

Hasselblad Center
19.05–16.09




DRONE VISION

WARFARE · SURVEILLANCE · PROTEST

KRIG · ÖVERVAKNING · PROTEST

ΕΧΘΟΡΠΡΑΞΙΕΣ · ΠΑΡΑΚΟΛΟΥΘΗΣΗ · ΔΙΑΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑ

جنگ . زنگرانی . اورادتجاچ



Introduction

Drone Vision: Warfare, Surveillance, Protest considers how drone technologies impact on photography and human rights, opening up questions about the vertical dimensions of surveillance, warfare and protest.

For the exhibition the commissioned artists Ignacio Acosta, Mhairi Sutherland and Behjat Omer Abdulla have produced new and site specific works that respond to the visual and material consequences of drone technologies in the context of Sweden.

Gothenburg, Nicosia, Lahore

Part of a collaborative initiative between Valand Academy, Gothenburg University and the Hasselblad Foundation, the exhibition at the Hasselblad Center is part of an exhibition triptych with the partner galleries NiMAC (the Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre associated with the Perides Foundation) in Nicosia, Cyprus and the Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan.

Bringing the cities Gothenburg, Nicosia and Lahore together through shared photo-based research is an endeavor to make apparent the differential meanings of visibility, of vulnerability and resistance. The triptych of exhibitions is an effort to produce a “geography of thinking” about drones shaped in part by the political and ethical implications of the asymmetry of seeing and not being seen, the proximity and physical distance to drone warfare and the political contexts of Sweden, Pakistan and Cyprus.

Each exhibition includes an installation of the view from above permitted by the authorities of the cities Gothenburg, Lahore and Nicosia by artist Vicky Pericleous. The exhibitions are, furthermore, connected by the audio recordings of three international roundtables hosted in Gothenburg in 2017 and made available in all three venues.

Ignacio Acosta

Litte ja Goabddá [Drones and Drums] is an investigation of the use of drone technologies in the protest against the Gállak mining project in Norrbotten County, Sweden.

Drones have, for the most part, been associated with notions of vertical control, surveillance and warfare, and have mainly been perceived as a technology that extends capitalist and military control. The project *Litte ja Goabddá* subverts this account through an exploration of the use of drones as part of the resistance to the Gállak North mining project. It explores the link between drums and drones as navigation and communication tools. While drums are played by the Sámi as part of a sonic relationship to the land, the use of drones “maps” this relationship and both, in turn, become a method of defiance against resource extraction led by multinational corporations.

Located in the municipality of Jåhkåmåhkke (Jokkmokk), Norrbotten County, and designated an Area of National Interest by the Swedish Geological Survey in 2013 for potential mineral extraction, Gállak North is one of the largest iron ore deposits in Europe that has not been exploited. Beowulf Mining PLC, through its Swedish subsidiary, Jokkmokk Iron Mines AB, has submitted an application for a twenty-five-year Exploitation Concession for Gállak North. The Swedish Government is currently reviewing the application to mine the magnetite iron ore deposit. Ignacio Acosta’s photographic installation *Giesse* is a series of vertical land observations that focus on fragments of the disrupted earth at the site where Beowulf Mining has extracted iron samples.

During several research visits in 2017 and 2018 to Gállak North and Jokkmokk, Ignacio Acosta met with activists and Sámi families living and working in the area threatened by the mines. Working in close collaboration with the Sámi, the project presents the importance of land and place and the anxiety that is felt within the region should the activists fail to halt the opening of a mine.

As an artist from Chile, Ignacio Acosta does not claim to have an intimate understanding of the generational and emotional affect that this moment holds for the Sámi, but by working collaboratively with those affected, *Litte ja Goabddá* traces the ways resource extraction negatively impacts on the cultural and economic rights of the Sámi as a minority indigenous community.

