are included in Derkert's large-scale work in carved concrete, made in 1961 for Östermalmstorg subway station, depicting the peace, environment and women's movement. Sections of this work, *Carvings in Natural Concrete,* are used here as a background to the drawings. In the exhibition are also a number of terracotta sculptures depicting both named and unnamed women from the school at Fogelstad. The portraits of women made with oil paints, iron bands and aluminium are further examples of how she returned to the motifs but with new materials and methods.

Åsa Elzén lives and works in the countryside of Näshulta, Sörmland. Her practice is transdisciplinary and often takes shape through installation, text, textile, video, performance and

participant-based situations, often outdoors. Among other things, she works with the concept "fallow" in relation to the climate crisis, the decline in biodiversity, memory, time and queer feminist- and more-than-human historiography. To pause human production is to take a step aside and pay attention, relate and make room for the lives and past practices of others. The work has been particularly connected to the legacy of the Fogelstad Group and their peace-with-the-earth practice. In collaboration with Malin Arnell, she initiated *Forest Calling—A Never-Ending Contaminated Collaboration or Dancing is a Form of Forest Knowledge,* a public artwork in the form of a growing forest on Fogelstad's historic grounds. Åsa Elzén also works with issues related to energy production, often in relation to water. Translated into German, "fallow" is "brache", the same word as brackish water, a condition and a mixture with a bad reputation. In her often local projects, for example in relation to the Fogelstad group, or Studsvik and the final repository, she instead tries to embrace mixing, slowness and rewetting.

Susanne Ewerlöf (she/her) is a PhD student in Artistic Research at HDK Valand (Gothenburg) where her work is focused around lost ancestral knowledge among Forest Sami and other contexts where colonialism has removed links with the past. The project explores how fabulation and other artistic strategies may reconnect communities with erased ancestral memories and lost indigenous knowledges. Ewerlöf has a background in curating and collaborates closely with artists and communities. She holds a MRes degree in Curatorial/Knowledge from Goldsmiths University of London as well as degrees in Culture and Media and Curating Art from Linköping and Stockholm University respectively.

Olivia Plender is a British artist based in Stockholm. She is known for her multidisciplinary approach, often blending installation, performance, and research-based art. Her work explores themes

such as power structures, the dissemination of knowledge, and the ways in which history is told and interpreted. Plender is particularly interested in the role of institutions, media, and educational systems in shaping public understanding and social order. She frequently draws from historical sources, including archival material, to critique how narratives are constructed and perpetuated. Her work often focuses on alternative or marginalized histories, as well as utopian movements, highlighting how these intersect with modern-day ideas of community and power. Through her projects, Plender examines the ways in which knowledge and information are organized and controlled, especially within capitalist systems, questioning the role of culture in reinforcing social hierarchies.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, including in prestigious venues like Tate, London, and she often engages with themes of class, gender, and labour in her practice. In 2024 she co-curated the exhibition Chronos: Health, Access and Intimacy, at Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm. Recent solo shows: Kalmar konstmuseum (2023); Maureen Paley, London (2022); Amant Foundation, New York (2022). Recent group shows include: The School of Creators, Centre Pompidou-Metz (2022); 34th Bienal de São Paulo (2021); Life Support, Glasgow Women's Library, UK (2021).

Åsa Sonjasdotter is an artist and researcher, living on the island of Ven in Sweden. In her practice, Sonjasdotter enquires relations of cultivation; its nurturing generosity, the tensions around power, politics, and narratives related to the practice, and not the least, how social organisation mobilise and form coalitions around cultures of cultivation. Her work has recently been presented, among several instances, at Lunds Konsthall, the Limerick Biennale, the Singapore Biennale, the Bergen Assembly, the Biennale of Warsaw, the Delfina Foundation in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, the Badischer Kunstverein, and the Kasseler Kunstverien.

Sonjasdotter is editor of the English translation of *Peace with the earth* (*Fred med Jorden,* 1940, Bonniers), by Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner (2021, Archive Books). She is author of the publication *Peace with the Earth—Tracing Agricultural Memory, Refiguring Practice* (2018, Archive Books). Her 2022 film Cultivating Abundance is distributed by Filmform, Stockholm. She received her PhD in artistic practice at HDK-Valand, the University of Gothenburg, in 2024, with the dissertation Towards Peasant Cultivation of Abundance. Between 2015 and 2019, she was a founding member of Nachbarschaftsakademie, a bottom up learning site in Prinzessinnengarten, Berlin. From 2007, Sonjasdotter led the foundation of the Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø, North Norway, where she was program leader until 2010, and professor until 2014. Sonjasdotter was founding member of Kvinder på Værtshus, a feminist action network initiated in Copenhagen in 1996.

