# searching for    social

*Adressing segregation with social art*
*in favour of empowerment & inclusion*

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ABSTRACT

Segregation has been linked to socio-economic inequality and becomes a threat to democracy when it is causing unequal rights to the city. The need to connect and belong to like-minded forms social groups conforming in culture, background and socioeconomic status. Over the last decades polarisation has increased resulting in conflicting preferences, beliefs and behaviours. Social art can be a medium to fight forces of social exclusion and to raise awareness about a specific problem with the ultimate goal to create positive social change. An art institution is an organisation founded for cultural or social purposes but it risks to lose its focus to be a public space offering knowledge and democratic ideas. Art institutions need to adapt and focus more on social change.

General research about segregation is common but its relation to institutions and specifically the democratic roles of art institutions is less studied in comparison. Public buildings are crucial for the social well-being of a city and their importance for democracy and community needs to be stressed. The aim with the thesis is to investigate how segregation has become a deep-rooted problem in Gothenburg and how social art and an art institution can respond to social segregation. To investigate what an art institution needs to be a democratic and social platform for all citizens. The design aims to specifically target groups with low socioeconomic standard.

The thesis is based on research for design with an iterative process. Theoretical studies with literature review are conducted in parallel with site analysis and design. The analysis are based on Gothenburg, on a regional and local level. The site for the design proposal is Bältesspännarparken, a park in central Gothenburg where people from all over the city cross paths. The aim has been answered by proposing a re-imagination of the conventional institution, a public building representing social meetings, democracy and social art in one organisation.

The conclusions show that it is important to put strong emphasis on people and identity and to design space where citizens can socialise and engage democratically. The physical appearance of a building impact how attractive the content becomes. Architecture alone cannot make a public building integrated and the program and content has a lot of weight for the institution to reach its social and democratic goals.

**Key words: segregation, socioeconomics, social constructions, social art, inclusion, democracy, art institutions, empowerment**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When I was a child I used to go with my family to visit an art park in the woods. It was an enchanting place with an old big castle, an outdoor radiator warmed by cow milk, a peculiar barn with spinning floors and a preaching house in the woods. The art park turned into a whimsical playground through the eyes of a child and it became a special place to me through the years. When I turned eighteen I got my first summerjob in the art park. One summer became four and I realised that art appealed to me, as a way to appreciate and learn about the world.

I have lived in Gothenburg for some time, both in the citycentre and the suburbs. The social differences in Gothenburg are evident and always been in the back of my mind. I wanted my master thesis to be about a subject that felt important to me and society but also something that interested me so I put two and two together to write about social segregation and social art.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Segregation is a deep-rooted problem in Swedish urban societies (Dikeç 2017:132). The modern segregation problem in Sweden officially marks its start in 1965 with Miljonprogrammet (Isitt 2019) followed by economic shifts and political decisions made during the following thirty years (Dikeç 2017:132). 1965 was a significant year because a political decision was made to build one million dwellings in ten years which influenced the distribution of socioeconomic groups. These decisions and shifts progressively changed the situation in Sweden to become more polarised and unequal. Privatizations and policies resulting in a more liberalised market benefitting the rich and disadvantaging vulnerable and poor residents.

Gothenburg is known for being a segregated city. The city has failed in creating a social mix and the neighbourhoods are lacking in diversity. Like-minded social groups cluster and local communities grow in parallell with polarisation. Inequalities can be seen in statistics, for example the annual income for men in Bergsjön is 580 000 kr less than for men in Långedrag (Isitt 2019). Bältesspännarparken is a park in central Gothenburg close to the public transport stop Kungsportsplatsen, the popular park Trädgårdsföreningen and the busy street Kungsportsavenyn. It is a place with a diverse range of activities and where people from all over the city cross paths.

The time we are living in has been described as a *liquid modernity* (Amin 2012:13). The term is coined by Zygmunt Bauman and refers to an instability in society, caused by globalisation, uncertainty and increasing inequality. People are uprooted from where they originally belong and displaced (Amin 2012:13). Relocation introduces the individual to multiple new social communities. Traditional community bonds are being replaced with fragile and temporary connections (Amin 2012:13).

Over the last decades polarisation has increased resulting in conflicting preferences, beliefs and behaviours (Vasconcelos, Constantino, Dannenberg, Lumkowsky, Weber, Levin 2021:1). This makes social bonds in society become weaker and affects the welfare-promoting processes in society negatively which in turn influence both collective and individual opportunities.

Jane Jacobs, activist and author to *The death and Life of American Cities*, thought that a concentration of strangers is what defines urban life. To take part of urban life strangers with various beliefs and backgrounds need to learn to live together (Legeby 2013:31).

Segregation has been linked to socioeconomic inequality and welfare (Nordic Council of Ministers 2019:5). Segregation as a threat to democracy becomes a recurring theme causing unequal rights and unequal access to the city. Democracy is commonly mediated through politics but it can also be expressed through art. Art can be used to express opinions and has the power to formulate something new in the world (Jonsson 2022). Sometimes art can be a mirror of society, highlight its problems and keep the democracy alive.

Social art is an artform socially engaging people and communities through interaction and collaboration. It can be a medium to fight forces of cultural and social exclusion (Dewinter, Rutten, Bradt 2021). This practice have been used to strengthen social cohesion, especially in neighbourhoods that are seen as multi-cultural and underprivileged. During changing times, a crisis in a city or community, social art has been a medium to ensure the functions of the social sphere (Dewinter, Rutten, Bradt 2021).

An institution is an organisation founded for cultural or social purposes. The institution has been questioned for being conservative, hoarding and isolating its content from society (Bishop 2013:61-62) It risks to lose its focus and purpose to be a public space offering knowledge and democratic ideas which liberate its visitors socially, politically and psychologically (Bishop 2013:43).

## PURPOSE & AIM

Segregation has successively been built into the systems of urban societies and is a relevant subject to investigate. General research on the subject is common but its relation to institutions and specifically the democratic roles of art institutions is less studied in comparison. Public buildings are crucial for the social well-being of a city and their importance for democracy, inclusion and community needs to be stressed. There is a need to move beyond conventional design solutions and explore new ways of interpretations.

The aim with the thesis is to investigate how social segregation has become a deep-rooted problem in Gothenburg and how social art and an art institution can respond to social segregation. To investigate what an art institution needs to be a democratic and social platform for all citizens. The design aims to specifically target groups with low socioeconomic standard.

### THESIS QUESTIONS

How did social segregation grow into a deep-rooted problem in Gothenburg and how is it connected to the social construction of a city?

How can an art institution adress segregation and be re-imagined as a democratic platform empowering its visitors?

## METHODS

Literature review is crucial for the thesis to form a framework and to understand how different factors are connected. It helps to get a deeper understanding for the situation and inspire ideas for the on-going explorations. The project bases on research for design. The theory translates to practice by taking what is said in the theory and test it in design. The design is a constant work in progress, adapting as analyses and conclusions expand and evolve.

The current situation and context are analysed by studying a specific site, Bältesspännarparken. What potentials and challenges lies within the context and how that can be used to benefit the project. The site is analysed by mapping and observations. The process is documented with daily journaling. Journaling is a tool to keep an overview of the progress in the project - where it came from and where it is going - but also to reflect on the subject as a whole. The analogue tools sketching and writing are used to think outside the box and outside the computer.

The design development is an iterative process. To gain learnings from the process and then start all over again, every time with a better understanding. Guided by roughly four steps:
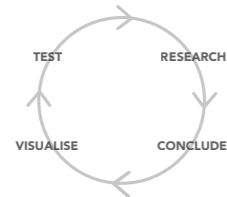


1) Research on the subject
2) Form conclusions from the subject
3) Visualise ideas from the conclusions
4) Test the ideas in design

## THEORY

It is crucial to deliver facts that are relevant, current and novel in its content. To carefully select literature and authors that are well-established. Ann Legeby, Swedish professor specializing in urban design and segregation at the Royal Institute of Technology, is a valuable source to understand the background problem of segregation in Sweden. Ash Amin is a British academic known for his work on the geographies of modern living and a good reference to understand the social construction of cities. Mustafa Dikeç, professor of Urban studies at Malmö Universitet, brings a good perspective on polarisation and inequalities.

Claire Bishop, a British art historian and known theorist, discusses contemporary art and institutions from a critical point of view. John Dewey, American philosopher during the 20th century, had ideas about art and democracy which are interesting for the design. Museum-ID is an independent magazine with progressive thoughts about museums and institutions and helps to provide enlightened thoughts about the social and democratic aspects. Nina Simon, former museum director, has written the book *The Participatory museum*, which is an inspiring source to find ideas about how to engage visitors in art institutions.

## DELIMITATIONS

The thesis focuses on social aspects of the subjects; social segregation and social art. The social aspect of segregation is essential but it is necessary to touch upon architectural, political and economical contributing factors to gain a holistic overview. Social segregation is narrowed down to social bonding between different groups in the city.

Participatory art is a subject that is being studied in theory but it is not part of the methods. The analyses have been limited to a specific site in Gothenburg to be able to go in depth and detail with the design. The design porposal is mainly targeting groups with low socioeconomic standard in Gothenburg. Quality has been an important keyword where the ambition has been to provide thorough and well-thought studies. Space, content and programme have been identified as the most relevant factors in relation to the subject and is the focus in design.

## READING INSTRUCTIONS

The theoretical studies are divided into three parts. The first part is focusing on segregation in Gothenburg and the social construction of urban societies. The second part investigates social art and social art methods. The third part studies the art institution from a democratic and social perspective, comparing the traditional institution with the modern and question how it can be re-imagined. The final design is an attempt to respond and translate theoretical ideas into practice. It should be seen as a dynamic design and a system with certain characteristics with the potential to grow in scale and adapt to its users.

| | |
|---|---|
| Segregation | The separation of different social groups in the social and physical environment in society. |
| Socioeconomic status | Social position of an individual or group in relation to others. Usually measured in income, education and occupation. |
| Stranger | A person that is unknown and outside family, friends and community. |
| Social art | An artform socially engaging people and communities through interaction and collaboration. |
| Participatory art | A social art method directly engaging people by letting them participate in the creative process. |
| Institution | An organisation founded for cultural and social purposes. |

## INTRODUCTION

This first chapter will cover the social construction in the city which sets the ground for segregation to grow. Further on look into the Swedish case, what factors contributed to segregation in the modern society in Sweden.

From the society at large to the individual and their behaviours and responses to segregation and globalisation in the urban environment, how they relate to stranger interaction, belongingness and commonality. What it means that the individual help their own situation by caring for others and shared resources. Switching from an individual mindset to collective thinking to be able to reach individual and collective well-being.

The second chapter examines social art practices as a method to bring strangers together and create commons. It describes social art in the context of social bonding and critical thinking. Three examples of social art methods are being presented; participatory art, social objects and storytelling and how they benefit the reciever. A social art project can help an individual to go beyond themselves, become aware of a bigger context and receive collective feelings.

Further on presenting two examples of social art projects that have had a significant impact on their society and community, projects that left a mark and lives on years after they were taking place.

The third chapter describes the link between art and democracy, how art can be a tool to help democracy stay alive in society and highlight injustice. The aim is to study the social institution, what it is and why it matters. To put it in contrast with the traditional institution and ask if there is a need to fundamentally rethink how it is designed and organised.

Going deeper into what tendencies and interests institutions are influenced by and what that leads to. The institution has the ability to educate and liberate its visitor so that they can feel empowered. This leads to thoughts about what a re-imagined institution needs to be able to serve its community, presenting principles and characteristics for a democratic and inclusive space.

## SEGREGATION IN THE CITY

Cities are places where contact is made and paths are crossed. The public spaces in the city are the arenas for these meetings, where people encounter each other and witness the diversity of the city. People become aware of similarities and differences they share related to ethnicity, culture and socioeconomic status. Ann Legeby, a professor specialising in social sustainability and segregation at The Royal Institute of Technology, describes the city as a place with imaginary boundaries, that both separate and keep people together. The imaginary boundaries can be seen as a threat to society, hindering democracy and urban welfare. The way the boundaries threaten democracy is by limiting the movement, flows and access to public spaces such as streets, squares and parks in the city. For example groups of people being restricted to certain residential areas because of economic reasons. The consequence of this is segregation (Legeby 2013:2).

Segregated cities are characterised by neighbourhoods that differ for example in socio-economic status, ethnicity and demographics (Legeby 2013:1-3). Segregated cities are unable to offer equal opportunities and life choices for the people and the possibility to integrate varies geographically. Integration is prevented when segregation fuels itself and initiate a negative spiral (Legeby 2013:1-3).

Neighbourhoods that are segregated can have a positive or negative image. Segregation is mostly discussed in a negative way in media who likes to portray disadvantaged segregated areas as dangerous and criminal. The residents of such areas have to deal with negative assumptions about their community (Johansson & Olofsson 2011:185). According to Legeby (2013:5-6) segregation is fundamentally a power system defining the relationship between people and how individuals position themselves to others; insiders - outsiders, visible - invisible. Social groups are being categorised in a hierarchy of power affecting interaction and collaboration (Legeby 2013:5-6).

Social distance in the built environment can lead to exclusion and isolation in everyday life which makes it even more difficult to integrate and take part in the services of society, for example receiving a first job (Legeby 2013:5-6). It is possible to improve living standards on a local level and hopefully decrease the inequality in the city but it does not necessarily mean that the city becomes less segregated. With urban segregation it is most essential to focus on investigating social relations and networks between different neighbourhoods (Legeby 2013, 7-9).

Social exchange can be achieved by sharing space. It makes social differences visible and let them collide - to see the "the other". Society needs to actively create space for these meetings (Legeby 2013, 7-9). Public transportation is such an example where people from all over the city gathers and have to co-exist with each other during their journey.

