

The Right to design: Another possible Thursday 7th October 2021: 13.00 – 19.00 hrs Röhsska Museet



**Roundtable 1:  
Borders, Institutions, Histories**

**Onkar Kular, Christina Zetterlund,  
Henric Benesch and Mahmoud Keshavarz**

Henric

Borders, institutions and histories ... but to get back to here-and-now, the question of design as right, and the role of education, the research within such a scope is particularly pertinent in relation to where we are today at the Röhsska—an institution originally built in the early 1900s around collections assembled for educational purposes within what was then a vocational school for craftsmen – *Slöjdföreningens skola* at the other side of the block now being a part of the Academy of Art and Design at The University of Gothenburg, providing elite education programmes within Arts, Craft and Design.

Still, most museums of today, including Röhsska indeed operate as sites of learning in relation to broader Publics, schools in particular, in that sense, being here right now, those of us who have a foot in the university, haven't left school, we've only move to another wing. Both our next two speakers have been working with questions of design and craft histories and institutions through writing, research, education and practice. And specifically, how border practises and regimes—whether they be state borders defining territories or borders defined by cultural and education institutions—stating what is to be valued and historicized, creates inclusions and exclusions that are constantly interfacing and negotiating with questions of rights at many scales.

Our first speaker Mahmoud Keshavarz is a design researcher. Some of you met him as a senior lecturer in Design Studies at our very own HDK-Valand. Mahmoud is also the co-editor of Design and Culture Journal co-founder of the influential Decolonizing Design group. He is the author of *Design politics of the passport materiality immobility, and dissent*, and together with the Decolonizing Design Group he has just published The Decolonization and Design lesson plan for design educators on Bloomsbury design library.

Our second speaker, Christina Zetterlund, is a craft and design historian, with a history of writing practices where craft and design become a perspective for analyzing social conditions. She is active as Associate Professor at Linnaeus University in Växjö and as a curator for the project Re-learning the Archive. In 2018 she worked together with glassworkers, The Glass Factory

in Boda and Folkets hus in Kosta to stage the exhibition project *During the Lunch Break*, about the worker skills and agency, and how this was expressed in the “frigger making” (*I don't know what that is? Yeah, so to come back to that?*)

So, Mahmoud and Christina will speak for approximately fifteen minutes each. This will be followed by a discussion, moderated by me and Onkar.

Mahmoud

Is this on? Yeah. Thank you so much Henric, thank you Onkar, thank you all for being here. It's actually a privilege to be in this gathering, both because of the title of the event, but also, I get the opportunity to see many colleagues that I haven't met in person since I started working at HDK/Valand last year. So, it's great in that sense.

But let me start with the story, of which some of you may know. In the spring 1933 a mother named Marta, together with her daughter, Hannah, were on the run, fleeing persecution in Germany. They arrived in Germany, at the Czech border. They were aided by a friendly family, whose house had a front door in Germany, and a backdoor into Czechoslovakia. They entered as guests, ate dinner, and left Stateless.

This world – the world of state-lessness and rights-lessness, which has grown ever since – is the foundation of thinking for one of the most and sharpest critics of Human Rights—Hannah Arendt. This world experienced by Arendt also put an end to the dream of universal rights for her, which she sharply articulated later in her important book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* published 18 years later, in 1951.

Arendt took on a project that is still valuable, and meaningful, and perhaps now more than ever. The critique of Human Rights, that she took on and articulated so passionately, and firmly through- out her writings, it was shaped by her condition in the world, –a Jewish refugee—which cannot be simply ignored when one thinks about the notion of Rights.

Rights, for Arendt, has always been a fragile mother. As she and many other refugees in 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and now, are experiencing. For her there is no hope of rights without recognising the ever-present possibility of their

destruction. Which also means no declaration of other abstract rights without an affirmation of the potential for speech and action to recreate the human beings, and their worlds. Let me clarify that complicated sentence: first, any promise of rights on an abstract level is meaningless. That's one of the main points Arendt makes; rights don't exist outside the material worlds; of institutions, communities, bodies, and actions.