The drone footage used in the project has been developed in collaboration with activists Mose Agestam and Henrik Blind, whose use of a drone view is part of a wider resistance to the logging and mining on Sápmiland. Re-purposing the view from above as an indigenous perspective, it records the Sámi claim to the land and the threat posed by resource extraction in Gállak, which would make indigenous land a source of capital.

If the mine in Gállak North is approved and a mining industry established on the site for twenty-five years, the fragile ecology of the World Heritage Centre protected Laponian Area, considered by Unesco as “the largest area in the world (and one of the last) with an ancestral way of life based on the seasonal movement of livestock” will be threatened, since the migration paths of the reindeer will be blocked. If this happens, Sámi cultural life in the area would experience irreversible decline and with it the loss of valuable indigenous knowledge.

The work *Litte ja Goabddá* documents how the mine would disrupt indigenous relationships to the land and in so doing represent a profound epistemic, ontological and cosmological violence. A violence that would not be temporally contained in the opening of the mine but would be reasserted each day of the twenty-five-year exploitation license.

Ignacio Acosta is a Chilean-born, London-based artist and researcher working with photography and exploring geopolitical power dynamics in minerals, geographies and historical narratives.

***Litte ja Goabddá* [Drones and Drums], 2018**

Two-channel video installation, 18:18 min looped with immersive sound design
Jokkmokk municipality, Norrbotten, Swedish Sápmi

***Giesse* [Summer], 2017**

Photographic series, 16 pigment prints
Gállak mining exploration site and Jokkmokk municipality, Norrbotten County, Swedish Sápmi

Mhairi Sutherland

Linköping is the home of Saab. Originally established by the Swedish government as a means of developing and supplying an airborne national defense system for the Swedish Armed Forces, Saab is now operational on every continent and in 100 countries, continuing to develop and manufacture fighter jets and other aircraft at the Tannefors Aeronautics base in Linköping. The company is a significant player in the contemporary global arms trade. The foundational role of military aircraft in the growth of the city, where the Swedish Air Force, Helicopter and Flights Schools are based, is signified in the local landscape. “Sculptures” of decommissioned fighter jets, Gripen’s predecessors Draken and Viggen, are mounted on curving concrete plinths, greeting visitors from their elevated roadside position. The city skyline itself bears architectural testament to the dominance of aerial flight paths, unbroken by contemporary skyscrapers.

A deeper, more complex acknowledgement of the aviation investment in the area is to be found in the Flygvapenmuseum, a national, award-winning museum situated at the perimeter of the Malmen airbase. Gripen jets and the recently launched GlobalEye AEW&C (Airborne Early Warning & Control) surveillance aircraft can be seen returning to base, flying over the obsolete planes outside the museum. Inside, the main exhibits are full-scale historical aircraft, the majority produced by Saab in Linköping, while the human scale is also introduced in the form of a “family room” installation in each decade of aircraft production represented, from the 1940s, up to the 1980s.

The Saab Arena is home to Linköping’s Hockey Club (LHC), a substantial and popular sporting and entertainment venue in the green parkland of the city. Close to the city center and reached by a short stroll over a pedestrian river bridge, the frontage, signage and flags flying reiterate the name of the key sponsor. Inside the foyer are video screens playing looped promotional videos and sporting clips. Gripen, especially, features heavily in a number of videos. Resonant with the Flygvapenmuseum display practices, contemporary, high-resolution video rather than

archival black-and-white stills evoke the emotive value of an “everyday”: a child’s toy, a wedding ring, loading a coffee cup into the dishwasher, are here connected to the psychology of fear/safety, whilst making a literal leap into the cockpit of a fighter jet.

Saab’s operations in Linköping have not always been so visible. For decades, following their move to the city preceding the outbreak of the Second World War and up until the 1990s the manufacture of aircraft took place in the underground factory of the *Bergverkstaden* the “mountain workshop.” A vast subterranean space of 20,000 square meters was excavated and an underground factory was built, located under today’s Saab Aeronautics HQ, which is still maintained and used as a storage area. The complex was regarded as a “secret” and even today, very few people outside of the company have been granted access. The space, although largely obsolete, still adheres to its original code of secrecy.