Anders Sunna (1985) was born into a reindeer herding family in Kieksiäsvaara, a village in the Swedish side of Sápmi and is based in Jokkmokk. He is an artist and activist, with works that carry a political charge, telling the story of abuse of power and oppression of the Sámi people by the Swedish state. Sunna's work connects directly to his own family's fight for their rights to herd reindeers, a fight that has been going on for over fifty years. Sunna's monumental paintings and sculptures tell the story of a lifelong fight for recognition and rectification.

Sunna's work has been shown at The Sámi Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2022, Àbadakone at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa 2019 and the Sydney Biennial, NIRIN 2020. Sunna's work is represented in the collections at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Världskulturmuseet in Gothenburg, the National Museum in Oslo, RiddoDuottarMuseat, Karasjok and Västerås Konsthall.

Roundtable discussion

Artists Petra Bauer, Åsa Elzén, Susanne Ewerlöf, Olivia Plender, and Åsa Sonjasdotter in conversation with curators Hanna Nordell and Maria Lind about how they, as artists, have approached their inquiries into the Citizen School for Women at Fogelstad.

Maria Lind: What made you all initially interested in the Citizen School for Women at Fogelstad?

Petra Bauer: I have always been interested in the period that preceded the establishment of the Citizen School for Women and the early socialist women's movement that stretched from the end of the 1800s until 1921. My choice to focus on the socialist women's movement pertains to the fact that it was a movement that not only fought for universal suffrage but also more comprehensive structural societal change. The right to vote was a goal to reach along the way, but it was by no means the final aim. They had a more overarching agenda which included ownership rights, sexuality, children, marriage, and the division of responsibilities in the home. It was markedly different from the movements that only focused on voting rights. I have been looking into the period leading up to 1921 since I am interested in how it's possible to navigate politics and be heard when you lack political agency. Of particular interest to me have been the ways in which these women utilized photography and posters to make political statements.

ML: The women that founded the Citizen School for Women most definitely wanted to achieve structural change in society, although they came from a more politically liberal context. Many of them would, however, gradually lean more to the political left. Your piece in the "Komtemåtta" exhibition is an installation featuring

a selection of posters, and photographs where the women display themselves in groups in front of the camera.

PB: Yes exactly, in these images the women are presenting themselves as collective political subjects. In the photographs, I see women stepping into positions that they otherwise were shut off from, positions that belonged exclusively to men. I imagine that these women used photography to portray themselves as intellectual subjects. In that way, photography becomes a place where women establish relationships, identity, politics, and solidarity amongst themselves. It becomes a collective space for discussion, a community. They bring to light a collective struggle, and the power needed to enact change for women. In other words, the images have not been created to simply represent something, but as a political action. And so, when the photograph eventually reaches the world, it is too late to take it back. The action cannot be undone. Political agency has been established. The posters, on the other hand, were utilized within the movement to communicate with other women and invite them to talks, discussions, lectures, and meetings. I have imagined the "making" of these photographs and posters in line with what Saidiya Hartman describes as "critical fabulation." Meanwhile, it should be said that posters and photographs are a comparatively marginalized material in terms of contemporary historical research.

ML: Did you come across Fogelstad while you were researching this?

PB: Fogelstad was set up towards the end of this period, when people wanted to create a space to gather and learn from one another. The subjects and ideas that the Fogelstad group focused on were also present during the earlier period. This can be seen in for example the magazine Tidevarvet, which was founded and run by the Fogelstad group, and on the posters that I have been looking at. They express an idea of a different kind of life with civil

and political rights. The women back then used Folkets Hus (people's houses) as a place for collaborative learning. Many of the women that appear in my work would also later be a present at Fogelstad, among them Ada Nilsson.

Hanna Nordell: Olivia, you have been looking into feminist movements of the 20th century in both Sweden and abroad. What was your point of entry when it came to the Citizen School for Women at Fogelstad?

Olivia Plender: I look to history as a mean to bring up contemporary issues and conditions. I want to know where the structures we live by today originate from, and I'm interested in the voices that have not been listened to or the stories that have been misunderstood. I also believe that history is replete with methods that are applicable today: ways to unite people, build strong social movements and so on. I explore this through drawings, cartoons, objects, video, and publications.

