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A Century of Swedish Gustavian Style

Art History, Cultural Heritage and Neoclassical Revivals from the 1890s to the 1990s

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Abtract

This is a study of the intersection between art historical theory and practice, and cultural heritage, where the revivals and mediations of the neoclassical Gustavian style have been used as a platform for further exploration. In relation to this, the use and changing meanings of the concepts authenticity and style have been examined. The research has a historiographical and multidisciplinary character, drawing on the fields of art history, critical heritage studies and design history. The study shows how the Gustavian style has been routinely used when Swedish culture has been staged, nationally and internationally, but also when shaping ideas of the ideal home and good taste. The focus is placed on three periods – the 1890s, the 1930s-40s and the 1990s – during which the Gustavian style was defined, revived and mediated in different modes of representation such as textbooks, exhibitions, period furniture and historically informed performances. In the study we meet the actors, human and non-human, that have contributed to the resilient position of the Gustavian style in the public consciousness and in a commercial context. The Gustavian style, perhaps like no other, has been systematically embraced by the official heritage institutions in Sweden, including the academic discipline of art history, which has been an important influence on the way the past has been presented, valued, categorised, preserved and re-used. The author argues that the style has been able to maintain its relevance due to its ability to embody many different prevailing aspects across the 20th century, for example tradition and modernity, nationalism and internationalism, but also the past, present and visions of retro-utopia.

Keywords: Gustavian style, authenticity, style, taste, Swedish art history, nationalism, exhibition design, reconstruction, period furniture, historical societies, design history, critical heritage studies, museum studies, historiography, Nordiska Museet, Nationalmuseum, Svenska Slöjdföreningen

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For Ellen and Oscar
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Figure 1. The demolition of the old Opera on Gustaf Adolfs Torg in Stockholm in 1892. Many were interested in the spectacle, and people would gather outside the opera house to see how the century old dust spun in the air. Some pieces of the building were sold off to private collectors and others were collected and documented by museums and various societies and institutions. Courtesy: Stadsmuseet, Stockholm.
1 Introduction

This is a study of the intersection between art history and cultural heritage, where the revivals and mediations of the neoclassical Gustavian style have been used as a platform for further exploration. Focus is placed on the period from the 1890s to the 1990s, a century during which the Gustavian style was defined and mediated in many different modes of representation such as textbooks, exhibitions, period furniture and historically informed performances. The Gustavian style, perhaps like no other, has been systematically embraced by the official heritage institutions in Sweden, including the academic discipline of art history, which has been an important actor in the way the past has been presented, valued, categorised, preserved and re-used. Furthermore, the style has been routinely used when Swedish culture has been staged, nationally and internationally, but also when shaping ideas about the ideal home and good taste. Nevertheless, this introduction will start at a moment of destruction.

In the regional newspapers people could read reports from the capital, which professed that the old Gustavian opera house in Stockholm soon would be nothing but a memory. In March 1892 the reporter from the newspaper Kalmar witnessed how stone after stone fell and how the century old dust spun in the air.¹ The demolition was motivated by the run down state of the opera house and because it was considered a potential fire hazard. Lacking state funding for a new opera house, it was in the end the banker and politician Knut Agathon Wallenberg (1853-1938) and other wealthy investors, alongside the organisation of a lottery that sponsored the new building.² A burgeoning Swedish conservation movement had opposed the demolition, and when it nevertheless happened people would gather outside the opera, and the reporter found them standing in groups “in melancholic dialogues about the ephemerality of it all”.³

¹ Anon. Gamla operahuset. Kalmar, 18.03.1892
² Teaterlånet (the theatre loan) helped finance the building of the opera house in 1889. The loan was an idea promoted by Wallenberg and Ernst Thiel, and the loan was realised with the backing of wealthy private financiers and a number of Swedish banks. Wallenberg was accused of making a personal profit from the deal, and it is true that it did strengthen the position of his own bank. Olsson, U. Finansfursten: K A Wallenberg 1853-1938. Stockholm: Atlantis, 2006. pp. 141-147
³ “håller melankoliska räsonnemanger om alltings förgänglighet”, Anon. Gamla operahuset. Kalmar, 18.03.1892
Gustav III’s opera house had been built in 1777-1782, based on drawings by the architect Carl Fredrik Adelcrantz (1716-1796). It was King Gustav III (1746-1792) who had initiated the construction. It was also here, at a masked ball, on the evening of 16 March 1792, that Captain Jacob Johan Anckarström (1762-1792) shot the king who died of his wounds thirteen days later, on 29 March. At the end of the 19th century the building had become a strong symbol of the Gustavian period.

The last performance in the old opera was held on 30 November 1891. During the performance, the actor Emil Hillberg (1852-1929) read a prologue written by the professor of aesthetics in Uppsala, Carl Rupert Nyblom (1832-1907), “Sista kvällen i gamla operahuset”. The poem spoke of the opera as Gustav III’s favourite creation, which had amused people for more than a century. Nyblom compared the tearing down of the stones to the act of ripping apart the fibres of the heart, and a body that bleeds. What was left? He maintained that what we are left with are the memories of past life but also a memory, a heritage that we should care for, even if every age acts as if it is the last in line. He ended the poem by stating that even if the shell was turned into dust, the voice of the soul that lived there would never grow silent. The prologue was then followed by parts of the opera “Den bergtagna” and then a short piece written for the occasion “Sånggudinnornas avsked”, both of them written by the popular writer and translator Frans Hedberg (1828-1908). The piece included a visit by a “shadow” – Gustav III, and a series of tableaux vivants that presented images from the past, including performances dating after the Gustavian period. The essence of the play seems to have been to convey the idea that the spirit of the Gustavian period, and

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4 The performance was advertised in the daily press, e.g. Anon. Teater och musik. Dagens Nyheter, 30.11.1891
5 “Skall till sist ändock det sanning blifwa,
Att kung Gustafs älsklingswerk förgår?
Spett och hacka skola skonslöst röfva
Hwad oss gladt i mer än hundra år!
Hvarje sten, I bort ur väggen rycker,
Af wart hjertas fiber sliter stycken, –
Och när de ha blödt – hwad återstår?

Minnet blott, hur gamla tider weto,
När ett yngre slägte gjort revolt…
Minnet blott? – Men minnet är ett eko
Af ett lif, som ädelt war och stolt.
We dig, unga tid, om ej du wiste,
Att ej du i kedjan är den siste,
Och om tron på fäderns arf du sålt!”
Nyblom, C R. Sista operaföreställningen. Kalmar, 04.12.1891
6 Frans Hedberg was a playwright and wrote a large number of historical dramas but also occasional poems, which were performed at various commemorations and events. He also wrote the commemorative book Gustaf III:s operahus och dess minnen. Några samlade blad. Stockholm: Geber, 1891.
7 Hedberg, F. Sånggudinnornas afsked: efterspel. Stockholm: Bonnier, 1891, p. 15
the king’s love for the performing arts would occupy and live on in the new temple.8 “The spirit of the future” ended the performance by declaring that from the old, the new would grow out of the destruction, out of the old soil. The performance concluded with the Swedish royal anthem *Kungssången*. After the performance the king hosted a party in the foyer and on stage for the three to four hundred members of staff.9

Despite their popularity in the 19th century, Hedberg’s plays have not been treated kindly by later critics, and the performance on the 30 November 1891 would later remind the pianist, conductor and writer Hjalmar Meissner (1865-1940) of a social event organised by lieutenants and ladies in some small provincial town.10 Despite the negative stance, this comment also reveals the popularity of tableaux vivants at the time.11 These were events where small groups of people met to perform events from different historical periods, sometimes for a bigger audience. The past had become a popular pastime, especially among high society, and the plays and soirees were dutifully covered in the press. A few years later these tableaux vivants could be found on the silver screen, making historic sites and events available through a new medium.

Several newspaper reports reveal people’s fascination with the demolition of the old opera house in 1891-92. The site attracted a great number of visitors during the last year the building was standing, and people appear to have been eager to experience the house before it was completely lost. Hedberg later recalled how, when passing the opera house, he experienced the shadow of a time that eluded him.12 One of the journalists who visited the site was Thore Blanche (1862-1932), and he dramatically declared that he wanted to come face to face with destruction, see the temple of art in its final phase and bear witness to the final act of this sad play.13 In March 1892 the readers of *Aftonbladet* were able to share Blanche’s struggle through the rub-

---

8 “Så skall Gustafs tempel stiga
Upp på nytt ur gamla jorden
Med det fornas bästa drag;
Hopp och minne skola viga
Det till konstens hem i norden,
Till en fjärran framtid dag!”
Hedberg, F. *Sånggudinnornas afsked: efterspel*, Stockholm: Bonnier, 1891, p. 25


13 "Sylvester". *Sista akten. Aftonbladet*, 24.03.1892
ble, and the now almost completely lost spaces. Amid the destruction it seemed to have comforted him that much of the construction material, bricks and wooden beams were still in good condition, and were about to be reused in the building of the new opera house. Parts of the interiors were also saved for the future. When the restaurant in the building, Operakällaren, served its last dinner to the public, the journalist recording the event for *Tidning för Wenersborgs stad och län* suggested that it was likely that the guests would take a “memento” with them, some porcelain or cutlery – sofas and tables would probably be too heavy, the writer added with a touch of irony. Although they left the sofas, visitors actually did carry off bits and pieces as souvenirs; other pieces were sold to private collectors and some were collected and documented by museums and various societies and institutions.

The demolition of the opera house happened at a time of strong nationalist sentiment, and the preservation of national cultural heritage was a topic of current interest. During the 19th century it had become gradually more important to identify that which could be considered representative of the idea of a Swedish art history alluding to a national history and a sense of being “Swedish”. It was in this context, around the turn of the 20th century, under what was perceived as the threat of industrialism, that a large number of new cultural institutions, among them several museums, for example Nordiska Museet and Skansen, were established. Objects from the Gustavian period were integrated into the collections of art museums as well as museums of cultural history.

The rescue of the material heritage from the opera house as well as the various mediations of the building and its history that followed in the 1890s give an indication of the diverse forms of heritagisation processes that were set in motion at the time. The pace was quick and the destruction of a

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14 Anon. Operakällaren. *Tidning för Wenersborgs stad och län*, 27.01.1892
15 Today pieces of the Opera can be found in the collections of Nordiska Museet, where the Queen’s room was on display at the time of the inauguration in 1907. The collections also include the armchair that Gustav III was carried in after he was shot at the opera in 1792, taburets, a chair, doors, wall panels, a railing, a mantle piece, etc. Other museums that have pieces of the old opera house in their collections are e.g.; Nationalmuseum, Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet, Tekniska Museet and Stockholms Stadsmuseum. Objects from the Opera can also be found in private homes. Svenska Slöjdföreningen documented the interior decoration and published a collection of patterns from the Opera in 1890. The clothes, including the mask, that Gustav III wore on the night he was shot were collected earlier and are preserved in the collections of Livrustkammaren. See e.g. Meissner, H. *Teaterhistoria och teaterhistorier. Minnen och anteckningar från en 40-årig verksamhet inom teaterns roliga och oroliga värld*. Stockholm: Åhlén & Åkerlund, 1924, p. 101
16 *Heritagisation* is the process by which heritage is constructed. First used in English by Kevin Walsh in 1992 as a pejorative way of describing the reduction of real places into tourist space, and something that destroy actual places. However, it has now a more established concept in English, with the same meaning as the equivalent terms in French (patrimonialisation) or Spanish (patrimonialización) – the process by which heritage is constructed. For a discussion about the concept see: Rogerto-Candelera, M. A. (ed.) *Science and technology for the conservation of cultural heritage*. Boca Raton, Fla.: CRC Press, 2013, pp. 388-389
prominent Gustavian material heritage, such as the opera house, coincided with a renewed appreciation and revival of the Gustavian style.

In 1891, the year before the final demolition of the opera house, the Gustavian style had been celebrated in Den gustavianska utställningen. This was the first major exhibition of Gustavian-style furniture and interior design in Stockholm, housed only a few blocks from the Opera. It included a collection of objects from six institutions and sixty-five private individuals. Many of the visitors to Den gustavianska utställningen must have been aware of the imminent destruction of the opera house while admiring the displays. Perhaps it even added to the sense of value of the objects on display? It would not be the first time. Heritage is often acknowledged and valued when there is a fear of loss, a loss that can be averted by maintenance, funding and promotion. To protect this seemingly threatened Gustavian heritage at the end of the 19th century, we can see how art historians, a newly established professional group in the world of academia, and museum professionals became increasingly involved in describing, collecting, reconstructing and exhibiting objects and sites from the past. While carrying out this work they were also contributing to the definition, mediation and preservation of the increasingly fashionable neoclassical Gustavian style.

In 1891, when Frans Hedberg found himself at the Opera – in “Gustaf’s temple”, in the middle of destruction and resurrection he argued that the past would play an important role in the production of the future. For a year or so
the Opera lingered in this state as the demolition process progressed slowly, and during this time, faced with an imminent threat, we can also recognize people’s feverish creative engagement with the past. Bits and pieces of the Gustavian cultural heritage were carried off as souvenirs or relics, collected, documented, reassembled, reconstructed and in other ways translated to new versions of the past, in an attempt to save it from “the ephemerality of it all”. In the 1890s the Gustavian style became firmly embedded in official Swedish cultural heritage, and since then it has lingered, like the Opera once did, between destruction and the future. This is a study of that state of suspense and how it has been maintained and mediated.

1.1 Scope, Questions and Aims

The eighteenth century remains a living cultural heritage for all who share its spirit and values, a tradition that for so many reasons and with particular force appeals to the Swedes and to those in the world beyond who truly appreciate Swedish culture.17

This quote, from an article written in 2004, about the Swedes relationship with the 18th century written by the American professor of history, Arnold H Barton, seems fairly straightforward, but it made me curious and raises a number of questions; how did the 18th century become a living heritage in Sweden, who has promoted its spirit and values, what are the values, to whom do they appeal, and how has its appeal been exported to the world beyond Sweden? I wanted to explore the heritage processes that have contributed to this situation and furthermore, I wanted to learn more about the role academia and museums have played, and how these actors have interacted with each other. To do this I decided to focus on mediations of the Gustavian style, mainly interiors, and its subsequent uses.18

Museum institutions but perhaps most poignantly the discipline of art history lies at the heart of this investigation. Art history is a field of research that does not exist in and of itself; instead it is the community, its shared histories, language and practices that identify it. The practice is further shaped by tradition, and formal and informal rules that can have different forms, such as routines, norms, technologies, and laws. These different aspects can be identi-

18 In this study the phrase “Gustavian style” refers to the aesthetical expressions that are associated with the “Gustavian period” c. 1772-1809. This thesis is mainly concerned with style as a concept that defines characteristics and periods in the history of interior decoration and furniture rather than the individual style of an artist. Style as a definition of describing painting, sculpture and architecture has a similar but separate history and meaning.
fied and studied, which implies that the practice of art history can be historiographically scrutinised. Three aspects of the Gustavian style are in focus; the aesthetical, the commercial and the performative, with a particular emphasis on visual representations of these aspects. The empirical material that this dissertation draws upon is the reuses and re-presentations of the Gustavian style, mainly texts and visual narratives describing the style and various mediations of it. Gustavian style has been mediated by different disciplines and professions in different modes of representation such as textbooks, journals, photographs, exhibition spaces, furniture and historically informed performances. By studying these different “arenas of mediation” I hope to understand the negotiations between theory and practice, production and consumption. It is important to emphasise that mediation in this case does not refer to a one-way communication even though the material might try to convince you that this is the case, rather it is what goes on in-between. Moreover, the medium might seem transparent, and the Gustavian might seem “unmediated” however, by comparing different materials and actors over time the medium becomes more visible.

The historical span of this dissertation is that of the post-Gustavian, starting in the early 19th century and still on-going. What I describe then could be referred to as a post-Gustavian period filled with different types of mediations of the Gustavian style. I primarily look at the field of interior design and craft, but also academic art history research, reviews and various artistic works, including film and theatre. The emphasis is placed on three periods within this temporal frame, the 1890s, the 1930-40s and the 1990s. The first period is categorised by the formation of the discipline of art history, the building of collections and museums and a revival of the Gustavian style in interior decoration. During the second period the Gustavian style was integrated within the modernist project, but also surveyed and listed by art historians and museum curators. Furthermore, this is the period when good

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21 The concept of style is closely linked to the concept of design, which has been used in a Swedish context since 1948, and now includes all older concepts apart from konsthantverk (used since 1872). Konsthantverk refers to craft production and is generally translated as “arts and crafts”, but literally art handicraft, while konstslöjd is an older concept, first used in 1820, that refers both to handmade and industrially produced goods. Before design, the words form and formgivning, from German Gestaltung, were used, and refer to an artistic design of everyday objects. Nationalencyklopedin. design. http://www.ne.se (accessed: 13.01.2017) Nationalencyklopedin. konsthantverk. http://www.ne.se (accessed: 13.01.2017) Nationalencyklopedin. konstslöjd. http://www.ne.se (accessed: 13.01.2017)

22 Allan Pred uses similar intervals 1897, 1930 and the early 1990s in his study Recognizing European Modernities (1995) where he refers to the three periods as examples of industrial modernity, high modernity and hypermodernity. Pred, A. Recognizing European modernities: a montage of the present. London: Routledge, 1995
taste was propagated by societies, museums and state-funded initiatives that were part of the welfare state. What categorised the third period, the late 20th century, was the relatively high profile that heritage held in the public mind. New heritage sites opened to the public and there was an increase in the number of protected sites and objects, a situation identified as the “heritage boom”. The “heritage boom” is also related to the development, from the 1970s until the present, of a late-modern society. A society characterised by, for example deindustrialisation, a development of tourism and the experience industry, as well as a widespread commercialisation of the past. This coincided with post-modernism’s nostalgic return to the past and to the neoclassical. The 1990s also meant a new political and economic situation for Sweden that included a financial crisis, membership of the EU and extreme right-wing movements gaining momentum. Heritage, including a reuse of the Gustavian style, was used to confirm a national identity and promote Sweden abroad, which ties in with a more general trend, where heritage has been used to help confirm national ideals and essentialisms in periods of political and economical change.

This study aims to identify the various forms of mediations of Gustavian style, and critically reflect on the role academia, commercial enterprises and museums have played in collectively helping to reproduce and promote the style. Further, it explores these mediations in the light of a more general heritagisation process and examines the purposes for which the style has been re-created and re-presented, valued and categorised. The exploration wishes to bring out the shape of networks that construct and distribute meaning to the style. I would like to argue that this is relevant since the ways in which art historians and museums curators write and present the world does de facto have an effect on how other people interpret it and the knowledge they have of it. I agree with Emma Waterton that the ways we talk, think and write about heritage issues matters because “…they influence, construct, reflect and constitute not only the ways in which we act, but how we identify and manage heritage in the first place.”

In this sense the power of discourse contribute to what is generally an elite, class-based and white vision of heritage. This study will explore how these words and images have provided a framework for interpretation and contributed to the construction of shared meanings that in the end are the makeup of culture. But would it be possible to say that the stories about the Gustavian style fulfil a purpose, what are the values supported and do they change over time? This will be explored throughout the dissertation.

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There are three main questions that this study seeks to answer. Firstly, it explores the concept of *style*, which has been a core concept in art history, and has a major influence on heritage. In this study I explore the uses of the concept, where an analysis of the definitions, descriptions and displays of style can be seen as a key to understanding how the social categorisations of the world can be a way of understanding human intention and communication. **What influence have art historians’ understandings of style had on defining cultural heritage, its preservation and promotion?** How has knowledge production about the Gustavian style affected furniture production and consumption in Sweden during the 20th century? Throughout the study, I will consider how the concepts of *style* and *history of styles*, using the example of Gustavian style, have been used not only as methodological tools, but also as ways of furthering certain arguments, aesthetic, academic, political and commercial. Moreover, I will investigate the genealogy of the use of stylistic analysis and formalism and how it has been translated into heritage discourse and how it for example has affected the way value is ascribed.27

A quick summary reveals that the appreciation or depreciation of the Gustavian style seem to relate to a social and historical context, for example, the nationalist movement of the 1890s or the heritage boom of the late 20th century. **Furthermore, if we understand heritage as an act of “making meaning in and for the present”, what are the contents and values mediated through narratives and displays of the Gustavian style?**28 **How does the Gustavian style construct meaning?** To explore these questions, I will show how the displays and definitions of the Gustavian style have developed over time, and what their main components are. Art historians and museum curators have continuously argued for the intrinsic values of Gustavian style, often in connection to national sentiments. A study of the Gustavian style can thus help show how art history itself has contributed to the very idea that there is an aesthetical dimension to that which could be identified as a national style or even a national essence. The exploration of this narrative is based on the assumption that heritage values are always ascribed to something rather than being intrinsic, and by studying the changes over time, I believe that we can move away from the idea of a value-neutral, apolitical and objective heritage, also within the field of art history. This opens up the final question, **how and when did these adaptations or translations occur and how has the Gustavian heritage managed to maintain its relevance over time?** The Gustavian style has been staged throughout the 20th century in ways that reflect the changing role of heritage

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in Modern, Post-Modern and Late-Modern societies. Seeming relevant to the right actors is always the key issue for long-term survival – not least for cultural heritage.

1.1.1 Gustavian Style

Many of the readers of this text would be acquainted with the Gustavian period and style, and it is tempting to presume that most would know something about it. However, as the writer of this dissertation I hope that there will be those readers who know little or nothing about it as well. Therefore, I will give a short introduction to the Gustavian style. It is somewhat running counter the aim of this dissertation to give such an account, and I am well aware of this fact. However, at the same time I believe it might be difficult to appreciate the text without such a basic account, where chronology, specific features and actors are identified. Moreover, throughout the text there will be some brief presentations of the historical contexts to ease the understanding for a reader who is not acquainted with the Swedish context.

In a review published in *Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift* in 1926, Holger Nyblom (1874-1953) summarised the research done in the past decades and presented a number of aspects that have characterised the trajectory of the Gustavian style since.29

In our country the subject (the Gustavian) has proved most useful in our earlier handicraft, no style has probably become more popular and permeated deeper into the soul of ordinary people or been more repeated and imitated in later centuries. Its discrete, slightly cold décor and clear vertical lines have suited us and we are delighted and proud of the impressive collection of art of all kinds that the period produced and that was successfully able to compete with contemporary production from the nation that set the standard – France.30

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29 Holger Nyblom was the son of Carl Rupert Nyblom, the professor of Aesthetics (with a strong interest in art history) who wrote the prologue at the closing performance at the old opera house previously mentioned, and Helena Nyblom (1843-1926), one of the most famous and productive writers at the time. Holger had a versatile career and was employed by the large department store Nordiska kompaniet, active as music historian, a critic, and member of the board of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. His career, and family background, makes him a typical example of the numerous actors that helped promote Gustavian style at the beginning of the 20th century.

30 “Ämnet (det gustavianska) hör till det tacksammaste inom vårt lands tidigare konsthantverk, ingen stil har kanske såsom den gustavianska blivit populär och trängt djupare ned i folkets breda lager, blivit återupprepad och efterhärmad i senare tider. Dess diskreta, lite kyliga dekor, de vertikalt betonade klara linjerna ha passat oss, och vi glädja oss och äro stolta över den imponerande samling av konstföremål av alla slag, som den tiden frambragde och vilka med framgång kunna ta ga upp tävlan med samtidiga produktion från föregångslandet Frankrike.” Nyblom, H. Gustaviansk stil i Nordiska Museets serie av stilmöbler. *Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift*, no. 3(1926), p. 6
In the review, Holger Nyblom described the style as penetrating, from above, the wider population. Moreover, it was a style that had been “repeated and imitated”. Further, Nyblom found that the collection of Gustavian material heritage at Nordiska Museet was a source of joy and pride, with a discrete and cold aesthetic that “suited us”, referring to the people of Sweden. In the review he seems to suggest that Gustavian style has contributed to what could be described as an imagined Swedish community based on aesthetical principles. This suggestion will be further explored in this dissertation, however, rather than teasing out any essential or innate qualities of the style, such as those we find in Nyblom’s description, this study aims to demystify the histories, narratives and fictions that have directed the interpretation of the Gustavian style.

While the Gustavian period has not been uncontested as a Swedish golden age it has undoubtedly been important as a vision of the country’s historic and cultural historical significance. The Gustavian period, 1771-1809 coincides with the reign of Gustav III (1771-1792) and his son Gustav IV Adolf (1792-1809). These are also the dates that are most commonly set for the Gustavian style, even though examples can be found which place the style both earlier and later than these dates. The style is commonly divided into at least two phases, early and late Gustavian. The Gustavian style is a neoclassical style, which was inspired by the French Louis Seize style, and is sometimes also identified under this name. In the 19th century it also went under the German term Zopf, which included a critique against the style, which was considered “rigid and pedantically sober”.

The style corresponds to the neoclassical styles that started to emerge in Europe in the 1750s, e.g. the late Georgian period in Britain.

King Gustav III made two journeys, to Paris in 1771 and Italy in 1783-84. Art historians have presented these two journeys as absolutely vital to the development of the style, reinforcing international influences. British influences have also been traced, especially during the latter part of the period. Moreover, artists and craftsmen travelled and gained knowledge and inspiration from their travels abroad. A number of international artists and craftsmen were also employed in Sweden. However, even at the time it was introduced it was seen as a specifically Swedish translation of the neoclassical style. Throughout its history the Gustavian style has been associated with Sweden as a nation but also ideas about Swedishness. In this sense it can be geographically defined. However, as will be discussed more in depth in chapter 2,

31 The Gustavian period is occasionally dated 1771-1818 (the year Karl XIII died).
the Swedishness of the style and international influences have been explained or dismissed in varying ways.  

By the 18th century the governmental support of antiquarian interests such as rune stones and archaeological remains had declined. Nevertheless, the Gustavian era and Gustav III were keen users of other aspects of heritage to promote the nation and the monarchy, for example historical dramas at the theatre and opera, as well as re-enactments of medieval tournaments. Of course, neo-classicism in itself can also be seen as a form of reuse of the past, resulting in numerous reconstructions, re-enactments and heritage production. Gustav III’s interest in history and earlier kings should be seen in the light of his conscious use of propaganda. He used history to enhance his own position as absolute monarch, as men in power often do. Consequently, to promote himself as saviour of the nation, reformer, and patron of the arts he used e.g. monuments, medals and portraits; but he also wrote historic dramas and staged tournaments with elaborate costumes.  

After a short period of renouncement, the Gustavian period has come to represent what is commonly described as a golden age of art and design in Sweden and it is closely linked to the king Gustav III and his initiatives concerning art, literature, theatre, etc. This is popularly described as – the shimmer that characterised Gustav’s days. The word relates to Esaias Tegnér’s (1782-1846) poem “Sång, den 5 April 1836” which also describes changes in the culture and how foreign influences were translated into a Swedish context. Celebrating this shimmer is often also a way of commemorating the king himself.  

The border of Sweden has changed considerably since the late 18th century. Finland was gradually integrated from the 12th century and lost to Russia in 1809. Finland became independent in 1917. Norway was part of Denmark until 1814 when it was forced into a union with Sweden. This union was dissolved in 1905. The present borders of Sweden date from this year.  


Despite the fact that 18th century Sweden also was also a place for poverty and starvation, the associations made in texts and displays of the Gustavian period and style are almost unanimously positive. Moreover, even if the austerity of the past is acknowledged it is translated into a positive quality or force. This can in part be explained by the attitude we find in a text written in
1838 by the influential writer Carl Jonas Love Almqvist – *The Implication of Swedish Poverty*, in which he discussed the positive impact of poverty on Swedish inventiveness.\(^{36}\)

Appreciating austerity as a driving force for creativity and quality is, as we will see, a recurrent theme in the revivals of the Gustavian style, to this day and it is further explored in this study.

### 1.1.2 Revivalism and Retro

Since the beginning of the 19\(^{th}\) century the Gustavian style has been a piece of the past, ripe for interpretation, re-use and revival. These revivals show how the past keeps playing an active part in the present, and that whenever it fulfils a purpose it can be re-evaluated and repackaged. It might seem that the modernity that emerged in the course of the Enlightenment (as did the Gustavian style) would have little room for historicity, and that it has considered “…everything that does not march in step with progress archaic, irrational and conservative.”\(^{37}\) Likewise, we might be convinced to believe that revolution and a total break with the past would seem to be the only way for the modern to understand their past. However, it would be equally possible to argue, and many have, that cultural heritage is very much part of a modern sensibility.\(^{38}\) This study explores the relation between modernity and historicism by investigating the process of construction, staging and reception of cultural heritage relating to the Gustavian style. This includes both the reinterpretations, such as Neo-Gustavian period furniture, and stagings of the period and original Gustavian objects and spaces.

One of the strongest revivals of neo-classicism in Sweden and the other Nordic countries happened in the 1920s, a period in-between nationalism, jugend and functionalism.\(^{39}\) The period is also referred to as Swedish Grace. While this period has been important in the life of the Gustavian style, it does not play a major role in this dissertation, which focuses on the contro-

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\(^{36}\) Carl Jonas Love Almqvist was a member of the patriotic society Manhemsförbundet. The friendship between two of the members, Almqvist and Johan August Hazelius (1797-1871), influenced the upbringing of Johan August’s son Arthur Hazelius (1831-1901) who founded Nordiska Museet and Skansen. As a child Arthur was sent all over the country, in order to get to know Sweden.

\(^{37}\) Latour, B. *We have never been modern*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993, p. 73


\(^{39}\) Swedish interior design and crafts in the 1920s is described by e.g. Anne-Marie Ericsson in *Svenskt 1920-tal: Konsthantverk och konstindustri*, Lund: Signum, 1984. The opposition between tradition and modernism from 1900s to 1930s and the role of neoclassicism is further discussed by Eva Eriksson in her dissertation *Mellan tradition och modernitet: arkitektur och arkitekturdebatt 1900-1930*, Ordfront, Diss. Stockholm University, Stockholm, 2000 and in the anthology *Classical tradition and the modern movement: the 2nd international Alvar Aalto symposium*, Helsinki: Grafitex Oy, 1985. The anthology *20th –century architecture. 4, Sweden* (Caldenby, C., Lindvall J. and Wang W., eds. 1998) provides an introduction to the classicism of the 1920s.
versies rather than agreement and consolidation, and the 1920s would deserve its own study.

Figure 4. Since the 19th century, it has been popular to re-enact the Gustavian period and a number of historical societies have focused specifically on this period. The photograph on this cover depicts the leader of Gustavianerna and their oldest member at the time. The image illustrates an article about the two historical societies Gustavianerna and Gustafs Skål. The article “On the run from our own time” (På rymmen från samtiden) was published in the mid 1990s, when museums and heritage sites started to collaborate more extensively with this type of society. Anne Hedén produced the article in collaboration with the photographer Anne Mossberg. DN Mars, 24.02.1996, cover. Courtesy: Anne Mossberg.
In order to describe this material and conceptual recycling of the Gustavian style I use different notions, reuse, recreation, revival or retro. The concepts used vary throughout the period studied, in the same way that the motivation and attitudes for reuse have changed over time. For example, the revivalism of the 19th century happened at a time that saw the present as a culmination of human progressive development. Retro on the other hand happened at point in time, which can be described as more self-reflexive and open to an ironic interpretation of the past, and shares many characteristics found in post-modern theory. Design historian Elisabeth Guffey has explored the cultural meanings of retro and its history in Retro: the culture of revival (2006). Guffey defines retro and separates it from other types of nostalgia such as revivalism. Moreover, Retro-Gustavian includes a wider range of activities than Neo-Gustavian, which primarily refers to a re-use of stylistic elements. Retro on the other hand describes an outlook on life, and includes popular culture and a wide array of media. It can be ironic, cynical and detached as well as devoted and full of admiration. It also challenges a historical way of knowing the past. Nostalgia can be part of its motivation but there are also other driving forces that will be investigated further.

So far, retro has mainly been associated with period styles situated in the immediate post-war years. However, I suggest that retro could be used for a wider time frame, especially since Gustavian style has been reused for such a long time. To complicate matters further, the reuse of the Gustavian can even be seen as a reaction to the revivalism of the 19th century. Gustavian style became part of 19th century historicism that developed alongside the bourgeois home interior, where a specific style dominated each room. However, this return to past styles was dominated by international influences, while the revival of the Gustavian style in the 1890s carried a more nationalistic interest. At the turn of the 20th century Gustavian style was, as will be discussed more, promoted, if used wisely and selectively, as a return to something better – a style based in a national heritage, making it morally and aesthetically superior to the superficial revival of styles in the 19th century.

1.2 Authenticities in Heterotopia

French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault (1926-1984) has described two different spaces that are linked with all others, while at the same time

41 The meaning of nostalgia has changed over time, from defining the longing after a specific site (home) to include a temporal dimension. It is no longer a medical condition but a state of mind, a subjective selection of the past. At the core of the notion is the feeling of longing, a sense of separation and a longing for something that has been lost. The feeling is based on the self-perceived. The development of the concept of nostalgia is described in Karin Johannisson’s study Nostalgia: en känslas historia. Stockholm: Bonnier, 2001
contradicting them, utopias and heterotopias.\footnote{Foucault describes the concept in a text based on a lecture he gave in March 1967. It was published as a text “Des Espaces Autre” in 1984 and translated by Jay Miskowiec and published in English in Diacritics. Foucault, M. and Miskowiec J. Of other spaces. Diacritics 16, no. 1(1986):22-27, p. 24} “Utopias are sites with no real place”, according to Foucault. However, at the end of this study we will explore the concept of retro-utopia, which can present real spaces, closely related to the effectively enacted utopias that Foucault describe as heterotopias. Different from utopias, heterotopias are spaces of difference, “real” spaces – outside all places but actually localisable. Examples of heterotopias are the library, the museum, the festival, the cinema or the stage.

What are the qualities that turn the spaces explored in this study, such as museums and heritage sites, into heterotopias? One of the most important aspects is that they are spaces where there exists a break with traditional time, a discontinuous time, which can be referred to as heterochronies. Foucault describes for example museums as spaces where time never stops building up. In the museum space we also find the juxtaposition of incompatible objects, enclosing “all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes” (deceptively) appearing to be inaccessible to the ravages of time.\footnote{Foucault, M. and Miskowiec J., 1986, p. 26} These are qualities that are clearly evident in the rhetoric used to attract visitors to these sites; we are invited to “travel back in time”, to a place where “time has stood still”, and to “touch the past”. However, to enter a space of heterotopia there are certain restraints or rites; perhaps an entry ticket, a dress code or a specific skill. “Pay attention” and “Either you get it or you don’t” as Dennis Sever (1948-1999) bluntly puts it when instructing the visitors who have entered the meticulously crafted 18th century “still-life drama” at 18, Folgate Street in London. The last trait that heterotopias have, according to Foucault, is that they function in relation to all other spaces, and because of this they are sites that help us in the work of discursive analysis, since they undermine “…the relation between words and things, and maintain the space between them as a space (…) heterotopias are spaces of the difference of words and things. It is within this realm of the difference of words and things, and through the activity of maintaining that difference, that systems of representation can be revealed as discontinuous, fragmented and contingent.”\footnote{Lord, B. Foucault’s museum: difference, representation and genealogy. Museum and society, no. 1(2006):1-14, p. 10} Such a revelation becomes even more apparent when studying the changes these spaces, these Gustavian style heterotopias, go through over a longer stretch of time.

One of the things that seem to unify the heterotopias discussed in this study is their dependence on and relation to the concept of authenticity. I would go so far as to argue that the concept of authenticity and how we experience authenticity is crucial to the very existence of heterotopia. Moreover, in the same way as heterotopias can be places of change and creativity,
the concept of authenticity is not stable, rather it is “dynamic, performative, culturally and historically contingent, relative.” As it is a powerful and significant concept for heritage it has been a constant source of debate. Postmodernist writers, such as Umberto Eco (1932-2016) and Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), have fed into this debate, deconstructing authenticity, while questioning the difference between real and fake, copy and original. They challenged whether it was possible to define authenticity at all, and at the end of the 20th century there was a global discussion within the world of heritage management concerning the notion of authenticity, critiquing the earlier focus on material aspects of authenticity. This material focus had been manifested in, for example, the formative 1964 Venice Charter (International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments).

The issue gained momentum as international conventions and declarations turned into a global concern, concretely articulated in the list of World Heritage Sites. The 1972 World Heritage Convention is regulated in the operational guidelines, which since 1978 have declared that a site must “meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting”.

However, since these guidelines were to be implemented on a global basis it soon became clear that there are many parallel definitions of the concept. The debate culminated in the 1994 Nara document on authenticity, which was primarily concerned with the built environment, although it was also informed by academic ideas about intangible cultural heritage. In this document a number of possible sources of information judging authenticity were considered, challenging the dominance of the original material.

Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined.

The main points of the document have since been integrated into The operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention, a document which regulates the precise criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List. The guidelines now acknowledge that judgements about value attributed to cultural heritage might differ from culture to culture, but

47 UNESCO. Operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention. 1978, p. 4
also within the same culture, authenticity must be judged within the cultural context of the site. It is therefore appropriate to speak of several types of authenticities, all of them relevant to Gustavian style. In this study the concept will be analysed specifically in relation to museum displays, furniture production and historically informed performances. However, even if we acknowledge all of these different sources of authenticity, it is also true that certain forms of authenticity have held priority, in art history, museological or conservation practice. However, in the end the state of authenticity that we aspire to is often the idea about an object, a hypothesis or a memory. Conservator Salvador Muños Viñas has argued, and I agree with him, that restorations could be understood as a creative and subjective act.

The aura of the authentic historical artefact has long been at the heart of museums and historic house museums. Even if these spaces are staged, in ways that adhere to contemporary practice, it has been important to maintain an aura of authenticity. One should not forget that the authority of the institution and the sense of authenticity are closely linked to each other. The sociologist John Urry (1946-2016) proposed in 1990 that the aura of authenticity was undermined by the development of the postmodern museum – a type of museum that acknowledges a diversity of perceived authenticities. Urry saw three major changes in this new museum: firstly new types of objects were preserved since the range of histories deemed worthy of representation increased; secondly visitors were expected to participate rather than stand in awe in front of the displays: thirdly the process behind the display was revealed, “and in some cases even how it was made to appear ‘authentic’.”

Britta Timm Knudsen and Anne Marie Waade, researchers in tourism, media and culture have also discussed this shift of focus, from the authentic material to the authentic experience. By introducing the term performative authenticity they have attempted to bridge the gap between object-based and experience-based authenticity. Although performative authenticity is striving towards an indexical authenticity, “the real thing”, we should acknowledge that authentication (the production of authenticity) is a process and not an essential value. This further indicates that the question of authenticity is not necessarily tied to a material authenticity, and it could be the expectations and the quality of execution that determines the way authenticity is perceived. Thus, authen-

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50 UNESCO. Operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention, II.E Integrity and/or authenticity § 81. 2015
53 Urry, J., 2007, p. 227-228
ticity becomes the outcome of a continuous negotiation within or among audiences rather than an authoritative statement.\textsuperscript{55} Professor and researcher in tourism studies Ning Wang refers to this as “the crisis of the authenticity of the original” and goes on to explore the possibilities of \textit{experiental authenticity} in tourism in relation to authenticity.\textsuperscript{56} Professor of archaeology, Cornelius Holtorf has further claimed, “Authenticity depends on the context of the observer”.\textsuperscript{57} I am convinced that Holtorf, Wang, Knudsen and Waade’s more experiential and process-oriented approach to authenticity can be useful for understanding the heritage process linked to the Gustavian style, a concept that has both material and immaterial qualities, and how it has been interpreted and mediated. Anthropologist Dr. Helaine Silverman has launched the concept of ‘contemporary authenticity’ to describe where this ambiguous concept stands today.

Contemporary authenticity generates and enables new spaces and forms of human interaction and creativity. Thus, far from being kitsch, inappropriately labelled postmodern, or demeaned as a simulacrum, contemporary authenticity is a vital force driving much national and local culture and cultural entrepreneurship today.\textsuperscript{58}

Although, I would argue that this “contemporary” version of authenticity might not be so new after all. This study will explore authenticity as a dynamic process and a performance as it has been acted out in the spaces of heterotopia since the 1890s, and throughout the text a number of different perspectives on authenticity will be placed in relation to various mediations of Gustavian style. This is done to explore different types of authenticity, when they have mattered and how authenticity has affected these spaces of heterotopia.

1.3 Previous Research

…there is no major research agenda that brings together heritage and the visual arts; there has been no systematic attempt to draw the two ‘worlds’ together, and there has certainly been no attempt to look at the visual arts

\textsuperscript{56} Wang, N. Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. \textit{Annals of Tourism Research} 26, no. 2(1999): 349-370, p. 358
\textsuperscript{57} Holtorf, C. \textit{From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: Archaeology as popular culture}. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2004, p. 118
from a critical heritage perspective. And yet heritage, however conceived, draws upon art history and theory in numerous ways...\(^{59}\)

This study is an attempt to draw the two worlds of art history and critical heritage studies together; design history is also to some extent included in this company. The attempt has resulted in a study that is distinctly multi-disciplinary in its character. Researcher in tourism and heritage studies Russel Staiff suggests, in the quote above, that there is no major research agenda as yet. Nonetheless, there are examples of various academic inputs, and they come from many different disciplines. As a result, this study builds on research from four main lines of investigation found in an array of disciplinary contexts; firstly, research within the field of critical heritage studies that wishes to answer the question of how cultural heritage is constructed and used, but also who the actors are and what the networks look like. Secondly, it draws on research within the fields of art history and design history that is specifically focused on the concepts of style and the history of styles, specifically in relation to design and furniture production. The third line of investigation is that of national identity in relation to cultural heritage and aesthetics. And lastly, this study belongs in the field of historiographical research focusing on knowledge production and specifically the development of art history. These four lines of investigation have been the building blocks that have made it possible for me to take on this study and finally attempt to take on the long historical perspective that I believe is a necessary addition to heritage studies in general and to outline this study, which could be defined as a heritage-centric study of art history, where I use the mediations of Gustavian style as a stepping stone to further exploration.

1.3.1 Cultural Heritage

This dissertation owes much of its theoretical orientation to two fields of research that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, along with the development of the heritage boom. The fields I refer to are museum and heritage studies. Cultural heritage studies tend to focus on how cultural heritage can be read in relation to “...the social, economic and cultural changes that took place in Western societies in the closing decades of the twentieth century.”\(^{60}\) Researchers are investigating for example: what cultural heritage is, who it is for and how the processes of heritage work. There are numerous disciplines that contribute to this field of research: art history, conservation studies, ethnology, history, tourism studies, etc.


Cultural heritage studies have a background in the critique of the heritage industry in the 1980s when British writers such as Robert Hewison and Patrick Wright criticised the consumerism, commodification, individualism and patriotism of the heritage industry.\(^{61}\) Since then, research has developed into two major branches, operational practice and heritage as a cultural practice. Lately issues of power, identity and control have dominated the field, questioning cultural canons, the concept of authenticity and the intrinsic value in cultural heritage. Scholars have been moving away from the physical fabric of heritage to its immaterial aspects. The burgeoning field of critical heritage studies has so far focused on a critique of professional practice and organisations. However, as Tim Winter, the president of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies, has reminded us, it should primarily be about addressing the critical issues that face the world today.\(^{62}\) Further, critical heritage studies call for a renovation of cultural heritage studies, similar to that within museum studies more than two decades ago, where new museology argued for a renewal of museum practice and a re-examination of the role of museums within society.\(^{63}\)

Heritage is, as much as anything, a political act and we need to ask serious questions about the power relations that ‘heritage’ has all too often been invoked to sustain. Nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, cultural elitism, Western triumphalism, social exclusion based on class and ethnicity, and the fetishising of expert knowledge have all exerted strong influences on how heritage is used, defined and managed. We argue that a truly critical heritage studies will ask many uncomfortable questions of traditional ways of thinking about and doing heritage, and that the interests of the marginalised and excluded will be brought to the forefront when posing these questions.\(^{64}\)

The 2012 Manifesto of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies, questions what cultural heritage has been about so far and calls for new, uncomfortable questions that challenge traditional ways of thinking about heritage. But why should critical heritage studies be interested in the visual arts and the discipline of art history? I agree with Russel Staiff, who argues that the legacy of visual arts within a cultural heritage discourse and practice has been and still is considerable.\(^{65}\) Further, I would like to claim that a study of the mediations

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\(^{62}\) Winter, T. Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies. International Journal of Heritage Studies 19, no. 6(2013):532-545, p. 533


of an officially sanctioned and elitist cultural heritage such as the Gustavian style might contribute to a critical scrutiny of the way we think about and do heritage. In this study I also aim to acknowledge the historical cultural geographer David Harvey’s call for studies in heritage that are temporally embedded and contextualised, and I attempt to add a complex and nuanced temporal perspective, and consequently the historiographical aspect of the study is important, including material from the 1880s until the 2000s.\textsuperscript{66} The main writers from the field of critical heritage studies who have influenced this study are Rodney Harrison, David Lowenthal, Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton.

One of few Swedish examples of a study belonging to the fields of heritage studies and museology dealing specifically with revivals of the 18th century is \textit{Sjuttonhundratalet som svenskt ideal: moderna rekonstruktioner av historiska miljöer} (2008), written by architect and architectural historian Victor Edman. In the book he explores the links between art history, museum and conservation practice in a Swedish context.\textsuperscript{67} He presents three case studies, all of them historical buildings dating back to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century that were reconstructed during the 1920s and 1930s. The reconstruction processes that he describes involved several of the art historians that we will meet in this study, for example Andreas Lindblom, Gösta Selling and Gustaf Upmark, father and son. There are also many similarities in the empirical material. Edman used archival material documenting the reconstruction processes, but also exhibition documentation as well as articles in books, journals and newspapers describing the process and the reception. Edman’s study shows how a change in museological and conservation practice led to the creation of many of the sites that we today appreciate as authentic 18\textsuperscript{th} century environments. These environments were created in parallel with the museum displays described in this study. What is especially valuable is that the study helps us understand not only the sites in a new way, but also the ideology and processes that have helped shape these spaces.

Apart from Edman’s book, there have been very few explorations of the reconstructions and stagings of the material culture of the Swedish 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Instead I would like to point at a number of international publications that have been imperative to this study. For example the historian Peter Borsay’s study \textit{The image of Georgian Bath, 1700-2000} (2000). Borsay present us with an understanding of how the image of the city of Bath and its past has been “remodelled, repackaged and redeployed by each generation”, and because of this approach, along with his interest in emphemeral printed


\textsuperscript{67} Victor Edman has, together with Anders Bergström studied the museums of the Swedish welfare state in \textit{Folkhemmets museum: byggnader och rum för kulturhistoriska samlingar}. Stockholm: Byggförlaget, 2005.
material, Borsay’s book has been most inspiring to the layout of this text. In 2003, Mark Sandberg, a scholar in film and media studies, published Living Pictures, Missing Persons: Mannequins, Museums and Modernity, a study that explores mannequin displays in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The study has contributed valuable perspectives, broadening the analysis of the exhibition spaces discussed in chapter three. Moreover, it has given valuable insight into how such spaces have been populated, which is further discussed in chapter five. I would also like to mention two other museological studies that have helped explore specific modes of display. Penny Sparke, Trevor Keeble and Martin Brenda’s anthology The Modern Period Room (2006) which explores this specific mode of display and how it has developed over time. Reports on museum practice, such as Palmqvist and Beckman’s Museer och framtidstro (2003), the anthology Museum 2000 – confirmation or challenge? (2002) as well as government commissions such as Museerna: Betänkande, MUS 65 (1965) and Minne och bildning: Museernas uppdrag och organisation (1994) have been equally valuable, providing a conceptual context for the exhibitions studied.

1.3.2 Style and Design

The second line of investigation belongs within the fields of art history and design history. Research in design history developed from art history and architectural history as an independent field of research in Britain and the USA as late as the 1970s. This does not mean, however, that the field of design or craft was not of interest to academics before that.

The English word craft is one of the keywords that have been subject to considerable negotiation. It has existed outside the fine arts and is “...known as the decorative, useful, industrial, applied or ornamental arts”. It had a very strong position in the 19th century and is linked to the attention that was paid to the vernacular at the time. Many art historians, writing within the field would probably have identified themselves as design historians, had they been active today. In Sweden many of the art historians writing about interior design were operating in a museum context and this is also where their publications were published. Since their research was based on the museum collections their orientation was slightly different to the academically situated design history that developed in the 1970s. To begin with this research mainly focused on objects produced after the Industrial Revolution. However, the scope has now widened to also include earlier periods. Today design history is an interdisciplinary discipline that, according to the editors of the Scandinavian Journal of Design History includes: “...history of arts and crafts, decorative art,

applied art, industrial design, graphic art, including fashion, scenography, and interiors in the pre-industrial and industrial periods.”70 One of the more interesting aspects of studying design and craft is that it creates, as the professor of the history of craft and theory Christina Zetterlund argues, an excellent platform for examining how norms and values concerning both objects and people are created.71

The publication Modern Swedish Design – Three Founding Texts (2008) includes three selected texts, translated into English, but also valuable introductory comments to each text that give an international reader access to the intellectual background of modern Swedish design. The three texts were published in 1899, 1919 and 1931 and can be considered canonical works for Swedish design history. The texts relate to the first two periods in this study, the 1890s and the 1930s and 40s.

Svenska Slöjdföreningen produced many of the texts that are subject to analysis in this study.72 Art historian Gunilla Frick’s (1930-2016) dissertation Svenska Slöjdföreningen och konstindustrin före 1905 (1978) covering the earlier part of the society’s history has therefore been highly relevant to this study. Frick’s study also provides a context and a background to for example Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891 and her use of eclectic empirical material has been an inspiration. Svenska Slöjdföreningen has also become a constantly recurring point of reference in most textbooks on Swedish design history, including publications from the past 20 years, such as Kerstin Wickman’s Formens rörelse: Svensk form genom 150 år (1995), Svenska Möbler 1890-1990 (1991), Signums Svenska konsthistoria (1994-2005), Denise Hagströmer’s Swedish Design (2001), Hedvig Hedqvist’s 1900-2000: Svensk form: Internationell design (2002). These textbooks have been important sources of information, but the theoretically and methodologically most relevant publications for this study are characterised by a more critical involvement with Swedish design history.

In this context I specifically would like to mention three recent books that focus on design processes in Sweden and Scandinavia.73 Two of them use approaches influenced by actor-network-theory, similar to this study; firstly,

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72 Svenska Slöjdföreningen (Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts, in the 1950s the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design, after 1976 Swedish Society of Crafts and Design or Föreningen Svensk Form in Swedish) was founded in 1845, and together with newly founded museums and private initiatives they worked to improve the quality of goods by educating and informing producers as well as consumers about quality and taste. The 1910s was a period of renewal influenced by the Deutscher Werkbund. The society had a strong social emphasis but also a moral dimension, focusing on the home and everyday goods. The society became one of the main promoters of functionalism.
the anthology edited by the design historian Kjetil Fallan, *Scandinavian design: alternative histories* (2012) with contributions by e.g. architect and historian Helena Mattsson and design historian Christina Zetterlund. The second book is written by the anthropologist Keith M. Murphy, *Swedish Design: An Ethnography* (2015). These two books deliberately move away from a design history focusing on the unique object or designer, to encompassing the many aspects involved in the design process. In the third book *Designing worlds: national design histories in an age of globalization* (2016) Kjetil Fallan and Grace Lees-Maffei argue for the reconceptualisation of the national within the global in design history.74 The authors encourage a more reflexive historiography; something that I hope this study can be seen as an attempt at, by placing the focus on how a national style is constructed and the actors involved in such an endeavour. In the same book, Kjetil Fallan and Christina Zetterlund explore Scandinavian design historiography and how national typologies and traditions have been used to legitimise the modernist mission of design discourse. This is a subject that is posed also in this study. All these three studies touch on design as meaning making in a way that is highly relevant to this study, and as described by Keith M Murphy: “...making things mean in a cultural way is the result of activities carried out by asymmetrically distributed actors tasked with reproduction, preserving, and augmenting indexical connections between forms and other meaningful entities.”75 This research brings attention to the idea that it is in the processes and activities around an object that the value and meaning resides, not in the things themselves.

Literature scholar Elisabeth Outka examines the marketing and mediation of authenticity at the turn of the 20th century in her book *Consuming Traditions* (2008). It explores the idea of how to liberate objects and places from commercial taint in the search for authenticity. Her study has great bearing on my understanding of the way the Gustavian style has been marketed and found its niche as consumer goods. Design historian Sara Kristoffersson’s study *Design by IKEA — a Cultural History* (2014) is a rewarding analysis and deconstruction of the narratives created by IKEA, a company which also plays a major role in this study. Her interest is not in determining whether the narratives are a reflection of reality or not, but rather in identifying the content of the narratives and “explaining why they appear as they do and how they have been shaped, as well as the reasons for their success”.76 This approach has also inspired this study of Gustavian style. Apart from these studies, a valuable source of research, not least concerning applied arts museums, has been a number of articles written in English and published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Design History*, which was in print from 1991-2005.

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75 Murphy, K. M. *Swedish design: an ethnography*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015, p. 49

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Other examples of studies interested in the cultural history of the history of styles include a recent study of revivals of the rococo style in the anthology *Rococo Echo* (2014), which comprises texts by seventeen art historians that specifically focus on the notions of style and temporality.\(^{77}\) There seems to be a renewed interest among art historians in these questions, and additionally there have been a number of exhibitions and exhibition catalogues focusing on how stylistic movements of the 18th century, primarily the rococo, have been present as a creative force in contemporary life. For example *The Ceaseless Century* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1998) and *Rococo: The Continuing Curve, 1730-2008* at the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York (2008) and recently a Swedish example at the Gothenburg Museum of Art, *Unbounded The Eighteenth Century Mirrored by the Present* (2016). The latter exhibition explored such issues as identity, gender transgression, boundaries and landscapes and the accompanying report *Skiascope 8* describes the approach of combining now and then in the same exhibition. The report suggests that the anachronisms helped make “…other meanings (…) visible and clarified in a comparing perspective”.\(^{78}\) This exhibition is one in a long line of exhibitions, some of them described in this study, which have used the 18th century to discover new aspects of the present.

1.3.3 National Identity and Heritage Aesthetics

The third line of investigation is that of national identity and heritage aesthetics, and it explores the circumstances that lie beyond the individual object, artwork or piece of furniture, such as place or geography. Art history became an independent academic discipline at a time when nationalism was a leading ideology, and even if art historians might be less inclined today than a century ago to identify specific national characteristics and consider them relevant for a national character or ethnicity, I would argue that national borders and ideologies still matter in research and exhibitions produced in Sweden today.\(^{79}\)

The assumption that the nation-state should be considered the natural social and political form of the modern world and the domain of empirical research is referred to as *methodological nationalism*.\(^{80}\) A consequence is that the

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present-day geo-political borders of Sweden have largely determined what is included in collections, exhibitions or textbooks. Academia and museums have certainly also contributed to the mapping and definition of what should be preserved within that Swedish nation-state, protecting the material legacy of a glorious past – a process of “nationing” supporting an imagined community. Stylistic movements and cultural epochs, such as the Gustavian, are still related to various conceptions that “make space specific to place”, and thus place becomes linked to a temporal or historical concept. The national, rather than regional, understanding of the Gustavian seems to have made it a suitable material legacy for reinforcing a national identity.

The relevance of geography of art is further reviewed and problematised by art historian Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann in Toward a Geography of Art (2004):

Far from being resolved, geographical considerations are still debated. They involve such issues as how art is related to, determined by, or determines – or is affected by or affects the place in which it is made; how art is identified with a people, culture, region, nation, or state; and how art in various places is to be interrelated, through diffusions or contact. They raise concerns about how areas of study are to be delimited, spatially as well as chronologically.

Art history has been and still is conducted within the framework of the nation state and its specific socio-political context and, even though there are transnational exchanges, the traditions of art-historical knowledge is still very much nationally determined. The geographic setting are still used as a relevant attribution in the classification of art and organises many textbooks, exhibitions and collections. This makes it relevant to still critically analyse the role of art history in the construction of national identity. The articles in the anthology Konsten och det nationella (2013) discuss art history’s relation to Swedish nationalism in 1850-1950 and critically analyse the role art history had in the nationalist project. Art historian Sabrina Norlander’s chapter on the Gustavian, Det gustavianska som svensk modell?, and architectural historian Victor Edman’s chapter Kungens paviljong på Haga are compelling introductions to the discipline’s long fascination with the Gustavian. A more general understanding of the important influence of nationalism within the museum sector


83 Kaufmann, T. DaCosta., 2004, p. 7-8
84 Rampley, M. (ed.) Art history and visual studies in Europe: transnational discourses and national frameworks. Leiden: BRILL, 2012, p. 2. One example of this recent interest in national art history is the study of British art history in Mark A. Cheetham’s Artwriting, nation, and cosmopolitanism in Britain: the ‘Englishness’ of English art theory since the eighteenth century (2012).
in Sweden has been explored in a number of texts, and museums consultant Stefan Bohman has returned to this topic a number of times, for example in *Historia, museer och nationalism* (1997). Historian Peter Aronsson has also studied the relation between cultural heritage and nation and was recently part of a European research project that resulted in the collaborative anthology *National museums: new studies from around the world* (2011) exploring the relevance of the nation today.

### 1.3.4 Historiography

The fourth line of investigation is the historiography of the practice of art history and art historical writing, and to some extent museum practice, in Sweden. In the 1990s historiography of academic disciplines became increasingly popular, also within Swedish art history, primarily mapping the early history of the academic discipline. This study builds on this earlier interest but wishes to place less focus on biographical or institutional historiography and instead concentrate on exchange and practice, allowing the study to be guided by the empirical material, the mediation of Gustavian style. Further, I wish to explore the impact art history has had on commercial production as well as the public imagination, maintaining and open approach to who an art historian is and what art history practice can include. A similar approach to the history of the discipline can be found in Hans Dam Christensen’s dissertation *Forskydningens kunst* (2001) in which the author discusses the traditions, practice and science within the discipline of art history in Denmark and what effects these have had on understandings of national identity, gender and art.

Charlotta Krispinsson’s dissertation *Historiska porträtt som kunskapskälla: samlingar, arkiv och konsthistoriesskrivning* (2016) is it the most recent Swedish example of a study focusing on art historiography and object-based practices, such as the process of collecting, inventorying and archiving. Looking beyond the field of art history I would also like to mention Ingrid Berg’s dissertation *Kalauria 1894: a cultural history of the first Swedish excavation in Greece* (2016) where she studies archaeology as a situated cultural practice, and where she has been interested in gender politics, nationalistic as well as colonial heritage practices. In addition I have relied on general overviews such as the anthologies *8 kapitel om konsthistoriens historia* (2000), *Art history and its institutions* (2002), and more specialised studies, focusing on textbooks such as Dan Karlholm’s *Handböckernas konsthistoria* (1996), but also biographies, for example Hans Dackenberg’s dissertation *Oscar Levertin som konsthistoriker* (1994).

Museum publications have also provided invaluable insights on the development of museum practice as well as information about specific collections and displays. This group includes publications of a historiographical character, Nordiska Museet’s anthology *Nordiska museet under 125 år* (1998) and various publications from Nationalmuseum, such as *Kongl. Museum* (1993) and *Konst kräver rum* (2002).
To conclude, previous research that has been relevant to this study can be found in a number of theoretical fields and I have aimed to combine these four lines of investigation into one study of mediations of Gustavian style. The theoretical approaches used have been inspired by the studies mentioned in this chapter. However, the combination is my own attempt to describe and analyse a vast and straggling body of material, while also readdressing the agency of the discipline of art history.

1.4 Theoretical Approaches

This is a study of art history, its relations to and impact on the staging and use of cultural heritage. However, could it be considered a dissertation within the field of art history itself? There is a clear focus on both visual and material aspects of heritage in this study, familiar to any art historian. Further, I analyse concepts important to art history such as style. Moreover, it is in part a historiography of art history practice in Sweden. Possibly, one might also argue that this is a visual culture study of art history, especially considering the variety of media included in the study. I do not see this movement between disciplines as a problem, as my own background is multi-disciplinary and this has also been the prerequisite in the making of this dissertation.

In this dissertation I primarily use theories and methods that are available for cultural heritage studies but do not originate within the field. I use them as a “source of theoretical and explanatory motility.”85 The multidisciplinary approach within the field has recently triggered a revived debate about cultural heritage studies, addressing questions such as – with which tradition of research methodology should heritage be defined and addressed? In the recent publication *The Palgrave handbook on heritage research* (2015) the research field is described as “flourishing in its incompleteness”86. However, what unites the writers of the mentioned handbook is the interest in heritage as a cultural process and how it works as such. This is also the wider purpose of this study.

The theories and methods used are concerned with power and legitimisation, networks and historiography. My intention is to use these theories and methods in order to analyse and collect data from a wide range of sources. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (1958-2016) refer to such an approach as a critical imagination, which is “…an approach that pays due respect to – and draws from – a number of disciplinary sources of theory, and which distinguishes between the range and purpose of various theoretical interventions in

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order to apply them usefully in appropriate context." It is also my intention to contribute to the exploration of the role of art history and design history within the fields of critical heritage studies and museology. Hopefully, a stronger visual and object-based focus can contribute with new theoretical insights and techniques within the field of cultural heritage studies. More specifically, the contribution could perhaps be pinned down to the focus on the visual and aspects of cultural heritage and an in-depth critical analysis of the role that art history has had in the construction and subsequent use of heritage, using the Gustavian style as example.