The title *Escalate* references the wooden escalator installed in Bergverkstaden, the longest in Sweden at the time, passing through three air raid doors as it transported up to 1,000 workers daily. This early verticalizing technology was the dialectic between above and below, connecting the domestic with the industrial, the subterranean to the potentially stratospheric.

Mhairi Sutherland is a visual artist and curator based in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland, working in photography, video, drawing and site-specific installation.

Escalate, 2018

HD video/color/audio/ 5.43 min, looped. Filmed by the artist in Linköping, Sweden, January 2018. The sound of a wooden escalator was recorded by Fred Weinberg, sourced on Soundsnap. The drone audio was recorded by the Hive Studio, Creggan, Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

Escalate was shot in three locations: the Sky Hotel, the Flygvapenmuseum (Swedish Air Force Museum) and the Saab Arena, in the city of Linköping, Sweden, January 2018.

Topographical Evidence, 2018

Topographical Evidence I (Berg)

Topographical Evidence II (Bank)

Topographical Evidence III (Arena)

Cyanotype print series on sensitized (Saunders Waterford) paper based on drawings by the artist of the Linköping city skyline.

Behjat Omer Abdulla

The film's title *It's Your Turn Doctor* refers to graffiti that was scrawled on a school wall in 2011 in the city of Daraa in South West Syria close to the border with Jordan. The statement was a direct protest against President Basher al-Assad, who trained as a doctor. In response to the graffiti the authorities rounded up, imprisoned and tortured 23 school boys from the city. These events were the initial catalyst for the 'revolution' in Syria sparking demonstrations against Assad throughout the country and the relentless war that has shaped the country since.

The starting point of Behjat Omer Abdulla's research was the long and complex history of Restad Gård, the largest refugee center in Sweden on the outskirts of Vänersborg, north of Gothenburg. Its change in use over time can be charted by the change in residents from farm workers to psychiatric patients, to the current 1,500 residents seeking asylum.

As an artist who has experience of being in exile from the country of his birth, Kurdistan in Iraq, Behjat Omer Abdulla knew from the outset of this project that he wanted to produce an artwork which centered on the experience of being displaced, on the loss, estrangement and trauma of fleeing war.

In the course of several meetings in 2017 and 2018 facilitated by the Restad Gård Support Network, the artist learnt of the civilian use of drones to map out safe routes and avoid ground troop operations to escape the war in Syria. These testimonies were key to his approach to the use of a drone above Restad Gård and its meaning for the residents below.

On one of his research visits, Behjat Omer Abdulla was told of Mohammed Al Maani and his wife's horrific experiences in Daraa. The artist met and began working with Mohammed Al Maani, assuring him of the fact that the produced film would be faithful

to his account and would respect his and his family's right to privacy, to remain unseen.

The artist integrated a pixelated YouTube video of the bombing of Daraa and the rescue of Mohammed Al Maani in *It's Your Turn Doctor*, which replays the documentation as a traumatic flashback. Intercut with the drone footage of Restad Gård, the film details the lived experience of war and its aftermath for those affected.

In reworking three stills from the YouTube footage as the series *Daraa Shelling*, Behjat Omer Abdulla wanted to draw attention to the detail and horror of war. Translating the physical injury of Mohammed Al Maani into the artist's bodily action of working with graphite powder, pencil and ink on paper, Behjat Omer Abdulla's *Daraa Shelling* series are acts of translation, solidarity, embodiment and defiance. By converting photographs to drawings, Behjat Omer Abdulla seeks to process the violence through his own body, to enter into a more human contact with the subject and affect the way the viewer connects to the artwork and the realities of war.

Rather than being a metaphor for the violence of war, *It's Your Turn Doctor* is Mohammed Al Maani's story and an invitation to look and listen. The aim of Behjat Omer Abdulla's project is to generate questions and debate about political violence and its representation as "images of war" that refer to profound and complex experiences.