## THE SWEDISH CASE

The issue with segregation in Sweden is strongly related to housing politics. The modern segregation problem in Sweden marks its start in 1965 with Miljonprogrammet, an ambitious goal to build one million housing units in ten years (Isitt 2019). Already during the first year, it was built more housing units per Swedish resident than anywhere else in the world. The areas were characterised by large building complexes put next to either busy traffic lines or dense forests. The areas were planned for a homogenous group of people; a Swedish nuclear family of one husband, one wife, two children and one car. The architects thought that it was a higher chance to achieve a sense of community in an area if the group was homogenous, categorising the residents after socioeconomic class (Isitt 2019). However the dream of a modern suburb became a monotonous and inhuman reality. The residents were not thriving and soon moved away to more attractive areas (Isitt 2019). One homogenous group was replaced by another. Large amounts of immigrants were placed in vacant apartments in suburbs in the cities of Gothenburg, Stockholm and Malmö upon arrival. The effect of concentrating immigrants geographically caused exclusion and social distance, making it more difficult for the immigrants to integrate in society (Legeby 2013:5).

The built environment was an important factor for the segregation to grow into a deep-rooted problem in modern society in Sweden but it was not the only factor that has been involved. Sweden went through economic shifts during the past thirty years which have resulted in a more liberalised market (Dikeç 2017:132). Tax reforms benefitting high-income earners and privatization of healthcare and education were some major changes that increased the inequality. These economic shifts affected the most vulnerable in society the hardest. From 1985 to 2010 income equality increased faster in Sweden than any other OECD country while the richest one percent in Sweden doubled their income from 1980 to 2012 (Dikeç 2017:133).

Political acts fuelled the polarisation even more. Changes in public housing policies during the 1990's made affordable housing more rare in Sweden (Dikeç 2017:139). Municipal companies started to focus on profit and the public housing market became a money machine. It resulted in shortages of rental housing, privatizations and over-crowding (Dikeç 2017:139). Renoviction - renovation leading to eviction - forced tenants to move when they could not afford higher rents caused by renovations in municipal housing (Dikeç 2017:139). The suburbs from Miljonprogrammet are oftentimes the cheapest neighbourhoods in Swedish cities. Many buildings from Miljonprogrammet are reaching a life time of 50 years, putting them in need for renovation. Renoviction is a problem for the tenants who neither can afford to stay or move when rents are increasing.

The suburbs from the 1960s and 1970s are seen as "problematic" areas in Sweden today. Swedish cities are facing inequality in terms of living conditions and access to services and jobs. Suburbs in Sweden are seen as stigmatized and the word 'suburb', in Swedish *förort*, has a negative connotation.

Immigrants are concentrated in these areas which are lacking of Swedish residents and culture, aggravating integration. Some immigrants try to disassociate themselves from the stigma and wants to create a more positive image of their neighbourhood (Johansson & Olofsson 2011:196). The immigration concentration in Swedish suburbs is caused by an increase of immigrants during the fourth last decades in Sweden (SOU 2005:50:32). The immigrants are dominated by refugees, mostly from Middle-East. A more globalised world is another important factor for segregation to grow (SOU 2005:50:32). Discrimination against foreigners occur and patterns of discrimination in the housing and labour market is a serious problem in the Nordic countries (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:28).

The situation has improved during the 21st century. Residential segregation in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Malmö is not increasing any longer and poverty is decreasing. Income-levels has risen but despite this high-income groups still benefit from the system and income gaps increase (Legeby 2013:5). In the Gothenburg context this can be seen comparing the residential coast area Långedrag and the suburb Bergsjön, where men in Långedrag on average earn 580 000 kr more per year than men in Bergsjön (Isitt 2019).

The complex polarised situation grew from urban, economic and political processes starting in the 1970's (Dikeç 2017:10). They are systematic relations with concentrated effects when they intertwine. Effects that are negative for vulnerable neighbourhoods. Segregation is the result of policies, economic changes, social attitudes and institutional processes working together in a dynamic way (Dikeç 2017:10). This shows that segregation is not solely a housing problem that can be solved with architectural urban planning but rather a problem stretching over multiple spectras. Patterns of segregation still remain in the built environment for example large scale, uniformity and differentiated traffic systems (Legeby 2013:8), leaving the segregation issue as stagnant as the buildings from Miljonprogrammet.

## A PLACE OF STRANGERS

The residents of a city is more or less a concentration of strangers. It makes the society of a city somehow unique as a place where strangers need to learn how to co-exist and relate to each other. The city has a complex social structure compared to rural areas. The sharing of space makes it possible for co-presence and social processes to occur.

Louis Wirth was an American sociologist developing a theory of the urban life as one of its kind (Legeby 2013:27). The city was depending on two factors - size and density. Wirth believed that an increase of inhabitants resulted in weakened social bonds within neighbourhoods as well as increased social distances.

The city is characterised by secondary relations which are often non-personal and temporary (Legeby 2013:27). They grow from people trading services to satisfy their needs. In comparison to primary relations which are irreplaceable and more long-lasting such as family and friends. According to Legeby (2013:27) Wirth was critical to urban life and argued that the living conditions of a city had negative mental effects for the individual resulting in a higher rate of suicide, crime, personal disorganisation and corruption than in rural settings.

Segregation on a local level in a city has been linked to negative attitudes and stereotyping (Bettencourta, Dixonb & Castroa 2019:15). Constructed beliefs about certain religions or ethnicities affect the behaviour towards these certain groups. Legeby (2013:26) presents ideas of a German sociologist, George Simmel, describing how the attitude towards others changes when strangers need to share space with each other (Legeby 2013:26). Residents become more reserved towards those they lack strong bonds with. The social construct of a city has serious effects on both the individual and society. It influences what type of society that would emerge from these constructions (Legeby 2013:26).

However, interacting with strangers is not solely negative. Jane Jacobs, journalist, activist and author to *The death and Life of American Cities*, meant, according to Legeby (2013:31), that a concentration of strangers is what defines urban life. To take part of urban life strangers need to learn how to live among each other. Not all strangers need to be anonymous relations, some strangers can be "familiar" strangers, for example the local shop owner, a morning commuter or a neighbour. In this way connections between strangers are established through social networks that overlap and co-exist without being personal. They learn how to adapt to the social conditions of the city and how to interact with each other (Legeby 2013:31).

## CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

The time we are living has been described as a *liquid modernity* (Amin 2012:13). Amin (2012:13) states that the term is originally coined by Zygmunt Bauman and refers to an instability in society, caused by globalisation, uncertainty and increasing inequality. People are uprooted from where they originally belong and displaced. Relocation introduces the individual to multiple new social communities brought on by technology (Amin 2012:13). Traditions from the home country becomes distant and more difficult to maintain. The traditional community bonds are being replaced with fragile and temporary connections.

How an individual connect depends on the circumstances and the situation. The native might turn to heritage and traditional settings to cope with immigration. The believer might look for safety in religious communities to escape secularism (Amin 2012:14). It can be seen as a form of identity

threat which the individual handles by engaging more with its ingroup and distancing themselves from outgroups (Bettencourta, Dixonb & Castroa 2019:16).

According to Amin there are mainly two ways of connecting defined as two characters with certain preferences, the 'traditionalist' and the 'nomad' (2012:14). The traditionalist takes comfort in strong ties, defined communities and security while the nomad prefers mobility and new, temporary connections.

Amin means that liquid modernity has evoked a want for community (2012:15). As a reaction to fluid and temporary connections, community brings on a strong feeling of belonging to a certain group. A need to find the way back to long-lasting bonds and engage on a local level. A wish to belong to a smaller world, as a reaction to the world becoming more globalised.

*Thrown-togetherness* is a term that describes the increasing tendency of different social groups that needs to co-exist both in the urban and rural context (Amin 2012:15). Communities with different beliefs might struggle to be understood and co-exist with each other. People have a tendency to avoid social settings that make them feel uncomfortable or nervous (Bettencourta, Dixonb & Castroa 2019:18). Such a place can be a shoppingmall where encounters with new and different groups can occur which brings on feelings of anxiety or being out of place. The overwhelming diversity of the city attracts the individual to social connections and spaces in the city providing a sense of belonging and familiarity (Amin 2012:65).

## THE NEED TO BELONG

The need to belong is a fundamental human need. It stems from the human history where living in groups increased the chance of survival. Group living has also shown to form much of human psychology and psychological functioning (Amin 2012:76). Anyone who newly has arrived to a city, whether a migrant or an established influential person, start out from the same level regarding their need and right to belong (Amin 2012:76).

People are attracted to others they can identify with, share similarities and brings on familiar feelings (Fiel 2021:159). This can be explained by using the term *homophily* meaning the love for the same; people like people that resemble themselves and feel and think in the same way that they do. Even small tendencies of homophily can have strong effects on segregation. Homophily might however be a generalisation with the risk to simplify social constructions; people may have several identities and might as well be drawn to the opposite. Homophily might be more about shared interests and attributes than attraction to specific individuals (Fiel 2021:159).

Sharing similar interests can be performed on a local, national or global level. These different

levels involves different dimensions of belonging (Moberg Stephenson 2021:40-41). People with shared commons become an individual's ingroup and the ingroups are prioritised over outgroups simply because the individual benefits more from the ingroup. The ingroup can be a community in small or big scale, a group of people the individual feel that they belong and matter to (Tellhed, Bäckström & Björklund 2017:88).

Every community has boundaries defining who can or cannot be included. It creates an identity of 'us' and in order for that to happen it needs to be an opposite (Moberg Stephenson 2021:40-41), a 'them' is created including all the other people that are not part of the community. Communities are kept together by shared values and ideals related to religion, ethnicity, language and culture. Community members share experiences and friendships that needs to be protected from the outgroups or the 'others' who does not conform with the values (Moberg Stephenson 2021:40-41). Some people actively seek globalised communities (Amin 2012:15). They might not be satisfied with their local community and have feelings of not belonging or wanting to be different. They care and want to be part of communities of global cultural exchange, openness and diversity.

### TO FIND COMMON GROUND

To simply care for each other is not enough to reach common ground. According to Amin (2012:78) it is better to see the city as a shared environment, where public spaces and resources needs to be shared among the citizens. The public spaces and resources are used by all citizens and ultimately what they have in common.

Amin (2012:78-79) states that there are many obstacles in the system to reach an ethos of common ground. The housing sector pressured to either segregate or gentrify,  public spaces pressured to privatize and increase control, vulnerable and disadvantaged pressured to invest for the rich. These tendencies threaten the community and democratic processes (Amin 2012:78-79). Economic and political inequality reinforce each other. In a society of structural economic and social inequality, democratic procedures work naturally in favour of dominant groups and therefore preserves and protects privilege. Social groups are excluded, not from society per se, but from the rights, privileges and opportunities that they cannot enjoy on an equal level (Dikeç 2017:4-5). A well-functioning communal life would not benefit from serving inequalities or favor privileged interests and these tendencies would fall away. Instead it emphasises togetherness as a way to reach collective well-being (Amin 2012:78-79).

The city needs to primarily be seen as a place functioning on togetherness and commons (Amin 2012:79). People need to make it a habit to interact at places representing various levels of shared commons such as workplaces, meeting places, friendship networks, streets, commercial spaces, parks and libraries. To make strangers aware of how they depend on each other and affect each

others possibilities. That they are part of a system of trading services which creates a mutual relationship between the giver and the taker. In a society where individuality and independence is increasing, strangers are still more than ever connected with each other through globalisation.

The challenge is to keep the movement of commons going. It has to conquer obstacles like social status or disinterest in caring for commons to be able to cover the entire social landscape (Amin 2012:80). This can be helped through mediums such as film and art to strengthen the urban narrative. The narratives are stories that can strengthen collective feelings. A connection between the personal agenda and the commons needs to be  made  (Amin 2012:80). To make the individual understand that the commons belong to him and by damaging the commons, he is also damaging his own possibilities and success.

### APPROACHES AND LEARNINGS

Segregation is a complex problem with many factors as causes; social and political policies, economical trends, education and changes in housing market. Urban planning will only solve some parts of segregation problems. Strategies of interest will be presented based on the working paper *Segregated cities and planning for social sustainability - a Nordic perspective* published by Nordregio. Nordregio, established by the Nordic Council of Ministers, conducts research within planning and regional policy, providing policy relevant knowledge. The paper discusses the segregation situation in Nordic urban contexts and how authorities respond to the issue which makes it relevant for the studies.

Different strategies have been tried to get closer to the problem with segregation in Nordic countries (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:31). Area-based projects are a common strategy. It tackles the problem from many angles; working with cultural, social and environmental issues. It is a holistic approach that can enhance life quality on a local level. However it is not likely to improve the socio-economic situation in the city as a whole. There is also a risk that these projects push away disadvantaged residents to poorer areas (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:31).

Another common approach is to create a social mix (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:32-33). The idea is to mix housing types to attract different social groups in one area. This will result in more diverse neighbourhoods on a socio-economic level. However, simply spreading out disadvantaged groups on a wider area does not necessarily mean that social interaction between different groups will increase nor decrease inequality. The strategy will be most successful in combination with other approaches (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:32-33).

A third strategy that has shown to be successful is to put the power in the powerless hands. This has been made by placing a mobile government office in socially marginalised areas to bring the leaders closer to the most disadvantaged residents. It has involved participation where citizens

influence local planning and decisions through digital platforms. The engagement has shown to be high and the citizens have been enthusiastic in proposing project ideas (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:35-36).

More and better knowledge is needed for successful outcomes. A fourth strategy is to use research and let a group of individuals study segregation and make proposals for solutions (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:34-35). This will result in a 'knowledge-bank' that will increase the knowledge and inspire. One way of doing this is to learn from applied solutions. Segregation must be seen as a political issue and a governmental responsibility (Tunström Anderson Perjo 2016:34). Society must actively work for social sustainability though rules, regulations and policies. The belief that society cannot reach common grounds until it is released by capital and set values is not true (Amin 2012:79-80). Common wealth can be achieved by focusing on self-government and collective production.

Poor areas must be upgraded to the same level as the rest of the city (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:38-39). However, upgrading areas to make them more attractive risks to result in displacement of low-income groups. It is important to ensure social sustainability in urban planning without gentrification. Diversity is key, to create neighbourhoods that are socially and economically diverse.

The social status has a big impact on an individual's opportunities (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:39-40). For example an immigrant without social networks and economic resources has a high risk to suffer from segregation. When segregation is discussed it tends to focus on the 'problem areas' in the city but it is important to keep in mind that the wealthy areas and wealthy residents are as much as part of the problem. For example their actions in the housing market has fuelled segregation. Moreover decisions, transactions and discrimination by natives and residents in wealthy areas plays an important role. Segregation is a problem for the entire city and need to be handled on both a neighbourhood level and the city as whole (Tunström, Anderson & Perjo 2016:39-40).