Her critique of human rights originated from this understanding, that human rights cannot be granted, unless one is a member of a nation state. As such, rights as a universal project is only a myth if human beings, or any other beings are not born into, left out or expelled from that membership (at some point Arendt actually called human rights, one of the most arrogant things human beings have invented)

The second point is that once rights are made accessible by registering them into the material world, then those rights can be easily taken away by destroying or manipulating the same material world. Again, rights are not an abstract objective category or entity, existing somehow, somewhere to be granted by an international or supranational entity, they are accessible, as well as are taken away by and through the material world. You might abstractedly write the rights into the world, but you can also take that right away by regulating the access to institutions that are responsible for implementing the rights.

So rather than regulating the right, to regulate the institutions. Take for example the right to housing, it can become inaccessible once housing is a property, regulated by market price. Right to abortion, becomes an accessible once a specific and almost impossible requirements are put on abortion clinics (which is the case in many US states). Right to freedom of movement becomes inaccessible once the system of passports and visas is established.

This is why for Arendt human beings don't need Human Rights, but what she called the *right to have rights*. Arendt didn't talk directly about design and rights (despite a new book that's coming out called *Designing in Dark Times* which tries to connect some of Arendt's conceptions or concepts into practice of design and designing). But Arendt didn't talk directly about design and rights, and I bring her words today in order to think with her and argue that the whole discussion on rights and design

should not forget the paradox of rights and the material world. I reiterate: rights cannot be granted unless through the material world of institutions, territories or artefacts, infrastructures systems.

But these materialities by their virtue, are not accountable to the inequality to which we arrive. Indeed the opposite.

They are parts and parcels of inequalities in the world, because we inhabit, and navigate the materialities that are shaped through histories of invasion, occupation, slavery, exploitation and violence.

After all, legal scholar Cheryl Harris, in a brilliant text which now is a classic within the critical race theory scholarship, reminds us that the origin of rights goes hand in hand with how the notion of property has been developed. Rights – as in the sense of individual rights we assume we have, have a very strong connection to property rights, which was historically reserved only for white men.

According to her, and based on her historical analysis of the relationship between property, slavery and race, property brings with itself three specific features: entitlement, expectation and privilege. And she argues that the whole system of rights is in place, to preserve and promote these three features: entitlement, expectation, and privilege. And I want to extend this line of argument, and say that these features are in fact features that are granted through the material qualities and affordances of property.

Let me quickly take an example, which I've done research on for some years now. The passport. The passport as an internationally temporary contract that has become permanent. Like many other temporary material contracts left from World War One, it is indeed not simply an identity document (which you may think). It is the right to freedom of movement materialized. Once the right to freedom of movement is materialised through a system of passports or what I've called *passporting*, then the right can be taken away or restricted by taking away the passport – for example, as the case for the seasonal workers, many workers in in in the Gulf countries or sex workers. So the rights can be taken away by taking away countries dictating the passport, or by manipulating it or inscribing

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restriction to it, as the case in Nazi Germany stamping the “J” sign on the passports of the Jewish citizens of Austria and Germany, in order to identify who is a potential refugee for neighbouring countries.

So the right to freedom of movement is nothing without a valid and valuable passport that guarantees you a higher place in the right comorbidity. This artefact to which millions of people in the world don’t have access to, establishes a property-like relationship to the world and its possibilities by owning a good one, you expect it takes you as far as you can. It makes you entitled to the whole world, and gives you privilege compared to others in terms of labour, economy, leisure, future and safety. We don’t need to look at what countries have the best passports for freedom of movement, but we can certainly be assured that passports are a white property, despite the fact that the major population of the world might not have one.

It’s a freedom of movement, given to only a few in the form of a property. Supposedly, we all have the freedom of movement, according to article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But in the material world of movement and mobility, which has historically preserved the interest of the Empire, the colonial regimes and Global North as such, this right has been only registered into the material world through specific and simultaneous practises of identification and bordering that were established by colonial rulers in order to guarantee as much as possible the freedom of commodities, labour and wealth by immobilising or regulating the mobility of those whose labours and bodies are the basis of the production of that wealth.

The material world in which rights are registered will already direct the rights to those who had a historically monopoly over building or designing the material world, in a way to make the road and it’s a species into properties for themselves.

So the key point is this. To have access to rights, one needs to have rights to access to the materiality of the world that makes those rights meaningful. I repeat that again, to have access to rights, one needs to have rights to access to the materiality of the world that makes rights meaningful. And this is not an access to simply consume the materiality, as that’s what you’re all given in the liberal democratic major parts of the world, but access to

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remake them to redirect them towards a more egalitarian and just future.