Behjat Omer Abdulla is a mixed media artist, born in Kurdistan/Iraq. He lived to the UK from 1999 to 2013 and now lives and works in Sweden.

***It's Your Turn Doctor*, 2018**

HD video/color/audio/ 19 min, looped. Filmed by the artist at Restad Gård and the area of Vänersborg, December–March, 2018

***Daraa Shelling I–III*, 2018**

Graphite powder, pencil and ink on paper

The Drone Vision Project

Drone Vision: Warfare, Surveillance, Protest is a two-year research project from 2016 to 2018 exploring the meanings of drone technologies on photography and human rights.

The project has been developed through a partnership between Hasselblad Foundation and Valand Academy in Gothenburg, Sweden; NiMAC, Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre (associated with the Pierides Foundation), Cyprus and Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery, at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan.

Conceived as a mode of relational experience between the curators, artists and gallery audiences and as a shared sense of responsibility toward distant others, the three exhibitions are all informed by *realpolitik* of place and region.

NiMAC, Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre presents the work of artists Efi Savvides, Stelios Kallinikou and Ran Slavin, curated by Yiannis Tournazis. Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts in Lahore presents the artists Wajahat Khilji, Salman Khan, Hammad Gillani and Sajid Khan curated by Imran Qureshi and coordinated by Imran Ahmad.

The exhibition at the Hasselblad Center is curated by Sarah Tuck and Louise Wolthers.

Three discursive events in the format of roundtable discussions were hosted in Gothenburg in March, May and June 2017. They provide an exploration of the exhibition themes of drone vision among participants from different academic disciplines – photography, visual arts, geography, literature, war studies, design, law – and from a range of countries: Australia, UK, India, Sweden, Pakistan, US and Cyprus. The discussions were intended as cross-disciplinary conversations that consider the impacts and affective meanings of drone technologies on image and its uses in warfare, surveillance and protest. The audio documentation of the roundtable discussions in the exhibition provide multiple perspectives on the asymmetry of the drone view and the “politics of verticality.” The discussions are produced by Sarah Tuck.

Participants in Roundtable 1, March 2017

Joseph DeLappe Former Professor of the Department of Art at the University of Nevada where he directed the Digital Media program and current Professor in Games Research at Abertay University in Dundee.

Tomas van Houtryve Artist, photographer and author based in France who engages with critical contemporary issues around the world.

Essam Adam Attia New York-based artist. He joined the US Army in 2003 where he served three years as a geospatial analyst.

Svea Bräunert DAAD Visiting Associate Professor for German Studies at the University of Cincinnati.

Lara Baladi A multi-disciplinary Egyptian-Lebanese artist.

Darren Newbury Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (Arts and Humanities) and Professor of Photographic History at the University of Brighton.

Dave Beech Artist in the collective Freee in England, as well as a writer, curator and PARSE Professor at Valand Academy, Gothenburg University.

Julian Stallabrass Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

Participants in Roundtable 2, May 2017

Anthony McCosker Senior lecturer and researcher in Media and Communications at Swinburne University, Australia.

Mirza Shahzad Akbar Co-founder, legal director and a trustee of the Foundation for Fundamental Rights, an organization that provides legal aid to enforce fundamental rights guaranteed under the constitution of Pakistan.

Erling Björgvinsson Professor of Design at the School of Design and Craft, Faculty of Fine Arts, Gothenburg University.

Kerstin Hamilton Photographer, filmmaker and a PhD candidate at Valand Academy, Gothenburg University.

Jann Kleffner Professor of International Law and Head of the International Law Center at the Swedish Defense University.

Fred Ritchin Dean of the International Center of Photography (ICP) School, New York.

Lila Lee-Morrison PhD Candidate in the Division of Art History and Visual Culture at Lund University, Sweden.

Abdullah Qureshi Artist and teacher, former Senior Consultant Arts Projects and Partnerships with the British Council Pakistan and currently a PhD candidate at Aalto University's School of Arts, Design and Architecture in Finland.