One of my pieces is a series of drawings based on archival photographs from the Citizen School for Women. In the photographs, we see a group of women dressed up as different characters from the fictional municipality Komtemåtta, as part of a role-playing exercise that was widely used as a pedagogical device by the school. Since many of the women are dressed in men's clothing, there is a distinct queerness about the images. In the Komtemåtta exercise, participants would perform different societal roles—municipal councilor, baker, teacher etc.—and solve political issues in the municipality.

I often work with themes related to education, having explored many examples from the history of alternative education during the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, during which there were attempts to make learning more of an experience-based

exercise. Proponents of this wished to break away from the hierarchical idea of the student as an empty vessel that needed to be filled up with facts by the teacher. Honorine Hermelin, principal teacher at the Fogelstad School, was inspired by the writings of the American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey. Beyond that, there is a long history of how games and play are used in education, which includes everything from Friedrich Fröbel, anarchist schools for adults, and self-organized working-class associations.

Many of the women who ran the Citizen School for Women were lesbians, or what we would today call queer. The role of queer people in the so-called "first wave" of feminism is often downplayed, and so I wanted to put it center stage. For previous projects, I have, for example, spent time in archives related to the 20th century British suffragette movement, where I learned that many suffragettes lived in same-sex relationships. There were aspects of the suffragette movement that not only focused on women's voting rights, but that aimed for much greater societal change, which included a transformation of family structures and gender roles. Once you dig up archival material like this, it is undeniable that the past is far more complex than we have been taught.

ML: Åsa Elzén, you have quite literally entered Fogelstad and made a number of works. Video work, photography, and even a "transcript" of a carpet that the artist Maja Fjæstad made, commissioned by Elisabeth Tamm, who owned the Fogelstad estate and initiated the school. The carpet is based on the school, what was going on there and the different people that frequented it. How did you get to know about it?

Åsa Elzén: It began as an interest in local history in combination with an already ongoing study on feminist histories. As a child,

I spent quite a lot of time in the area around Fogelstad, so in some way it's always been on my radar. When I was invited to take part in Bie Biennale 2016, I saw an opportunity to further explore the place, since Bie is situated around ten kilometers from Fogelstad. At that time, I didn't know so much about the Citizen School, and I realized that people in the area had limited knowledge about it as well. At first, I was exploring different parts of the school, applying Toni Morrison's ideas on the "responsibility of the imagination" since there was not enough archival material to consult.

I contacted the Fogelstad Cultural Association, which was founded in the 1990s, and they were very generous with their time. My work in the biennale was partly displayed in the building known as "the Dairy," which was an important location for the Citizen School for Women. It was in the attic above the dairy that the so-called "Homestead Evenings" took place. This was the time when course participants, one by one, would sit down in front of the others and talk about their lives. It was an exciting place, but also quite dilapidated, which I found both sad and interesting.

HN: In your work about Fogelstad, you've consulted archival materials, private photo albums and photographs. You've also looked into artistic materials that materialized at the Citizen School for Women. Do you want to tell us a bit more about how you approached these material traces that were left at the school?

ÅE: I began looking for objects that had been left at Fogelstad, which might provide insights into some interesting ideas that are relevant to the present day. Also objects that might problematize how we perceive time and history. Through this research, I heard about a carpet that Elisabeth Tamm commissioned from the artist Maja Fjæstad, which was inspired by the concept fallow.

To lay a field fallow means to let it rest from human production for a period of time. The carpet had been in the library at the Women's Citizen School at Fogelstad up until the late 1960s, when it was put up in the attic. Both the carpet and the concept interested me, and since then, I have created different works using them as a points of departure. Fallowing land is about us humans taking a step back, putting production on hold and thereby allowing time and space to other life forms. It is an archaic term that we need to begin reconsidering, particularly when it comes to our forestry, and what our Earth could gain by allowing the forests to remain untouched, that is, letting it lie fallow. I think that a lot of the ideas and material surrounding the Fogelstad group have been kind of lying fallow, but it is possible to pay attention to it again.

ML: Åsa Sonjasdotter, your work in the exhibition is a translation of the book *Peace with the Earth,* written by Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner in 1939 and published in 1940. You were the editor of the publication. Would you like to tell us how you first came into contact with the book?