This reflects back to the actual practices of border transgressors, smugglers and forgers, those who must claim the right to mobility by reconfiguring the material worlds which made freedom of movement meaningful only for the few. And this was the position of some of the smugglers I met in the last six years, one of them put it in this way when recounting his experience of his last 30 years experience of smuggling migrants to Europe:

“I saw myself as the lawyer of refugees outside of Sweden. I ran my own Migration Board where those left without a visa and passport could be granted one that could guarantee them safe escape and arrival.”

For him, the ability to move today is no longer a matter of survival, as he viewed it in the early days of his activities, but an essential right that cannot be waited to be given rather needs to be urgently taken. So if he said, If the mobility is regulated by the states (he told me in that January 2019) this directly means the promotion of a market where different capacities for movement can be bought and sold.

“The state wants to monopolize this market and to put it frankly I’m interfering with that.”

What the smuggler points out here, resonates with Arendt, who herself used forged passports and visas, as well as boats by the services of a smuggler to flee Europe in 1941. Those who suffer from injustices in the world are not simply deprived of rights that can be guaranteed by institutions dedicated to give it to them, because again the rights don’t exist as an entity on its own somewhere, but rather they are deprived of the ability to claim the right to make the right to happen to them. So they are not deprived of the right. They are deprived of the ability to claim the rights.

The criminalization of border transgressors and the smugglers today and the state and media directed public fear around those who forge, or use forged passports, using unseaworthy boats in

the Mediterranean to travel across borders, so called illegally. It's not because they don't have rights, but because they come and ask for it. This active participation in the world, in the materialization of rights, can of course be an inspiration for those interested in remaking the world, whether they are educated as designers, or their acting in world is a form of designing, as in the sense of directing the world towards a less cruel and violent and more equal and hospitable place to live.

But again, this right to remaking or redirecting, to design and to the right to design, if you wish, cannot exist as an abstract figuration. The question however is how this right and through what institutions, practises and relations will be materialised? Once made accessible through the material world of institutions, artefacts, practises, who has the power to negotiate or even manipulate those materialities which in return can regulate the access to the very right to design. Do not get me wrong this is not a critique of the right to design as I believe the framework of right as in relation to those subjects designing or those who are subjected to a violent designed world is great because it allows us to shift our understanding of the vulnerable from an object of universal compassion into a subject of right demanding justice.

What I am trying to get it is to recognize the paradox embedded in notion and histories of rights. To reiterate, we cannot have them unless they are materially made accessible to us through institutions and practises. But once they are materialised, then they are also vulnerable in the sense that can be easily taken away through removing access to those materialities and materialisations, regulating access to institutions, stopping people at the borders of institutions, nation-states, territories, and so on. Therefore, the right to design cannot take for granted the notion of the rights and work only with the designing part of that framework. Here maybe another question can be asked: Can designing makes rights meaningful for those who have not access to the rights they need? Can designing be that right to have right?

My answer at this moment is that perhaps no but possibly yes.

[audience applause]

### Christina Zetterlund

Thank you for this wonderful seminar, and especially nice of course to see my former students in the audience. My presentation is of course informed by our brilliant conversations and I hope that we can continue talking today. Thank you Mahmoud for your presentation and I think that what you're talking about will partly resonate with my presentation, especially the relationship of materiality and rights. And, I was thinking whilst listening to you, I'm also interested in history and how history is written and some kind of critical historiography you might be able to call it. But also *who* becomes history and also who becomes involved in trying to write histories that would not allow themselves to be written because there is no materiality to speak off and because the bodies that carry the histories are not around to tell the histories anymore.

And I think this is an important background in what I'm going to talk about. Because when I started to make this presentation, I made this first slide and then I read it, 'The Right to Design, Borders, Institutions and Histories' and of course it became this statement, *Who* has the right to design borders, institutions and histories? You can talk about this in many ways and I will talk about this mainly in relation to the aspect of class. And when you make this kind of presentation you start with ... *where should I start?* But of course I should start where we are at ... I think we need to bring this institution into the conversation, so I will start here at the Röhsska Museum.