1.4.1 Critical Heritage Studies

Art history deals with history and heritage: the history it produces feeds into heritage and heritage in turn provides new material. This process contributes to the construction of heritage and is an on-going process, where “…heritage is primarily not about the past, but instead about our relationship with the present and the future.” This on-going process is the topic of critical heritage studies. This field is, as explained above, still in a state of continuing theoretical development. In 2012 the Association for Critical Heritage Studies launched their manifesto and in 2013 the aims and directions of critical heritage studies were presented in a special issue of International Journal of Heritage Studies. This affirmation of intent followed the international conference in Gothenburg, Sweden the year before. Researchers such as Rodney Harrison, Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton have adopted and developed this critical perspective. The critical implies that, apart from relating to cultural heritage, the researcher is interested in how it is constructed, the prerequisite being that the past is continually re-created in the present. The process of re-interpretations and re-stagings can also be studied and analysed in an attempt to open up the black boxes that are the make up of cultural heritage.

My successive readings have been informed by discourse analysis and close reading, as it has been used in critical heritage studies. Discourse can be understood as ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a topic

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88 Harrison, R., Heritage: critical approaches, Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, p. 4
90 Black box refers to something that we see as a whole, an accepted truth and where knowledge about its internal workings seems unnecessary. It is the success of something, that it simply works, that makes it opaque and obscure, a black box. It is created by different actants that have reached a consensus and work together until something goes wrong and the box opens up or dissolves. When this happens one or several actants might leave the box. Latour, B. Pandora’s hope: essays on the reality of science studies. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 304
or practice and ways of talking about knowledge and conduct.\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Gustavian style} is such a topic, a cluster of ideas images and practices. These can be referred to as \textit{discursive events} that can be analysed. Together they make a \textit{discursive formation}. Further, discourse refers to a form of social practice and meaning embedded and reproduced via language. It is a \textit{discursive practice} that systematically forms the objects of which it speaks, and it also organises the way we act. It was Michel Foucault who gave discourse a different meaning – other than the linguistic, where discourse was defined as “passages of connected writing or speech”.\textsuperscript{92} Instead, he studied discourse as a system of representation. Meaning is, according to Foucault, produced not through language but through discourse, and it governs the way we talk meaningfully about a topic. Moreover, it also regulates practice and the conduct of others. Consequently, certain practices develop within institutions dealing with the Gustavian, e.g. conservation management, exhibitions and education, etc. Foucault’s discourse analysis is historically grounded, and as such focuses on how discourse provides a language for talking and representing knowledge about a particular topic at a particular moment.\textsuperscript{93} In this sense, discourse regulates what is possible to say or think about something at a particular historical moment. This can make us question whether the Gustavian style is always the same. In this study I have been seeking out what is constant and what is variable in the material.

Another important aspect of the discourse is the interaction of power, knowledge and institutional practice. Foucault displaced the subject from his/her privileged position and didn't find it necessary to identify a subject for power/knowledge to operate. Further he argued that power circulates, it does not radiate in a single direction – it can be understood as a productive network. Critique against Foucault, apart from the charge of relativism includes the opinion that he encompassed too much into discourse, which makes his followers ignore material, economic and structural factors.\textsuperscript{94} I agree that a

\begin{itemize}
  \item Hall, S. (ed.) 1997, p. 44
  \item Foucault, M. \textit{Archaeology of knowledge}. 2nd ed., Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2002, p. 220
  \item Michel Foucault identified a difference between old history and new history. Old history included some of the aspects that have been of vital importance to the development of art history as a discipline; linear successions, causal links, fields, periods and the spirit of the age. A discourse analysis calls these terms into question. However, Foucault retains, in some form, both the author and the period, which can be argued to increase the usefulness, or at least the ease with which the art historian can use discourse analysis. Fernie, E. (ed.) \textit{Art history and its methods: a critical anthology}. London: Phaidon, 1995, p. 335
  \item The critique of Foucault has resulted in the establishment of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in research over the last 30 years. In 1993 Fairclough defined CDA as a: “…discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes…” (Fairclough, N. \textit{Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language}. 2nd. ed., Harlow: Longman, 2013, p. 93) This is done in order to see how power relations ideologically shape these communicative events, and to counteract the opacity

\end{itemize}
single subject couldn’t be placed in focus as the producer of “the Gustavian style discourse”. Nevertheless, I am interested in the subjects or actors that have contributed. Critical discourse analysis (CDA), authorised heritage discourse (AHD) and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), presented below, provide theoretical frameworks for exploring wider social structures, actors and the idea of networks. What specifically attracts heritage researchers to use discourse analysis is the way it relates to wider social structures, and I am certainly not the first researcher to be inspired by discourse analysis in a study of cultural heritage. Already in 2006 Emma Waterton, Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell described in the article The utility of discourse analysis to heritage studies: The Burra Charter and social inclusion what possibilities CDA holds as a methodological tool in critical heritage studies. It is an analysis that is anchored in “…an understanding that social relations are material and have material consequences”, as Laurajane Smith phrases it in her influential study, Uses of Heritage (2006). In this book she further describes the authority of a particular representation of heritage, labelled authorised heritage discourse (AHD). Smith argues that AHD helps naturalise assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage and is often linked to ideas of nation and nationhood. AHD “…takes its cue from the grand narratives of nation and class on the one hand, and technical expertise and aesthetic judgement on the other.” Moreover, AHD favours Western elite values and understandings of heritage, which has consequences on what is selected as heritage. It is also a professional discourse, something which is further explored in this study, focusing on the profession of the art historian and museum curator. This AHD becomes a highly relevant concept for understanding and analysing the re-presentations of Gustavian style.

Although I have been inspired by the various approaches to discourse analysis discussed above, it has not been possible to conduct a full-blown discourse analysis, and instead I have chosen the method of close reading of the text and visual material (which may be any cultural artefact). The material has

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95 This can be compared to e.g. Panayotis Tournikiotis’ study The historiography of modern architecture where he deliberately removes the main actors, the context and the personalities. Tournikiotis, P. The historiography of modern architecture. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999, p. 5
96 There are a number of Swedish examples of the use of discourse analysis within heritage studies, e.g. conservator Ingrid Martins Holmberg’s dissertation På stadens yta om historiseringen av Haga (2006). Art historian Maja Willén has explored the concept of the open-plan dwelling in her dissertation Berättelser om den öppna planlösningens arkitektur: en studie av bostäder, boende och livsstil i det tidiga 2000-talets Sverige, Univ. Diss. Stockholm University, Lund: Sekel, 2012
99 Smith, L., 2006, p. 4
been sampled through a process described in the following chapter. There are several reasons for this choice, for example the complexity of the material, which is multimodal and covers a long time-span, but also because of the language, since most of the text was originally written in Swedish and translating it in order to make an analysis has not been practicable. Moreover, close reading is better suited to the aims and goals of this study.

1.4.2 Actor-Network-Theory

Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) was developed within the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) by philosopher, sociologist and anthropologist Bruno Latour, and sociologists Michel Callon and John Law in the 1980s, and acted as a critique of conventional social theory. However, rather than being a complete theory or methodological toolkit it resembles an analytical strategy. Bruno Latour has claimed that some of the benefits of ANT are that it can help the researcher to pose new questions and understand a complex world in a scientific way. Moreover, ANT makes it possible to investigate the way new knowledge is generated, partly challenging it by acknowledging that scientific research depends on a social context – a perspective that is further explored in this study.

ANT is interested in identifying and describing networks and the actors that help shape them. The invitation to follow the actors helps the researcher to understand the situation from many angles and gives the opportunity to see how the distribution of power changes over time. This approach, to follow the actor, has been highly relevant in this study since the use and revivals of the Gustavian style are the result of a long process involving numerous and occasionally unexpected actors. However, Latour refrains from any traditional definition of networks, and wants you to pay attention to how they are known and the way they are described.

Network is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described. (…) you can provide an actor-network account of topics, which have in no way the shape of a network. (It) is the trace left behind by some moving agent.100

Objects, non-human actors as well as human actors are active and hold agency in these networks, and they interact indiscriminately. In this sense it is for example possible to understand different types of mediations of the Gustavian style as actors. Apart from identifying actors and describing the network, I have found that ANT helps bring out an understanding of the processes of knowledge production and heritage production. To focus on the process means that you have to move beyond the intrinsic qualities of a

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product or an exhibition, for example, and instead focus on the transformations they undergo, which in this study can mean that it is relevant to study for example reviews, the second hand market or visitor numbers. It also implies that it is not relevant to prove who was right or wrong in their interpretation or expression of the Gustavian style. I will leave such judgements to others.

The use of ANT in design research has been described and developed by design historian Kjetil Fallan in Design History – understanding history and method (2010) and in the anthology Networks of Design (2010). He accounts for both difficulties and benefits of ANT, and ends up referring to ANT as “…an effective antidote to complacency.”101 So far, ANT has been used sparsely within the discipline, but I agree with Fallan, who sees a potential in the method and presents ANT as a useful tool that helps the design historian to pose and answer questions about the views and positions of different actors, and the power negotiations made.102 In this sense, ANT can be used to enrich the theory of design history and art history, where traditionally the single product or designer is in focus. Furthermore, ANT opens up the possibility to include other perspectives such as consumption, use and methods of production. In this sense ANT has close links to the field of material culture, where the material aspects or objects are seen as being as important as language, social relations, time and representation, etc.103 Similarly to material culture studies, the focus can be the domain of things or the human subject, or the relationship between persons and things. “Where a thing or an object and a person, or culture and material culture, ‘begin’ or ‘end’ can never be defined in the abstract. All depends on the context of analysis and research.”104 The Gustavian style is as much material as it is text, ideas or practice and this study is an attempt at including all of these aspects, as reflected in the methods and materials presented in the following chapter.

1.5 Material and Methodologies

This study demonstrates and analyses the many ways in which the Gustavian style have been mediated. The material is multimodal, and both material and immaterial aspects are pursued. The material mainly consists of texts and images found in advertising, exhibitions and textbooks, but also exhibition


103 Articles published in The Journal of Material Culture (SAGE journals), first published in 1996, have been an important source material in this study. The field of material culture studies has its point of origin within the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology. However, numerous disciplines have experienced a “material turn” at various points.

documentation covering most of the 20th century. Before presenting this disparate material in more detail, it seems necessary to start by pointing out that I agree with W. J. T. Mitchell, that all media are, from the standpoint of sensory modality, “mixed media”.105 That is, all visual media involve other senses. “The Gustavian chair” as a more specific example, is neither textual nor visual; it is both and a lot more. Which, I admit, is a challenge to any researcher. Nonetheless, it is also what makes it fascinating to study. Perhaps this study could be seen as an attempt to create a more productive critical space.

…one in which we would study the intricate braiding and nesting of the visual with the other senses, reopen art history to the expanded field of images and visual practices (...) and find something more interesting to do with the offending eye than plucking it out.106

The material related to the mediations of the Gustavian style moves in-between what has been the object of study in traditional art history with a focus on style, high-class artworks and well-known artists and architects, and a world of images and objects that are not art, but ephemeral mass-produced copies made by anonymous producers with little interest in authenticity etc. Parts of this study evolve around what can be describes as the production-consumption-mediation (PCM) paradigm, which includes both object-based analysis and a broader exploration of the cultural meanings of artefacts, acknowledging that design is also its surrounding practices and discourses.107

In this study it implies the mediations and discourses that can be found between producers and consumers, for example advertising, exhibitions, objects and journals etc. This means that the study covers a wide spectrum of what art history and visual studies so far have included. Moreover, it is a process that I describe, what is considered Gustavian is not constant; it keeps changing and reflects changes in society at large. It is continuously challenged by, for example, new research, changes in the political climate and new actors – institutions, humans and objects.

1.5.1 Looking for Controversies

This study focus on the mediations of Gustavian style, how it has been described, displayed, illustrated, photographed, performed and advertised from the end of the 19th century until today. Consequently, the material used in this study is eclectic and belongs to different categories, mainly texts, illus-

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trations, exhibitionary forms and historically informed performances from a range of cultural practices and institutions, such as museums, historical societies, universities and the media. But it also consists of critique and reviews of these events as well as archival material documenting furniture and exhibition production. The professions that have produced the core material used in this study are art historians, critics, journalists, museum workers, historical societies and furniture producers.

A field of practice or research doesn’t exist in isolation; instead it is the community, its shared histories, language and practices that identify it. Art historian and cultural heritage management practice is shaped by tradition, and formal and informal rules that can have different forms, such as routines, norms, technologies and laws. These different aspects can be identified and studied, which implies that the practice can be historiographically scrutinised. Art historians such as Andreas Lindblom (1889-1977) and Axel L. Romdahl (1880-1951), very much part of this professional practice, have written memoirs, which have been used as primary sources. These texts yield facts and can help us understand the interactions between museum professionals, institutions and their collections. However, you also need to be aware of the subjectivity and historical context of these texts, and ask not only what it says but also why and how.

As an integral part of the study I have conducted a systematic survey of an extensive body of material, covering more than a century of publications, exhibitions and archival material about the Gustavian and the re-presentation/production of the Gustavian style. It has been necessary to scan these, many thousands of pages, to familiarise myself with the subject, but it has also helped me to move away from my own preconceptions of what Gustavian style might be. However, the great variety of the material doesn’t imply that it is a random selection; every example used has been carefully chosen. The main method to explore the subject and select relevant examples has been to make a cartography of controversies. This is a research method that has developed out of Actor-Network-Theory. The idea is that the researcher should try to remain as open as possible, while acknowledging that research perspectives are never unbiased. Nevertheless, objectivity could be perused by multiplying the points of observation and by listening more to

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108 Similarly eclectic material is used in e.g. Gunilla Frick’s dissertation *Svenska Slöjdföreningen och konstindustrin före 1905* (1978), which describes Swedish design history prior to 1905.
the actors’ voices than the researcher’s presumptions.\textsuperscript{112} When scrutinising this vast material I have searched for, and identified texts and visual material that in some way represent the following:

- descriptions and illustrations of Gustavian style, including academic research when it has been used in a context outside a strict academic university context;
- descriptions and discussions of the reuse of historic styles, reconstruction projects, creativity and tradition, mainly concerning furniture production and historical societies;
- documentation of historically informed performances;
- adverts for antiques and period furniture;
- descriptions, reviews and adverts for exhibitions and exhibition catalogues related to the Gustavian style.

The controversies might not always occur where you would expect them. The debates about authenticity or taste, for example, might be more dynamic among the producers of furniture than with the curators at the museums. And in the end, as this study shows, controversies might also help new and unexpected alliances to be formed. The centre of the “action” concerning the mediation of Gustavian style has varied over time and different controversies and actors are examined throughout the study. In some instances it has been possible to create specific statistics from the material. However, the complexity of the material and the wide timespan have in most cases made it an unreliable method because of the many variables.

Thus, the material adds up to a selection of mediations or \textit{concrete communicative events} – articles, books, films, performances and exhibitions and sometimes objects, where different actors, most commonly art historians, historical societies and museum curators, have communicated with each other and the world around them.\textsuperscript{113} The examples that I have ultimately used are included in order to further explore the themes that the questions posed by this study have generated. Other examples could perhaps have added other dimensions. Nevertheless, my intention has been to pick examples that could be considered “typical” of the re-presentations and reuse of the Gustavian style, and thus they can be seen as the result of an exploration of discourse.

\textsuperscript{112} Venturini, T. Diving in magma: how to explore controversies with actor-network theory. \textit{Public Understanding of Science 19}, no. 3(2010):260

The material can be divided into four groups: firstly documentation found in museum archives and exhibition catalogues, secondly articles in the daily press and professional journals, thirdly printed books and lastly, advertising, mainly found in newspapers and professional journals. In order to find the first group of materials I have used libraries and archives, the main ones being the archives of Göteborgs Stadsmuseum, Nationalmuseum, Nordiska Museet and Röhsska Museet. Some of the material has been digitised and can be found in databases available online, e.g. Digitalt museum, currently including the collections of 53 Swedish museums. Articles in the daily press have been accessed via a large database maintained by the National Library of Sweden, which includes Swedish daily press from the 19th century until today. I have used the databases to search for key words including, for example, exhibitions and other events described in this study. Professional journals and textbooks have generally been available via the Uppsala University Library.

There are three semi-structured interviews included in the material. However, it has been a conscious decision not to focus on this type of material, one of the reasons being that it would create an imbalance between the three periods. Moreover, it would distract from the intent to focus on the mediations of Gustavian style. Therefore I have only used interviews when it has been impossible to find material that was available at the time, but now is difficult to get hold of since it is not held in the public archives or libraries.
Daily Swedish newspapers have been an important primary source, offering information about specific events as well as opening up a world of intellectual ideas and social, political and economic situations at specific points in the past. However, these newspapers, for example *Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* cannot be seen as objective. They have shaped the news and views of their readers, and acted as “gatekeepers and filterers of ideas.”\(^{114}\) The same goes for journals and magazines, which have received increasing attention as sources for research in design history. Kjetil Fallan has pointed out that they can be used as “…the primary source material when investigating more specific discourses through case studies.(…) (they) do not merely transmit design discourse but also contribute to its transformation”.\(^{115}\) I have tried to be aware of the agency this material hold by including their transformative potential in the analysis.

The professional publications used include journals such as *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift: revy för konst och konstforskning, Möbelvärlden, Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift* (Meddelanden från SSF before 1905, Form after 1932) and *Svenska museer: Meddelanden från Svenska museimannaföreningen*. These publications cover most of the 20th century and have been used to analyse a primarily professional discourse. In a scientific or professional journal it is possible to present new research and establish the boundaries of a discipline or a profession. The editors and writers have helped shape the accepted norm system and the discourse within the different professional fields. Consequently, scientific and professional journals are useful, specifically for analysing networks around certain fields of knowledge production and distribution. *Konsthistorisk tidskrift: revy för konst och konstforskning* was established in 1932 by Konsthistoriska sällskapet (The Society of Art History). From 1967 the publication was known as *Konst-historisk tidskrift. Möbelvärlden* was the official journal for Sveriges Möbelhandlares Centralförbund, Sveriges Möbelindustiförbund and Svenska Leverantörförbundet av Möbleringsmaterial. Hence, it represented the retailers, the producers and the suppliers of furniture in Sweden. *Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift* was first published in 1905 and was the official publication of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. It represented the opinions of the society, but also the debate about design, craft and industrial production. The publica-


tion changed it name to *Form* in 1932. Svenska museimannaföreningen (The Swedish Museums Association) published *Svenska museer: meddelanden från Svenska museimannaföreningen* from 1932-2004 and it was distributed to the members of the association. The journal included recurring debates about the museum profession, as well as display techniques, exhibitions and other museological issues. The material also includes lifestyle magazines such as *Antik & Auktion* (first published in 1975) and *Idun* (published from 1888-1963), as well as the annual publication *Gustafs Skål* (first published in 1993) aimed at the members of the society. Occasionally, these journals have acted as sources of information about events such as exhibitions and are used as a complement to other sources to answer questions such as who, what, where and when. In this sense these texts have in a few instances had to take on a dual role, especially when information has been scarce. However, it is important to remember that all of these journals, and other material used in this study, are biased, and the extent to which they can be taken as evidence of practice varies. They may, for example, be biased in their selection. To use *Form* as an example, the furniture that was represented in the journal was only a fraction of what was being produced and sold in total.

1.5.2 Reading the Text

My research work is founded on three methodological approaches based in theory; firstly I use close reading focusing on a historiographical perspective in order to describe how, when and where Gustavian style has been mediated in research, text, performance and displays throughout the 20th century. Secondly, I use Actor-Network-Theory in order to analyse how actors and networks have made the Gustavian happen, what the knowledge production has looked like, and where art history and cultural heritage meet. Thirdly, I have focused on the visual material and analysed that, acknowledging its prominent role and agency in mediating Gustavian style. All of these three methodological approaches are available for heritage to make us of, while still, for the most part remaining independent and separate from this field of study.

Close reading as a method for textual analysis is often used in literary studies as well as in feminist scholarship, and developed in the 1940s and 50s. Edward Said used close reading in his book *Orientalism* (1978) where he acknowledges how individual writers contribute to a dis-cursive formation like Orientalism. Other examples of works that can be related to this method are Susan Sontag’s *On photography* (1978) or Roland Barthes’ *Mythologies*, (1957). Close reading indicates that the context of the text is taken into consideration, as texts originate from varying sources and genres. Many of the texts analysed in this study were part of an institutional practice, for example

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museums, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, universities, as well as national associations that united retailers, suppliers and producers. This position made the texts powerful in producing discourses and social relations. While these texts can provide facts, however, by close reading it is also possible to move beyond the factual account to understand what social, cultural, historical and political relations are mediated.\textsuperscript{117}

The texts may originate from varying sources, such as textbooks, handbooks, exhibition catalogues, professional journals and lifestyle magazines. The texts also relate to visual material, often a major aspect for understanding the content of the text. Moreover, these illustrations hold their own agency and are as closely analysed as the texts. When analysing the texts and illustrations I have returned to them on several occasions, aiming to situate the text and the illustration in their historical context, comparing them to other texts and illustrations and using approaches offered by Actor-Network-Theory in order to deepen the analysis. Apart from these methods it is important to point out that the concepts authenticity and style have been of crucial importance when analysing the material. I will now describe the methods in more detail.

1.5.3 Actors and Networks

In this study I have been inspired by Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), an approach that acknowledges heritage as a process and I use it to answer the question of how the Gustavian style is mediated by mapping who, what, when and where.\textsuperscript{118} However, ANT should not be considered a methodological toolkit “...but rather as a theoretical framework facilitating new and dynamic ways of thinking about design.”\textsuperscript{119}

Activities such as production, collection, display and reception of the Gustavian style as well as research about the Gustavian period can be seen as part of “Gustavian activity”. Similarly, there are many actors that make the Gustavian happen: people, ideas, institutions and objects – one might speak of a complexity of practices or a set of material and social agencies. Earlier sociological models have made a clear definition of what makes up the social. Bruno Latour opens up for the way for networks that look different and

\textsuperscript{117} Close reading can be an indispensable tool for exploring ideological investments prompted by a text. Literary critics such as the Professor of English Paula M.L. Moya have used closed reading in the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity. Moya, P. M. L. The social imperative: race, close reading, and contemporary literary criticism. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016.

\textsuperscript{118} A comprehensive study of the wide range of agents involved in staging cultural heritage in a museum context is presented in Byrne, S. Unpacking the collection: Networks of material and social agency in the museum. New York: Springer, 2011.

where human and non-human actors are given the same attention. And, when using ANT it is important to remember that one should not have pre-conceived ideas about who or what an actor is. Both humans and non-humans can hold agency.

By extending agency to nonhumans, we may begin to see how knowledge can be both contingent and traditional, how objects can maintain their form but change their identity, how humans can change their form and maintain their intentions, and a thousand other endemic contradictions that we have inherited from an uncritical acceptance of a Cartesian duality.120

In ANT the difference between actor and actant is downplayed, artefacts may be seen to act in the same way humans do. Even though the emphasis is on human actors, this study also includes numerous non-human actors such as pieces of furniture, the national dress, black-and-white photographs etc. This study investigates how objects, sites and style, epitomised by furniture, historic houses and the Gustavian style, act as silent intermediaries around which people gather, or sometimes as nonhuman actants.121 ANT helps the researcher analyse what is connected without determining beforehand what that could be. To acknowledge the importance of the agency of the material object is to recognise that “…material objects form the basis for the construction of various ‘social facts’…” which also influence how people relate to one another.122 Another thing that ANT helps the researcher with is to map the relationships between things and concepts – using the network to understand these relationships, implying that “…all actions are simultaneously material and conceptual, physical and symbolic.”123 Still, it is not easy to portray a network: networks are not static, but a way to describe flows or “translations”.124 In his study I have attempted to portray the networks from different starting points, spaces or objects: the textbook, the exhibition, the domestic interior or the event, themes that are reflected in the chapters of this study.

Moreover, in a study of networks, I believe that it is important to try to recognise what Latour suggests – that the social is flat.125 This implies that in a network all actions can be seen as equally important, but this should not be seen as a way of disregarding the power structures that are in place. Rather, I

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121 The word actant is borrowed from the field of semiotics, and can be used instead of the word actor in order to include the nonhuman. Latour, B. *Pandora’s hope: essays on the reality of science studies*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 303

122 Byrne, S. *Unpacking the collection: Networks of material and social agency in the museum*. New York: Springer, 2011, p. 11

123 Byrne, S., 2011, p. 10


125 Latour, B., 2005, p. 165-172
see this ‘flattening’ as a way of acknowledging all of the numerous actions and actors that make up the network, and thereby trying to understand often very complex processes. Some actors were hardly visible when I first analysed the material, even though, as I soon discovered, they have played an important role in the network that make Gustavian style happen – for example, the photographer Märta Claréus or the project manager Per Hahn (presented in chapters 2 and 4), one explanation is that both worked in larger organisations, where they were visible within the organisation but less so to a general public. It is a challenge for the researcher to identify and present networks in a way that justly recognises all actions as equally important and I am sure that this study is only an attempt that could be supplemented by other studies recognising other actors contributing to the network.

1.5.4 Images, Myths and Metaphoric Screens

In his collection of essays Mythologies (1957) Roland Barthes acknowledged the symbolic dimension of artefacts, and according to him, even everyday objects are saturated with latent meaning and can become metaphorical vehicles for collective desires. Mythologies is a critical reflection on an increasingly mediated consumer culture and has influenced design studies to this day.126 In agreement with Barthes’ semiotic cultural theory, I would argue that Gustavian period furniture, in its role as consumer goods and presented as such in advertising but also as museum objects, is organised by different actors in meaningful relationships via narratives that help express collective cultural values. When these more elaborate and ideologically framed meanings or messages on a connotative level appear as denotative, Barthes has described this as myth, and through the available visual material, this study explores the myths of Gustavian style.

126 It is primarily Barthes’ interdisciplinary application of semiotics to popular culture that has been crucial to design studies. He displaced the emphasis on the individual human agent as the arbiter of meaning in favour of a broader cultural system of signification. Discussed by e.g. D.J. Huppatz in the article Roland Barthes, Mythologies, Design and Culture 3, no. 1(2011):85-100
Figure 6. A photograph of a Gustavian chair becomes the signified, which has the accompanying text: 734. Stol av Anders Hellman d. ‘ – Inv. 105,015. The signifier and the signified have turned into a sign of Gustavian style. This style is in turn a sign of, for example, a Swedish translation of foreign influences and high quality traditional craftsmanship, which in turn becomes what Barthes would refer to as myth. The photograph was taken by Märtä Claréus and published in the book Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshem (1933/1979), p. 191.

The basic semiotic analysis of the material that I have used is based on the concepts of signifier, the signified, sign and the level of myth. I will use this basic model to perform a multimodal analysis of the concept of “Gustavian style”. If we take the image of a chair published in 1933 as an example, we know that it is “a Gustavian chair” because the text describes it as such, a statement founded on the development of the concept of style and research done by art historians. “A Gustavian chair” becomes the concept – the signifier. The chair, mediated via the photograph, is what is signified. The unit of the signifier and the signified becomes a sign. However, the relationship between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. There is always a slippage between the two, something that has become a key tenet in post-
The Gustavian style is a good example of how the combined efforts of researchers and museums work to minimise this “slippage” and strengthen the link between signifier and signified. If successful, the reader does not need to understand and know the history of that exact chair. It is enough that together, the signifier and the signified create the symbol “Gustavian style”. The chair and the Gustavian relate to other similar terms nearby, and can be defined by comparisons, e.g. ‘this is not a rococo chair’ or ‘the back resembles a Dutch rococo chair’. In this sense, these surveys and documentations enable predications, the logical affirmation of something by another. Hence, we can point at the importance of museum collections and surveys to create a link between signifier and signified to create symbols.

“A Gustavian chair” can also be used to signify different meanings such as national identity, taste and quality and can thus become a signifier for something completely other than the actual chair in the photograph or the physical object in the museum collection. It has become myth. Moreover, it is always possible to add additional layers in this chain; the chain of signification has no end, even though some meanings carry greater relevance according to context. Art historians, museum curators and commercial actors help create a language and provide images that describe “Gustavian style” and thereby they help create and mediate values and the myth of the Gustavian chair. Walking through an exhibition about the history of interior design is often a walk through a semiotic landscape where the myth we are told is that of style. However, the process is not one-way or top-down and meaning making happens in the meeting of different actors, including visitors, popular culture, artists and others.

The myth postulates a historical intention that appears as a natural justification by providing something with meaning and that makes it seem normal, “it transforms history into nature”. In the case of Gustavian style, textbooks, exhibitions, advertising and historically informed performances create associative links between “the Gustavian chair” and ideas about for example “Swedishness” or “taste”. The myth leaves us with a simplified world and refers to ideas and values that could be described as stereotypes that we all use in order to help us understand the world. Moreover, myth becomes part of a process where history becomes a way of legitimising the present, which also has great effect on cultural heritage.

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127 This slippage also brings into question the validity of a representation, and has been explored in art, for example the American conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth’s artwork One and Three Chairs (1965). In this work Kosuth assembles three representations of a chair, opening up a debate about meaning, representation and the artist’s role. We can start wondering about the actors, who wrote the text, who took the photograph, who made the chair, and who put them together? And in the end who is it that can define what is what and what is art?

128 In this sense myth contributes to an authorised heritage discourse such as the one explored in this study. See Barthes, R. Mythologies. New ed. London: Paladin, 1973, p. 128
I will apply some of the insights of Barthes in order to analyse the steps by which this broader meaning of the Gustavian style has been produced over time. As we will see, the “Gustavian chair” or “Gustavian style” and their meanings as symbols are created by various actors and mediated via communicative events, described throughout this dissertation, for example textbooks, exhibitions, furniture production and performances. These illustrations, texts and narratives have become metaphorical screens that in the end neutralize heritage. Heritage researchers Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith have sought to identify and understand these screens by analysing: how things are explained, does the explanation refer to common sense or simply the way things are? One way to identify the metaphorical screens in the material of this study has been to compare descriptions of the Gustavian style over time. “Gustavian style” is not a static landscape that is unmoved by external influences, and a comparison will make it possible to note “…the shifts in the selection of characteristics judged salient”.129 By using Barthes’ basic semiotic analysis and the level of myth, I investigate whether it can be a key to understanding art history practice as well as the heritage process, and how contents and values have been mediated through narratives and displays of the Gustavian style.

1.6 Being Part of the Heritage Process

Critical heritage studies call for an engagement with the world outside of academia. However, the way this is to be achieved is much debated, and it is still a matter of concern as to how research should interact with practice.130 In this study, I will show how academia and the outside world have interacted throughout the 20th century, questioning whether it has ever been valid to imagine a strict separation between the two. The empirical material of this study helps to show that any walls between academia, museums and the heritage industry, are illusory. People, objects and sites have continuously moved in-between these fields, creating networks of heritage. I use the perspective of critical heritage studies to study both theory and practice within these networks.

For fifteen years, I myself have been one of these actors and part of different networks, moving between museums, heritage sites, academia and the heritage industry. I have always been interested in “the doing of heritage”. In 2002 I finished a BA in conservation of the built environment and two years later I finished an MA in international museum studies, already having

129 Hyde, M L. and Scott, K. (eds.) Rococo echo: art, history and historiography from Cochin to Coppola. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2014, p. 4
130 The value of engagement and collaboration rather than critique for its own sake is discussed in Witcomb A. and Buckley K. Engaging with the future of ‘critical heritage studies’: looking back in order to look forward. International Journal of Heritage Studies 19, no. 6(2013):562-578
spent a couple of years at a heritage site as a museum educator at Gunnebo House and Gardens, in Mölndal south of Gothenburg. Here I was also involved as a project administrator in an EU-funded full-scale reconstruction of two freestanding wings that had burnt down in the 1820s. For many years I have also worked to further contacts between schoolteachers, the university and museums and heritage sites. Being able to move between these different professional fields was the incentive of this PhD project, but it has also kept contributing to its content. I hope that this project can further a constructive dialogue and understanding between theory and practice – not only looking at practice from a theoretical point of view but also vice versa. My intention is, however, to leave the controversies to the actors. My ambition is not to bring about their closure, rather it has been to show that they can be closed in different ways.

I am aware that by contributing interviews and talks and by writing this dissertation I am adding to the idea of the Gustavian, which is also my intent. However, by using a critical eye, my intention is not to say what has been done wrong or argue with past judgements about the Gustavian but rather by highlighting a discursive process, to make it clear that display and reception are always affected by the choices someone has made at different times. Such an awareness regarding “the Gustavian stories” might help highlight ideologies and structures that shape practice. Moreover, I am interested in issues of power and hegemony concerning cultural heritage, and in making them visible and transparent. This study takes place at a point when cultural heritage is, yet again, being used as a means to separate and divide people. I hope that this study might act as an account of how, when, where and by whom cultural heritage is staged and promoted. Studying the way academia, institutions, furniture production and heritage industry relate to the Gustavian and to each other might shed light on these issues.

1.7 Notes on Geography and Language

So far, cultural heritage studies have mainly focused on Western Europe, which Sweden belongs to. However, Sweden has not followed the same path as the UK and the USA. Even though it has been informed by and interacted with the rest of the world, Sweden has to be understood from its specific context, its specific socio-politics, material culture and curatorial and academic practices. Moreover, I believe that a geographically contextualised study of the Gustavian style might help acknowledge the numerous possible ways to think about heritage. Besides, much of the empirical material analysed in this dissertation has not previously been presented to an international audience in English. I hope that you as a reader will find it useful within your own context, providing it with validity beyond a national context.
Looking back, there have been few historiographical studies of the development of the Swedish conservation movement and museums available in English, and it is not material that is well known in an international context, with the open-air museum Skansen in Stockholm being one of the noticeable exception. This is partly due to linguistic restraints, and writing this study in English has been a conscious choice to contribute to facilitation of a transnational exchange. While most studies in the field of “critical heritage studies” are written in English, most Swedish studies in art history are not. I believe that this might not be such a good thing when we aim to be a part of an international field of research. Moreover, I have come to realise that changing my language, and thereby whom my reader might be, has become an important aspect of my research method. I am thereby creating a necessary space for reflection, which I find to be essential since I am writing about something, that is very close to my own professional and social background. Writing in English means that I have to reconsider that which, for a Swedish reader might be obvious, natural or believed to go without saying. I will have to put words to things that might be considered a given in a Swedish context. I believe that this might benefit the study, and might perhaps add a level of generality as well, drawing conclusions about such volatile concepts as identity, nationality and taste.

Over the century some of the concepts used in the empirical material of this dissertation have changed meaning and some do not translate well into English. When a development over time is described and the use of words varies across the space of time discussed, I have chosen to use the most contemporary word to facilitate the reading of the text. If necessary the change of meaning is explained in a footnote. Where a quote has been translated into English, the original is found in a footnote.

1.8 Outline of the Study

Temporality and narrative structure are constant challenges in this dissertation. However, each chapter, as well as the dissertation as a whole, adheres to a chronological structure. I will start in the past and end with the past as a route to the future, a retro-utopia. The first chapter, which you have just finished, describes the research project as such. The second chapter explores how the Gustavian style has been defined in textbooks published in 1913-1998 and the role museum collections, illustrations and surveys played in this process. It focuses on the dating of the style, the qualities and values ascribed to the style, and the presumed Swedishness of the style. In the third chapter I identify different kinds of exhibition spaces and modes of display that have been used since the end of the 19th century, and how they have related to authenticity. The fourth chapter explores the relationship between modernism and historical modelling in a domestic context. Further, it looks into the
concept of *smakföstran* (education of taste), the mediation of authenticity and its implications for the production and consumption of period furniture. There have been different incentives for this production and the chapter ends by discussing IKEA’s flat-pack period furniture and how Gustavian style has been exported. In the fifth chapter I discuss how the Gustavian has been performed and experienced, in historical parades, silent films and the time travels of historical societies. These historically informed performances have called into question who should have the right to define and use Swedish history and to what ends. The dissertation ends by arguing that the reuse of the Gustavian style has been a confirmation of the authorised heritage discourse as well as more popularised retro-utopic visions for the future and that the source of its success within the heritage process lies in its capacity for both these qualities.
Figure 7. Chairs have often been used to illustrate style in museum displays. These chairs were part of the display in room 63, Avdelningen för de högre stånden (the department for the privileged classes) at Nordiska Museet. A photograph of the third chair on the left no. 105.015 was included in Sigurd Wallin's Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshem II (1933, fig. 13) and Andreas Lindblom's Sveriges konsthistoria från forntid till nutid (1946, fig. 17). The numbers on the drawing indicate the numbers in the inventory. This register was created in May 1921 and revised in May 1932. Courtesy: Nordiska Museet
2 Defining Gustavian Style

Thus it is that these imaginary super-artists we call styles, each of which has an obscure birth, an adventurous life, including both triumphs and surrenders to the lure of the gaudy and meretricious, a death-agony and a resurrection, come into being.\(^{131}\)

In this quote, the French writer, theoretician and secretary of culture André Malraux (1901-1976) describes the strong position style has in art history, and how the life of a style seems to follow a pattern, a set dramaturgy. However, in order to exist a style needs to be identified, documented and described, and for this it depends on the art historian and the museum curator. This chapter explores various uses of the concept of style and how Gustavian style has been defined and “come into being”, as Malraux phrases it. This process of labour creates empirical material and communicative events, for example surveys, collections and photographs and other illustrations.

This chapter focuses on how objects and sites related to the Gustavian period have been surveyed, collected, documented, researched, and turned into *immutable mobiles* that have helped produce the words and images that were published in the eight different textbooks on Swedish art history that are analysed in this chapter.\(^{132}\) When sites, objects and collections are turned into words and illustrations they become easy to compare, but they also become

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\(^{132}\) The textbooks I have chosen are well known and part of an art historical literary canon. All but one are mentioned by professor of art history Dan Karlholm in his overview of textbooks, “Handböcker i allmän och svensk konsthistoria” in the historiography 8 kapitel om konsthistoriens historia i Sverige (2000). The book that I have added is Sten Åke Nilsson’s *Det sköna 1700-talet* (1993). The book is a re-edition of S Å Nilsson’s *Konsten i Sverige* (1974), which is mentioned by Karlholm.


Romdahl A. L. *Konsten i Sverige: från medeltidens början till vårt tid: en kortfattad skildring jämte överblick av Europas konsthistoria i dess huvudsak. Stockholm; Bonnier, 1943


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what Latour refers to as *immutable mobiles*, as they keep some of their relations intact. These immutable mobiles are used in research, and “...cleverly aligned they produce the circulating reference.”133 However, the chapter starts with a discussion about the concept of style and the influence of formalism and cultural history.

### 2.1 Art History and Style

To explain it as simply as possible, you could say that a style is defined by the features that distinguish an object from others of the same kind.134

In his book about old furniture first published in 1927, the art historian and museum director of the applied arts museum Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet, Gustaf Munthe (1896-1962) defined style as the deduction of characteristics that differentiate two objects of the same kind. This means that the concept of style is the product of empiricism, and that it is based on formal analysis and a basic taxonomic interest, similar to that which is used in museum collections and displays.135 As a concept, it has also been widely used in the listing, conservation and management of heritage.

Style helps the art historian to group objects, define and produce periods, cycles and cultures, as well as the œuvre of an individual artist.136 Consequently, a stylistic analysis might provide us with a time line, based solely on the comparison of objects, and stylistic identification has been essential for the identification of fakes.137 However, such an analysis depends on how the art historian perceives the creative process, for example whether she speaks of influence or appropriation.138

The concept of style has developed alongside the discipline of art history and was deliberately used at the end of the 19th century to help define art history as an independent and respectable academic discipline alongside for example, archaeology. Style has also been closely linked to the empirically

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135 Empiricism encouraged the notion of connoisseurship and the focus on individual objects. It was the dominating approach in the 19th century, lost popularity in the first three decades of the 20th century, and returned in the 1930s-1970s. Fernie, E. (ed.) *Art history and its methods: a critical anthology*. London: Phaidon, 1995, p. 335


137 Stylistic analysis was increasingly questioned in the early 1970s. The art historian as connoisseur was also strongly criticised, mainly because of the association with an unhistorical approach to art, an interest in the antiques market and commercial interests in art. Ibid., p. 364

138 To use the word *appropriation* implies that the maker chooses from the past rather than copying it with little thought.
verifiable procedures developed by connoisseurs such as Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) and Giovanni Morelli (1816-1891), adhering to the positivism of the 19th century. The interest in visual analysis, as an addition to an aesthetic and biographical approach, continued to grow at the end of the 19th century, and it reached its peak around 1915, when the Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945) published his book Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe (Principles of art history).

Focus has shifted between an intellectual content and formal characteristics of style. There is no doubt about it, style is material and immaterial, a quality that makes it similar to cultural heritage in general. Munthe argued that the two depended on each other; a piece of furniture was always placed in a room, in a context, and this room was placed in a specific time and place. Moreover, the material objects are created, placed there and used by various actors. In this sense, style arguably provides a link between designs and ideology and can represent both individuals and nations. Style can support identities, initiate economic change, and promote its own preservation or destruction. This implies that style can hold agency. Moreover, it helps us substantiate cultural associations – a synthesis between concrete shapes and abstract ideologies. However, it is important to remember that the link between style and ideology is arbitrary and can change with context. In the anthology Konsten och det nationella (2008) the Swedish art historian Martin Olin makes the relevant claim that a problem arises, not when using comparative style analysis per se, but when the art historian uses a known material to identify what is typical for a certain nation, region or ethnic group, which has been a reoccurring phenomenon when defining Gustavian style.

What purpose does style fulfil as a category today? The concept of style gave the discipline the tools to present what was seen as an objective and scientifically verifiable historical truth. However, since the establishment of art history as an independent academic subject in Sweden there has also been a strong critique against the concept and its sometimes single-minded focus on comparisons of material aspects. It has been reinterpreted and challenged, by for example post-modernist art theory, leaving it in an ambivalent position toward the discipline of art history. It would be possible to claim that style has become obsolete as a critical concept to most art historians today, and few researchers would maintain that they focus on style. If the concept is still used in analysis, it is primarily the contextualisation and ideological purposes that receive attention.

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Yet style remains a crucial reminder of our discipline’s depths – the follies, the idealisms aspired to and unachieved, the rigor of an unsurpassed formal analysis supported by a compendious first-hand visual knowledge. This is the lineage of the discipline we practice. If we abandon it entirely, we do so at our peril.\footnote{Elsner, J. Style. In Critical terms for art history, Nelson, R. S. and Shiff, R. (eds.), 2nd ed. 98-109, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 108}

Despite the serious critique, style is still closely associated with the discipline, and I agree with art historian Jas Elsner’s comment on style, that despite its flaws it has relevance for contemporary art historians as long as it is knowingly used, and even if art historians do not use it, we can be sure that others will, not least since style and formal analysis still play an important role within heritage.

2.1.1 Formalism and Cultural History

Style analysis within art history can be said to have reached its crowning moment around the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The five Swedish scholars with the greatest influence on academic teaching of art historians at the time – Ewert Wrangel, August Hahr, Axel L. Romdahl, Osvald Sirén and Johnny Roosval – all based their teaching on the history of styles.\footnote{Hayden, H. Gregor Paulsson och den konsthistoriska tolkningens problem, Univ. Diss. Uppsala University, Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion, 1997, p. 33}

The history of formal analysis can be traced back to Johan Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), whose writings about Greek, Greco-Roman and Roman art in the 1750s and 60s presented a prototypical schema that future art historians would mimic.\footnote{The first major work by Winckelmann is Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Greischiechen Werke in der malerey und Bilderkunst. Dresden: Im Verlag der Waltherischen Handlung, 1755. In English Reflections on the painting and sculpture of the Greeks: with instructions for the connoisseur, and an essay on grace in works of art, 1765.} However, Winckelmann and the focus on formal qualities were far from the only influences on Swedish art historians around the turn of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Art history and museum practice were deeply influenced by the discipline of archaeology and by the archaeologist Oscar Montelius (1843-1921) who propagated a “Swedish typology,” suggesting that material culture and biological life develop through essentially the same kind of evolutionary process.\footnote{Oscar Montelius Typologien eller utvecklingsläran tillämpad på det menskliga arbetet (1899) and Die Typologische Methode (1903).}

Style and formal analysis have been continuously criticised from various theoretical positions. German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s (1770-1831) position was that each historical period has a typical style, and that style is an expression of the intellectual and artistic atmosphere of a particular epoch, referred to as the Zeitgeist. Most art historians, presenting their own solutions to the problem of style, have refuted the Hegelian idea of
an evolution of styles and essentialism. Nevertheless, his ideas have “a certain force and logic”, which have been attractive to art historians.146 Around the turn of the 20th century many students of art history favoured the cultural historic writings of the Swiss historian of art and culture Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897). Burckhardt developed his ideas in the mid 1800s, at a time when there was a strong historical interest within German society, especially the middle, academic and intellectual classes.147 He adopted a broad view of history and what constituted a historical document, and considered history as a form of literature, as art, and used biographical and cultural historical methods, explaining art through history and social change. This cultural history tradition developed especially among the art historians who worked in museums, in Sweden represented in particular by the art historians working at Nordiska Museet.148 Another Swiss art historian, Heinrich Wölfflin, a student of Burckhardt, developed an alternative framework for integrating empirical, psychological and visual elements into an analysis of art. In doing this, Wölfflin moved beyond connoisseurship and the artist’s individuality, providing an account of the general changes in period styles. He presented his ideas in the successful publication Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe (1915), which described the progression from Renaissance to Baroque style. In his work, Wölfflin challenged the more literary, inclusive approach of Burckhardt. Even though Burckhardt also fostered formalist ideas, he was never as radical as Wölfflin, whose system is based on polarities in art and developed into a side-by-side comparison technique for images that is still relevant in the didactics of the discipline today. Wölfflin further argued “Not everything is possible at all times, and certain thoughts can only be thought at certain stages of the development.”149 Moreover, Wölfflin placed much emphasis on the way style and the history of styles were linked to the sense of place, assuming the presence of “a national type of imagination”, one “…that contains the bases of the whole world-picture of a people”.150 Wölfflin’s ideas influenced art history in Sweden.151 Some art historians would not only read his texts, but also visited his seminars in Berlin and brought his ideas back

home and promoted them in their roles as teachers and researchers.\textsuperscript{152} We will now look closer at how three Swedish art historians, Oscar Levertin, Andreas Lindblom and Henrik Cornell, related to these different approaches to style and art history.

Oscar Levertin (1862-1906) was well known as a writer and leader of the Swedish Romantic literary movement, but he has also been described as one of the most prominent art historians in Sweden and as the one who established academic research on Swedish 18\textsuperscript{th} century art.\textsuperscript{153} As a writer and researcher Levertin let the 18\textsuperscript{th} century inform his essays, fiction, dissertation and literary studies. In 1899 for example, he published \textit{Rococo-noveller}, a collection of stories and pastiches that recreated the world of King Gustav III’s court. Levertin’s interest in the Swedish 18\textsuperscript{th} century seems to have been established as a child, and he recalled fond memories of his visits to Nationalmuseum with his parents.\textsuperscript{154} He admired Gustav III, whom he described as an enlightened monarch and protector of the arts and sciences. According to Levertin, life after the death of the king in 1792 became grey and bourgeois.\textsuperscript{155} In addition, Levertin played an important role in changing the prejudices held against the rococo in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. He made numerous trips to Paris to study rococo artworks and he wrote his dissertation about the painter Niclas Lafrensen Jr. (1737-1807).\textsuperscript{156} Art historian Rune Didon refers to Levertin’s efforts as a “resurrection of the rococo”.\textsuperscript{157}

Levertin was educated at Uppsala University and was a pupil of the professor of literature Henrik Schück (1855-1947).\textsuperscript{158} From 1899 Levertin held a professorship in the history of literature at Stockholms Högskola (the Stockholm College of Higher Education), but he was also an art historian and taught art history. This combination of subjects was very common at the time as both subjects were taught within the same department. It was not until

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{152} Karlholm, D. Vetenskapens vardag. In \textit{8 kapitel om konsthistoriens historia i Sverige}, Johansson, B-I. and Pettersson (Hayden), H. (eds.) 93-118, Stockholm: Raster, 2000, p. 96-98
\item \textsuperscript{153} Lundberg, E. Konsthistorisk forskning i Sverige. \textit{Konsthistorisk tidskrift: revy för konst och konstforskning} 2, Konsthistoriska sällskapet, no. 3(1933):86-93, p. 87
\item \textsuperscript{154} Dackenberg, H. \textit{Oscar Levertin som konsthistoriker}, Univ. Diss. Umeå University, Umeå, 1994, p. 141
\item \textsuperscript{156} Levertin, O. \textit{Niclas Lafrensen d. y. och förbindelserna mellan svensk och fransk målarkonst på 1700-talet: konsthistorisk studie}, Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1899
\item \textsuperscript{157} Didon, R. \textit{Rokokon och dess måleri i det svenska 1800-talets ögon}. Univ. Diss. Stockholm university, Stockholm: Konstvetenskapliga inst., 1988, p. 121
\item \textsuperscript{158} Schück criticised the idealising and published a critical study of the king, \textit{Gustaf III En karaktärsstudie} in 1904. In the book he pointed out how Gustav III very consciously promoted himself, and how writers and others were not critical enough in their relation to the monarch. The main qualities that Levertin admired and that he described in several books were the king’s support and appreciation of art and theatre. e.g. Levertin O. \textit{Gustaf III som dramatisk författare. Litteraturhistorisk studie}, Stockholm: Bonnier. 1894, and Levertin O. \textit{Från Gustaf III:s dagar}. Stockholm: Bonnier, 1896.
\end{itemize}
1908 that literature and art history became separate, independent disciplines. Their development is further explained in chapter three. Levertin was interested in the way Swedish artists had been able to invite foreign influences and naturalise them, creating something perceived as characteristically Swedish in the process. The Swedish 18th century he saw as a combination of cosmopolitanism and nationalism, resulting in art and craft of high aesthetical quality.

Figure 8. The writer and historian of art and literature Oscar Levertin was a public figure and appeared frequently in the press. This photograph, published in Idun in 1900, shows Levertin and his wife Ebba Levertin in their drawing room, which in the article is referred to as “half Gustavian and at the same time modern”. The same drawing room can be seen in the background of Carl Larsson’s portrait of Levertin (1906). Photographer August Blomberg, and text written by the well-known writer and critic Hjalmar Söderberg (1869-1941). Idun no. 48, 1900, p. 768

Levertin has been an important role model, especially for the art historians who have considered a more subjective, emotional and experience-based approach. Together with other influential Swedish writers, such as Christoffer Eichhorn (1837-1889), Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895) and August Strindberg (1847-1912), he belonged to a group that wrote about art in a more literary style. Levertin regarded the artwork as an expression of the Zeitgeist, and he
made frequent comparisons with other artistic expressions, especially literature. He looked for the typical and was interested in identifying national characteristics. Undoubtedly, Levertin was also interested in the individual expression, but he was not sure that an art historian could describe this in an objective manner.

Personal experience and sensibility were important tools to Levertin, and he trusted his personal critical judgement and his sense of taste. Because of this he can be considered an aesthetician and a connoisseur who let his own experiences of different art works influence his writing. Moreover, Levertin regarded art and literature as the best way of trying to understand a historic human being. The idea was that the same great causal factors determined any cultural artefact at a given place and time. Heinrich Wölfflin and his students, on the other hand, wanted to write an independent art history, which focused on formalist qualities and did not depend on cultural history and biographies. Levertin was critical towards Wölfflin, and especially his claim that art history could be approached as an exact science, since Levertin argued that art is too much an individual expression. According to Levertin, an art historian needed both intuition and poetry to understand art and artists.

Still in the 1940s, writers could still be seen to relate either to Burckhardt’s literary, cultural historic approach promoted by Levertin, or the independent art history and formalist methodology of Wölfflin. For example, Andreas Lindblom museum director at Skansen and Nordiska Museet was directly influenced by Levertin’s literary style of writing, a style, characterised by its spirituality and lyrical qualities. Lindblom’s language in the third volume (1946) of his series about Swedish art history was described as vivid (“levande”) and characterised as an example of the joy of research and telling stories (“forskarglädje och berättarglädje”). In an obituary in 1977, the professor of art history Sten Karling (1906-1987) described Lindblom’s scholarship as a mix of the literary quality of older art historians and a concreteness and accurateness of a developed connoisseurship. Lindblom’s literary style was generally positively acclaimed, but it was sometimes

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159 Dackenberg, H. Oscar Levertin som konsthistoriker. Univ. Diss. Umeå University, Umeå, 1994, p. 221-223
160 Although he was sceptical towards the French critic, historian and professor of aesthetics and of the history of art Hippolyte Taine’s positivist view on history, Levertin was inspired by Taine’s faith in the ability of art and literature to show social and historic connections, and was influenced by his theories on three great conditioning facts: race, environment and moment. Dackenberg, H., 1994, p. 201
161 Ibid., 1994, p. 204
commented on in a slightly condescending way. Johnny Roosval (1879-1965) claimed in a review of his textbook on Swedish art history that Lindblom “tells his readers fairy tales while in secret he fills his readers with a good portion of information about the art of the Swedish people”. Lindblom’s way of writing contextualises the Gustavian style and numerous parallels are drawn between for example interior decoration, art, literature and politics. Moreover, his opinions and personal impressions are clear to the reader, who is left to agree or disagree with the writer.

Was style primarily a question of formal analysis or does “every true style have a deep psychological meaning”, as Axel Gauffin (1877-1964) claimed in Svensk konsthistoria in 1913 or has it been emptied of almost any content as Henrik Cornell (1890-1981) claimed in Karakteriseringsproblemet i konstvetenskapen in 1928? In his book Cornell explored the different methods available to art historians. He aimed for an independent art history and wanted to base all art history research on scientific methods, devoid of intuition, improvisation and unsystematic approaches. Further, Cornell insisted on a practical terminology, and felt the necessity to develop an art historical language for scientifically based analysis. Cornell also incorporated the senses as important for the analysis of art, and there would follow a number of art historians that explored multidisciplinary methods and developed different aspects such as psychology and sociology. One of the main objections against Wölfflin’s methodology was that formal analysis couldn’t eliminate subjectivity, and therefore shouldn’t claim it did. The critics of a strict formalist approach argued that subjectivity always influenced the way a style is described and given certain characteristics.

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The fact that style was still a concept that engaged even the more outspoken modernists becomes clear in Gregor Paulsson’s (1889-1977) first lecture as new professor of art history at Uppsala University in 1935. In the lecture he spoke about the concept of style and that it needed contextualisation. He had just left the position as director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, where he had helped initiate the 1917 *Home Exhibition* as well as the 1930 *Stockholm Exhibition*. He concluded in the lecture that style had so far been of great importance: however, style could no longer be the only concept of art history since it separated art from culture and society. In 1943, Paulsson elaborated on the subject in *Konsthistoriens föremål*, and professed that once the external facts, for example date, authenticity, function and style, about the object were established, the work of the art historian starts for real.

The discussions about subjectivity and objectivity, the value of personal experience and the concept of style seem to suggest that style is caught somewhere in a motion between formalism and feeling, material and immaterial, art history and cultural history. The textbooks analysed in this study reflect this movement, and this chapter will show how it has affected the way the Gustavian style has been presented and valued. However, we will continue by taking one step back, because in order to describe and identify what could be included in a Swedish art history you first need to identify, select, document and collect. This must be done in order to create a material on which you can base your research.

### 2.2 The Survey – A Scientific Campaign

The surveys that were conducted by museums and university departments around the turn of the 20th century were imperative tools that provided a reference material that could be scientifically analysed. The large body of reference material was invaluable when determining the style and date of objects. Placing objects in a historical sequence became vital for analysis, as it enabled the art historian to place it in relationship to other objects and understand their context. The surveys and museum collections were also essential in enabling stylistic comparisons based on formal characteristics that could help date anonymous objects.

Many art historians participated in large surveys across Sweden. These surveys were to begin with influenced by the National Romantic Movement, which fostered a strong interest in documenting and preserving Swedish art and architecture. But in order to be useful to the new discipline the surveys

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170 Paulsson G. *Konsthistoriens föremål*. Uppsala universitets årsskrift, 1943, p. 6-7
needed to meet scientific requirements, and include for example careful measurements and photographic reproductions. These were skills that had to be taught to future art historians, and eventually excursions became a permanent feature in the education offered at the universities. The method of typologising a large body of inventory material was already standard practice in archaeological and ethnological surveys, where the work generally focused on geographical regions and was often published by local editors.\footnote{Karlsmo, E. and Löfgren, E. Historiography of Swedish building types. \textit{Konsthistorisk tidskrift} 85, no. 1(2016):8-28, p. 12}

In the introduction of \textit{Svensk konsthistoria} (1913), the editors Johnny Roosval and Axel L. Romdahl described the lack of available reference materials. They found that this lack prevented researchers from painting an exhaustive picture of different periods in Swedish art history. Publications about Swedish castles and manor houses did exist in 1913; however, these were generally not the stricter academic surveys that Roosval and Romdahl requested, rather these publications appealed to a more general reader. The brother of Johnny Roosval, Albin Roosval (1860-1943), was the editor of one of these more popularised surveys, the series \textit{Svenska slott och herresäten} (Castles and Manor Houses in Sweden). \textit{Svenska slott och herresäten vid 1900-talets början}, was published in 1908-1915, 1918-23, and \textit{Svenska slott och herresäten} in 1930-33.\footnote{Albin Roosval was a photographer and very interested in the medium, he was also the editor of \textit{Fotografisk tidskrift} and wrote books about architecture, interior design and Swedish kings and the court. Moreover he edited and wrote in numerous journals about photography, theatre, art and design.} These books were published at a time when many estates went through changes that would significantly alter their management and upkeep, and the series set out to document these sites before these changes became too substantial.\footnote{A later edition was published in 1966-1971 by Allhems förlag. This edition is still used as a reference work. The series is analysed in Rebecka Millhagen Adelswärd’s article “More than meets the eye. ‘Castles and manor houses in Sweden’ revisited”, in \textit{Konsthistorisk tidskrift} 85, no. 1(2016):97-108. Millhagen Adelswärd concludes that even though the character had changed from the earlier series, with less focus on the owners, the descriptions were often too general and might work against a more in-depth historical understanding and identification of more complex networks.} The series was published at a quick pace, with the information focusing on the past and present owners rather than architectural analysis. The estates were portrayed as private homes and the owners were introduced, and photographed, along with their estate. Thus the sites became symbols of aristocratic virtues rather than important historic buildings and architectural monuments.\footnote{Millhagen Adelswärd, R. 2016, p. 104-105}

Surveys that were aimed at a more scientific readership included for example \textit{Sveriges kyrkor} (Churches of Sweden – Art historical inventory), a project initiated by Sigurd Curman and Johnny Roosval. It was a huge undertaking, and according to the art historian and museum curator Johan Kruse it needed youth and enthusiasm as well as deep knowledge, a talent for organisation
and energy to succeed. Kruse was nonetheless convinced that they would succeed, as the project sent out numerous art historians and architects on scientific crusades to churches that were to be measured and carefully searched. Similar surveys became the mission for numerous art historians at the beginning of the century. University studies in the newly established discipline of art history involved excursions and fieldwork, which gave the students the opportunity to practise the necessary skills and provided material for research. The surveys encouraged art historical research and they also helped create social bonds among art historians. I would suggest, based on my reading of memoirs and reports from excursions and surveys, that art history excursions fulfilled much the same functions as ethnological fieldwork or the archaeological excavations described by the archaeologist Ingrid Berg in her dissertation *Kalaureia 1894: A Cultural History of the First Swedish Excavation in Greece* (2016) – as an identity-making practice, as a nationalist practice and as a heritage making practice. The art historian and museum director Andreas Lindblom has described in his memoirs how the excursions he took part in as a student were criticised by the more conservative university teachers who preferred to remain in the lecture theatre. But the students who joined the excursions felt happy and privileged, considering themselves part of “...the smart set in the international realm of beauty”, according to Lindblom.

The museums were in great need of people who could document and research their collections and many art historians became responsible for this extensive work. The work at the museums resulted in numerous exhibitions and publications about specific periods, collections and materials. These publications, but also the experience that art historians gained working with surveys and collections, were used in research and would eventually end up in textbooks and other publications. This also included the photographic documentation of museum collections and heritage sites, from which repro-

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177 The important role surveys and excursions played in the education of art historians is emphasised by Sigurd Wallin in the article Översikter och granskningar. *Rig: Föreningens för svensk kulturhistoria tidsskrift* 43, Stockholm: Svenska teknologföreningens förlag, no. 2(1960):37-62, p. 39-40


179 “Men vi kände oss lyckliga och privilegerade, vi ansåg oss tillhöriga den smarta set i Skönhetens internationella rike” Andreas Lindblom studied together with e.g. Erik Wettergren and Sigurd Wallin. Lindblom, A. *De gyllene åren*. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1952, p. 34
ductions were used as illustrations in textbooks, for example. In this sense, what quite literally became “Swedish art history” in the textbooks described in this chapter was largely dictated by what was documented in surveys and photographed in museum collections, and most of this work was carried out during the first half of the 20th century.

2.2.1 Svea Rike (1931)

Nordiska Museet has been one of the main actors to conduct surveys of cultural history in Sweden. Most of the surveys were based in the field of ethnology; however, many were also relevant to and conducted by art historians. The surveys were often motivated by an acute sense that there were places and objects that had to be documented and collected before they were lost to modern life. Thus the surveys became part of saving or at least documenting Sweden’s cultural history for the Swedish people. The most common surveys were building surveys of farm buildings, vicarages and manors - a practice that developed at the museum as early as the 1880s. Art historians connected to the museum, for example Arvid Baeckström (1881-1964), Sigurd Erixon (1888-1968), Erik Lundberg (1895-1969), Gustaf Upmark Jr. (1875-1928), Gösta Selling (1900-1996) and Sigurd Wallin (1882-1968), carried out some of the most ambitious surveys.

