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How Do You Become a Successful Beggar in Sweden?

An inquiry into the images of begging and giving 2011 to 2016

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How Do You Become a Successful Beggar in Sweden?

An inquiry into the images of begging and giving
2011 to 2016

Cecilia Parsberg



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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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To be defended at Umeå Academy of Fine Arts, Umeå University, on 14th November 2016 at 12 in Flexhallen, Strandvägen 32, 90187 Umeå.

Faculty opponent

Dr. Professor Stefan Jonsson, Linköping University

Cecilia Parsberg presents the six staged works from her dissertation 10-11 am.

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Title and subtitle: How do You Become a Successful Beggar in Sweden?

An inquiry into the images of begging and giving 2011 to 2016

Abstract: My first encounter with a begging person led me to spend five years investigating the new situation regarding begging and giving in Sweden. The premise is that every-day actions and reactions to another person can be made visible through aesthetics with ethical underpinnings. My investigation takes place mainly in the urban landscape and in the media. The images always constitute the point of departure for the reasoning and for the staged works. Images that separate as well as connect bodies. Which images are at play in the social choreography of begging and giving? In this context, how can images be activated in new ways? How can new images be generated? Begging is a call to social interaction, and regardless of whether the giver interacts socially with the begging person on the street, the giver is implicated in the asymmetrical value systems of the European Union. In my first staged work I hire a professional market researcher to find out how a beggar in Sweden should behave to be successful. This becomes a film that I then show opposite another film in which begging people talk about how givers give. This is followed by a number of staged works and an interdisciplinary theoretical discussion involving, among others, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, and Hannah Arendt, as well as a number of artistic works concerning how images – and bodily actions – are linked to the social image and the body politics. The arrangement of the choirs in the staged work *The Chorus of Begging and The Chorus of Giving*, indicates a space for social interaction and thus demonstrates a different order that demands different actions in terms of language, movement, and attitude toward each other. It's a *social choreography*: when the choirs rehearsed and sung together a political form emerged. My hope is to make visible a space for action between the begging and the giving that can be used for continued ethical negotiations and new staged works.

Key words: fine arts, images, begging, giving, beggar, giver, successful, solidarity, empathy, affect, space of action, free movement, borders, politics of waiting, gestures, urban life, participating art, filminstallation, asymmetry, symmetry, place, house, *co-presence*, *framing*, social choreography, power, activate the image, ethics, aesthetics, ethics, video documentation, artistic research, phronesis, Hannah Arendt, Judith Butler, Sara Ahmed, Sven-Eric Liedman.

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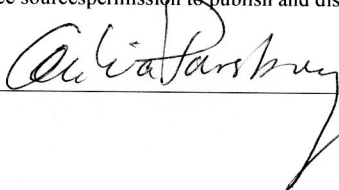
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