The Röhsska Museum is an institution that has the right to design histories to design institutions and one could also argue, borders, what is perhaps most obvious is borders of practice. How design is defined and practised within the institution. But if we go closer (and perhaps this is something that we can also discuss) you can also see how it creates other forms of borders.

The right to design history is given to Röhsska Museum partly by the people of Gothenburg (I guess as a large proportion of the funding comes from here) But it's also a right that I would argue that comes from a history of being an institution that has been here for a very long time. Röhsska Museum was established within a movement that dates back to the 19th century. Where-in the process of industrialization and the need to elevate taste, of

product producers, and consumers, so that they would desire, what design experts defined as a *qualitative design*.

These experts saw that people had a craving for what was called “foreign trinkets” These experts saw that people had a craving for what was called “foreign trinkets” or the problem was that products producers use too much, or make the wrong decorations.. Added to this was an aesthetic sensitivity, that is, if you appreciate the good design you will also have an educated aesthetic sense. And by doing that, that was also linked to having good morals. So appreciating aesthetics would also create more moral citizens. And of course the role of the museum could not be as easily defined today as it when Röhsska was founded, and another museum that comes from the same tradition is the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. At the museum, history is being told through exhibitions, through talks, like the ones that we do today. But I think most important is the collection, what is being preserved, collected and saved, because what is there now, that is also what is there in the future and regulates what the institution is. And I think we can see a very good example of this here along the wall.



What was collected when the museum began still generates what is important and what is collected. But I would also like to go a bit closer to how this *right to design* history is being institutionalised in naming the collection. I want to look at how the collection is labelled and here I will not use Röhsska but a vase in the Nationalmuseum as an example. And if we go closer to the image displayed, we can see how the museum describes

this vase and how this labelled through the caption card. And if we look at this label, we can read the title, date, technique, materials, dimensions and then we have artist/maker/designer.

The right to the design here is ascribed to Edvard Hald. As a brief introduction Edvard Hald was born in Stockholm, first, he was educated at the business school in Leipzig but soon he started to learn architecture in Dresden. But he wanted to become an artist, where he eventually would attend Matisse art school in Paris. In 1917 he started to ‘make’ work for Orrefors glass works where he designed [this vase](#) shown. ←

How the museum labels the making of this vase is creating a definition of practice, or a border if you will, of who is given the right to the design. As this is something that differs from manufacturing but also from making. And here we can read in Swedish that the vase itself was made by Knut Bergqvist. And here I would like to briefly introduce Knut as the maker of the vase itself. [Here you see an image of Knut Bergqvist](#) at his work. At the age of 9 he started to do odd jobs at Kosta and from the age of 12 he was working full time here. Nine years later, in 1894, he would be a master glass blower at the company. From this, there is a difference not just in making, but also in class.

However, this is where it becomes important. If you know the history behind this vase and this technique, the history becomes more complicated, and the distributions of rights becomes more complicated because Knut Bergqvist is more than a “mere maker” of the vase. He is the one that invented the *graal* technique that the vase is made of. It was a form of experimentation, and it started in his spare time, during the lunch break. But then when the manufacturer realised that there was something here and that they could make money out of it they started to allow him to do it during his work hours and then finally he came up with this technique.

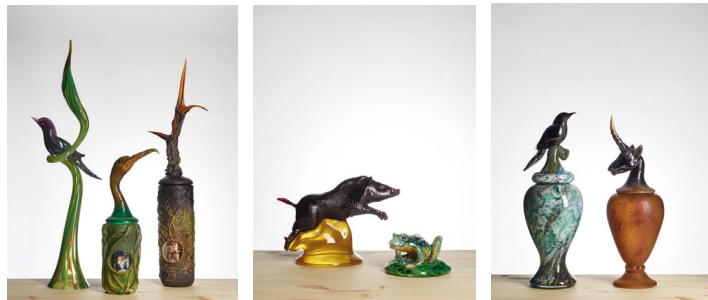
Hald could not have made this vase without the knowledge of Bergqvist. But this experimentation of doing, in his spare time was not just something that Bergqvist did. It was actually practice that was quite common in the glassworks. In Swedish it is called *sölning*. In English it’s called *frigger making*. *Frigger making* is actually a practice that outside glassworking and Småland is little known. And if people do know what *frigger*