In 1931 Nordiska Museet participated in the exhibition Svea Rike. The exhibition had been part of the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition, but it remained open the following year and Nordiska’s contribution was a new addition in 1931. Svea Rike was organised by a committee representing the Gustaf Adolf Foundation, and there were hopes that the exhibition would generate money for the foundation. A guidebook was printed and sold at the exhibition. The guidebook described the aims behind Svea Rike, which were to show the visitor how the country had reached its present favourable position and how it could develop further, that is if the Swedish people used their spiritual and material resources wisely. The text also emphasized that the information in the exhibition was based on statistical data and that this data was processed and presented in educational, scientifically exact, but also artistic presentations. The statistical facts had been collected from numerous sources and were presented in an effective and striking way. Photography had a prominent position in the presentations, adhering to the aesthetical ideals of the

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180 “Kring allt detta grupperar sig slutligen en samling bilder av svenska städer, herrgårdar, prästgårdar och bondgårdar, idylliska och typiska exponenter för en kulturbryggelse, som sjunger på sista versen och som Nordiska museet med aldrig svikande energi gått in för att åtminstone i bild bevara under fältropet ‘Rädda Sveriges kulturhistoria åt svenska folket’.” Anon. Svensk kulturhistorias riksarkiv på Svea Rike. Svenska Dagbladet, 26.05.1931

181 The fund was established to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the National Heritage Board and support the preservation of Swedish cultural heritage.

182 Vägledning genom Svea Rike 1931. Stockholm: Thule, 1931, p. 9
Straight photography movement. The large photographic prints and statistics were combined with a “common thread”, a text written by Ludvig Nordström (1882-1942) that conveyed a more emotional message. The Swedish people and their history were presented by Nordström as a resource, comparable to the natural resources that were meant to build the wealth of the country. History was used to show the way forwards towards a bright future and a new Swedish identity.\footnote{Alzén, A. Framtidstro i Svea Rike. In Museer och framtidstro. Palmqvist, L. and Beckman S. (eds.) 11-46. Stockholm: Carlsson, 2003. pp. 26-27}

Figure 9. Svea Rike was first exhibited during the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930 and the following year the exhibition was reopened featuring Nordiska Museet’s additional display about the survey work done at the museum. The text highlights the importance of modern equipment such as motor vehicles, cameras, film camera and measuring instruments. The exhibition architect was David Blomberg. Courtesy: Nordiska Museet

Nordiska Museet’s display was named Den svenska kulturhistoriens riksarkiv (The national archives of Swedish cultural history) and it was produced by Sigurd Wallin, Sigurd Erixon and Avdelningen för de högre stånden. Other organisations and institutions that took part in the exhibition were Svenska
Turistföreningen, Statens Historiska Museum, Diakoni-styrelsen, Sjöfartsmuseet, Tekniska Museet and Statens Institut för rasbiologi (The Institute of Racial Biology). The texts and illustrations were mounted on big screens. The text emphasised the importance of supporting the documentation of the old traditional culture that was “falling to pieces”, however it was a “race against motorisation and death” (see illustration above). The museums could only win the race with the help of modern technology, such as automobiles, cameras, film cameras and instruments of measurement and organisation. Statens Institut för rasbiologi in Uppsala also exhibited their work; their display included a presentation of professor Herman Lundborg’s (1868-1943) work. Lundborg and his assistants created photographic documents and surveys of the Swedish population, most notably the Sami people from 1922 until 1935 when Lundborg retired.184 This part of the display showed the Swedish people divided into different races and openly expressed racist views. Although they were motivated by very different ideologies the two displays were based on surveys that shared some technical and visual characteristics; for example their use of modern technology, photographic documentation and exact measurements, which made it easier for the researcher to compare and categorise a huge body of material.

Of course it has only been possible to show a limited selection of pictures in the exhibition, but still they give us a good idea of how systematically all the forces available to the museum proceed in their work in the field with camera, film and measuring instruments.185

Nordiska Museet’s systematic documentation of Sweden was presented as a way to preserve knowledge about the past whilst modernism ruthlessly swept across the country. *Svea Rike* was a manifestation of trust in technological progress combined with a faith in a new Swedish identity built on the belief in a shared history and a bright future.186 Art historians were one of the professional groups that became part of this utopic vision for Sweden.

### 2.2.2 Documenting the Manor House

Gösta Selling’s (1900-1996) dissertation in art history, *Svenska herrgårdshem under 1700-talet* is still one of the best-known studies of Swedish manor houses and has had a direct influence on the mediations of the Gustavian

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184 Many of the photographs were included in *Svensk raskunskap* (1927). The collection of photographs are kept in the collections of Uppsala University Library.
185 “Naturligtvis är det endast ett ringa urval bilder, som man kunnat exponera på utställningen, men de ge i alla fall en god föreställning om hur systematiskt alla de krafter, som stå museet till buds, gå till väga i sitt arbete i fältet med kamera, film och mätinstrument.” Anon. Svensk kulturhistorias riksarkiv på Svea Rike. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 26.05.1931
style. Albert Bonniers Förlag first published it in 1937, and then Rekolid published it as a facsimile in 1991. The study was based on an extensive survey of manor houses in the region of Sörmland. Sigurd Wallin at Nordiska Museet supervised the survey in collaboration with Riksarkivet (the Swedish National Archives).

Selling defended the dissertation at Stockholm Högskola in front of the three opponents. The first opponent was the professor at the Royal Academy of Art, Martin Olsson (1886-1981), who gave a two hour-long critique, mainly positive. Then, after a break, the architectural historian Erik Lundberg focused his critique on the architectural plans and the last opponent was journalist and art- and cultural historian Gustaf Näsström (1899-1979) who, according to the journalist, commented entertainingly on the text. In the audience were the art and architectural historians Johnny Roosval, Elias Cornell (1916-2008), Andreas Lindblom, Gregor Paulsson and Carl G. Laurin (1868-1940). Selling’s dissertation quickly became a reference book for art historians, conservators and museum curators for many years to come. Moreover, in 1937 it was advertised as a lavishly illustrated and charming gift book, perhaps not the most common description of an academic dissertation.

The dissertation became part of Selling’s successful career in museums and as the director general of Riksantikvarieämbetet (the National Heritage Board). During his studies at Stockholm Högskola he took part in several surveys of museum collections, villages in the countryside and later the city of Stockholm. Selling started working as an amanuensis at Nordiska Museet and Skansen in 1923. He became part of the museum’s survey of manor houses. Moreover, he assisted in the planning of Skansen and the inclusion of Skogaholm. In 1928 he published his first work about manor houses in Stockholm Säterier och gamla gårdar i Stockholmstrakten. The book was republished in 1977 with new photographs taken by the author. In 1932-37 he worked as the director of the department of the privileged classes at Nordiska Museet. He worked as the director of Stockholms Stadsmuseum (Stockholm City Museum) in 1937-60. Selling was interested in museum education and the education of museum workers and helped develop a professional course for museum staff that started in the 1950s. In 1960 he was appointed director general of the National Heritage Board. Selling published extensively and contributed greatly to the research about 18th century...

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190 In Sweden the title amanuensis (amanuensis) is primarily used for a civil servant at archives or museums.
architecture, and in one of the obituaries published in 1996 the writer and critic Per Wästberg described Selling as an “affable Gustavian”.

What did Selling do in his book? In a systematic and well-structured manner he described manor houses in the regions Sörmland and Närke. He used artwork, plans, measured drawings and photographs that he took himself to illustrate the text. The survey was divided into chapters according to style: the karolinska (baroque) tradition, rococo architecture, the early Gustavian style and breakthrough, the late Gustavian style and the final chapter, the representative home. The concept of style is based on an identification of change and difference, along a linear chronology. In the book certain elements and

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certain characteristics and their various combinations are identified. The idea is that style is modified as these characteristics changes – which means that a development over time might be established. However, in Selling’s study we can see that it was not only form and aesthetic but also use and activity that were of interest and this approach highlights a more general adjustment in focus within the discipline of art history at the time. Instead of focusing only on style, he emphasised the practical and technical aspects of the buildings, acknowledging not only the architects but also the contractor and craftsmen. One of the results that he was able to point out in his study was the important role that architects and artists from Stockholm played in the development of these countryside estates.

When the facsimile was published in 1991, the editor of Form, Ulf Beckman (1942-2010) described it as a restful book, a well-written story of the birth of our interior decoration in which you can find and understand the origins of Sweden’s style renown. Thus implicitly tracing it back to the 18th century. In her review of the facsimile, the architectural historian Eva Eriksson reminded the reader that we still live with the Gustavian tradition, as it regularly comes back, even during functionalism and also during the previous decades. She suggested that in this tradition we could find an inevitable core in our cultural heritage. Selling’s study shows how important surveys were to academic research as well as museum and building conservation practice. Moreover, it is an example of how important the use of photography was in this context, as documentation, material for research and as reproductions in order to illustrate and strengthen your argument.

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193 “en mycket vilsam bok att finna och förstå ursprunget till vår stilberömmelse i och en välskriven berättelse om vår inredningskonst födde.” Beckman U. Trendens rötter. Form, no. 2(1992):15
Figure 11. Erstavik. Selling placed architectural drawings next to the photograph to be able to make comparisons in the caption. Here he compares a room at Erstavik with the drawing made by Jean Eric Rehn. We learn that the use of the room has changed, as well as the wall colour and perhaps there was a fireplace rather than a tiled stove as the drawing suggests. Selling, G. Svenska herrgårdshem under 1700-talet: arkitektur och inredning 1700-1780. (Facs. ed.) Stockholm: Rekolid, 1991, p. 207
2.3 Illustrating Style

Since the invention of photography it has been part of the advancement of the discipline of art history. The medium has helped art historians become familiar with a wider range of art, and reproductions have facilitated comparison and analysis. One might argue that photographs have been considered the “silent intermediaries” of art history. In 1947 André Malraux concluded that for the last hundred years “...art history has been the history of that which can be photographed.” Photographs and the illustrated art book made art accessible to art historians and the general public and made comparisons between artworks from all over the world possible. In this sense photography played a part in developing a new way of looking at and analysing art. Malraux referred to the art book as le musée imaginaire, a museum without walls.

The technical ability to reproduce illustrations in books and journals changed dramatically in the period studied. Today, illustrations are easily accessible and reproductions are generally of high quality. In the first half of the 20th century, on the other hand, illustrations were expensive and often of poor quality. This meant that some images that met the requirements were used over and over in publications about the Gustavian style. In the analysis of the illustrations used in the eight textbooks, I scrutinise what illustrations were used, their characteristics and role in the books, but also who made them and in what context. The aspect of intertextuality is also of vital importance when determining the consequences of the agency held by these illustrations. Danish art historian Hans Dam Christensen has claimed that there used to be a more developed critique of reproductions used by art historians, perhaps because of the more apparent flaws in the reproductive techniques in the past, but that there is now a lack of reflection. He concludes that the profession has developed a multifaceted discursive system “...in order to veil the dislocation of the art object.”

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197 Malraux, A. 1953/1990, p. 16
199 “Överhuvud taget kan man väl knappast tänka sig något tacksammare reproduktionsmaterial än konsthanterverk från 1700-talet, men trycket gör dock knappast rättvisa åt de utsöktas sakerna.” Stavenow, Å. Gustaviansk stil i Nordiska Museets serie av stilböcker. Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift. no. 3(1926):5
The different objects and styles were subjected to the same mode of representation, where the white backdrop and the mug shot protocol were vital ingredients. The neutral white background, where the shape of the object was emphasised, was also used in commercial photography and shop displays, especially in the period 1930s-1950s. Märta Claréus in the studio at Nordiska Museet in 1939. Courtesy: Nordiska museet

Before the photographic print became more widely available there were a variety of reprographic processes, and in the early textbooks a mix of techniques was represented. Even if photographs considerably extended the visible resources available to art historians up until the 1910s-20s reproduced photographic documentation was rare and often of bad quality. Because of this the photographic study collections available to students at the different departments of art history were very important for both research, education and for attracting students. In his memoirs, De gyllene åren (1952), Andreas Lindblom referred to the camera and image archives as the most important...
Instruments for art historians. Many of the photographs in these study collections were bought by the teachers on study trips and generated within the museums or in surveys conducted by different institutions. The study of photographic collections was complemented with study trips and excursions, enthusiastically promoted by teachers such as e.g. Johnny Roosval.

Photographs were also instrumental to museum work and were the result of practices and processes belonging in the museum; they helped manage and display collections, and they were the documentary evidence of objects, events and displays. Moreover, they were produced for marketing and commercial purposes. The practice of photography is still vital to museums and “forms a crucial museum ecosystem”, yet they have been little discussed and the practice remains largely invisible. Digitalisation of collections during the past two decades has to some extent opened up a discussion, but it is still mainly a discussion about documentation rather than a critical engagement with the effect these analogue photographs have and the practices they entail. The professor of photographic history Elizabeth Edward and the professor of art history Sigrid Lien have referred to this as a “museological lacuna” in their anthology Uncertain Images: Museums and the Work of Photographs.

2.3.1 Photographing the Collections

Looking at textbooks, most of the time the photographers are anonymous to the reader since the images were owned by, and listed according to different institutions, which often also owned the objects portrayed. Still, some of the photographers can be identified and several of them return in numerous publications on art history, for example Märta Claréus (1907-2001) employed by Nordiska Museet. Larger museums, such as Nordiska Museet and Nationalmuseum often had a specific department working with photographic documentation of objects and exhibitions as well as the production of publications with high quality illustrations. These publications could be in-house productions or long-term collaborations with external actors. For many years, Nordiska Museet worked together with the publishing company Nordisk Rotogravyr, which was known for their high quality printing and illustrations. Andreas Lindblom’s textbooks are examples of this collaboration. We will now look closer at Sigurd Wallin’s three volumes, Nordiska

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204 Apart from museum institutions the list of illustrations included institutions such as Svenska Turistföreningen, the authors themselves and auction houses. In Svensk konsthistoria (1986) and Den gustavianska konsten (1998) two auction houses are included in the list of illustrations.
museets möbler från svenska herremanshem, which acted as a catalogue of the museum’s collection of furniture of the privileged classes. It was first published by Nordiska Museets förlag in 1931-35 and then reprinted in 1979. The second volume focused on the 18th century and was printed in 1933. The illustrations in these volumes have been reproduced in numerous publications and have been vital to the mediation of Gustavian style.

When Sigurd Wallin’s first book in the series was published in 1931 it was considered modern in comparison to Gustaf Upmark’s presentation of the collection from 1912, which was apprehended as a textbook about the history of styles. Wallin’s book on the other hand was considered radical since he focused on the objects and the craft rather than style or the social and cultural context.205 Another difference was that Upmark focused more on single pieces of furniture, while Wallin published series of objects, and ten photographs sometimes illustrated one object. I would argue that this cavalcade of single pieces of furniture emphasised the objects’ importance as part of an evolutionary progress, a style. When the photographs were placed next to each other we could see “...their proximity and unbroken sequence – which bring a style to life, much as an accelerated film makes a plan live before our eyes.”206 The furniture, or rather the photographs of them, the silent intermediaries, have turned into immutable mobiles as they keep some of their relations intact and as they are placed in an order that strengthens the arguments behind the style to which they produce a circulating reference.207

Wallin had joined Nordiska Museet in the 1910s and held the position as curator of Avdelningen för de högre stånden (the department of the privileged classes) for 23 years, from 1924-1947. He was an educated art historian and published extensively on the collections he worked with.208 Wallin considered it to be of vital importance to study the objects in their original context and organised extensive surveys of castles and manor houses, rectories, and regional cities. He was involved in the refurbishing of Skogaholm manor house at Skansen.209 Apart from Nordiska Museet, Wallin also worked at Kungl. Husgerådskammaren (the Royal Collections) and Stockholm Högskola and initiated Linnémuseet (the Linnaeus Museum) in Uppsala. He has

205 The pseudonym H.R. could be the arthistorian and publicist Hans Rabén who wrote the occasional text in Form in the 1930s. “H.R.” Ett stäldt möbelverk. *Form*, no. 8(1932):74, 78, p. 74
208 Sigurd Wallin was the editor of *Svenska kulturbilder* 1929-1932, 1934-38 together with Sigurd Erixon.
209 Skogaholm was added to the museum when Andreas Lindblom was the director of Skansen and Nordiska Museet (1929-55). Lindblom had a keen interest in the 18th century. Nationalmuseum also manages historic house museums that are open to the public. In collaboration with The Royal Collections department, the museum administrates the collections belonging to the royal castles. Moreover, the museum manages collections at some estates, for example the old ironworks at Lövstabruk, the manor house Nynäs Slott and Gustavsbergs Porslinsmuseum.
been referred to as “the last Gustavian” and specialised in the late 18th century.\textsuperscript{210}

Figure 13. Märta Claréus’ photographs, taken in the studios of Nordiska Museet, were much appreciated by the critics who reviewed the series Nordiska Museets möbler från svenska herremanshem I-III published in 1931-1935. Printed by Nordisk Rotogravyr. The photo of the chair in the upper left corner was one of several photographs that were reused in e.g. Andreas Lindblom’s Sveriges konsthistoria: från forntid till nutid (1946). Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshem (1933/1979), p. 191.

In the books about the furniture collections at Nordiska Museet, Wallin first offered a short introduction, and then followed a catalogue with short texts about each object, which were illustrated by one to three photographs. Each object is assigned an inventory and a provenance or maker as well as measurements. The photographs were black and white and taken in the photographic studios of Nordiska Museet by Märta Claréus. Märta Claréus was trained as a portrait photographer and started at the museum in 1927.\textsuperscript{211} Wallin is said to have been very careful with the quality of the photographs,


\textsuperscript{211} “Rita”. Bilden som bevarar. Svenska Dagbladet, 14.06.1963
and he preferred the neutral backdrop and the mug-shot protocol – placing the objects en face and from the side.\textsuperscript{212} Photographs on site, he argued could on the other hand be more atmospheric with a soft light. Wallin’s attention to detail and Claréus’ skilfulness were acknowledged in the reviews of the series. The critic “H.R.”, probably the publisher Hans Rabén (1905-1988), argued in \textit{Form} that the photographs in Wallin’s book were almost better than the originals if you wanted to study the execution of each object.\textsuperscript{213} The journalist Sven Jansson at \textit{Dagens Nyheter} praised Claréus and the graphic designer Anders Billow (1890-1964), and referred to the illustrations in the book as a delight for the eye and extraordinarily beautiful, and was of the opinion that they made times past come to life.\textsuperscript{214} The critic Gotthard Johansson (1891-1968) agreed with this judgement.

These illustrations are absolutely brilliant. The museum’s own photographers are the ones who should be honoured for the originals. Most of them have been made by Mrs Märta Claréus who should be given special praise for extraordinarily sensitive and meticulous work. But the reproductions are also in a class of their own. Much credit should be given to ‘Nordisk Rotogravyr’ who printed the book. I have hardly ever seen such excellent reproductions, at once rich and distinct.\textsuperscript{215}

\textit{Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshöm} reached readers with quite different types of interests in the Gustavian period. Åke Stavenow (1898-1971), then curator at Nationalmuseum, advertised Wallin’s books in \textit{Möbelvärdén} (1932), promoting the value the books would have to furniture makers.\textsuperscript{216} Still, Stavenow supported the functionalist movement and did not want any copies of old museum objects, rather he hoped that the detailed photographs and descriptions would inspire them to increase the quality of their production. Other readers included for example the commercial auction houses, art historians and colleagues in the museum world. The illustrations used in these volumes have been reused in numerous publications, including some of the textbooks on Swedish art history, e.g. Lindblom (1946) and Alm (1998).

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{213} “H.R.”, Ett ståtligt möbelverk. \textit{Form}, no. 8(1932):74, 78, p. 78
  \item \textsuperscript{214} “ögonfröjd”, “förunderligt vackra”, “Sv. J-n.”. (most likely the journalist Sven Jansson) Möbler från fyra århundraden. \textit{Dagens Nyheter}, 04.03.1935
  \item \textsuperscript{216} Stavenow, Å. Nordiska museets möbler. \textit{Möbelvärdén}, no. 1(1932):11
\end{itemize}
2.4 Eight Textbooks About Swedish Art History

The formation of Swedish art history concerning the 18th century is now about to become so comprehensive that it is possible to enter the house and have a look at what it is like.\(^{217}\)

In 1945, the professor of art history, Johnny Roosval concluded, in an article on 18th century painting, that the 18th century had been researched for almost 100 years, its virtues and geniuses had been discovered and illuminated by art historians and museums. It was now possible to “enter the house and have a look at what it is like”. Admittedly, about 20% of the dissertations produced at Swedish universities in 1857-1949 covered some aspect of art or architecture from the 18th century.\(^{218}\) However, it is possible to detect a decline in academic interest in the second half of the 20th century. In the period 1950-1999, only 13% of the dissertations covered some aspect of the 18th century.\(^{219}\) Still, this decline in academic interest doesn’t imply that there was less popular interest in the period or fewer exhibitions. Moreover, many of those who wrote their dissertations about other subject matters would later contribute to the field of 18th century studies, and in 1999 the professor of art history Anders Åman identified a return to more classical subjects, among them the 18th century.\(^{220}\) Old subjects were researched based on new values and material, although with a well-known empirical perspective. These and other changes in the discipline of art history in the 20th century becomes clear when looking at how the eight textbooks describe the Gustavian style. These changes are subject to the first analysis, then follows a closer analysis of how the Gustavian style is described and illustrated.


\(^{218}\) The numbers are based on a list of all dissertations in art history in Sweden until 1999 published in Johansson, B-I. and Pettersson (Hayden), H. (eds.) *8 kapitel om konsthistoriens historia i Sverige*, Stockholm: Raster, 2000, pp. 224-247

\(^{219}\) The decline was probably a direct consequence of new art history and changes in the academic subject in the 1970s, one of the consequences of which was an increasing number of dissertations that dealt with contemporary art.

2.4.1 Svensk konsthistoria (1913)

The production of textbooks and exhibition catalogues is often a collaborative work where different attitudes and perspectives need to be coordinated. *Svensk konsthistoria*, published in 1913, is an early example of a larger collaborative work among professional art historians. In his review of the textbook, the art historian Carl David Moselius (1890-1968) described the collaboration as necessary since art history was such a new academic discipline.\(^{221}\) The project involved eleven, mostly younger, art historians. It consisted of 612 pages and the chapters were sold separately and could be put together to form a book. Aktiebolaget Ljus published books on popular science and textbooks from 1900 until 1914 when it was incorporated into the larger publishing company P. A. Norstedt & Söner. Oscar Levertin, Georg Nordensvan (1855-1932) and August Strindberg were among their regular writers.

In an advert for the book, published in *Svenska Dagbladet* in April 1913, the publisher promised that the texts would offer the reader the most recent results available in research.\(^{222}\) It is important to remember that only five years earlier art history had become an independent academic discipline. However, the sheer weight of the book and the large number of expert writers must have contributed to the publication’s feeling of authority. The large number of different voices also gave the volume the characteristics of an anthology, where different approaches to the subject are easily discerned. The future museum director Axel L. Romdahl and future professor of art history Johnny Roosval acted as editors. The other writers included Sigurd Curman (1879-1966), Axel Gauffin, Georg Göthe (1846-1933), August Hahr (1868-1947), Georg Nordensvan, Otto Rydbeck (1872-1954), Nils Sjöberg (1871-1914), Carl R. af Ugglas (1884-1944) and Gustaf Upmark Jr. Most of the writers had, or were about to have, successful careers as museum directors, professors or art critics.

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“Den konsthistoria som nu lägges fram är i sitt material upptäckt och skapad, kan man säga, under loppet af tio, femton år, ur en ringa början gjord af en äldre generation. Allt detta ger af sig själft formen på den nya konsthistorien, som består af en serie monografiar öfver olika konstgrupper, skrifa af de unga fackmän som just genomforskat och klarlagt dessa områden.”

“A. B-ä.” Ny svensk konstlitteratur. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 27.03.1913

\(^{222}\) Advertising for the book *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913) published in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 04.04.1913
Figure 14. Svensk konsthistoria – Swedish Art History published in 1913 was a collaborative work involving eleven writers active as art historians in museums and universities. The publisher Aktiebolaget Ljus focused on popular science and textbooks.
The eleven writers in *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913) were representative of the typical Swedish art historian at the beginning of the 20th century. The majority had a doctoral degree and had studied or worked at Uppsala University. They belonged to a generation of art historians who mainly focused on comparative analysis of art, with the aim of mapping the development and context of Swedish art history. Several of them also spent a considerable amount of their careers conducting surveys of country houses, churches and urban architecture. For a long time the great majority of art historians were men. In 1933 when Erik Lundberg made a summary of Swedish art history research he mentioned almost seventy different men but only three women. Moreover, art history practice for a long time worked to reproduce idealised stereotypes of bourgeois masculinity, simply leaving women out of history and out of leading positions in academia or museum hierarchies. The women were offered the role of assistants to the male art historians, helping them with illustrations, proofreading or fieldwork, a situation which illustrates the way men dominated both the museum world and the academic world at the time. This gendered situation also applied to the social networks that existed within departments at museums and universities, journals and societies. Most of the art historians lived in larger cities such as Stockholm, Uppsala, Gothenburg and Lund, and worked at a university or a museum. Consequently, many of them knew each other, they studied together, worked together on restorations or exhibitions, or they belonged to the same societies, e.g. Konsthistoriska sällskapet, Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Utile Dulci etc. Several of these societies had strong links with the royal family, as did the museums. Being part of these networks usually also meant that you subscribed to certain scientific, social and ideological principles.

The book *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913) covers about 1000 years of Swedish art history, from rune stones to contemporary artists around the turn of the 20th century. Three of the chapters of *Svensk konsthistoria* describe the 18th century; *Frihetstidens och gustavianska tidens måleri* (Axel Gauffin), *Skulpturen under 1700-talet. Tobias Sergel* (Georg Göthe) and *Den gustavianska tidens och 1800-talets byggnadskonst* (Sigurd Curman). These chapters dealt with painting, sculpture and architecture respectively. None of the chapters focus on interiors, so the reader is mainly left to linger outside the buildings, admiring their exterior. This does not however imply that the Gustavian interiors were not appreciated. Curman for example describes them as the most perfect creation, an inheritance from the aristocratic culture of the past that luckily was well preserved.

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In the introduction attention is paid to economic, social and political factors that have influenced art. The importance of Swedish poverty was pointed out as having a decisive effect on art and architecture. However, these factors should not be considered of central relevance for an art historian according to the editors. Rather, this should be the responsibility of historians or cultural historians. We will see in the following chapter how the division of responsibility was also reflected in the work done in the museums. Instead, the art historian should be focused on the taste and sense of beauty of the Swedish people, which is a statement that confirms the editors’ more systematic and formalistic approach to the subject. However, the attitude differed among the individual writers included in the book, and both Göthe and Gauffin were clearly influenced by Oscar Levertin with the critic Moselius duly noting that they maintained a connoisseur’s attitude throughout their texts. About 25 years later the editors, Roosval and Romdahl, but this time separately, published new books on general Swedish art history (1935 and 1943). By then, Roosval and Romdahl, were both enjoying successful careers as art historians.

The text was coloured by the National Romantic Movement where art was seen as part of a Swedish national heritage – “odlingsarv”. National characteristics, or nationell egenart, are a focus throughout the book, although not because the authors denied international influences. On the contrary, such influences were considered of vital importance in fully understanding Swedish art history. Advertising for the book described it as the first attempt to portray the history of the art and artists that lived within the borders of Sweden. Romdahl stated in the introduction that the book could be regarded as an attempt at defining what Swedish art history may consist of. He outlined Swedish art as something that lives within the borders of the country, native or foreign hands can practice it, and despite all influences and imported masters it should rightly be considered Swedish and part of our national heritage.

227 Both books were published by Svenska bokförlaget, which was jointly owned by Bonniers and Norstedt. It existed from 1928-1970 and focused on textbooks, dictionaries and atlases.
228 Advertising for the book Svensk konsthistoria (1913) published in Svenska Dagbladet, 04.04.1913
229 In a lecture in 1927 Romdahl traced the appreciation of “national values” back to the period around the turn of the 19th century. He claimed that the romantic era provided us with the antidote to universalism, a tendency that, according to Romdahl, resulted in the obliteration of finer nuances, all intimacy and authenticity. Romdahl, A. L. Hemslöjden som nationell kulfaktor. Svenska Slöjdföreningens Årskrift (1927):47-52, p. 47
ing the textbook.\textsuperscript{231} Especially when comparing Swedish art to foreign art, for example German or Danish. He then goes on to present a short summary of Swedish architectural history in order to suggest what the characteristics typical of Swedish art might be a \textit{simple dignity, a moderate use of ornamentation, restrained and sparing} (\textit{kargt}).\textsuperscript{232} Gauffin (1913) concluded in his chapter that the art produced in Sweden, rather than on the banks of Seine was \textit{simpler, more bourgeois, brilliant} and \textit{elevated}.	extsuperscript{233} These are all characteristics that have been used to define specifically the Gustavian style.

\subsection*{2.4.2 Writing About National Style in the 1940s}

In the \textit{19th} century the Gustavian style had been known under the French term \textit{Louis Seize} or the German word \textit{Zopf}. Starting to use the term Gustavian style was one way of emphasising the Swedishness of the style. At the turn of the \textit{20th} century nationalistic sentiments were strongly felt by many in society and different institutions, supported not least by museums and academia. The nation was also a frequent source of inspiration for artists and architects. The National Romantic Movement wanted to present an ideal and unique Swedish nation to both a national and an international community, and to defining and describing a national art history became an important ingredient in the nationalist project. Art history is far from the only discipline that has supported the nation state as a natural given. Modern history, until the 1990s modern history was, in most cases, the history of particular nation states or their relations to each other, and up until the Second World War there was often an obviously nationalist aim.\textsuperscript{234} The very idea of writing a book about Swedish art history is based on the assumption that nation, state and society are an entity, a natural form and the basis for scientific inquiry, a methodological nationalism.\textsuperscript{235} But what makes something Swedish, is it the maker, the site of production or the result? Art historians maintained an interest in national characteristics and style also after the National Romantic Movement had faded. The CIHA (\textit{Comité International de l’Histoire de l’Art}) congress in Stockholm in 1933 was organised by Johnny Roosval and his devotion to the geography of art showed in the programme which also included, despite Roosval’s more regional than national under-

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{roman} Romdahl, A. L. and Roosval, J. (eds.) \textit{Svensk konsthistoria}. Stockholm: Ljus, 1913, p. 3
\bibitem{roman} “…en enkel värdighet, ett måttfullt bruk av ornamentala former, nyktert och kargt.” Romdahl, A. L. and Roosval, J. (eds.), 1913, p. 3
\end{thebibliography}
standing, sessions about the study of national art and national styles. However, during the 1930s and 40s, the idea of a national history of art became highly politically charged territory. During the war a number of textbooks were published, and they triggered a heated debate about what Swedish art history should be and how it should be written.

Art historian Henrik Cornell (1890-1981) published several textbooks aimed at students at advanced level, of which *Den svenska konstens historia* (1944 and 1946) became the most influential. The series was reprinted four times, and the last edition was printed in 1970. The textbook was generally well received and in numerous reviews it was compared to Andreas Lindblom’s *Sveriges konsthistoria*, published around the same time (the third volume included the Gustavian style and was published in 1946). The professor of art history Ragnar Josephson referred to these two publications as a fertile and stimulating dialogue. A dialogue that triggered the question: what should a Swedish art history be about? Because of this, my analysis of these two textbooks will focus on the reception of the books in professional journals and the daily press.

Henrik Cornell studied in Uppsala, and became a professor in Stockholm in 1931 (Zornprofessuren), a position he kept for 26 years. He also taught architectural history at Tekniska Högskolan, and was elected the secretary of Stockholms Skönhetsråd and chairman of Konsthistoriska sällskapet. As discussed earlier, Cornell was theoretically inclined but also interested in the senses and their response to an artwork. Andreas Lindblom (1889-1977) worked as a professor of art history (1925-1929) and taught at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in the 1920s. Lindblom became the director of Nordiska Museet and Skansen in 1929 and remained so until 1955. At the open-air museum Skansen he contributed to a popularisation of cultural history, inviting for instance the worker’s movement, the farmer’s movement, and the sports movement. For two years, while writing *Sveriges konsthistoria*, Lindblom was on a leave of absence from his work at Skansen.

Lindblom’s *Sveriges konsthistoria* (1946) was published in three volumes, where the last volume covered the period from Gustav III until the 1940s. It was aimed at both students and the general public. The volumes were published by Nordisk Rotogravyr, a publishing company that collaborated with Nordiska Museet from the mid 1920s and closed in 1943. The art historian and critic Bengt G. Söderberg’s (1905-1985) review of Lindblom’s third volume in *Expressen* implied that this textbook differed from other, earlier publications in its wish to reach a broader audience with its rich illus-

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236 Volume 1 covered the period before c. 1800. The book was published in four editions, the last one in 1970, by Albert Bonniers förlag.

237 Lindblom’s book was published by Nordisk Rotogravyr. The company was founded in 1918 and focused on high quality image reproductions. In 1965 it was taken over by Esselte.

trations and moderate price. Söderberg further traced a social ambition in Lindblom’s work, similar to that of modern art at the time.

In a time of unrest like ours this work will teach its audience humility, faced with the old art and its profound educational value. Modern art has already penetrated into the Swedish welfare state and set up new social goals. With Andreas Lindblom’s work research in art history has proved its will and ability to follow the same roads – such a will is also shown by the publishing company that has put an affordable price on the abundantly and excellently illustrated book.  

In the 1940s art history was an important aspect of *smakföstran*, the education of taste, which was an integrated aspect of the construction of the Swedish welfare state. The Gustavian style was described in the chapter about neoclassicism (“Nyantiken”), which included architecture, garden design, vernacular art and architecture, churches, painting, prints, sculpture, crafts and interior design. Many of the critics were impressed with his ability to cover such wide-ranging material. Moreover, this was the first of the textbooks about Swedish art history that encompassed vernacular objects, and he described the homes of the nobility as well as the farmers. Even though there were some art historians who had an interest in vernacular art it had so far mostly been left to the ethnologists. It was probably Lindblom’s position as a museum director that had prompted this interest and in his post script, he explained his gratitude towards his male comrades at Nordiska Museet who helped him with the book, especially with the chapter on vernacular architecture. Lindblom’s book was even regarded by some critics as “cultural history exemplified through art”, revealing an uncertainty about whether this way of writing was “real” art history.

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view of what art can be. Cornell, as mentioned earlier, included very few subjective judgements about the Gustavian style in his text, which was liberated from anecdotes and causeries. In the textbook, Cornell divided the presentation about the Gustavian style into architecture, painting, sculpture and prints. These chapters were then divided into short introductions of individual artists and architects and sections with short backgrounds mainly focused on stylistic development. He set aside the development of craft and vernacular art and instead he referred to other contemporary publications on the subject.

Lindblom revealed the intention with his book in the postscript. He hoped that, despite the accounts of style and periods, the reader would not be tempted to view the artworks as mere “bones for the researchers to chew”. Instead he wanted the reader to “sense beauty’s power to give spiritual invigoration” and perhaps it is no surprise that Lindblom was a keen reader of Oscar Levertin’s texts. In 1909 he had started his museum career at Statens Historiska Museum and Nordiska Museet and had an interest in and knowledge of cultural history. The responses to Lindblom’s approach were mixed. Johnny Roosval thought that the author did not show enough interest in stylistic periods, and that he ignored “the steps of history”, something which Roosval believed to be a problem from a scientific point of view. Roosval complained: why not explain chronology, periods, style etc. to the reader? Why not open up the scientific process? Still he was impressed by Lindblom’s ability to entertain his readers and overcome their fear of “real knowledge”. Roosval had been one of Lindblom’s teachers and he was actually the reason why Lindblom chose to study art history. Lindblom would leave an indirect comment to Roosval’s critique in his memoirs published in 1952, where he wrote that he appreciated Roosval’s gift for systematisation but that in the end, it had almost become a mania.

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245 “Det innehåller mängder av fakta, så gott som alltid av värde, och det är välgerande fritt från personhistoriska anekdoter och käserande utvikningar. Värderingarna är få och balanserade.” Bergmark, T., 29.11.1947
248 Roosval J., 1944, p. 125
249 Lindblom A. *De gyllene åren*. 1952, p. 28. In an article about periods in modern Swedish art, written in 1938 Roosval defended art history’s inclination to divide the past into periods, claiming that these abstractions were real, perhaps more real than the individuals. (“abstraktionerna” är tvärtom verkliga, kanske mera verkliga än de i kött och blod påtagliga individerna”) in his article Den levande konsten i historiens skåpfack. *Konsthistorisk tidskrift: revy för konst och konstforskning 7*, Konsthistoriska sällskapet (1938):1-14
Nils Lindhagen (1909-1989), art historian and museum curator at Nationalmuseum and Malmö Museum, wrote a review about the Cornell and Lindblom’s series in Bonniers litterära magasin in 1945, just before the last of Lindblom’s books had been published. Lindhagen claimed that the general public and students had long been without a reliable and up-to-date overview of Swedish art history. Svensk konsthistoria (1913) was at this point more than 30 years old and hopelessly out of date, according to Lindhagen. Further, he stated that the vital research, completed over the past 10 years, needed to be included in a general picture and summarised in a coherent standpoint.

Lindhagen’s review demonstrated that the dispute between a formalistic and a literary approach was far from resolved. He concluded that Cornell’s book was based on reason and Lindblom’s two volumes were based on feeling. He did not wish to comment on which author was more true to historical resources than the other, rather he wanted to ask: who was the grandest, who spoke to our imagination? Lindhagen characterised Henrik Cornell as a man of logic, homo scientificus, and believed that Cornell’s formalistic approach made the reader forget the people and the historical context that in the end are the elements that make and influence art. He would have preferred Cornell to have made some sort of introduction to each period, letting the reader know something about life at the time – a spiritual background. Cornell, Lindhagen concluded, was faithful to truth and sceptical about synthesis. This was an approach that made his work clear-headed, objective and impressive. Yet, Lindhagen questioned if it was at all possible to write a text on art history maintaining the same claim to objectivity as the natural sciences. As a reader of the two books it is easy to recognise the difference in attitude. We get to know what Lindblom thinks about things, he is clearly subjective, while Cornell keeps his distance. The critic and art historian Torsten Svedfelt (1904-1987) also commented on the language and characterised Cornell’s language as precise, refined and well adapted for the purpose, Cornell was to the point and focused on the essentials.

Apart from their different styles of writing, it was the authors’ take on “the national” that was the focus of most reviews at the time. Their different attitudes to this aspect clearly influenced the way the Gustavian style was described and valued. Johnny Roosval, was interested in the geography of art and when he reviewed Cornell and Lindblom’s publications he tried to analyse different possible approaches to the problem. He found that there were

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251 Lindhagen N., 1945, p. 320
252 "klar, kultiverad och väl anpassad för ändamålet. Och i sitt framsättningsätt (…) förebildligt saklig, helt inriktad på väsentligheter.” Svedfelt, T. Konsthistoriskt standardverk. Aftonbladet, 12.10.1944
253 Roosval’s interest for a geography of art is described in e.g. Bonsdorff J. Global aspects on Johnny Roosval’s concept of the Artedominium. In Crossing cultures: Conflict, migration and conver-
four different methods of writing a national art history: “1. the ordinary liberally national; 2. the strictly national; 3. the nationalistic or outright Nazi; 4. the politically independent or, in short, free way.” He placed Cornell in the first category and Lindblom in the second. The fourth “supranational” category did not care about political borders but looked for personal, artistic connections, and included all artists, despite their nationality. Roosval favoured this last category, although, he thought it might be difficult to make the general public buy these works.

The view of the general public is hopelessly tied to the red political borders on the map. It is like the stroke drawn with chalk for the hen. Thus the public is less inclined to buy works planned according to the free method. This is a great disadvantage to our science, which with its expensive need for illustrations is rather dependent on the support of the book buying public.

Art, stated Cornell in the foreword, reflected the character of the people and their history. Moreover, it placed Sweden in the world and Europe, and only in collaboration with other countries could Sweden have created the art we now call Swedish. Sweden should be treated as a part of Europe and Cornell emphasised the interaction between Swedish and European art. Further he found that there was no conclusively Swedish development within the arts. Roosval placed Cornell in the first category since he used the present borders of the country to decide what should be included in a historic overview. Moreover, he considered artists who resided only for a short period in Sweden as Swedish. This was a valuable perspective, although questionable from a scientific viewpoint according to Roosval.

Lindblom used the present borders of the country and only included artists who had been born in Sweden or lived there for a very long time. Because of this Roosval placed Lindblom’s work in the second category. Lindblom began his third volume, which covers Gustavian style, by stating that there was an on-going struggle between Germanic and Classical...
influences, and he used this antagonism as an explanation for the changing styles in art.\textsuperscript{258} Lindblom saw the foreign influences on Swedish art and crafts as a necessary evil.\textsuperscript{259} He neutralised the immigrant artists and made them Swedish, or if they hadn’t stayed in Sweden long enough he called them “passage artists”. When Lindblom described the difference between a Swedish piece of furniture and a foreign one, he claimed that taste and motives might be imported, but the practical execution follows a “national instinct”, which made it easy to identify a Swedish piece of furniture.\textsuperscript{260} Crafts and vernacular art were the main proofs for Lindblom in support of Swedishness in art. He described the Swedishness as the simplification of ornamentation and proportions in high-end furniture, while simpler furniture had a Swedish choice of material and treatment – preferably pearl grey. Despite his critique, Roosval thought that Lindblom deserved praise for this experimental and bold way of describing Swedish art history. Roosval believed that if popular writers like Andreas Lindblom abandoned their, according to him, extreme nationalistic way of writing in favour of the “supranational”, the general public might also change their attitude.

The third category Roosval described included everything within the present borders and could arbitrarily also include what is outside the borders. He stated that it was mostly German art historians who had suffered from this greed for power, and “in the good old days” you did not react when the German museums labelled Dutch art as “German”.\textsuperscript{261} It was only now, at the end of the war, that you understood the connection. Lindhagen claimed in his review that it was fashionable to detect crypto-Nazism everywhere, and that it would be easy to do so in Lindblom’s work.\textsuperscript{262} However, he believed that this was not relevant in this case, and that Lindblom’s books had a role to fulfil, as they helped the readers to find a national value also on a more spiritual level.

“It disappears like a mirage as soon as you use instruments of logic to describe its quintessence.”\textsuperscript{263} Lindhagen found that it was easier for an art historian to describe the national characteristics of an artwork by using feeling and intuition rather than a scientific approach. As a result, when describing a national characteristic the art historian was left with generalisations that were either false or without interest. According to Lindhagen, a national style should be seen as an abstraction and only one of many aspects

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\item[263] Lindhagen, N., 1945, p. 318
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that influenced art. Consequently, Lindhagen was very critical of Lindblom’s attempts to identify a national style in 8,000 year old rock carvings, arguing that if there existed such a thing as a national style, it would look different over time. Ragnar Josephson likewise commented on the riskiness in Lindblom’s focus on Swedish characteristics and race. Despite his criticism, however, Josephson found that Lindblom’s approach gave the study character and energy and that it was an impressive example of a personal way of writing. In an earlier review Josephson also saw that there might be some positive outcomes of nationalistic interest in art since it could result in a new examination.

According to Ragnar Josephson, Cornell, by no means wanted to be part of such a new order, one that adhered to the principle of blood and soil. Instead Cornell emphasised that Sweden was part of Europe. Nonetheless, Josephson could see that Cornell and Lindblom were united in one sense and that was in their embrace of the importance of Swedish poverty to artistic expression. Moreover, Cornell did not deny the particularity in a country’s tradition and expression, the way Swedish artists and architects transformed the foreign testified to Sweden’s particularity and spiritual needs. The foreign language was transformed and translated to fit a Swedish context according to Lindhagen. This idea of translation will be explored further in this study.

At the end of the Second World War, in 1944, Danish architect, designer and critic Poul Henningsen (1894-1967) spoke about style at a meeting of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. He declared, concerning the significance of the

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265 “…vi i sin framställning av konstens vidare förlopp brukar författaren, bland många fina och träffsärk karakteristiker, ofta epiten svensk i olika graderingar – svensk, äktsvensk, kärnsvensk, ursvensk, ibland varierande med ”germanskt brinnande i anden” och dylikt. Häremit ställas gansa skarpt de “osvenska målarna. (…) De radanteckningar till Lindbloms framställning, som här ha gjorts, vilja påminna om vanskligheten i att skriva konsthistoria, byggd på raskonstanter. Lindblom är inte ensam därom, de flest av oss konsthistoriker har väl mer eller mindre någon gång prövat något liknande.” Josephson, R. Klassicitet och germanism. Svenska Dagbladet, 30.12.1946

266 “personligt färgad framställningskonst.”, Josephson, R., 30.12.1946

267 “…mycket kan drivas fram i dagsljuset av denna heta åtstandan att hävda den nationella egenarten” Josephson, R. Diskussion om svensk konsthistoria. Svenska Dagbladet, 23.12.1944

268 “…vill däremot på inga villkor vara med på en sådan nyordning efter principen blod och jord”. Josephson, R., 23.12.1944

national, that it was a nuance, which was of little importance. Instead he found that style should be considered international. After the war it seems to have been difficult to justify the search for national characteristics in a style, and Henningsen’s attitude mirrored an increasing loss of interest in national characteristics, which coincided with a loss of the idea of an essentialist national spirit. After the war many art historians, for example students of the professor of art history Gregor Paulsson, were interested in the internationalisation of the research of art history. Moreover, the national narratives that developed after the war came to reflect the dominant ideological viewpoints that supported the winning side. The strong German influence on Swedish art history diminished and art historians looked for new ideas about how to understand international relations and nationalist character, if they still believed there was such a thing.

### 2.4.3 Art History Without Style?

In the 1970s we find several studies in Swedish art history that expressed a critique of canon and traditional art history. These were attitudes that also characterised the heritage movement of the 1960s and 1970s, where the focus moved from single monuments to groups of buildings. Architectural historian Eva Eriksson has pointed out two main changes in the discipline at the time; the importance of the local that brought new stories to the main narrative and an increased interest in cross-disciplinary perspectives. Researchers became increasingly aware of the earlier elitist canon that had excluded much that now was of interest. This meant that new material was brought into the discipline, and the research scope broadened. Some of the research was carried out at museums, for example by Gerda Boëthius (1890-1961), the first woman to receive a PhD in art history in Sweden. She was an important source of influence on the discipline at the time, opening its eyes to regional variations in crafts and vernacular art. This development coincided with a change of name for the discipline in Sweden. In 1969, what was formerly known as konsthistoria med konstteori (art history with art theory) was now renamed konstvetenskap (the science of art). The initiative for the

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270 “En nuance, hvorpå ingen vägt skal läggas.” Poul Henningsens lecture at a meeting in Svenska Slöjdföreningen 1944-11-23, Henningsen, P. Stil. Form, no. 1(1944):6-11, p. 6
change was external and came from the Department of Education, and there were many disciplines that changed names at the same time.

The series *Konsten i Sverige* was planned in 1966 and published by Almqvist & Wiksell/Gebers Förlag (AWG) in 1974-81, and then republished in the late 1980s. It was a collaborative work in eight volumes. The editors wanted to challenge the conventions set by the textbook genre and the themes differed from previous textbooks. In the foreword of the first volume in the series the editor and professor of art history Sven Sandström began by establishing that Swedish art history was not primarily that of its kings or artists. Instead he emphasised foreign influences and the importance of place and “human context”. Professor of art history Sten Åke Nilsson wrote one of the eight volumes in the series – *Konsten i Sverige 1700-talet efter den karolinska tiden* (1974). The text was divided into geographical themes, rather than style or material: Sweden and the wider world, Stockholm and the provincial towns and cities and the countryside. In his review of *Konsten i Sverige* (1974) the art historian and critic Gustav Näsström (1899-1979) wrote in very positive terms about the new ground that the book was breaking.

So many embellishing words have been written about the Swedish 18th century, especially the Gustavian period that you get a feeling of opening a window to the fresh summer wind when somebody objects that no this is how it really was (…) But such details should not make our 18th century friends refrain from a cold rub-down in the health treatment the senior lecturer Nilsson offers. It is not very like the idyllic pleasure of a season in Medevi or Ramlösa, but it is felt like a dip in the open sea and that kind of recreation also trace its origin back to the 18th century.

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275 Almqvist & Wiksell and Gebers Förlag merged to form AWG in 1928. It was incorporated into Esselte in 1973.
278 Art historian Ingrid Sjöström believed that the structure of the book might make it difficult to read for a beginner in the field. Moreover, she found that the language was personal and occasionally too casual. Sjöström, I. Litteratur. *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 44. Konsthistoriska sällskapet, no. 3-4(1975):107-108, p.108
Näsström had played an active role in the modernist functionalist movement, while maintaining a keen interest in the 18th century and especially the Gustavian period. In the press he was often referred to as the “last Gustavian” because of this interest and knowledge about the period. When Näsström read Nilsson’s textbook he was enthusiastic about the new material that was included, with examples spread across the country, and he commented on the presence of both rich and poor. Nilsson was never letting the reader forget about the social structure that the artist or architect had to relate to.

In the book the concept of style was never really in focus, it is mentioned only in passing when describing for example the homes or when trying to sort out international influences on Swedish architecture. Likewise, Nilsson does not seem to have been interested in setting any dates for the style. In the textbook he rather focused on the context and erased the traditional divisions between art, architecture and gardens. The examples were picked because they represented a group or a category, not primarily because of their excellence. Even though he demonstrated how styles (or more specifically “formerna”, the shapes) transformed when moved from the European scale to the provincial, style as a concept plays a very subdued role in the book. Furthermore, Nilsson showed little interest in interior design and instead he preferred to describe the structure of a whole site. The author commented on the selection of examples and stated that the material was too rich for him to be able to include everything, not even what could be considered the best.

This allowed him to pay more attention to the common and anonymous as well as the regional and vernacular.

The social, economic and political context was important to Nilsson, and throughout the textbook he explained the working conditions for artists and architects in Sweden during the 18th century, exploring themes such as education, collectors and the first art museum. On several occasions he reminded the reader that most inhabitants of Sweden in the 18th century were farmers or poor. Nilsson also described the 18th century art world as strongly internationalised, and compared 18th century Sweden to developing countries in the 1970s such as India and Tanzania, a comparison

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280 A few months after the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930 Näsström published Svensk funktionalism in which he maintained that there were links between functionalism and traditional Swedish building design. His aim with the book was to make people more open to new modernist ideas. Näsström also wrote on a regular basis in Form and the publications of Svenska Turistföreningen. He published a number of books on the 18th century: Det gamla Medevi (1928) and Svensk 1700-talsmiljö (1967) as well as the series, Forna dagars Sverige, the first volume published in 1941, second in 1948 and the third and final covering the frihetsiden (The Age of Liberty) and the Gustavian period, published in 1962. These volumes were not a traditional general art history, they were more focused on cultural history and lavishly illustrated.

which turned international artists into aid workers bringing in much needed know-how, and who in return for high salaries educated the Swedes. To emphasise the international exchange he also pointed out that Sweden also exported artists abroad, for example portrait painters who travelled to North America and Europe, most notably Paris.

*Konsten i Sverige* (1974) was reworked and reprinted in 1993 – now with a new title: *Det sköna 1700-talet* (The Beautiful 18th Century). The disposition and most of the content of the book were exactly the same, but it covered a longer time span and the geographical area included Finland and Swedish Pomerania (Germany). However, the most striking difference is the illustrations, most of them in colour and of much better quality than those in the previous edition. The fact that every photograph was taken using only natural light was used as a sales argument. Additionally, the book concluded with a new section of artists’ biographies. *Det sköna 1700-talet* was promoted as a complement to Nationalmuseum’s large exhibition *Solen och Nordsjärnan* 1993/94, a display that portrayed Swedish-French cultural exchange, and which is described in more depth in chapter 4. The critic Ingela Lind was not alone in combining the exhibition and the book in the same review. She referred to the book as a coffee table book (praktbok) and disapprovingly declared that it did not pose a single interesting question to the century whose art and architecture it so marvellously illustrated. It is as if the photographs prompted her to place the book in a totally different category than the critics had done when reviewing the 1974 edition. In her eyes the groundbreaking textbook from the 1970s had turned into an uninteresting coffee table book. The critic Ingamaj Beck also reviewed the book in *Aftonbladet* and did it alongside the exhibition; however, she found the book more enlightening than Lind did. Beck argued that it saw behind the gold that glittered in the exhibition.

### 2.4.4 Style Revisited

The publishing house Signum was founded in 1974 and merged with the publishing house Atlantis in 2006. During the 1980s and 90s Signum published a number of ambitious series about art and cultural history. *Svensk konsthistoria* was published in 1986, and the following year it was translated into English, the 2nd edition came in 1993. The four writers, Mereth Lindgren

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(1936-2000), Louise Lyberg, Birgitta Sandström and Anna Greta Wahlberg were all educated at the Department of Art History at Stockholm University. All of them, except Lyberg, held a PhD at the time of publication. The book was arranged chronologically, from 1000-1980, and it kept within the borders of present day Sweden with the result that e.g. Finland, part of Sweden until 1809, is more or less ignored. The chapter about the rococo and Gustavian period is divided into sections about architecture, painting and sculpture. The author of this chapter is Anna Greta Wahlberg, and even though she does not explicitly cover furniture in her text it contains many descriptions of interiors. In the introduction the four writers mentioned the textbooks written by Cornell (1944) and Lindblom (1946) forty years earlier. They claimed that there yet again was a need for a Swedish art history in one volume, a book that offered both an overview and more in-depth information. Further, they stated that their aim was to provide the reader with a better understanding of their own surroundings by giving them a background of style and cultural history.

Svensk konsthistoria (1986) was later developed by the publishers into a series of thirteen volumes covering thousands of pages. The series was published between 1994 and 2005, and the volumes corresponded to a traditional history of styles, dealing with a different style or period in each volume; the last volume covered the period 1950-75. The ambitious series contained many thousands of pages and brought together many active researchers. After the closure of the series in 2006, the publishing director Viola Robertson described it as expensive and laborious, while she believed that the audience for qualified specialised literature had diminished. “The level of education and interest is much worse than 20, 30 years ago.”

286 The authors let the reader know that they were aware of the complicating matter of the changing borders of Sweden. However, they chose a well-established solution, limiting their studies to the present borders of Sweden.

287 In 1977 Wahlberg finished her PhD about five Swedish artists in the 18th century and their study trips to Italy. She returned to this subject in Den gustavianska konsten (1998). Wahlberg, A. G. Svenska konstnärers väg till antiken 1755-93: Jean Eric Rehn, Johan Pasch, Georg Fröman, Erik Palmstedt och Gustaf af Sillén på studieresor till Italien, Univ. Diss. Stockholm University, Stockholm: Akademilitteratur, 1977

288 The comparison with the 1940s was not entirely favourable according to the art historian Rudolf Zeitler (1912-2005) who reviewed the book in Konsthistorisk tidskrift in 1986. He pointed out that the conditions for writing a handbook had changed since the 1940s, when Lindblom published his three volumes. Books should be written, printed and turned over quickly. He then went on to describe the many mistakes he found in the book. “…om boken skall användas i undervisningen vid universiteten eller i studiecirklar, måste den förses med en rättelselista.” Zeitler, R. Litteratur. Konsthistorisk tidskrift 55. Konsthistoriska sällskapet, no. 4(1986):168-70

289 Another eight volumes about Swedish cultural history followed these publications in 2004-2009.

Despite her disbelief in the audience the volumes are still for sale, and *Den gustavianska konsten* was reprinted in 2010.

The eighth volume, *Den gustavianska konsten*, was published in 1998. It was a collaborative work with experts in different fields providing chapters for the book. At the time the twelve writers were established researchers at the universities of Lund and Stockholm or they held various positions at Nationalmuseum, Nordiska Museet, the Royal Court or the National Heritage Board. The book was divided into eleven chapters and the researcher of the history of ideas and sciences, Jakob Christensson, wrote the introduction, which included a political, ideological and cultural historical background to the period. The introduction ended with the statement that “times change and so do we”, referring to the fact that we might appreciate and be moved by different art works than people were in the 18th century.291

Aside from the introduction, I have mainly focused on the three chapters on architecture, painting and furniture. However, there are also chapters on garden design, study trips, textile art, metal work, glass, ceramics and vernacular art, which makes it the most comprehensive of all of the ten textbooks in this study. The editor Göran Alm holds a PhD in art history from Stockholm University and is the former director of the Bernadotte library and is affiliated to the Royal Court. From the 1970s until today Alm has published extensively on the Swedish 18th century and royal environments such as Tullgarn and Drottningholm.292 Moreover, he has contributed to five of the volumes in *Signums svenska konsthistoria*. In *Den gustavianska konsten*, Alm is responsible for the most extensive chapter in the book, describing the architecture and interiors of the Gustavian period. The chapter about painting was written by Pontus Grate, an art historian educated in Uppsala and employed at Nationalmuseum in 1954. In 1998, he was 76 years old and could look back on a long career in Paris and at Nationalmuseum. Rose-Marie Söderström, who wrote the chapter on furniture specialises in traditional crafts and 18th century interiors. Her dissertation from 2009 dealt with these subjects, as did her recent book *Hantverksmästarna i det gamla Karhsamn* (2014).293 To conclude, they were all experts in their fields contributing with their specific competences to the book.

Alm both disputes and confirms earlier research; and occasionally he includes his own thoughts on “what it might have been like”, while admitting

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293 Söderström, R.-M. *Bostadskultur, informationsflöden och hantverkslekar 1740-1820 med utgångspunkt i Bålby (Närke) och Skottbergska gården (Blekinge).* Univ. Diss. Lund University, Lund: Sekel, 2009.
he can’t be sure.\textsuperscript{294} Alm makes a thorough review of numerous buildings and interiors, drawings and physical sites and makes an analysis primarily based on comparisons and the development of style. There is less concern for cultural history, placing Alm firmly in a tradition based on an interest in style and development of style rather than a sociocultural context. Consequently, he does not describe the life of the buildings; rather he is looking for a past, ideal state, today sometimes only existing in drawings. In a sense what he studies is the idea of the object – the artistic intent. All too often this has also been the aspired state in the search for authenticity at historic sites. Rose-Marie Söderström (1998) introduces the chapter on furniture by stating that Gustavian interior design is considered especially Swedish. Even if the ideas came from abroad Swedish furniture had its own style, and what separated it from the French models was the motto *simplicity as virtue.*\textsuperscript{295} Söderström’s chapter is organised around different types of furniture and style with a focus on the development of style. The craftsmen are presented, but the context of production or the use of the rooms is not explored in any depth. Grate, more than the other three, shows an interest in the socio-cultural context and the role Gustav III played. Moreover, he makes a number of reflections about the Gustavian period, the way it has been valued at a later date, but also its use of history and heritage.

The Signum textbooks from the 1980s and 1990s were written in a different vein of thought than *Konsten i Sverige* (1974), they relate to Cornell and Lindblom’s work from the 1940s, rather than reflecting new theoretical approaches within academia. They can be seen as a return to a more traditional use of the history of styles. As we will see later in this chapter there is a direct reference in the visual material to the publications about different styles and departments of Nordiska Museet created in the 1930s.

In a review of a later volume in Signum’s series, the art historian Kristoffer Arvidsson makes the comment that Signum balances on a line between the commercial publication and the scientific text, which includes some compromises and complications.\textsuperscript{296} He then goes on to define it as a project of popular education. Arvidsson’s comment could be true for all of the textbooks on Swedish art history described in this chapter. All of them had this dual purpose of appealing to a general audience and presenting an overview of what Swedish art history was in the eyes of contemporary research in art history at the time. Although there are some aspects that unite the first and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item E.g. when he discusses the possible English influences on the Marmorkabinett at Drottningholm, in Alm, G. (ed.) *Signums svenska konsthistoria 8. Den gustavianska konsten*, Lund: Signum, 1998, p. 46
\item “…*Signums svenska konsthistoria* balanserar på en linje mellan det kommersiella bokverket och den vetenskapliga texten, vilket innebär ett mått av kompromisserande och komplikationer.” Arvidsson, K. *Ett verkligt folkbildningsprojekt!* *Signums Svenska Konsthistoria. Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 73. no. 2(2004):110-114, p.114
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
last textbook, for example the collaborative approach, there are some conditions that have changed. In 1913 we started with a 614 page textbook covering all of Swedish art history and in 1998 it was possible to write, and sell, a textbook on Gustavian art from various perspectives covering 509 pages in total. Another noteworthy difference is that in 1913 the eleven writers were all men and in 1998 five writers out of twelve were women. But how have the different textbooks related specifically to the Gustavian style, how has it been described in words and images?

2.5 Period and Style

When does a style begin and when does it end? Some art historians try to give a precise date, others refuse, others prefer to focus on the periods when styles have overlapped and interacted. In the textbooks analysed in the diagram below, the Gustavian style is dated somewhere between around 1750-1810. It is sometimes also divided into a tripartite division: early, high and late Gustavian. The king’s trip to Italy in 1783-4 is mentioned by all the textbooks as important, and they all conclude that classicism is more emphasised after this date. Cornell (1944) even stops referring to it as Gustavian, and uses the word classicism instead.

In his role as patron of the arts, Gustav III supported theatre, opera and the Swedish language as well as the arts, and as king he founded a number of academies. The economic historian and professor of technology and society studies Svante Beckman, has identified five different roles for a monarch: owner, constituter, beneficiary, object and theme and finally as an arena for cultural heritage. During his lifetime Gustav III played all of these roles, perhaps more consciously and skilfully than any other Swedish monarch. All of these roles were also carefully commemorated in words and objects by the king himself, and later by devoted followers, historians and art historians. Ragnar Josephson remarked, in his review of Lindblom’s textbook (1946), that there were lines in the book where the king is undeniably loved to death (“onekligen ihjälalskad”). Lindblom was not alone in this love, or strong interest if you like, for the monarch.