Åsa Sonjasdotter: I found the book *Peace with the Earth* by Elisabeth Tamm and Elin Wägner at my local public library when I was twelve years old and curious about feminism. When I started reading, I was totally blown away. In hindsight, I understand that what was so overwhelming for me was the place from which the words in the book originated. Back then I didn't know that such a place existed. My family comes from the countryside, and I have grown up with a rural identity. The fact that feminism could be linked to issues around agriculture and ecology really resonated with me.

Since then, I have lived abroad for many years, and I've always looked for that same voice in the places I work in. Similar initiatives have turned up, and some of them are connected to or in dialogue

with the Fogelstad group. That revelation made me curious about further exploring the transnational activity of the Citizen School for Women. They were constantly in dialogue with initiatives from other places.

ML: Susanne Ewerlöf, you have contributed to this exhibition with a video essay that is not directly linked to the Citizen School but that Hanna and I as curators regard as a parallel development. Since we wanted to contextualize the exhibition in Norrbotten, it is about a Sámi woman with a strong activist practice around the same time as the school. What are your thoughts about Fogelstad?

Susanne Ewerlöf: I never really got the chance to investigate the Citizen School for Women in depth, although I've always been aware of its existence. During my studies, I worked as a museum guide at Julita Manor close to Fogelstad, which tells a different story about Sweden. Now that I've had reason to consider what such a place might mean for individuals and for society, it has made me think primarily about our current need for collectivity, radical thinking, and finding spaces for the exchange of knowledge.

In this exhibition, I'm exhibiting a piece about Karin Stenberg. She was a forest Sámi, who was born and lived in the area around Arvidsjaur between 1884 and 1969. She is remembered as an important Sámi voice from that time. Her most active period coincides with the same decades that the Citizen School was operational. Among other things, she was engaged with issues around education for Sámi people, the preservation of Sámi cultural heritage, and fundamentally the right for the Sámi people to live as Sámi.

Having researched her life and the story about who she was, it is evident that she was a sharp, intelligent person, who realized early on that she would enact change through education. When

she encountered elderly people in her local community who were concerned about their lack of rights, she decided to get an education. Her family was supportive. She eventually became a teacher and would spend her whole life working in a primary school. In order to educate herself further and become a significant political voice, she looked up important texts on her own initiative and would sit in the forest and read. She was very dedicated.

In 1920, she published an important text written together with Valdemar Lindholm, with the title "It Is Our Will: An Appeal to the Swedish Nation from the Sámi People." Now I'm reading this text one hundred years later, but many of the problems she raised back then continue to persist today. This makes me wonder what difference it would have made had she been in a different context or community to share this knowledge with. It is difficult to be a radical thinker wishing to enact change if you are acting alone in a small, local context.

ML: Your video essay is about Karin Stenberg, her thoughts and her life work. It should be mentioned here that the two of you are distantly related.

SE: One of my points of entry to this topic was the forest Sámi culture that Karin Stenberg came from. I only recently found out about it, and that it was very heavily targeted by the assimilation policies pursued by the Swedish government during the 20th century. Many families with roots in the forest Sámi tradition, for example my maternal grandfather's family, chose to stop identifying as Sámi and passing Sámi knowledge on. In some cases, people even refrained from telling their own families about their Sámi identity. I reflect on these issues in the video since I imagine that they were a part of Karin's lived reality. I also borrowed a quote from her book.

HN: In the exhibition there is also a portrait of Sámi activist Elsa Laula Renberg, by the artist Anders Sunna. Renberg played a central role in the political organization of the Sámi people up until her death in 1931. She was a midwife who also worked to improve schooling for Sámi children, taking a critical stance towards the nomadic schools that you raise in your essay, Susanne. There is no direct connection between Elsa Laula Renberg and the Citizen School, though Renberg was active during the first decades of the school. Despite the lack of connection, it is interesting to see that issues surrounding education, land rights, and women's rights all intertwine.

ML: What makes the Citizen School for Women relevant to this day?

PB: What interests me is how women, both in the past and in the present, choose to gather and organize, how they discuss what position they should take in and towards society. The socialist women from the early 20th century would meet at community centers where political meetings, lectures, talks, and parties were arranged. Festivities were an important part of the organization, mobilization, and sense of community at Fogelstad. If I understood it correctly, this developed even at a later stage, where women collectively discussed and explored how they should take part in society as new citizens. This is something that I think is totally relevant today. We need more common spaces where we can discuss issues together and learn from each other, so we can properly navigate the societal developments of the current age.