Daniel Rubinstein Reader in Philosophy and the Image at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London.

Khashayar Naderehvandi Poet, writer and literary critic. PhD candidate at Valand Academy, Gothenburg University.

Participants in Roundtable 3, June 2017

Ayesha Omer Artist based in Karachi, Pakistan, and a PhD candidate at the Media, Culture and Communication department, New York University.

Steve Graham Professor of Cities and Society at the Global Urban Research Unit, based in Newcastle University's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. His research addresses the politics of infrastructure, mobility, digital media, surveillance, security, militarism and verticality.

Despo Pasia Museolog och museiutbildare vid State Gallery of Contemporary Cypriot Art. Doktorand vid UCL, Institute of Education vid University of London.

Karl Ydén Member of the Swedish Royal Academy of War Sciences and has served as an advisor on defense matters to the Government Offices in Sweden and the Swedish Defense Research Agency.

Helen Jackson Senior Lecturer at the School of Communication and Media at Ulster University, Northern Ireland.

Caroline Kennedy Pipe Professor of International Security at University of Loughborough, England and former Professor of War Studies and Director of the Centre for Security Studies at the University of Hull.

Kent Klich Socially engaged photographer based in Copenhagen who has, amongst others, photographed life in the Gaza Strip since the early 2000s.

Onkar Kular Professor for Design Interventions at HDK, Academy of Design and Crafts, Gothenburg University.

Ram Krishna Ranjan Visual artist and filmmaker from India and PhD candidate at Valand Academy, Gothenburg University.

The edited round table audio has been installed in a furniture designed by Julia Chirokova, Maja Frögård, Carolina Laudon and Louise Mazet, led by Markus Miessen and Mattias Gunnarsson at the Design Politics group from the Academy of Design and Crafts, Gothenburg University. The audio was recorded by Samuel Malm and edited by Safin Taki and Sarah Tuck.

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Stefan Jensen

Björn Larsson

Samuel Malms

Markus Miessen

Elsa Modin

Despo Pasia

Mattias Persson

Safin Taki

Yiannis Toumazis

Imran Qureshi

Dragana Vujanovic Östlind

Mick Wilson

Rida Zainab

Niclas Östlind

Program

Sunday, May 20 at 1 pm

Guided tour with the artists Behjat Omer Abdulla, Ignacio Acosta and Mhairi Sutherland (in English)

Guided tours in Swedish, Sundays at 1 pm

27.5, 3.6, 10.6, 17.6

19.8, 26.8, 2.9, 9.9, 16.9

Wednesday May 30 at 5:30 pm

The Hasselblad Center
Showing of the Hasselblad HK7 aerial reconnaissance camera from the early 1940s and presentation of the most recent civilian drone technologies.
With Elsa Modin, Louise Wolthers, Sarah Tuck and Danny Zheng.

Wednesday June 13 at 5:30 pm

The Hasselblad Center
Guided tour and presentation of the research project by Sarah Tuck.

Wednesday August 29 at 6 pm

The Hasselblad Center
Author Linnea Axelsson speaks about and reads from her book *Ædnan*.

Friday September 14 at 10 am to 5 pm

Hörsalen, Gothenburg Museum of Art International seminar with collaborating artists and curators from Nicosia and Lahore.
Supported by the Swedish Arts Council.

Saturday September 15 at 2 pm

Trappscenen, Stadsbiblioteket in Gothenburg
Public discussion about drone vision in Sweden with the artists Behjat Omer Abdulla, Ignacio Acosta, Mhairi Sutherland and their collaborators. Supported by the Swedish Arts Council.

For booking of guided tours in other languages and other events please visit www.hasselbladfoundation.se

Hasselblad Center

Götaplatsen

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hasselbladfoundation.se

Opening hours

Tuesday, Thursday 11 am–6 pm

Wednesday 11 am–8 pm

Friday–Sunday 11 am–5 pm



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