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Figure 15. When does a style begin and when does it end? The diagram shows how different writers have chosen to present this aspect in their texts. Göthe and Nilsson are intentionally left blank since they are very vague on the subject. Others have presented definitive years, which are marked with a vertical line. The diagram also shows how Gustav III’s trip to Italy has been considered as vital to all writers, while the trip J E Rehn made is more pronounced from the 1940s and on. Moreover, we can see how the length of reign for Gustav III and Gustav IV has guided the dating of the style.
But all the Nine Muses existed just to please him, to glorify his apollonian splendour and heroic achievements (...) Endowed with its valuable disputed but irresistibly fascinating personal qualities surrounded by the radiance of a liberating revolution and a glorious war Gustav III possessed a wonderful talent to inspire the artists which made them surpass themselves when rendering the captivating features.

Gauffin (1913), for example, described the king’s wonderful ability to inspire artists to surpass themselves, an ability which marked the importance of the nobility as patrons of the arts. It is only recently that art historians have looked more exhaustively at the conditions established during the Age of Liberty (1719-1772), which made the development of Swedish art possible during the reign of Gustav III.

Apart from the two Gustavian kings there is one artist, Jean Eric Rehn (1717-1793) who has been imperative to the dating of the style. Rehn was an artist, architect, graphic and interior designer and professor at the Royal Institute of Art. His role becomes more pronounced in the textbooks from the 1940s onwards, although his importance had been promoted earlier by, for example the writer and publicist Christoffer Eichhorn at the end of the 19th century and the art historian and museum director Erik G Folcker (1858-1926) back in 1906. The Bellinga collection, containing about 850 drawings by Rehn, was opened up to researchers in the 1920s and played a decisive role in research about Rehn. Gösta Selling used the Bellinga collection in his research and his 1937 dissertation, Svenska herrgårdshem under 1700-talet, highlighted Rehn’s importance. In the text Selling writes that it might be too early to tell whether it was Rehn or C. F. Adelcrantz who created the Gustavian style. However, Selling was sure that it was Rehn who spread the style and that he put his mark on it. Five years later, in 1943, Rehn was one of the five artists represented at the popular exhibition Fem stora gustavianer at Nationalmuseum. To many of the visitors Rehn was still a new name or at least “a

303 The Bellinga collection contained more than 800 works by Rehn and was privately owned by the Piper family. In 1993 it was put up for sale. Nationalmuseum now owns the collection.
name without a specific content”.

In the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, the museum director Erik Wettergren (1883-1961) claimed that in 1943 the professional art historians already knew how important Rehn was for the introduction of the Gustavian style, but when seeing so much of his work in the same exhibition his greatness was emphasised. When Johnny Roosval commented on the exhibition he maintained that our idea of the 18th century had been fragmentary without Rehn – Rehn filled in the gaps. In his textbook, Henrik Cornell (1944) stressed Jean Eric Rehn’s role as the introducer of Louis Seize, and claimed that it was he who, in his translation of the neoclassical style, created the Gustavian style. This happened in the 1760s and onwards. In the 1780s the more modest neoclassicism of the Gustavian style was taken over by a strict classicism. Andreas Lindblom (1946) referred to the library at Drottningholm Palace, redecorated by Jean Eric Rehn in 1760, as the starting point for the introduction of the Gustavian style.


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Some of the art historians have described the Gustavian style as a mix of rococo and neoclassicism, while others see it primarily as a Swedish version of Louis Seize. Sigurd Curman (1913) referred to the style as a transitional style, a period between the playful rococo and the serious neo-classical style introduced by Gustav III after the king’s trip to Italy in 1783-4. According to Curman the trip contributed to “an inorganic development”, “a sudden leap in development”, a break where the neoclassical style was very rapidly established as the dominant aesthetical ideal, because of the king’s immediate influence on art and architecture. Axel Gauffin (1913) placed the Gustavian style in a time span from 1772-1809 corresponding to the reign of Gustav III and Gustav IV Adolf; however, he declared that it would be misleading to understand it as one unified style. Instead he divided it into “early Gustavian” based on the French Louis Seize, and “neoclassical style”, and the year that marked the break was 1783, the year when the king travelled to Italy. Georg Göthe (1913) compared the enthusiasm for antiquity and the French influence on sculpture with the reaction in craft against rococo that was found in the Louis Seize style. Axel L Romdahl (1943) did not give the reader any exact dates either, apart from placing it during the reign of Gustav III. According to Romdahl the early classicism during the Gustavian period had links to the shape and scale of earlier periods; however, in connection to Gustav III’s journey to Italy he sees a radical change in style. European influences promoted a return to the antique sources, especially to the temples of Greece, with their exact design and noble measurements, as Romdahl puts it.

For Sten-Åke Nilsson (1974), style was never really in focus, and it is mentioned only in passing when describing the homes, for example, or when trying to sort out international influences on Swedish architecture. Likewise, he is not interested in setting any dates for the style. Wahlberg (1986) described Rococo and Gustavian in the same chapter and provided examples of the mix and transition between the two styles. When writing about architecture she describes a “rococo-classicism”, which would later be referred to as the “early Gustavian style”, introduced by Jean Eric Rehn after his trip to

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309 Curman, S., 1913, p. 579, 588
313 Romdahl A. L., 1943, p. 145
Italy in the 1750s. However, she suggests different dates for when it ended. When writing about architecture she claims that when Gustav III died the Gustavian period ended. Then, when sculpture is discussed she marks Johan Tobias Sergel’s (1740-1814) statue of Gustav III at Skeppsbron as the definite end to the Gustavian period. The model for the sculpture was finished in 1790; however, the statue was not put in place until 1808. The different dates, depending on the art form, are also found in Den gustavianska konsten (1998). On the back cover the dates are set to 1771-1809. Throughout his text Alm is noticeably interested in the transition of styles and makes a lot of effort sorting out what element belongs to which style. He compares drawings and existing interiors and attributes the different components of the designs to baroque, rococo or gustavian influences. Alm starts the chapter by setting the dates of the Gustavian style to 1771-1809, correlating to the reign of Gustav III and Gustav IV Adolf. He argues for including the son’s reign by pointing out that numerous artists were still active during this period. However, at the same time he acknowledges that a stylistic period does not appear or disappear with the same exactness as kings are crowned or dies. Later in the text Alm suggests a much earlier date for the origins of the Gustavian style - 1758, the year when Jean Eric Rehn visited Herculaneum and Pompeii. According to Alm, the uniting force of the Gustavian style was the interest for the Greco-Roman antique heritage, even though this influence was expressed differently in the Early and Late Gustavian period. Rose-Marie Söderström’s chapter on furniture describes the earlier French neoclassical influences from the 1750s, and “an early Gustavian style” she dates to the 1770s. The High Gustavian period is set to the 1780s and the late Gustavian style to 1785-1810. Grate’s chapter on art starts with the 1770s and the last example is dated 1797, this example, he thinks carried the characteristics of art and literature of the Gustavian period – when art existed in the tension between dream and reality, high ideals and sensibility.

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315 Wahlberg had already written extensively on Rehn, and her dissertation contributed to our understanding of the study trips of Swedish artists during the second half of the 18th century. See Wahlberg, A. G. Svenska konstnärens väg till antiken 1755-93: Jean Eric Rehn, Johan Pasch, Georg Fröman, Erik Palmstedt och Gustaf af Sillén på studieresor till Italien. Univ. Diss. Stockholm University, Stockholm: Akademilitteratur, 1977
317 The date was also observed in Nationalmuseum’s exhibition Fem stora gustavianer in 1943.
To conclude, Gustav III, Gustav IV Adolf and Jean Eric Rehn stand out as most influential when it comes to defining the dates. Their roles are influenced by the writers’ attitudes to international exchange and agency – who is it that influences a style, the patron or the artist? It is clear that Gustav III’s strong position as a monarch and patron of the arts is seen as decisive, while his son is there to carry on his legacy, a legacy that also dies with him. The associations made between Gustavian style and Gustav III, and to some extent also his son, are generally so strong that it is his influence on art and architecture that has set the dates, rather than a specific object or site. In this sense it is the historical context and specific individuals, not just artists or artworks that have established the dating. This confusion of period and style, history and aesthetic expression, is symptomatic of the Gustavian style.

2.5.1 Simple and Elegant

What words have been chosen to describe the style, and what values have the authors attributed to it? The thing that strikes you when reading the texts is the lack of descriptive words or more subjective judgements in some of the books. Sigurd Curman’s long description, below, is an exception. Instead the writers seem to rely on illustrations and the reader’s prior knowledge. Many of the descriptions also rely on comparisons; it is more or less classical, more or less rococo. Regular comments such as “it is the epitome of Swedish interior design” or that “it laid a shimmer over the days of Gustav”, do not really reveal much about the style in itself, although they reflect a positive assessment of the style.

Now is the time when the rightly admired Gustavian interiors are created, some of which constitute the most perfect creations of Swedish interiors. In these rooms with pearly panelling, decorated with finely cut garlands of flowers and fruit baskets or with wall coverings on which the most delicate Pompeian motifs have been painted, with white pieces of furniture both with noble and light elegance, in these rooms pervades an unparalleled flavour of old culture and refined joie de vivre. It was a heritage from the previous aristocratic culture which was fortunately nurtured over a long time.

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321 The ruling monarchs gave their names to the Georgian period in Britain and Louise Seize in France, establishing a link between style, period and person that has also affected the dating of the styles.

In this quote, Sigurd Curman pinpoints a number of the aspects that characterise the way Gustavian style has been defined during the 20th century. It is the epitome of Swedish interior design, it is light and pearly grey, it represents a refined joy of life but it is also an inheritance from the aristocratic culture of the past. In their descriptions of the Gustavian style, the writers seem to repeat past judgements on the style ascribing it different values, usually positive. Still, the characteristics described are more or less the same during the whole period. When reading the nine textbooks, I have listed all the adjectives used to describe Gustavian interior design. The most common adjectives used are: simple, sincere, restrained, elegant, straight, light, peaceful, ideal beauty, cool, rational and dignified. The descriptions can be sorted into five different categories representing specific qualities. Many of these qualities have both aesthetical and moral values.

- Simple and light – ethereal qualities
- Sober, dignified and peaceful – solemn qualities
- Ideal, definitive and a model for interior design – absolute qualities
- Load-bearing and horizontal-vertical – architectural qualities
- Elegant, distinguished and refined – cultivated qualities

As I have mentioned earlier, the most common way of defining and describing the Gustavian style has been to compare it to the rococo, which is very often described as the opposite of the Gustavian. Art historian Sabrina Norlander has proposed in her article Det gustavianska som svensk modell? (2013) that words used to described the Gustavian style also implicitly suggest their opposites. Norlander suggests that a study of these contrasting words can help us understand the processes that have shaped the concept of style and how they relate to national connotations. The national Gustavian is contrasted to the French and foreign rococo, and if we were to contrast the adjectives used to describe the Gustavian mentioned above it would suggest that the rococo had qualities such as complicated, extrovert, excited, playful, unrefined, common, organic, false and irrational. One example that emphasises the use of comparison, is the way descriptions of the rococo and the Gustavian, are often based on gender and the idea that rococo is feminine and the Gustavian masculine. The way this is expressed by art historians mirrors changing ideas of gender and sex. The soft emotional femininity of the rococo is placed in contrast to the heroic, enlightened and masculine classicism. Moreover, the rococo is

324 Numerous art historians have of course questioned this way of categorising styles as feminine or masculine. e.g. Perry, G. and Rossington, M. Femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century art and culture. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994 and Hyde, M. Confounding
described as playful and the Gustavian as serious. Just to give one example of many, in Gösta Selling’s 1937 dissertation we can find wording such as this:

For the entire 1760s, he created ‘gustavian’ interiors in rooms that demanded a more restrained approach, while rococo was allowed to spread its pleasing softness in rooms where the ladies reigned, in bed chambers and cabinets.\(^{325}\)

Another example is the normative aesthetics associated with neoclassicism, where antiquity is the ideal and artistic expressions that deviated from this ideal were automatically bad. One of the consequences of these normative understandings of styles was that the rococo came to symbolise many of the qualities that were routinely associated with bad taste at the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century: opulence, gold, superficiality, femininity etc. Gustavian style on the other hand became celebrated for its nationalist qualities, high quality and good taste.

### 2.5.2 Illustrating the Textbook

For art historians as well as the general reader, textbook illustrations, and particularly photographs, have been integral to how the Gustavian style has been described and defined.\(^{326}\) Naturally, the authors and editors wanted to pick an illustration that was considered representative of the text and the period or style. This meant that they followed set conventions and that certain qualities of the objects and sites were selected; specific angles and lighting were favoured. However, there were also numerous practical considerations such as accessibility, quality and cost. The need for representativeness, together with practical considerations, led to a situation where some pictures or types of pictures were used repeatedly and consequently the objects or sites they depict and the way they are framed and presented, has come to define the Gustavian. The list of illustrations and the texts that accompany the illustrations reveal the network of organisations, collections, heritage sites and photographers. Moreover, since most of the textbooks lack footnotes or indeed any bibliographic information, these lists of illustrations become important clues to the intertextuality in both text and illustrations.

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\(^{326}\) The collections of photographs available to the students at the departments of art history were considered very important since printed photographic documentation was rare and often of bad quality around the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century. The study of photographs was supplemented with study trips and excursions, enthusiastically promoted by e.g. Johnny Roosval. See: Romdahl, A. L. *Som jag minns det*: 2. Stockholm, 1943, pp. 95-96
The quality of the reproduced images varies considerably in the textbooks. Before the 1990s the great majority of the illustrations of furniture and interior design are black and white photographs, which of course limit the reader’s understanding of the objects, especially since most writers have been reluctant to describe colours in the text. The first colour photographs of interior design can be found in the textbook from 1986. Moreover, many of the photographs fail to convey the scale of the original, the structure of the surface or the context in which the object is placed. Photographic illustrations dominate; however, some of the illustrations are prints and paintings. The painter that has been considered most trustworthy in his depictions of 18th century interiors is Pehr Hilleström Sr. (1733-1816), a painter whose role will be further examined in chapter 3.

Figure 17. Three Gustavian chairs from the collections of Nordiska Museet. Other pieces of furniture reproduced in Lindblom’s textbook came from Nationalmuseum or private collectors. These photographs were taken by Märta Claréus at Nordiska Museet and were first published in Sigurd Wallin’s second volume of Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshems (1933). Because of the way they are photographed against a neutral background and placed next to each other it is very difficult to get an idea of size, texture or context. Moreover, it emphasises their similarities and adherence to style. The Hellman chair in the middle is also featured in figure 7 and 13. In Lindblom, A. Sveriges konsthistoria: från forntid till nutid. D. 3, Från Gustav III till våra dagar. Stockholm: Nordisk Rotogravyr, 1946, p. 785

In Sveriges konsthistoria: från forntid till nutid (1946) most of the illustrations of architecture and craft were recently taken photographs. However, the author was also very grateful towards the department of photography and Louise von Platen, as well as the photographic archives at Nordiska Museet where Asta Lamm and Inger Nordenfelt “…obligingly assisted him with illustra-
327 Märtä Claréus contributed with several of her photographs previously published in *Nordiska museets möbler från svenska herremanshem* (1933), and Lindblom thanked her and the photographer Olof Ekberg in the postscript. Lindblom’s textbook is the first that included photographs of single pieces of furniture, most of them from Lindblom’s own place of work, Nordiska Museet. The photographs are black and white with the objects photographed against a neutral background. The neutral upholstery fabrics in most photographs also contribute to the focus on shape. This way of photographing, where you remove the object from its context places applied art on equal terms with painting or sculpture where this is standard practice. In the 1940s we can see the same tendency, of decontextualising the object in displays of applied art, which is further discussed in chapter 3. Moreover, the black and white image privileges shape with very few references to colour in the textbooks, although Lindblom described colours in more general terms. The furniture also losses their relative dimensions by being adjusted to fit the page.

Figure 18. In the chapter on Gustavian sofas and armchairs there is a mix of black and white and colour photographs. The two top pictures were produced by Signum, the bottom left was taken by Sven Nilsson and can be found in the archives of the Royal Collections and the picture on the bottom right was taken by Sören Hallgren and can be found in the archives of Nordiska Museet. In *Den Gustavianska konsten* (1998, reprinted 2010), pp. 354-355. Courtesy: Atlantis, Kungliga Husgerådskammaren and Nordiska Museet.

In Wahlberg’s chapter in *Svensk konsthistoria* (1986) there is a mix of photographs, some of them in colour, and drawings. A new feature was the close-ups that supplied atmosphere rather than illustrating arguments in the text. The illustrations originated from private and public collections and many of the photographs were taken specifically for this publication. This was also the case with many of the illustrations in *Den gustavianska stilen* (1998) which included contemporary photographs produced by the publishing company. The two other major contributors of images were, as in all of the textbooks discussed, Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet.

There is a mix of older black and white photographs in the book; however, the large number of colour photographs separates this book from the other textbooks. Now the 18th century was in colour and the colours were often surprisingly strong and vibrant! Compared to the older black and white photographs, the new colour photographs of single pieces of furniture are always situated in a context. They become part of an entity and are not only singled out as stylistic examples. It also makes it easier to get a sense of the size, material and finish. We will now look closer at the reproductions of a site that features in all of the textbooks, the Gripsholm Theatre.

Gripsholm Theatre is illustrated with a photograph in six of the textbooks and a plan in one. The only book that lacks an illustration of the room is *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913). However, this book has no photographic illustrations of interiors at all. How come this theatre was picked as an illustration? What does it represent? Interestingly, the parts of the text referring to this room are always short; it is one of many examples of the architecture of Erik Palmstedt (1741-1803). The main incentive to include the theatre seems to be because it illustrates the point when Palmstedt’s architecture became more classical after his trip to Italy. An interesting detail is that the theatre was in place before Gustav III’s trip to Italy. Consequently, it doesn’t fit the idea of a radical break in 1783-84, discussed below, and the art historians handle this detail differently.

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328 Gripsholm Castle also included the Courtiers’ Wing with 28 almost identical guest rooms. These rooms have played an important role in mediating Gustavian style. However, the wing is only illustrated in four of the books. John Böttiger was instrumental in recreating these rooms in 1918, however, they were not strictly a reconstruction. Böttiger staged a new interior based on existing collections of furniture and inventories.
Figure 19. The architect Erik Palmstedt was responsible for the design of Gripsholm Theatre in 1781. The photograph is taken from the stage. Roosval (1935), Romdahl (1943) and Cornell (1944) seem to have used the same photograph as illustration. The photograph is probably a rather low quality reproduction of Carl Gustaf Rosenberg’s photograph published in Slottsteatrarna på Drottningholm och Gripsholm (1933). Andreas Lindblom (1946) used what seems to be a better reproduction of the same photograph. Published in Roosval J. Svensk konsthistoria (1935) p. 143

Curman (1913) described the theatre as an expression of Palmstedt’s new devotion to neoclassicism after his trip to Italy in 1778-80. However, the classicism is still “masked” according to Curman, the decoration is a bit too “ornate and graceful” to constitute a radical break with early Gustavian style. Romdahl (1943) agrees and sees it as an example of the early neo-classicism, influenced by Louis Seize that was dominating before the king’s trip to Italy. Roosval refers to the theatre at Gripsholm as exceptionally beautiful and classical. Cornell, on the other hand, sees the theatre as an expression of the “dry and genuine” neoclassical style that Palmstedt brought with him after his own trip to Italy in 1778-80. This new and faithful classicism is also the focus of Lindblom, who establishes that this is the only time

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Palmstedt is allowed to try his new skills and taste. The result was a specifically noble room, characterised by the clarity and peace of antiquity, every trace of rococo Lindblom claims has now disappeared.\textsuperscript{332} Wahlberg reminds the reader that the theatre refers to what was considered the ideal shape by Palmstedt – the Pantheon in Rome, and goes on describing the cassettes in the ceiling as a painted illusion.\textsuperscript{333} Alm finds it interesting that even though the theatre is strictly neoclassical in its style, it was planned before the king’s trip to Italy, yet again confirming the idea that this trip, rather than the artists’ and architects’ individual influence on the king as a patron was a defining moment when style changed.

The theatre historian Agne Beijer (1888-1975) was instrumental in generating attention around the Gustavian theatres. He had rediscovered and reopened Drottningholm Court Theatre in 1922 and in 1933 he published his research in the generously illustrated book \emph{Slottsteatrarna på Drottningholm och Grippsholm}.\textsuperscript{334} Carl Gustaf Rosenberg’s (1883-1957) photographs illustrated this publication. Rosenberg collaborated with a number of art historians during his career as a photographer: Gregor Paulsson, Jan Roosval, Carl Gustaf Laurin, Carl David Moselius and August Brunius (1879-1926).\textsuperscript{335} He also worked for three decades for Svenska Turistföreningen, and contributed many of the photographs used to illustrate the yearbook focusing on the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, published in 1943. He travelled around the whole of Sweden and his work focused on architecture, cultural history and industries. It seems highly likely that it is his photograph of the theatre that features in the books from 1935, 1943 and 1946. Both Wahlberg (1986) and Alm (1998) used a photograph from the Royal Collections (Slottssamlingarna, Statens Konstmuseer) that replicates the same perspective used in previous textbooks – from the stage. Nilsson (1974), on the other hand, focused on the clever layout and chose a reproduction of the original plan as an illustration rather than a photograph. However, in Nilsson’s reprint of the book, now renamed \emph{Det sköna 1700-talet} (1993), there is a large colour photograph of the room taken from the side of the stage. The choice of illustration seems to reflect an interest in the life led in this room, the lights, the colours and the backdrop reflecting in the mirrors covering the walls.

Gripsholm Theatre does not seem to have been included in the books because the writers thought that it was the most representative example of the period; instead it almost seemed to have posed a stylistic problem to the


\textsuperscript{334} Drottningholm Court Theatre reopened in 1922 after a smaller restoration by architect Ivar Tengbom (1878-1968)

\textsuperscript{335} Rittsel, P. Carl Gustaf E Rosenberg. \emph{Svenskt biografiskt lexikon}. http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/6897 (accessed: 08.12.2015)
writers since they have to relate it to the king’s trip to Italy. This makes it an interesting choice of illustration and indicates the possible agency of single photographic reproductions and their role in the mediation of Gustavian style. There is also the question of what we are not shown, that which is not photographed becomes invisible and is usually forgotten about. Moreover, the visual material in these textbooks suggests the important role specific institutions, such as the image archives at Nationalmuseum or Nordiska Museet, and individual photographers have had in the construction of a visual canon.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on how the Gustavian period has been surveyed, collected, documented, researched, and how the material produced has been mediated in eight textbooks published 1913-1998.

The writing of a textbook is a process that depends on researchers, available material and different ways of organising and categorising the material evidence. Moreover, the process mirrors the relationship between academia, museums, students and the reader. By identifying how the Gustavian style has been defined and described, we can learn more about this process and how these relationships changes over time. I would argue that even if textbooks might be considered as the presentation of already black-boxed science, an analysis of textbooks over time can help show how the construction of facts is a collective process, a science in action, as suggested by Latour.336

Most textbooks on general art history tend to live a long life, and are often re-printed, which can explain why some ideas stubbornly lived on while others never seemed to gain momentum. Many of the authors had prominent roles within academia and museums, where they could reinforce their influence on education, research and exhibition production. Considering this, it is not suprising that most of the canon and the positive, almost devoted, attitude towards the Gustavian style are repeated in all of the textbooks. The repetition of examples and the devotion to the Gustavian style contribute to creating what could be categorised as metaphoric screens that help naturalise heritage. However if we look a bit closer, it is possible to identify some of the major controversies and negotiations in the field of Swedish art history in the 20th century also in this type of texts. There have for example been slight shifts in emphasis, and the most obvious change has been that the timespan for the Gustavian style, as well as the material included have been extended. This is partly due to the fact that surveys and museum collections have

provided the authors with more examples, which have made it possible for the authors to expand their analysis.

Surveys, together with more extensive documentation of museum collections and the catalogues these generated, were of great importance to the production of textbooks, not least since they provided illustrations, drawings and photographs, as well as expert opinions, which could be used to establish a canon. André Malraux explored the role of photographic reproductions in his text *The museum without walls* (1947). He identified both problems and wonderful possibilities as the methods of reproduction improved. Malraux found that reproductions would make art more accessible to more people, “a common heritage of all mankind.” This ambition to “give” or communicate art to the people can be identified in several of the textbooks analysed in this chapter. The photographs used in textbooks have generally been perceived as silent intermediaries; however, I believe that we should engage more critically with them. Illustrations have the ability to shape as well as confirm an art historical canon. I would argue that some of these pictures are far from silent, instead they can carry as much agency when defining the Gustavian as individual researchers or museum collections do, and moreover they can help establish ideas that have been reproduced both inside and outside academia and museums.

The textbooks do not agree on when you should start talking about a Gustavian style. However, the tendency is that Jean Eric Rehn and his trip to Italy are considered more relevant from the 1940s and onwards. Rehn is presented as the introducer of neoclassicism in Sweden, but also as a translator, creating the Gustavian style. The style is usually divided into two or three periods but there is no agreement on their name or dates. Still, everyone agrees on the importance of the king’s trip to Italy, and there is more or less a consensus about the end date of around 1809-1810. The three chapters in *Den gustavianska konsten* (1998) and in *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913) show that the dates of a style can depend on whether the focus is on painting, architecture, sculpture or interior design. The correspondence between the dates and the reign of Gustav III and Gustaf IV Adolf confirms the great importance placed on the monarchs’ influence on art and architecture.

The authors generally focus on single objects and makers and how they relate to the history of style. There is less focus on patronage, collecting, and the conditions for production, while commercial aspects are more or less invisible. This focus of attention is quite stable throughout the whole period, although Nilsson (1974) can be seen as an exception. The subject for these textbooks is Swedish art history and they reflect grand narratives of nation and aesthetics. The narrative of the Gustavian style in many aspects reproduces a national self-understanding among the readers and in many ways these text-

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337 Their importance is acknowledged by e.g. Henrik Cornell in *Den svenska konstens historia. Från Hedehus till omkring 1800*. Stockholm: Bonnier, 1944, p. vii
books help construct nation and national identity. Other perspectives such as gender or class have little room in these texts, even though Nilsson (1974) makes an attempt at challenging the grand narrative based on style and the national. Moreover, the analysis of the texts shows the difficulties of “pinning down” a national style – a main difference in argument relates to the relevance of the national in relation to the Gustavian style. The role of foreign influences has been interpreted differently, and in the textbooks we find that a tension between defining the Gustavian as an international neoclassical style or as a Swedish style, shaped by the character and landscape of Sweden and its people. The strongest conflicts between the authors were based around who is a Swedish artist, what is Swedish, how did new influences reach Sweden and is there a link between art, taste, temperament and landscape? National characteristics and Swedish particularism are essential to many of the writers, to others it appears much less relevant. Those who do identify national characteristics use words such as dignified, distinguished, moderate, restrained, harsh, simple, bourgeois, brilliant and elevated. When trying to describe what happened to foreign influences once they came to Sweden, writers use words such as dialect, translation and adaption.

The textbooks were aimed at students as well as a general audience wanting to learn about Swedish art history. The reader was offered expert knowledge produced by art historians who were prominent in their field and who “…set the agendas or provide the epistemological frameworks that define debates about the meaning and nature of the past and its heritage.” Moreover, through these books, these art historians became the stewards for the presentation and evaluation of the past, making sure that the public was properly educated and informed about the significance and meaning of the Gustavian style. Considering this it is possible to argue that these textbooks are essential parts of as well as an expression of authorised heritage discourse, shaping the knowledge and values of students of art history as well as the general public. Many of the authors knew each other and had close contacts with museum institutions. These institutions were used as a resource, providing expertise, examples and illustrations. The next chapter will explore the role of museum exhibitions in defining the Gustavian style.

Figure 20. “Self-made men” – and women. In June 1911, Museimannaföreningen (The Swedish Museums Association) made a visit to the Gunnebo estate, outside Mölndal. The owner of the estate Hilda Sparre can be seen standing in the middle, with her daughter sitting on the stairs. On their left stands the well-known archaeologist and chairman of the organisation, Oscar Montelius. Museum director and professor Axel L Romdahl is likely to have been part of the group as well. After Hilda Sparre died in 1949 Gunnebo estate was sold to the municipality, and opened to the public in 1952. In 1996 the project Åter till 1700-talet was initiated in order to bring back the 18th century at Gunnebo. Reconstruction work is still ongoing, including both buildings and gardens. Courtesy: Mölndals stadsmuseum
3 Displaying Gustavian Style

Around the turn of the 20th century, after a period when much focus had been placed on the old Swedish farming culture and the perceived threat of industrialisation, many museum curators and art historians became increasingly aware of the material culture found in the residences of the upper classes. Not only material objects but whole country estates and their old way of life seemed to be under threat as industrialism reshaped society. These sites were now increasingly appreciated as important parts of Swedish cultural heritage, representing historic styles and periods, as well as good taste and beauty. Because of this objects and sites were meticulously and systematically documented and collected from the end of the 19th century by both art museums and museums of cultural history. This renewed interest in the material culture of the upper classes coincided with a new appreciation of, and interest in, the Gustavian style, which was consciously promoted in exhibitions, lectures and publications by actors such as Svenska Slöjdföreningen, as well as various museums.

The Gustavian style has been exhibited in various contexts since the 1890s; for example art museums, museums of cultural history, ethnographical museums, historic house museums and temporary exhibitions for applied arts. The displays included in this chapter date from 1891-1994 and are explored via archives, guidebooks, catalogues, reviews and reports in professional journals and newspapers. Unfortunately, none of the displays described in this chapter remain in situ. This means that there are limitations to the possibilities of recreating the experience of space, and because of this, focus has been placed on the structure of the display, the intentions of the museums and the contextualisation of the displays rather than the visitor’s experience. Moreover, this chapter focuses on some of the turning points in the display of the Gustavian style and discuss how these changes related to object-based and experience-based authenticity.

The analysis is organised chronologically around the most common modes of display of the Gustavian style during the 20th century and focuses on three periods, the 1890s-1910s, the 1930s-40s and the 1990s-2000s. I have identi-
fied and chosen four types of displays that I believe reflect the controversies and attitudes of the period, and these four will be analysed more in depth. Each mode of display is illustrated by one or two examples:

- the period room and the showcase room
- the style ensemble
- the artistic intervention
- the reconstructed space

Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet in Stockholm will be the main examples and are described in detail in this chapter. Other museums included are Göteborgs Museum, which opened in 1861, Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet, inaugurated in 1916, and Örebro County Museum, inaugurated in 1887 and first situated in Örebro Castle. Short descriptions of the history and organisation of these different museum institutions can be found in the appendix.

This third chapter focuses on art historians, curators, museum displays and the contents and values they mediated. Who were the actors that initiated and influenced the displays of the Gustavian style? What influence did art historians’ understanding of style have on collecting and display? What were the contents and values mediated through these displays of the Gustavian style?

3.1 Art Historians in the Museum

In the late 19th, early 20th century there was a small group of art historians that moved between museums, helping them to collect, organise, research and display the history of styles. This meant that art history in Sweden developed alongside a museum-based practice, a situation, which greatly influenced both worlds.

The stage of research at which our art history find itself, the strange fusion of archaeology, critique and even some agitation which has created the young Swedish type of art historian.

341 The word showcase room is my translation of Gustaf Upmark, Jr.’s, concept montrer-rum, which he used to describe those rooms adjacent to the period rooms where the objects were arranged in showcases according to chronology, material and maker. He considered these rooms to be complements to the period rooms. Upmark, G. Från vårt nationella panteon. Idun, no. 26(1907):325-327, p. 325

342 The word (style) ensemble was used at Nationalmuseum to describe a display where aesthetic considerations were the guiding principle; these ensembles were created without any intent to resemble authentic historical interiors. Ernstell, M. Konsthantverks- och designsamlingan på Nationalmuseum. In Konst kräver rum: Nationalmusei historia och framtid: en bok i anslutning till samlingsutställningen Konst kräver rum 13.6 2002-16.2 2003. Nationalmuseum and Brummer, H. H. (ed.) 69-84. Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 2002, p. 79
This review of *Svensk konsthistoria* (1913), one of the first comprehensive textbooks on Swedish art history, indicates that art history was still a discipline that was trying to find its identity and that there were different genres and disciplines that influenced how it was written. In Sweden, art history had developed into an academic discipline with specific objects of study, its own terminology and a discernible praxis at the end of the 19th century. However, at the turn of the 20th century, history of literature and art history were still part of the aesthetic discipline. This co-existence meant that history of literature held priority over art history, at least in Uppsala, a situation that reflected the personal interests of professor Henrik Shück, who first worked at the University of Lund (1890-98) and then Uppsala (1898-1920). Schück wanted, along with numerous students, to separate history of literature and art history from the department of aesthetics and give them the position of independent academic disciplines. In 1901 a group of students in Uppsala put forward a proposal to establish the subjects as independent disciplines, and six years later the funding for two assisting lecturers at Lund and Uppsala was secured. In February 1918 August Hahr took up his position as the first professor of art history at Uppsala University.

The practice of art history can be understood from at least two different perspectives, as a professional practice but also as a specific competence applied to certain objects or subjects situated in different contexts. At the end of the 19th century art historical competence could be found in different arenas, institutions, museums, commercial enterprises, societies, magazines and universities. Some of the most prominent arenas in Sweden during the 20th century were: the universities, the museums, the National Heritage Board, the Royal Collections, the regional art societies, art magazines, and auction houses. Moreover, art historians could take on many different roles where

343 “…det forskningsstadium på hvilket vår konsthistoria befinner sig, den egendomliga sammanträdningen av arkeologi, kritik och t.o.m. något litet agitation som skapat den unge svenske konsthistorikerns typ.” “A. B-s.”. *Ny svensk konstlitteratur*. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 27.03.1913
344 The first professorship in art history was established in 1889 at Stockholm University. The first to hold the post was the author Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895). The second was Osvald Sirén (1879-1966), who was appointed in 1906.
they would use their professional expertise: the connoisseur, the biographer, the historian, the philosopher and the researcher, to mention but a few. Theoretical and practical work was regularly combined, especially at the beginning of the century. Occasionally it implied close contact, and collaborations with furniture and textile production, which will be explored further in chapter four. Throughout the 20th century there was friction between these different roles and arenas. However, they also depended on each other, and art historians worked in all of these arenas.

As discussed in the previous chapter, German art history was generally the strongest international influence on Swedish art history at the time, most of the literature was written in German and many of the professors, for example Axel I. Romdahl, Johnny Roosval and August Hahr had been active in Berlin. This strong German influence was also evident in the formation of museums at the end of the 19th century. Since the 19th century, museums have been one of the most important arenas for art historians, and art history has been considered one of the three museum disciplines along with archaeology and ethnology.348 However, in 1906, when the professional organisation for museum workers in Sweden, Museimannaföreningen, was formed, few of their members held an academic degree in any of these disciplines.349 The reason being that these disciplines had not yet become independent from the study of aesthetics and history of literature. Consequently, most academics working in museums did not hold a degree in art history and gained relevant knowledge about museum work mainly through practice. Moreover, many had to start as volunteers and work without pay before they got a regular employment. Museum director Axel I. Romdahl has described them as “self-made men”, and most of them were men – only three women attended the meeting in 1906. However, the situation changed during the first half of the 20th century, and in the 1940s you would find “…staff consisting of distinguished researchers educated for their different duties…”350 The professionalisation of the museum worker continued throughout the century and from time to time specialised courses were on offer.351

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Svenska museimannaföreningen, 1937 he mentioned academia and museums, but also journalism, publishing and art dealers. (p.53) In the same publication Axel I. Romdahl mentioned a few more alternative careers: librarian, archivist, and teacher. (p. 62)

348 There have always been close links between the academic discipline of art history and museum practice. The departments of art history in Uppsala, Lund and Stockholm had their own study collections, and in Gothenburg the professor of art history was also the director of the city art museum.


350 “…hela staber av för sin uppgift skolade framstående forskare” Romdahl, A L., 1946, p. 6

351 The education of museum professionals was a constant source of debate in the professional journal Svenska museor: Meddelanden från Svenska museimannaföreningen published by Museimannaföreningen 1937-2004.
Art history as a discipline and the art historians working at museums had great influence on collections and museum displays in both art museums and ethnographical museums, especially during the first half of the 20th century. Art historians conducted surveys, as discussed in the previous chapter, helped make the selection of objects, documented and researched them, and displayed them in ways that were influenced by the theories and methods discussed at the time, often inspired by study trips abroad or to the larger museums in the capital. Moreover, they attributed values to objects, values that were based on their professional authority and expert knowledge. These values are still relatively fixed and unquestioned, seemingly intrinsic to the objects and their material fabric. In order to understand the influence these individuals had, it is important to remember that many of the early museum professionals moved back and forth between museum practice, academia, furniture production and the auction houses. By the 1910s a close collaboration between restoration work, surveying, documentation and the new academic discipline had been established.

3.2 New Museums of Applied Arts

In 1891, in a review of Den gustavianska utställningen, Erik Gustaf Folcker declared that knowledge about art and craft from the past had become a necessity for public taste and an important aspect of general knowledge. At the time there were many different actors who worked to raise awareness and knowledge about applied arts in the age of industrialism. The German architect and theorist Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) had promoted the educational mission of the museums of applied arts already in 1851, the same year as the Great Exhibition in London. Both Semper and Jacob von Falke (1825-1897) argued that traditional art museums had failed because they were not useful for popular education. Instead they promoted museums for applied arts such as South Kensington Museum (London) and Museum für Kunst und Industrie (Vienna), where Falke was employed as a curator. They argued that these museums were didactic, popular and useful for industry and modern society. See: Sheehan, J J. Museums in the German art world from the end of the old regime to the rise of modernism, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 252-253
The closeness to the industry was emphasised not only in exhibitions and lecture series: some museums also produced pattern books and handbooks, on their own or in collaboration with various societies and commercial publishing companies. Usually the aim of these books, as presented on the cover or in introductions, was to improve contemporary production, by presenting the period and the collections. Some publications were also aimed at the general reader guiding them to make a good buy. Ideally, the reader would become a connoisseur, who could attribute furniture to the right maker and style and establish sources and influences in order to judge their quality. The educational purpose of the museums included both producers, in order to improve the quality of production, and consumers whose taste was considered questionable.\textsuperscript{356} The museum director James M Bradburne has described the cultural, utilitarian and commercial goals of these early museums of applied arts as commercial and cultural.

Workers, newly sensitive to beauty, would give industry the competitive edge ... industry needed a visually literate public – to buy its goods, and to produce them. The museum was an important part of a broad social, economic and cultural strategy.\textsuperscript{357} Moreover, the displays of applied arts contributed to defining national and regional tradition but also to the establishment of new, shared norms. These were norms regarding, for example, taste and quality in production. The exhibitions also played an important role as sanctioned arenas for the establishment of national unity and identity. The displays of crafts and industrial production very often emphasised a national historical trajectory and mediated authorised ideas about national characteristics and particularity.\textsuperscript{358} In Sweden, the Gustavian style was made to fit these nationalistic aims very well.

The second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century was a period when new museums for industrial art and crafts were established, for example the Museum of Manufacturers, later known as South Kensington Museum in London. The museum opened in 1852, the year after the Great Exhibition, and in 1899 the museum was renamed The Victoria and Albert Museum. This, and similar museums in European cities such as Vienna, Berlin and Oslo served as inspiration for initiatives in Sweden. However, instead of a national museum solely

\textsuperscript{356} e.g. in Lamm, C.R. Ett inlägg i konstindustrimuseifrågan. \textit{Meddelanden från Svenska slöjdföreningen}. Stockholm: Svenska slöjdföreningen (1898):28-46, p. 29


\textsuperscript{358} However, some of these 19\textsuperscript{th} century museums performed and negotiated national identities more intricately than you would assume, and when looking more closely at collecting practices and displays of these early museums a nationalist agenda is not always empirically supported. This is further discussed by Magdalena Hillström in an article where she presents the early history of Nordiska Museet. Hillström, M. Contested Boundaries: Nation, People and Cultural History Museums in Sweden and Norway 1862-1909. \textit{Culture Unbound. Journal of Current Cultural Research} 2, pp. 583-607.
dedicated to industrial art and crafts, these collections and displays were integrated as separate parts in larger national or regional museums in Sweden. One important initiative was the museum that Svenska Slöjdföreningen (the Swedish Society for Arts and Crafts) instigated in 1872, and which opened in 1874. The idea was to establish a state funded museum, which in the end did not happen, and instead the collection was integrated into Nationalmuseum’s Konstslöjdaavdelning, inaugurated in 1885. The fact that collections of applied arts were incorporated into museums that had other, overriding aims, usually as art museums or museums of regional cultural history, meant that the displays were influenced by what the organisations saw as their main interest.

Exhibitions of industrial art and crafts constituted an imperative stage in the creation of a new institutional framework in the area of design. Apart from collecting, protecting and displaying craft and industrial production, they had a utilitarian, practical goal to improve production, a goal that set them apart from other museums. This meant that the museums sought a central position in debates, and encouraged historical modelling, for example. This didactic and instrumental function of these museums meant that they also were directly associated with educational institutions such as art schools. In 1906, Gustaf Upmark, Jr., who worked at Nordiska Museet at the time, imagined the purpose of the museum as both theoretical, explaining, for example, the stylistic development, as well as practical, giving the industry and craftsmen new ideas and impulses. Despite somewhat different approaches, Nordiska Museet, Nationalmuseum and later Röhsska Konstslöjdmuseet in Gothenburg were all hoping to inspire new production through the display of their collections of applied art, making them available to both producers and consumers.

The encouragement of historical modelling became an instrument for directing production and counteracting the negative aspects of industrialisa-

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359 Konstslöjdsställningen at Arvfurstens palats (1876-77) preceded Konstslöjdaavdelningen at Nationalmuseum, which was formed in 1884-85. The process around Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s collection and museum is described in Frick, G. Svenska slöjdföreningen och konstindustrin före 1905, Univ. Diss. Uppsala University, Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1978
362 In the 19th century it was primarily the middle class that promoted this practical use of museums, which they argued would benefit the industry. The upper classes and the aristocracy (Riddarhuset) on the other hand, emphasised the educational role of the museum. What unified them was the argument of national manifestation. Per Widén sees the arguments for building a national museum for art as “a mixture between the British situation – where arguments on economic usefulness predominated – and the German situation, where arguments concerning formation and general education were dominant.” Widén, P. Från kungligt galleri till nationellt museum: aktörer, praktik och argument i svensk konstmuseal diskurs ca 1814-1845. Univ. Diss. Gothenburg University, Hedemora: Gidlund, 2009, p. 238
tion. However, applied arts museums never rejected industry as such: rather they wished to create an educational environment that would influence industrial production in a positive direction. This educational ambition towards producers continued well into the 20th century. When Röhsska Konstslöjd-museet in Gothenburg opened in 1916 it even offered the professional visitor access to studios and workshops in order to utilise the impulses that craft from different periods and countries could give. The museum was placed next to Slöjdföreningens Skola (later renamed Högskolan för design och konsthandverk, HDK). In addition to this many of the academics and museum curators involved in these museums were also enrolled as teachers at schools for crafts and design.

3.3 Period Rooms and Showcase Rooms

The period room developed in parallel with the professionalisation of the museum curator and alongside new demands for authenticity and scientifically grounded displays. In this study, I use a broad definition of the concept period room. It is a room or part of a room that has been staged to represent a particular period, region or owner. It can be a recreation of a specific room, but it is more likely a collection of objects from different places of origin. Period rooms can be found in numerous contexts: historic houses, department stores, industrial exhibitions, lifestyle magazines. However, my main focus in this chapter is on interiors in museum settings in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Örebro.

364 E.g. Gustaf Upmark Sr. (1879-1900), professor of art history August Hahr (1900-1903) and Gustaf Upmark Jr. (1903-1928) who were all teaching art history at Tekniska skolan (today University College for Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm). The curriculum at the turn of the 20th century included art history introductions and trips to historic sites such as Gripsholm, Ulriksdal and Drottningholm. Described in Wollin, N. G. Från rösskola till konstfackskola: konstindustriell undervisning under ett sekel. Stockholm: Bröderna Lagerström, 1951, p. 236
365 “The period room can be defined as a reconstructed historic interior that is in some way representative of its past owner, era and/or region.” Bryant, J. Museum period rooms for the twenty-first century: salvaging ambition. In *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24, no. 1(2009):73-84, p. 75
The period room became a key representational device for the history of style, maintaining a dual role, representing both social and aesthetical aspects of history. This duality can partly explain its success, as well as its inherent problems. The objects on display have tended to be what has been considered the best examples of a style, which in the case of the Gustavian style means that they have come from the milieus of the upper classes or a royal context. Consequently the stories told have been those of a specific class. Moreover, a traditional art historical focus on specific creators and styles has contributed to the way the rooms have often been arrested within a single moment of their history, usually an idealised moment of origin. These moments in history are usually chronologically ordered and when the visitors walk through the rooms it resembles a walk through history, which shows the passage of time but also evolutionary changes and developments in form.

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367 Keeble, T. 2006, p. 3
style, invention, value or mentality. The earliest room that was collected by the South Kensington Museum, an institution that was a precursor of many similar museums, was the Parisian Serilly Cabinet from 1778, acquired in 1869. A little later than in Europe, the golden age of period rooms in the USA was the 1920s-1950s.

The period room was often found in combination with a showcase room, which focused on material and the technique of production. In these showcase rooms the objects were arranged in showcases according to chronology, material and maker. Similar displays were also found in archaeological collections. The showcase rooms encouraged the visitor to make comparisons based on material qualities rather than cultural history. In the showcase rooms at Nordiska Museet the walls were covered with textile-clad panels in colours that were considered characteristic of the period and advantageous to the objects on display. These displays partly corresponded to Gottfried Semper’s ideal museum, where the collections demonstrated a complete history of the development of the applied arts. In his book Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten (1860-63, “Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts”) Semper used a taxonomical approach, drawing on both archaeology and evolutionary biology. In the book he argued that style should be a consequence of the harmony between shape, ornament, use, material, and production method, driven by the free will of creative humans. Semper’s influence on the displays of applied arts would diminish at the beginning of the 20th century, paving the way for a stronger focus on the individual artist and aspects of cultural history.

369 Upmark, G. Från vårt nationella panteon. Idun, no. 26(1907):325-327, p. 325
370 Semper published his ideas about how collections should be displayed and how art can stimulate artistic development in the essay Plan eines idealen Museums (1852). The ideal museum should have five departments, four of them devoted to a specific material: wood, stone or ceramics and textiles. The fifth showed a combination of these four. During his career as an architect he designed a number of museums in Europe.
Figure 22. The mix of period rooms and showcase rooms was typical of the displays of the Gustavian style both at Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet. This display of ceramics in elegant showcases could be seen in Konstslöjdavdelningen (The department for applied art), Nationalmuseum in 1911. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

In period room-based exhibitions the visitors stand by the invisible fourth wall of the display, on the threshold, and they might be watching a piece of clothing that is thrown across a chair, the porcelain on the table, traces of the card playing guests who have just left the room. Little details that create the right atmosphere and occasionally a voyeuristic quality, that are intended to help us relate to the people that used to inhabit rooms, just like, or almost like the one in front of us. This ambition to inhabit the room with material traces of life can be seen in numerous exhibitions discussed in this chapter, from the first exhibition created by Nationalmuseum and Svenska Slöjdföreningen Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891 until the last Med hemmet i blickpunkten at Sven-Harry’s Art Museum in 2015.
Figure 23. The period rooms at Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891 included clothes and textiles that were carefully arranged to create an impression of life. During the exhibition floors were covered with fabric and the walls were covered by the 18th century inspired scenography created by Fredrik Liljekvist. Above the bed (from Drottningholm Palace) it is possible to glimpse the wall paintings of the original room, which was the premises of Konstföreningen, built in 1868. The building was situated in Kungsträdgården, Stockholm. The exhibition spaces were on the 2nd floor and had large windows letting in the light. In the evenings electric lights could be lit, which enabled late opening hours. The building was demolished in 1965. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives
The period room has always seemed to hold a special appeal for the public. However, the popularity among scholars has waxed and waned since the 19th century, partly because of aesthetical preferences and partly because of different views on the role of the visitor. In the past decades, there has been a renewed interest in the concept. Several major American and European art museums have undertaken significant projects to refurbish and reinterpret existing period rooms and even install new ones. After being condemned for their shortcomings, “a form of fiction posing as history”, a new generation of period rooms can now be found in museums and historic houses.

3.3.1 The Gustavian Exhibition (1891)

In the 1890s there were numerous exhibitions, publications, lectures, tableaux vivants and articles in the press that reveal a new interest in the Gustavian style. In the spring of 1891 Den gustavianska utställningen (The Gustavian Exhibition) opened in Stockholm. The exhibition was the result of collaboration between Nationalmuseum and Svenska Slöjdföreningen and presented a precious compilation of Gustavian decorative arts and paintings. It was Gustaf Upmark, Sr. director general of Nationalmuseum (1880-1900), who initiated the exhibition together with the amanuensis Ludvig Loostrom (1848-1922). Loostrom was a member of the board of Konstnärsförbundet (Swedish Association of Art), secretary of Svenska Slöjdföreningen and director of Konstslöjdavdelningen at Nationalmuseum, and in 1900 he became the director general of the museum. Den gustavianska utställningen was housed in the old premises of Konstföreningen in Kungsträdgården, where the objects were exhibited in period rooms that were specifically built for the exhibition.

At the end of the 19th century there existed the idea that there were not that many untouched 18th century sites left. The member and future secretary of Svenska Slöjdföreningen and future superintendent of Nationalmuseum, Erik Gustaf Folcker, lamented this situation in an article about the exhibition.

372 Barquist, D. L. Period room architecture in American art museums. Winterthur Portfolio 46, no. 2-3(2012):113-116, p. 113
374 Svenska Slöjdföreningen was founded in 1845 and the first large exhibition, Allmänna Industri- och Konstutställningen, opened in 1866 in a temporary building of glass and wood erected in Kungsträdgården, Stockholm. The same year Nationalmuseum opened not far away from Kungsträdgården in its new building at Blasieholmen. Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s collections were handed over to Nationalmuseum in 1884 and Konstslöjdavdelningen (the department of applied arts) was formed.
375 Upmark Sr. was the first person that taught art history at Tekniska högskolan.
376 Loostrom wrote his PhD about Gustavian drama. Loostrom, L. Literaturhistoriska studier rörande det gustavianska tidens freds dramatik till år 1800. 1875.
377 Stockholms Konstförening was founded in 1832 and was the start for Sveriges Allmänna Konstförening founded in 1886. Its mission is to support artists financially and display their art to a wider audience, at exhibitions and through publications.
According to Folcker, modern needs and personal taste had changed the historic royal interiors, and he found that it was only in exhibitions such as *Den gustavianska utställningen* that you could experience the splendour of the historical interiors that the original sites lacked.\(^{378}\)

Figure 24. *The guidebook for Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891 included a reproduction of Johan Tobias Sergel’s medallion of King Gustav III. Full-scale reproductions of this medallion are still made and sold. Ludvig Loosström and Gustaf Upmark, Sr. initiated the collaboration between Nationalmuseum and Svenska Slöjdföreningen. The guidebook included a list of those individuals and institutions that contributed objects to the exhibition.*

The exhibition space in Konstföreningen’s former premises had to be adapted to create suitable spaces for the period rooms. The period rooms were intended to provide an “illusion of the period”.\(^{379}\) The committee and the architect Fredrik Lilljekvist (1863-1932) provided the designs.\(^{380}\) The photographs documenting the exhibition spaces show a mix of furniture, fine art,

\(^{378}\) “E. G. F.” (Erik Gustaf Folcker) *Den gustavianska utställningen.* *Aftonbladet,* 24.03.1891. The Royal Palace underwent a process of musealisation after the turn of the 20th century. John Böttiger was instrumental in this process. Edman, V. *Sjuttonhundratalet som svenskt ideal: moderna rekonstruktioner av historiska miljöer.* Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 2008, p. 31


\(^{380}\) Lilljekvist was working as an architect for The board of public buildings (Överintendentsämbetet), which managed the property owned by the state. He would later be responsible for a number of reconstructions of historical sites, but is perhaps most known for the design of Dramaten, the Royal dramatic theatre in Stockholm.
clothes and textiles behind ropes that kept the visitor from entering the staged rooms. There were no labels in the exhibition apart from the numbers that referred to the short texts in the guidebook.

Upmark Sr. and Lilljekvist had spent the summers of 1885 and 1886 together, making measured drawings of Gripsholm Castle. Upmark Sr. was responsible for the portrait collection at Gripsholm and wanted to create a suitable environment to hang the portraits in. He had hired Lilljekvist to make measured drawings and this led to a restoration proposal presented in 1887. The restorations at Gripsholm were privately funded by members of Gripsholmsföreningen. This society had opposed the demolition of the old Opera building and the members were inspired by the sentiments of the Swedish National Romantic Movement and Arthur Hazelius’ educational ambitions.381 The proposed restorations at Gripsholm aimed to recreate the way the building had looked in the 16th century, the time of the King Johan III (1537-1592) and to begin with it was inspired by the attitude found in the French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc’s (1814-1879) restorations.382 However, Gustaf Upmark Sr.’s article Stilenlighetens faror (1893) showed that a change in attitude was about to take place. Stylistic restorations were often criticised for destroying the original building, and according to the critics there was a lack of research and material authenticity. The protests against the style restorations were also an appeal for a more nationally oriented conservation.383 The critique reproduced an international preservation movement opposing the interpretive restorations spearheaded by Viollet-le-Duc in the mid 1800s and the critique eventually led to a crisis within the field of conservation in Sweden.384 In the article Upmark rejected the ambition to create a condition of completeness, often found in period rooms, and despite the critique, it is possible to see Gripsholm as a turning point where historical studies and documentations were used as the basis for the restoration works.

381 Bedoire F. Restaureringskonstens historia. Stockholm: Norstedt and Royal Institute of Art, 2013, p. 176
382 Viollet-le-Duc’s intention was to return the building to an original state. However, in his restorations he added his own interpretations of the past, obscuring the original designs. The influential English critic, writer and artist John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a strong opponent of Viollet-le-Duc and accused him of destroying old monuments and buildings. Ruskin argued against restoration of the physical fabric and found that authenticity resided in all the changes a building had gone through. He presented his ideas in The seven lamps of architecture (1849), which influenced the burgeoning conservation movement in Sweden at the end of the 19th century.
Figure 25. This illustration is an example of the pattern books distributed by Svenska Slöjdföreningen. This volume (XVIII) from 1891 included furniture from Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891. The furniture in this illustration was on display in cabinet no. 2—a bedchamber. Originally the furniture came from Drottningholm, Haga and the Royal Palace in Stockholm. The illustrator Erland Heurlin (1865-1947) was a former student at Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan. He worked with restorations and became a practising architect in 1903. He also worked as an illustrator for several journals.
Art historian and curator at Nordiska Museet Anna Womack has described *Den gustavianska utställningen* as an important part of the re-evaluation of the Gustavian style at the end of the 19th century in her Master’s thesis *Nationellt och smakfullt* (2012). The Gustavian style had suffered some devastating critique during the 19th century, a critique that can be illustrated by the writings of Jacob von Falke (1825-97), a German-Austrian art theorist who wrote extensively on art and whose publications influenced interiors in Sweden.³⁸⁵ Around 1870 he visited Sweden to catalogue part of the Royal Collections. The year after he wrote the book *Die Kunst im Hause* (1871), which was translated into Swedish in 1876. Excerpts from the book were published as a series of articles in *Tidskrift för hemmet: tillegnad den svenska qvinnan* in 1874-1875. In the book von Falke advocated for the neo-Renaissance and criticised the neo-antique styles of Louis XVI and the neo-Greek style. In one of the articles, he compared the rococo and Louis Seize, and noted that the strict character of the latter style left you with the impression of poverty and rigidity.³⁸⁶ He continued to describe how they had wanted matters of taste to be shaped by enlightened thought, not with the best outcome according to Falke – despite the intention to use the purest Greek style, the result was not pleasing. The rooms were filled with dull colours, antique motifs and uncomfortable furniture.³⁸⁷

In her study of the re-evaluation of the Gustavian style, Womack points out the importance of specific individuals, for example the museum curators John Böttiger (1853-1936), Ludvig Loosnöm, Gustaf Upmark Sr., as well as Nationalmuseum, Nordiska Museet and Svenska Slöjdföreningen. There were also a number of exhibitions of applied arts in the 1870s and 1880s, organised by Sveriges Allmänna Konstförening and Svenska Slöjdföreningen, where a change in taste could be foreshadowed. By the 1890s we see that the arbiters of taste surely started to change their minds about the Gustavian style as well as the rococo, and according to the museum curator Erik Gustaf Folcker, the Gustavian style was back in vogue at the time of the exhibition in 1891.³⁸⁸ The friend of art was now happy to own original Gustavian antiques as well as newly produced period furniture according to Folcker.

³⁸⁵ The negative attitude towards the neoclassical style was present among architects as well as art historians. Described in more detail in e.g. Johansson B-I. *I tidens stil: Arkitekten Agi Lindegrens liv och verk*, Univ. Diss. Uppsala University, Stockholm: Raster förlag, pp. 84-87
³⁸⁷ “…formerna äro stela och obeqväma, stoppningen är stenhård, så att det ser ut som de voro afsedda för uppmuntrande af den spartanska dygden, att härjas.” von Falke J., 1874, 298-299
³⁸⁸ “…åter kommit till heders; icke blott så till vida, att konstvännen prisar sig lycklig att ega dessa sirliga gamla byråer, sekretärer o. s. v. utan äfven så, att den moderna möbelförringens med förkärlek hemtar sina månster från denna stil.” “E. G. F.” (Erik Gustaf Folcker) Den gustavianska utställningen. *Aftonbladet*, 24.03.1891
Nationalmuseum would later contribute loans to a number of Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s exhibitions. This arrangement was probably facilitated by Gustaf Upmark Sr. and Ludvig Loostöm, who held high positions at the museum while also being members of the board of the society.\(^\text{389}\) However, in 1891 Nationalmuseum did not own enough Gustavian objects to create *Den gustavianska utställningen* and had to borrow objects from private collectors.\(^\text{390}\) In order to find suitable objects, the exhibition committee sent out forms to people they knew were in possession of objects and who might be interested in participating.\(^\text{391}\) The committee was specifically looking for examples of exceptionally high quality furniture. The priority of the committee was to make sure that objects from the Royal Collections would be available, since they were convinced that once the king had agreed to contribute, the success of the exhibition was secured. The committee achieved this goal, and was able to choose freely among the king’s private possessions as well as the Royal Collections.\(^\text{392}\) Prince Eugene (1865-1947) even agreed to be the chairman of the exhibition committee. All of the lenders of objects are listed in the guidebook: six institutions and sixty-five private individuals, three of them art dealers, some collectors and at least four of them relatives of the committee members. Probably the list of names of prominent and known individuals contributed to the appeal of the exhibition. Visitors would not only learn more about a specific style, they were also able to see objects soaked in the aura of the rich and the famous of the time. The press duly reported on the royal family’s visit to the exhibition.\(^\text{393}\) The value of the objects on display was also discussed in newspaper articles, underlining the quality and luxury of the objects in question.\(^\text{394}\) Ludvig Loostöm explained the relevance of these luxury objects by maintaining that it was only when the maker worked without financial constraints that he was free to develop his intents.\(^\text{395}\) Consequently, he found that these objects spoke more about the time they were made than simpler objects could do.