OP: There were some fantastic pedagogical methods at the Citizen School for Women, some of which I would like to take into my artistic practice in the future. One example is their use of role-playing, which is truly a magical way to bring a group together and for participants to identify themselves within a given situation. Komtemåtta was

a sophisticated role-playing exercise that the students used as a mean to practice acting as local municipal stakeholders, handling conflicts and solving problems in a political context. In the archives there is evidence of a whole host of other activities. They didn't just throw these women in at the deep end; there were some brilliant techniques used to strengthen women's self-esteem.

One that I particularly like are the "Homestead Evenings," during which one woman would talk about her life in front of the rest of the group. There are parallels to be drawn here to the "consciousness raising" groups of the 1970s. This method, developed by the Women's Liberation Movement, builds on the idea that "the personal is political." The act of telling their personal story aloud in front of a group of women, who saw them and listened to them, boosted their self-confidence. It made them realize that their life story has importance and that it is part of a greater political structure. The "Homestead Evenings" were engaging in activities similar to those of consciousness-raising groups long before that term was ever coined.

Many of the pedagogical methods developed at Fogelstad resembled those used in other historically progressive educational spaces. There were, for example, sessions in training participants to read newspapers to understand the ideology behind how a story was written. This reminds me of similar techniques developed in the 1970s in a totally different context by Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire from Brazil, two important figures in the history of radical pedagogy.

ÅE: The women behind Fogelstad were ahead of their time. In a way it's like an echo that continues to resound today, which feels both sad and comforting. *Peace with the Earth* was published in 1940, but as I understand it, the same thoughts had been around for a long time, already in the 1920s and '30s. They were concerned about what they saw coming with the industrialization of agriculture: chemical

pesticides and fertilizers, larger farms, and less biodiversity. Elisabeth Tamm practiced the methods that she wrote about on the farm at Fogelstad, for example with crop rotations and recurring fallows. In Peace with the Earth, they express it in the following way: "The ideals of today are mechanization, specialization and speed. We stand consciously against this, with what we believe are the ideals of tomorrow: Self-sufficiency—diversity—patience." [1]

Self-sufficiency here means "resilience," and patience is something that we ought to really be working on today. They were early to warn us about these developments. What we are witnessing now is happening at a different pace and the scope is larger. Of course, this feels sad, but I still feel comforted by the work that they put in. There are many of us around the world right now, but also historically, who have fought for what they so beautifully express in the book: not just peace on earth but peace with the earth. One peace is impossible to achieve without the other.

ÅS: What I think we can learn from them is their methods of self-organization. They were pragmatic about the system of representative democracy and, as I gather, mildly skeptical about whether this structure could "get the job done" when it came to transforming patriarchal hierarchies. They had a down-to-earth stance towards a situation that to them was (and still is) clearly more complex.

SE: I feel that we are living in a time when we need to rethink how we share power between us and how we should share responsibility. We need tools in order to continue to be hopeful, resilient, and

1 Elisabeth Tamm, Elin Wägner, Fred med jorden (Peace with the Earth), Flory Gates Stiftelser Fred med Jorden, Alvesta 2014 p. 21. First edition of Fred med jorden (Peace with the Earth) was published at Albert Bonnier publisher 1940.

radical; therefore, it is a welcome idea, or maybe even a necessary one, that we find new ways of coming together to think and talk and create. So even if they lived in a very different time, with different problems and challenges, Fogelstad can be an inspiration now that we need to find new ways to create a future together.

ML: As you have all mentioned, there are a lot of fascinating things about Fogelstad: how they worked, what they did and who was involved. But what are the school's blind spots?

ÅE: One aspect worth bringing up is that the women at Elisabeth Tamm's estate at Fogelstad were, it seems, living openly queer lives. But as I gather, they were not an active part of the early queer movement in Sweden. They didn't, for example, bring up the issue in their journal Tidevarvet, which was a platform for driving opinion. One should keep in mind that, in Sweden, homosexuality was criminalized until 1944.

I've been interested in the Women's Barn and Livestock School that ran alongside the Citizen School. Elisabeth Tamm was concerned that farms were becoming too large and thus much worse for the earth and biodiversity, so she thought it was important that there were small farms left in the countryside. With the industrialization of agriculture, there was also a kind of masculinization of many positions and jobs that women had previously held. Tamm thought it was important that women should be barn foremen, partly because it would mean that there were still interesting jobs for women in the countryside. She also wrote somewhere that she believes women are simply better suited to care for animals precisely because they are women. That might feel problematic today, but on the other hand, they lived under completely different circumstances.

