



Press release from HDK – Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg, May 31, 2017

New initiative from HDK: OPEN WEEK - Gothenburg Design Festival, 20–26 November 2017

What does it mean to be an *open university*? During the new initiative OPEN WEEK - Gothenburg Design Festival, HDK, in collaboration with partners, will test new formats for displaying *learning* in design and crafts. The ambition is to engage in a critical discussion in order to provide new insights that can further develop learning, research and future directions for design and crafts practice.

Onkar Kular is professor in design interventions at HDK, since autumn 2015. The assignment as curator / artistic lead for the Göteborg Design Festival fits well with his previous experiences at the Royal College of Art, London, among other places.

“Over a number of years as an educator and curator, I have been keen to understand how places of learning engage directly with civil society. In particular how design and crafts exhibitions can further support the practice of education by developing environments for continued learning, knowledge production and alternative modes of audience engagement. The OPEN WEEK within the context of an established and emerging creative community in Gothenburg is a great opportunity to begin to test ideas that engage and speak with a variety of audiences,” says Professor Onkar Kular.

The background to HDK’s initiative for a design festival was originally a desire to try a new format to present the design students’ degree projects.

“The traditional design exhibition format, based on simply displaying an artefact, does not fit the range of design practices at HDK,” says Professor Onkar Kular. “The formats are generally unsympathetic to the more process based, relational and critical approaches of our students.”

The aim of the festival is to include the entire learning process that continues into professional practice. OPEN WEEK is an opportunity for national and international art schools, cultural organisations, industry and practitioners to exchange ideas about the role of artistic education in relation to openness and society.

Through exhibitions, symposia, talks, evening classes and the annual Open House at HDK, the *OPEN WEEK - Gothenburg Design Festival 2017* will invite the public to engage in activities and discussions concerning design and crafts, society and education. OPEN WEEK will have a presence beyond the inner-city centre of Gothenburg, staging cultural activities and forming partnerships in the suburbs.

“Gothenburg has a great potential to become an international center for design, arts, crafts, fashion and architecture, says Ulf Dalnäs, Head of HDK. But academia, business and cultural organizations must understand the possibilities and together lift Gothenburg. Through this initiative, HDK wants to show the strengths of the city.”

Gothenburg Design Festival is aiming to be an annual feature in Gothenburg.

PARTNERS

Discussions are ongoing with several networks and institutions on partnerships for the week. This we know:

- HDK will host the conference *Crafts and Ethics* in collaboration with Konstantverkscentrum and Röhsska
- The Röhsska museum will open parts of the museum to host an alternative graduate exhibition by Bachelor and Master design students
- Throughout a number of venues and locations, alumni, teachers and researchers at HDK will share exploratory platforms with the cultural and educational sectors, creative communities and businesses of the Gothenburg region
- Röhsska's exhibition with the recipient of Torsten and Wanja Söderberg's Prize 2017 - former HDK student Daniel Rybakken – will be on display at the City Library. Daniel Rybakken will participate in OPEN WEEK with an activity at the City Library
- The Regional State Archive will become a platform for a site-specific intervention
- The Gothenburg Award For Sustainable Development: joint workshops and debates with among others Chalmers based on the open design philosophy of the Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena, who won the prestigious prize 2017

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University of Gothenburg is one of the major universities in Europe, with about 37 800 students and a staff of 6 200. Its eight faculties offer training in the

Creative Arts, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Humanities, Education, Information Technology, Business, Economics and Law, and Health Sciences. The University's unique breadth in education and research provides an interdisciplinary environment conducive to collaboration with private enterprise and public institutions. The quality of the University has earned recognition in the form of numerous awards, including a recent Nobel Prize, and a steady stream of applicants at all levels.