

ABOUT HELENA BJÖRK (FINLAND)

AN INTRO BY NELE HERZOG

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Helena is set out to combine her fields of interest. She is interested in art education, literature and how the two can be useful when it comes to the practice of curating. They have been and are still her subjects of studies. She came to the Institute's Neukölln Büro on a scholarship that connects her alma mater the Aalto University of Helsinki and the Institut für Alles Mögliche. The two are cooperating in enabling chosen students to live in Berlin for a month and to pursue their interests using the Institute's network and spaces during that time. Since Helena is engaged in researching material for her master's thesis which involves Berthold Brecht's theatre practice theories, Berlin seemed like the perfect place to be. After all Brecht has lived and worked in the city for a significant part of his life.

Helena is already quite certain about the thematic direction of her thesis: By examining the methods of certain curators and analyzing the ways in which they address their audiences, she wants to try and make a point about encounters with contemporary art. For her, Brecht's notion of alienation seems like a good starting point in looking for solutions to a lack consideration of the audience in some curatorial manners. During her stay Helena went to the Brecht archive and talked to Berlin-based researcher Giulia Palladini about Brecht, which helped her deepen her knowledge and also pose questions from a different angle, as she says.

She also gave talks about Helsinki's art spaces at the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig and the Institute's Abteilung für Alles Andere. Not only the art scholars but also various friends and acquaintances of the

Institute were able to profit from this insight into a Nordic way of working with art. One very memorable anecdote she shared with people, was about the so-called Vintage Plant shop she helped setting up and run in a small Norwegian town called Kristiansand in 2012. During a two week period people were encouraged to bring their old plants to the store and fill out a registration form that called for the plants history and unique features for others to become interested in so they would maybe buy the plant and actively take part in its history. Helena says, that she is all for this kind of space and audience-oriented way of intervening through art and enjoyed attending the store and talking to the customers very much. After having been around some of the many art spaces in Berlin and Leipzig she thinks, that she will go home to Finland with a new outlook on possibilities in running art spaces unconventionally. When it comes to the development of Helena's thesis, she is glad to have been able to spend time with her subject, and will now carry on thinking about it with a deeper sense of what she wants to express.