[http://emp-web-84.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultListView/result.t1.collection\\_list.\\$Tsp-TitleImageLink.link&sp=10&sp=Collection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=1&sp=3&sp=SdetailList&sp=100&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=100](http://emp-web-84.zetcom.ch/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultListView/result.t1.collection_list.$Tsp-TitleImageLink.link&sp=10&sp=Collection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=1&sp=3&sp=SdetailList&sp=100&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=100)

<https://digitalmuseum.se/021016654607/mastare-knut-bergqvist-pa-strombergshyttans-glasbruk-bergqvist-ar-i-fard>

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making is, they tend to be from Småland. So, this lunch hour making is called *sölning* or *frigger making*. And initially it was something that glass workers did in order to learn glass, because most of the glass workers were like Knut Bergqvist, did the mandatory years in school and then they ended and in order to climb the professional ladder you have to know glass, which then leads to this lunch hour practice. Which in itself became a kind of education and school in how to make glass. But it also, not just about learning. So if you are a Knut Bergqvist or a really accomplished maker, where do you go with your creativity and joy of making when you are constantly subjugated to the making of other individuals? So the lunch hour here also becomes an hour of joy, an hour of experimentation and freedom. And, as in the case that we see here, a lot of the actual designs that are ascribed to designers, and that are labelled with the right to the design are labelled to Edvard Hald but have come out of this lunch hour practice. So the lunch hour experimentation also became something that was appropriated by the workshops or by the designers, in order to become sellable design. And I'll just show you two examples of these kinds of makings.



Tuomo Nieminen

Once such a maker was called Tuomo Nieminen, he spent his mandatory years in school but would eventually become a master glass blower at Bergdala and Kosta. Another example is Anton Koch, he came from Germany, and then started working at Åfors.

Photograph: Peter Westrup

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Anthon Koch



Photograph: Peter Westrup

The image shown is part of his lunch hour making. However, this *frigger making* has not been collected by any design museum, and until recently only one text on *frigger making* existed. If you want to learn about this making you have to go to the glassworkers, as the archive is now in their homes and this is something that became very clear to me while visiting glass workers in their homes and interviewed them about these practises.

And now I will come to the only text that exists, and it is in this book, *Orreforsaren i Glasriket*. And it was a book that was made and a large project that is called in the *Kingdom of Crystal: The people the environments, the future*. And this was a large project conducted between 1978 and 1983. It was initiated by chapters of *Arbetarnas bildningsförbund* (Workers' educational association) in Lessbo and Nybro, together with union locals of *Svenska fabriksarbetareförbundets* (Swedish factory workers' union) and a local radio station. So what they did was that they took the right to design their own histories, so they organised themselves in order to materialise their own history. And what they did was, what you see here on the image, they did study circles where they forged their own methods in order to materialise their own histories. It resulted in many different things, among them is a total number of twenty-one books. They did exhibitions, they did plays, they did music, they did talks, they did a lot of things in order to tell their history.

<https://www.antikvariat.net/en/pix19671-orreforsaren-i-glasriket-utgiven-av-i-glasriket-manniskan-miljon-framtiden-ett>

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And I think it's interesting to see that when the workers took the right to write their own history, that this history is visabilised. The history of making Friggers, looking from the outside it doesn't appear, but looking from the inside, it does appear.

From this I would like to argue that writing design history is a site specific practice. And in order to formulate what you're talking about—Onkar—for *Another Possible to be Possible*. We need to negotiate borders of institutions, or rather reformulate and remake institutions. And I think I will stop there, so we can start a conversation.

[audience applause]

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### Onkar

Well, I mean, wow, what a start. Thank you for so much. I'm trying to think about how we digest or ingest those two, I wouldn't say necessarily two different positions— but two kinds of approaches to this question. And so I've tried to identify a question, and let's see if there's an opportunity to respond to it. So if I am to identify commonalities between your presentations, is the right to a certain form or mode/s of visibility. So we could extend this to 'how to design the right' to a certain form of visibility. But I would also try to complicate this even further. And importantly, also the right to design a certain form of invisibility. So the right in certain situations to remain invisible. And we could also add 'design' in there, and I think there are two contexts or sites and kind of institutions that we could identify, firstly is the airport, where certain bodies are made visible and certain bodies are made invisible because of the passport or a certain type of passport. And I would also say that to extend that to the institution of the museum, is the right to claim a certain type of visibility. And that is in itself also a question.