PB: The socialist women's movement doesn't raise the subject of ethnicity very much and I haven't seen them paying attention to the situations and conditions of different population groups in Sweden, for example the Sámi. However, the terminology of racial biology seeps into the discussions and reasoning that existed at this time. The use of language and the approach is extremely problematic from today's perspective. Not being able to distance yourself from your own language and criticize it could be seen as a blind spot.

ÅS: I think that the blind spots can be a little easier to see beyond the Swedish context. I have a very concrete example of language use. When I was working on the translation of *Peace with the Earth,* I was researching in the KvinnSam archive, where there were many letters and manuscripts in German and other languages. When it comes to international dialogue, I think that a lot of material disappeared in the countries that were involved in the war, which makes the KvinnSam archive even more important. One such document—which there may be only one copy of in Sweden—has been preserved in the personal archive of the farmer, artist, and activist Flory Gates. It's a protocol from a meeting arranged by the Women's Organization for World Order (WOWO), which was a group based in Austria, founded in 1935 by Anna Helene Askanasy and active until 1939. The initiative summoned members from most of the world's continents. Both Flory Gates and Elin Wägner participated in the group's meeting in 1937. The protocol has been written in German and reveals that eugenics, as in racial biology, was one of the matters raised.

In the protocol it is stated: "Population policy must focus on raising the quality of life of people and not, as has been the case thus far, the quantity." Under the second point it says: "Eugenics

is one of humanity's most important foundations." [2] There are no comments or questions written down in Flory Gates' protocol, which she would have had right in front of her at the time. For us reading this today, the sentence feels incredibly controversial, even though we don't know how it was discussed during the meeting.

The context was different then, eugenics was generally perceived to be something good for society, and it wasn't questioned in the same way as it is today. If we try to read this text through pardoning eyes, we could imagine that their focus was on abortion rights and the right of bodily autonomy for women. Regardless, for me it's a painful detail that points to a large blind spot that needs to be cleared up. In *Peace with the Earth,* Tamm and Wägner are very critical of how the questions of race and purity are brought up in relation to animal husbandry and plant breeding. They were also actively anti-Nazi. So where did they stand in relation to the idea of eugenics, and what does that mean for how we relate to their work today?

Another issue that I think deserves more attention is the colonial connections to the ecological movement that emerged in Europe, and which the book *Peace with the Earth* refers to. The idea came to Europe with agronomists who were employed on plantations in India by the British colonial administration. The British had understood that the cultivation techniques of the Indian farmers were much better than their own, and their advanced composting methods came to be a central part of the Western ecological movement. But the connection to the Indian farmers disappeared.

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2 IX, Bevölkerungspolitik, 1 "Die Bevölkerungspolitik muss das Gewicht auf Hebung der Qualität der Menschen und nicht wie bisher auf Hebung der Quantität legen. [...] Eugenik is eine der wichtigen Grundlagen der Menchheit."

Although this is not exactly a blind spot—it has been discussed quite a lot—there is a colonial history here that needs to be studied more closely.

OP: I would say that blind spots from the history of the Citizen School for Women, and from other similar feminist histories, have to do with the way the stories are used or misused in the present day. The campaign for women's voting rights at the beginning of the 20th century was an international movement, and groups that fought for women's suffrage were connected with feminists in other countries. Many of them would have been in what we call today the Global South, and these women would have been active in the struggle against colonialism. The women that founded the school had many international feminist contacts as far as I can see, with visitors coming to the school from around the whole world.

SE: The time during which both Karin Stenberg and the Civilization School for Women were active tend to be described as a period in which Sweden's history indicated a greater degree of democratic values, better education, greater equality, and better standards of living. This coincides with the Nomadic school system, which was enforced in 1913 and would come to affect schooling for Sámi children over many decades. It affected primarily the Sámi children who had nomadic parents, such as mountain Sámi. The whole system was marked by the attitude "a Lapp is a Lapp," which entailed not introducing Sámi children to anything that could be considered "civilized," including a higher education.

I think about the statements made by Karin Stenberg, who advocates for improved education for the Sámi people. She also reflects on the Swedish majority population's view of the Sámi as a people that didn't have the capacity to develop, a people that should remain in some kind of past way of living. This is something that I've reflected

on in my work. It reminds me of Walter Mignolo's thoughts on colonialism as being the dark side of modernity, and something which is present throughout the development of democracy.