Urban spaces need to be more than just functional, they need to be designed to encourage meaningful social connections between strangers (Zeeb & Joffe 2020:543). In the daily life be able to have positive interactions and acknowledge each other in small ways. It also needs to make visible shared interests and similarities to find common ground. The social interaction needs to be the main focus in the activity. It needs to lift the importance of strangers needing and matter to each other for example the bus driver being needed to move around in the city or the help from a cashier to be able to pay for groceries (Zeeb & Joffe 2020:543).

Segregation is not only a physical problem, it should rather be seen as structures of relations to understand its complexity (Fiel 2021:175). It does not need to be inevitable, it just needs to be understood the right way as a societal problem stretching over several domains of life.

## SOCIAL ART PRACTICES

Social art is an artform with the purpose of socially engaging people and communities through interaction and collaboration (tate.org.uk). The most important aspect of social art is the act of participation and collaboratively created artworks. It is often associated with societal and political issues; with the purpose to raise awareness and foster debate about a specific problem with the ultimate goal to improve situation and conditions. It can be a sort of activism, for example to help a community to reach a common goal (tate.org.uk).

Social art can be created by individuals or an entire community and is often associated with minority groups or a local community. It is often taken place in a public space for visibility and symbolic meaning. Niziołek (2010:151-152) sees social art as a combination of five elements; 1) the receivers of an activity, 2) how the receivers are engaged in an activity, 3) the place for an activity, 4) the aim/result of an activity and 5) the quality of an activity. Social art projects can function on different levels. *Spatially* to revalue space and to mobilise resources or participants. *Participatory* to encourage communication, social bonding, identity construction and attitude changes. Finally *collectively* to address social problems, reveal symbolic messages and initiate social protests (Niziołek 2010:151-152).

## METHOD 1: PARTICIPATORY ART

Participatory art is a social artform and a strategy with the idea to engage public participation in the process of making art to challenge the traditional ways art is made. With the objectives to create and share knowledge, promote empowerment, develop skills and affect the participants lives in positive ways (Ramírez Galleguillos & Coşkun 2020:145).

The most common way to make participatory art is through involvement in design activities such as interviews, co-creation and idea workshops (Ramírez Galleguillos & Coşkun 2020:141-143). Participatory art can be helpful to empower disadvantaged groups by letting them express themselves in a project. It can be challenging to make this successfully work, disadvantaged groups might experience barriers hindering them from participating. They might have experienced mistreatment that make them feel insecure or lack confidence in engaging in activities for the fear of exposing their vulnerabilities. This creates an unequal situation where participants that are more privileged might take more space and raise their voices more. To overcome this it is important to do activities where the less privileged can see their own importance in the project (Ramírez Galleguillos & Coşkun 2020:141-143).

When doing participatory art it is less important what kind of methods are being used. It is more important to reflect about how the interventions influence the participants and keep the focus on how the art project can improve the participant's lives (Ramírez Galleguillos & Coşkun 2020:145-146).

## METHOD 2: SOCIAL OBJECTS

Nina Simon, former museum director and a cultural activist, has written the book *The participatory museum* suggesting ways that museums can become more relevant for community and as a public space. Simon has some interesting ideas about how the institution can invite to more participating engagement. One of them is the way objects displayed at museums can be interpreted, as experiences with the aim to spark conversation (Simon 2010). This is called social objects and strangers can connect when a specific object give them a shared interest. The objects become the centre of the institution which visitors gather around to share, discuss and socialise.

The objects can be seen as opportunities to talk about the important things in life, such as humanity, nature, history and future. People will connect through a shared fascination for people, objects and history (Stanbury 2017).

According to Simon (2010) there are four common qualities of social objects; *personal, active, provocative* and *relational*. *Personal* refers to objects that establish a personal connection and trigger enthusiastic and natural sharing. The visitor feels a personal or nostalgic relationship with the object and feel the urge to share their personal story. *Active* objects are objects that in a direct and physical way interfere between two strangers that leads to a shared experience. For example when two strangers on the street witness an incident and gain a connection because they were both part of the same experience. Active objects in the setting of a musem can be an installation with objects that move on occasion and a relationship between two strangers is created when the object interferes the space between them. *Provocative* objects have the intention to trigger shock or surprise and make people react and discuss. Provocation can be hard to create in a contemporary museum if visitors expect to see provocative elements, for that reason it needs to be a genuine surprise. *Relational* objects encourage an interpersonal use and only function when several people are involved. This can for example be a participatory or interactive installations inviting people to solve a problem together (Simon 2010).

## METHOD 3: STORYTELLING

Social art can be used as a tool to tell stories. Stories are a natural part of humanity. It mirrors the way humans make sense of their own lives and interpret their heritage. It is a powerful tool that can be used to emotionally engage and communicate with visitor but also to engage physically and sensory with the place (Peirce, Gidlow & Schomberg 2017). Stories can allow individuals to step into the shoes of others, to see themselves in the stories but also give new insights changing how they think and feel. It creates empathy and makes individuals care and connect to both people and places (Faherty 2023).

Humans are naturally drawn to stories. Both the content and the way the story is told has an impact on how it is received by the audience (Hughes, Oliveira & Bickford 2022). During a story, the listener reflects on similarities and negotiates differences in relation to the storyteller. If two strangers want to get to know and understand each other deeper, sharing stories might be the quickest way (Gargiulo 2005).

It is important to use storytelling with care and create clear boundaries to not be misleading. People tend to accept them uncritically because of the empathy they create. The visitors needs to be encouraged to question and challenge stories, teaching them to practice their critical thinking (Peirce, Gidlow & Schomberg 2017). Using people's stories as a part of an art project can raise ethical and philosophical questions about consent and response (Matarasso 2015). It is better to aim for storytelling that occur in a natural way as an effect, and not a part, of the project, sparking conversation between strangers with the purpose to bond.

## FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE COLLECTIVE

To form strong social networks it is important to acknowledge and treat strangers as individuals. Allowing individuals to express themselves makes it possible to see who they are, what they want and who they want to meet. Acknowledging and identifying strangers as individuals is specifically important in participatory art practices (Simon 2010). To be able to make the participants open up and share their stories and ideas the artist needs to respect them as individuals and let them know that their individual contribution is valuable for the project. By attending to the individual's specific interests, their confidence grows so they feel more comfortable to get involved. Participation on different levels and engaging different groups allows individual of all sorts to find their place in the project to connect (Simon 2010).

In the bigger perspective social art practices aim to attend to the community and collective results. To help the individual shift focus from themselves to the world at large and engage with it in an active way. It will teach the individual to open up, listen and become aware of a bigger context (Miranda 2014).

After initially looking to the personal needs of the individual it is possible to proceed to engage on community level. According to Simon (2010) the goal is to create a collective result that engage and make strangers relate to each other rather than simply force them to socialise in a crowd. This can be made by letting the participants interact in a way that puts them in direct relation to other participants for example through a live poll. This makes individuals become aware of themselves as part of a larger social context. Projects must be made in a way that engage individuals to socialise and eager to participate by increasing their enthusiasm and curiosity (Simon 2010).

## SOCIAL ART LEAVING A MARK

Two examples of well-received social art projects will be presented that had interesting conditions and concepts. The first project is *Project Row Houses* which is a social art project made by Rick Lowe. The artist renovated around twenty houses into studios and artist residences in a neglected area in Houston in 1993 (Miranda 2014). Twenty years have gone by and the project has grown into 49 buildings and is now a cultural hub. The takeaway is that Lowe created space for other artists to operate that grew into a cultural community. Lowe did not set any limits for the project allowing it to thrive and grow into something bigger beyond his control.

The second project, with a set time and space, is *One & Other*, by Antony Gormley. It was a public art project running on Trafalgar square in London in 2009 for 100 days, 24 hours a day and involved 2400 participants (Gormley 2023). The idea was to transform the vacant Fourth Plinth on Trafalgar Square to a platform that was occupied by one person at a time, one hour at a time. The artist's idea was that the body became a metaphor and a symbol when put on the plinth (Gormley 2023). People were to sign up beforehand and was allocated based on a geographical spread. Thousands of people watched when participants performed, campaigned or just sat on the plinth which was broadcasted on live stream. The legacy of the project lives on and has generated interviews, books and a movie (Artichoke 2023).

For participatory art projects to be well-functioning it is important for the artist to create a platform where the participants can get involved on their own terms and have the ability to grow and expand the project beyond the artist's imagination.

## ART AS A DEMOCRATIC TOOL

Segregation has been and still are linked to socio-economic inequality and welfare (Nordic Council of Ministers 2019:5). Segregation as a threat to democracy becomes a recurring theme causing unequal rights and unequal access to the city. Democracy is commonly mediated through politics but it can also be expressed through art. Art can be used to express opinions and has the power to formulate something new in the world (Jonsson 2022). Sometimes art can be a mirror of society, highlight its problems and keep the democracy alive.

To understand this, John Dewey's theories will be used. John Dewey (1859-1952) was an American philosopher during the 20th century. Dewey is known for his thoughts about pedagogy and education but he also had ideas about art that were innovative at the time (Chaliakopolous 2020). These ideas were expressed in his book *Art as an experience* (1934) where art was put in relation to society, science and emotion. Dewey's work received varied responses by his colleagues at the time. Some thought it provided clarification of some problems and concepts while others thought that they were more based on idealism than science (iep.utm.edu).

According to Goldblatt (2006:29-30) Dewey believed that art is a way to highlight social injustices and that art can display what is wrong and right. Showing oppression in society through art, it can encourage people to care, respond and participate. Each individual has a moral responsibility and a choice to act when injustice in society is observed, it is a part of the 'burden of civilisation' (Goldblatt 2006:29-30).

## QUESTIONING USE OF ART IN MODERN TIMES

Art displayed in an institution such as museums has been questioned through times, questioning the level of publicity and accessibility it provides. There is a risk that the space steals the spotlight from the content and the space or museum itself becomes the primary focus. It seems to be hard to find the balance, Claire Bishop (2013:5-6) means that there is a tendency for the institution to either be a space of elite culture or a populistic space of leisure and entertainment. Bishop challenges the notion to rethink the 'contemporary' in contemporary museums (Bishop 2013:5-6).

Bishop believes that the museum is a conservative institution that needs to adapt and focus more on social change. The role of the museum is to learn about the history, question the present and imagine a different future (Bishop 2013:61-62). Rather than hoarding treasures, museums should adapt to the idea that culture is universal resource that has the ability to liberate the viewer socially, politically, physically and psychologically (Bishop 2013:43).

Dewey was critical to the idea of the institution arguing that it isolates art from society, that it used to be a part of human life before art was institutionalised in modern age. The institution separates art from its history and transforms it into a purely aesthetic object. Dewey did not see any distinction between fine, useful, high or low art and argued that art will only be meaningful in human lives if it stays connected to society (Chaliakopolous 2020).

According to Bishop (2013:43) there are some tendencies and risks with the contemporary museums today in relation to democracy. One is the trend of 'starchitecture', the idea to create iconic architecture for the sake of simply being admired, and the focus on the shell of the museum rather than what is inside. In this case people visit the museum to experience grand architecture and the experience of the space is prioritised (Bishop 2013:43). This can become a problem when the motives are driven by economic profits (Bishop 2013:27), for example starchitecture projects made to gain attention to attract visitors and tourists. Another problem is when the art displayed is controlled by factors limiting the diversity and the richness of the installations, for example market interest influencing what is being displayed (Bishop 2013:27).

## INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

John Dewey believed art could be a tool to teach individuals abilities and attributes important for inclusion and equality. The institution can and should primarily be a place where these abilites are being developed and strengthened. Patricia Goldblatt is an educator that has examined John Dewey's pedagogical principles related to art. According to Goldblatt (2006:25) Dewey's thoughts about how art can have positive effects on society can be divided into four components; *responsibility*, *principles of democracy*, *empowerment* and *critical thinking*.

*Responsibility* aspire to reveal issues that society choose to close their eyes for. For example oppression issues related to economic, political and social systems causing poverty and neglect (Goldblatt 2006:26-27). The aim is to raise awareness about these issues through public scrutiny and trigger an emotional response among the public. It teaches the population to become more conscious and make decisions leading to change and a more fair society.

Art can teach about the *principles of democracy* to help it stay alive. Expressions and opinions can be generated through art and lead to personal reflection. Goldblatt (2006:26) understands Dewey's thoughts about art primarily as a pedagogical tool, to teach about the principles of democracy. A genuine and inclusive community life is encouraged through collaboration and cooperation.

Continuing on the educative theme, experiences can be expressed and interpreted through

making works of art to gain *empowerment*. According to Dewey four attributes help to engage in this process (Goldblatt 2006:25) 1) social instinct (desire to communicate), 2) investigative instinct (desire to seek answers), 3) constructive impulse (desire to make things) and 4) expressive impulse (desire to be creative). These attributes will help the individual to take action, change things and empower themselves.

Finally is the ability for *critical thinking*. The individual is taught how to make meaning out of information by comparing, arranging, categorising and contrasting it. To be able to observe something through an analytical and critical perspective and dare to question what is being seen. This can in turn cultivate cultural and philosophical knowledge (Goldblatt 2006:26).

What is most interesting in the context of social segregation is that art can help to remove the fear of the stranger. Dewey (1934) means that art helps to sympathetically enter a world of foreign civilisations which increases the understanding for differences. It creates a deepening in one's own experience and opens up for a more universal attitude. Goldblatt (2006:25-26) interprets Dewey's thoughts of art as a provider of a diverse world of heritage, attitudes and social codes which the viewer will travel through. The unknown and unfamiliar become less frightening when the viewer is able to enter new worlds and broaden perspectives.

## RE-IMAGINING INSTITUTIONAL ART

Based on critical thoughts on traditional and contemporary institutions previously discussed there is a need to re-imagine the institution. Just as the space can steal the focus from the content, it should be able to regain the focus by creating an environment highlighting social art and put an emphasis on democracy and society. The goal is further to create positive encounters between strangers and to make it easier to accept differences by displaying content in a supportive and non-threatening environment (Goldblatt 2006:22).

