

ARTFORUM



Performance view of “In This Country, Comrade (a collation),” 2020.
Photo: Hendrik Zeitler.

Annika Lundgren GALLERI BOX

Kastellgatan 10
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In Swedish theater, “collations” are procedures in which actors read through scripts for the first time, without dramatization. This impassive ritual informs Annika Lundgren’s exhibition “In This Country, Comrade (a collation),” whose spare set designs are accompanied by a trio of performers each Sunday. During these informal performances, a manuscript by Lundgren is read aloud as in a final round of edits, after which it will supposedly be published in an artist book alongside documentation of the performance and installation. As in her previous work with textual montage, Lundgren’s project channels the means and ends of its manifestation into a single loop.

The piece borrows its title from a 1976 poem, by Swedish socialist writer Svante Foerster, whose speaker describes the language on which democracy is constituted to be “gray.” Today, this color is used by Swedes to depict the corrosion of the social democracy that has guided the country for a century. In front of three monitors showing muted films set in a vacated parliamentary hall in Stockholm, Lundgren and her fellow collationers, Tove Posselt and Ellen Skafvenstedt, mirror the disaffected sculptures therein. Interlacing lines from Foerster and his peers with modern bureaucratise, they articulate the gap between opposed discourses that, officially, still reside under the same political banner.

This gap also manifests in the space between the scenery and, across from it, a muted monitor that depicts members of the Swedish parliament gesticulating during an uncategorized hearing. When reading, the collationers tack hasty notes onto the floor and walls in attempts to distinguish political “melancholy” from “nostalgia.” Here, in this gray zone, viewers may be awakened to both their silence and the radical stakes of language itself—another collation that is yet to take place.

— Frida Sandström