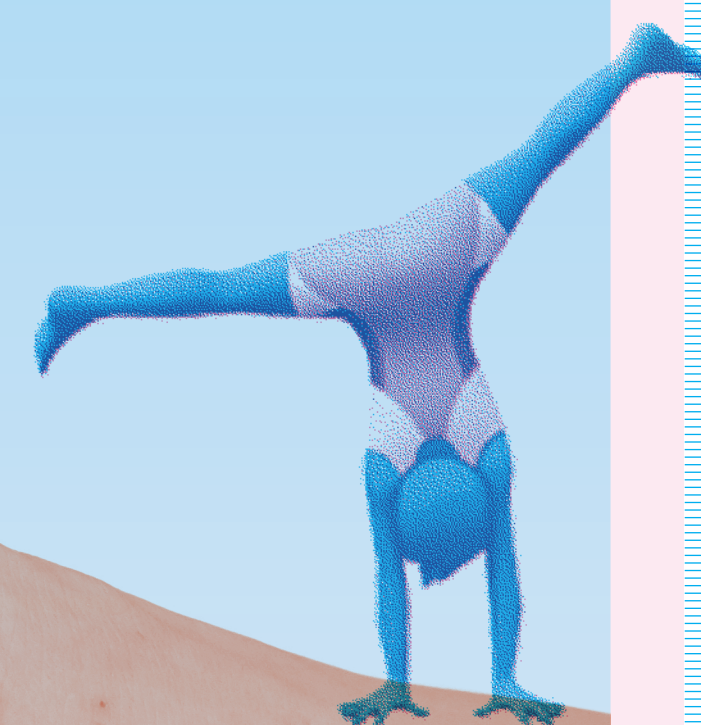
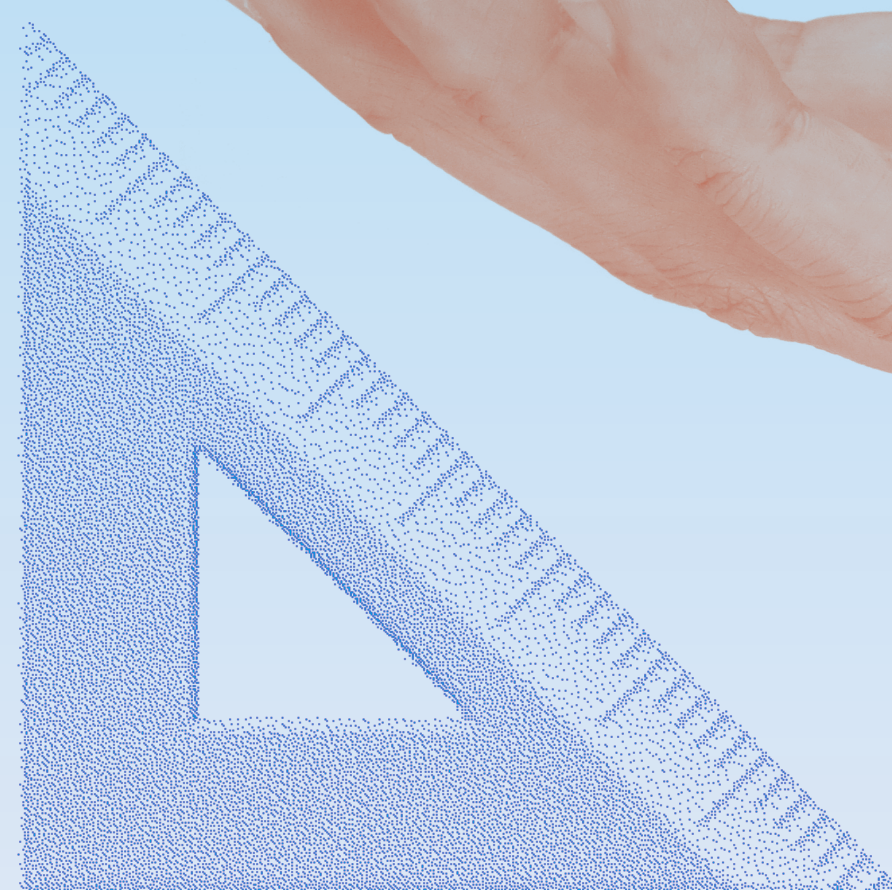


# Allmänningen (The Common Room)

# POST WORKERS THEATRE PRESENT

# The Ballad of Goodwill



*or*

the lecturers lament at the demise of goodwill in the neoliberal university

Is the privilege of working in the university being compromised by the dominant transactional cultures of contemporary education? Are universities in danger of losing the goodwill of their staff and students? Where does goodwill end and unpaid labour begin? Organised to coincide with International Workers' Day, *The Ballad of Goodwill* was an experimental one-day

symposium where a new workers' ballad was collectively produced and sung by soprano and librettist Roxanne Korda. Symposium guests were invited to listen to guest speakers in open conversation, and all participants contributed to the production of a ballad through retelling, scripting and discussing the often-hidden economies of goodwill in academic labour and life.

*...They usually passed on from one person to another. So you would learn the words and the tune from the balladeer, you know, as I say, there aren't many good descriptions of it, but every time you see a painting of a balladeer—and these people appear all over Europe—every time you see a painting of them, they are always surrounded by crowds of people. The idea is that they are singing to everybody.*

They've usually got a hand up like this, which in portrait speak demonstrates 'I am speaking to somebody' or performing in some way. So ballads are very much predicated on the idea of groups of people doing something together, learning it together, and the idea that they can be adapted.

Dr. Jenni Hyde



Allmänningen (The Common Room) was a Vinova-funded project at the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, Gothenburg University (2018–2021). The aim of the project was to begin to develop and pilot a new public model for collaboration and usership between the university and society. Referring directly to the Swedish commons concept of Allmänningen, we illustrated through terms such as Allmän (general), Allmänskriften (right of public access), Allmänheten (the general public), the commons can be viewed as not only a right to public access, but a relation between societal institutions and the individual citizen. A relation which within the context of Sweden, could and should naturally be applied and extended to the publicly funded university as a common societal resource.

Although there are differences between the natural commons studied by influential figures such as Elinor Ostrom and the university as 'commons', the analogy stresses the relational dimensions between viable and sustainable institutions, and the public trust in the commons & its resources. Through a series of residencies in 2021, Allmänningsrum (The Common Room) began by inviting practitioners, collectives and organisations to help think through questions such as: 'What are the conditions for commons to be developed as public commons? In what sense are these resources enclosed, vulnerable and at risk of exploitation? And what is needed today to produce a socially sustainable institution?' The project has been a series of conversations, and the next stage is to develop a framework that began to suggest alternative modes and models for university collaboration and ownership.

POST WORKERS THEATRE with guest soprano and librettist Roxanne Korda, Professor Rajani Naidoo, Dr. Joanna Figiel, Dr. Stevphen Shukaitis, and Dr. Jenni Hyde.

Post Workers Theatre are Demitrios Kargotis, Dash Macdonald & Nick Mortimer, an artist collective investigating the future of politically engaged performance, reimagining historic forms of creative resistance to address inequalities in contemporary labour.

Curated by Onkar Kular  
Project Coordination by Monica Sand  
29 April 2021



**VINNOVA**  
Sweden's Innovation Agency