Institutions can be much more than they are today, in the sense that they could reach wider. They have the possibility to be a place to engage in ideas differently. Activities generating ideas that the visitor can take with them and spread outside the walls of the institution. People would not come together because they share a specific identity but rather because of curiosity in an arena not yet defined. Those excluded from the institution and its system might not actually be excluded if one only listen (Rogoff 2008).

## WHAT THE NEW INSTITUTION NEEDS

Neither the traditional institution or the contemporary 'starchitecture' museum is fulfilling what modern institutions need in terms of being aligned with society and its visitor's values. The traditional institution isolates art from society and treats it as purely aesthetic objects (Chaliakopolous 2020) meanwhile the contemporary 'starchitecture' museum seem to attract the attention to itself and the art displayed has to compete with architecture and falls in the background (Milojković & Nikolić n.d.). Neither of them are respecting and putting its content in relation to its visitor but they can be learned from.

Judist Dobrzynski, American journalist writing about arts, culture and philanthropy, means that museums should be seen as social places where communities can gather and meet (2010). The art might be the magnet but the reward is the social exchange. Dobrzynski argues that future museum-visitors will not be satisfied by simply observing art but also wants to participate and interact with it (Dobrzynski 2010). Imagining that this can create deeper and more meaningful museum visits that leaves a longer mark and puts it in a bigger context.

The discussion what kind of impact architecture has on how art is perceived is somewhat parted (Milojković & Nikolić n.d.). A minimalistic style makes the space neutral and let the art speaks for itself. On the contrary if the building is completely neutral, the artists feel that their art is not important because it is put in a building that does not seem to have any aspirations at all. Some success stories about contemporary 'starchitecture' buildings show that a spectacular design can breathe new air into the entire organisation and be revitalising (Milojković & Nikolić n.d.). Architecture and space have an important role to make the institution attractive and help the visitor to read the displayed art in the right way, but it is important that it acts in service of the its content and prioritise to be a social interactive space that focus on the individual experience.

Adam Rozan, Director of Audience Engagement at the Worcester Art Museum, thinks the entire museum organisation should be restructured to satisfy the demands for the future (Rozan 2017). The museum can still offer traditional museum activities but it also needs to be a space for social and participatory practices to reach younger generations. The younger audience has a desire to socialise and get involved, it is less important what the certain activity is. Its primary purpose is to exist at service for its community, to be a relevant and needed organisation for the visitor (Rozan 2017).

The traditional institution has been founded on traditional roles and hierarchy with a set spatial organisation; a lobby, gift store, café and exhibitions that shapes the visitors opinions (Rozan 2017). Both the programmatic and spatial organisation needs to be questioned and challenged. Even the traditional operation hours can be questioned and pushed for what times in a day museums are accessible.

There is a need to modernise the traditional model of the museum and rethink programs, exhibitions and how visitors are approached focusing on engagement, participation, usage and communication (Rozan 2017). To offer different types of experiences for different groups of people. How the visitor perceive the organisation has an impact on how the visitor chooses to engage with it. Even the outdoor area can be pushed to be something else, for example an empty park can become an open art space where cultural as well as social activities are welcomed (Rozan 2017).

David Fleming, Director of National Museums Liverpool, emphasises the role of the museum to be democratic and what that means (Fleming 2017). There are four important questions to ask; *who*, *what*, *how* and *whom*. 1) Who runs the institution? 2) What does it contain? 3) How is it being administered? 4) Whom does it target? Fleming also identifies principles of a democratic institution that should be considered:

- The institution should put an emphasis on people and identity.
- The institution needs to keep in mind that it is using public funds and has a social responsibility that needs to be expressed as social goals.
- The public should be involved in several ways, not just as a visitor but to be able to embrace entire communities and represent their voices.
- It should actively work for social justice and not be afraid to trigger debate and opinions. It is important to consider who is behind the organisation and assure that they welcome these thoughts and are not elitist.
- The programme is free of charge, both permanent and special exhibitions, and have a budget that allows for this.
- It should welcome different social groups through a diverse programme and help them develop a habit to use and revisit the institution frequently.

## SUMMARY

The city is a place full of strangers. Even though it comes with some challenges it provides the city wih diversity and openness keeping it alive and thriving. Homophily shows that humans are attracted to sameness but it is also as true as the notion of heterophily and being attracted to the opposite. Strangers do not need to love each other but they need to learn how to find harmony in living together and sharing space. Social interactions are crucial for the well-being and people are primarily drawn to those they have something in common with. Segregation is a complex problem that needs to be solved in several ways on different levels for the best outcome. Urban public spaces needs to be designed encouraging positive and meaningful connections between strangers.

Institutions can generate participatory engagement by using social objects and storytelling. The purpose of social objects is to gather people and encourage them to socialise. Sharing stories is the most effective and natural way for strangers to get a deeper connection. For the artist to be aware of what conversations the projects will generate and use this as an active strategy. It is important to respect participants as individuals and attend to their specific interests. Not all people will engage in participatory projects and the project needs to offer a spread that appeals to people on different levels.

Well-functioning participatory art projects offer a platform where the participants can get involved on their own terms and have the ability to grow and expand the project themselves. It puts the focus on the individual and make them feel that they have an actual importance for the project's outcome.

There is a need to re-imagine and rethink the traditional institution. The traditional institution needs to steer away from conventional ways, to push for social and democratic content so it can be reborn into *the social institution*. People want public places where they can gather to socialise, participate and get involved and it is possible for the institution to offer this.

What is most important to consider when shaping the social institution is 1) *who runs the institution*, 2) *what does it contain* and 3) *how is it being administered* and 4) *for whom*. These questions in combination with principles for a democratic institution can be a guidance to transfer the theoretical ideas into practice.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THEORY

| SOCIAL SEGREGATION | SOCIAL ART | THE INSTITUTION |
|---|---|---|
| Humans have a desire to matter and belong. Social interactions are crucial for the well-being and people are primarily drawn to other people they have something in common with. | A well-received social art project offers a platform where the participants can get involved on their own terms and have the ability to grow and expand the project themselves. | People want public places where they can gather around activities to socialise, participate and get involved and it is possible for the institution to offer this. |
| **Create a physical space with activities based on commonalities and shared interests.** | **Create unprogrammed physical spaces to inspire for free interpretation and imagination.** | **Create a building serving as a social playground and natural meeting place for the citizens.** |
| Segregation is a complex problem that needs to be solved in several ways on different levels for the best outcome. | Institutions can generate participatory engagement with social objects and storytelling. Stories are the most effective and natural way for strangers to connect. | What is most important to consider when shaping the social institution is 1) who runs the institution, 2) what does it contain, 3) how is it being administered and 4) whom does it target. |
| **Create an organisation offering a wide program targeting different social groups.** | **Use social objects and storytelling as tools to create social interaction in the exhibitions.** | **Keep these four questions in mind when forming the organisation.** |
| Urban public spaces needs to be designed encouraging positive and meaningful connections between strangers. | Make a project with a spread to reach out on different levels for people with different interests. | Principles for a democratic institution can be a guidance to transfer the theoretical ideas into practice. |
| **Create physical spaces that feel safe and with content that can spark conversations.** | **Invite and work with artists and social art projects agreeing to these terms.** | **Use the principles on page 35 as guidance when forming the organisation.** |

SITE ANALYSES

## INTRODUCTION

Moving on from the theoretical studies, this chapter aims to analyse patterns of segregation in Gothenburg. First on a regional level to look at the socioeconomic situation in the city. Second on a local level to look at specific conditions on a public space in the central parts of the city.

A specific site has been chosen which is Bältesspännarparken and the base for the design proposal. The site is analysed from a usage perspective; how the site is being used by the citizens and what conclusions can be drawn from this. To find a situation and conditions on the site with good potentials for a social institution to thrive and grow.



Bältesspännarparken

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Gothenburg has 583 056 citizens. Statistics from Boverket shows that 20.8 % of the population lives in areas with some sort of socioeconomic challenges (Boverket 2020). *Delad Stad* is a report published by the Royal Institute of Technology analysing how the built environment affects segregation in Gothenburg. The publication states that the south parts of Gothenburg are more integrated while Gårdsten and Biskopsgården are most clearly segregated from the rest of the city (Royal Institute of Technology 2015:14).

The river Götaälv in Gothenburg functions as a barrier in the city in some ways. Citizens of Gothenburg have different conditions depending on where they live. The majority of jobs are concentrated in the central of Gothenburg. There is a signficant difference in access to job places comparing North to South where North-East has the lowest access, making this area especially disadvantaged (Royal Institute of Technology 2015:21-26).

The maps show the socioeconomic standard and participation in political elections. The socioeconomic standard in Gothenburg decreases closer to centre and low socioeconomic standard is concentrated in the North-East and North-West. For participation in political elections it is the opposite situation where the lowest participation is situated in North-East and North-West. From this observation a conclusion can be made that there is some sort of relation between low socioeconomic standard and low engagement in democratic procedures among the citizens which are disturbing facts for a democratic society.

The data is collected from Boverket's interactive programme *Segregationsbarometern* (Boverket 2018). The programme make measurements of different variables related to segregation such as socioeconomic standard, income, education, health and engagement in democratic processes.
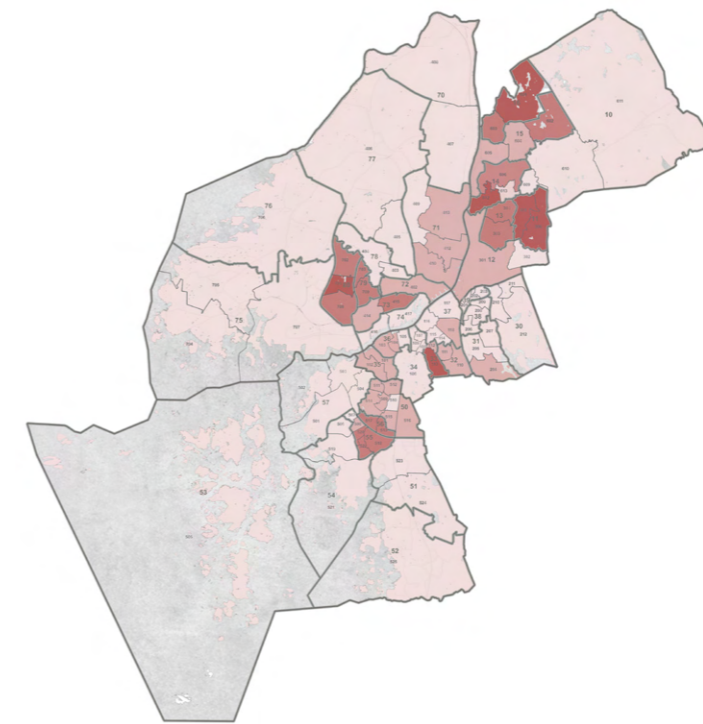


Gothenburg region | Percentage of low socioeconomic standard

0 - 12 %
13 - 27 %
28 - 45 %
46 - 60 %
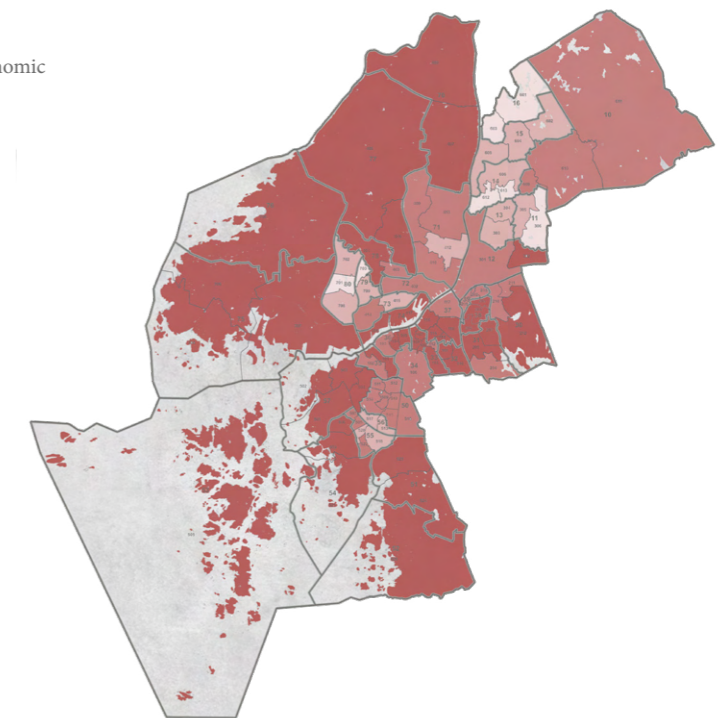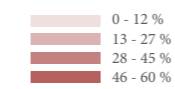


Gothenburg region | Participation in election for the Swedish Parliament

60 - 69 %
70 - 79 %
80 - 89 %
90 - 100 %
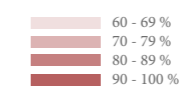
## LOCAL CONTEXT

Bältesspännarparken is a park in central Gothenburg next to the city moat. It is a relatively small park with walking paths, seating spaces, plantations, grass areas and a fountain. It is in the center of many activities close to the tram stop Kungsportsplatsen, the busy street Kungsportsavenyn and the popular park Trädgårdsföreningen. It is a place with high urban life and where people from all over the city cross paths every day.

The report *Delad Stad* states that a diversity of resources is important, they function as everyday meeting places for the citizens. Multi-functional meeting places benefit different social groups in society (Royal Institute of Technology 2015:21-26). Bältesspännarparken is valued as a place with multi-functional meeting places. The site offers plenty and diverse recreational activities such as cultural and recreational activities, public transport services, water elements, nature elements and public spaces. It gives the site plenty of meeting places addressing different social groups.

Bältesspännarparken is the site for the project and what further analysis will be based on. The site has been chosen because it is a central place with diverse functions and used by all residents in Gothenburg. It has been determined as a suitable place to locate an inclusive and democratic space that can welcome different social groups.

