

REFLECTION

The Kraken Skool of Finance

Spectral Collaborations - The Kraken Skool of Finance is an international project dealing with the Nordic countries' involvement in the slave trade with the Caribbean. Artists and researchers from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Brazil and Trinidad & Tobago are involved in the project, all from the performing arts (theatre, dance, performance art, martial arts).

Our work is formed under the label of The Kraken Skool of Finance. Kraken is an octopus-like sea monster that has been present in Nordic folklore since the 12th century. It lurks on the seabed but if it rises to the surface, nearby fishermen must quickly leave the site, as they risk being dragged into the depths by the water vortex that occurs when the kraken sinks again. The word can be traced to the Swedish and Norwegian word "krake", an older name for eight-armed giant octopuses, but also for something crooked and twisted.

Through the project, we are poking in buried histories through embodied artistic actions. We started to develop a card game which is a performance score, a collective process, a conversation. Through embodied actions we investigate and perform connections, temporary memorials, street rituals and collective conversations. We deal with entangled economies, forgotten ghosts and loss but also with dreamed futures and playful encounters.

The conference presentation with the title *The Kraken Skool of Finance* was a video piece where the group created a window towards the project and performed and displayed the actual game we are developing. This means that a performative situation was rigged where the group was playing the card game and each card revealed and opened a "world" within the project's research area.

This collaborative work is based on performing and listening practices as well as ways to reimagine artistic intimacies and material relations in the spirit of anti-colonial work. Each one in the project contributes with and proposes their perspectives, interests and practices in dialogue with the project as a whole. The project questions colonial structures, unfolds alternative stories, dreams new futures and proposes decolonial pathways.

Being part of this project means participating, proposing, listening and acting. It is to actively participate in what the game demands, but also to suggest actions or materials into the project. In the conference presentation, I, like everyone else, participated in playing the game and being engaged in joint conversations or performative actions. I also contributed with two specific works or actions. One was about the sending of a message in a bottle and related to the project's focus on the sea as a connecting link, and how materials, ideas, economies and losses travel and create threads and entanglements between us. This part contained a performance instruction, reflections and text about the phenomenon of sending

a message in a bottle but also a real action that was manifested in the form of a video. The video captures how we in a small group write messages in a bottle and then head out to sea in a sailboat to send our messages. The event was a reflection on Gothenburg's upcoming 400th anniversary based on the question of how to manage a colonial heritage that is so little visible on the surface. What messages and calls do we want to send to the city and what future scenarios do we see in front of us? My other contribution to the game in this video was a video about the handling of sugar with the title The White Gold - Nordic Craving for Sugar. The video reflects on the handling of sugar in Sweden during the transatlantic slave trade. Cruelty and desire are united in the sugar business. In this work, hidden and forgotten objects are dug out of the snow-white powder, and the contradiction in the encounter with the history of sugar is investigated. The work is described in more detail in a separate report.

The card game, the project and the presentation The Kraken School of Finance reflects a complex work, with endless threads, connections and layers. Various details in our history are examined, such as the popularity and history of the pineapple, mythological sea monsters, the history of sugar or accepted terminology about being black in today's Europe. The presentation at the conference Alliances & Commonalities was a way to put together some of the threads in this complex and rich project but also to try it out in a conversation with colleagues and researchers in a larger context: To play the game with a wider audience.

Role in the project and presentation: Participation in collaborative work (gaming, discussions, collaborative actions) and directing of actions/videos, author of texts.