ML: I would like to mention here that one part of the exhibition draws attention to the women from Norrbotten who participated in the courses. We haven't been able to see that any of them are Sámi, and there are no Finnish-sounding names that would indicate a background from the Torne Valley / Lantalaiset / Kvänland. Like the other participants, many of the women from the region were teachers. There was also a journalist and a boarding school principal.
ML: Is there some kind of contemporary equivalent to the Citizen School for Women?

PB: For the past fifteen years, I've been involved in the association of the Women's Centre in Tensta-Hjulsta, which you Maria introduced me to when you were director of Tensta Konsthall. There is clearly a contemporary Fogelstad mentality there. The Women's Centre in Tensta-Hjulsta is a grassroots movement founded in 1997 by women with a migrant background. At the center, women provide teaching, they share experiences, and reflect together on how to relate to society. Through the center, I've got to know a larger network of different women's organizations in Järva, which makes for a women's movement that grows in strength each day. The women there are fighting for better conditions for the citizens of the outskirts of the city, against poverty, criminalization, racism, and inequality. To me, this growing movement is our future. I feel like what is happening among the networks in Järva is similar to the women's movement of the early 20th century but rooted in the present of course.

OP: Over the past few years, I've been working in community centers and women's centers in the United Kingdom. I made a series of artworks based on the history of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes (ELFS), which ran a network of women's centers a century ago in London. As part of my research for the project, I organized workshops on a play written around 1913 by the activist Sylvia Pankhurst about the ELFS. The play was written in collaboration with other London-based groups at the Crossroads Women's Centre and a housing activism group called Focus E15. We discussed the importance of its story and its misrepresentation today, as well as the similarities between the situation for women then and now in terms of the issues that they were working with like equal wages, domestic violence, and benefits.
After having spent so much time in these places, I became interested in how they practice what I would call different forms of feminist pedagogy. Those that frequented the spaces were offered a political education. I'm also interested in what makes these places inviting and accessible to different groups of women—an important aspect of feminist pedagogy—and how they manage to transcend differences like ethnicity and class to create a sense of solidarity between women from different backgrounds.

SE: Reflecting on places where there are alternative, radical ways of sharing knowledge, I like to think that there are hubs that can enact small-scale change using methods that have been previously tested. These are often smaller art organizations that consider pedagogy and knowledge in new ways, or where established perceptions are questioned. I had the opportunity to take part in something called the Praxis Independent Study Program, which was organized for the first time last year and which is currently taking place for its second edition. It is run by a tiny art organization called Fluent, which has its base in a small town in the north of Spain. They invite people to come and live together during a period of time, and you get to try all sorts of things, from poetry to alternative movement, to sensing places. We also went through some pretty serious theoretical study, but above all, we practiced living and thinking in new ways. I believe that there is hope to be found in these small hubs.

ÅE: We are now living in a completely different time period, and in one way, it is much easier for us to get organized and in contact with one another globally in order to address various issues. On the other hand, it might be more difficult now to establish continuity and to set aside time and space for one another.

ÅS: I was recently at a meeting in Brussels organized by the global farmers' movement Via Campesina, which works towards a sustainable farmer-led agricultural system. The meeting brought together local organizations from different parts of Europe. One of the issues discussed was how to organize aspects of the movement that have to do with queerness, diversity, and feminism. I think that the themes brought up during the meeting, and in general the manner in which the movement is organized, is very similar to what Tamm and Wägner write in *Peace with the Earth,* that the League of Nations should be replaced with an organization that is more grassroots-influenced. They write "A new League of Nations must, in order to pursue its task, be made up of people who have agreed never again to plunder, abuse and exploit the earth, their common home." [3] At the meeting, a representative from the Swedish organization NOrdBruk read a quote from *Peace with the Earth* to preface the discussion about queer politics. So, their work and their words are very much alive within that movement today.