### Henric

I could add to that somehow, in the business of grafting things together, we took from the conversation about the passport, and the card (caption), associated with the vase, which obviously is a kind of passport, you know, to be able to be within the nation state of Swedish design, so it's fairly similar mechanisms, operating across different kind of regimes or in contexts. Thinking about rights in terms of scales, there is the nation state of course and the international but I'm also thinking of the commons as another form of rights, which have a much more local base in relation to this. I think that's also interesting to think about the scalability or non-scalability of rights and access. I mean if you talk about the commons, it will be about the rights 'through use' so there is a slightly different relation associated with that which is interesting in relation invisibility, or visibility, which plays out in a different way.

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## Christina

Yes, I think that what you talk about Onkar, about the right to visibility and the right to invisibility. I also am also thinking about something that you talked about Mahmoud, the relationship between privilege, entitlement and expectation, which also makes me consider the visibility in relation to invisibility in the right to choose as well. Also, what I believe institutions and institutionalisation does, is that it enhances privilege and entitlements and expectations. And I think that this kind of dualism between visibility and invisibility, that is the entitlement to the either or, that is at the core of it, I would say.

## Mahmoud

It's a very present question of visibility and visibility, which, is not clear cut, I mean we know there are giant apparatus internationally, nationally and locally that act against let's say migrants and refugees or I use the term *travellers without right papers*, because I believe all those terms we often use interchangeably such as refugee/asylum seekers/migrants, they are the terms which the border regimes have produced to efficiently categorise and so on so forth. So going back to this conception that they have that the right to the freedom movement is materialised in terms of papers. And we have giant apparatuses on one hand that try to visibilise, make them visible and seen to states, and even make them seen in the urban space.

Together with Christina, some years ago we worked on the REVA project, and authored outlining that the REVA project was very much a national project. The REVA project was a project between police and the migration office, the 'criminal world' and probation services to find what they called to find undocumented migrants. So what the police did was basically to set up checkpoints in Stockholm, the project was first piloted in Malmö, then in Stockholm. And what happens there is that by the fact that police picks up non-white Swedish citizens, as a potential undocumented migrants it also dedicates the right to gaze to any other citizens that don't find themselves as undocumented or so-called illegal to exercise that right. So whenever a white citizen sees a non-white citizen [they might ask] is he or she, an illegal immigrant? And it's something that's

<sup>1</sup>In 2009, the so-called REVA project, Legal and Effective Enforcement (Rättssäkerhet och Effektivt Verksamhetsarbete), was initiated by the police, the Swedish migration board (Migrationsverket) and the Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården) in response to a request by the government. The project was co-funded by the European Return Fund. REVA aimed to search for, arrest, and deport people who stayed in Sweden "illegally" and who did not leave Sweden after being denied the state's permission to stay in the country. The project did not do something that was not already happening, but rather it functioned as a communicative platform; a sort of branding and marketing of a section of the authorities work. A unified, collaborative, national and efficient will over the willfulness of individuals who did not leave. A Method for Materialising Borders Silent University Reader: Tensta Konsthall #1, 2013

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done, that's what the state does, it turns us into what they call property or what Cheryl Harris called 'Whiteness as property'. So what I'm trying to get at, there is a system that tries to make visible, let's say, constantly, but at the same time, there is also invisibility, so it is not clear cut as it is always there. And of course that is why the question is: Who has the access to these materialities and apparatuses of visibilising or invisibilising? So who decides, who has the agency in deciding when and how and at what scale, who shouldn't be invisible, and the other. So if we go back to Édouard Glissant, and the right to opacity, how, historically modern institutions are all about transparency and connect that to the colonial rules but it's like, you know, migrants and vulnerable should have right to opacity, they should be able to himself decide when to withdraw from the domain of visibility and when be visible to demand rights, right?

As in the case of many border transgressors, at some point you will need to make yourself visible to claim asylum, but on many other points, you have to remain invisible. So I think this is a play, but the question is, who has historically, the right to exercise over the mechanism of making visible and making invisible? And that's what design has strictly done, with any act of designing makes certain things visible and other things invisible, you know, it could be an object or practice or relation. It can make certain labours visible and not others, right? make visible certain histories and not others, make visible certain bodies are not others. So I think going back again to this question of the right to design the question is, rather, how, basically, the access to this right is always already regulated through the material world and we need to pay attention to the material world.