BÄLTESSPÄNNARPARKEN

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 10 East Angered | 30 Källtorp-Torpa-Björkekärr | 50 Stora Högsbo | 70 Kärra-Rödbo |
| 11 Bergsjön | 31 Kallebäck-Skår-Kärralund | 51 Askim-Hovås | 71 Backa |
| 12 Gamlestaden-Utby | 32 Krokslätt-Johanneberg | 52 Billdal | 72 Kvillebäcken |
| 13 Kortedala | 33 Guldheden-Landala | 53 South Archipelago | 73 Rambergsstaden |
| 14 South Angered | 34 Linnéstaden | 54 Bratthammar- Näset | 74 Norra Älvstranden |
| 15 Central Angered | 35 Kungsladugård | 55 Tynnered | 75 Torslanda |
| 16 North Angered | 36 Majorna | 56 Frölunda | 76 Björlanda |
| | 37 North Centre | 57 Älvsborg | 77 Tuve-Säve |
| | 38 Lunden | | 78 Kärradalen-Sättadamm |
| | 39 Olskroken | | 79 East Biskopsgården |
| | | | 80 West Biskopsgården |

# SITE ANALYSIS

**1** Kungsportsplatsen

Public transport stop connected to other central parts in Gothenburg. Accessible meeting point used by all citizens.

**2** Kungsparken

Park along the canal with minigolf and sculptures. Used by all citizens. Accessible and free of charge.

**3** Milleniumplatsen

Public open space primarily used for events hosted by the city. Unprogrammed and lonely when no events occur.

**4** Entrance to Stora Teatern

Theatre with an outdoor café during the summer. The entrance stairs can be a meeting point but the content is only for certain groups and not free of charge.

**5** Parking lot

Parking space primarily used for people visiting the nearby parks. Meeting point with good overview.

**6** Bältesspännarparken

**6.1** Structure with seating popular among young people.

**6.2** Gamla allén, wide enjoyable lane connecting the inner city to Heden.

**6.3** Fountain to gather around in summer.

**7** Trädgårdsföreningen

Diverse recreational park in Gothenburg with café, kiosk, green house and hosting events. Popular among all citizens in Gothenburg but especially families. Free of charge.

The mapping shows that the site has a diverse usage and is a place for everyone to be because its location next to Kungsportsavenyn. It has a gradation of accessibility where for example Stora Teatern, with certain types of events requring a fee, makes only some groups go there. Bältesspännarparken and Kungsparken feel more accessible because they do not have any physical borders compared to Trädgårdsföreningen with a gate. Gamla Allén is a wide lane for bikers and pedestrians along the waterline. It is valuable in the sense that the width allows for more free movement and is an alternative route towards Kungsportsavenyn. The parking lot is an empty big space and has a lot of potential for more activities. It has a beneficial location in the centre of the city with high exposure next to two busy streets.
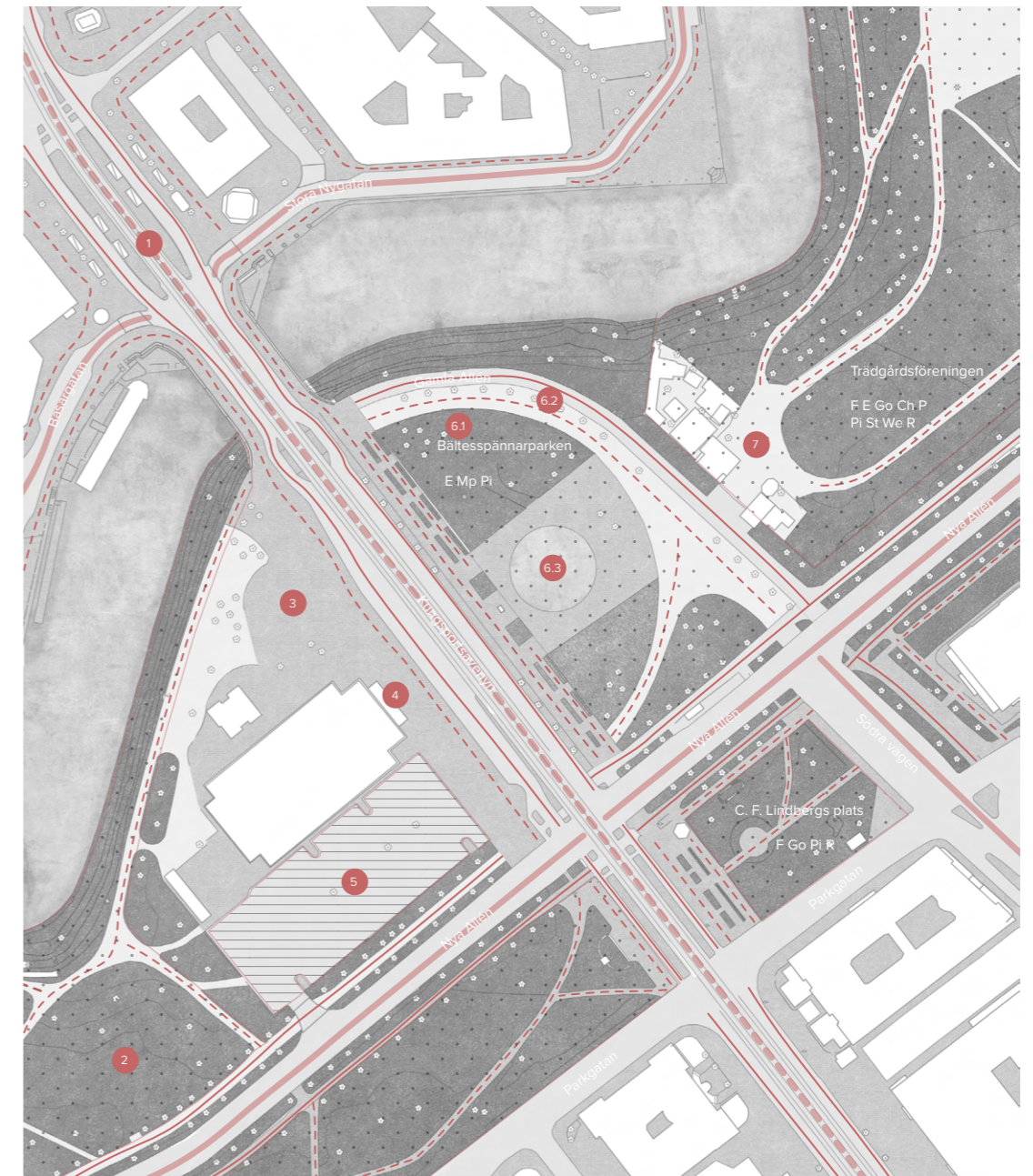
1:2000 | Flows, Use and Meeting points

— — Walking lanes
—— Bike lanes
━━ Car traffic
▪▪ Shared lane for public transport and car traffic
▭ Used by all residents in Gothenburg**
▭ Free space e.g. parking, public buildings**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| F | Flowers | Pi | Picnic |
| E | Event | St | Stroll |
| Go | Green oasis | We | Water experience |
| Ch | Cultural history | R | Rest |
| P | Play | Mp | Meeting point |

Kungsportsavenyn     1600-2200 pedestrians & bikers/hour*
Gamla Allén     402-700 pedestrians & bikers/hour*

\*   (Göteborgs Stad 2012:25-32). Data collected from report Stadslivsanalys.
\*\*   (Göteborgs Stad 2006). Data collected from Sociotope map.

## THE PARKING LOT

The parking lot has been identified as having the best potentials on the site for the project's intentions. It is located in the corner of two busy streets, providing a high exposure which is beneficial for visibility. It is located next to a conventional institution, Stora Teatern, and this can create an interesting dynamic between traditional and innovative. The space is interesting and relevant because it is in the center of several important city functions; busy flows and recreational/cultural functions.

In front of the parking lot are bike stands, e-scooters and Ställ&Styr (rental bikes) which makes the space a gathering point for these uses. There is also a parking space for taxis and tourist buses allowed to stay for 30 minutes meaning there is periodically a flow of people hopping on and off in front. There are two paths behind the parking lot people use to cross when heading from Kungsparken towards Kungsportsavenyn showing that the parking lot is partly used as a short cut and could need a dedicated path for pedestrians. It is valuable to save a small part of the parking because it makes the space accessible for those who cannot go to the place by public transport or by foot. Also because it might be necessary for service cars and visitors to Stora Teatern.
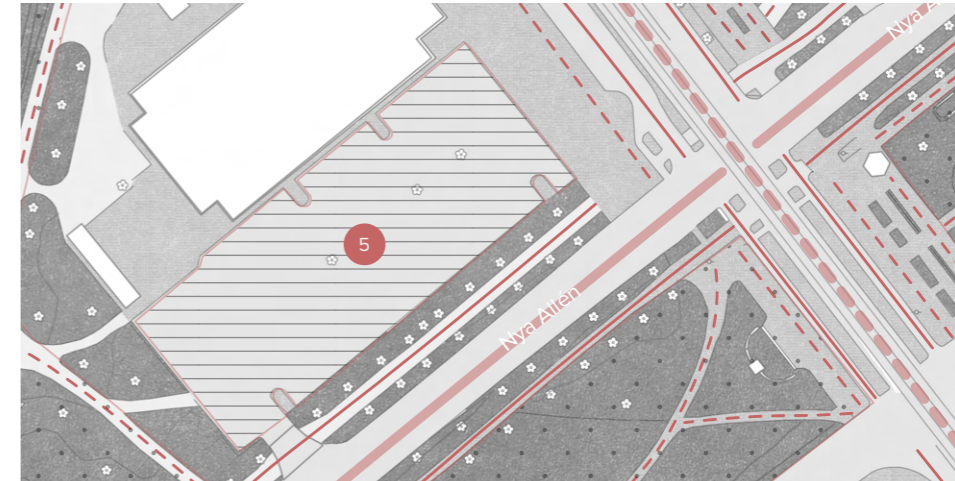




Overview of the parking lot



Bike stands in front of the parking lot



The path from Kungsparken



Looking towards the parking lot from upper Avenyn

## SUMMARY

Groups with low socioeconomic standard are concentrated in the North-West and the North-East in Gothenburg where up to 60 % within the area belong to this group. A link between low socioeconomic standard and low engagement in democratic processes has been made, showing some sort of correlation between the two, which is critical for a democratic society.

The analyses have shown that the insitution needs a place with the right conditions to be relevant for its purpose. A high flow of people, high exposure to the city and a context that highlight its novelty are some beneficial conditions that have been identified. A place with diverse functions and central position to easily be reached by all citizens. The parking lot on the opposite side of Bältesspännarparken are aligned with these thoughts and has been chosen for the design proposal.

DESIGN

## INTRODUCTION

Learning from the theoretical studies and analyses, in this chapter ideas about the social institution will be translated into practice. To determine the purpose and functions of the institution and use space, content and program to reach the goals.

The design starts with a process to define spatial typologies identified to help to reach the goals. A part of the process is to analyse the site to find the fundamental framework for the design. The process results in a building, *the Social Institution*, which represents inclusion, social meetings, democracy, and social art in one organisation. A public building where participation is key and the institution and its visitors thrive together.

## PROCESS

Spatial typologies inspired by the theoretical ideas have been visualised and examined as part of the process. The spatial typologies are examined in terms of how they are related to inclusion, social bonding and democracy. Some of them have been determined as good candidates to apply to the design.

The shape of the building is inspired by the neighbour building of the plot, Stora Teatern. The intention is to challenge the idea of the traditional institution by putting the Social Institution next to Stora Teatern, which is considered a typical traditional insitution. The design has the same footprint and proportions as Stora Teatern to get the perception that they have the same volume, except for that the Social Institution is slimmer and only mimic Stora Teatern towards Kungsportsavenyn. The two buildings have the same shape but different content and expressions to make an interesting contrast. The shape of Stora Teatern and the physical borders of the parking lot has set a clear frame for the design. Further on to consider what spatial functions are desired and find the right place for them within the framework.

The key takeaways from the theoretical studies were translated into physical design ideas on page 37 and they are used as guidelines in this chapter to further shape the design. The principles and four questions on page 35 have also been used as guidance and to set a framework for the design.
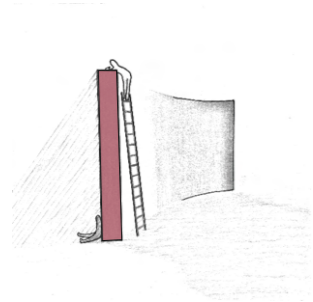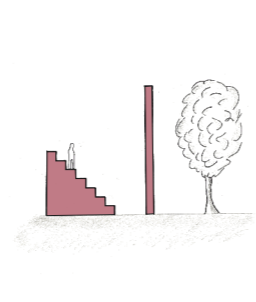
### Single wall

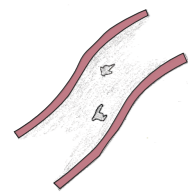Visually separating space in a city with statement design.
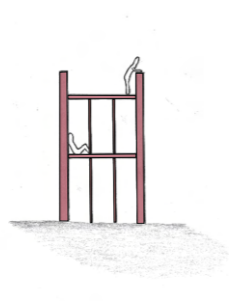
### Double wall

The wall idea with double walls to allow for actual space inside.
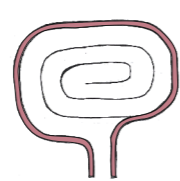
### Transititions

Different elements used as transitions to make it easier to enter the building and to break up the structure.
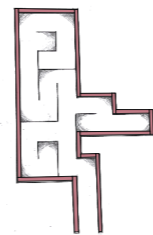
### Passage

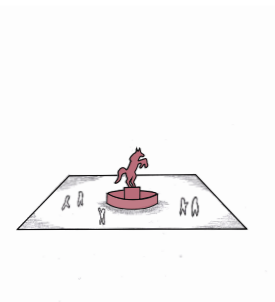A narrow space where only two individuals can pass at a time. An act of acknowledging when passing.

### Labyrinth
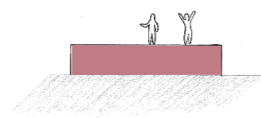
Navigating through a space with meditative and slow movements. Calms the mind.