\(^\text{390}\) Already in the 1880s Ludvig Loostöm, who had a pronounced interest in the 18th century, complained about the lack of 18th century furniture in Nationalmuseum’s collections. A Gustavian period room was not in place in the museum until the end of the 1890s. Nordiska Museet acquired its first Gustavian furniture at the end of the 1870s. Womack, A. *Nationellt och smakfullt: omvärderingen av den gustavianska stilen och lanseringen av Georg Haupt som estetiskt ideal.* Student essay. Stockholm University, Stockholm: Konstvetenskapliga institutionen, 2012, p. 22
\(^\text{391}\) Upmark, G. and Loostöm, L. *Vägledning i den gustavianska utställningen i Konstföreningens första lokal i Kungsträdgården; med ett porträtt af konung Gustaf III.* Stockholm, 1891, p. 4
\(^\text{393}\) Anon. *Konst och litteratur.* *Aftonbladet*, 14.04.1891
\(^\text{394}\) Anon. *Den gustavianska utställningen.* *Svenska Dagbladet*, 09.03.1891
Figure 26. Cabinet no. 3 was part of the displays at Den Gustavianska utställningen in 1891. On the wall on the left we can see Alexander Roslin’s (1718-93) large portrait of Hedvig Elisabet Charlotta of Holstein-Gottorp (1759-1818), Gustav III’s cousin and queen of Sweden and Norway (also seen in fig. 64). On the armchair we see parts of a national dress (according to the catalogue) and a lute (owned by the artist Julius Kronberg who in 1893 would be responsible for the scenography of the historical parade at Skansen, compare with the lute in fig. 30), and together with the porcelain on the writing desk the visitor can get the sense that someone just left the room. In order to guide the visitors each room had signs with large numbers that referred back to the guidebook that accompanied the exhibition. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

Was the exhibition an exhibition of art, cultural history or applied arts? The reviews suggest that the visitors were offered a mix of different experiences; a feeling of intimacy with the homes and people of the past, as well as contemporary celebrities, mixed with feelings based on aesthetical sensations, including the beautiful effects of the electric light. One review in Svenska Dagbladet described Den gustavianska utställningen as a combination of ethnographica and craft, and as an exhibition which presented a series of tableaux of the homes of the past, arranged with care and knowledge that revealed how our ancestors lived. The writer even suggested that the exhibition might become a resort for those who could still remember the stories they were told as children about the Gustavian period. In the photographs documenting the exhibition it is possible to see burned candles, clothes, fans, newspapers, instruments or porcelain that are arranged in a manner that helps create a feeling

396 “en serie med omsorg och sakkunskap ordnade taflor ur deras hemliv” Anon. Den gustavianska utställningen. Svenska Dagbladet, 09.03.1891
that someone has just left the room. Even if Ludvig Looström wanted to emphasise a focus on art and decorative arts he admitted that he felt a historical breeze through the exhibition.\textsuperscript{397} Erik Gustaf Folcker, curator at Nationalmuseum, explained the benefits of the period rooms in the exhibition; he found that the rooms provided a context for the objects and responded well to a contemporary interest in cultural history and “the art in the home of our ancestors”.\textsuperscript{398} Moreover, he considered these rooms more interesting than the permanent displays at Nationalmuseum, which he found too uniform and dominated by the Baroque style.\textsuperscript{399}

At the time, \textit{Den gustavianska utställningen} was considered a new, modern way of displaying art and interior design. Several newspapers commented on the fact that the exhibition was well lit, and that it was also open in the evenings. The electric light had a beautiful effect on the gold plating on furniture, frames, clocks and candelabras.\textsuperscript{400} The rooms on display in 1891 were a mix of period rooms and freer ensembles of objects. Some of the rooms were populated; they were “missing-person displays” where the bodies appeared as space rather than substance, surrounded by evocative visible traces of life.\textsuperscript{401}

An alternative mode of display featuring wax mannequins populating a Gustavian scene could be found just across Kungsträdgården where the wax museum \textit{Svensk Panoptikon} had opened in 1889 and filled four floors with displays.\textsuperscript{402} One of the displays showed Gustav III just about to enter the studio of the artist Johan Tobias Sergel who was accompanied by the Gustavian celebrities Mrs. Anna Charlotta Schröderheim (1754-1791) and Carl Michael Bellman (1740-1795). The wax museum also featured displays such as the contemporary royal family and historic Swedish kings. It is fairly plausible that many of the visitors as well as the curators of \textit{Den gustavianska utställningen} had visited Svensk Panoptikon. However, where museum practice demanded authenticity and verifiability, the wax museum was based on the principle of likeness rather than preservation and it focused primarily on the

\textsuperscript{398} “E. G. F.” (Erik Gustaf Folcker) \textit{Den gustavianska utställningen}. \textit{Aftonbladet}, 24.03.1891
\textsuperscript{399} In 1885 only one of the rooms was dedicated to the 18th century and it focused on the rococo style. It was not until 1890 that a room with Gustavian style objects was added to the display. Looström, L. \textit{Vägledning för besökande i Nationalmusei konstslöjdafdelning Med 2 plankartor}. Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1885, p. 35, Looström, L. \textit{Vägledning för besökande i Nationalmusei konstslöjdafdelning: Med keramiska märken, m.m.} 3rd ed., Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1890, p. 48
\textsuperscript{400} “…vacker effekt och den myckna förgyllningen i möbler, tafvelramar, ur och kandelabrar fick en mildare glans, och de många ljusa tonerna smälte vackert samman.” Anon. \textit{Konst och litterature}. \textit{Aftonbladet}, 10.04.1891
\textsuperscript{402} Artists, e.g. Skoglar Bystedt, working for Svensk Panoptikon would occasionally supply wax mannequins for museum displays and historic sites. See e.g. Grill, C. \textit{Ett krigsmuseum i Göteborg}. \textit{Idun}, no. 51(1904):634
figures instead of the objects. Nevertheless, *Den gustavianska utställningen* did suggest human presence in a way that appealed to the imagination of the visitors, who were able to place them as part of the scene without crossing the rope. The authenticity of the display primarily relied on the provenance of each object, as stated in the catalogue, the high quality craftsmanship, and the authority of the exhibition committee, which con-sisted of both experts and prominent individuals.

During the last decades of the 19th century the Gustavian style became more prominent in pattern books, exhibitions, reconstructions, furniture production, museum collections and private collections. *Den gustavianska utställningen* helped establish the Gustavian style as part of an authorised heritage discourse at the end of the 19th century. This was a process that involved a number of strong actors, art historians at museums and in academia, artists, collectors and the royal family. The exhibition was one of the first in a series of temporary and permanent exhibitions created to educate about the history of styles and further contemporary production of furniture. In a public lecture in 1891 Looström explained the intentions of the exhibition had been twofold, to produce an informative display of the Gustavian style, to “define its image, its looks for the general public”, but also to promote one of the main goals of Svenska Slöjdföreningen – to refine taste (“smakens förädling”). *Den gustavianska utställningen* seems to have been successful in both regards. Together with other exhibitions focusing on other styles in the 1890s, it seems to have had a direct influence on production and education at Tekniska Skolan. The large number of drawings directly connected to the exhibitions produced by the students were seen as proof that the goals of the exhibition had been reached.

3.3.2 The Department for the Privileged Classes

Nordiska Museet (the Nordic Museum) is Sweden’s largest museum of cultural history. Arthur Hazelius (1833-1901) founded the museum in 1873 and since the start there have been displays focusing on the history of style. A forerunner to Avdelningen för de högre stånden (The department for the privileged classes) opened in 1877 in the first premises for the museum on Drottninggatan, Stockholm. A Gustavian period room was presented for the first time in 1888.

It seems as if Hazelius did not see any contradiction in

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406 Artur Hazelius opened Skandinavisk- etnografiska samlingen (Scandinavian-Ethnographic Collection) at Drottninggatan 71, Stockholm in 1873. It was renamed Nordiska Museet in
the museum acting as a museum of cultural history and catering for those who wanted to study applied arts and design. Avdelningen för de högre stånden opened to the public in 1907 and contained elements of both these aspects.

Avdelningen för de högre stånden concentrated on interiors dating from the 17th century to the more contemporary styles at the turn of the 20th century. The privileged classes included nobility, priests and burghers. It was placed on the top floor of the new museum building at Djurgården, claiming approximately ¼ of the total exhibition space; the rest of the space was mainly occupied by displays of vernacular and Sami culture. The exhibition was permanent, and changed little in expression or intent from 1907 when the museum opened, until the end of the 1960s when it underwent some major changes.

After the founder of Skansen, Arthur Hazelius died in 1901 there was a conflict at the museum as how to best organise and display the collections that were moving into new premises at Djurgården, Stockholm. Hazelius son, Gunnar Hazelius (1874-1905), became responsible for the open-air museum Skansen, which had opened to the public in 1891. The art historian John Böttiger, who had worked at the museum for a long time, was in charge of Nordiska Museet and Avdelningen för de högre stånden. Böttiger greatly influenced the planning of the exhibition, but withdrew from any practical work at the museum in 1902, after a conflict with the board where he had suggested a split of the organisation. Böttiger believed that Skansen should be responsible for the popular patriotic mission of reviving Swedish history, while Nordiska museet should focus on a scientific collection and display of objects. These were different missions that required different competences according to Böttiger. He decided to leave Nordiska Museet to focus on his work with the Royal Collections where he had been working since the 1880s and where he remained until his death in 1936. The conflict concerning

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1880. The antique dealer Henryk Bukowski (1839-1900) bought many of the objects on behalf of the founder of Nordiska Museet, Arthur Hazelius.
1888 Borgare (burghers) lived in the cities, but didn’t share the privileges of the nobility and the priests. Mostly they were merchants or craftsmen. Bourgeoisie is a wider term than “borgare”.
1889 The architect Isak Gustaf Clason (1856-1930) designed the new building at Djurgården, Stockholm. His proposal was accepted by the board in 1891, but the project was never completed and only one part of the building was erected. The design of the building was inspired by Nordic renaissance architecture.
1891 John Böttiger started his career at Nationalmuseum in 1881, and then worked at Nordiska Museet in 1891-1902. In 1885 he was appointed hovintendent, in 1892 slottsarkivarie, and in 1907 he was appointed överintendent. The experiences he gained at Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet probably influenced his later work.
how to organise the exhibitions at Nordiska Museet has been referred to as the “installationsfrågan” (the installation issue). The debate circled around whether or not the museum should use dioramas and tableaux vivants, with mannequins dressed in representative dress, as it had done in its first exhibitions in the 1870s – or whether they should be more “scientifically” arranged and based on typology, for example. Hazelius had successfully integrated mannequins and dioramas into his displays at Drottninggatan where he showed his collections before Nordiska Museet opened in 1907. His inspiration probably came from various forms of display that focused on the experimental, for example the world exhibitions, wax museums such as Svensk Panoptikon, and tableaux vivants. The professor of museology Per-Uno Ågren has described Hazelius mode of display as the contextual exhibition, where the objects are displayed in a reconstructed context in order to help the visitor understand their meaning. The result of the conflict was that the more experiential modes of display that did not seem to fit the scientific ideals were moved to Skansen, along with most of the romanticism, nostalgia and the popularisation of the past. Axel L. Romdahl concluded in 1938 that dioramas and tableaux vivants represented what was seen as the “old” ways of Hazelius.

412 The main advocate of a scientific approach was Bernhard Salin who studied art history in Uppsala. The structure and layout of the exhibition and the “Installationsfrågan” debate are further discussed in e.g. Lindberg, E-F, Gunnar Hazelius och nordiska museets installationsfråga, Stockholm, 1957 and Medelius, H., Nyström, B. and Stavenow-Hidemark, E. (eds.) Nordiska museet under 125 år, Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1998, pp. 127-153

413 Rentzhog, S. Friluftsmuseerna: en skandinavisk idé erövrar världen. Stockholm; Östersund: Carlsson, 2007, pp. 35-36. The earliest Swedish example of mannequins on display in a museum context is the mannequins in Ornässtugan in Dalarna, on display since the 1750s.


Archaeologist and art historian Bernhard Salin (1861-1931), the director of the museum 1905-1913, represented the “winning” side of the conflict, which included many of the younger staff. At the time Salin and many other art historians were strongly influenced by archaeologist Oscar Montelius’ typology, where objects were compared and placed in long series in order to identify gradual changes, creating a relative chronology.\textsuperscript{416} Displays should be typologically ordered, and objects arranged in groups according to material, use, geography and chronology. This mode of display related to the early museum of applied arts that were founded in the mid 19\textsuperscript{th} century, which focused on the material and mode of production, and became most apparent in the showcase rooms. The vernacular exhibitions in the museum were primarily arranged topographically, emphasising a more nationalistic agenda than before, while

\textsuperscript{416} Montelius became the chairman of Svenska museimannaföreningen when it was founded in 1906. Gustaf Upmark Jr. was the elected secretary.
the department for the privileged classes was arranged chronologically according to style.\textsuperscript{417}

Another important source of influence for museum curators was the study trips to European museums. Bernhard Salin visited around 100 museums in Europe during his year abroad in 1891 and kept making more trips over the following decades.\textsuperscript{418} The German art historian and curator Wilhelm von Bode’s (1845-1929) \textit{Stilraum} or “style rooms” in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin were probably one of the exhibitions Salin visited. Salin and the future museum director for Röhsska Konstlöjdmuseet, Axel Nilsson (1872-1924) visited Berlin in 1904, the same year that the Kaiser Friedrich Museum opened.\textsuperscript{419} von Bode’s style rooms integrated paintings, sculpture and applied arts in historical ensembles in order to evoke a specific period, but also to highlight masterpieces by placing them in a reconstruction of a cultural and historical context.\textsuperscript{420} von Bode’s goal was not to create authentic historical interiors and in this sense \textit{style rooms} differ from \textit{period rooms}, which displace the original architectural elements from a historic interior in order to create an actual room in the museum. von Bode’s stylistic crosslinks were an inspiration to many exhibitions and were also adapted and used by Richard Bergh (1858-1919) at Nationalmuseum and Axel L Romdahl at Göteborgs Konstmuseum.

Axel L. Romdahl succeeded Johnny Roosval as amanuensis at the museum in 1903 and remained at the museum until 1906.\textsuperscript{421} At this point only a few specialists such as John Böttiger, Gustaf Upmark Jr., Ludvig Looström, Erik Folcker and Rudolf Cederström (1876-1944) had studied the material culture of the upper classes of 18th century. According to Romdahl, none of them had dared to look at the context – the synthesis.\textsuperscript{422} A context that was essential to Romdahl when creating the period rooms at Nordiska. Romdahl writes in his memoirs \textit{Som jag minns det} (1943) that when arriving at Nordiska Museet, he was met by chaos; furniture was packed in a space on the bottom floor of the unfinished museum building. Romdahl’s task was to catalogue, bring order to and group according to style and to photograph the collec-

\textsuperscript{418} Almgren, O. Bernhard Salin: fornforskaren med konstnärshågen, \textit{Fornvännen} 28 (1933):1-46, p. 10
\textsuperscript{421} Romdahl and Roosval would later collaborate as editors of \textit{Svensk konsthistoria} published in 1913.
\textsuperscript{422} “Men helheten, syntesen, som det här var fråga om att åskäldligt gestalta, hade knappast någon vägat sig på.” Romdahl, A. L. \textit{Som jag minns det}. 2. Stockholm, 1943, p.192
tion. When cataloguing Romdahl made a technical, stylistic and historic examination of the objects. He also helped place the furniture in experimentrum (experiment rooms) where different types of displays were tested. This helped him identify the gaps in the collection, there were for example many cabinets but very few chairs and sofas. Romdahl thought that this type of furniture probably had been considered too worn and ordinary to be appreciated by the former museum director Hazelius and his collectors. In his role as amanuensis, Romdahl was sent to the antique dealers, Bukowski’s and other less well-known dealers, to acquire these more humble pieces of furniture to supplement the collection. The provenance of the objects seems to have been less important than the ability to place them in a context and chronology based on the history of style.

A major problem for the museum around the time of its opening was that it did not own many complete interiors, and none of the interiors they did own represented the privileged classes. Instead they owned single pieces of furniture – “membra disecta” as Romdahl described them. He found himself being criticised when trying to create period rooms from these individual objects and in spaces that were far from flexible. His critics, for example Axel Nilsson, colleague and future museum director of Röhsska Konstslöjdmuseet, argued that the rooms were not scientifically accurate, which he thought one should be able to expect in a museum. Reconstructions were a controversial and difficult area, especially in the period that followed the criticised restorations at Gripsholm in the 1890s. After the 1890s there was a strong focus on the original material, which was seen to carry a testimony of the past that reconstructions and copies lacked. It was not until the 1920s that attitudes started to change and reconstructions became more common in historical houses. When Romdahl confronted his superior, the museum director Salin, about this problem, Salin’s response was that it was a “virtuous deception” for those who did not mind, but actually wished to be deceived in this innocent way. Nonetheless, Romdahl found it deplorable that the museum could not offer a single complete interior at the time of the opening and was very happy when in the end suitable interiors from the centre of Stockholm were identified and acquired.

426 Edman, V. Sjuttonhundratelet som svenskt ideal: moderna rekonstruktioner av historiska miljöer. Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 2008, p. 34, 36
Despite objections concerning the authenticity of the period rooms and practical problems, the museum opened in 1907. By then it was Gustaf Upmark Jr. who was the responsible curator of the department. The display included a Gripsholm room (later removed), a Krusenberg room, and a room that combined interiors from Braheska Palatset and the old Royal Opera house demolished in the 1890s. The interiors of the two latter rooms were original from these sites; however, the furniture came from already existing collections, and was typical of the period but without any connection to these places, apart from a stylistic and chronologic coherence. Upmark, Jr. affirmed Salin’s approach that a mix of objects was acceptable since the main aim was to offer the visitor an understanding of what a room might have looked like at a specific point in the past, not to make a reconstruction of a specific site. Still, Upmark Jr. was careful to point out in the guidebooks when something had been copied, restored or recreated from original patterns.

There was little information in place in the displays. Instead guidebooks, which could be purchased at the museum, were used to direct and focus the visitors’ attention. The guidebooks, vägledning in Swedish, acted as itineraries for the visitor, guiding the visitors so that they would experience the display according to the evolutionary development that it portrayed. The guidebook could also be taken home to help recreate a virtual tour of the exhibition, available also to those who never visited the exhibition. The strict clarity of the chronological arrangement of the department seems to have been valued by the visitors and it was a popular part of the museum. In 1921, a journalist in Aftonbladet described the advantages of the department compared to the

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428 Upmark Jr. had started his career as a museum professional at Nationalmuseum in 1898 and moved to Nordiska Museet in 1902. In 1903 Gustaf Upmark Jr. became lecturer in art history at Tekniska Skolan (later known as University College of Arts, Crafts and Design), a position previously held by his father Gustaf Upmark, Sr. He became curator of Avdelningen för de högre stånden in 1906. In 1913 he was appointed director of the Nordiska Museet and Skansen. He initiated numerous surveys and research projects. “Gustaf Herman Fabian U.” in *Nordisk familjebok*, 1920, p. 1153. In one obituary Sigurd Curman described Upmark’s childhood. Upmark’s father had a long career at Nationalmuseum and his son’s upbringing was characterised by education in the humanities, art and cultural history. “Han hade förmånen att växa upp i ett hem, där humanistisk bildning samt konst- och kulturhistoriska intressen helt mättade den luft, hand från spädaste barndom inandats.” Curman, S. Gustaf Upmark död. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 04.10.1928

429 Room 62 was an illustration of “a room at Gripsholm Castle”, representing the 1770s and the transition from rococo to neo-classicism. The next room, number 63, was a showcase room, displaying objects that represented this transition between the rococo and the neo-classical, but also “pure” examples of these styles.

430 The museum would later acquire some interiors that were more complete than the Gripsholm or Krusenberg rooms. In 1914, when the department store Nordiska Museet was built on Hamngatan/Regeringsgatan in Stockholm, parts of the Gustavian interiors in the houses that were torn down ended up in the collections of Nordiska Museet. Described in Wallin, S. (ed.) *Gustaviansk stil i dess tidigare form: ett urval av föremål från Nordiska museets avdelning för de högre stånden*. Stockholm: Nordiska Museet, 1926

431 Upmark, G. Från vårt nationella panteon. *Idun*, no. 26(1907):325-327, p. 325
parts of the museum dedicated to vernacular material culture, which were considered more difficult to navigate.

The department for the upper classes is perhaps the department where most people find themselves most easily at home, thanks to the chronological order and the well arranged and – why not – instructive placing of the objects. No doubt it is this department that is best suited to attract the casual visitors attention.432

This evolutionary walk through the museum could also be found in contemporary natural history displays and ethnographic displays. The cultural historian Tony Bennet has argued that this performative aspect of the museum acted as a prompt and an opportunity for the visitors to improve themselves “…treating the exhibits as props for a social performance aimed at ascending through the ranks”.433 The visitors could thus fashion themselves to become part of and contribute to the development that the museum portrayed. In this case it was primarily taste and an ability as a consumer that the visitor should develop. Numerous designers and critics have pointed out the value of a visit to Nordiska Museet as an important component in educating yourself as a consumer or designer. In 1928, Sigurd Curman described the legacy of Gustaf Upmark Jr. and his creation Avdelningen för de högre stånden. He considered that it had “…been of real practical importance for the refinement of taste in the field of furniture design”.434

In addition to concentrated guidebooks a lavishly illustrated account by Gustaf Upmark Jr. Möbler i afdelningen för de högre stånden, was published in 1912. The volume was aimed at a general public interested in Swedish cultural history and those who collected and owned old Swedish furniture.435 In 1914, the art historian Arvid Baeckström, at the time a colleague of Upmark Jr., reviewed the volumes in the magazine Konst och konstnärer. He claimed that after collecting, and ordering it was now time to use the collection for research and presentation.436 Baeckström believed that the volumes could be

434 “…en verkligt stor praktisk betydelse för den svenska smakens förädling på möbelkonstens område.” Curman, S. Gustaf Upmark död. Svenska Dagbladet, 04.10.1928
435 “…afser att offentliggöra det viktigaste af det rika materi till kunskap om svenska hems möblering i äldre tider som finnes i museets samlingar. Arbetet bör biffa välkommet för alla dem som intressera sig för svensk kulturhistoria och särskilt för alla som samla och äga gamla svenska möbler.” Anon. P.A. Norstedt & Söners förlag’s advertisement for Möbler i afdelningen för de högre stånden, Konst. Stockholm: Konst, no. 11-12(1913) unnumbered page
436 Arvid Baeckström later became Nordiska Museets specialist in glass and ceramics.
of interest to everyone who had an interest in Swedish cultural history, and who cared for old furniture.\footnote{437}
less, it did share many of the characteristics of the early displays at National-
museum, where Upmark Jr. had started his career. It was primarily organised
around principles found in art history and many of the objects on display had
been included in the collection because of their aesthetical value rather than
their ethnographical value.

Figure 29. A photomontage of Avdelningen för de högre stånden at Nordiska Museet published in
the journal Idun in 1907. Reviews and photographs from new exhibitions were a recurring theme in
Idun. Number nine on the left represented the cold elegance of the Gustavian period according to
Upmark Jr. The room was a mix of two Stockholm interiors – the queen’s cabinet from the old
Royal Opera House torn down in the 1890s and the Bruseska palatset, an interior that the muse-
um acquired in 1906. Upmark Jr. described the objects as typical examples of interior decorations
of the period. Number 13 at the bottom is a display of Gustavian clothes. Upmark G. Från vårt
nationella pantheon. Idun, 1907:26, p. 327
The exhibition would eventually consist of 28 rooms, and every period was presented in at least two rooms, one period room and one showcase room. The walls of the showcase rooms were covered with textile-clad panels in colours that were deemed to fit each specific period. The showcase rooms were rearranged in the 1930s, objects were taken out and showcases and lighting redesigned, much in accordance with new modernist ideals where individual objects were favoured over typological series.439 The period rooms, however, changed very little until there was a radical break in the 1970s when the exhibition Svensk bostad opened.440 This exhibition partly replaced the old exhibition and offered a unmistakably ethnological perspective, showing how different social groups in both urban and rural areas lived. Style was (partly) abandoned as the guiding principle, although, the museum kept a study collection Svenska möbler where the visitor could learn about furniture styles from the past. The development of Svensk bostad can be seen as a response to changes in society. Changes that meant that dedicating a large exhibition to the material culture of the upper classes was seen as problematic. In 1971 the journalist Åsa Moberg presented Nordiska Museet as a museum for the wealthy, it looked like a castle and wealthy industrialists according to the labels, sponsored Avdelning för de högre stånden.441 The museum she further described as an old textbook in history, it was all about the upper class and the kings, one still learned nothing about the life of the average person. Svensk bostad can be seen as a response to this critique.

To conclude, Avdelningen för de högre stånden was situated on the top floor separated from the displays of vernacular collections. This structure of the display would greatly influence other regional and local museums in Sweden. The displays were not only spatially but also conceptually separated, where the former was more closely linked to the discipline of art history and the latter to that of ethnology. The exhibition was chronologically organised in a long row of rooms representing the different steps in the history of styles. The 18th century dominated the exhibition and the Gustavian period was represented in five rooms, which were a mix of period rooms and showcase rooms. During the first decades of the 20th century there were strong

441 “Barnen skulle kanske rent av börja undra varför en så stor del av Nordiska Museet upptas av “Avdelningen för de högre stånden” och varför flera avdelningar inredning enligt skyltarna är finansierad av Knut och Alice Wallenbergs stiftelse. Barnen kanske skulle dra slutsatsen att Nordiska Museet är ett politiskt museum, ett odemokratiskt PR-organ för kungahuset och de rika.” Moberg, Å. De rikas museum. Aftonbladet, 04.05.1971
demands for authenticity and scientific objectivity and the display was inspired by a typology borrowed from archaeology. Several members of staff made study trips to newly established European museums of applied arts, which also contributed ideas about how to organise the exhibition. The result was an exhibition that was a mix of period rooms and showcase rooms. Even though Upmark Jr. wanted to point out the differences, it is obvious that the department at Nordiska Museet shared many similarities with the displays found in art museums such as Nationalmuseum. Moreover, it adopted many of the obligations associated with museums of applied arts, for example the objective to help further production of new furniture and interior decoration. Drawing a strict line between these different types of museums at this time, the first decades of the 20th century is difficult.

3.3.3 Local and Regional Exhibitions

The central museums in Stockholm, Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet, strongly influenced the organisation and structure of exhibitions at regional and local institutions in Sweden. They did this by offering travelling exhibitions as well as trained staff that could assist the smaller institutions. Nordiska Museet’s way of arranging its exhibitions chronologically, in period rooms and showcase rooms, became standard practice also for these local and regional museums. Collaborations, exchange of ideas and support for the founding of Svenska Museimannaföreningen in 1906 assisted the smaller museums further.

In the late 1800s there were numerous smaller exhibitions of applied arts organised by actors outside the museum institutions. In 1891, the same year as Den gustavianska utställningen in Stockholm, the society Sällskapet Gnistan organised an exhibition in Gothenburg. This was not the first occasion; already in 1880 the society had attempted a similar exhibition with the explicit intent of improving the taste of the general public. Even if they were happy with the outcome, the society concluded in 1886 that there was still much left to do in order to enhance the production of applied arts in the city of Gothenburg. The society went on to suggest that the city needed to create a museum that was specifically focused on applied arts but at the time the society lacked enough funding to realise the idea. It was not until 1916 that Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet opened to the public.

444 Sällskapet Gnistan was a society that supported the arts in Gothenburg and was founded in 1878.
However, what did exist was Göteborgs Museum, founded in 1861. To begin with the museum had a small collection of about 250 objects, which were exhibited in the building of the East India Company in central Gothenburg.\footnote{Göteborgs museum. \textit{Göteborgs museum 1861-1911: femtioårsberättelse}. Gothenburg, 1911, p. 178} In 1903 the department of cultural history and ethnography was formed, and a decision was taken that a focus should be placed on objects that had cultural historical value. This was done to separate the museum from the Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet that was about to be set up. However, in 1904 Göteborgs Museum received a major donation from a private collector, Anders Nilsson, which meant that the departments were reorganised once more into the department of history, which included the material culture of the privileged classes, and the ethnographical department, which included vernacular objects. It was a huge undertaking for the museum to survey and register the large collection, which had arrived in 12 train carriages.\footnote{Göteborgs museum, 1911, p. 193} The museum kept about 3,000 objects and sold the rest to other museums and private individuals. The expansion of the collection meant that the museum had to be rearranged and it was done so with the help of staff from Nordiska Museet, and their influence left apparent traces in the structure of the displays.

After the reorganisation the museum was reopened in 1906, the year before Avdelningen för de högre stånden opened at Nordiska Museet, and the same year that Svenska Museimannaföreningen held it’s first meeting in Gothenburg. The magazine \textit{Idun} published a report from the meeting and a presentation of the new displays. The anonymous reporter was especially keen on the Gustavian room, seen in the photograph above. While the other rooms are described in a rather dry tone, this room seems to convey a specific atmosphere, a feeling of times past that fitted well with the reporter’s idea of the Gustavian period.

A room in the Gustavian style has been decorated, resembling a princely guest room in the Gripsholm Castle. Immediately when entering the threshold to this room you experience a breeze from the easy and light view on things during the Gustavian period. The furniture and the interior decoration in some way carries the trace of the ephemeral shimmer that characterised the days of ‘the enchanting king’.\footnote{"Ett rum i gustaviansk stil har utstyrts i likhet med ett furstligt gästrum i Gripsholms slott. Genast vid beträdandet af detta rums tröskel erfar man en fläkt af den gustavianska tidens lätta, ljusa syn på tingen. Möblerna, rumsrymnaderna liksom bär på den efemära glans, som utmärkte ”tjusarkungens” dagar.” Anon. Från Göteborgs museum. \textit{Idun}, no. 6(1906): 67}
The displays in the museum were divided into the upper classes, allmoge (vernacular objects) and non-European peoples. This arrangement created a spatial and visual division based on ethnicity and class that appeared natural and valid around the turn of the century, and the division lived on for a long time in many museums. The division was part of a rhetoric of value and encapsulated the authority of their institutional embedding, being “both part of and about political economies of representation”. The displays of furniture for the upper classes were placed on the top floor and were presented in a mix of period rooms and showcase rooms, as in Nordiska Museet. In 1911 the curator Carl Lagerberg (1859-1922) could proudly declare that, since he had been given the opportunity to make several study trips to France and Germany, Göteborgs Museum had been able, despite small means, to keep up with the visitors’ mounting expectations of professional museum dis-

450 This was also replicated in art museums, where art was displayed according to national school and chronology. Kratz, C. A. Rhetorics of value: Constituting worth and meaning through cultural display. Visual Anthropology Review 27, no. 1(2011):21-48, p. 25
The curator also stressed the importance of close collaboration with Svenska Museimannaföreningen and the central museums in Stockholm.

The new displays, a mix of period rooms and showcase rooms, were also arranged chronologically, from the 16th century until 1820. In the showcase rooms the furniture was placed on low elevations and the walls were painted in neutral colours that were considered suitable for each period. A few years later the remainder of the 19th century was added to the display, thanks to generous donations, which the museum was happy to receive, especially since antiques became more popular and prices went up. The ambition was to fill the most apparent gaps in the different categories, mainly household utensils and clothes. It had been difficult to acquire an original rococo interior from a house in the region, and when the displays were rearranged in 1918 the solution was to add an interior from Stockholm to the collections. However, the rest of the rooms were from the region, and the anonymous reporter who reviewed the exhibition in a local newspaper in 1918 found that it was this regional connection that saved it from being a superfluous repetition of Nordiska Museet. The displays were slightly modified over the years but the department for the privileged classes remained part of the permanent exhibitions until the museum was renovated in the 1990s.

In 1916, ten years after the exhibition at Göteborgs Museum opened, a museum dedicated to applied arts opened in Gothenburg. Röhsska Konstslöjd-museet was named after the donors August and Wilhelm Röhss, who in 1900 and 1901 made two donations to establish a museum for applied arts in Gothenburg. To begin with the museum had tried to take over the collections from Göteborgs Museum. However, the suggestion was rejected in 1900-01 and Röhsska had to acquire their objects from other sources. Axel L. Romdahl has attested that this was followed by a rivalry between the two museums to create the best displays. Röhsska’s collections grew and contained both Swedish and international objects. The first museum director, Axel Nilsson had previously worked as an assistant at the museum of cultural history, Kulturen in Lund, and as an assistant and curator at Nordiska Museet in 1902-1925, and it was while working there that he started preparing for the

456 Romdahl, A. L. De nya interiörerna i Göteborgs museums historiska avdelning. Göteborgs handels- och sjöfartstidning, 23.11.1918
opening of Röhsska Konstlöjdmuseet in Gothenburg.\textsuperscript{457} Nilsson did not publish extensively, but he was still an important source of inspiration for other researchers at Nordiska Museet.\textsuperscript{458} The subsequent museum director at Röhsska Gustaf Munthe, described Nilsson as a cultural historian rather than an aesthetician, who saw it as his duty to collect and preserve, saving invaluable treasures from destruction.\textsuperscript{459} Art historian Sixten Strömbom (1888-1983) described in an article written in 1941, how Nilsson was very ambitious and had been very lucky in his acquisitions for the Röhsska museum. Nilsson had salvaged parts of the façade of the Royal Opera House in Stockholm, as well as a number of 18\textsuperscript{th} century interiors from Gothenburg.\textsuperscript{460}

When the period rooms at Nordiska Museet opened in 1907 Nilsson criticised the lack of authenticity, and when he became a museum director in Gothenburg he put a lot of effort into the period rooms to make them as authentic and scientifically accurate as possible. Despite these efforts, Strömbom criticised the period rooms in Röhsska for being too close to cultural history, and remarked that it was odd that Nilsson had made this choice, despite the fact that this type of display already existed at Göteborgs Museum. Strömbom considered Göteborgs Museum to be more suitable for stylistically impure examples: a museum such as Röhsska should have more consistent examples to show.\textsuperscript{461} This reflected the persistent idea that museums of fine art and applied arts should show the most excellent and qualitative examples, and let the museums of cultural history take care of the rest. A difficulty that Nilsson had to struggle with was that the rooms in the museum were not ideal for housing the historic interiors, as the scale was so different. Nevertheless, and despite his objections, Strömbom thought that Nilsson had succeeded in creating an impression of wholeness that gave the visitor “an overview and the peace to happily explore”\textsuperscript{462}.

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{457} One of Nilsson’s main responsibilities had been to help move buildings to Skansen, for example a farmstead from Ravlunda, Scania. The move of this farmstead was considered an innovation since Nilsson did not reconstruct or make any additions, in favour of authenticity. “Det senare företaget innebar en museal nyhet såtillvida som att N till förmån för autenticitet avstod från alla försök till rekonstruktion och komplettering av monumentet.” Berg, G. Axel R Nilsson. Svenskt biografiskt lexicon. http://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/8937 (accessed: 30.01.2016)
\textsuperscript{459} Munthe, G. Tjugofem år. In Aritysk, Röhsska konstlöjdmuseet. 35-45, Gothenburg: Röhsska konstlöjdmuseet. 1941, p. 37
\textsuperscript{460} Strömbom, S. Röhsska Konstlöjdmuseet i Göteborg. Ord och Bild 27 (1918):129-145, p. 135
\textsuperscript{461} Strömbom, S. 1918, p. 139
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid. p. 136-37
\end{footnotes}
Figure 31. The gold and white painted interiors of Regeringsgatan 36, Stockholm were taken down and reconstructed in the Röhsska Konstslöjdmuseet in Gothenburg in 1916 (see fig. 21). The panels were adapted to fit the room and the floor was covered with simple wooden floors to fit the period. The focus was on style and there were no visible traces of life in these period rooms. Courtesy: Archives of Röhsska Museet

In the catalogue from 1916, describing the period rooms at Röhsska, Axel Nilsson described all of the eight interiors carefully, especially what features were original or not, and what was simply “of the period”. All of the rooms referred to an original place and function that was named and given an address. A draft from the original inventory was printed in the catalogue to emphasise the accuracy of the display.\(^\text{463}\) The reader was to understand that when the museum did not own the original furniture, the curator had chosen objects that were as similar as possible when furnishing the room. Most rooms came from houses in or close to Gothenburg; however two of the rooms came from Stockholm. One of these rooms was a drawing room from Regeringsgatan 36 in Stockholm. This was one of four rooms that had been salvaged when the fashionable department store Nordiska Kompaniet was built in 1912-15. The other three rooms from the site were integrated into the collections of Nordiska Museet. The displays at Röhsska were changed,

\(^{463}\) Nilsson, A. Äldre fasta rumsinredningar i Röhsska konstslöjdmuseet i Göteborg. Gothenburg: Röhsska konstslöjdmuseet, 1916
exchanged and discarded over the years as new collections and objectives called for new types of display.

The same year as Röhsska opened, in 1916, Sigurd Wallin at Nordiska Museet handled the publication of a guidebook describing the collections of the regional museum in Örebro, situated in Örebro Castle.\(^{464}\) Twelve years later, in 1928 the collection had tripled and the museum was described in the press as an extremely heterogeneous collection in strong need of more rational organisation and careful selection.\(^{465}\) The museum was given more space in the castle and the displays were reorganised in 1928 by curator Sven Nordenmark and the art historian and museum professional Bertil Waldén (1901-1963). After the reorganisation a new guidebook was needed and Wallin’s old guidebook was edited and extended by Waldén. Waldén’s work was assisted by six museum curators from Stockholm: Sigurd Wallin as well as Sune Lindqvist (1887-1976), Carl R. af Ugglas, Andreas Lindblom, Sixten Strömbom and Erik Lundberg. The exhibition included a section for vernacular culture and a section for the culture of the bourgeois or burgher class – not the aristocracy and clergy, as we found at Nordiska Museet. This probably reflects the fact that Örebro was a provincial town and that the collections were smaller than at Nordiska Museet.

The first room in the exhibition was arranged according to style – baroque, transition and rococo. In the guidebook, however, Waldén explained that there were too few objects on display to provide the visitor with a comprehensive understanding of the general characteristics of the different periods. He suggested that the visitor should visit other parts of the collection as a complement, to get the whole picture. The rococo was presented as the golden age of Swedish domestic culture.\(^{466}\) Uncommonly, nothing is mentioned about the qualities of the Gustavian period. The objects were placed along the walls or in display cases. In the second room, the Gustavian period was illustrated with plaster casts of decorative elements in the manor house of Skogaholm, a house which Gustaf Upmark, Jr. had set eyes on back in the 1920s and which was moved to Skansen in 1930. It is interesting that these plaster casts were made, what purpose did they serve? A plaster cast emphasises the shape and encourages comparison with other casts. Maybe they also acted as a concession to the regional museum, which “lost” Skogaholm to Skansen and Stockholm. In the display at Örebro Castle there was also furniture, painted wallpaper, musical instruments, paintings, clothes, textiles and some “smaller inventories”. The museum combined the displays

\(^{464}\) The museum originated in a collection of 28 objects in 1858, which developed into a regional museum that opened in 1887. It was first situated in Örebro Castle and moved to its present premises in 1963.

\(^{465}\) “Quelqu’un”(Lindqvist, M.) Örebro Framtidsstaden på Närkesslätten. Svenska Dagbladet söndagshilaga, 17.06.1928

\(^{466}\) “…den svenska hemkulturens egentliga guldålder.” Waldén, B. (ed.) Vägledning genom samlingarna i Örebro slott, Örebro, 1929, p. 97
that focused on the history of styles with a section for systematic cultural history (Avdelningen för systematiska kulturhistoriska samlingar). In this section the objects were presented in large glass cabinets as “…links in a development chain, a product of work or technical tool”, similar to an archaeological display. The purpose of the displays was to give the objects a context and it mimicked the set-up at Nordiska Museet, with a period room and a show case room.

In this chapter we have seen examples of how, from the end of the 19th century and during the first decades of the 20th century, the Gustavian style was mediated in both temporary and permanent exhibitions organised by museums and various societies. It was a period when an active collection process helped fill what was regarded as gaps in exhibitions of the Gustavian style, and where the period room and the showcase room were the favoured modes of display. The mix of these two modes of display offered the visitor a systematic, taxonomic as well as contextualised narrative that fitted well with the art historians’ approach to the history of style. One of the main concerns was how to achieve authenticity and create a credible whole from the objects the museums managed to procure. Using local material seemed to have added to the feeling of authenticity, even though Stockholm interiors regularly found their way into collections in other regions. The reason seem to have been that it was difficult to get hold of local interiors that were considered to be of the right quality, but also that museums such as Nordiska Museet acted as an intermediary when houses were under threat in Stockholm.

Örebro Länsmuseum, Göteborgs Museum and Röhrska Konstslöjdsmuseet were influenced by the larger museums in Stockholm and staff with experience from these museums were employed to help set up the displays. They mimicked the organisation both vertically, placing different displays on different floors, and horizontally in the combination of period rooms and showcase rooms in a linear, chronological structure. The structure was additive and the closer you got to the present the shorter each period was. This fostered the idea that the evolution of style happened at an increasing speed. The Gustavian style was an essential link in this chronological set up. The additive and chronological structure of the exhibitions helped transmit a sense of objectivity and authority. In the 1920s and 30s aesthetical ideals and ideas about museum education started to change when a more clean-cut modernist exhibition design replaced many of the older period rooms.

467 “…länk i en utvecklingskedja, som arbetsprodukt eller som tekniskt hjälpmedel.” Waldén, B. (ed.) Vägledning genom samlingarna i Örebro slott. Örebro, 1929, p. 107
3.4 Style Ensembles and White Walls

A number of new modes of display were introduced at Nationalmuseum in the period 1910s-1940s, modes that would influence the way Gustavian style was mediated. Richard Bergh, the previous director general of Nationalmuseum (1915-19) developed the concept of brygger (bridges) in the 1910s. This was a way of displaying art and design that was mainly used in the displays of painting and sculpture and reminded of Wilhelm von Bode’s Stilraum or “style rooms” in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. Bergh was motivated by his interest in developing the interaction with the audiences and bridges were created with the intention of introducing the visitors to a period, and to make them understand and feel sympathy with the past. Bridges also helped emphasise the impression of style and atmosphere to the visitor. This mode of display also meant that certain objects were ascribed a more instrumental role than others, they would assist the visitor to experience other, more important and presumably what was considered, more complicated objects.

Figure 32. Display of Gustavian style at Konstsöjdvälteningen, Nationalmuseum in 1912 (cabinet IX). The way the objects are placed and the wall paintings created the feeling of a somewhat overcrowded period room. This mode of display became unfashionable and was replaced by style ensembles in the 1920s. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

In the 1920s period rooms were abandoned and new ways of displaying objects were introduced at Konstslöjdavdelningen (The department for applied arts) at Nationalmuseum. The separation into two sections was kept; one part representing the historical development of crafts, and one part dedicated to the history of style. However, Erik Gustaf Folcker (1858-1926) wanted to exhibit fewer objects than before, and got rid of the period rooms in favour of style ensembles. The purpose of the style ensembles in Konstslöjdavdelningen was not to recreate period rooms that mimicked real and actual historical sites, but to create an aesthetical synthesis. This way of aesthetically contextualise objects was closely associated to the concept of bridges (bryggor). The objects were chosen because they best illustrated style through their aesthetical expression, an approach typical of the art museum. They were pregnant impressions of a specific style – it was style more or less devoid of cultural history, unless the visitor was already knowledgeable in this field and could generate their own associations.

In 1923, Folcker introduced new displays at Nationalmuseum, with the assistance of Erik Wettergren and Gustaf Munthe. All three were deeply involved in debates concerning the Swedish home and interior design at the time. Folcker was the curator of Konstslöjdavdelningen (1913-1919) and director general of Nationalmuseum (1919-25). Moreover, he started Svenska Slöjdforeningens Tidskrift in 1905 and was one of the leading forces of the society in the 1910s, together with Erik Wettergren. Wettergren was the secretary and chairman of Svenska Slöjdforeningen for many years, and played a vital role in the society and its reorientation towards a closer attention to the home, with an emphasis on the social activities of the society. He was the curator of Konstslöjdavdelningen (1920-28, 1934-42), and served as director general in 1942-1950. In the obituary in Form in 1961 he is said to personify...
the link between the 18th century and modernist ideals. Inspired by the ideas of the German Werkbund, and Danish design traditions he wanted to merge these values with the Swedish 18th century to create a modern Swedish design culture (en modern svensk formkultur). The design historian and editor of Form and Kontur, Arthur Hald (1916-93) described him as “…an aristocrat who knew that culture and beauty are for all”. According to Hald, Wettergren helped initiate the second golden age of Swedish craft and suggested it might have been because he loved the first golden age, the Gustavian, so intensely. Gustaf Munthe, who was involved in Svenska Slöjdforeningen, became the director of Röhsska Konstslöjdsmuseet in Gothenburg the year after he had helped introduce the new displays.

Åke Stavenow, the curator of Konstslöjdavdelningen (1928-34) and director of Svenska Slöjdforeningen (1935-1946) agreed with the change that had been introduced by his colleagues. He argued that the period room belonged in museums of cultural history and not art museums such as Nationalmuseum. In an art museum, the aim should rather be an artistically and aesthetically appealing staging of objects, in order to create a display that effectively communicated an essence of the style. von Bode’s and Bergh’s historical bridges became less popular and many of them were removed from the art galleries in the 1950s. Instead modernist ideals began to dominate, art should hang on undecorated walls and without disturbing elements such as labels. This mode of display has been described by Per-Uno Ågren as the isolating mode, and has also been favoured in many exhibitions of arts and crafts. The focus was placed on the single object and its maker and there is the impression that history and tradition have been left behind. Instead the aesthetic appeal of the object and the power of its form were promoted. Authenticity rested firmly with the materiality of the single object and maker. It was a period of transition and is possible to see traces of all of these modes of displays in the two temporary exhibitions produced during the Second World War that we will now take a closer look at.

474 Hald, A. Erik Wettergren 1883-1961, Form, no. 6(1961):344
475 Hald, A., 1961, p. 344
Figure 33. A style ensemble of the Gustavian style, Konstslöjdavdelningen. Some of the highlights in the display, described in a guidebook from 1951, included furniture produced in Sweden, pieces by Georg Haupt, a medal cabinet made by Lorentz Nordin for Queen Lovisa Ulrika (1720-1782), as well as imported furniture such as a clock by David Roentgen and a chest of drawers by P. A. Foullet. The two larger paintings are Pehr Hilleström’s depiction of Kongl. Museum at the Royal Palace (Gustav III:s Museum of Antiquities), of which there are several copies in different sizes. These paintings were used when the Kongl. Museum was reconstructed in the 1950s and the 1990s. (see fig. 38 and 39) Paintings by Pehr Hilleström Sr. were also regarded as the best way of visualising Gustavian interiors in these style ensembles and his works were put up on two of the walls. Four display cases with smaller objects were placed next to the ensemble. Undated photograph. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives
3.4.1 Temporary Exhibitions During the Second World War

The war in Europe did not stop the activities at Swedish museums, and most museum workers seem to have agreed on the importance of keeping things going. At the start of 1942, the director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, and by then former curator at Nationalmuseum, Åke Stavenow, described the challenges Sweden was facing, as war was raging in Europe, arguing for the value of artistic and cultural development as a counterweight to terrible times. In connection to this he reiterated the words of the 18th century figure Count Carl Gustaf Tessin (1695-1770) who spoke about the importance of art and crafts in Sweden. “Without arts and craft our country would become a desert and its inhabitants savages.”\(^{480}\) In 1943 Stavenow concluded in the first editorial of the year that Svenska Slöjdföreningen had gained more members in 1942 than ever before and he admitted that this might seem a surprise in times of war.\(^{481}\) His explanation was that perhaps it was the privileged escape from the pointless destruction and raging war that had made Swedish people more interested in their home and other indispensable national values. Still, the temporary exhibitions must have seemed extraordinary in times of war, and such feelings were sometimes communicated in the reviews.

And then this: in what European country could a similar exhibition be made now. Nowhere. These beautiful goods are hidden or crushed, production stands still due to lack of coal and labour, not even in Denmark is porcelain made now.\(^{482}\)

This quote, where the journalist and writer Eva von Zweigbergk (1906-84) comments on the exhibition *Rörstrand under tre århundraden*, makes the contrast between Sweden and other countries during this period blatantly obvious. In 1939 the evacuation of collections began from Nationalmuseum. The evacuations made new spaces available for temporary exhibitions, and after Livrustkammaren (The Royal Armoury) evacuated their collections, Konstslöjdavdelningen had considerably more space than before. The department used this opportunity and started to produce a number of temporary exhibitions on such topics as porcelain, silver, linen, architecture and embroidery. In this chapter we will take a closer look at two of these temporary exhibitions covering different aspects of the 18th century.

\(^{480}\) “…utan konster och handaslöjder vore vårt land en öken, och dess innebyggare ett vilt folk. Vårt konstnätsverk är en tillgång för landet och på sitt sätt har det bidragit till att vi i utlandets ögon framstå som ett kulturfolk.” Stavenow, Å. Inför 1942. *Form*, no. 1(1942):1

\(^{481}\) Stavenow, Å. 1943. *Form*, no. 1(1943):1

The 1943 exhibition *Rörstrand under tre århundraden* (*Rörstrand over three centuries*) was the result of a collaboration between Nationalmuseum and the board of the porcelain manufacturer *Rörstrand*, a company that was founded in 1726. The curators and art historians Carl Hernmarck (1901-90) and his colleague Bo Gyllensvärd (1916-2004), were responsible for organising the exhibition. It was the first time Nationalmuseum had produced a monographic exhibition of the whole production of a single company and the focus was split, towards the past as well as the future. The exhibition brought together objects from numerous contributors including the current king and prince, private collectors, the city of Stockholm, Nordiska Museet, Röhsska Konstlöjdmuseet and other regional museums. The temporary exhibition was celebrated in Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s journal *Form* as the result of professionalism and good taste.

The exhibition introduced 200 years of porcelain production and showed both unique pieces and everyday objects. New spaces had to be added for the exhibition and the solution was to construct temporary walls and screens, which can be seen in the photograph below. Nine new rooms were built and painted in a creamy white colour, a colour that must have seemed different at the time since it is commented on in several articles about the exhibition. According to Åke Stavenow and Svenska Slöjdföreningen, the exhibition architect and designer Åke Huldt (1910-1988) had succeeded in making the visitor feel an internal connection between the early 18th-century and contemporary production. The temporary rooms met modernist aesthetical ideals and were the leitmotif that helped connect the heterogeneous objects in the exhibition. However, older types of display were also used in the exhibition. The porcelain was displayed together with a few pieces of furniture representing each period in a way that resembled Bergh’s bridges mentioned earlier. Moreover, there was one element in the exhibition that can be characterised as a period room. As we can see in the photograph below, in an alcove

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483 Hernmarck started his work at Nationalmuseum in 1928 and was the director of Konstslojdavdelningen in 1946-1966. The 18th century had been of pivotal interest to him for a long time, ever since he wrote his dissertation about the portrait artist Georg Desmarées. In his research, he specialised in the 18th century and wrote extensively about silver and ceramics in particular. Bo Gyllensvärd specialised in Chinese porcelain and worked at Nationalmuseum (1943-81) while also acting as the director of Östasiatiska Museet (1959-81) and holding an academic position at Stockholm University. He was appointed a professor of art history in 1981. Other people involved in the exhibition were Nils Lindhagen, Elias Cornell and Elma Rålamb.


485 Stavenow, Å. Från 1726 till 1943. *Form*, no. 6(1943):93-98, p. 93 The production of Rörstrand was quite well researched, in 1926 Arvid Baeckström published *Rörstrand och dess tillverkningsar 1726-1926*. The exhibition in 1943 relied on this research. Carl Hernmarck and Bo Gyllensvärd wrote the catalogue for the exhibition in 1943.

486 Stavenow, Å., 1943, p. 94
a laid table was surrounded by East Indian wallpaper and Swedish furniture from the 1760s. The every day 18th century porcelain was exposed on the wall on the right, as it would have been in a contemporary country house.487

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 34. Rörstrand under tre århundraden. The staged 18th century dining room was incorporated into the otherwise clean-cut modernist displays. The wallpapers came from the manor Taxinge-Näsby and were in the museum’s collections. On the right we see a modern version of the plate shelves that can be found in many 18th century interiors. Photograph published in Form, no. 6(1943), p. 94

Two Hilleström paintings were also added to the 18th century display. These paintings featured some objects, a tureen and a plate, similar to those on display.488 Hilleström’s paintings were used to help contextualise and authenticate the objects in a display that in the main part focused on the shape and

487 “Som kontrast mot denna vardagsvara har i en annan del av rummet ordnats en festlig miljö med en färgstrålande ostindisk 1700-talstapet och ett matbord dukat med silver, fajanser och linne från tiden”. Stavenow, Å. Från 1726 till 1943. Form, no. 6(1943):93-98, p. 93
colour of the objects. The same strategy had been used in the 1929 Liljevalch exhibition of Hilleström’s art. The curators described in the Liljevalch exhibition catalogue how cultural history and art supported each other in a display. It could help the visitor appreciate times past and step into a closer familiarity with its habits and views.

With groups of contemporary objects kept until our time the contents of these paintings are highlighted with the intention of concretising even more the painter’s view of his time and help today’s viewer to tangibly perceive a passed age, to enter the life of the depicted period, and to form a close acquaintance with its habits and views. The cultural historical moment may here support the perception of the works of art, while these in turn offer rich material for a cultural historical mediation of their time.\(^\text{489}\)

The influential critic and active member of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, Gotthard Johansson was very pleased with Åke Huldt’s exhibition design at Nationalmuseum. Johansson found that the staging of the dining room and the modern version of an 18th century porcelain kitchen accompanying it lent the precise amount of period corporeality.\(^\text{490}\) The critic and writer Eva von Zweigbergk similarly found that the wallpaper used in the display offered the concept of rococo in one gaze.\(^\text{491}\) It is interesting to note that it was the 18th century display and not the other periods that urged the curators to use this more old-fashioned mode of display. The Rörstrand exhibition can be understood as an example of how the older concepts of the period room and Bergh’s bridges were used in combination with a clean-cut aesthetic that came to profoundly influence displays from the 1950s and onwards. This mix of exhibition modes can be regarded as a reflection of the transition in the modes of display used in the museum.

In 1943, the same year as the Rörstrand exhibition, Nationalmuseum organised another temporary exhibition, *Fem stora gustavianer*. The exhibition commemorated five artists, mainly painters, who all died in 1793, the year after Gustav III. In the press it was promoted as an exhibition of exceptional


\(^{490}\) "I 1700-talsalarna samla sig de blå och polykroma fajanserna till de mest utsökta stilbilder mot de ljusa väggskärmarna, och ett dukat bord mot bakgrunden av en färgstrålade kinesisk papperstapet ur museets samlingar och ett i 1700-talets anda ordnat “porslinskök” ge med en alldeles lagom konkrektion tidmiljön.” Johansson, G. Tre århundrade på Rörstrandsvernsage. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 03.04.1943

\(^{491}\) "…ger hela begreppet rokoko i en enda blick.” von Zweigbergk, E. Rörstrand under tre århundraden. *Dagens Nyheter*, 04.04.1943
artistic and historical interest.492 *Fem stora Gustavianer* became a very popular exhibition, and during the 60 days that it was open to the public 36,000 visitors came.493 The later director of Nationalmuseum, Per Bjurström, described the exhibition as a party in the bleakness of wartime Stockholm.494 Moreover, the exhibition helped break a downward trend in visitor numbers. Despite the overwhelming success, there were some negative remarks about the exhibition. The professor of art history Johnny Roosval for example, was displeased with the hanging, the rooms were too big and the curators had been too generous in their selection of works, he argued.495 He was also unhappy about the fact that the glass roof had been covered, denying the paintings the magic of sunshine. At the beginning of the 1930s electric light had been installed above the glass ceiling, an installation that made it possible to keep the museum open in the evenings twice a week.496

Figure 35. *A number of photographs of visitors in the exhibition Fem stora gustavianer were produced and used when promoting the exhibition. On the right we see an excerpt from an article in Svenska Dagbladet 22 November 1943. The article explains that it had been a very successful year for Nationalmuseum despite the evacuation of the collections. Their effort in attracting the audience by offering more lectures and guided tours had paid off, this exhibition alone attracted an audience of 36,000. There were several paintings by Alexander Roslin included the exhibition, for example Damen med slöjan from 1786 (seen in the photograph on the right), which also featured on the exhibition poster. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives"

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492 Wettergren, E. Press release Fem stora Gustavianer, Archives of Nationalmuseum, 1943
As was the case in the Rörstrand exhibition, the objects in the exhibition were on loan from the king, other museums, art dealers and private collectors. In the 1940s classes on school trips to Stockholm visited the exhibitions at Nordiska Kompaniet as they would museums such as Nationalmuseum.\footnote{497} The 1940s became a period of numerous collaborations between museums and commercial actors resulting in both sponsorship and commercial production. This meant that several of the temporary exhibitions were sponsored; either by direct collaborations with companies or in some cases wealthy businessmen. The car manufacturer Gunnar V. Philipsson donated a lorry, which kept transport costs much lower. The businessman and founder of Nordiska Kompaniet, Joseph Sachs (1872-1949) also sponsored the exhibition. The department store Nordiska Kompaniet had cultural as well as commercial ambitions and collaborated with museums as well as Svenska Slöjdföreningen.\footnote{498} Apart from sponsoring museum exhibitions, the department store offered exhibitions of crafts and cultural history in the department store itself, and naturally goods were sold in conjunction with these exhibitions.

The period room was gone, instead furniture on display was either used as anonymous “bridges” or celebrated as individual pieces of works of art, such as the throne chair by Jean Eric Rehn seen in the photograph below. The exhibition promoted Rehn as the introducer of the Gustavian style, and in a speech to the Friends of the Museum, the curator Carl Hernmarck pointed out that Rehn had not yet been duly appreciated.\footnote{499} For many of the visitors to the exhibition Rehn was still a new name or at least “a name without a specific content”.\footnote{500} As we saw in the previous chapter, this situation changed during the 1930s and 40s and Rehn became an important part of the narrative. The exhibition catalogue Fem stora gustavianer included several photographs of exteriors and interiors attributed to Jean Eric Rehn, the only one of the five artists who focused on interior decoration.\footnote{501} None of the paintings in the catalogue were photographed as part of an interior. In the illustrations they are without context, a fact that illustrates the difference made between painting and objects of interior design, where paintings were seen as art and not as part of an interior.
Figure 36. The exhibition Fem stora gustavianer (1943) featured Queen Lovisa Ulrika’s throne by Jean Eric Rehn from 1751. This chair has been included in several of Nationalmuseum’s exhibitions e.g. Gustaf III (1972/73) and was sent abroad for the exhibition Tresor d’Arts Suedois Louvre Paris (1963) and Solen och Nordstjärnan (1993). A slim folder accompanied the exhibition, revealing information about each work on display, which had numbers attached to them. The visitors can be seen holding the folder in the photograph above. The visitors were also offered guided tours and lectures. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

In the introduction of the exhibition catalogue the responsible museum curator, Sixten Strömbom, explains that in times of war it was even more important to clarify the importance of a Swedish national heritage. However, it had to be the right kind of nationalism, a good nationalism. A bad nationalism on the other hand encouraged aggression toward other states, and had led to the ongoing war. In the spirit of good nationalism director general

Wettergren made a statement in the catalogue against the war, expressing his hopes that the publication would contribute to the love of a period when Swedish art had flourished and when no false nationalism built barriers against impulses from the crowning country of art (France). In a speech on the radio on 5 October 1943, Gustaf Näsström described the effect that exhibitions of material culture can have in times of war. He explained how the exhibition made the visitor experience something fundamental about the Swedish 18th century, something that would make life richer, and our understanding of Swedish culture broader. Näsström argued that an exhibition like this could be seen as an act of spiritual preparedness, making us understand why new sacrifices had to be made to defend our national culture. In this sense Fem stora gustavianer was seen as an expression of nationalism focused on a peaceful cultural heritage, and the rococo and Gustavian styles were used to demonstrate sympathy towards, and good relations primarily with France.

One of the negative impacts the war had on the exhibition was the difficulties Wettergren experienced when he wanted to include some paintings made by Carl Gustaf Pilo (1711-1793), a Swedish artist who lived and worked in Denmark for more than 30 years. The desired paintings were in Danish possession, but the country had been invaded by Germany in 1940, which made transport very difficult. When the paintings finally arrived the income from the entrance fees 21 October 1943 was donated to help Danish war refugees. Gotthard Johansson saw the arrival of the paintings as a message from a country in need and a sign that the contact between the two countries had not been completely broken. Outside the museum the Danish and Swedish flags were hung next to each other. The crown prince visited the exhibition, which now included Pilo’s paintings. The day after the visit at

504 “När vi gått igenom en sådan utställning känner vi att vi upplevat något väsentligt om vårt svenska 1700-tal, något som gör vårt eget liv rikare. Och vårt begrepp om svensk kultur har vidgats. Vårt kulturella arv har vuxit i vårt medvetande. Att detta är i en tid av krigshot får vårt och våra barns här vi också hoppas. En utställning som denna även fattas som en akt av andlig beredskap. På det mest gripbara sätt vill den klargöra en sida av vår kultur, ge oss ett av de många svaren på det stora varför; varför nya offer äro stora nog att försvara vår nationella kultur.” Näsström, G. Radioanförande. 05.10.1943, written document in the archives of Nationalmuseum, F1: 52
506 Johansson, G. Pilo hälsar från Danmark. Svenska Dagbladet, 22.10.1943
507 The last week of the exhibition it also included a couple of paintings by the painter von Krafft, paintings that were on loan from Germany’s former secretary of state for foreign affairs, Richard von Kühelman (1873-1948). Anon. Tyskfredsförhandlare 1918 i Stockholm med porträtt. Svenska Dagbladet, 26.11.1943
Nationalmuseum, the crown prince was present at the exchange of prisoners of war in Gothenburg.

Sweden belongs to a category of smaller states with a long nation state history that have traditionally used museums to define the nation as far back in history as possible and to display examples of the country’s scientific and aesthetic grandeur, partly to compensate for territorial decline and loss of imperial ambition. The Gustavian period and style has continuously been used to express such an aesthetic grandeur. During the Second World War it also seems to have represented an appropriate manifestation of nationalism that didn’t promote aggression while at the same time allowing for nationalist sentiments to be expressed openly, discreetly promoting the bond with France and neighbouring Nordic countries. These exhibitions contributed to the imagining and defining of the nation at a time of crisis and where political pressures only allowed for specific expressions of nationalism.

In the two temporary exhibitions described, there was only one display that resembled a period room, and apart from this room the curators seem to have had little interest in displaying art works in a material context. Instead we can see how modernist aesthetical ideals influenced the displays; however, some of the simpler solutions might also have been due to financial restraints during the war. The period rooms was been more or less replaced by ensembles or individual objects in front of “a neutral” background, emphasising a focus on the individual object or artist. Instead of objects or lengthy texts, it was guided tours and the catalogues that provided the context. In the exhibitions described below the neutral walls were completely abandoned in favour of full-scale reconstructions of historical rooms - spaces that would provide new possibilities.

3.5 Reconstructions of Space

The museum has little by little become a show. Things happen, the guides are supposed to entertain, the children to be kept busy, music is played and lectures given. The notorious dust in the museum whirls up. No longer should the visitor passively look but also be active himself: test, experiment, touch, smell, paint, card, spin and build his own igloo.