3 Wägner, Tamm, p. 57.

Colophon

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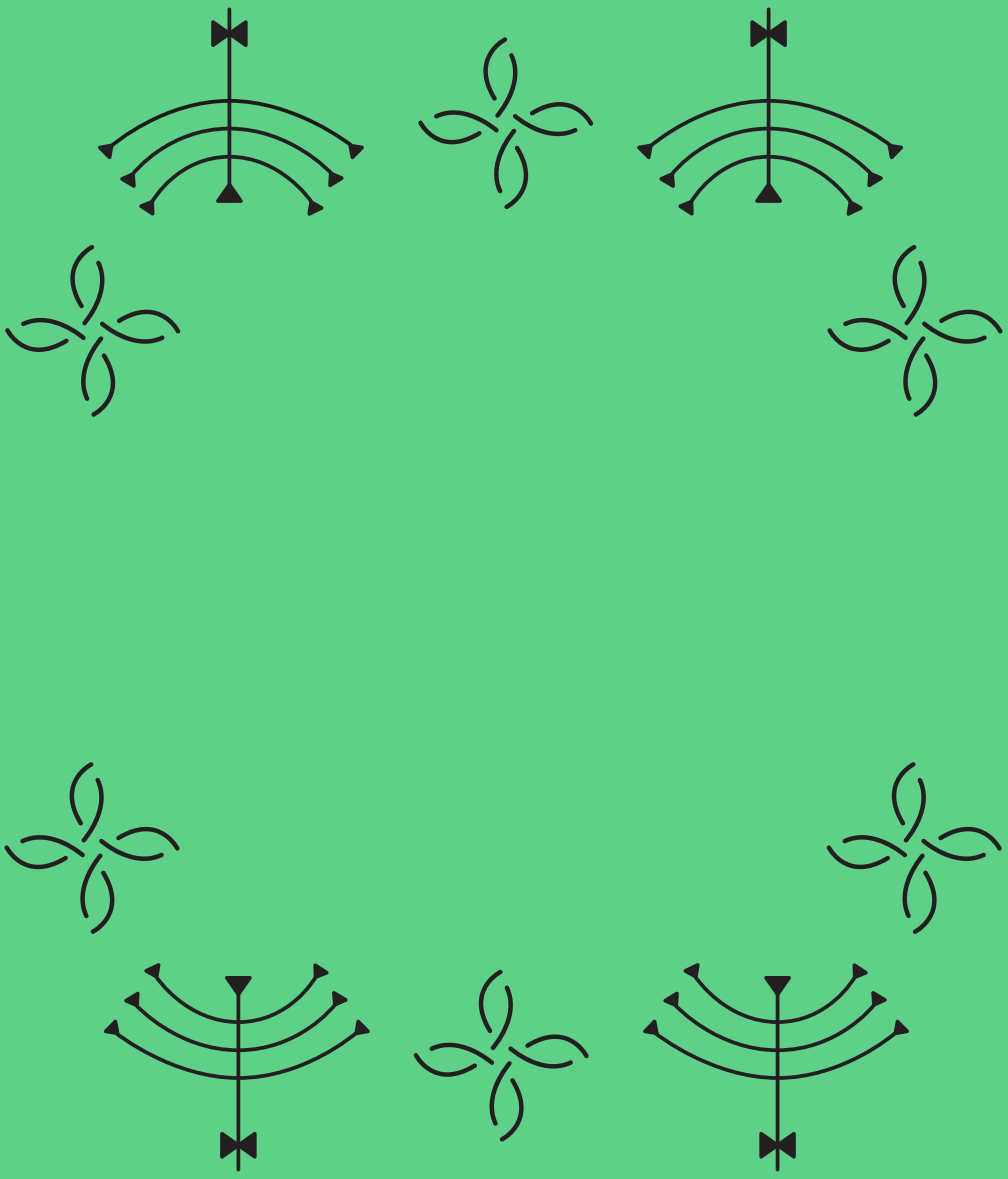
Graphics: Marina Sergeeva

Graphic form in the exhibition by Maryam Fanni. Curators are Maria Lind and Hanna Nordell. The exhibition is a collaboration with KvinnSam at Gothenburg University Library, Norrbottens museum, Liljevalchs konsthall in Stockholm and the cultural magazine Ord&Bild.

Kin's visual dialect has been conceived by the artists Inga-Wiktoria Påve and Fredrik Prost in collaboration with the designers Johanna Lewengard and Benedetta Crippa.

Komtemåtta—A Pioneering Safe Space for Women.
11 April—27 July, 2025.

Kin Museum of Contemporary Art is the regional art museum of Norrbotten, founded in 2018 by the region and the Municipality of Kiruna.

Kin museum för samtidskonst är Norrbottens länskonstmuseum. Huvudmän för museet, som öppnade 2018, är Region Norrbotten och Kiruna kommun.

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