### Maze

Disorienting and challenging space. Makes the individual increase their awareness of the surroundings and more alert to other individuals.
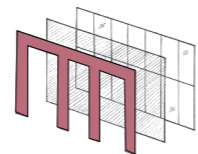
### The square

Open public space in the city. Natural meeting and gathering point for social, cultural and political reasons.

### Platforms

Spaces functioning as democratic platforms for citizens to express themselves and participate.
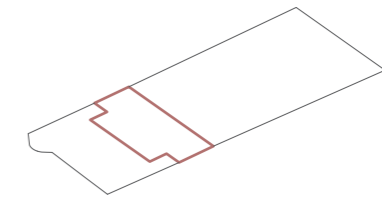
### Layers

Layers of structures to play with the expression and functions of the facade. A layered facade makes the building look more intriguing.
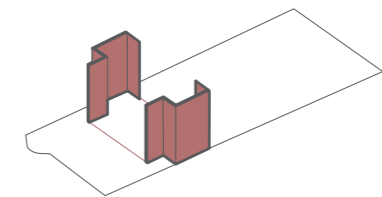
### Footprint

The footprint of the building with the same proportions as the front side of Stora Teatern.
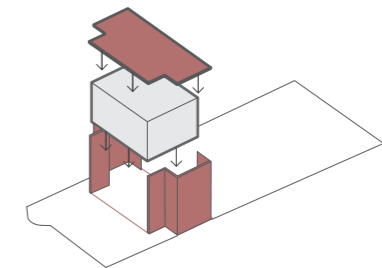
### Side blocks

All fixed functions of the building are concentrated in the load-bearing two side blocks.
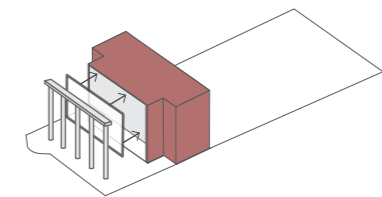
### Central block & Roof

The exhibition space is located in a central block. An open and flexible space with a transparent shell.

### Facade

The building has two facade layers. A semi-transparent (perforated metallic) inner layer and an outer layer with a freestanding column structure.

## CONCEPT

The Social Institution is a public building in four floors with an organisation representing social art and inclusion. Floor one, two, three and the rooftop is open for the public to visit. The organisation expands vertically into the four floors with exhibition space and café and horizontally with the park providing a public space outdoors where social art works can be placed as well. One of the spatial typologies, the maze, has been placed in the park as an element. A small part of the parking has been kept for its good location and make the institution accessible for people who cannot reach it by public transport.

**1  Square**

A square under roof becomes a natural meeting and gathering place. It will become an appreciated resting and protecting spot along the otherwise exposed Kungsportsavenyn with plenty of seatings.

**2  Seating space**

The square and the park offer plenty of seating in the sun with the trees and Stora Teatern protecting from the wind.

**3  Outdoor social art-space**

The park has some open spaces allocated for social art-projects with high exposure to the city. The square can host projects in smaller size such as sculptures.

**4  Maze**

The park has a maze with various heights to be challenging and attractive for both adults and children and a playful element in the park.

**5  Social art & Café**

Visitors will gather around social art and food when entering the institution. Both are presented in transparent and open spaces to make it easier for the visitor to take the step to enter.

**6  Participatory platforms**

The social art can be presented in several ways and one of them are elevated platforms with steps inviting the visitor to step up and participate in the art work.

**7  Administration**

The institution is administered and supervised by a staff team located on the fourth floor. The administration is on the highest floor to be invisible for the visitor and let the visitor feel less supervised during their visit.

**8  Roof top**

The roof offers some extra exhibition space and view over the surroundings. Intended for for bigger outdoor installations.
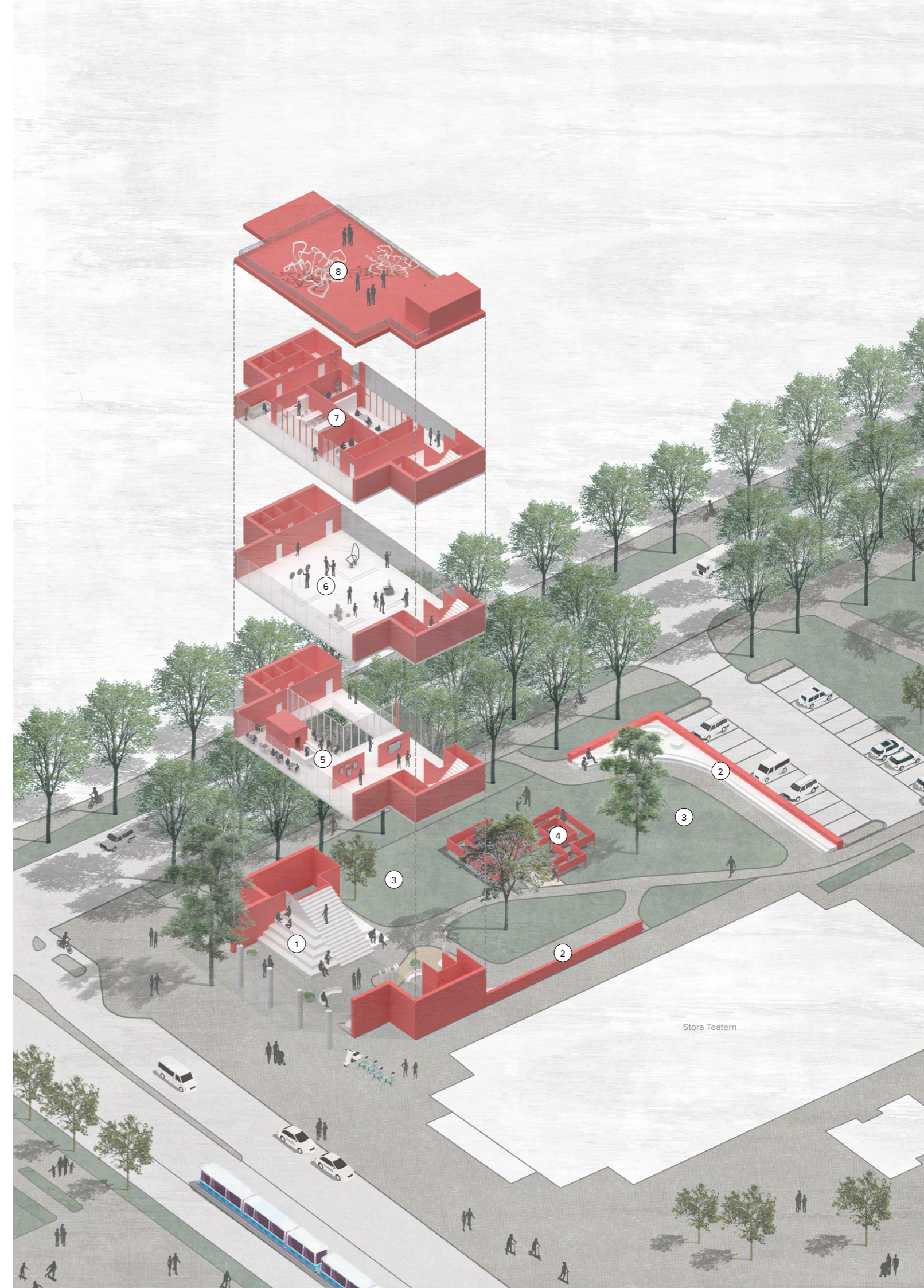
Spatial typology | Maze

The maze typology is incorporated in the park as a playful element with various heights to be challenging for both adults and children. It can also be incorporated in the exhibitions as a way to showcase art on the walls of the maze and make the exhibition become like a walk. The typology adds an entertaining and joyful sensation to the visit.
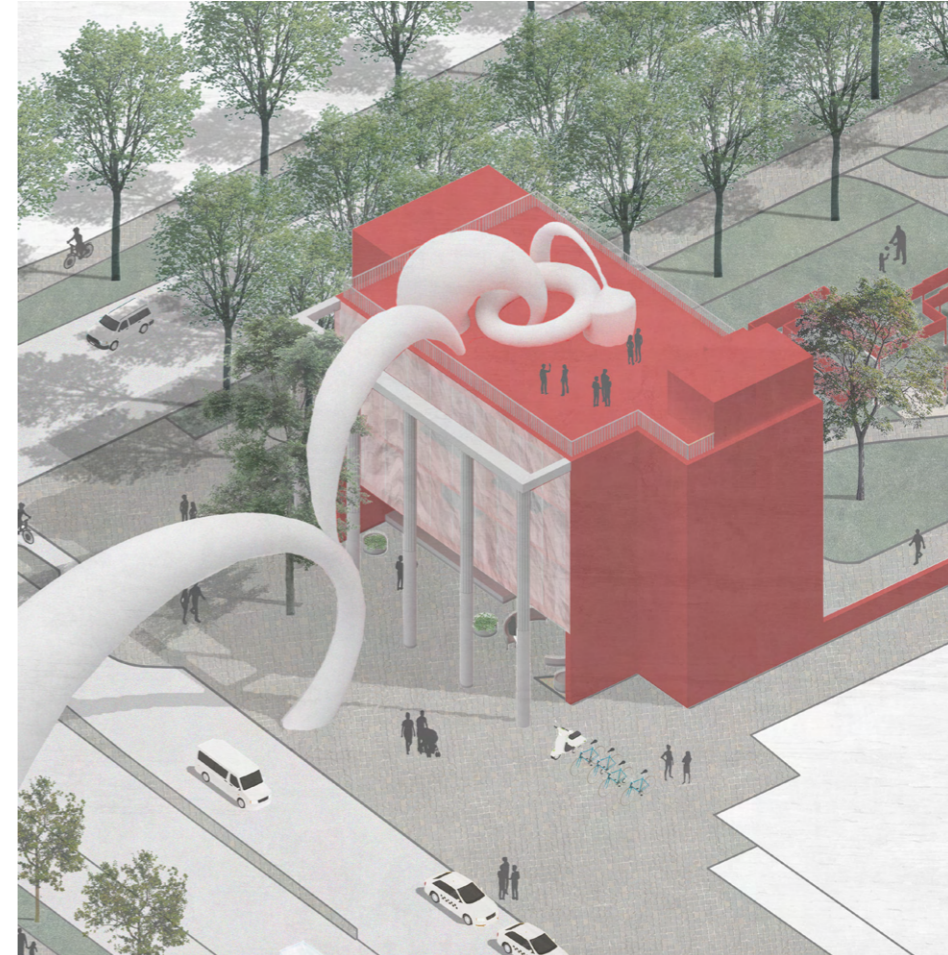


Spatial typology | Transitions & Layers

The facade has layers of classical and artistic elements creating an interesting dynamic between traditional and modern to put the building in its own category. The semi-transparent inner facade layer is a metallic perforated structure with an uneven surface intended to resemble a crinkled paper. The perforation allows art installations to be attached to it and become a vertical exhibition, like a big canvas with art. The building has a red distinct color to give it a unique character and make it stand out on Kungsportsavenyn. The physical appearance is important to emphasise the institution's innovative and open character. A big tree is situated in front of the building as a transition into the square. The illustration shows an example of how an artwork on the rooftop can claim the building and interact with the street and the urban space, to see how it is possible for the building to stretch outside its boundaries and become part of a bigger context.