509 “Allt mer har museet blivit show. Det händer saker, guiderna ska underhålla, barnen sys-

selsättas, det spelas musik och hålls föredrag. Det ökända museidammet virvlar upp. Besökaren

skal inte längre ‘passivt’ titta, utan också göra något själv: testa, experimentera, röra, lukta, måla,
kardas, spinnas och bygga sin egen igloo.” Ehn, B. Pedagogisering och kulturpolitik. Tvärsnitt.
This is how, in his book *Museendet* (1986), the ethnologist Billy Ehn described the new type of museum that emerged in the 1980s. In the 1980s and 90s, following the advance of the heritage boom and the expansion of the experience economy many museums felt the popular, but also political and economic demand for more atmosphere and greater variety of stories in the exhibitions.\(^{510}\) Displays should involve all the senses, evoking feelings such as curiosity, sensuality and adventure. The designer and writer Helena Henschen suggested in an article from 1990 that these more experiential, aesthetically appealing and imaginative exhibitions, exemplified by the new Vasamuseet, would have appealed to Arthur Hazelius, the creator of Nordiska Museet and Skansen.\(^{511}\) It is not farfetched to draw this historical parallel with Hazelius, but the increasingly experiential museum displays were not only a reference to the past, they were also influenced by new museology and a dissatisfaction with the authoritative statements that could be found in museums. Per-Uno Ågren has described this new type of exhibition as the metarealistic exhibition, which allowed “questions, doubts and uncertainties so as to arouse intellectual curiosity and reflection”.\(^{512}\) The history of styles and specifically the Gustavian style was mediated also in this “new” type of museum.

Because of the experience-based focus, full-scale reconstructions fulfilled an important role in the museum landscape of the 1990s. I would argue that this was due to the fact that they could realise the aspirations of the experiential as well as the metarealistic museum. Presently, we will explore how the Gustavian style was mediated in two exhibition spaces and full-scale reconstructions curated by Nationalmuseum, Gustav III:s Antikmuseum and Sörby. These two examples represent two different ways of using the reconstruction process in a museum context. Moreover, they represent different approaches to using and revivifying our experience of the past. Using reconstructions in museum displays was certainly not unheard of at the time, many of the period rooms described in this chapter consisted largely of reconstructions. However, many of the reconstructions in the 1990s were on a different scale, and the process-oriented focus and interest in communicating traditional craft skills can be considered as a new feature. Many of the reconstructions outside the capital were EU funded projects offering unemployed craftsmen the chance to learn traditional crafts. For example the East India-man Götheborg III (first initiated in the 1980s), the court theatre Confidence (1994-97, 2003-2004), Mälby Säteri (1996-2000) and at the project *Åter till 1700-talet* at Gunnebo House and Garden, Mölndal (initiated in 1996, reconstruction work is still ongoing and includes both buildings and gardens). All of these reconstructions were based on different sources of information, such as accounts, archaeological finds, artworks, drawings and knowledge

\(^{510}\) Harrison, R. *Heritage: critical approaches*. Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, p. 68

\(^{511}\) Henschen, H. Låt konstnärerna sätta fräs på museerna. *Aftonbladet*, 02.07.1990

about traditional craft. Sources that helped contribute to different aspects of authenticity.

Figure 37. Pehr Hilleström’s painting painting Spelparti hos statssekreterare Elis Schröderheim (see fig. 77) extended in 3D in the 2015 exhibition Med hemmet i blickpunktten. The large photographs of the paintings created an interesting mix of style ensemble and period room. The people in Hilleström’s paintings very effectively populate the rooms when being enlarged to full size. Exhibition designer and scenographer Henrik Widenheim created the exhibition design. Since the 1990s he has produced numerous exhibitions for Nationalmuseum and the Röhsska Museum, Gothenburg. Photographer: Per Myrehed. Courtesy: Sven Harry’s Konstmuseum

3.5.1 Using Art as a Source of Information

Authenticity is one of the core values of museum practice and heritage management and finding reliable sources of information has been a constant dilemma. We will now look closer at a much-used source of information – the artworks produced by the 18th century painter Pehr Hilleström Sr. Throughout the period studied they have been used because of their perceived matter of factness. Gösta Selling referred to Hilleström’s work as a “goldmine” for those who wanted to reconstruct the rooms of times past - if the paintings were used as critically as other sources of information.513

When making a reconstruction you need to start by defining your aim in making a reconstruction. This aim will then determine what kind of reconstruction you make, and what sources of information should be used to help you achieve the types of authenticity you are aiming for. The sources of information available determine how close to the original creative process you can come. These sources may include archival material, archaeological examinations, artwork, material remains, memories, traditional craftsmanship and learning from the reconstruction process itself. In an article published in 1912 the museum director Axel L. Romdahl discussed the difficulties when bringing pieces of old furniture back to life and suggested that we should use art as a source of evidence and inspiration. Art works have always been one of the major information sources for reconstructions, even if their strengths and weaknesses as a reliable source have been debated.

Sometimes we try to achieve a unity, where, in a natural and orderly way, they can be included as parts, an interior in a museum or a castle. But, still the old furniture remains homeless fragments from the past that can never be brought back to life by our hands. Ours is only the shape but not the spirit that makes it come alive.514

The article Romdahl wrote was aimed at the members of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, and refers to a dilemma in private homes as well as museum displays. The difficulty has always been to make museum interiors and objects feel authentic and speak to the visitor, to give them life. Axel L. Romdahl spoke from his own experience. He had studied art history in Uppsala and then worked at Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet before moving to the art museum in Gothenburg. As I have mentioned earlier he had helped prepare the new displays at Nordiska Museet that would open to the public in 1907. When creating the period rooms he found it difficult to create displays that would seem trustworthy. In the article he argued that a style would remain peculiar as long as we do not see the true connection to the people who lived their lives in these interiors. And where better to learn about this connection than to study the rooms and objects in prints and paintings?515 Here it was possible to see how people and interiors related to one another and how furniture and objects were arranged.

Hilleström Sr. depicted the everyday life and homes of the bourgeoisie, including groceries and household utensils, but also the work in the mines that so many 18th century people were so fascinated by. Hilleström Sr. meticulously rendered the matter of factness of bourgeois life and has been celebrated as

515 Romdahl, A L. 1912, p. 7
the objective eye, quite ordinary according to many writers, but most of the
time trustworthy. He is often referred to as a Swedish Chardin, described as
not being as good as his French colleague, but the one who brought genre
painting to Sweden, and he shared some of Chardin’s fascination for banal
rituals of domesticity.

It was Oscar Levertin who suggested to the future professor of art history,
museum curator and director Osvald Sirén (1879-1966) that he should write
his dissertation on Hilleström Sr. The dissertation Pehr Hilleström d. ä.: väfvaren och
målaren, hans liv och hans värk was published in 1900. After being popular, almost
too popular according to Sirén, the painter’s reputation had faded, and Sirén
set out to establish the artist as part of the art historical canon.516 In Svensk
konsthistoria (1913) the paintings of Pehr Hilleström Sr. are referred to as
invaluable documents of fashion and interiors because of faithful rendering
of details; however, Axel Gauffin found that most of them lacked feeling or
atmosphere.517 Hilleström Sr. had been a prolific painter, and even though
Sirén did extensive research he never assumed that he would be able to pre-
sent a complete catalogue of works, as there seems to have been over 1,000
paintings, many of them in private collections. Gerda Cederblom (1867-1931)
later attempted a complete catalogue in her two volumes on Pehr Hillerström
Sr., published in 1927 and 1929.518 Cederblom was an expert in textile and
costume at Nordiska Museet where she was employed in 1900-31. Sirén and
Cederblom both emphasised the painter’s ability to portray culture and peo-
ple’s lives in the Gustavian era, and Hilleström’s role as a reporter of Gusta-
vian life has been well established throughout the century.

Undeniably, Hilleström’s art has become an important source for recon-
structions of the Gustavian period. Hilleström’s paintings, originals and re-
productions, seemed to have added a feeling of authenticity to the display.
However, because of the snapshot quality of his paintings, they have also
been carefully tested against a reality. When confronted with paintings such as
Hilleström’s, it is “difficult to repress the sense of viewing a snapshot” as the
historian Peter Burke phrases it in Eyewitnessing: The uses of images as his-
torical Evidence (2005). Burke’s approach, similar to Romdahl’s is that the testimony
of prints and painting was valuable because they show artefacts as well as
their organisation.519

After the publication of Cederblom’s first volume the conservator Sven
Drakenberg (1904-1979) investigated this matter further in an article in RIG,
a journal for cultural history and ethnology. He asked how much trust one

516 Sirén, O. Pehr Hilleström d. ä.: väfvaren och målaren, hans liv och hans värk. Univ. Diss. University
of Helsinki, Stockholm: Marcus, 1900, p. 196
517 Gauffin A. Frihetstidens och gustavianska tidens måleri. In Svensk konsthistoria. Romdahl, A.
L. and Roosval, J. (eds.) 374-425, Stockholm: Ljus, 1913, p. 410
519 Burke, P. Eyewitnessing: The uses of images as historical evidence [E-resource]. London: Reaktion
Books Ltd., 2005, p. 99
could put in a Hilleström painting. This was a question that would have greatly interested museum curators, art historians and cultural historians at a time when the number of reconstructions made at historic sites was increasing. Drakenberg drew comparisons with preserved interiors, objects, literature and art, and concluded that Hilleström’s proportions were often wrong and that the artist added details that were meant to flatter the buyer. In addition, Hilleström was mostly interested in the people he depicted, not the interiors, according to Drakenberg. Instead, Hilleström was most faithful in his rendering of simpler interiors, and household and kitchen utensils. This corresponds to Peter Burke’s observation that art might primarily give you clues about the arrangement of objects and the social uses, for example how to hold a fork. “So far as the history of material culture is concerned, the testimony of images seems to be most reliable in the small details.” Drakenberg concluded his article by stating that Hilleström was an artist, with artistic licence, but keeping that in mind, he could be of great value to the cultural historian.

In 1929, the same year as the second volume of Pehr Hilleström som kulturskildrare was published, Nordiska Museet set up an exhibition at Liljevalchs Konsthall called Gustavianskt skildrat av Pehr Hilleström (Gustavian portrayed by P.H.). In the exhibition the paintings and interior decoration, household utensils, clothes, tools and theatre costumes were all displayed together. The exhibition included about 400 of Hilleström’s paintings curated by Gerda Cederblom. Her colleagues Sigurd Wallin, Arvid Baeckström and Gösta Selling arranged the period rooms that alluded to Hilleström’s paintings assisting the visitor in stepping into the life of the past. 18 institutions and 181 private collectors contributed works by Hilleström. Many of those who contributed came from the nobility or academia. The idea was that the combined displays of paintings and period rooms would make Hilleström’s images of the period more real and help the contemporary viewer understand the past in a more palatable way. The objects could help the visitor enter the period and become familiar with its life, customs and views of the world. However, it was not the exact objects that are in a painting that were on display. The curators aimed for a more general affinity, and the museum encouraged the

520 Drakenberg, S. Pehr Hilleström och det Gustavianska hemmet. no. 1-2(1929):73-82 p. 82
522 Drakenberg, S. Pehr Hilleström och det Gustavianska hemmet. RIG, no. 1-2(1929):73-82 p.82
523 "att stiga in i den skildrade periodens liv..." The exhibition showed objects from numerous museum collections. John Böttiger at Kungliga Husgerådskammaren contributed with textiles created by Hilleström, the theatre and carousel display was done in collaboration with Agne Beijer at Drottningholms Teatremuseum. The mining display was done in collaboration with Jernkontoret and Sixten Rönnow, tools were on loan from Tekniska Museet. Liljevalchs konsthall. Gustavianskt, skildrat av Pehr Hilleström: Stockholm den 28 mars – 21 april 1929; utställningen anordnad av Nordiska museet, Katalog no. 78. Stockholm, 1929, p. 5
524 E.g. Fredrik Lilljekvist (who was the exhibition architect for Den gustavianska utställningen 1891), Otto Hilleström, Werner von Heidenstam, A Lagrelius, Eric von Rosen, A Sahlin, Henrik Schück, members of the Wachtmeister and Wallenberg families and Emma Zorn.
visitors to make comparisons between the painting and the objects on display. Three period rooms were set up to enable just such a comparison, something that Hillerström’s interiors encouraged.525 According to the curators, the mix of Rococo and Gustavian in Hilleström’s interiors added to the authenticity of the paintings. Such a mix would have been found in most interiors, the stylistically pure interiors were ideal but not real according to the curators. The proportions on the other hand were wrong, since the heights of the rooms had been much exaggerated. Another detail that was pointed out to the visitor was the fact that many of the same objects and clothes appeared in several of his paintings, could they have been Hilleström’s own objects, brought along to create a suitable setting? Stig Fogelmarck concluded in 1947 that:

To tell the truth one has to admit that good old Hilleström does not justice in his representation of furniture. In some respects his sense of proportion and refinement of details seem to be lacking. The furniture of the time speaks for itself better than by Hilleström’s mediation.526

Gösta Selling, who was deeply involved in many of the reconstructions at Skansen, actually promoted the inventory above the art by Hilleström or Lafrensen. These were pictures that he found gave the wrong impression of 18th century interiors.527 The artists presented them as much more homely and comfortable than they actually were according to Selling, the more “sober inventories” showed the homes as much more representative and ceremonious. Despite these and other objections regarding the exact likeness in paintings by Hilleström they have been a main source of information for museum curators when creating displays of the Gustavian style since the turn of the 20th century. Hilleström’s attention to detail has given his paintings a quality that curators have been trying to recreate. However, paintings of domestic interiors have to be approached as an artistic genre, and as we have seen in the case of Hilleström, the artist’s intention could be to record faithfully but also to idealise and to capture the still-life drama of the period. I believe that the potential of Hilleström in a museum context is his ability to create what we can today apprehend as a combination of “snapshot quality” and the feeling that he captured the essence of a period, the total look, a “still life gaze”

525 “…vartill de Hilleströmska heminteriörerna inbjuda.” Liljevalchs konsthall, Gustavianskt, skildrat av Pehr Hilleström: Stockholm den 28 mars – 21 april 1929: utställningen anordnad av Nordiska museet, Katalog no. 78, Stockholm, 1929, p. 68

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that resembles what we today can find on the pages of interior design magazines.\textsuperscript{528}

The ability of Hilleström’s art to help “make space” was further explored in 2015, when Sven-Harry’s Konstmuseum in Stockholm exhibited about 40 of his paintings. The exhibition \textit{Med hemmet i blickpunkten} focused on Gustavian homes and interiors. Seven institutions and a number of private collectors contributed to the exhibition. Large photographs with blown up details of some of the paintings were used as backdrops for ensembles with antique furniture. These ensembles emphasised the feeling of snapshots – it was as if the visitor had put on 3-D glasses and stepped into the Gustavian period. New period furniture placed in some of the rooms added to this feeling, as you could actually sit on these chairs. Another feature of the exhibition and a permanent feature of the museum is that on the roof of the art museum there is a replica of the first floor of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century house Ekholmsnäs. The original house used to be the home of the founder of the museum, Sven Harry Karlsson, a collector and wealthy building contractor. On the museum’s webpage Karlsson asserts his own interest in art and interior design. “I have always been interested in interior design and always hang my paintings myself because I know exactly how I want it. Everything goes together, carpets, furniture, the room and the art – they form a totality, and that is how they should be shown.”\textsuperscript{529} Consequently, the replica of Karlsson’s home acts as a giant display case or period room, for Karlsson’s art collection, and the feeling of entering a historical space, suggested downstairs in the Hilleström exhibition, is realised in this full-scale reconstruction.

\subsection*{3.5.2 Reconstructing Gustav III:s Antikmuseum (1992)}

A visit to Gustav III’s Museum of Antiquities is a journey through time and space that opens the door to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, as well as Roman antiquity.\textsuperscript{530}

Kongl. Museum in the Royal Palace in Stockholm, one of the earliest public art museums in Europe, is one of the most well-known, late Gustavian spaces in Sweden. It is closely associated with King Gustav III, as well as the popular image of the Gustavian period as a golden age for art and culture. The museum was reconstructed and reopened, first in the the 1950s and then again in the 1990s, and the new spaces offered visitors “a journey through


time and space” spurred by historically informed performances as well as exhibitions of contemporary art.

In 1958 the larger gallery was reconstructed and reopened under the new name Gustav III: s Antikmuseum (Gustav III’s Museum of Antiquities). The antique sculptures that were part of the original display were traced and returned to the larger gallery. The architect Ivar Tengbom (1878-1968), who was appointed palace architect in 1922, was responsible for the reconstruction carried out in 1956-58. The smaller north gallery was reconstructed much later, in 1991-1992. The palace architect Ove Hidemark (1931-2015) was responsible for this later reconstruction. He also worked at Drottningholm Palace, for example on the continuous care of the Gustavian theatre, and had long experience of working in historical buildings. Hidemark had a keen interest in both preserving the patina of old buildings as well as building new houses using old techniques and materials. At the time he was also responsible for another major project, the reconstruction of the burnt down 17th-century church, Katarina Kyrka, in Stockholm. Hidemark kept the same vision Tengbom had in the 1950s, to reconstruct the museum the way it looked when it opened in 1794, thus offering the visitor a unique museum space from the late 18th century. The reopening of the museum on 28, June 1992 coincided with the bicentenary of the museum but also of the king’s death in 1792. Today the collection is the responsibility of Nationalmuseum, while Ståthållarämbetet runs the museum.

Only three months after the death of Gustav III, in 1792, the first public art museum in Sweden, the Kongl. Museum, was founded and two years later it was inaugurated. The museum was placed in the northeast wing of the Royal Palace, and became one of the first public art museums in the world; the Louvre in Paris was inaugurated the year before, in 1793. The collections included the antique Roman sculptures that the king bought in Italy in 1783-84.531 The collection was one of a number of royal and private collections across Europe where artefacts of classical antiquity were the prime objects. These collections signalled “…universal values of goodness (virtue), truth (reason) and beauty (aesthetics) as well as a historical tradition of state making.”532 Gustav III planned to house the collection at Haga. However, the construction plans at Haga were never realised.

After the king’s death in 1792 the decision was quickly made to create a museum in the Royal Palace in Stockholm. Many of the princely collections were translated into public domains in the 18th century. This meant that their

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531 The sculptures have been left in the same condition as they were in the 1790s. The sculptures have some later attributes that were put there to accommodate Gustav III’s wishes to buy a group that included Apollo and all of the nine muses. Leander-Touati, A.-M. Rekonstruktion av den äldsta uppställningen i Stenmuseum. In Kongl. Museum: rum för ideal och bildning: en konstbok från Nationalmuseum. Söderlind, S. (ed.) 139-150, Stockholm: Streiffert, 1993

function transformed – now the objects embodied “…a representative publicness of and for the power of the king.”

The first curator was Carl Fredrik Fredenheim (1748-1803), who had previously assisted the king with his collections. In 1794 the museum opened to the public one day a week. Contemporary sculpture was added to the display in the early 19th century, changing the character of the museum and making it more in line with new French and German models. In 1838 the smaller gallery was refurbished and used to exhibit oil paintings. The spaces in the museum became more and more crammed and the collections were moved into Nationalmuseum’s new building when it opened in 1866. The Swedish National Library used the spaces until 1877. In 1884 the Royal Armoury moved in and remained there until 1906, when the collections were moved to Nordiska Museet.

Figure 38. Hilleström’s first version of the smaller North gallery of Kongl. Museum (The Rosersberg collection, NM Rbg 41). There exist three original paintings of the same room painted around 1794-96. When comparing these paintings we can see that the room appears different in size. In 1929 the museum amanuensis at Nordiska Museet, Gerda Cederblom pointed out a number of features in the paintings of the gallery that Hilleström had improved on. However, also the original room tried to look more lavish than it was, one example is the stone flooring, which was painted on the wooden floor boards, a common feature in Gustavian interiors. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives (Dimensions 44,5 × 60,5 cm)

Before the reconstructions could begin a closer examination of the changes in the building was needed. A number of different sources of information were consulted, for example a guiding text from around 1794, account books, inventories, extant paint layers and drawings and physical evidence found at the site. The reconstructions in the early 1990s mainly focused on the smaller gallery and were much assisted by Pehr Hilleström Sr.’s paintings of the gallery. Hilleström also created paintings of the large gallery as well as an external view from Logården around 1794-96. Two of the paintings were rediscovered as late as 1992 and 1993. Hilleström’s paintings were also vital for the reconstruction of how the objects were placed in the room.

Figure 39. Hilleström’s painting (NM Rö 41) was the source for this drawing done by Christer Lindstedt at the architectural office of Ove Hidemark. The paintings differed in their rendering of details, proportion and size of the rooms and several drawings had to be made to fully explore the room through the paintings. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

535 The examination was carried out by Monica Hector and Lars Ljungström. Hector, M. Byggnadshistorisk utredning, 1991. A building archaeology examination was carried out by Lennart Tjernberg in 1991.
Ulf G Johnsson, curator at Nationalmuseum, has described how he studied the paintings in great detail and how they enabled him to enter the room in his mind. Once the reconstruction was completed, he felt as if he could literally cross the boundaries of time and space when entering the room.538

“When you intensely regard pictures of this kind, which so consciously strive to give you a feeling of space, they can suddenly come towards you giving you a feeling of entering them and finally being embraced by the room.”539

Today three of Hilleström’s paintings hang in the smaller Egyptian gallery, which so far has not been reconstructed. The paintings invite the visitor to make a comparison, which frequently has been the enlightening purpose of Hilleström’s art.

Figure 40. Populating the reconstructed space. The Swedish King and Queen and the head of Nationalmuseum Olle Granath at the inauguration of the new spaces of Gustav III:s Antikmuseum in 1992. Courtesy: Kungliga Hovstaterna Photographer: Alexis Daflos

Another important aspect of Hilleström’s paintings, and why they are so captivating, is the people depicted in them. Art historian and historian of ideas

539 “När man intensivt betraktar bilder av det här slaget, som så medvetet eftersträvar en rumsskapande effekt, kan de plötsligt komma glidande emot en så att man till sist tycker sig stiga in i dem och omslutas av rummet.” Johnsson U. G., 1993, p. 135
Per Widén has suggested that the visitors we see in Hilleström’s paintings probably correspond to a real public, or at least an ideal public for the Kongl. Museum. The people we see in the paintings represent a well-educated public from the privileged classes of both sexes. During the reconstruction process in the 1990s there were constant negotiations about how best to accommodate contemporary visitors. There needed to be toilets, lighting, heating and somewhere to sell tickets. After the reopening of the museum there were regularly visitors populating the spaces. However, the museum has also been used for performances including elements of historical re-enactment. The year after the reopening of Gustav III:s Antikmuseum, in the summer of 1993, artists were brought in to comment on and invigorate the historical space in the exhibition Sublima små stunder. The artists exhibiting were Maja Spasova, Sissel Tolaas, Susanne Torstensson and Fredrik Wretman. Nationalmuseum was responsible for the exhibition and engaged Elisabeth Haitto as curator. Haitto proudly announced in the exhibition catalogue that the reconstructed museum was now “…one of Europe’s most exciting museum premises”. Haitto remarked that, since this was the world’s oldest art museum, it had brought on the idea of returning to its origins and to scrutinising antique and classical ideals in order to see how contemporary artists would employ them, and all of the artworks in some way related to, or commented on, the concept of the sublime or the sculptures in the museum.

The artists in this exhibition visited the place themselves and they offer a greeting to their classical past from a classical present, speaking a contemporary language and, perhaps, pointing to a classical future.

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541 In 1993 the museum started a collaboration with Medelhavsmuseet offering a guided tour featuring both the museums. “En vandring i antikens värld”.
544 Maja Spasova’s installation included medals with quotes by classical thinkers that were planned to hang around the neck of the nine muses in the gallery. These medals caused controversies between the artist, curator and the museum; one of the arguments was that they were potentially harmful to the sculptures. Other arguments were strictly curatorial and included a discussion about who would have the final say in the exhibition, the artist or the curator, and the argument resulted in a debate in the press and the removal of the medals. For example: Wall, Å. Bråk på Antikmuseum. Svenska Dagbladet, 23.06.1993. and Madestrand, B. Kulon. Expressen, 17.06.1993
The intention was to offer the visitor the sublime and the unexpected according to the information sent out to the press. This was only one of many similar exhibitions at the time where artists interacted with a site or a collection, and it has since proved to be an increasingly popular way of renewing historic sites. A contemporary example was Museum für angewandte Kunst, a museum of applied arts in Vienna, which reopened in 1994. The museum invited international artists to help present the collection together with the curators. One of the consequences of the intervention was that the voice of the curator became much more visible and transparent. Today, perhaps the best known example is the annual exhibitions featuring contemporary artists at Château de Versailles that started in 2008.

Figure 41. People gathering in the larger gallery at the opening of the exhibition Sublima små stunder at Gustav III:s Antikmuseum, 1993. Sissel Tolaas installation of plastic bags filled with air from an air conditioner can be seen on the right. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

The role of these exhibitions is to revivify the site, filling it with creativity and life, and to make people ask “I wonder what is happening at the museum today?” and hopefully return to find out. In some of them, for example Wilson’s exhibition, the artist is allowed to express a more critical stance against the institution, although this is quite rare. Sublima små stunder was presented as a way of instilling new life and unexpected sensations into a collec-

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tion of antique sculptures.\footnote{“Det blir oväntade upplevelser i samspelet mellan den klassiska konsten och dagens konst. Fyra unga konstnärer har inspirerats av miljön men samtidigt behållit sin egen integritet och genom detta fört in nytt liv i den antika skulptursamlingen.” TT Nyhetsbyrå. Kultur i korthet. Tidningsnamns telegrambyrå, 10.06.1993} The antique sculptures were used as a source of inspiration for the artists, but they were not allowed to make changes in the permanent display, the contemporary art was an addition, a temporary comment.

To conclude, the reopening of Gustav III:s Antikmuseum in 1992 spurred a number of uses of the reconstructed space. The reconstruction was, as with so many other staged Gustavian interiors, mainly based on paintings by Pehr Hilleström Sr., which included detailed, although not completely accurate, renderings of the museum spaces. The aim was to recreate the visitor experience in 1794. Today when entering the museum the most clearly legible time layers are antiquity, the late 18th century and 1794, and the reconstructions in the 1950s and 1990s. The long period when it functioned as a museum in the 19th and 20th century is more or less lost. The main types of authenticities that appear to have been relevant in the reconstruction are use and function, location and setting and form and design. The professor of archaeology and ancient history Anne-Marie Leander Touati concluded in 1993 that the museum had an atmosphere of authenticity and harmony, arguing that the modern restorers were responsible for the former, while the first museum curator Fredenheim was responsible for the harmony.\footnote{Leander-Touati, A-M. Rekonstruktionen av den älsta uppställningen i Stenmuseum. In Kongl. Museum: rum för ideal och bildning: en konstbok från Nationalmuseum. Söderlind, S. (ed.) 139-150, Stockholm: Streiffert, 1993, p. 156} Once the museum space was recreated it could be revived and repopulated, adding in different ways to a feeling of authenticity. The exhibition “Sublima små stunder” in 1993 added a contemporary comment on the neoclassical heritage celebrated by these interiors, thus recreating some of the sense of novelty the visitors must have felt in 1794, visiting one of the first public art museums in Europe. The museum has also helped to underline the role Gustav III’s trip to Italy in 1783-84 has in our understanding of the Gustavian period and the development of the Gustavian style.

3.5.3 Sörby – a Manor House for the Future (1994)

In the summer of 1994 a full-scale reconstruction of an 18th century manor house could be seen in the yard outside Nationalmuseum. The Sörby exhibition was intended as a source of inspiration for private individuals and commercial enterprises to create their own version of the Sörby house. Still, the exhibition catalogue declared that the intention was not to mass-produce the house, rather to show how close contemporary values are to the simple ra-
tionalism of the 18th century. This was an objective that recalls the close relationship museums have had with the furniture industry, as described previously in this chapter. Although now it was not only the furniture but a whole house that was promoted. Stads-hypotek, a company which provided mortgages for house builders helped finance the exhibition and received a prize for “best cultural sponsoring” in 1995. The jury handing out the prize specifically pointed out how the collaboration, in a new and exciting way, had managed to promote the message about quality in housing. In his historical exposé of architectural conservation the architectural historian Fredrik Bedoire mentions Sörby as an example of the many new manor houses, inspired by 18th century manor houses that were built in the Swedish countryside around the turn of the millenium. Further, he compares this trend to the situation at the start of the 20th century, and the new manor houses created by the architect Isak Gustaf Clason (1856-1930).

The Sörby house was a copy of a small stately-home in Närke, built in the 17th century, but restored in the 1780s. The plan originated in the type plans that were distributed by the army for use within the allotment system, which provided housing for soldiers. The original Sörby house was in pretty bad condition and was renovated in conjunction with the exhibition project. During the restoration later additions from the 19th century were removed and part of the removed material was re-used to create the copy placed outside Nationalmuseum. IKEA provided the furniture, displaying examples from its line of 18th century furniture, described in detail in chapter four. The paint manufacturer Alcro helped provide the paint and house painting and the craft of making tiled stoves were among the activities offered to visitors.

In the exhibition catalogue *Sörby gård ett typhus från sjuttonhundratalet* (1994) the exhibition was described as a complement to two different exhibition projects: *Sverige bygger 1990-1994*, an exhibition of contemporary building in Sweden on display at the nearby Arkitekturmuseum and the 1993 exhibition *Solen och Nordstjärnan* (The Sun and the Pole Star) at Nationalmuseum, which focused on the exchange between France and Sweden in the 18th century.

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550 A prize handed out by Föreningen Kultur och Näringsliv and the newspaper Svenska Dagbladet. Stadshypotek had previously sponsored “Carl Larsson”, which also had a strong focus on the home. Stadshypotek sponsored the publication of a facsimile of Carl Larssons book “Ett hem”, which is further discussed in chapter 4. Press release, Stockholm 05.02.1992, Archives of Nationalmuseum
553 The roof was missing and scale drawings of the roof of one of Lars Sjöberg’s other houses Odenslunda were used as a historical model. Sjöberg, L. and Sjöström, J. *Sörby gård*. Stockholm: Rekolid collaborating with Nationalmuseum and Stadshypotek, 1995, p. 27
Figure 42. The reconstruction of Sörby was documented in the exhibition Sörby i teori och praktik (Sörby in Theory and Practice), which was turned into a travelling exhibition. The design mirrored the plan of the reconstructed house and included samples of construction materials and paint. The exhibition went on display in Örebro, Lund, Karlskrona, Kristianstad and Borås, and was complemented with objects from the collections at the different museums. The exhibition was well received and rendered numerous articles in the local press. Exhibition design by architect SAR Susanna Regnell. Courtesy: Archives of Nationalmuseum

It was the museum curator at Nationalmuseum, Lars Sjöberg, owner of the original Sörby manor house, who initiated the Sörby exhibition. In interviews in the 1990s journalists described Sjöberg as being possessed by the 18th century, and in one of the articles he is described as “the living grammarian of 18th century design”.[554] When asked by a journalist if not every period should have to find its own expression, he retorted “Do we have our own expression?”[555] He then suggested that maybe our expression was to return to something tangible, ecologically sound and permanent. Sjöberg found that modernist ideals and contemporary society only made people feel lonely and alienated. When asked if he was a conservative or a radical he replied that if you want to keep something that somebody achieved and that had quality, without trying to turn it into something clever, then it was only a matter of time before you become a radical or a revolutionary.[556]

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After studying art history at Stockholm University, Lars Sjöberg started as an amanuensis at Nationalmuseum at the age of 25. In an interview from 1994 he described how significant his time as a pupil at the independent school Viggebyholmskolan was to him. It was a school that promoted the importance of manual skills as much as theoretical ones, a combination that has been an unmistakable feature in Sjöberg’s later professional career. Sjöberg was for example involved in establishing Träakademien in Kramfors in 1995, a school that educates furniture makers and building craftsmen focusing on traditional craft and styles. He also worked with the Royal Collections at Nationalmuseum and has published a large number of books about traditional craft and historic houses in Sweden.

Contemporary building was described in negative terms as lacking in quality and comfort, and the problem of mould in new houses in the 1990s was mentioned in many of the articles describing the Sörby exhibition. Sörby can be seen as a reaction against contemporary production that was considered to be a bad investment and modern housing that was unhealthy to live in. The architect and professor of urban design John Sjöström even claimed in an information leaflet that you would not get any allergies in a well-ventilated timber house. A house like Sörby could stand for hundreds of years they argued, while new production on the other hand wouldn’t last many years. Moreover, the way housing developed in the mid 18th century was described in the exhibition catalogue as the origin of what would happen later, the building of the folkhemmet – the Swedish welfare state. In the articles covering the exhibition the timber house was referred to as “a house for the future”. In conjunction with the Sörby exhibition there was a panel debate on the theme “What is the Swedish building tradition?”.

By July 1994, 3,500 people had signed up to say they were ready to bid on the house, order more information or buy plans to build themselves. In October the house was put up for auction by Nordéns Auktioner, who placed full-page adverts in some of the major daily newspapers. Expectations ran high, but in the end it was sold for less than expected – SEK 420,000. The profits from the auction were returned to the museum with the purpose to help promote Swedish building traditions, and soon after the sale of the first house a new copy was built. Sörby number two was placed next to the

558 Stugart, M. Nationalmuseums nya granngård. Dagens Nyheter, 25.03.1994
559 Sjöström, J. Nationalmuseum och Stadshypotek. Sörby, information leaflet, 1994, p. 3
562 The numbers differ in different material but there seem to have been many thousands who were interested. Anon. Folk i farten: Stort intresse för 1700-talshus. Dagens industri, 29.07.1994
563 TT Nyhetsbyrån. Gammal herrarådsdröm gick i uppfyllelse för 420 000kr. Tidningarnas telegrambyrå, 22.10.1994
IKEA warehouse situated outside the northern Swedish town of Sundsvall. Sörby had now become a regional project – Design i Träriket, a project that aimed to promote local craftsmanship. The money obtained from selling the second Sörby house was used to create the timber house Vistet, designed by the architects Bertil Harström, Anders Landström and Thomas Sandell. Svensk Form (Svenska Slöjdföreningen before 1976) was also part in this project. In 1997 Vistet was exhibited in Kalmar, in 1998 the house was placed outside Nordiska Museet and then the year after it became part of H99, a housing fair in Helsingborg. The house was presented as a development of the Sörby house, although it was clearly also a product of the neo-functionalism of the 1990s, where the 18th century yet again acted as the national roots of functionalism.564

A number of Sörby houses were built and exhibited across the country. One example was the exhibition Möbler i Ostindiefarartid in 2003. The house was on display at the shipyard Terra Nova, where a full-scale reconstruction of the 18th century East Indiaman Götheborg III was carried out. The East India Company and Gunnebo House and Gardens, an 18th century estate south of Gothenburg collaborated to produce the exhibition. Some of these full-scale reconstructions were open to the public during the time of construction; however, this was not the case with Sörby. Still the visitor to Sörby was able to learn more about and see some of the techniques used in the house on specific days. I would argue that when the backstage becomes the stage this type of exhibition bears some resemblance to the laboratories described by Bruno Latour in Science in Action (1987), which share some similarities with the full-scale reconstruction projects of the time. In open laboratories such as these some of the statements made in research and texts could be tested and scrutinised by the museum as well as the general public. Especially, since the reconstruction process in itself becomes a staged back region, or even a front region, open to visitors. It is in such process-oriented exhibitions that “what is there”, a house or a chair can be brought back to its beginnings and the process that created it can be made visible.

564 Alton P. Stockholms nya slott och kojor. Dagens Nyheter, 05.06.1998
The type of authenticity favoured in the Sörby project was the quality of execution and strong links to traditional craft skills, but also form and design. The presentation of original 18th century furniture and the knowledge that the Sörby house was based on an existing original, together with the authority of the museum and the curator all added to the feeling of authenticity regarding the reconstruction. In the book *The Swedish Room* (1994) Lars and Ursula Sjöberg described how, in their eyes, Skogaholm, the moved and reconstructed 18th century manor house at Skansen represented a new way of interpret-
ing the manor house ideal. Rather than recreating the magnificent, Skogaholm was characterised by “modesty and a lack of pretention”. An ambition that Sjöberg argued was present also in the Sörby project. This idea of modesty and lack of pretention characterises a different approach to the history of style than could be seen in for example *Den gustavianska utställningen* in 1891 or the period rooms at Nordiska Museet at the beginning of the century. The choice of furniture was also different, favouring painted furniture over veneered chests of drawers, for example.

IKEA helped furnish the house with the line of 18th century furniture it had developed together with the National Heritage Board and Lars Sjöberg. In the house originals were placed next to the copies produced and sold by IKEA at the time. However, in Sjöberg’s vision the 18th century was no longer just an accepted addition to an eclectic home – it was your home. In the same vein, the reporter Martin Stugart ends his article about the exhibition with the comment “Then you can go home and try it for yourself”.

The Sörby project was exceptional for Nationalmuseum in the sense that it was not based on a collection of objects or artworks but rather an idea about the revival of traditional craftsmanship and the values found in past. Its claim to authenticity was the careful copying of the original and the knowledge of the curator and the craftsmen involved. Complementing the full-scale reconstruction was an exhibition that documented the reconstruction, *Sörby in Theory and Practice* that helped contribute a feeling of authenticity as it showed the benefits of traditional crafts, the expertise of the museum, and how it had been used in the reconstruction.

### 3.6 Conclusion

Around the turn of the 20th century there were strong bonds between the academic discipline of art history and the museum institutions. Art history was on its way to establishing itself as an independent academic discipline, and stylistic comparison was one of the favoured analytical methods available. Objects were carefully collected, analysed, compared and organised by determined art historians, who were convinced that they were saving a threatened national heritage. This practice coincided with the popularity of the period room in Swedish museums. I agree with Kerstin Arcadius who refers to this

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565 Ursula Sjöberg PhD, studied art history at Stockholm University and has worked at Buskowskis, Stockholms Auktionsverk as well as the Royal Collections, where she focused on textiles. She has written numerous publications, most of them focusing on interiors.


567 After the exhibition the furniture was sold to the staff working at Nationalmuseum. Granath O. *Försäljning av IKEA-möblerna i Sörby*. OG/gt. 10.10.1994. Nationalmuseum Archives, NM F 1 A/4.

mode of display as an art-historical gaze, which “…contained the aesthet-
ization that could create a whole from all the parts.”569 Many of the first
period rooms were reconstructions, where the curator had to make do with
creating an overall impression in order the give the visitor a feel for the peri-
od rather than referring to a specific site. The objects on display became illus-
trations and representative of other objects that fell within the same period
and style. It was not their connection to a specific site that was in focus but
rather their representative qualities, the focus was placed on the overall im-
pression of the room; they were “virtuous deceptions” as Bernhard Salin told
Romdahl when he was brought in to create order out of chaos and unity from
membra disecta. Furthermore, Romdahl had to supplement an incomplete col-
lection via buying sprees at antique dealers’. And he was not alone, the num-
er of objects in the collections grew, and objects as well as entire interiors
were bought by the museums. These collections still exist; in fact they usually
make up the majority of objects representing the Gustavian style, and can be
found in displays, databases and in storage. Some of these objects were, and
still are, reproduced in textbooks and catalogues.

Most of the early exhibitions of the Gustavian style were a combination of
two different modes of display, showcase rooms and period rooms. These
were modes that reflected two different approaches to period and style. The
chronologically arranged display cases in the showcase room reflected the
idea that primarily craft skills, materials, tools and techniques determined
style, while the period rooms also reflected the appreciation and the impact of
the Zeitgeist, the spirit of the period. In the latter, authenticity became tied to
types of authenticity other than materiality. The critique against the period
room reminds of the more general critique against the concept of Zeitgeist.
The critique implies that the period room is the result of a social construction
that has little to do with reality, an iconic authenticity.570 The period rooms
become expressions of a symbolic authenticity, which occasionally have result-
ed in very stereotypical representations of the past. An important aspect of
symbolic authenticity is that it changes the role of the expert; authenticity
becomes the outcome of a continuous negotiation within or among audiences
rather than a statement.571

The life portrayed in these rooms are often traces, supposedly left by the
people who lived in and consumed the room. These traces are often reduced
to stereotypical ideas of the past, feeding into a popularised image of the 18th
century. Furthermore, the displays of style emphasised a classification and
separation that appeared natural. Stylistically “pure” displays separated the

569 Arcadius, K. Museum på svenska: länsmuseerna och kulturhistorien. Univ. Diss. Lund University,
Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 1997, p. 272
571 Holtorf, C. The time travellers’ tools of the trade: some trends at Lejre. International Journal
of Heritage Studies 20, no. 7-8(2014):782-797, p. 790
viewer from an impure reality where styles and objects mix, but also from contemporary life, which we know from our own experience is much more complicated and multifaceted. Instead this type of display supported narratives that were “…apparently harmonious, unified and complete”. Museums displayed and organised the homes of farmers and the lower classes, as well as the homes of the privileged classes, which included the nobility, priests and the burghers; however, these two categories in society were often separated into different types of display with distinct characteristics. The history of styles became the main guiding principle for the displays of the interior design of the privileged classes; moreover, art historians made this category their domain. Vernacular culture, on the other hand, was organised by ethnologists and was presented with a focus on themes connected to the activities of everyday life or regional and geographical belonging. One of the results of this distinction was that the association between the Gustavian style and the upper classes was, and often still is, reinforced.

Moreover, the displays effectively separated different ethnicities: usually by including a separate Sami exhibition and excluding other ethnic groups. One of the founders of visual culture studies, Nicholas Mirzoeff, has pointed out that visuality has three component techniques by which it can be used for authoritarian control; classification, separation and aesthetics. When they work together, “…the classification, makes separation seem natural and, in turn, what is right comes to seem pleasing, almost beautiful”. These techniques are for example used in the layout of the period rooms presented in this chapter. Sometimes the strategies are in plain view, for example when specific displays were placed on separate floors at Nordiska Museet and Göteborgs Stadsmuseum. This model naturalised the separation of the history of the privileged classes, the farmers and the Sami. At other times these strategies can be subtler, for example by the way the curator included traces of life into the display. Invariably, it seems, it is the pleasures of tea drinking, card playing or lute playing that is conveyed to the audience.

572 Hooper-Greenhill, E. Museums and the interpretation of visual culture. London: Routledge, 2000, p. 151
573 One consequence of this interest was the documentation of Swedish castles and manor houses, which was initiated in 1908. Svenska slott och herresäten vid 1900-talets början (1908) Edman, V. Sjuttonhundratallet som svenskt ideal: moderna rekonstruktioner av historiska miljöer. Stockholm: Nordiska museets förlag, 2008, p. 12
574 The exclusion of difference or otherness in museums and design history’s importance as a platform for “…altering the notion of a homogenized past that underpins current nationalist discourses” is further discussed in Fallan, K. and Zetterlund, C. Articulating heterogeneous material cultures in Norway and Sweden. In Designing worlds: national design histories in an age of globalization. Fallan, K. and Lees-Maffei, G. (eds.) New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016, pp. 172-187
575 Mirzoeff applies this in order to describe a political and social development in the USA. However, it can also be applied on a smaller scale, such as the Retro-Gustavian. Mirzoeff, N. (ed.) The visual culture reader. 3rd rev. ed. London: Routledge, 2013, p xxxi
A study of the objects that were collected and exhibited, and how this was done, reveals contemporary scientific and national agendas; moreover, it exposes the framework for how people and their culture and history are represented. The study also shows that many of the regional and local museums were influenced by the large museums in Stockholm. They would for example mimic the mix of showcase rooms and period rooms that were arranged chronologically, but also the vertical organisation, placing the privileged classes on the top floor.

Throughout the 20th century the artist Pehr Hilleström Sr. played an important role in the way Gustavian life and interiors were staged and conceived. The use of Hilleström’s paintings represents three different attitudes towards historical art; evidence of spirit or matter, art as art or art as cultural history. Generally his paintings have been promoted as mostly trustworthy, especially when it comes to the pots and pans of everyday life. However, there are degrees or modes of reliability and reliability for different purposes. Exhibitions such as the ones described at Liljevalchs Konsthall and Sven Harry’s Konstmuseum emphasised the “snapshot-still life quality” of Hilleström’s paintings. Both of them encouraged the visitor to step into a 3-D version of the paintings and make comparisons between paintings and contemporary objects.

The status of the period room waned about the same time as the concept of style became less important in art history research, around the late 1920s and onwards. Many museum curators deemed the period room inauthentic, sentimental and escapist. The style ensembles, on the other hand, reflected a modernist approach, emphasising the artistic qualities of the individual piece and its maker, leaving the objects to speak for themselves by revealing their presumed inherent aesthetic qualities. In the 1920s and 30s modernist ideals with neutral rooms and clean-cut displays of individual objects replaced many of the dioramas and period rooms. The objects were no longer considered to be in need of a cultural historic contextualisation; instead they were arranged as individual objects according to style, artist or function.

During the Second World War many museums organised exhibitions that focused on Swedish art and the 18th century, and this increased interest in the national could also be seen in the large number of textbooks about Swedish art history that were published during this decade. Museum directors, such as Erik Wettergren at Nationalmuseum, spoke about the importance of clarifying national heritage in times of turmoil, and the quality and particularity of Swedish art and craft were emphasised in the exhibitions. The 1940s were also a period when many museums collaborated with commercial enterprises

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and were offered support by private sponsors such as Joseph Sachs, who was the guarantor for Fem stora gustavianer in 1943. The idea of cultural sponsorship was to be revived again in the 1980s.

In the late 20th century, an increasing number of exhibitions included full-scale reconstructions that relied on a combination of art historians’ competence and qualified craftsmen working with traditional materials and techniques. These spaces added experiential, scenographic as well as pedagogical qualities to the presentations of Gustavian style. Moreover, they made the professional and skillful craftsman increasingly important to museums and heritage sites. Gustav III’s Museum of Antiquities invited the visitor to a fixed stage occasionally revived by temporary exhibitions and performances, while exhibitions such as Sörby (1994), a full-scale reconstruction of a house, implied a more open process, where new actors and audiences were invited to join the interpretation of the past. In this case the reconstruction process and the rejuvenation of traditional crafts became as important as the finished product or exhibition.

I would argue that the Gustav III:s Museum of Antiquities in many ways has helped confirm the image of the Gustavian period, and the legacy from Gustav III. These reconstructed spaces help portray Gustav III as an important patron of the arts and emphasise the period’s interest in neoclassical ideals and antiquities. In a sense they have helped maintain the black box of Gustavian style, offering such a “perfect” example of the period’s aesthetic. The Sörby reconstruction project on the other hand, despite its unashamed celebration of the period, helped to slightly open the black box of Gustavian style in the sense that it made the different ingredients, the materials, the shapes, the paint, the clothes and the skills of the craftsman visible and open to new interpretations and contemporary uses of it. The reconstruction worked as a laboratory where the knowledge of conservators and craftsmen were tested and the visitor could scrutinise the process and the result. Furthermore, the visitors to Sörby were encouraged to go home and build their own house, making the past relevant for contemporary life. The professor of museum studies, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, imagined in 2000 that the new post-museum of the future might be exactly this, “…a process or an experience.”

Acknowledging the subjective element, by revealing the staged authenticity to the visitor, could perhaps also help heritage and museum professional overcome the debateable contradiction between symbolic and material authenticity, scientific and experiential displays that have riddled the museums and heritage sites since the end of the 19th century.

Another important aspect that has helped make these exhibitions of the Gustavian style more accessible is the way they all referred to the home, which has the advantage of being a “universally understood place” that we

577 Hooper-Greenhill, E. Museums and the interpretation of visual culture. London: Routledge, 2000, p. 152
can easily compare with our own homes and experiences. The comparisons we make as visitors can evoke feelings of empathy as well as providing knowledge about the past. In the following chapter we will see how museums, along with a large number of other actors, have been involved in the education of the general public, producers and consumers, often with the ambition of turning people into conscious consumers who bring good taste, exemplified by the Gustavian style, into their homes.

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Figure 44. In 1930 there were many (men) in the audience, watching the game, who asked themselves whether the giant of functionalism or the boxer representing the old style would win. Furthermore, what effects would a victory for either side have on production and trade? Some actors argued for a peaceful co-existence, maintaining the qualities of both contestants, while others did their best to support a clean knockout. The outcome was not certain and the debate was heated on the pages of Möbelvärlden and Form. Illustration by Bertil Almqvist (1902-1972) published in Möbelvärlden, 1930, no. 4, p. 74.
4 Gustavian Period Furniture

The influence of the past is regularly used for production, marketing and commercial purposes. Museums and societies have been important actors, working to improve production of period furniture by providing education displays of qualitative historical models. Gustavian period furniture is a mode of heritage production that from time to time has been seen as controversial, even damaging to creativity and production. The sometimes heated debate has focused on notions such as taste, honesty, beauty and authenticity, and throughout the century trendsetters, lifestyle magazines, museums, producers, lobbyists, artists and architects, have all had their idea about period furniture and its role in the Swedish home. This chapter explores some of the debates and controversies in the arenas of mediation of Gustavian period furniture from the 1897 General Art and Industry Exhibition, through the functionalism of the 1930s and 40s, to the IKEA’s 18th century line in the 1990s.

The debates and controversies that are explored in this chapter were set against a number of publications, marketing, educational projects and exhibitions. The specific material analysed comprises articles and adverts in the professional journals Form and Möbelvärlden (renamed Möbler & Miljö from 1974), handbooks and catalogues about furniture produced by museums and museum curators, books on interior design, as well as furniture catalogues and documentation of exhibitions. These displays, texts, illustrations and advertisements have all played a role in the production-consumption-mediation paradigm of Gustavian style period furniture, where mediation is what happens between producer and consumer, between production and consumption.\(^{579}\) A study of this paradigm includes both object-based analysis and a broader exploration of the cultural meanings of artefacts, acknowledging that design also encompasses its surrounding practices and discourses. There are a number of channels through which this mediation has occurred, and the visual and textual material, including illustrations – photographs, displays and advertising – as well as the mediating channels in themselves have been the objects of this analysis. The designed goods also act as mediating devices. However, the focus here is placed on specific lines of furniture

\(^{579}\) Grace Lees-Maffei defines mediation as the “phenomena that exist between production and consumption, as being fundamentally important in inscribing meanings for objects.” Lees-Maffei, G. The production-consumption-mediation paradigm. *Journal of Design History* 22, no. 4(2009):351-376, p. 365
rather than individual objects, which could of course serve as the focus for a separate study.\textsuperscript{580}

### 4.1 Three Types of Historical Modelling

There are three different types of historical modelling that have been the most common for the reuse of the Gustavian style. Firstly, there are faithful copies and high-quality furniture made with direct inspiration from 18\textsuperscript{th} century originals, usually intarsia furniture. This type of furniture is generally produced in small numbers and the cost is relatively high. The museum exhibitions and publications of applied arts, described in the previous chapter, played a decisive role in this production. This type of furniture appropriates both the \textit{style} and \textit{content} of the Gustavian style.\textsuperscript{581} Secondly, we find furniture produced by the crafts movement and the furniture industry; this production was less dependent on the original, and could be referred to as the appropriation of \textit{style} or just basic \textit{motifs}. Usually, the furniture is painted, and the proportions are slightly adapted and the details could be radically simplified.\textsuperscript{582} What is interesting is that both of these ways of appropriating historical styles were seen as distinct from the historicism that had just fallen out of vogue at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. They were perceived as different because they were based on knowledge, honesty, authenticity and high quality craftsmanship rather than what was described as historicism. Moreover, some specific historical styles have been considered as better than others, primarily because they seemed to agree better with contemporary lifestyles and values. In 1892, for example, the museum curator Gustaf Upmark Sr. singled out the late gothic style, early renaissance and the Gustavian style as the most suitable styles to use as inspiration.\textsuperscript{583} This second type of historical modelling was put into serial production and was sold in large numbers. And thirdly, the market

\textsuperscript{580} I have deliberately chosen not to focus this study on the theories developed by Pierre Bourdieu in \textit{Distinction} (1979), although this could be a highly relevant approach in another context. In \textit{Distinction} he studies French consumers in the 1960s and 70s and establishes “taste” as a set of social relationships, based on education, profession and family or class. However, this chapter is only secondarily a study of the consumer of Gustavian style; the moment of consumption is downplayed, rather it is a study of the negotiations and controversies concerning the definition, display, production and experience of the style. A recent study of Swedish 20\textsuperscript{th} century design that considers Bourdieus theories is Mark Ian Jones, \textit{Vicke Lindstrand on the periphery: mid-twentieth century swedish design and the reception of Vicke Lindstrand}, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala, 2016

\textsuperscript{581} James O. Young has identified five different types of cultural appropriation, of object, content, style, motif and subject. I would argue that these types can be applicable also in this context where the Gustavian style is appropriated by designers and craftsmen separated from the Gustavian period by time. Young, J. O. \textit{Cultural appropriation and the arts 6}. Malden, MA.: Blackwell Pub, 2008, pp. 5-7

\textsuperscript{582} Hedqvist, H. \textit{Svensk form internationell design}. Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN, 2007, p. 17

\textsuperscript{583} Upmark, G. Sr. Stilenlighetens faror. \textit{Meddelanden från Svenska Slöjdföreningen}. Stockholm: Svenska Slöjdföreningen (1892):1-16, p. 7
for antiques started to thrive at the end of the 19th century. This market was based on the appropriation of objects. However, it included both originals and fakes, which was considered a problem. Some argued that the number of fakes would be reduced if the consumer could get hold of new, honestly produced, period furniture instead.

Furnishing your home in different period styles was considered an ideal in many homes at the end of the 19th century; each room should have a clear style. Specific historical styles were considered more suitable for certain rooms, depending on what they were used for. The drawing room, for example, was often reserved for rococo or Louis Seize. Each country would have its specific set of styles that were used, although these styles did not have to have any historical connection to that specific country. Already in the mid 19th century there were critics and artists who reacted against historicism. Historicism was seen as superficial, only helping to disguise the bad quality goods that industrialism had brought with it.

The same, shameful truth confronts us when we compare our products with those of our ancestors. Notwithstanding our many technical advances, we remain far behind them in formal beauty, and even in a feeling for the suitable and appropriate. Our best things are more or less faithful reminiscences.\footnote{Semper, S. \textit{Science, industry, and art} (1852). In \textit{The design history reader}, Lees-Maffei, G. and Houze, R. (eds.) 55-59. New York: Berg Publishers, 2010 p. 56}

After the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the German architect Gottfried Semper published his critique of contemporary production in the article \textit{Science, Industry and Art} (1852). This was an article that greatly influenced the debate concerning the production of applied arts. Semper had designed the Canadian, Danish, Egyptian and Swedish displays in 1851, and he was impressed by the new technical skills that were exhibited. However, he was less impressed by the artistic virtues of the goods. In Sweden Semper’s ideas were popularised in books and articles by the German art historian and museum curator Jakob von Falke (1825-1897). von Falke’s book \textit{Die Kunst im Haus} (Art in the House, 1871) and some of his other texts were published in Swedish in the 1870s, and were targeted at a general audience. Falke emphasised the purpose, material and fabrication of the object and made the connection between good design and the function of an object. Although he promoted a renaissance revival, like Semper, he still questioned historicism and tried to find alternatives to a historically based design. His texts inspired a number of Swedish critics and writers, for example Ellen Key, who we will return to later in this chapter.

By the 1890s interior design and the question of historicism caused a lively debate in Sweden. The objections against historicism were based on several arguments, people’s homes were no longer adapted to modern life. They had
turned into museums according to the critics.\textsuperscript{585} The director of Nationalmuseum Gustaf Upmark Sr. concluded that people revered old things because they were old, not because they were beautiful, and they ended up with authentic (äkta) chairs that you could not sit on, mirrors that you could not see yourself in, and cupboards that you could not open.\textsuperscript{586} He considered this to be a misguided interest in the past, which in the end made people reject the modern simply because it was modern. The architect and designer Hugo Hörlin (1851-94) made drawings for Svenska Slöjdforeningen’s pattern books and was involved in the production and debates about applied arts. Hörlin added to Upmark’s critique that people who lived in these museums would become strangers in their own homes or they had to turn into demonstrators of antiques (antiqvitetstefsire).\textsuperscript{587} Other objections against historicism in interior design related to the concerns about poor quality industrial production and the ill-informed use of historical styles.

The critique against the production of goods based on historical modelling led to increased efforts to create more exact copies, and museum curators, art historians and Svenska Slöjdforeningen all invested a lot of energy into reviving people’s interest in and knowledge about the styles of the past at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. One example of these efforts was the numerous exhibitions of applied arts that were organised in the larger cities in Sweden. These exhibitions can be considered as early examples of smaksfostran (the education of taste), which was part of a reform movement that would grow stronger during the decades that followed. Smaksfostran was seen as important since it could potentially limit material, spiritual and even moral decline.\textsuperscript{588}

Many of the actors involved in the debate met at the General Art and Industry Exhibition in Stockholm in 1897.

4.1.1 The General Art and Industry Exhibition (1897)

Despite the objections, period furniture – these controversial commodified versions of the past – sold well and was a prominent feature at the 1897 exhibition. The anonymous expert reporter, commissioned by the magazine \textit{Idun}, declared that there were countless different types of period furniture available at the 1897 exhibition, and thanks to modern production methods “…models from all periods and of ultimate purity of style and beauty of form had been

\textsuperscript{586} Upmark, G., 1892, p. 13
\textsuperscript{587} Hörlin, H. Några ord om förhållandet mellan våra fornminnen och vår nutida konstutövning. \textit{Meddelanden från Svenska Slöjdforeningen}. Stockholm: Svenska Slöjdforeningen (1892):18-29, p. 27
made available for the public to use” – and at better prices than before. The general purpose of the exhibition was to advertise industrial and technological progress. Producers were able to show their goods and compete for prizes, but it was also a way of boosting national esteem and the use of history was certainly part of this ambition. Educational displays were also an important feature and some of the pavilions offered “…a staging of a more tangible kind”, where the visitors could learn directly from objects and visual examples. The visitors could for example immerse themselves in the Old Town of Stockholm, a conglomerate of reconstructed 16th and 17th century Swedish city buildings, designed by the architect Fredrik Lilljekvist, who had been part of the restoration work at Gripsholm Castle. Lilljekvist was also responsible for the exhibition design at Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891.

Figure 45. A writing desk in Gustavian style, a Haupt inspired desk made by Johan Richard Almgren and exhibited at the General Art and Industry Exhibition in 1897. Published in L. Looström, Allmänna konst- och industriutställningen i Stockholm 1897: officiel berättelse 2, 1900, p. 512

590 The first major exhibition organised by Svenska Slöjdföreningen took place in Kungsträdgården in 1866. A number of smaller exhibitions were organised after this. The exhibitions were generally well attended, reviewed in the press and visual materials were distributed widely.
The architect and exhibition veteran Ernst Jacobsson (1839-1905) summarised the 1897 exhibition in an official account published in 1900. In one of the chapters he described the exhibited furniture. Some of the Haupt-inspired furniture, such as Almgren’s writing desk above, Jacobsson found to be of such high quality that it could defend its place in a museum of industrial art.\footnote{Jacobsson, E. Konstslöjden. Allmänna konst- och industriutställningen i Stockholm 1897: officiell berättelse. D. 2. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1900, p. 511} Further, Jacobsson recalled an incident involving the art dealer and furniture maker Alfred Leonard Matsson (1847-1901). Matsson’s furniture was so well executed that he had to inform the judges, who were about to evaluate his faithful copies of 18th century furniture, which pieces of furniture were original and which were copies.\footnote{Jacobsson, E., 1900, p. 525} This type of high quality furniture is an example of the first type of historical modelling I described earlier, and it can be seen as a consequence of exhibitions such as Den gustavienska utställningen in 1891, as well as Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s pattern books and museum collections. However, the cabinetmakers would also have seen and handled original furniture in their workshops, since they regularly carried out repair works on old furniture.

The second, and to some extent the third type of furniture was also represented at the exhibition 1897, most notably in Carl Larsson’s (1853-1919) twenty watercolours depicting his and Karin’s (1859-1928) home Lilla Hyttnäs in Sundborn. The watercolours were published in the bestseller Ett hem (A Home) two years later.\footnote{In the book a total of 26 watercolours were included. Some of the watercolours were exhibited in the USA before 1897 and after the Stockholm exhibition in Berlin.} When the art historian Georg Nordensvan (1855-1932) reviewed Ett hem, he described it as a welcome lesson for the reader and a protest against all that is banal and modern.\footnote{“G-g N.” Georg Nordensvan. Konst och litteratur. Aftonbladet, 13.12.1899} Nationalmuseum bought the watercolours from the publishing company Bonniers the following year.\footnote{The publication was immensely popular and in Germany an edited version of the book has sold in over half a million copies. The German title is Das Haus in der Sonne. Lengefeld C. Carl Larssons Sverigebild kult i Tyskland. Svenska Dagbladet, 29.03.2009} The book became incredibly popular and the illustrations are still reproduced in various contexts. The house still serves as one of the main sources of stimulus for interior decoration in Sweden. In 1946 it was turned into a historic house museum and open to visitors, although still extensively used by the family.\footnote{Udovic, A. Carl Larssons ättlingar håller ihop. Dagens Nyheter, 29.08.2011} Apart from the aesthetical programme that the book promoted it also launched a specific lifestyle and ideals of family life that continue to resonate in interior design today.
The home portrayed in the book included a mix of styles, new furniture and antiques, primarily from the 17th and 18th century. Similarly to many other artists at the time, the Larssons were passionate collectors of old and new objects and their home included numerous examples of antiques and vernacular furnishing. The antique and vernacular furniture also inspired them to create new objects, and the couple employed local craftsmen to realise their designs. The appreciation of the vernacular was an important aspect of the contemporary National Romantic movement, but it also shared some of the ethos present in the Arts and Crafts movement, such as honesty, authenticity and individuality. The couple were familiar with the Arts and Crafts movement through international publications such as *The Studio* and personal contacts.598

598 Erik Gustaf Folcker had a long career at Nationalmuseum and was the secretary of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. He was instrumental in introducing the aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts movement into Sweden and opened the little shop *Sub Rosa* together with his brother in 1892. In the shop they sold Art and Crafts products, primarily fabrics and wallpaper. Numerous artists and craftsmen made study trips to the UK and studied the production of William Morris.
The Larssons also used furniture they had inherited, which they renovated and repainted in white, as we can see in the watercolour *The Flower Window* depicting the drawing room at Lilla Hyttnäs, or in red and green. The Swedish crafts movement soon picked up on this trend and promoted the white-painted 18th century style furniture. The trend for white-painted 18th century furniture did not diminish until the 1920s, and helped generate a thriving production of period furniture. The future director of Nordiska Museet and Skansen, Andreas Lindblom has described in his memoirs how, when he furnished his first own first room in 1903 he looked for antiques and found a couple of rococo chairs that he of course had painted white and three Gustavian chairs he himself painted in black and bronze. His choice of colours reflects two subsequent trends, the black and bronze made the furniture fit the dark interiors of the 1880s and the white was adapted to the lighter rooms from the 1890s and on.