WHITENESS AS PROPERTY. Cheryl I. Harris

## Christina

I also think that that project that we did is also quite a good example as it relates to institutions, because visibility is also about seeing; someone sees something; and also we are here in order to see, we are invited to Röhsska in order to see things are on display. Whereas, there are also some things in this structure that we are not encouraged to see. So what we did in the REVA project was to visualise the 'borders'. So, we see tend to see

right to invisibility?  
visibility

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national borders as something that goes around the nation. But borders are also carried by bodies, so the police have internal border checks within nations. You can follow through police records, here is an archive that you can look at and experience the everydayness of this violent process. So what we did in the project was to frame and map the locations of these internal border practises. To materialise the internal border.

### Henric

We could also fold that back into sites like the Röhsska, or let's say design education as sites of visibility or as sites of invisibility, also given that both Röhsska and the school (HDK-Valand) are part of the nation state that has a legacy and framework. So the question also becomes how to operate within that challenge both, inside, and outside.

### Onkar

Something that we've been trying to grapple with is the fragility of this claim itself, 'the right to design'. It's always been on slightly precarious ground, but, I would say there actually is kind of an enjoyment in that precarity and practising through that precarity, partly because it's an opportunity to share this event. For this cartography (of design rights) we speak of, is not necessarily an absolute cartography, it's a one that can also problematize this claim. And I was thinking, okay, we've got so many brilliant students here, what might they take away from this right now, you know that feeling well we were in a design school now and so what can design actually do and not do? Maybe, it's also a question that will connect to the conversation with Arjun (Appadurai) and Arturo (Escobar) around the possibility of refusing design altogether. I think that's a really interesting position in relation to the question of rights and the right to refuse design.

If we don't mind really just open it up to the audience.

We can start with straightforward reflections as I recognise that sometimes formulating questions directly after long talks can be difficult.

## Roundtable 1: *Borders, Institutions, Histories*

### Audience Question

Thank you. I have a question of access or inclusion after access, and the idea of accessing rights, and being an active agent in having those rights and being able to operate within institutions with those rights that you have. And somehow, this inclusion being a step taken from the institution, not from one personally, having access. And I find a connection between that and your [Mahmoud] summing up saying that, *probably No but possibly Yes*. And then, Christina with the very inspiring proposition of reformulating institutions. Not only to have access but have something beyond inclusion.

### Mahmoud

If I'm correct you are somehow connecting this to what Hannah Arendt describes as the right to have rights. I also share with Arendt who at the time wrote that there are various institutions that could grant us rights but what happens when the state is racist? So this is the kind of scholarship that people criticise why human rights is a colonial framework. Because also what happens if the state is racist and therefore it's not even a question of reformulating the institution. Maybe Arendt, in my view, made a mistake in putting too much hope in US federalism as a solution to the European nation state, and hence, I think she came to the wrong conclusion when for the same reason she analysed and criticised the civil rights movement in the US. But what I'm trying to get at— inclusion or as being part of an institution by itself doesn't guarantee and bring the rights in which we are promised.

So the question again, how are those materialities being brought out of the institution in relation to the rights in which we want to claim, or in themselves are accessible or a place of navigation, because you can be part of an institution but not have access to it. So access is not necessarily in the sense of being there's, you can have many people present in the society, there are citizens, they have right, but in a way they don't have right to participate in the society, maybe they belong to something, but they, they don't, they cannot participate, right? Because the materiality or the material world are made and distributed in ways which constantly exclude people at the same time

Not only  
access but  
inclusion?



The Right to design – *Another Possible is Possible*

including them. A case in point is undocumented migrants, as they are included in the economy because the cheap labour but they excluded from certain rights. So they are part of an institution, but at the same time excluded from them.

Therefore, the question of access and inclusion goes hand in hand, as long as, again, not thinking of rights as something abstract, that can be just guaranteed by the virtue of being human. That is just a myth as we have to make the world a place in which we can claim those rights, hence let's say plurality or whatever things that Arendt argues. So we have to—it's our task to do that. That's why Arendt does not put much hope on institutions—because institutions are constantly failing or betraying the people they're supposed to serve.

Onkar

Thank you, Mahmoud and Christina, really fantastic, lots to chew on for sure.

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