Illustration showing art installation on the facade

Illustration of the park and the maze
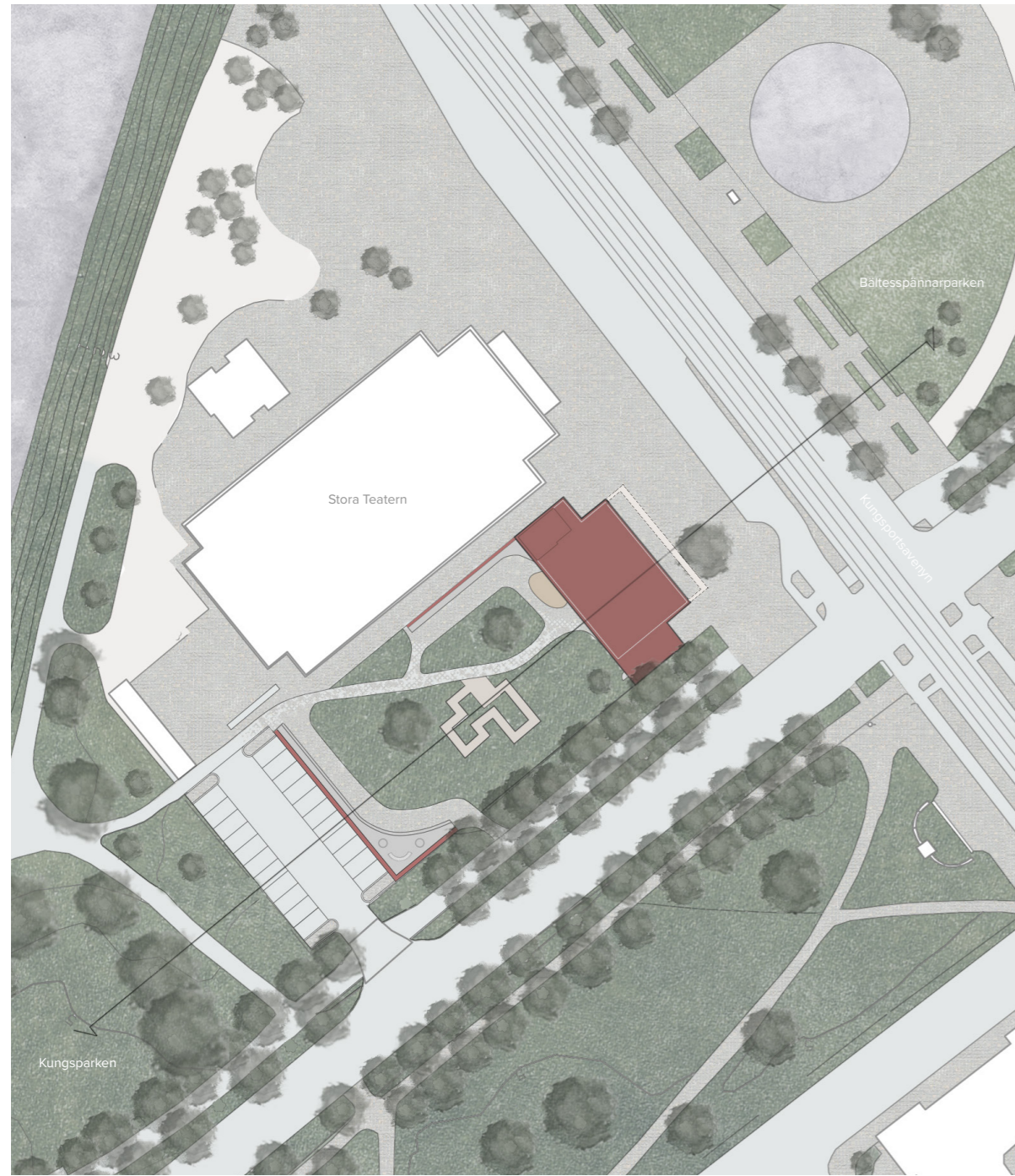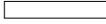
1:1000 | ⏱ Site plan with footprint
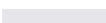
The site plan shows the footprint of the Social Institution and the park. In this bird view it is clear to see that the footprint mimics the shape of Stora Teatern. The long benches in the South-West and North corner frame the plot and set clear physical boundaries of the park. The park can be reached from three directions; Kungsparken, the bike alley and Avenyn. The walking path through the park gives the citizens a new enjoyable alternative to move between Kungsparken and Kungsportsavenyn.
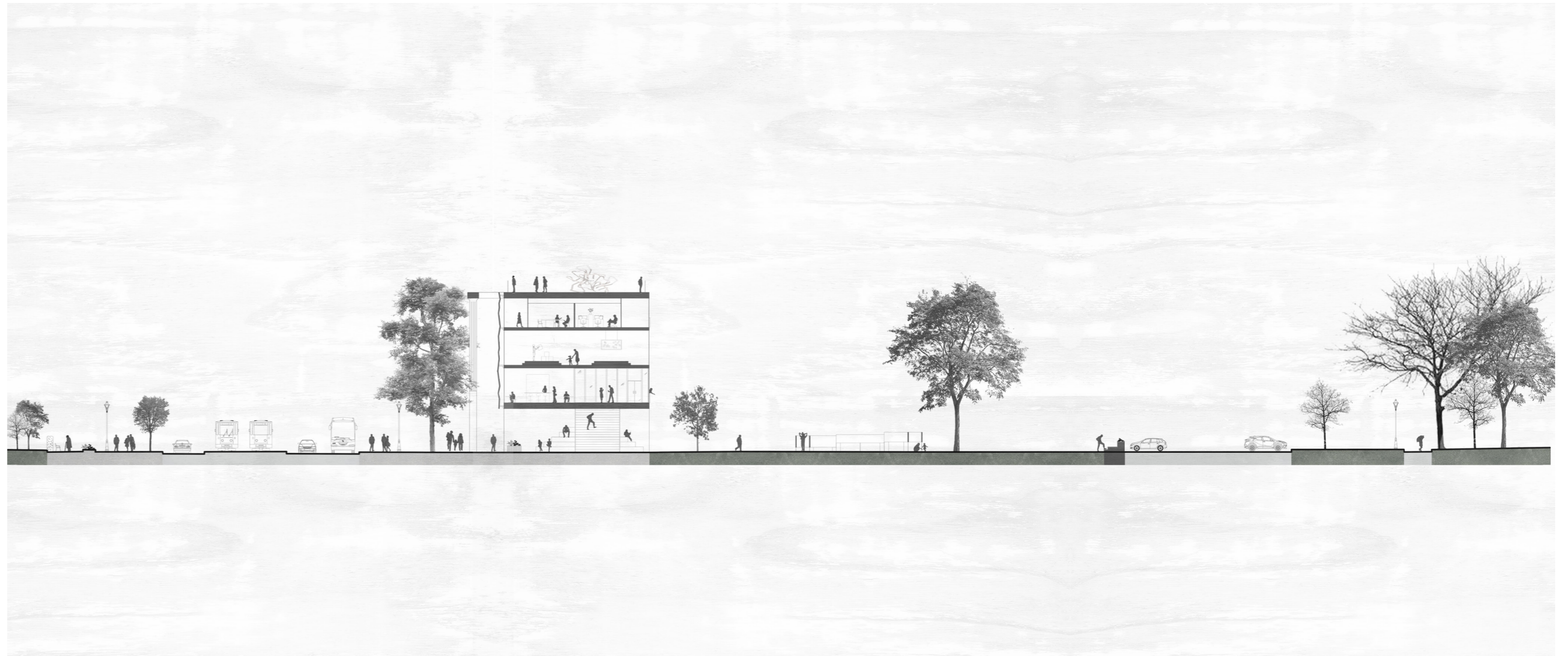


1:400 | Section through the park

The section shows the entire plot from Kungsportsavenyn to Kungsparken with the building, park, maze and parking area. The trees in the park are matching in size with the trees in Kungsparken for a smooth transitition and emphasise the park character. A big tree in front of the building works as a transition into the square, it helps passers by to slow down and is a hint to the park behind the building. The section shows the structure of the  facade with the columns and how they reach out in the street. The open first plan with the square allows for free movement through the building and makes the park more connected to Kungsportsavenyn.

## SPACE & FUNCTIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ▭ | Exhibition Space |
| ⋯⋯ | Exhibition Alt 1 |
| ---- | Exhibition Alt 2 |
| � | Café |
| ▱ | Administration |
| ▱ | Communication |
| ▱ | Storage & Services |
| ▱ | WC |

The first floor has some designated spaces for smaller artworks or sculptures, giving the visitor a first impression and idea what the institution offers. The second floor has an open exhibition space and a café. The entire open middle space of the third floor is dedicated for exhibitions. The exhibition space can be arranged in different ways depending on content with Plan 3 on the opposite side showing two examples. The first example are platforms that visitors can step up on and interact with the social art displayed there. The second example is a maze using the idea that the space increase awareness of one's surroundings including other visitors which is beneficial for mindful social interactions.. The café is located next to the entrance to give the visitor a friendly first impression of the indoor space. Facing Kungsportsavenyn, it is offering café guests a view over the lively street. The café kitchen is arranged as an island in the room to make the entire floor more airy and open.

The administration is located on the fourth floor. Offices and meeting rooms are arranged in an island surrounded by a hallway allowing for communication around. All rooms have transparent walls to let in the outside view. The staff has a small balcony facing the park and seatings in the hallway for breaks. The visitor can move through the building taking the elevator or the stairs. The elevator goes all the way from the square to the roof. The stairs are divided into two complexes. The open stair in the square on Plan 1 takes the visitor to the next floor and from there the stair continues on the other side all the way up to the roof.

Toilets are located on Plan 2-4 with toilets on Plan 2 and 3 being for public use. Storage rooms are located on all floors. The storage space is primarily used for extra exhibition material and resources. Service rooms are located on Plan 2-4 next to the stair.
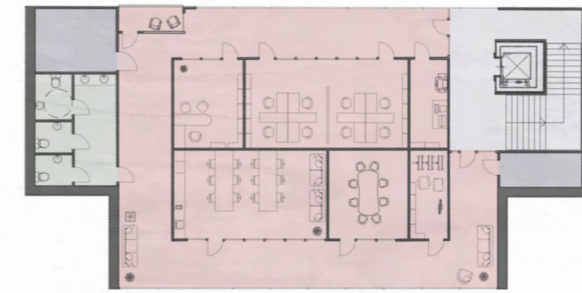


1:400 | ⌕ Plan 4
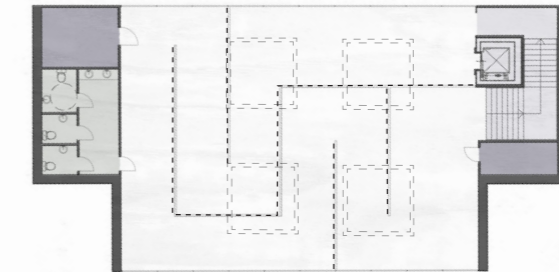


1:400 | ⌕ Plan 3



1:400 | ⌕ Plan 2



1:400 | ⌕ Plan 1

KAFÉ

KAFÉ
UTSTÄLLNINGAR

## THE ORGANISATION

Moving on from space and functions to the people behind the organisation who are managing the programs and exhibitions. To describe the organisation four questions from the theoretical studies have been answered; 1) Who runs it? 2) What does it contain? 3) How is it being administered? and 4) For whom is it?
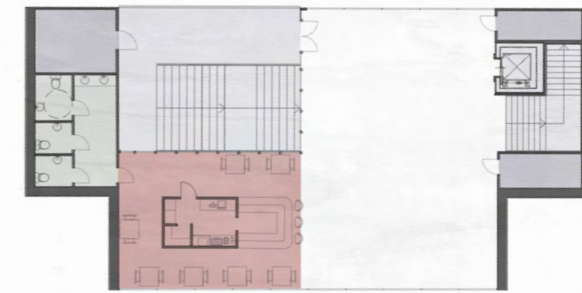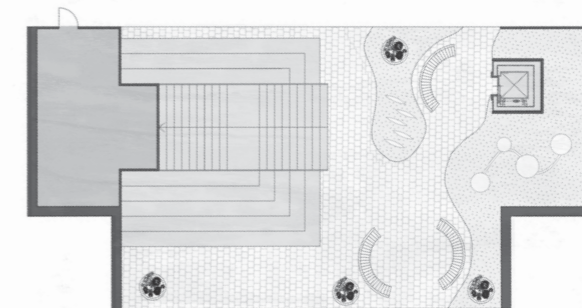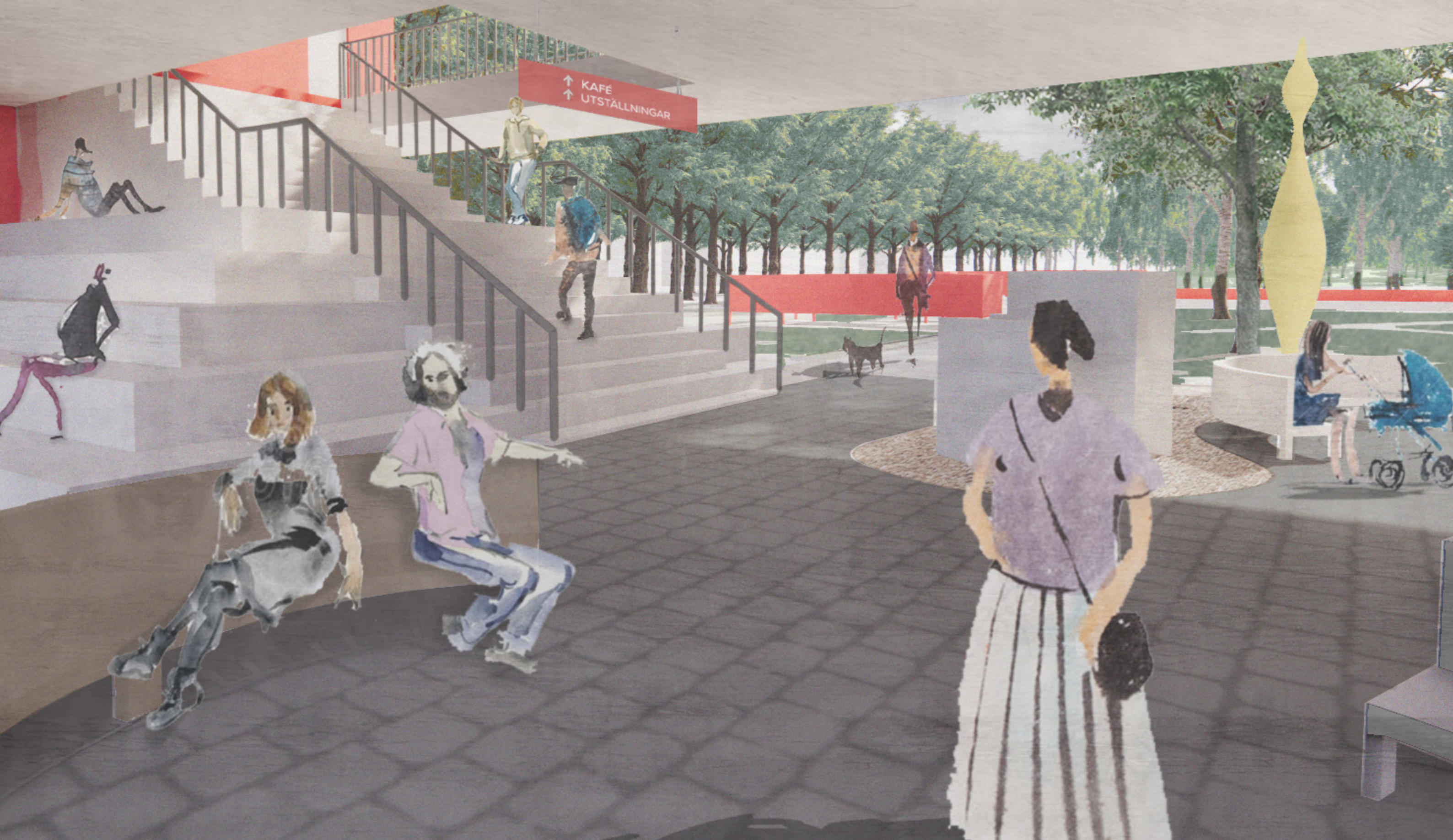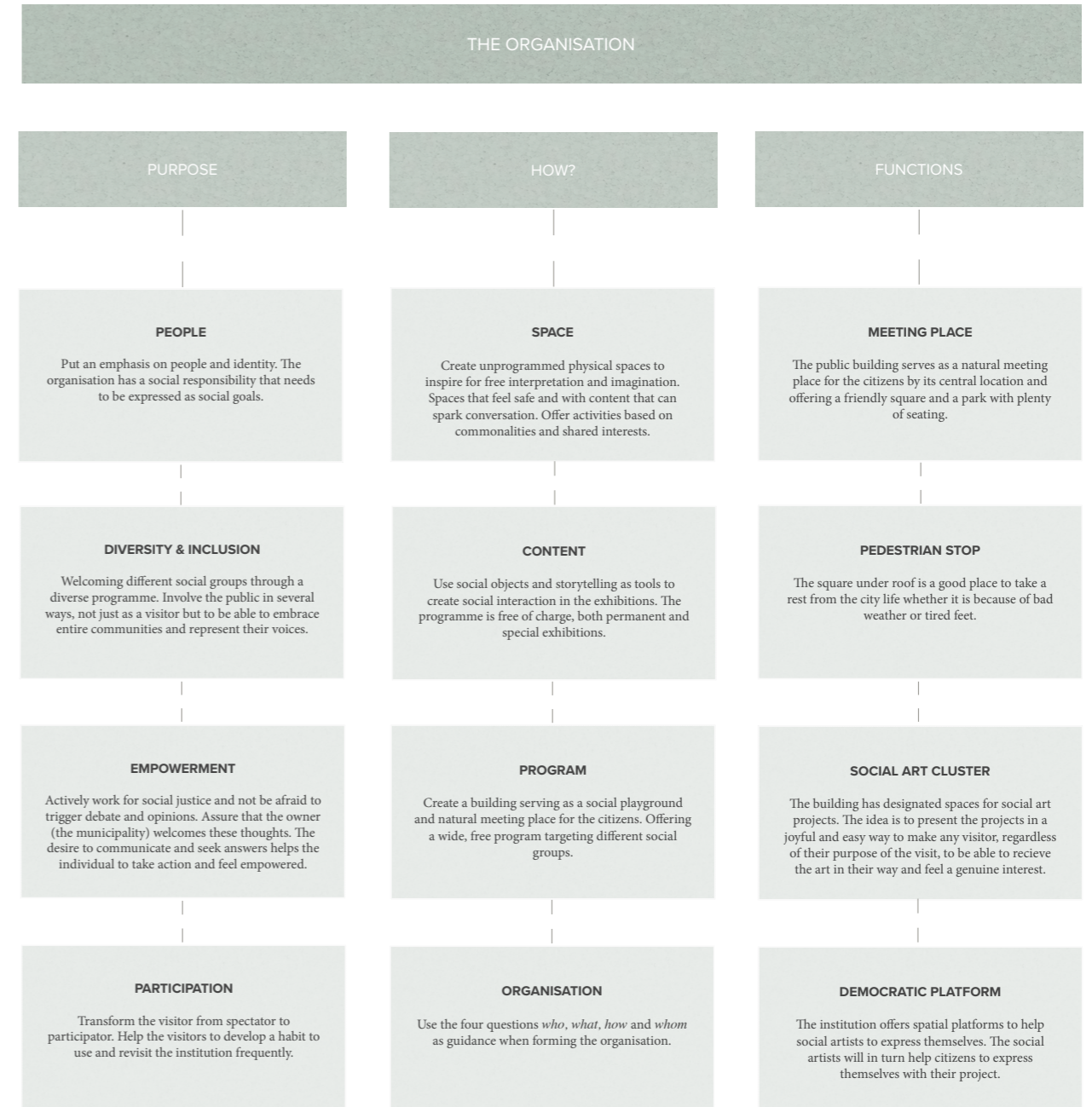
1) The institution is owned and managed by Gothenburg municipality to be able to show that the municipality can be open for new ideas and work for inclusion in art institutions. The staff is hired by the municipality and social artists are invited to participate in exhibitions. The invited artists will bring energy to the organisation and contribute with refreshing perspectives.