Fourteen years after the exhibition in Stockholm, in 1911, the art critic August Brunius suggested that Carl Larsson’s unique home could be used as a starting point for creating a simple, practical and homely national style. This was a home that, according to Brunius, had a distinct Gustavian 18th century character. By 1911 Brunius found it easier to be inspired by the 18th century than the 19th century, and maybe, he prophesised, the Gustavian seed would begin to grow – if only people felt “the responsibility to choose”. Six years later, the 1917 *Home Exhibition* at Liljevalchs Konsthall in Stockholm became the first Swedish manifestation of a nationally orientated neoclassical style in interior decoration. Carl Larsson’s watercolours and publications inspired influential critics such as Ellen Key (1849-1926), and contributed to a reform movement in Sweden that propagated “beauty for all”, where beauty became “…an elevated expression of purpose”.

Since the 1890s, the Larsson home has been an inspiration, with its repainted 18th century furniture mixed with antiques and modern designs. The reproductions of Carl’s watercolours must also be considered important actors in the survival of the Gustavian and rococo style in Swedish homes.

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603 The exhibition was a success, attracting more than 40,000 visitors. The exhibition moved to Röhsska Museet, Gothenburg in 1918

4.1.2 Beauty for All

Around the turn of the 20th century there was a housing shortage, as more and more people moved from the countryside to the cities. The quality of housing was poor and the overcrowded conditions were criticised and various initiatives were aimed at remedying the situation. One of the activists who wanted to improve Swedish housing was Ellen Key, a philosopher, socialist, difference feminist, pacifist, pedagogue and design theorist. She was deeply concerned with aesthetics and believed that a change in the home could bring change in society at large.605 Key and like-minded people arranged exhibitions, pamphlets and lectures in order to improve Swedish homes aesthetically, morally and hygienically.606 John Ruskin, William Morris and the French movement L’Art pour tous inspired their attitude, advocating that art and everyday beauty should be available for all. The aim was to help people make informed choices, and to influence production so that the consumer would be able to find what they should be looking for.

Beauty was promoted as the source of a happy life, confirming the perceived link between good taste and morality. Moreover, they opposed the poor quality of the industrially produced goods, which included period furniture that failed to reproduce the high quality of the original.607 The movement included architects, artists, designers, societies and institutions. The future superintendent of Nationalmuseum, Richard Bergh, his wife Gerda (1864-1919) and art historian Carl Gustaf Laurin organised exhibitions together with Ellen Key at Stockholms Arbetarinstitut (the Stockholm Worker’s Institute). Architects Carl Westman (1866-1936) and Ragnar Östberg (1866-1945) opened a bureau that offered advice for housing, moreover, and they also designed houses and furniture aimed at the working class.608

Prompted by the success of the exhibitions she had initiated, Key wrote a short text on the subject of beauty for all, Skönhet i hemmen (Beauty in the Home, first published in the journal Idun 1897 and then in the collection of essays Skönhet för alla: fyra uppsatser 1899) in which she claimed that beauty should not be a luxury, and that the capacity for good taste was simply a mat-

607 Many have repeated the notion that early industrial production mainly consisted of bad reproductions of low quality. Not until the 1920s-30s does there seem to have been an agreement that there was an upturn in the quality of the output, partly because of the introduction of artist into industrial production. The change in attitude towards industrial production can be seen in e.g. Åke Stavenow, Svensk stil och standard 1933: Utställning av modern svensk konstindustri, anordnad av Sveriges Nationalmuseum i Kunstindustrimuseet i Oslo. Februari 1933. Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1933, p. 13
Her text was aimed at individual readers that she wished to educate and she hoped that they would redesign their homes accordingly. In Key’s writings each worker was a potential artist, but it was the woman and mother who were in focus for the change she propagated. Key’s feminist views were based in the belief that men and women were different biologically and culturally, and that the home was primarily the responsibility of the woman. In her arguments interior design and visions of a better society became intricately connected. Her ideas about the home as a driving force for social change would have a great impact on the design movement in Sweden in the century to come.

In Beauty in the Home Key described the contrast between the cosy and beautiful parlour in a country parsonage, the simple peasant cottage and the ugly home, which she saw as the result of the dominant taste from 1870 to 1900. “Dark wallpapers with pointless ornamentation, ceilings painted in loud colours and decorated with plaster mouldings, and gaudy, multi-coloured tiled stoves with mirrors and knickknacks…” According to Key, the reason for the popularity of these dark interiors was that “…most people’s taste is undeveloped. And that is why they satisfy their thirst for beauty – paradoxical though this may sound – in an ugly way.” In her text she further recommended that the reader should study the collections of applied arts at National-museum, Skansen and Nordiska Museet. However, Key also looked to other historic sources and returned to the ideas of the 18th century aesthetic philosopher and admiral, Carl August Ehrensvärd (1745-1800). In her text Beauty in the Home she quoted Ehrensvärd’s text De fria konsters philosophi printed in 1786, a text where Ehrensvärd remembers his travels to Italy, worships antiquity and classical ideals. What Key seems to have appreciated the most were his words about simplicity and purpose.

Key’s words also resonated within the functionalist movement that developed a couple of decades later. One of the movement’s most prolific advocates, art historian Gregor Paulsson, was deeply influenced by Ellen Key as a young student, especially her ideas that beauty in the home could lead to a better society, and that adult education was a touchstone for this to happen. Furthermore, we can recognise that he adhered to the same virtues that Ellen

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611 Key, E. Beauty in the home. In Creagh, L., Kåberg, H. and Lane, B. M., 2008, p. 35
612 Ibid., 2008, p. 54
613 Ehrensvärd, C. A. De fria konsters philosophi. Stockholm, 1786

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Key picked up from Ehrensvärd, simplicity and purpose. Gregor Paulsson later became one of the co-authors of the functionalist manifesto *acceptera* (1931) and pursued a career as a curator at Nationalmuseum from 1916-24, the director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen from 1920-34, and professor of art history at Uppsala University from 1934-56. He also lived on and off in Berlin and was inspired by the ideas of the German arts and industry organisation Deutscher Werkbund, founded in 1907, a movement that opposed the historicist and academic attitudes of the 19th century, and wanted to forge an alliance between artists and the industry.615 Paulsson revealed his attitude to style and historicism in the article *Anarki eller livsstil* (1915). He was upset by the fact that people were buying industrially produced period furniture and antiques – furniture that was meant for a different age as he saw it.616 People’s taste needed to be updated to fit with their own time according to Paulsson.

### 4.1.3 Fashionable Antiques

The third type of historical modelling is the antique – a Gustavian objects that has been recontextualised and placed in a modern interior. Looking at, buying and owning antiques are some of the ways that individuals can interact with the material culture of the past. It is the past as commodity, and helps turn history into something that can be consumed in a material form.617 In his system of objects published in 1968, the French theorist Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) gave the antique a very specific function – “namely the signifying of time”.618 Antiques he portrayed as markers of time, as well as challengers of time, as occasionally reflected in the rhetoric used in advertising and articles.

Mass production of virtually identical objects, many of which were poorly made and/or ugly in comparison with their handmade predecessors (even if one discounts the reality of planned obsolescence at this early stage of capitalism), soon further stimulated the preference for the past object, the antique.619

In Sweden antique furniture, both vernacular furniture and period furniture, became fashionable among a wider audience at the end of the 19th century. Internationally we can see the tremendous affect the French revolution, the Napoleonic wars and later industrialism and world exhibitions had on the attitude and availability of antiques. Antiques were in most cases considered to be of higher quality and had higher status than new, mass-produced

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615 While living in Berlin Paulsson bought the first yearbook published by die Deutscher Werkbund in 1912, *Die Durchgeistigung der deutschen Arbeit.*

616 Paulsson, G. *Anarki eller livsstil.* Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift, no. 1(1915):1-12, p. 2


objects. Henryk Bukowski (1839-1900) opened his store for antiques in Stockholm in 1870 and the number of collectors grew. Bukowski also collaborated and sold objects to numerous museums, for example Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet, and the importance of this trade is further discussed in chapter three. Around the turn of the 20th century, there were a number of museum curators, usually art historians that moved between their work at the museum and offering expert advice to the auction house. One of them was the amanuensis at Nordiska Museet, Carl Ulrik Palm (1864-1954), who succeeded Bukowski in 1900.

By 1906, museum curator Gustaf Upmark Jr. at Nordiska Museet felt required to write an article where he complained about the increasing public interest in antiques. Everybody wanted an antique, rich and poor, and they were not only interested in aesthetically pleasing objects – objects of cultural history were also interesting. Antiques were bought as a safe investment in good taste according to Upmark.620 The production of period furniture he saw as a consequence of this interest, but even worse, according to Upmark, was the production of fakes, that were passed off as authentic antiques. Moreover, Upmark criticised the Swedish antiques market, where people paid a lot for the mediocre, and found that the collector’s passion was to blame. Upmark was also troubled because the buyers did not have the desire or the knowledge to take care of the objects. Instead they restored objects and had them fashionably painted, and consequently destroyed.621 However, and typically for the writers in Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift, what he found most upsetting was the damage done to contemporary production of furniture and interior design. Most writers in the journal argued that their own time needed a specific style, a style that truly expressed the time they lived in. However, this did not mean that the past was not interesting, and presentations of older designs and objects were a reoccurring feature in the journal, and when the number of ads in the journal increased in the 1910s, a large share of the companies putting in ads were antique dealers or firms making period furniture and wallpaper. This ambiguous attitude in Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift towards antiques and period furniture reflected some of the central concerns of the design debate during the first half of the 20th century. In addition, there

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621 “De “samla”, därför att det är modernt; de betala för mycket, och de värda icke de gamla klenoderna så väl; de restaurera och polera och begagna de gamla sakerna, hvarigenom de förr eller senare förstöras eller föröra sitt värde som kulturdocument.” Upmark, G., 1906, p. 11
were numerous examples at the time of collaborations and interaction between the market for antiques, modern production, museums and art historians.

The large department store Nordiska Kompaniet in Stockholm had three distinct departments, furniture, textile and antiquities. The antiques department was very profitable, especially during the golden era of antiques (the “antikvurn”) during the First World War. The manager Josef Sachs offered the job as director of the department of antiques to the future museum director Andreas Lindblom, who declined the offer – according to Lindblom’s memoirs because he felt uncomfortable with Sachs’ commercial attitude. Lindblom was also upset about the large number of forgeries of both art and furniture – it was not uncommon that genuine parts were joined with newly produced parts to create a set of furniture. He explained that this happened because there was a high demand for antique Gustavian furniture that could not be met, and the solution was simply to make more. The demand for Gustavian antiquities intensified even more during the neo-classical 1920s, reflecting the relation between trends in contemporary furniture design and antiques.

Artists, museums and commercial actors contributed to the passion for antiques. Anders Zorn (1860-1920) was not only a successful artist but also a passionate collector and displayed his collections in his home. Anders and his wife Emma Zorn (1860-1943) later donated the Zorn collection to the Swedish state in order for them to be kept and cared for at their home in Mora. The collection consisted of more than sixty buildings and about 20,000 objects. In 1930, ten years after Zorn’s death, some of these collections were brought to Stockholm and put on display at Liljevalchs Konsthall. The exhibition Zorn’s samlingar lasted for a month from 5 February to 5 March. Zorn had been especially interested in collecting the medieval and renaissance period, but the Gustavian period was also collected and the exhibition included a

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622 Nordiska Kompaniet opened in 1902 as the result of the merger of AB K. M. Lundberg and Joseph Leja. It set up its own furniture production in Nyköping in 1904 and continued its production until 1973. The furniture was made to order, and it was not until the late 1940s that the company began serial production. Many leading designers have contributed to their production of mainly high-end furniture. Gregor Paulsson refers to the store in Better things for everyday life (1919) as a store that places quality before quantity, promoting the cooperation between artists and industry. Carl Malmsten was one of these designers. Paulsson, G. Better Things for Everyday Life. In Modern Swedish design: three founding texts. Creagh, I., Käber, H. and Lane, B. M. (eds.) 72-125, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008, p. 118-119


627 The donation was handed over after Emma Zorn died in 1942.
copy of “the Green room” at Zorngården, the only reconstructed room in the exhibition. The catalogue from the Zorn exhibition included several advertisements for companies that sold furniture, new and old. The objects, and the “look” were available to those who could pay. One spread carries the advertisements for Nordiska Kompaniet and Hemslöjdsförbundet, which offers the customer “Zorn furniture”, as well as the “artistically perfect interior”. The idea of promoting complete historical interiors was common also in an international context and often the commercial displays resembled the period rooms found at museums. In the 1930s, the decade that followed the Zorn exhibition, the interest in antiques seems to have decreased and prices went down, while at the same time the popularity of the neoclassical style slightly faded.

Figure 47. The Green Room in Zorngården was recreated at Liljevalchs Konsthall in 1930 as part of the exhibition Zorns samlingar. It was the only room that was reconstructed and it shows some of the antique Gustavian furniture collected by Anders and Emma Zorn. The original room has green walls and a green carpet that covers the whole floor. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives

In 1933 Åke Stavenow, the curator at Konstslöjdsavdelningen at Nationalmuseum (1928-34), proudly announced that newly married couples no longer furnished their homes with antiques as they did five or ten years earlier. What he based this conclusion on is not clear, but there was a general slump in the antiques market in the 1930s, because of an international economic depression, and perhaps the change in fashion also contributed. The designer and interior decorator Gustaf Axel Berg (1891-1971) published agitated articles in both Form and Möbelvärlden where he argued for letting go of the past and allowing modern people to liberate themselves from the furniture made for other times. He lashed out in a letter to the editor in Möbelvärlden in 1938, hoping that people would start referring to antiques by their rightful name “used furniture” (begagnade möbler), and that no one should

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be forced to save them.\textsuperscript{631} We should consider our own needs instead and not the needs of dead people, Berg declared. However, not everyone was so categorical, and Stavenow recognised that the interest in antiques might have prepared people for the undertaking of putting together their own interiors, learning how to mix old and new.\textsuperscript{632} The opportunity of mixing old and new, of letting go of the idea of stylistic coherence, was, perhaps slightly surprisingly, presented as an alternative even by the authors of the functionalist manifest \textit{acceptera} in 1931. That is, if it was done with an ounce of judgment and discrimination. Several texts suggest that it was common to find a Gustavian chest of drawers in homes with functionalist interiors.

We can recall Le Corbusier’s (1887-1965) words from 1925. “Trash is always abundantly decorated; the luxury object is well made, neat and clean, pure and healthy, and its bareness reveals the quality of its manufacture.”\textsuperscript{633} These were opinions that resonated within the functionalist movement, and included a renunciation of the overly decorated 19\textsuperscript{th} century home. However, by defining the quality of a luxury object, it made it possible to speak of some historic styles as less deplorable than others, if they were well made. Among the many historical styles available, the Gustavian style was seen as specifically suited for modern use. The “light and bright historical styles, such as Louis XV and XVI” offered an escape from what was seen as the out-dated dark interiors of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, and could in this sense have a “modernising effect”, while other styles were completely dismissed.\textsuperscript{634} In a discussion about copying older furniture, museum curator Marshall Lagerquist (1907-1977) stated that a Gustavian chest of drawers fitted well in a modern interior.\textsuperscript{635} A mix of old and new, he found, made a home less uniform and more interesting. The often small and light pieces of Gustavian furniture were considered to fit the functionalist homes better than older, more robust furniture. In 1991, art historian and museum curator Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark repeated this idea that the vertical shapes of the Gustavian style fitted the modern functionalist furniture, creating an echo between old and new.\textsuperscript{636}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{631} “Vi finge faktiskt social rättighet att göra något för vår egen individ och behövde ej gå i stil med döda människors behov.” Berg, G. A. <<Det fria ordet>> Stil eller standard?. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, no. 5(1938):155-157, p. 157
  \item \textsuperscript{632} Stavenow, Å. Om smakens föränderlighet. \textit{Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift}, no. 10(1935):237-240, p. 237
  \item \textsuperscript{633} Le Corbusier, The decorative art of today (1925) in Weinthal, L. \textit{Toward a new interior: An anthology of interior design theory}. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011, p. 149
  \item \textsuperscript{635} Lagerquist, M. Nytt vin i gamla läglar. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, no. 5(1945):175-179, p. 175, 177
\end{itemize}
In 1947, the art historian and future director of the Royal Collections, Stig Fogelmarck (1916-2006), concluded that the 1940s were the golden age of the small, antique Gustavian chest of drawers.637 He suggested that Gustavian style furniture had been appreciated by every period because of its ability to fuse *gracious* and *soft charm* with *comfort* and *functionality*.638 The art historian Hans Frölich, the writer of *Antikvitetskäparens ABC* (1946), confirmed the declining interest in antiques during the early functionalist period.639 However, according to Frölich, it did not take long before people realised, yet again, that antiques made it possible to create a beautiful and personal home.640 He also mentions other contributing factors such as improvements in people’s personal finances, which meant that people could spend more time on leisure activities and hobbies, for example, learning more about antiques through evening classes, guided tours and visits to museums and exhibitions. A visit to the museum gave both the amateur and professional many opportunities for comparative studies. Here the buyer of antiques could develop a connoisseur’s knowledge, and practise their sense of quality.641 Frölich goes on to liken the skills acquired with those of an athlete – you needed to practise to reach a certain level, and keeping fit required repetition. By the 1950s and 60s attitudes had definitely changed once again. Yet again there was an increased interest in antiques. Nordiska Museet arranged a number of exhibitions under the headline *Antikviteter till vardags* (*Antiques for Everyday Life*). These temporary exhibitions displayed objects from the 19th century and each lasted for three weeks. The visitors could bring their own objects to the museum, where experts would share their knowledge about the object; however, they did not estimate the value.642 Evening lectures on the subject were offered, and publications with information about antiques were sold or handed out to the visitors.

Today, several auction houses, museums and various media offer their costumers and readers courses about different aspects of the history of styles.


639 Frölich, H. *Bröderna Elias och Johan Fredrik Martins gravyrer (en undersökning av deras verksamhet som gravyrer samt en förteckning över deras produktion)*. Univ. Diss. Stockholm University, Stockholm, 1939

640 In 1947 Stig Fogelmarck confirms Frölich’s impression that antiques were fashionable. Fogelmarck, S. (ed.) *Antikvitetsboken: sju kapitel om konst och samlande*. Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1947, p. 112


There are several TV productions, such as *Antikrundan* (an Swedish version of the British series *Antiques Roadshow*, which has been running on the BBC since 1979) and *Antikdeckarna* where experts value objects but also describe their style and qualities. They daily press, primarily *Svenska Dagbladet* as well as lifestyle magazines such as *Allt i Hemmet, Antik & Auktion, Gods och Gårdar*, and *Sköna hem*, offer their readers lectures and informative articles about different historic styles. Occasionally these are in the format of “style classes”, presenting a new style in each number. The articles often include short reviews of one or several craftsmen or artists of the period. There are also articles that describe specific types of furniture, tables and chairs etc. Often you also find tips on how to restore furniture or make good buys. The literary historian Jerome de Groot suggests that this type of educationally oriented mediation could be seen as levelling the intellectual and taste-making playground; however, he concludes that it is still the expert and the market that are in focus. The experience and knowledge of the audience is not considered and “Their perceived shift in status is purely temporary and result-driven.”

Gustavian antiques are still among the most popular and considered a safe investment.

### 4.2 Debating Period Furniture in the 1930s and 40s

Throughout the 1930s and 40s there was a lively debate about period furniture. This chapter investigates some of the adoptions and translations that were made in the production of period furniture to fit the ideals of authenticity, honesty, taste and serial production that featured in the functionalist debate. It also discusses how collaborations between commercial enterprises and museums affected the production of period furniture, a production that has so far been little noticed in Swedish 20th century design history. However, this narrative is slowly starting to be scrutinised and in an article published in 2015, art historian Christian Björk questions the idea that functionalism distanced itself from bourgeois values and craft production and he uses Nordiska Kompaniet’s participation in the Stockholm Exhibition as an example. He suggests that it would be more relevant to speak of functionalisms in plural since the movement was more complex and dynamic than previously thought.

In 1931, the authors of the functionalist manifesto *acceptera* described the three main trends in interior decoration: firstly, modern furniture of good

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quality, secondly, period furniture and finally, cheap industrially produced goods. The authors described the second category, which is our focus, as the result of an overdeveloped knowledge about the past and interest in history.

This whole trend is endorsed by the ‘lovers of beauty’ in society. In this way they create “cultivated” homes. (…) Nobody seems to realize that what they admire and live in is a spectacle.

The struggle between tradition and modernism was on going throughout the 1930s and 40s, and functionalist ideals existed in parallel with those who embraced the “spectacle”. In 1931, at the annual meeting of Swedish retailers, producers and suppliers of furniture, the critic and functionalist Gotthard Johansson lashed out against the art historians who were teaching the intellectual class as well as the wealthy millionaire that the old styles were better than contemporary production. The intellectual class, he claimed could be divided into two categories; those who favoured the radically modern and those who had an overdeveloped knowledge about historic styles, favouring the historical and conservative.

Negotiations concerning period furniture can be found in various forms of mediation, such as exhibitions, courses, advice literature and advertising or in the personal meeting between seller and buyer. The debate circled around how to make and sell period furniture, why and if people should buy it, and whether it was good taste, or simply a threat to modern design. However, it was not only a matter of style, the recessions in the 1930s and around the time of the Second World War were also a cause for worry and controversies and greatly affected furniture production and consumption. There seem to have been a general anxiety about how to survive as a producer and salesman.

645 The authors were art historian Gregor Paulsson (1889-1977) and architects Gunnar Asplund (1885-1940), Sven Markelius (1889-1972), Wolter Gahn (1890-1985), Eskil Sundahl (1890-1974) and Uno Åhren (1897-1977).


647 Johansson G. Smakriktningarna och möbelproduktionen. Möbelvärlden, no. 8(1931):159-164, p. 162
In the 1930s and 40s precision in serial production and historicism were both of interest to the editors of Möbelvärlden. According to functionalist aesthetics effective, functioning and honest objects tended to be considered beautiful. The machine, which had a form that was determined by the way it worked, was promoted as beautiful proof of this. The back cover illustrates a machine from Jonsered “where tradition is united with modern technique”. However, a surprising number of covers of the journal Möbelvärlden featured 18th century furniture and interiors, e.g. Tottieska Malmgården, Skansen (1938:2), a rococo chest of drawers by Christian Linning (1949:8) and Thomas Chippendale and George Hepplewhite chairs (1950:2) to mention a few. This front cover from 1945 features a Gustavian chest of drawers, an original from the 1780s found in the collections of Nordiska museet used for serial production. Möbelvärlden 1945:4 back cover, 1945:5 front cover.

The primary sources in this chapter are the two professional journals Möbelvärlden and Form, and the modernist manifesto acceptera (1931). All three had overt agendas and acted with an outspoken ambition to shape the discourse and views of their readers. The texts, illustrations and advertisements found in the mentioned publications are all part of a production-consumption-mediation paradigm that can be associated with the production of Gustavian style period furniture during the 1930s and 40s. This paradigm includes an exploration of the cultural meanings of artefacts, as well as surrounding practices and discourses. In all three publications we also find numerous illustrations, mainly photographs, which have played an important role in the mediation of Gustavian period furniture.

acceptera (1931) had six different co-authors, and all of them were involved in the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930. All the authors but one, the art history-

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ian Paulsson, were trained architects with an interest in furniture and interiors. The functionalist manifesto was partly a summary of the exhibition but it also included extensive discussions about style, resulting in a critique of historicism and tradition, while at the same time opening up for “an amalgam of old and new”, promoting a modernism that was less radical than was the case with the European avant-garde.\textsuperscript{649}

The journal\textit{ Möbelvärlden} represented producers, distributors and retailers of furniture in Sweden and was published in 1921-1973.\textit{ Möbelvärlden} reflected the mix of traditional craft, modern serial production, functionalist ideals and the sizeable production of period furniture that characterised the market at this time. The mix was also reflected in the choice of illustrations, as can be seen in the illustration above. \textit{Form} was, and still is, an important arena for professional debate, acting as the official publication of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. In the 1930s and 40s the journal included design reform criticism, reviews and featured top-down propaganda for good taste, as it was dictated by the society. The editors held an ambition to reach a wide readership beyond just the members of the society; which included designers, producers, retailers as well as consumers. \textit{Möbelvärlden} shared some of its writers, and presumably also readers, with \textit{Form}, but it reprinted texts from a variety of professional journals and I would argue that the opinions about period furniture and serial production presented in the journal were more varied and closer to the heterogeneous positions of the producers than \textit{Form}. The advertising that can be found in the journals also represented different types of ideals and modes of production.

When reading \textit{Möbelvärlden} it is evident that Svenska Slöjdföreningen worked to influence the attitudes of the readers of \textit{Möbelvärlden}. The directors of the society, Gregor Paulsson and Åke Stavenow, both published in the journal, and the editor of \textit{Möbelvärlden} Edvard Miltopaeus described the society as a strong force, supported by the government, which couldn’t be ignored.\textsuperscript{650} Miltopaeus described the society’s journal \textit{Form}, as the voice for the official understanding of good taste in Sweden. However, he also criticised \textit{Form} for directing itself towards the intellectual middle class, and not solving the problems for the general public.

In \textit{Möbelvärlden}, the new functionalist furniture was met by both enthusiasm and scepticism. When discussing the new, it is often mentioned in contrast to a traditional type of furniture. The editors invited the debate and pub-


\textsuperscript{650} Miltopaeus, E. Efter 1930. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, no. 8(1938):251-255, p. 251. Edvard Miltopaeus was a civil servant who worked for the Federation of Swedish Industries and the Swedish government, and in 1924 he became the director of AB Svenska möbelfabrikerna in Bodafors. Svenska möbelfabrikerna had close contact with Svenska Slöjdföreningen and produced many of the prototypes used in exhibitions. Arwidson, B. and Svensk byggtjänst. 100 år med svenska möbler: från snickeri till möbelindustri. Stockholm: Svensk byggtjänst, 2006, p. 17
lished different opinions about the matter, and the traditionalists had as strong a voice as the modernists. In 1938, the journal published a speech prepared by the furniture designer Gustaf Axel Berg. The speech was held at a meeting for furniture producers in Nässjö and Berg’s text was published to initiate a debate about modern furniture production. In the speech Berg accused the industry of clinging to old ideals that were created for clothes and customs of past generations. As Miltopaeus had suspected, the readers and writers of Möbelvärlden did not unanimously accept Berg’s message of standardisation and simplified designs; some producers were afraid that functionalist furniture would result in fewer job opportunities and less profit for the industry. Some producers, for example Eric Boberg, questioned the profitability of modern design per se. Further, they argued that old styles should be adapted to modern times, rather than being discarded completely. They asked themselves: if we continue producing period furniture, what was the right or tasteful way of doing it?

The two journals mainly focused on contemporary production, but this was not without reference to the past. There are numerous articles about the history of furniture production and consumption in Sweden, including 18th century furniture makers such as Georg Haupt (1741-1784), Gottlieb Iwersson (1750-1813) and Gustav Precht (1698-1763), as well as the reprinted texts from exhibition catalogues and yearbooks from Nordiska Museet and Nationalmuseum. There were also reviews of publications from Nordiska Museet and texts that described historical styles, collections or historic interiors. Many writers seemed to have found history an indispensable resource, as relevant for production as the modern machines used. In 1939, Miltopaeus described one of these publications, Sigurd Erixon’s Folklig möbelkultur i Svenska bygder (2nd ed. 1938) as “…an inventory that is as important to a furniture manufacturer as newly invented mechanical equipment for the same price.” The editor further declared that all furniture offices (möbelkontor) in Sweden should get it, despite its cost. If nothing else it would help the producer feel responsible for the furniture he was involved in creating.

4.2.1 Education of Taste

The unmistakable dedication among the writers in these journals shows how important they considered the choices that producers and consumers made

651 Art historian Maria Perers (2003) refers to Gustaf Axel Berg as a modernist, designer and propagandist. Berg was a regular writer in Form and published shorter texts such as Simplicity and design: an hour with G. A. Berg (1939) and Levande möbler – eller museiföremål? (1943).


653 e.g. Boberg, E. Det fria ordet – Stil eller standard?. Möbelvärlden, no. 6(1938):187-189

were, not only for their own benefit but also for society at large, connecting both moral and pragmatic arguments. Whichever side you were on, there seem to have been a consensus that education and a knowledge of the history of styles helped the public as well as the producers to make informed choices, and to differentiate between true and false, good and bad, beautiful and ugly. At the beginning of the century the ambition to educate the public in the history of styles could partly be understood as a reaction against what critics referred to as the “false” interest in historical styles in the 19th century. The Gustavian style was in this context considered as more honest and uncorrupted. The debate was also intimately linked to the progression of industrialism, which in most cases was considered to have a negative influence on both taste and the quality of production. Good taste, along with improved quality, was perceived as a way of improving housing and living conditions for all social classes. The debate was highly normative and we can see how opinions about people’s taste became strongly linked to political visions for how Swedish society should develop.

The concept of taste is based on the idea that there is such a thing as objectively good and bad taste, and that telling them apart is a skill you can acquire through education. In this understanding of the concept, taste is not subjective, but can be logically explained. Taste is thus something that is acquired, an ability that needs practice, especially if you seek to have good taste. In order to be able to display good taste you have to be an active consumer making the right choices, and such choices can only be made if you have the right education. In this specific context social background and economical situation are rarely mentioned.

A time for confusion in taste (“en smakens förbistringstid”) – this is how the anonymous reporter in Göteborgs Tidningen described the period following the 1870s after visiting the new displays at Göteborgs Museum in 1910. However, by 1910 the reporter and many others believed that the deplorable mix of styles of the 19th century was on its way out thanks to the vigorous promotion from different actors, including Svenska Slöjdföreningen and Ellen Key but also museums and artists such as Carl and Karin Larsson.

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655 Glambek, I. One of the age’s noblest cultural movements. Scandinavian journal of design history 1, Copenhagen: Rhodos International Science and Art Publ., no. 1(1991):47-76, p. 60
656 “Taste is one of the processes we use to make judgements about design. The body of information we draw upon in making these judgements has accumulated across the centuries.” Bayley, S. Taste: an exhibition about values in design. London: Boilerhouse Project, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983, p. 11
658 There were government organisations and museums in other countries that also worked to inform and educate the consumer, for example The Finnish Society of Crafts and Design (1875), The Danish Society of Arts and Crafts (1907), The Norwegian Society of Arts and Crafts and Industrial Design (1918), and in Britain the Design and Industries Association (1915), which used didactic displays to influence consumers to decorate their homes using
Their efforts to educate and enlighten the public would become intimately linked to the concept of *smakfostran*, which can be translated as “education in taste”. The art historian and director of Föreningen Konst i skolan, Marita Lindgren-Fridell wrote an article in *Form* in 1953, clarifying the two main aspects of *smakfostran*: on the one hand individual comfort and joy and on the other hand macroeconomic considerations leading to an approved consumption.659

Already in the late 19th century *smakfostran* had become the concern of several prominent actors, such as Ellen Key and Carl G Laurin, but also museums, schools, the crafts movement, private businesses, universities and various associations for liberal education. These actors produced exhibitions, lectures, education in schools and books about style and art history aimed at a general audience and school children. Apart from museums, there were numerous historical buildings and heritage sites open to the public during the 20th century which became part of this effort, offering the visitor authentic historical environments that helped them learn about history and revive their connection to the past. Svenska Slöjdföreningen included the refinement of taste (*smakförädling*) in their mission statement back in 1887.660 The society worked hard to improve the quality of production and cultivate the taste of the public, hoping that the right type of furniture would end up in people’s homes.661 This was motivated by arguments that were presented as logical, sensible and based on experience and research, beyond subjective opinions. Books, pamphlets, lectures, consultations, distribution of patterns, study circles, financial support, and didactic displays in Sweden and abroad were part of their – as they themselves referred to it – “taste propaganda”. Through taste propaganda and education, the society wanted to distance the consumer from the degenerate taste of the 19th century and cultivate good taste in every part of society.662

*Smakfostran* would eventually be launched as a democratic right and was integrated in the construction of the Swedish welfare state through state-funded initiatives focused on education and housing. This is a process that has been described by many art and design historians. The state-funded initia-

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661 “Men vår huvuduppgift har alltid varit densamma, bohagsproduktionens och den allmänna smakens förädling till gagn och glädje för hela vårt folk.” Speech by the director Åke Stavenow at the centennial of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, in the hall at the Nordiska Museet, 6th October, 1945. *Stavenow, Å. Svenska Slöjdföreningen under 100 år.* *Form*, no. 9(1945):189-191, p. 191

tives favoured certain representations while dismissing others that did not seem to fit the ideals of beauty, usefulness and craftsmanship. The people's home (folkhemmet) had already been launched as a concept in more conservative circles, but it really gained momentum when the social democrat Per Albin Hansson (1885-1946) integrated it in a debate in 1928. The establishment of the people’s home began to be realised after the 1932 election and was closely associated with the development of the Swedish modern movement. Functionalism was shaped in a context of relative political calm with a dominating reformist socialism and a relief from the full impact of the two world wars. Internationally, especially in Britain and United States, the “Swedish modern” represented a softer, less extreme vision of modernism.663 In the exhibition catalogue Sweden Speaks accompanying the World’s Fair in 1939 in New York, the writer proudly proclaimed that Sweden was on its way to creating a more homogenous home culture, where the working class was also given the opportunity to own their home and equip it with “esthetically sound furnishings”.664 Educational efforts intensified once more in the 1940s, which was also the point when a new research industry, centred on the domestic area, developed. Museums and individual art historians played an important role in educating designers, producers, dealers and consumers via the articles, handbooks, courses and catalogues they produced. Still, while acknowledging the importance of knowledge about the past, the supporters of functionalism certainly did not want the production of copies. Instead they saw the past as a resource that could be used to make producers understand and be inspired by the quality in both style and execution that could be found in original furniture.665

Courses were a popular format for mediating ideas about interior design and production, not only within the furniture industry but also to the general public. Museums, various societies, worker’s unions and commercial initiatives such as Kooperativa Förbundet (Sweden’s Cooperative Union) used courses as a medium to influence the general public. One example is the two-week master courses for carpenters organised by Hantverksinstitutet, which included visits to Avdelningen för de högre stånden at Nordiska Museet under the supervision of an expert.666 Sales assistants were also targeted for these types of courses, and starting in the 1930s this professional group were offered courses on a regular basis, where the history of style was an important feature. These courses were the result of collaboration between Köpmannainstitutet and Centralförbundet and were reviewed and advertised in Möbel-

663 *Swedish Grace* is a term coined by British art critic Morton Shand. *Swedish modern* was first used by the American press after Paris Expo in 1937. The term *Scandinavian design* was launched in the mid 1950s and promoted Scandinavian collaboration.
The two-week courses aimed to give an overview of the furniture trade and encourage self-study. The course included also visits to museums, manufacturers and stores. Museum curator Marshall Lagerquist at Nordiska Museet was one of the teachers on the course. He also produced a compendium for the course about the styles of Swedish furniture.667

The concept of smakfostran and the idea that taste was an objective fact have been repeatedly challenged since its introduction – not everyone agreed that good taste was a good thing to have. Around 1960 we can see a radical change in attitude to good taste and smakfostran. In 1958, Marita Lindgren-Fridell argued that it was time to separate ideals based on a history of styles from individual taste influenced by for example temperament, patterns of consumption, etc.668 Further, she claimed that in order to study these individual aspects, smakfostrargruppen (the educators of taste) would have to leave their ivory tower and look beyond their ambitious ideals. She believed that a study of individual temperaments might bring more tolerance and a nuanced understanding of taste. Lindgren-Fridell was far from alone in questioning the relevance of smakfostran, and in 1961 the mission to educate about good taste was removed from Svenska Slöjdföreningen’s bylaws. Modernism began to lose its appeal, and “good taste” and “good design” were no longer seen as magic talismans. By the 1960s and 70s Svenska Slöjdföreningen started to focus more on other issues such as ecology and solidarity.669

Also before the 1960s there were attempts at breaking free from the conventions of taste, and often these objections meant a promotion of other values such as honesty, harmony and authenticity. In an article in Form in 1944, the Danish designer, architect and critic Poul Henningsen stated that taste is a bad habit and disables us from fully understanding colour and shape.670 Furthermore, Henningsen claimed that good taste distorted the richness in life. Henningsen divided artists into three categories, the pure functionalist artist, the artist of taste and the free artist.671 The artist of taste Henningsen linked to a development of style and described this artist as an evolutionist who sees a step-by-step development. The artist of taste started from traditional expressions of taste that he wanted to improve, and usually he became the most popular of the artists according to Henningsen. Taste should be seen as an expression of the governing aesthetics at a certain point, not an

667 Lagerquist M. De svenska möbelstilarna. Möbelvärlden, no. 4(1940):111-116
670 Henningsen, P. Jag tycker att… Form (1945):46*
objective truth according to Henningsen; moreover, taste was a restriction that prevented us from experiencing beauty:

The more places we experience beauty, the less taste we have and the richer and more beautiful life becomes. Taste is always about limitations, taboos, do’s and don’ts in the area of aesthetics – almost a question of decency...

The problem was that tradition made us blind as moles, and in the end taste stopped the artist improving our environment.

Figure 50. In the article Heminredning i veckopressen Carin Bergsten-Lagergård pointed out that the weeklies showed traditional, original and luxurious homes in a way that made the sensible, economic and useful ideas about interior decoration stand out as dry and unattractive. At the same time she is happy that it is the dream of the manor house (herrgårdsdrömmen), on the left, rather than the 19th century boudoir, on the right, that is the ideal that is promoted. The illustration is an example of the common practice within art history of placing two images next to each other in order to compare them, an image-based rhetoric frequently used in the debate about taste. Bergsten-Lagergård. Heminredning i veckopressen. Form, no. 2, 1948, p. 36

Even if many of the readers of Form still believed in the concept of taste, they probably found Henningsen’s opposition to tradition liberating. And they might have agreed with his statement that it was not enough that the artwork had an intrinsic harmony, there must also exist a harmony between the artwork and the idea of that specific time. Henningsen described how many people harboured “slotsästetik” (castle or manor house aesthetics), despite the fact that they could never afford to realise this dream. Instead he imagined that there must be a bitter feeling in only dreaming about beauty and never

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673 “Vi lever i grå dager, går i gråt og brunt tøj og omgir os med smagfuldt afstemte nuancer. Traditionen gör os blinde som mulvarpe overfor lys och farve och livets rigdom.” Henningsen, P., 1944, p. 71

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seeing it realised. Dreaming of the good life, but only affording cheap pastiches could result in what was considered bad choices and bad taste as the illustration from Form above demonstrates. We can find similar arguments among some of the writers in Möbelvärlden. Adapting historic styles to contemporary homes meant that the styles had been corrupted; the result was, according to the furniture designer Erik Ullrich, anachronistic interiors that had “a false air that caused irritation”.675

Several museums saw it as part of their mission to educate both producers and consumers about how to avoid bad imitations of older styles. Marshall Lagerquist (1907-1977), curator at Nordiska Museet, was involved in the debate. He found that new period furniture usually was of good technical quality. However, there were many examples where the copy and the original were too different, resulting not in copies but in pastiches.676 To avoid this, Lagerquist suggested that producers should know more about the original before creating a copy. The producers often used photographs, rather than original furniture. Moreover, they lacked careful measurements and information about colours. Lagerquist suggested a number of adaptations in production to make it fit better with the ideals of authenticity and also made some suggestions on how to mediate this authenticity. Furniture, he argued should be marked with the signature of the maker, and the producer should also be responsible for accompanying every piece of furniture with a description of the original. This narrative could also provide the salesmen with stronger sales arguments and help them meet the competition from the antiques market. Today storytelling and the commercial use of history can be considered common practice.

4.2.2 Originary Authenticity and Serial Production

The conspicuous consumer was not supposed to be satisfied with false and soulless versions of period furniture, they were expected to look for furniture that could present a factual and spatio-temporal link with what it claimed to be, “an originary authenticity”.677

During the 1930s and 1940s there were many different types of period furniture available to the consumer: antiques, high-class copies, updated and simplified furniture produced by the crafts movement, and industrially produced furniture of varying quality. As discussed earlier, in this multitude of variations it is possible to identify three main types of reuse of the Gustavian

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674 “Det er bitter bare at drømme om skønhed, men aldrig se den blie virklighed. Det er i sig selv en rigdom og lykke at kommi overenstemmelse med sin egen tids bestrebler.” Henningsen P. Det moderne ved de nye. Form, no. 3-4(1944):69-71, p. 69
675 Ullrich E. >>Stilenlig<< möblering. Möbelvärlden, no. 3(1937):67-69, p. 69
676 Lagerquist, M. Nytt vin i gamla läglar, Möbelvärlden, no. 5(1945):175-179, p. 179
style. All three types adhered to the concept of authenticity in different ways. Firstly, there were more faithful copies and high-quality furniture made with direct inspiration from 18th century originals, typically intarsia. These were usually made in small numbers and the cost was relatively high, although some of these faithful copies also became part of more large-scale serial production. Museum exhibitions and publications played a decisive role in this production. Secondly, we find furniture produced by the crafts movement that was less dependent on the original. Usually, this type of furniture was painted, and the proportions were slightly adapted, with details radically simplified. They were perceived as different because they were based on knowledge, honesty, authenticity and high-quality craftsmanship rather than a superficial historicism. And lastly, there was a market for antiques, where the question of forgeries was a constant issue. The mode of production was an important aspect of originary authenticity. The main difference was whether furniture was handmade or machine-made.

Let us allow one or two generations brought up in the religion of patina and the ‘handmade’ to fade away quietly.678

Le Corbusier’s machine classicism and modernist agenda resonated in Swedish furniture production and generally, modernists called for machine based serial production. However, the difference was not always easy to define; for a long time production included both mechanised and handmade elements, and it was quite common that functionalist furniture was at least partially handmade. Furniture production in Sweden in 1900-1950 was concentrated in the regions of Västergötland and Småland, where it was easy to find raw materials, skilled workers, and the industries were often placed next to the railway. The numerous small companies specialised in different types of furniture, while a few larger industries with serial production were established in the 1920s and 30s.679 This became a period of modernisation of the industry, when more efficient machines and electricity were introduced. The professor of Economic History, Sverker Jonsson, has suggested that at the time the Swedish furniture industry was more interested in rationalisation and streamlining the production than in committing to new styles and designs. The actors in the industry seem to have felt that they were working at a moment of change in both style and mode of production. The change included a transition from handmade suites of furniture to serial production and lower prices. In 1939, the editor of Form, Kaj Andersson, stated that serial production

would deliver the deathblow to the previously popular suites of furniture. Moreover, he pointed out that state-funded enquiries had established that such suites could be devastating for smaller households, mainly because of the cost but also because they were considered impractical. The editor of Möbelvälden, Edvard Miltopaeus, was not so categorical; he thought that Andersson exaggerated, even if the number of suites of furniture would diminish, there would always be wealthy homes that needed to be furnished.

What was the difference between handmade or machine-made, how did the mode of production affect the idea of an originary authenticity? This question was debated in a different context at the time. In the text *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction* (1936) Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) discussed the difference between manual and mechanical reproduction, using film and photography as the example. In Benjamin’s text and in the debate concerning the production of period furniture, there is a focus on the mode of production and how it related to the original, highlighting the question of honesty in production. Even though art had always been reproduced, the introduction of mechanical means represented something new and Benjamin argued that mechanical reproduction meant an upheaval of tradition. He also found that its effect went beyond the realm of art and made the aura of an object shrink. The original was also affected by reproduction, since it was no longer unique. Therefore, the conditions of production would determine the reception and authenticity of the object, according to Benjamin.

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680 Andersson, K. Nya standardmöbler. *Form*, no. 7(1939):148-152, p. 148
Modern Seriemöbler

Förnäma Stilmöbler

GÖTEBORGS SLÖJDMAGASIN

Figure 51. Modern serial production or distinguished period furniture? In 1932, the consumer was offered both at Göteborgs Slöjdmagasin. However, as is most often the case in Form, it was the modern furniture that was picked for the advert. Göteborgs Slöjdmagasin was not the only store that saw the commercial potential in both types of products. Form, 1932, p. 78

The authors of acceptera offered a more nuanced portrayal of the difference between industry and handicraft than might be expected from a modernist
manifesto. The illustration in acceptera, seen below, highlights at least three different aspects of serial production of period furniture relevant to the functionalist movement. Firstly, it illuminates what the critics claimed to be a “false” feeling of authentic craftsmanship associated with period furniture. This type of furniture couldn’t own an originary authenticity, since it wasn’t what it claimed to be, e.g. handmade rather than machine-made. Secondly, the picture illustrated and supported the argument of the authors of acceptera that there were close links between handicraft and the industrial process, and that it was not the use of machines that was the biggest difference. Thirdly, it indicates how “new furniture in antique styles” became part of modern furniture production as industrial production developed.

Figure 52. This is how ‘new furniture in antique styles’ is made. This illustration was used in the acceptera manifesto to illustrate that period furniture and modern serial production were more closely related than one might think. Asplund G., et al. acceptera, 1931, p. 110

Serial production in the 1930s and 40s was usually defined as a specialisation and rationalisation that would result in reasonably priced furniture of good enough quality. However, the question of whether serially produced period furniture could be of high quality and good taste was far from agreed upon. The debate about serial production was fierce in Möbelvärlden and Form and continued throughout the 1930s and 40s. Opinions differed about what it meant for Swedish furniture production. Despite the high value placed on handmade furniture, the texts suggest that the aura of authenticity was not considered to have been automatically lost in the process of modern serial production; rather it was transformed into iconicity and a pastiche could be accepted if it was done the right way, and with taste and knowledge. It was not the use of a machine per se that made the difference, they argued. Rather it was a question of standardisation and mass production versus commission-based production on a small scale.
There were a number of art historians as well as architects and designers in the 1930s and 40s who were interested in the link between modernism and Swedish tradition, mainly the 18th century. Art historian Gösta Selling, for example, used the 18th century to highlight ideas about serial production and standards.\footnote{Selling, G. Série och standard på 1700-talet. \textit{Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift}, no. 6(1933): 129-135} In an article from 1933 he declared that so far art historians had not written enough about everyday objects and the museums focused on style and excellence rather than standardised, everyday objects. As an example of serial production he presented the carver chair a popular model produced in the Gustavian period. Selling concluded that contemporary serial production could work and lead to good results, as it had done in the 18th century. The carver chair did indeed prove to be a popular model throughout the 20th century. In 1930, the same year as the Stockholm Exhibition, Gustaf Näsström’s book \textit{Svensk functionalism} explored the roots of Swedish modernism. The book aimed to show how contemporary architecture was linked to old, Swedish building traditions, and tendencies such as standardisation. The book presented Swedish functionalism as the latest phase in a development of certain techniques and qualities that had begun much earlier. The aim of showing this strong connection to tradition was to give Swedish functionalist architecture a stronger national context, separating it from the international modernism that seemed so foreign and cold to many.

Some retailers were worried about how they would be able to sell the older models when everyone was asking for the latest.\footnote{Lengqvist, D. Frågan om nya stilar. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, no. 2(1933):35} The retailer Eric Ternström felt the new style lacked beauty and national character, and he found modernism too German. However, he admitted that most styles were imported at some point, but they had usually developed a more national expression.\footnote{Ternström, E. Standardisering. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, April, no. 4(1933):67-68, p. 67} A survival of a style, Ternström added, depended on its ability to adapt to new circumstances. He doubted that this new style would be able to do that and expected there to be a reaction.\footnote{Ternström, E., 1933, p. 68} Ternström, were more hesitant and felt that the interest in functionalism (ändamålsenlighet) wasn’t based on any real understanding, and that every age has needed practical and functional furniture.\footnote{“…var tid har haft lika stort behov av praktiska och ändamålsenliga möbler” Ternström E. \textit{En presentation}. \textit{Möbelvärlden}, January, no. 1(1933):?}

4.2.3 Carl Malmsten
The designer, craftsman and educator Carl Malmsten (1888-1972) aptly managed to balance his work between modernism, tradition, handmade and machine-made in a way that made his furniture qualify for an originary authen-
ticity as well as good taste. This, however, did not happen without debate and controversy. Malmsten became part of what has been referred to as the Battle of the Styles even before the Stockholm Exhibition had opened in 1930.688

Figure 53. Gotthard Johansson and Carl Malmsten were two of the lead figures in the battle between functionalism and traditionalism. Tubular metal-framed furniture became the symbol of the new style and here they struggle about whether or not to let it into Svenska Slöjdföreningen, where both of them were active members. Numerous illustrations dealing with the controversy were made and published around the year 1930. Illustration by Bertil Almqvist published in Möbelvärlden, no. 7, 1933, p. 116

Malmsten opposed the focus on industrial, mechanised production, in favour of traditional crafts and he also wanted to counteract the separation of arts and crafts. In the fierce debate in 1930 Malmsten represented the traditionalists – “opponenterna”, promoting history and a national style against the “funktionalisterna” represented by Gregor Paulsson and Gotthard Johansson who preferred a practical, clean-cut and authentic international modernism. Malmsten on the other hand considered modernism to be cold, commercial

and rootless, distanced from nature and the Nordic landscape. These were important aspects to Malmsten, who already in 1916 had published the text *Om svensk karaktär inom konstkulturen: en undersökning om svensk naturs och svenskt kynnes återverkan på vår arkitektur, konst och handverk samt om främjande och bämnande maktar vid skapandet av en enhetlig konstkultur*. In this text he explored the influence of Swedish nature and its people on architecture, art and craft, a bond that he argued needed to be strengthened.

The heated discussions concerning traditional versus modern have become a well-known touchstone in Swedish design history. The modernists led by Gregor Paulsson came to dominate the board of Svenska Slöjdföreningen, and as soon as there seemed to be a backlash after the purifying modernistic bath of the exhibition in 1930 there was an outcry in *Form* from various critics, art historians and museum directors. Writers would for example complain about exhibitions and weekly journals that they considered encouraged the wrong ideals and counteracted the efforts to promote good taste among the public. The sheer number of these protests seems to suggest that the purifying bath of 1930 wasn’t so purging after all.

Ten years on the situation had changed and Erik Wettergren, the future chairman of Nationalmuseum, who at the time was working as a curator for Konstslöjdavdelningen, concluded in a statement in *Form* (1940) that those who were on opposite sides in the debate in 1930 were now united, working for the same goals. Functionalism had become “softer, friendlier and more colourful” than in other countries. Moreover, he found that it had become a more suitable expression of Swedishness. However, Malmsten still described functionalism as a denial of cultural heritage, and he acknowledged the usefulness in turning one’s back on old values only because it enabled you to return to them with fresh eyes and rediscover the treasures that were there.

Malmsten started his career as a designer and cabinetmaker at the end of the 1910s and was part of the neo-classicist movement of the 1920s. He always had a keen eye for the Gustavian period, often referring back to the craft, the material and the attitude of the period. Malmsten regularly commented on the importance of museum visits for his work, and as a child he visited museums such as Skansen and Nordiska Museet together with his father and later as a teacher he took his own students. The art historian

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690 Wettergren, E. tradis och funkis bar båda på rika värden, som stärkta och rensade gick ut år 1930 års strid, *Form*, no. 2(1940):95

691 “Så skola då åter dessa värden lämna sina inspirerande bidrag vid nyskapandet i tidens anda och främja hemkänslan i svenska hem.” Malmsten, C. Då och nu. *Form*, no. 2(1940):95

Anna Greta Wahlberg describes his visits to Skansen as conclusive to his sense of aesthetics and feeling for Swedish craftsmanship. In 1931 Malmsten published two booklets with designs of simpler pieces of furniture, alluding to Empire and Gustavian furniture. When Axel L Romdahl presented Malmsten’s furniture production in Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift in 1933 he concluded his article by stating that it should be considered just as fine to own a chest of drawers made by Malmsten as it was to own a Haupt, and that perhaps in the future a Malmsten might be even more expensive than a Haupt.

However, Malmsten’s production would include more than limited and expensive furniture. By the 1940s Malmsten was designing furniture for Kooperativa Förbundet (KF, Sweden’s Co-operative Union), which was strongly associated with standardisation in furniture production. Even before KF opened their own furniture department in 1937 they were involved in housing and interior design and produced their own line of furniture. In 1934 they took part in Standard 1934, an exhibition at Liljevalchs Konsthall, which was seen as a continuation of the Stockholm Exhibition. KF’s architects designed a semidetached house over two storeys, where they mixed old and new furniture in a modern setting. The organisers of the exhibition, Svenska Slöjdföreningen and Svenska Arkitektföreningen wanted to promote mass production of standardised furniture.

From the start KF had an ambitious programme of public information and education for members and potential customers, and it would play an important role in creating new patterns of consumption by initiating discussions and definitions of style, shape and taste. In 1938, Erik Wettergren (Nationalmuseum) described the public enterprises KF and HSB (the Savings and Construction Association of the Tenants) and their architects as “purifiers of taste” that could potentially reach millions of Swedes. It is interesting to note that Wettergren suggested there was a correlation between the improvement of taste, assisted by KF and HSB, and a specific lifestyle of the Swedish people, “…our free, physically active, swimming, knowledge-thirsty young Sweden”. However, despite KF’s ambition to speak to the “ordinary person” it was more often the ideals of the middle class that were promoted.

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693 Wahlberg, A. G. Carl Malmsten. Lund: Signum, 1988, p. 11
694 Malmsten, C. Teckningar till enklare möbeltyper. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1931
696 KF’s department for furniture (Kooperativa Förbundets möbelavdelning) was set up in 1937 and was led by Erik Ahlén. In 1964 the department was integrated with KF Interiör. In 1978 they started a collaboration with Svensk Form developing KF’s basmöbler.
699 Wettergren, E., 1938, p. 27
Figure 54. The “architectural structure” of two Gustavian chairs in Carl Malmsten’s Formspråkets Grammatik presented in the book Bo i ro-. Stockholm, 1958, cover. Courtesy: Carl Malmsten Archives.
Malmsten’s chair in the advert represented the idea of democratic design. Democratic design, which included the notion that design should be available to “…the broadest cross-section of the populace at the least possible cost per unit.” KF proudly announced in the advert that next year professor Malmsten’s quality furniture would be available to a large audience. The ambition of KF was, according to the advert, to offer furniture that was functional, and of good design and quality. Further, the text assumes that the reader is familiar with professor Carl Malmsten and his good reputation. The chair in the advert is a version of a “simplified Gustavian” style, and can be compared with the schematic illustrations of chairs in Formspråkets Grammatik (1958), see the illustrations above. The chair is photographed against a white background, similar to the photographs taken of museum collections discussed in chapter two, while the typography is more elaborate. The font is based on a copperplate style of “artistic” handwriting resembling writing with a quill or a fountain pen. The primary version of the font, Kuenstler Script, was designed in 1902 and stands out from the more contemporary fonts used in the journal.

701 Carl Malmsten was appointed honorary professor by the King in 1936.
Malmsten’s line of furniture for Kooperativa Förbundet is an illustrative example of the way designers, museums and commercial actors have interacted throughout the century. In 1944 Nationalmuseum displayed some of the designs that Malmsten made for KF’s furniture department in the exhibition Från barkbåt till eget hem. Valuable art works had been removed from Nationalmuseum during the war and the empty rooms were used for temporary exhibition such as Rörstrand under tre ärhundraden and Fem stora Gustavianer, described in chapter three. This exhibition focused both on Malmsten’s interest in education and on his furniture.

Malmsten knew the chairman of Nationalmuseum, Erik Wettergren, quite well and in the obituary in *Form* he refers to Wettergren as his dear friend and emphasises his importance for young designers in the 1910 and 20s. Moreover, Malmsten portrayed Wettergren as a guardian of traditional craft as well as the historic city of Stockholm. In the obituary Malmsten quoted Esaias Tegnér’s poem about the Gustavian period, “Blott barbariet fosterländskt var…” and referred to Wettergren’s efforts to save Stockholm from some of the demolitions of historic houses that were so popular in the 1950s and 60s. The designer and critic Lena Larsson (1919-2000) made similar references to the 18th century when she described Malmsten the year he died, in 1972. He was like a carrier of a living tradition from the 18th century. It was a tradition that was at the same time *popular* and *distinguished* as well as *useful*, according to Larsson.

With the perspective of time we can now say that Carl Malmsten directly descends from and continues our Swedish 18th century. In shape after shape he completes the line from Linnaeus, Bellman and Almqvist. It is popular, noble and useful, this tradition created by famine, aquavit, briar and wood.

Despite Malmsten’s traditionalism and resistance to trends, very few designers, craftsmen and teachers have been so systematically embraced by both critics and consumers as him. In 1945 the professor of art history Per Olof Palme (1914-1983) claimed that modernism’s struggle to get rid of style imitations, symbolism and judgements based on aesthetic grounds had brought with it a fear of atmosphere and aesthetical qualities. Palme felt lucky to find

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702 Malmsten, C. Käre Ur-vän Erik… *Form*, no. 6(1961):345

703 “Så tacka vi Dig, vår Gustavian, ädle Herre av klarhet och måtta, för god stad och god vakt.” Malmsten, C., 1961, p. 345


705 Even after 1930 Malmsten’s patterns were among the most popular among the prints published by Svenska Slöjdföreningen. Ivanov, G. Vackrare vardagsvara - design för alla? Gregor Paulsson och Svenska slöjdföreningen 1915-1925, Univ. Diss. Umeå University, Umeå: Institutionen för historiska studier, 2004, p. 170
that this fear had been overcome with the help of a living Morris-tradition, embodied by Carl Malmsten’s person and work.\footnote{Palme, P. O. Möbler och moral. \textit{Form}, no. 3(1945):56-60, p. 60}

In his work, Malmsten wanted to create an atmosphere that favoured the genuine form. He was firmly convinced that design was not a superficial aesthetic concern but a question of honesty and genuineness, which required a profound knowledge of the styles and designs of the past. However, the different styles should not be studied as “dry, historical facts”, instead they should be presented as the consequence of an all-embracing desire for expression that included all elements.\footnote{“...allomfattande formningsvilja, vilken för att uppnå ett visst uttrycksvärde i en given riktning utbildade alla element.” Malmsten, C. Principer för formsinnets fostran i barndoms- och ungdomsskolor II. \textit{Svenska Slöjdföreningens Tidskrift} (1922):105-110, p. 105} The students should use historical styles to awaken the slumbering sense of the genuine shape.\footnote{Malmsten, C. 1922, p.108} Consequently, it was primarily the principles and the laws governing each style that were important according to Malmsten.\footnote{Ibid, p. 105}

In texts such as \textit{Formspråkets Grammatik} (1958) Malmsten developed this idea, identifying the basic qualities in historical styles, and showed how shapes grew out of older shapes, all of it dictated by gravity. He was a much appreciated educator and an important driving force in the development of crafts education, starting several schools and writing books and articles about the subject.\footnote{Carl Malmstens Verkstadsskola (a training workshop) opened in 1930 in Stockholm, and after much struggle the folk high school Capellagården opened in 1957.}

Malmsten was strongly rooted in tradition and studied furniture in museums as well as historical sites. Even though he used the grammar of shapes, rather than the historical modelling promoted by museums, he did encourage his students to copy furniture from museum collections as part of their studies. Moreover, he used the Swedish landscape and climate as sources of inspiration. The Gustavian style was part of this inspirational heritage. Malmsten used the past as a resource in the present, managing to combine a traditional input with a strong individual expression that makes his furniture recognisable as a “Malmsten product”. I would argue that the fact that his furniture was apprehended as (more) genuine and honest than other types of historical modelling has to do with his ability to mix the historical influences with a strong identity as a designer. A contributing factor was probably also that the core values in his ideology have been generously mediated through museum exhibitions, articles, advertising and education. Malmsten’s focus on education would also influence later revivals of the Gustavian style and the development of historical modelling, for example in the production of Norrgavel.

To conclude, during the 1930s and 1940s the production of period furniture existed in parallel and in dialogue with the development of functionalism. Further, the production highlighted some of the key features of the modern
movement: truth, technology, function, progress, anti-historicism and internationalism. Moreover, this was a period when good taste was propagated by state-funded initiatives, societies and museums in Sweden. Many arbiters of taste seem to have accepted that people bought period furniture, but only as long as they were able to differentiate the right historical references from those that were less appropriate. The arbiters of taste seem to have more or less agreed that, compared to other historic styles, the Gustavian style could easily be integrated into your modernist home, creating an acceptable aesthetic mix. This presupposed, however, that production related to tradition and demands for an originary authenticity where the consumer could experience a factual and spatio-temporal link between the object and what it claimed to be. To achieve this, both producers and sellers needed to make adaptions in production to fit the ideals. Moreover, they had to mediate furniture in a way that could be understood and appreciated by the consumer. Museums would see this as part of their mission, to educate the general public but also to promote high quality, authentic models for the furniture industry, and they were involved in the education of producers and salespeople.