2) The purpose of the institution is to be a platform for activities and programs related to social art encouraging social bonding, empowerment and enlightenment. It contains social art projects engaging visitors in different ways. Participation is key and to target various groups with a changing program. The content will inspire visitors to engage and participate by using interactive exhibitions.

3) The institution is managed by a group of staff handling planning, programs, communication, marketing and economy. The staff works 'in the background', hidden on Plan 4. The exhibition spaces will be supervised with cameras so the staff will not interfere the visitor's experience. It is open afternoons to after working hours from Tuesday to Sunday to be accessible after working hours. The weekend hours will be morning to afternoon expecting citizens to be more active and available during daytime on weekends.

4) The exhibitions will be open to everyone and free of charge. However it is specifically targeting groups with low socioeconomic standard by offering a program focusing on engaging these groups in participatory art. To grow their confidence and empower them which in long-term will benefit their success and possibilities in life. The elevator, parking space and wheelchair toilets make the building fully accessible.

### THE ORGANISATION

| PURPOSE | HOW? | FUNCTIONS |
|---|---|---|
| **PEOPLE** Put an emphasis on people and identity. The organisation has a social responsibility that needs to be expressed as social goals. | **SPACE** Create unprogrammed physical spaces to inspire for free interpretation and imagination. Spaces that feel safe and with content that can spark conversation. Offer activities based on commonalities and shared interests. | **MEETING PLACE** The public building serves as a natural meeting place for the citizens by its central location and offering a friendly square and a park with plenty of seating. |
| **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION** Welcoming different social groups through a diverse programme. Involve the public in several ways, not just as a visitor but to be able to embrace entire communities and represent their voices. | **CONTENT** Use social objects and storytelling as tools to create social interaction in the exhibitions. The programme is free of charge, both permanent and special exhibitions. | **PEDESTRIAN STOP** The square under roof is a good place to take a rest from the city life whether it is because of bad weather or tired feet. |
| **EMPOWERMENT** Actively work for social justice and not be afraid to trigger debate and opinions. Assure that the owner (the municipality) welcomes these thoughts. The desire to communicate and seek answers helps the individual to take action and feel empowered. | **PROGRAM** Create a building serving as a social playground and natural meeting place for the citizens. Offering a wide, free program targeting different social groups. | **SOCIAL ART CLUSTER** The building has designated spaces for social art projects. The idea is to present the projects in a joyful and easy way to make any visitor, regardless of their purpose of the visit, to be able to recieve the art in their way and feel a genuine interest. |
| **PARTICIPATION** Transform the visitor from spectator to participator. Help the visitors to develop a habit to use and revisit the institution frequently. | **ORGANISATION** Use the four questions *who*, *what*, *how* and *whom* as guidance when forming the organisation. | **DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM** The institution offers spatial platforms to help social artists to express themselves. The social artists will in turn help citizens to express themselves with their project. |

SUMMARY

The chapter presented a design proposal attempting to show an example of how social art and an art institution can adress segregation. The goal with the design is to answer the research question *how an art institution can adress segregation and be re-imagined as a democratic platform empowering its visitors*.

The design proposal has adressed social, democratic and inclusive values and presented them in space, functions and organisation. *Transparency* is an important key word both in design and organisation to invite the visitor to be part of the institution. *Social* is another important keyword, realising that social interaction is a strong driving force and the base for any public building and its visitors to thrive. A positive social atmosphere lays the groundwork for other important processes to occur related to democracy and empowerment.

DISCUSSION

## THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT & EMPOWERMENT

During the process with the theoretical studies and the design some interesting thoughts have been developed about the social environment. Urban societies are a mix of social groups and strangers need to learn how to live among each other. People thrive best in company with other people that are close in culture, background or personal interests. In other words birds of the same feather flock together. It lays the ground for the social construction in urban settings. To accept and realise that not all people are meant to be together, that the well-being is connected to a specific social group. This realisation will help to avoid having too naive thougths about how a social environment should be and accept the social nature of humans.

The social construction lays the ground for social groups to form with various feelings of empowerment. Regional analyses presented on page 42 showed that there is a link between groups with low socioeconomic standard and participation in democratic processes. It is relevant to believe that an individual is influenced by the opinions and actions in their specific social group. If a social group has an undermining effect on the individual's self-worth it can affect how they act and engage in societal issues. This has a negative effect on empowerment leading to feelings of inferiority, discomfort to engage and eventually neglecting one's own rights.

## SOCIAL GOALS & OUTCOMES

The theoretical studies emphasised the role of institutions to serve its citizens and put focus on people and identity (Fleming 2017). Humans have a strong need to socialise and this fact has been used in design to create a building where people can thrive. One important learning from the design process is to design space where citizens can socialise and engage democratically.

The work with the design proposal has shown that it is challenging to design a building that fulfils the goal to be a social platform. There is no straight way to find out how well the design will perform on a social level. Social factors cannot be measured in the same ways as for example technical features to detect flaws beforehand. It is a drawback that it is not until the building is built and used it is possible to measure how well it serves and satisfy its citizens. Measurements could give an indication on how well the building performs and open up for improvements in the design-phase.

Based on the social goals some conclusions will be presented about how architecture, content and program have been important factors in the design. The first part describes what architecture can do in terms of space and physical expression to affect how the institution is perceived. The second part describes the role of content and program to help the institution reach its social and democratic goals. These three aspects; architecture, content and program have had a central role through the work.

## ARCHITECTURE AS A MESSENGER

The design proposal has shown that architecture matters for how the organisation of the art institution is perceived. The expression and physical appearance of the building have an impact on how attractive the content becomes. However beauty lies in the eye of the beholder and each individual will perceive the building in their own unique way. It is essential to find the balance to design a building that is both attractive and highlight its content. The building should help the visitor to read the displayed art in the right way. This becomes challenging when the content is unknown beforehand and the building has to inspire for things yet not known. A space that is flexible can help to easier adapt to different types of content. The facade is the organisation's face outwards. It determines how the visitor initially perceive the organisation and the environment influences how they feel. A combination of a neutral and flexible interior and an aspiring and attractive exterior make justice for both content and visitors.

Working with spatial typologies have shown that space also matters for how the content is perceived and engaged with. Five spatial typologies have been identified as especially useful to reach the social goals. *The square* helps to create a natural meeting spot where everyone feels invited and welcome to occupy space. *Transititions* makes the public building look more friendly and easier to enter. The facade can be divided into *layers* to feel less like a barrier. *Maze*-structures increase the awareness of the surroundings to become more mindful of others and narrow *passages* encourage individuals to see and acknowledge each other.

## CONTENT & PROGRAM

Architecture alone cannot make a public building integrated and the program and content has a lot of weight in that aspect. When improving and changing already traditional institutions, re-thinking is an important key-word. To be able to question and dare to re-think the fundamental approach to its visitors and content. To allow for new perspectives and let the social and democratic aspects lead the way. Principles and questions have shown to be helpful as guidance to reach social and democratic goals.

It is essential to work with content and program on several layers and dimensions. Reflecting over target groups, availibility, integration, accessibility, functions and incorporate these aspects into both content and program. To have clear social and democratic values that penetrates the entire organisation and drives decisions. For example letting the values guide the way for what artists and programs are going to be involved in the exhibitions and evaluate in what way the program engage and affect its visitors. If the building is going to achieve its goal to be social it needs to challenge conventional ways and become a multi-arena attracting a diversity of people. Within the organisation to let social, democratic and inclusive values be a part of an open and recurrent discussion.

## INSIGHTS & LEARNINGS

Writing a master thesis about how an art insitution can address segregation has increased my awareness of this aspect of a city and start to see how it is expressed in everyday life. Studying it on a deeper level has lead to developing a specific 'lense' for the subject; to see the city through socioeconomic glasses. This new perspective has brought on daily thoughts about deeper dilemmas about capitalism, globalisation, racism, equality and the future of social constructions. As much as it is overwhelming to deepdive into the faults of society it is rewarding that I have gained deeper knowledge and understanding which has lead to more cultivated discussions within and outside the frames of the project. Spending almost 800 hours studying a subject makes a mark on the character. Social segregation has helped me to develop a deeper interest and curiosity for social theory.

## THE INSTITUTION'S MOTIVATIONS & LIMITATIONS

The central location for the design proposal is essential for its capacity to reach different social groups. The building could have been placed in the suburb, as a temporary structure moving around in the city's suburbs. It was considered better to place it in a central location to problematise that segregation is a problem for the entire city and take a critical stand to the tendency to focus on disadvantaged areas when other socioeconomic groups such as the more wealthy areas are as much as part of the problem. The institution is therefore placed in a central location to make it a concern for all socioeconomic groups. Besides placing it in a central location in the city is a powerful strategy to grant space to disadvantaged groups where they normally would not feel included, in this case Kungsportavenyn which might be one of Gothenburg's most exclusive and influential streets.

Segregation is a common problem in urban societies but the work with the design proposal has shown difficulties to translate learnings about the social construction into physical design solutions. Architecture alone cannot solve segregation and through the work with the design it has become evident the limitations of architecture in segregation projects. It is merely a tool limited in its capacity to have inclusive effects. Moreover art is not a vital need and there might be difficulties to convince low socioeconomic groups to visit the institution when they cannot clearly see how it is helpful in their lives in terms of how it can offer them something beneficial and essential. Fundamental human needs will always be prioritised and art might seem like an entertaining leisure for most in comparison. However belonging is a fundamental human need and if the institution succeeds to be a social playground it can become essential for isolated individuals from all socioeconomic groups who are in need of a community. To have a place where they can feel part of a context which can have a possible meaningful impact. In addition to be a social community it can have the crucial role to be a space where critical conversations can take place.

It has been important to focus on one problem at a time in the process and slowly pave the way through the phases. Schedules and checklists have been incredibly helpful to keep focus on the right thing at the right time. To take the time to test and review ideas and dare to question and change them. To constantly keep the theoretical learnings in mind when designing. Working in parallell with theory, analyses and design have helped me to find connections inbetween them and easier draw conclusions. Translating and interpreting the theory into design has been a specifically difficult challenge; to take a stand for ideas and believe in them.

In the beginning of the project I had an underlying belief that the design needed to 'solve' segregation. As time went on and a deeper knowledge was gained it became clear to me that this could not be the goal of the project as it is an impossible task to solve with one building. It was difficult to take the first step to start the design process, there was a general confusion and lack of ideas. It helped to find strong motivations for the site and a fundamental framework to let them shape the base of the design. From there it was easier to develop the goals and functions of the building.

The master thesis is the most important project that will be made during the years as an architect student both in length, complexity and content. These thoughts were overwhelming in the initial phase, especially since the project was going to be an individual effort. Being in the end of the project and see everything coming together has grown confidence. It goes without saying that the support from others has been essential for the success of the project. A fact that has become evident in the project both in knowledge and experience.

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