Throughout the 1930s and 40s historicism as well as modernism helped shape furniture production in Sweden. This was echoed in a lively debate about period furniture involving art historians, critics, consumers, designers, museum curators, suppliers and producers. Period furniture became an important component in this debate about Swedish design, focusing on notions such as taste, honesty, beauty and authenticity. The material explored in this chapter shows how Gustavian style period furniture not only survived functionalism; the production actually thrived, despite historicism being a highly controversial subject among trendsetters and critics. Gustavian style was even partly integrated within the functionalist project, promoted as the national and historical roots of the modernist movement, and used to motivate both serial production and traditional materials.

The idea that there existed a connection between functionalism and the 18th century was re-launched during the neo-functionalism of the 1990s. However, there were some changes in the interpretation of the style. When the critic Ingela Lind described the Gustavian in an article about the revival of the 18th century in 1993, she no longer referred to the Haupt chest of drawers but to the painted, simpler type of furniture, easily adapted to industrial production. We will now look more closely at IKEA’s production of

712 In his description of the Swedish furniture industry Bertil Arwidsson suggests that period furniture and simpler furniture dominated in most furniture stores until the 1970s-80s. The debate about modern versus traditional he refers to as an elitist academic discussion. Arwidson, B. and Svensk byggtjänst. 100 år med svenska möbler: från snickeri till möbelindustri, Stockholm: Svensk byggtjänst, 2006, p. 54
713 ”Dess inhemska fattigvariant smälter in i modernt boende och går lätt att överföra till industriproduktion.” Lind, I. 1700-tal lockar nyfattig svensk. Dagens Nyheter, 02.10.1993
period furniture, which includes both of these trends – the veneer Haupt as well as the simpler, painted furniture inspired by Carl and Karin Larsson’s Lilla Hyttnäs.

4.3 IKEA and Period Furniture

IKEA started as a business in 1943. A recurring statement used to describe the company’s role in Swedish society is that the Social Democratic Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson created the modern Swedish *folkhemmet* (welfare state), while the creator of IKEA Ingvar Kamprad furnished it. This might have an ounce of truth to it, but it is also a nostalgic reference to Sweden in the 1930s–1960s. Despite the contradiction between *folkhemmet* and new values in a changing Swedish society, IKEA has managed to appropriate the values of *folkhemmet* and transfer them to IKEA’s ideology.\(^\text{714}\) The company has furthermore applied a similar rhetoric about Swedish design found in the publications of Svenska Slöjdföreningen. This rhetoric has resonated with critics as well as commercial enterprises, and has relied on a stereotypical Swedishness that is “practical, simple, rational and democratic”.\(^\text{715}\) These are all values that are closely linked to IKEA’s choice of words in its global marketing strategy today. However, at the start the company met resistance both from the furniture industry (Sveriges Möbelhandlarens Centralförbund), which felt threatened by IKEA’s business concept, and Svenska Slöjdföreningen, which accused them of poor quality and stealing designs from others.

IKEA’s success was based on flat-pack solutions and cheap modern furniture. However, the company also produced and sold period furniture.\(^\text{716}\) Some of the earlier pieces were copies of originals in museum collections. Still, the focus was placed on offering reasonably priced copies of high-end furniture, mainly veneer furniture with marquetry. The model “Haupt N.M.”, a copy of a Haupt chest of drawers featured in the illustration below, was produced by Firma Allt i trä. The business changed its name to Östergyllens Möbelindustri in 1963.\(^\text{717}\) The model was based on Nordiska Museet’s Haupt chest of draw-


\(^{716}\) IKEA were not the first company to produce flat pack furniture, however, they did develop it to their main concept. The first flat pack furniture was designed by the student of Carl Malmsten, Elias Svedberg. The series was named Trivia Bygg and was sold by Nordiska Kompaniet in the 1940s.

ers with the flute-playing putto and was sold by IKEA in 1955-1968.\textsuperscript{718} It was a well-known piece of furniture. Already in 1901 John Böttiger had included drawings of the chest of drawers in his book on the cabinetmaker Georg Haupt published by Svenska Slöjdföreningen.\textsuperscript{719} This book contained a catalogue with descriptions and photographs of forty pieces of furniture signed by Haupt. The chest of drawers was also turned into an illustration by the textile historian and illustrator Emilie von Walterstorff (1871-1948) and published in Gustaf Upmark Jr.’s Möbler i afdelningen för de högre stånden (1912). Other examples of period furniture in IKEA’s production were more generic, for example the dining room set Desirée sold by IKEA 1957-1976.\textsuperscript{720}

![Image]

Figure 56. The IKEA model Haupt N.M.. This chest of drawers is a copy of one of the most exhibited pieces of Gustavian furniture at Nordiska Museet. However, if you compare this Haupt copy produced in the 1960s with Emilie von Walterstorff’s illustration from 1912 it becomes clear that there are a number of differences in colour and materials. The IKEA model Haupt N.M. was made with inlays of several tropical woods, but it lacks the variation in colour tones that can be found in the original. This copy produced by Östergyllens möbelindustri AB has been part of Nordiska Museet’s collections since 2007. Photo on the left: Mats Landin, Nordiska Museet. Illustration on the right: Emilie von Walterstorff in Upmark, G. Möbler i Afdelningen för de högre stånden. Stockholm; Norstedt, 1912, pl. LVIII

By the end of the 1970s period furniture had become less fashionable with IKEA’s customers and they more or less disappeared from production.\textsuperscript{721}

Instead, the company focused more on cheap, sometimes cheeky, design


\textsuperscript{719} Böttiger, J. Kungl. hofschatullmakaren och ebenisten Georg Haupt: en studie till 1700-talets konstslöjd-historia. Stockholm: Svenska Slöjdföreningen, 1901

\textsuperscript{720} IKEA’s Haupt chest of drawers and the Desirée table and chairs have both been acquired by Nordiska Museet and are now part of their collections.

\textsuperscript{721} Atle Bjarnestam, E. IKEA: design och identitet. Malmö: Arena, 2009, p. 51
aimed at younger customers moving into their first apartment. However, in the mid 1980s when IKEA promoted Stockholm, a new line of furniture created by designers Karin Mobring and Tomas Jelinek, the target group was a bit different. One of the advertisements for the line jokingly explained that many people revolt, but eventually they end up longing for more sophisticated furniture. And then the advertisement bade the customer welcome to the bourgeoisie.722 According to the IKEA employee, Anders Carlberg who helped launch the line, the new line represented furniture with class. When Kerstin Wickman, professor of the history of design and craft, reviewed Stockholm in Form in 1985, she stated that it was for the customer that wanted something genuine (“gediget”) without ruining their finances. IKEA offered “a piece of culture” to their customers.723 Critics at the time assumed that the company was trying a more “middle-aged way” where they put less effort into developing new and original designs.724 The journalist Ann Tiberg considered this to be in line with international and European trends at the time, which according to her meant flower patterns for the middle-aged and less design for the young. The risk, according to Tiberg, was that good taste yet again would be reserved for those with money.

In 1984 IKEA became a Purveyor to the Royal Court, and since then they have been able to use the coat of arms of Sweden with the text “Kunglig Hovleverantör”. The monarchy lends this symbol to about 130 companies. By appointing companies the monarchy shows that a member of the royal family appreciates the products or services provided. One important aspect of these appointments is that they help reproduce royalty in different ways. When the companies use the coat of arms in combination with their own brand it also helps fill royalty with meaning. Moreover, the products sold by these companies can be interpreted as a kind of everyday royalism, where royals become a natural part of citizen’s individual lives and histories.725 Lennart Ekmark, marketing director at IKEA, remarked in the press in 1984 that the intention of the advert was not primarily commercial, but was intended to create joy and sympathy with the king and queen.726

723 Wickman, K. Ett stycke kultur. Form, no. 4(1985):15
During the 1980s and 1990s IKEA used the coat of arms in their marketing along with the slogan “IKEA from palace to hut” (IKEA från slott till koja). The slogan was written by the copywriter Jan Nord and implied that the company was capable of furnishing both palaces and huts. It was also a way to answer the challenge from other companies that imitated the IKEA flat-pack concept. IKEA wanted to prove that there was more to the company than cheap furniture. However, the Royal Court was not entirely posi-
tive towards IKEA’s bold use of the appointment, according to the Marshal of the Realm Nils-Erik Svensson, and would have preferred a more modest use of the coat of arms.\footnote{Wirén, A. Ikeas annons retade hovet. Expressen, 14.11.1984}

The advertising in the 1980s showed IKEA’s products, for example the Stockholm line in more exclusive settings than before, mixing IKEA furniture with antiques, design classics and heirlooms, and moreover, the ads were placed in more high-profile magazines.\footnote{Kristoffersson, S. Design by IKEA: a cultural history. London: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 43} Using historical references in interior design can be seen as a response to the post-modern influence at the time. The director of Svensk Form, Beate Sydoff, wrote in Form\footnote{“Även historien är vår, inte bara objekten ärvs utan också hela det immateriella arv som finns kvar. Vårt kulturarv är en oändlig ackumulation av kultur, men också av människor snarare än ting. (…) har lämnat plats för ett rum som sköljer över oss associationer från de kulturer vi är delar av, och som på det sättet också markeras vår hemvist kulturellt och historiskt. 80-talets rum är inte okonroversiella eller neutrala. De försöker få oss att återta en plats i historien: se detta är vårt arv och vår del i mänsklighetens samlade erfarenhet…” Sydhoff, B. Svensk Form: Tradition och nytänkande om den svenska smaken. Form, no. 5(1985):4} She found that these eclectic rooms were neither uncontroversial nor neutral; rather they wanted us to reclaim a place in history as they flooded us with association from the different cultures we are part of and marked where we belonged, culturally and historically.

By the 1990s we see a return to the functionalism of the 1930s, which had ended up in the utopian arena. However, when revitalised as neo-functionalism, new values had to be added in order to make the style relevant once again. Some of the aspects added were contemporary ideals such as ecological design, anti-consumerism and globalisation. These values gave the products a non-commercial aura that actually increased their commercial appeal. Neo-functionalism could thus aspire to become a “commodified authentic”, which is a type of product that is considered as more successful the more skilfully it can hide its commercial origins.\footnote{Outka, E. Consuming traditions: modernity, modernism, and the commodified authentic. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 172} The exhibition and furniture designer Lars Bülow predicted the return of functionalism in an article in Form\footnote{“Idag har trendneurotikerna bytt livsstil. Samma personer som för några år sedan försvarade flärd och lym predikar nu enkelhetens evangelium. När allting varit tillåtet börjar man längta efter något hårdtagget, substansiellt, autentiskt.(…) Vi måste rusta oss bättre för att kunna höja kvaliteten under det 90-tal, som kanske innebär den skandinaviska funktionalismens återkomst, spädde han.” Bülow, L. Möbelkultur att ärva. Form, no. 6(1992):64} in 1992. In the text he related this to the current changes in lifestyle, from luxury to simplicity, better quality, and the more substantial and authentic.\footnote{“Idag har trendneurotikerna bytt livsstil. Samma personer som för några år sedan försvarade flärd och lym predikar nu enkelhetens evangelium. När allting varit tillåtet börjar man längta efter något hårdtagget, substansiellt, autentiskt.(…) Vi måste rusta oss bättre för att kunna höja kvaliteten under det 90-tal, som kanske innebär den skandinaviska funktionalismens återkomst, spädde han.” Bülow, L. Möbelkultur att ärva. Form, no. 6(1992):64} The search for the authentic he saw as a reaction to the frivolous 1980s. I would further argue that the neo-functionalism of the 1990s could be considered a reaction to the more eclectic historicism of post-modernism. Not only did it refer back to the 1930s, it looked even further back into a past
that was considered a distinctly Swedish style, and that claimed its roots in the 18th century. Furthermore, I would argue that the longing for authenticity and quality in the 1990s could be compared to the interest in national history and critique against historicism in the 1880s and 90s, described previously in this chapter.

In the 1990s the heritage boom was in full bloom, offering increased access to manor houses and castles, as well as books and magazines on popular history, period clothes, food and furniture. In 1992, a journalist in Möbler & Miljö (the successor to Möbelvärlden) declared that at a time of internationalisation our need for the home and the original, our roots, increased, and furniture makers anticipated a Scandinavian trend. In 1991 the journalist Marie Hogfors declared that designers and artists were competing to define what was most Swedish. “Country” was a popular style in Swedish homes in the early 90s, which meant pine and imitations of older vernacular furniture. Karin and Carl Larsson’s home in Sundborn was yet again a popular inspiration, and the journalist in Möbler & Miljö explained that this was due to the fact that it symbolised home, family and safety. Nationalmuseum’s exhibition about Carl Larsson in 1992 and a new book about the artist probably also contributed to the interest. The following year Möbler & Miljö reported from the annual furniture fair in Älvsjö that there was a mix of different styles, and the Gustavian style dominated. When reporting from the Paris exhibition Salon International du Meuble that same year, in 1993, the journalist in Möbler & Miljö proudly declared that the Gustavian style had become a major source of inspiration in France. Sweden was no longer following French fashion; it was the other way around this time. The Gustavian style became a fixed point alluding to Swedish tradition in a changing world.

736 Hogfors, M. Tidlöst och fullständigt knallmodernt. Svenska Dagbladet, 23.01.1991
737 Interview with Per Hahn, Inter IKEA Culture Centre AB, 12.02.2016
738 The period styles were most prominent with the producers K A Roos, Ämells, City-Möbler, LM Möbler and Solgärden. Johansson, B. Ett bra lyft för svenska hemmöbler. Möbler & Miljö, no. 3(1992):8-9, p. 8
4.3.1 IKEA 18th Century

IKEA has on several occasions launched special collections parallel to their standard range of products. In the beginning of the 1990s, IKEA and the Swedish National Heritage Board joined forces in a project that resulted in a new line of 18th century furniture.

One example of these collections was Stockholm, which was presented in a catalogue entitled “Vackrare vardag” and refers to Gregor Paulsson’s “Vackrare vardagsvara” (1919). Another collection is the PS collection, which is relaunched every third year, a collection that has a more modernist aesthetic and sometimes a more experimental approach.
In 1991, art historian and well-known design critic Ulf Härd af Segerstad (1915-2006) commented on the proposed launch of IKEA 18th Century. He described the intentions of the project as a vote against the modernist belief in progress. He suggested that Kamprad’s Gustavian knockdown furniture meant that IKEA had embarked on a post-modern search for style, which he interpreted as an expression of the difficulties that designers always had when trying to develop a genuinely contemporary style. Härd af Segerstad further suggested that although it was not the first time the company included period furniture in their range this new launch might indicate a change in their message, from modernism to historicism.

Obviously it must be admitted that these end of days Gustavians, who try to find a solid point in a fleeting present, have the ambition to seek out something considered to be Swedish tradition. In this respect they join in an evident reaction against internationalism and collectivist utopism. That attitude is excellent as far as it concerns the authenticity of the materials, the quality of the production, the sensible adaptation to function and the like. Perhaps we may even defend a moderate adaptation to Gustavian style counter balancing the suggested search for expression.

What was it that motivated the project by IKEA and the National Heritage Board? The project originated in a number of concerns that could be solved through collaboration. The Swedish National Heritage Board wanted to save the collection of furniture at the oldest spa in Scandinavia, Medevi Brunn, and needed funding. The director general of the National Heritage Board Margareta Björnstad contacted IKEA, who in turn were looking for products that would assert their profile. Informal contacts also played an important

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741 Härd af Segerstad worked as a design critic at Svenska Dagbladet 1939-2004, and as the editor of Form 1957-1960.
743 ”Det måste självfallet erkännas, att dessa de yttersta dagarnas gustavianer i sin ambition att finna en fast punkt i ett flytande nu har ambitionen att söka sig till en som man anser svensk tradition. I detta avseende spela man med i en påtaglig reaktion mot internationalism och kollektivistisk utopism. Den inställningen är förträfflig, när det gäller materialens äkthet, tillverkningen kvalitet, förnuftig funktionsanpassning och liknande. Kanske vi till och med kan försvara en mättfull gustaviansk stillanpassning som motvikt till nyss antydda uttryckssökande.” Hård af Segerstad, U., 05.02.1991
role. According to Lars Ekmark a decisive incident was a well-timed conversation between the National Heritage Board and Kamprad.\textsuperscript{745}

It was important to both actors that this line of 18\textsuperscript{th} century furniture would be a step away from the “degenerate copies” that were made in the 1980s. The furniture had to be more authentic, classic and genuine according to the project manager Per Hahn at IKEA.\textsuperscript{746} When the project was made public in 1991 the next phase of the project was initiated and the different actors went through an obligatory passage, committing to the project without damaging their interests. Apparently, the news leaked to the press and the project then became a matter of prestige. In this sense the publicity became a cohesive frame for the project.

IKEA and the National Heritage Board agreed on a one-off amount for each model that became part of the project, and all the money was placed in trust for the Medevi Brunn project.\textsuperscript{747} The agreement was that the National Heritage Board contributed with advice, knowledge and models, and IKEA would contribute financial support. However, the different demands from the actors would require numerous negotiations. At the time Lars Sjöberg was a head curator at Nationalmuseum.\textsuperscript{748} IKEA employed Lars Sjöberg part-time for two years to assist them in developing IKEA 18\textsuperscript{th} Century, for which they wanted models to furnish an entire home. Sjöberg would also represent the interests of the National Heritage Board in their dialogue with IKEA. This was not the first time Sjöberg or Nationalmuseum was involved in furniture production by providing an original piece of furniture for historical modelling. In 1987, for example, a chair from Nynäs Gård (Nationalmuseum) was copied by the cabinetmaker Michael Björnskär. In the promotion of the chair it was declared to be a “perfect copy”, and Lars Sjöberg is claimed to have approved the chair.\textsuperscript{749} The first two copies were reserved for the king and queen, to sit on during the forthcoming celebrations in the city of Nyköping that same year. The chair was sold as “the Nynäs armchair”.

4.3.2 The Hallunda Story

IKEA 18\textsuperscript{th} century was a line that combined several of the features of the types of period furniture already mentioned. The line included copies of original furniture and textiles, some of them found in museum collections. However,


\textsuperscript{746} The words Hahn used when describing the original 18\textsuperscript{th} century furniture in the interview in 2015 were: authenticity, user value, originality, roots, heritage, original, culture and functionality – they are simple but well made. Interview with Per Hahn 12.02.2016

\textsuperscript{747} Fredlund, J. 1700-tal à la IKEA. Antik & Auktion, no. 4(1994):40-45, p. 40

\textsuperscript{748} Statens Konstmuseer was a governmental authority that included Nationalmuseum, Moderna Museet and Ostasiatiska Museet. In 1999 the organisation changed and Nationalmuseum is an independent authority.

\textsuperscript{749} Anon. En perfekt kopia. Svenska Dagbladet Weekend, 03.04.1987
it was not Haupt or some other famous cabinetmaker who had made the original. Rather the furniture chosen represented models that were closer to the everyday type of painted furniture that became popular in the 1890s. Moreover, each model was attached with a story linked to a specific place, creating a feeling of “originary authenticity” usually reserved for antiques.

The “Hallunda” chair was chosen as the emblem for the entire line of furniture. The original Hallunda model developed in several similar variations during the 1780s. There exist chairs with the same back shape, curved seat rails and fluted legs that carry the signatures of two different furniture makers, Melchior Lundberg Sr. (active in Stockholm 1775-1812) and Johan Mansnerus (born in Finland and active in Stockholm 1759-1779). The inspiration came from Gustav III’s dining room chairs at Gripsholm, which were possibly based on a French model at Versailles according to Sjöberg. This model was then adapted to Swedish conditions by the furniture makers in Stockholm. The translations made involved the filling in the backrest being exchanged for a wooden backrest and the firm filling of the seat had being exchanged for a slip seat, with an added stretcher.

Background stories and the provenance of the furniture were of vital importance for the way IKEA 18th Century was marketed. Storytelling had become increasingly popular in the 1990s and more and more companies realised its economic potential. In this case the narrative created an understanding and acceptance of the translations made, and gave a sense of closeness to the original style and material. This together with the approval from the National Heritage Board as well as Nationalmuseum’s expert, created a feeling of authenticity that added to the “seriousness” of the project. Sara Kristoffersson concluded in her book Design by IKEA: a cultural history (2014) that it was “...at least, partially, a serious cultural manifestation”.

Since the items were copies of originals they could have been termed ‘pastiches’. On the other hand, they were not just based on original design or even mere imitations but were, rather careful copies. All of the products were controlled and stamped by the National Heritage Board with its official seal and the project could be seen, at least, partially, as a serious cultural manifestation.

The project was launched and the production started in autumn 1993. The next step in establishing the network was a mobilisation where the different actors would start behaving like a macro actor. The catalogue Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA became an important part of the joint launch of the products. This catalogue differed from the “ordinary” IKEA catalogue in a number of ways:

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750 Sjöberg, L. and Sjöberg U. Stolar, taburetter och fåtöljer i Sverige från 1600 till 1800. 1993, p. 115
752 The line was never included in the regular IKEA catalogue where the rest of company’s range of products was advertised.
it was smaller and had more information about each product, plus it cost SEK 50. Normally the catalogue was free of charge. It had several authors expressing ideas and opinions about craft, techniques, production and heritage. Axel Unnerbäck, PhD and principal administrative officer at The National Heritage Board wrote the foreword to the catalogue. He was an authoritative person to use for the project. He was well known within the heritage movement as one of the co-authors of the popular book *Så renoveras torp & gårdar* (1973, now in its tenth edition), as well as other key texts.\(^{753}\)

Recurring words in the catalogue and the press were notions such as *tradition, quality, simple design, skills* and these qualities are mentioned in opposition to *cheap, efficient, modern industrial production*. Nonetheless, IKEA wanted the reader to recognise the links between the 18th century and the contemporary production. The goal now was the same as then according to IKEA – to create more beautiful everyday objects at low cost – it was just achieved in a different way.

For 18th century Sweden it became the result of a poor country’s longing for beauty. For us it became our business concept in the 1950s.\(^{754}\)

The Gustavian was also described as specifically Swedish, and was presented as a tradition that was still alive. Sjöberg claimed that the 18th century furniture had not become unfashionable for 200 years and they would never become so unfashionable that they wouldn’t fit into modern homes.\(^{755}\) In the catalogue and at the launch in 1993 the options for combining the furniture with the rest of IKEA’s production were emphasised.\(^{756}\)

Stories create and shape brands, and history has become a marketing tool, used to give the material meaning and an identity. The catalogue *Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA* included stories that accompanied the photographs of each model. IKEA had worked with storytelling long before it became a vital factor in branding.\(^{757}\) The stories have mostly focused on the founder, the history of the company, Sweden and sometimes also about the customers. In this project storytelling became an active tool to strengthen the connections between the actors while also functioning as effective marketing. In the press material the company declared: “Every piece of furniture has an origin. A story to tell.”\(^{758}\) These stories were promoted in the catalogue and via the press, and

\(^{753}\) The authors included the architect Ove Hidemark, museum curator Elisabet Stavenow-Hidemark, art historian Göran Söderström and conservator Axel Unnerbäck.


\(^{755}\) Jonsson, M. *Nu satsar Ikea på 1700-talet*. Smålandsposten, 02.04.1991

\(^{756}\) Jonsson, M. *Svenskt 1700-tal visades upp i Råshult: experterna imponerade av Ikeas nygamla möbler*. Smålandsposten, 10.06.1993


\(^{758}\) IKEA. Scandinavian collection. Press material, undated
worked to emphasise the connection between the story, the object and a specific site. The stories also contributed to the feeling of authenticity since they provided the furniture with a provenance.

Figure 59. The Hallunda chair in the IKEA catalogue Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA. The photographs were used for marketing and press, and have been reused in Sjöberg’s books and in marketing even after other actors took over production of the model. Book spread, Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA, p. 52-53. 1993 Photographer: Staffan Johansson. Courtesy: Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

The story about the Hallunda chair states that the same type of chair as “Hallunda” was bought and placed in the dining room of the manor house in Hallunda, Botkyrka outside Stockholm at the end of the 18th century.759 Today, in the 2010s, the owner of the manor house is Lars Petter Wåhlin.760 In 2011 he told me in an interview that he contacted the National Heritage Board and IKEA in the 1990s when he found out that a chair in IKEA’s 18th century line of furniture was named Hallunda. Wåhlin wanted to know more about the connection to Hallunda and says that he did not get a proper reply, other than he did not own the name. From IKEA he didn’t get a reply at all. Wåhlin claims that his intention was never to claim ownership to the name, rather he wanted to be able to answer questions about the connection between the site and the chair. His own theory is that there might have been a mix-up between two different models – “Hallunda” and “Odenslunda” and refers to an old photograph where the chairs in the dining room resemble the latter. To find out more he visited the Sörby exhibition at Nationalmuseum in the summer of 1994, see chapter 3. He found that the sign next to the Hallunda chair had been removed, and speculates whether they might have become aware of their mistake.761 Wåhlin’s counter story is interesting be-

759 “På Hallunda herrgård i Botkyrka socken anskaffades på slutet av 1700-talet stolar av denna typ till huvudbyggnadens matsal.” IKEA. Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA. 1993, p. 52-53
760 Notes from a phone call 14.09.2011 to Lars Petter Wåhlin.
761 The story about the chair changes slightly in the books Sjöberg publish later. The original furniture maker is changed from Johan Peter Mansnerus to Melchior Lundberg Sr. (e.g. Sjöberg, L., Snitt I. and Sjöberg, U. Nio hus & en kyrka: svenska interiörer från 1700- och 1800-talen. Stockholm: Norstedt, 2010, p. 115)
cause it brings up the question about who owns a story and how the stories are used in a commercial context. What if private individuals or academic researchers present alternative readings of the past, readings that contradict these stories? Can contradictory stories destroy the market value of a product? How does the story of an object relate to the aura of an object?

4.3.3 Copy and Aura

Consequently, for all these choices the 18th century aesthete should meet IKEA’s demands for quick-drying colours and flat packs. Isn’t this a ground for conflicts? Of course, they both agree. But it can be solved from the beginning by choosing easily demountable models with small proportions.762

It required a large number of translations concerning knowledge, culture and technology between the different actors before production of IKEA 18th century could start.763 Firstly, the actors needed to find a common ground in their understanding of the past, which in turn affected their choices concerning for example the means of production. A compromise that was necessary concerned the paint, as linseed oil paint could not be part of industrial production of furniture. The compromise meant that IKEA sold part of the furniture unpainted and the customer could then make the choice to paint their furniture with traditional paint if they wanted. For the pieces of furniture that were painted, IKEA developed a new type of paint with a heavier pigment that made it look as if it had been hand-painted.764 Another important compromise concerned the chairs, which could not be delivered in flat packs but were sold ready assembled.

The negotiations between the National Heritage Board and IKEA resembled the debate and controversies in the 1930s and 40s mentioned earlier. They circled around intent, production methods, how to mediate the product to the consumers, national qualities, etc. When Sjöberg was asked about whether it was a bad thing to make copies, Sjöberg replied that copies had a bad ring to them in the context of art. However, he found that when it came to furniture it was the continuity and not the age of the object that was important.765 When it came to original furniture and interiors, Sjöberg had long advocated keeping original layers of paint and to scrape off later addi-


764 Interview with Per Hahn 12.02.2016

tions. On the other hand, in contemporary production the faded and worn original should not be used to fool anyone. Selling distressed furniture, where a machine made them look old and weathered, was not an option according to Sjöberg. The copy should look like the original did when it was new in the 18th century. Fabricated patina was not allowed.

Unstitch the hem, find the quality of the thread and the strength of the original colour. The originals have always sought maximum strength, clarity and purity. If one succeeds it becomes blatantly fashionable – and at the same time timeless.766

In the 1930s Walter Benjamin wrote about authenticity in relation to new modes of production. He found that the presence of the original was “the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity”.767 However, could it also be that the quality of the copy can be decisive to how we apprehend it? Are there good and bad copies? In the article The migration of the aura, or how to explore the original through its fac similes (2010), Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe explore our understanding of originals, copies and the aura of objects. Lowe and Latour argue that the means of production is important for the way we experience the copy, and the aura we ascribe originals and copies. They claim that if the technique is good enough it can help us redefine what the original is and what the copy implies to the original. When production methods and materials closely resemble those of the originals, it is easier for us to accept the value of the copy. In order to describe this they use the notion of differential of resistance, and they mention theatre as an example where the production demand more and better resembles the original production process than a reproduction of a painting normally does.768

This line of thinking can partly explain the efforts made when trying to introduce craft into the production of IKEA’s 18th century line of furniture in the 1990s. The National Heritage Board wanted the execution to be of high quality with as much fidelity to Swedish craft traditions as possible, the way it looked up until industrialism.769 Yet again, this repeats the perceived dichotomy between handmade and machine-made. Sjöberg, for his part, wanted to revive traditional craftsmanship in Sweden and use the historical models available: the Sörby exhibition at Nationalmuseum in 1994 was very much an

768 Latour, B. and Lowe, A. The migration of the aura, or how to explore the original through its fac similes (2011)1-18, p. 8. Accessible via: http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/151
769 “…största möjliga trohet mot den svenska hantverkstradition som levde fram till industrialismens genombrott.”, Unnerbäck, A. En kulturskatt bevaras. IKEA. Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA. 1993, p. 2
expression of this ambition.\textsuperscript{770} The demands from the National Heritage Board meant that the production included a number of materials and techniques that were new to IKEA, and it meant that the end result included a number of qualities, or flaws if you like, that IKEA normally would not have accepted, for example variations in weight and appearance.

In the article \textit{Roten till det svenska?} (1992) Ingela Maechel asked Lars Sjöberg how knockdown Gustavian in the flat-packs of the mass-market could further Swedish design?\textsuperscript{771} Sjöberg answered that copying is the first step in the upgrading of “the real functionalism” – a grammar of objects that we forgot when machine functionalism made its breakthrough. Here Sjöberg made what appears to be a direct reference to the previously mentioned Carl Malmsten’s \textit{Formspråkets Grammatik} (1958), the previously mentioned grammar that contains strong references to the past, and Sjöberg goes on to claim that this grammar needed to be relearned in order for the designers to create a new, individual and Swedish profile. The key to Swedish design identity could be found in history according to Sjöberg. However, it was in the manor houses and not with the farmers that a new Swedish functionalism should seek its roots. Moreover, by using the word machine-functionalism (maskinfunkis), Sjöberg suggests that there was functionalism before there were machines. It seems as if Sjöberg wanted to re-launch the idea of Gustavian style as pre-industrial modernism.

However, IKEA needed to find manufacturers that could deliver the products on time and for the right price. In order to find companies that could offer a genuine knowledge of craftsmanship, IKEA first looked to manufacturers in Eastern Europe that still used older machines that visually gave a similar result to older tools.\textsuperscript{772} In the end, production was spread across the world; the Hallunda and Fresta chairs were manufactured in Italy.\textsuperscript{773} The chandeliers were produced in the Phillipines as part of a Swedish development cooperation associated with Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). The idea was that the “craftsmanship” required in the project would be combined with a low price as well as modern industrial production. In order to succeed with such a translation it was necessary to compromise and find practical solutions to problems. How did the IKEA furniture compare to the originals? \textit{Antik & Anktion}, asked the joiner, restorer of antique furniture and researcher Torsten Sylvén (1915-2011) to examine IKEA’s 18\textsuperscript{th} century chairs. He was very pleased but at the same


\textsuperscript{772} Jonsson, M. Nu satsar Ikea på 1700-talet. \textit{Smålandsposten}, 02.04.1991

time he found the copies stereotypical. The sense of craftsmanship had disappeared. It became too perfect and the furniture lost its charm. Consequently, the readers of Antik & Auktion could rest assured that antiques were still a good option, since they had qualities that the copies lacked.

Figure 60. “…just as the craftsmen of the 18th century signed their work, we too have put a stamp on our furniture. (...) the seal as a certificate of authenticity…” (IKEA, Scandinavian Collection, press material, undated) The Hallunda chair was chosen as the symbol for the 18th century collection. Picture published in IKEA. Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA, 1993, p. 12. Courtesy: Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

The National Heritage Board and Lars Sjöberg from Nationalmuseum represented the expertise and know-how, as well as guaranteeing high quality and authenticity. To manifest this all the furniture was stamped with a hallmark that the customer could recognise as proof of authenticity. This was important since IKEA 18th century was promoted as an alternative to false pastiches in poor materials. Lars Sjöberg described the IKEA furniture as different from regular period furniture since they had historical credibility, were of better quality and produced in a way that resembled traditional craft.

Not surprisingly, there were those who criticised the National Heritage Board’s role in the project. The critics argued that it was in conflict with their role as Sweden’s central administrative agency in the area of cultural heritage. One of the people who spoke about this was the antiques dealer Christina Edelstam, who commented on the project in Antik & Auktion’s article about the project in 1994.

775 “…fuskgjorda pastischer i dåliga ersättningsmaterial”. Fredlund, J.,1994, p. 43
Above all I dislike that something labelled with the name of the National Heritage Board gives the impression of some kind of authenticity. The National Heritage Board is our authority as regards export permits for antiquities. This does not sit well with their involvement with IKEA…

Similarly to the 1930s and 40s, museums played an important role in supporting and promoting contemporary production of period furniture. Not only did Nationalmuseum help with expertise in the production of **IKEA 18th century**. It also helped create an authentic and genuine feeling around the project when the IKEA furniture was made part of two of Nationalmuseum’s exhibitions at the time; *Solen och Nordstjärnan* (1993) in Stockholm and Grand Palais, Paris and in the reconstructed house *Sörby* (1994) described in chapter 3. In the *Sörby* exhibition originals and copies were exhibited next to each other, in a similar way that can be seen in the catalogue and the IKEA museum, which opened in 2016. A number of publications also added to the feeling of an originary authenticity. *The Swedish Room* (Det svenska rummet, Swedish ed.), written and published by Lars and Ursula Sjöberg the same year as the Sörby exhibition described the original Sörby house. Its interiors are featured on the cover of the Swedish edition. Although no visitor surveys were conducted at the exhibition it is most likely that the visitors saw IKEA’s furniture and the publication *Det svenska rummet* as part of the same project, with Sjöberg and the 18th century as the common denominator.

The design critic and historian Hedvig Hedquist referred to Sörby as an original model for a Swedish home. The critic Peder Alton joined in the enthusiastic response, and compared Lars Sjöberg to the artist Carl Larsson, and claimed that Sjöberg was almost as successful in the promotion of his version of a Swedish home. Although, according to Alton, unlike Larsson, Sjöberg refrained from promoting a specific lifestyle, a statement that can be debated. In contrast we can read the critic Ingela Lind’s review of the book. Lind found that the furniture promoted a very specific taste, and drew parallels to *smakfostran* (the education of taste) at the beginning of the century. Lind made the claim that Lars and Ursula Sjöberg and the photographer Ingalill Snitt lacked the social pathos of Ellen Key. The authors seemed blind to the fact that simplicity is the most elite choice at the moment. Instead of a social commitment it was the lack of order and beauty that spurred them on according to Lind. It was the celebration of old Swedish aesthetic virtues that

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778 “…urmödell för ett svenskt hem” Hedquist, H. Som en faluröd satellit från svunna tider. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10.05.1994
were celebrated in the book – let's get rid of the messy and ugly – back to order.\textsuperscript{780}

Studying Snitt's photographs in The Swedish Room, it becomes evident she looks for the beauty in decay and transience, in patina. It is the house seen as an artwork – and it is a beauty that reveals itself in the right light but also it seems, under the imminent threat of destruction.\textsuperscript{781} Her pictures remind us of the transformation that heritage goes through, as it is staged and exposed to our gaze, or as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett phrases it: “...heritage is a mode of cultural production that gives the endangered or outmoded a second life as an ‘exhibition of itself’.”\textsuperscript{782} Moreover, the photographs reflect the approach that Lars Sjöberg had promoted since the 1960s where age, wear and tear should be visible, emphasising “the simplicity of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century”.\textsuperscript{783}

The production was completely terminated in 1999, when the designs were handed over to Nationalmuseum. There are several stories of what happened and why the collaboration ended. Many of the actors have later returned to comment on the project and added their own versions. According to Per Hahn, the project manager at IKEA, there was internal resistance and in the end it did not sell very well.\textsuperscript{784} At the time the company did not have enough patience to see the benefits the line had, and Hahn believes that the situation might have been different if the project had been launched today. Another reason, which I would argue was possibly the most important, was that the actors failed to create a macro actor, instead the different actors spoke with different voices and the different interests were obviously difficult to unite from the start. And possibly, IKEA, which was already a strong macro actor had to open up too much for its own comfort. Despite the drastic end of production, IKEA 18\textsuperscript{th} century was in many ways a success. Different actors had managed to collaborate and create a rather unique collection of furniture. Yet, much of the acclaim seems to have come after it was over. Today the


\textsuperscript{781} The publication Kavaljersflygeln på Gripsholm (1938) with photographs taken by the conservator, artist and photographer Ivar Andersson (1904-1985) as well as photographer Max Plunger's images in the book Hidemark, O. Edström, P. and Schyberg, B. (eds.) Drottningholms court theatre: its advent, fate and preservation, Stockholm: Byggförlaget, 1993 seem to share Snitt's fascination with patina and light in these 18\textsuperscript{th} century environments.


\textsuperscript{783} Bedoire F. Restaureringskonstens historia. Stockholm: Norstedt and Royal Institute of Art, 2013, p. 341

\textsuperscript{784} Interview with Per Hahn 12.02.2016
IKEA 18th century furniture produced in the 1990s has a high second-hand value at Swedish auctions.\textsuperscript{785}

In 2016 the company opened the IKEA museum in Älmhult, where the exhibition includes a tour of the company’s history told in parallel to a fairly standard version of Swedish 20th century design history. The concept and the brand IKEA are owned by IKEA Systems B.V. which carefully manages the history of the brand and the narrative created around the company. The museum is just one example of how skillfully IKEA has written its own history and been able to control the narrative, which is repeated faithfully in both media and research.\textsuperscript{786} In the museum, IKEA 18th century is presented at the beginning of the display, next to displays of the vernacular furniture tradition, Carl and Karin Larssons home Lilla Hyttnäss and the welfare state. The display includes examples of furniture, textiles and porcelain from the collection as well as an original Hallunda chair placed in a display case next to the copy, clearly marking a difference between the two. Alluding to the unique history of the line, there is a poster from an exhibition at Kulturen in Lund placed underneath the copy. The poster includes the logo with the Hallunda chair. The slide show in the background of the display shows pictures from Linnaeus Hammarby, the summerhouse of the botanist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) outside Uppsala. The connection between these images and the rest of the display feels a bit vague. Moreover, the accompanying text, a reference to Linnaeus “Live a simple life. Use natural resources wisely”, feels a bit far-fetched in this context.

IKEA 18th century meant that the company actually succeeded in furnishing both palaces and huts. Today these copies can be found in numerous historical sites and museums. It is this furniture that visitors are allowed to sit on, put their bags on, lean against or place their coffee cups on. It is an 18th century that you still can feel and experience with your senses, you are able to bring it home, and mix with originals from different times. The range was discontinued and all rights, drawings and other IKEA material were donated to Nationalmuseum in 1999. Some of the models are still in production but produced by other, smaller Swedish companies. The difference between the period furniture and originals is not always explicit and I would argue that they have become integral to the experience of the Swedish 18th century both in historic houses and private homes.


\textsuperscript{786} Even before they opened their own museum, the company financed and supported books and exhibitions about IKEA, for example IKEA på Liljevalchs in 2009.
4.4 Gustavian Style Abroad

Design has been one of the main tools to communicate national identity and market a national brand abroad. In the 1990s the Gustavian style played a prominent role in the development and promotion of Swedish design abroad.\(^{787}\)

Since the 1980s IKEA has been one of the main mediators of Swedish national culture abroad, and it has insisted on the particularity of its Swedish-ness, even if this might be based on myths or stereotypes.\(^{788}\) Some of the main notions that IKEA has taken advantage of are that of Sweden as a democratic and egalitarian welfare state.\(^{789}\) Ursula Lindqvist goes so far as to describe the company as “the most effective archive of national culture in today’s global marketplace”.\(^{790}\) When IKEA introduced IKEA \(18^{th}\) century to

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\(^{789}\) Kristoffersson, S. 2014, p. 2

the international press they explained their enthusiasm for the Gustavian style.

We share the enthusiasm of the 18th century for specifically functional thinking combined with the simple and beautiful language of design. The Gustavian style simply reflects our Swedish cultural heritage.791

Even though it was successful as part of the marketing of the brand, the line of 18th century furniture sold well in only one country outside Sweden, and that was France.792 According to Per Hahn this was because they liked this simplified version of Louis Seize, but he maintains that it generally is difficult to promote Swedish design traditions abroad since each country has their idea of the past and how it should be interpreted. Still, some “national” historical styles have had a successful life internationally. The success of the Shaker style in the USA can be compared to the more modest career of the Gustavian style. They both originated in the 18th century and have been promoted by commercial interests, as well as scholars and museum academics, to help establish a national style.793 At the end of the 20th century a form of Shaker heritage industry had developed that has been successful in the US as well as abroad.

The idea of marketing Sweden through its design can be traced back to the 19th century, and in the mid 20th century it had become an important aspect of how Sweden was presented to an international public. It was generally contemporary furniture that was promoted, but it was often done with reference to national heritage. In 1948 the Swedish Institute, in collaboration with Svenska Slöjdföreningen, published Design in Sweden Today. The text was written by Åke Huldt, who compared Swedish industrial design to a natural resource. In order to produce successful designs certain conditions needed to be favourable, according to the author: the home soil, history, the present way of life and an enlightened and energetic leadership.794 According to Huldt, this resource was something that nations succeeded in exploiting to a varying degree. Design products might not bring in as much cash as iron and wood pulp. However, they were a kind of hallmark, and a guarantee of good general standards – a measure of success. Seventy years later one would probably express it slightly different; we would probably say that design is a vital ingredient in Sweden’s national brand. Huldt ascribed the success of Swedish design to a few main factors: Swedish designers grew up and were inspired by the country rather than the city, which meant that they themselves were

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791 IKEA. Scandinavian Collection. Press material, undated.
792 Interview with Per Hahn, IKEA, 12.02.2016
craftsmen. Moreover, industrialism had arrived late in Sweden and in 1948 there was “...a residue of peasant handicraft on which to build”.

From the 1950s design and decorative arts were promoted under the banner Scandinavian design, which has proved to be a successful marketing and economic construct. It has been intimately linked to the concept of democratic design and the Swedish welfare state and state intervention in design and housing, presented as capitalism with a benign face. Scandinavian design is also, according to design historian Mark Ian Jones, associated with a set of myths that relate to “…clichéd views of the creators, including primitivism, folk arts and a supposed simplicity of existence…” It very successfully also promoted a specific aesthetic, and excluded anything that did not sit well within the regional/national emphasis. The rhetoric that was constructed in the 1950s continues to be recycled when presenting Swedish or Scandinavian design today.

Svenska Institutet (The Swedish Institute) is a public agency funded by both state and private ventures. Since 1945 the institute has worked to disseminate knowledge about Sweden’s cultural and social life. It is also responsible for creating a positive image of Sweden abroad. This has been done through exhibitions, publications and financial support. The promotion of Swedish design is often a collaborative task and The Swedish Institute has on numerous occasions collaborated with Svensk Form and various museums, for example Nationalmuseum. An example that highlights these connections is an advert in the journal Form in 1985. The journal advertised itself by publishing short texts about “Why I read Form”. Several prominent people in the design world were featured, for example Anders Clason, at the time director of the Swedish Institute (1983-1993). He recalled being 12 years old when he got his first edition of Form and claims that this was where his interest in what he described as the Swedish style with its blond tone from the 18th century until today, was established. As the director of the Swedish Institute he saw Swedish style as the best way of promoting Sweden. He dreamed about a major exhibition called “The roots of IKEA” to be shown across the world; the exhibition would reveal an unbroken tradition of style, the influence of

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795 Benedicks, E. and Huldh, Å. H. (eds.) Design in Sweden today, Stockholm: Swedish Institute for Cultural Relations, 1948, p. 6
797 Jones, M.I. Vicke Lindstrand on the periphery: mid-twentieth century swedish design and the reception of Vicke Lindstrand, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Uppsala, 2016, p. 48 The period has been re-examined in a number of studies since the 1990s by scholars such as Mark Ian Jones, Helena Kåberg, Cilla Robach and Kerstin Wickman.
798 Svenska Slöjdföreningen promoted Swedish art and crafts already at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1867. Today it collaborates with the Swedish Institute as well as Business Sweden, Visit Sweden and Swedish embassies to promote Swedish design abroad. See: http://svenskform.se/verksamhet/utlandssatsningar/ (accessed: 08.09.2016)
poverty, and it would show that the Swedish model is more than just words. He found that “Swedish style is Swedish identity.”

In the 1990s there was an interest across Sweden and Europe in the concepts of the global and regional, spurred on by post-modernism. The global was explored both in exhibitions and literature, and design historian Jeremy Aynsley concluded “…design responds in more flexible ways to its economic base than simply in terms of ‘nation’ and its geography will become more fluid.” However, in parallel to this regional and global development national styles were still promoted. They were commercial and popular, and after a period of decline, the modernism of Scandinavian design made a comeback in the early 1990s. This time around however, it was more concerned with ecological design and local identity than before.

The textile designer Chiqui Mattson produced the project I själ och hjärta (From Heart and Soul) for Sind (The National Board of Industry) and Möbelbranschrådet (The Swedish Furniture Trade Council) in 1991. The four interiors she created as part of the project showed a mix of old and new products from around 30 different Swedish companies, including Carl Malmsten and Åmells Möbler. The interiors related to a Swedish vernacular design and Gustavian style, and the idea was to look to Swedish roots for the exotic rather than searching abroad.

The press release from Möbelbranschrådet in 1991 stated that the interest in the styles of the past was not a temporary trend. Mattson’s message was that we carry cultural heritage with us all the time, from the depths of our heart and soul. Mattson claimed that it would be easier for the industry to find a Swedish profile if they saw the connection between our own cultural heritage and contemporary modern design. The four stagings of Swedish interiors created by Mattson were exhibited at Stockholmsmässan as part of the International Antiques Fair, the Swedish Furniture Fair and the Fashion Week. The interiors were well received in the press and in Form. The editor-in-chief of Form, Ulf Beckman, wrote that the interiors represented something more than the latest trends; Style Gustavien, country, Shaker and cotton

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801 Möbelbranschrådet. Pressrelease, 06.02.1991

802 Hedqvist, H. Det svenska arvet enkelhetens triumf. Svenska Dagbladet, 24.01.1991

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check fabric. That something more was the vitality of the simplicity in Swedish poverty in our rich century.\textsuperscript{803} 

Figure 62. Gustavianskt – one of Chiqui Mattson’s four interiors in the exhibition I själ och hjärta created for Sind and Möbelbranschrådet in 1991. The conservator and paint expert Pontus Tunander (1957-2011) painted the walls in an 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century tradition. Photographer: Johan Westin. Courtesy: Chiqui Mattson

The interest in the Gustavian style was associated with a longing for authenticity, and what was considered genuine Swedish furniture of good quality. Mattson described it as Swedish exoticism, and Ebba Francke at Möbelbranschrådet referred to the trend as “ethnocentricity”, and also connected this with an ecological interest.\textsuperscript{804} Swedish exoticism was made part of Swedish particularity, as Sweden became part of the EU. I själ och hjärta was also exhibited at the World Expo in Seville in 1992. The director of Skansen Hans Alfredsson, coordinated the Swedish display. Although IKEA’s furniture was not part of the display, it is most likely that it benefited from the promotion of Swedish design and its Gustavian roots and when the French trend forecast agency Promostyl presented the latest trend in the winter of 1992/93, the theme was “Nordic memory”. Alongside references to Gustav III, Promostyl also mentioned Carl Larsson and Sundborn as a source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{805}

\textsuperscript{803} “…livskraften i den svenska “fattigdomens enkelhet” i vårt rika århundrade.” Beckman U. På spaning efter den svenska stilen. \textit{Form}, no. 2(1991):27-29, p.28
\textsuperscript{804} Källberg, E. Gammal kavlité ny trend. \textit{Nordvästra Skånes Tidningar}, 26.02.1991
\textsuperscript{805} In 1992 Chiqui Mattson and her husband Jan Hellzén collaborated with the Danish furniture company Licentia and launched the furniture line “Gustav Larsson”, the name referring to Gustav III and Carl Larsson, drawing inspiration from both periods as well as Swedish rustic folk furniture.
Associating sophistication and simplicity, classical culture and country tradition, abundance and poverty, the nostalgia of 18th century Scandinavia is rediscovered. (...) King Gustav III of Sweden (1746-1792) gave his name to this style, which is a source of inspiration for contemporary designers.806

Birgitta Egeström-Rabot, employed by the Swedish Institute, confirms the French interest in the Gustavian style in the 1990s.807 In an interview in Gods & gårdar she mentions the exhibition Solen och Nordstjärnan (1993-94) as a contributing factor. This was an exhibition that she recalls managed to inspire both the designer Karl Lagerfeld and the editors of Elle Decoration. According to Egeström-Rabot, the Gustavian heritage opened the doors for Swedish design, music and history in the 1990s.

The Gustavian cultural treasure opened people’s eyes to Swedish design, jazz and Carl Linnaeus. Now the focus is on Strindberg and food, she says.808

Solen och Nordstjärnan was an exhibition that focused on the cultural exchange between Sweden and France in the 18th century. IKEA was approached about sponsoring the exhibition and decided to sponsor the Swedish part of the exhibition. The sponsorship included the opportunity to display the furniture at Nationalmuseum and offer specific groups guided tours of the exhibition. The exhibition was the biggest “culture manifestation” that the Swedish Institute had organised.809 Fifty per cent of the project was financed by the Swedish business world, Volvo, IKEA, Astra, Investor, Stadshypotek and Ericss. The responsible curator in Sweden was Pontus Grate at Nationalmuseum and in France the director of Versailles, Pierre Lemoine. The exhibition turned into a co-production between Nationalmuseum and the Royal Collections, with John Sjöström as the exhibition architect.810 Sweden’s King Carl XVI Gustaf and the French President François Mitterrand acted as patrons of the exhibition, which was presented in Stockholm and then in Paris.

When the exhibition opened in France in March 1994 there were numerous activities to support cultural and business exchanges between the two countries,811 Anders Clason, the director of the Swedish Institute, and Olle

806 Promostyl. Le tendances de Promostyl - Influences Hiver/Winter 92/93, 1992, p. 4
808 “– Den gustavianska kulturskatten öppnade dörrarna för svensk design, jazz och Carl von Linné. Nu är det Strindberg och maten som står i fokus, säger hon.” Höjemberg H., 2013
811 Ingalill Snitt’s photographs of Swedish castles and manor houses as well as furniture and textiles in the Gustavian style were exhibited in Lyon. Lundholm, L. Kultursponsring – Ett torr-
Granath the head of Nationalmuseum recognised the specific social and historical context of the exhibition in their foreword to the exhibition catalogue. They argued that the exhibition had a particular significance at a time when there was a profound change in Europe, both geopolitically and culturally. Moreover, they noted that it took place during the Year of History (Historicàret) 1993, when major efforts were made by the museums in Sweden to increase knowledge about Swedish history. The exhibition in Paris focused on the French influences on Swedish art and it consisted of almost 800 objects, but also a number of reconstructed spaces. However, when Gunilla Cedrenius, editor of Svenska museer, visited the exhibition her impression was that people were remarkably silent until the final display in the exhibition – a slide show of the photographer Ingalill Snitt’s pictures of Swedish castles and manor houses. It was what all visitors had been eager to see, “the light, blond manor house idyll”. In the exhibition catalogue, the curator of the exhibition Pontus Grate described how we understand these manor houses as the most genuinely Swedish thing there is, an ideal based on simplicity that lives on. However, he believed that the question of whether to interpret this simplicity as an expression of a specifically national Swedish taste remains open to debate. IKEA was not part of the Paris version of the exhibition at Grand Palais since they found the cost too high. Despite their reluctance to participate in Paris they did gain media exposure in France because of the exhibition, and in the end they were very satisfied with the collaboration. However, the collaboration between Nationalmuseum and companies such as IKEA was not uncontroversial.

Never before have the products of a company been so generously promoted by Nationalmuseum. The collaboration is symbiotic. There is also a touch of enlightened despotism. It is as if a modern counterpart to Gustav III should dictate how his subjects ought to furnish their rooms. Now the state and the institutions are eager to introduce our 18th century.
This is how the critic Ingela Lind described the exhibition in an article in *Dagens Nyheter*, and she was not the only one who observed how strongly both the state and cultural institutions promoted the Swedish 18th century at the beginning of the 1990s. Moreover, she thought that it was questionable to promote this 18th century as specifically Swedish, and speaking of originals in IKEA’s production she considered was rather overdoing it. It was the Swedes who had been copying the French, and they were not giving very much back according to Lind.

Today, when sold abroad the newly produced furniture in Gustavian style is sold under names such as *Scandinavian chic*, *Le style gustavienne*, *Gustavian* or the *Swedish look*. In 2013, *The Financial Times* concluded that Gustavian interiors, dating from the 1780s were back in vogue. The antique dealers interviewed in the article told the journalist that the prices had doubled. The British dealer Toby Lorford described why it had become so popular.

> It's such a perfect combination of Swedish restraint and the French decorative style, which makes it calm and easy to live with. It is timeless and unfussy and works just as well in a Manhattan penthouse as it does in a London town-house or country estate.817

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Figure 63. The Eksolsund bookcase was part of IKEA’s line of 18th century furniture. In the sales catalogue some of the photographs depicted rooms where the collection was mixed with the more regular range of IKEA. On the bookshelves we find old and new books such as Carl G Laurin’s Konsthistorien, Erwin Panofsky’s Studies in Iconology and Herman Lindquist’s book about the 18th century nobleman Axel von Fersen. In the IKEA catalogue Svenskt 1700-tal på IKEA, 1993, p. 24. Photographer: Staffan Johansson. Courtesy: Inter IKEA Systems B.V.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has investigated how professionals within academia, museums and the furniture industry have negotiated ideologies and values associated with period furniture, and how these values were mediated between these actors and to the individual customer. Copy, re-edition, reproduction or variation – there are many terms to describe different kinds of period furniture. This chapter has focused on three main categories of period furniture:

- Careful reconstructions of an 18th century original
- Designs inspired by the past, a historicity in design or technique
- Antiques that are re-contextualised and placed in modern interiors

The publications and exhibitions analysed in this chapter show that period furniture was an important component in discussions about Swedish design in the 20th century. The debate focused on notions such as taste, honesty, beauty and authenticity. There was a difference made between good and bad
examples of period furniture. This judgement was usually based on the same logic as Latour and Adam’s ideas about the migration of the aura, where quality of the copy and its affinity to the original are considered to be of vital importance for our experience of the object. Latour and Adam suggest that the aura of authenticity does not have to be automatically lost in the process of serial production; rather it is transformed into iconicity and can be accepted if it is done the right way, with taste and knowledge.

Since the 19th century, museums have supported the production of period furniture; they have endorsed copies or reproductions, distributed pattern books or displayed contemporary production. In this way, museums have supported furniture production but they also used their authority to bolster the prestige of the companies involved and the visitors have been able to bring home “a piece of the museum”. The production of replicas or copies has in this sense made objects of history mobile. Their encouragement of historical modelling can be understood as the embodiment of an aesthetic agenda reinforced by the museums and companies that have helped bring the styles of the past back into circulation. Museums have also provided potential customers by educating the public in the history of styles. They have taught their visitors to appreciate the “right” things, contributing to conspicuous consumption.

At the end of the 19th century, customers were still offered a bewildering array of styles that included both contemporary versions and reproductions of actual historical models, some more similar to the original than others. The world exhibitions and smaller art and industrial exhibitions displayed new styles and innovative objects, but also the variety of styles and objects produced in the material cultures of the past. This production of historicist objects was not limited to the select few, but reached a large part of the population.818 Artists such as Carl and Karin Larsson, together with critics and writers such as Ellen Key, promoted interiors that included repainted older furniture as well as furniture produced by the crafts movement and the furniture industry. This production was less dependent on the original than the careful copies of veneer furniture. Instead it was painted, and the proportions slightly adapted and the details often radically simplified.

The examples explored in this chapter have helped highlight an alternative design history of the 1930s and 40s, which includes the role played by historical modelling and period furniture. Swedish home interiors in the 1930s and 40s were shaped by a powerful nostalgia, as well as modernist ideals of efficiency. This was a contradiction that generated controversies as well as creativity. The critique against historicism during the second half of the 19th century and the continuation of this critique during the functionalist period have dominated the narrative. However, during the 1930s and 1940s the production of period furniture existed parallel to, and in dialogue with, the develop-

ment of functionalism. Moreover, the past was used to motivate the radical ideas of functionalism, claiming that rational design and standardisation could be found in older Swedish building traditions. The idea of this close connection to the past was re-launched in the 1990s, when neo-functionalism was introduced as a reaction to the post-modernism of the previous decade.

Baudrillard has described the antique and the functional as complementary. We live surrounded by both, and the functionalist object speaks to the present as well as the future, while the mythological antique adheres to the myth of origins, or birth – both of them speak of authenticity. Similarly, design can be oriented towards the past as well as the future, and this means that a historicity in design can exist in parallel and in mutual dependence with anti-historicism. The Gustavian was seen as a style that you could easily integrate into your modernist home, creating an acceptable aesthetic mix, a Haupt could go well in a functionalist living room, and traditional values could be combined with an image of modernity.

Original Haupt furniture was put on display next to IKEA’s “Haupt N.M.” in the 2006 exhibition *Georg Haupt Gustav III:s hovschattmakare* at the Royal Palace in Stockholm. The display embodied the trajectory of Gustavian furniture from the 18th century until today, a trajectory from the drawing rooms of the monarchy, where originals still stand, into the homes of the general public where copies are found in halls and living rooms. “Haupt N.M.” refers back to a model that only a small minority could enjoy, until museums and publications made them available to both producers and consumers. Through the efforts of these museums, together with Svenska Slöjdföreningen and various furniture producers, this and other Haupt furniture became serially produced objects that reached a broader stratum of the society. Today, the model could even be argued to contain two very distinct possible associations, its distinctly upper class-character when presented as an antique, and a nostalgic reference to the Swedish welfare state in the 1930s and 60s when period furniture of various kinds found their way into people’s homes. One sample of the IKEA “Haupt N.M.” is now included in the collections of Nordiska Museet, making an interesting statement about the translations necessary for the survival of the Gustavian style.

The trajectories of the various Gustavian models presented in this chapter are filled with translations and adaptations that reflect the function they have fulfilled in specific political and historical situations, but also the role art history, museums and the history of styles have played in furniture production. In an article in *Antik & Auktion* from 1994, the journalist Jane Fredlund asked whether *IKEA 18th Century* would make us grow tired of the Gustavian style.

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819 Historicity in design can be described as “the use of historical narratives and imagery as part of the process of creating something new” Otto, T. History in and for design. *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 1(2016):58-70, p. 58

style but reached the conclusion that there was no reason to worry. It would keep its position as an ideal for 200 years, and it would retain this position long after people have forgotten about IKEA.821 Despite varying attitudes towards heritage-inspired production and the revival of the Gustavian style, we can conclude that it has been commercially successful and popular, more or less throughout the century. The Gustavian style survived and even to some degree existed in symbiosis with functionalism, and thrived while historicism was a controversial subject among trendsetters and critics. Consequently, nostalgia for Gustavian period furniture need not be a yearning towards the 18th century; it can also be based on personal memories of a later date since this type of furniture has been present throughout the 20th century. Yet, another twist to the trajectory of the Gustavian style is the reuse of the period furniture produced at the beginning of the 20th century, which at the end of the century was bought by creative cabinetmakers and either patinated to make it look like original Gustavian furniture or painted to fit contemporary tastes.822 This period furniture was not considered old or antique, and was treated with less reverence.

822 E.g. Hedqvist, H. Nya möbler blir som gamla. Svenska Dagbladet Weekend, 03.04.1987
Figure 64. During the 1993 exhibition Den svenska historien (The Quest for a Swedish History) the visitor was able to meet characters from history. In the Gustavian room the audience could meet a member of staff attired in period clothes, portraying Hedvig Elisabeth Charlotta of Holstein-Gottorp (1759-1818), Queen of Sweden and Norway, diarist and memoirist, and the cousin of Gustav III. The queen was also present, as a large portrait by the well-known painter Alexander Roslin, in one of the period rooms at Den gustavianska utställningen in 1891. Photo: Peter Segemark. Courtesy: Nordiska Museet Archives
5 Populating the Past

Historically informed performances such as time travels, tableaux vivants, films and parades have all contributed to the visual landscape that is associated with the Gustavian period. Moreover, they have triggered the production of objects and clothes, and influenced the stagings of the Gustavian period in museums and heritage sites. This chapter explores three different aspects of historically informed performances with reference to the Gustavian period and how these relate to various understandings of the concept of authenticity.

At the end of the 19th century, historical parades and tableau vivants had become a common feature at festive occasions, for example at the recurring spring festivities at Skansen. The new medium of film was also used for its potential for time travel, and period drama soon became a popular category, reviving kings and queens, wars and love stories. The films were distributed not only on the screen, but also in other media such as film journals – newspapers and books where film stills and scripts were discussed and reproduced.

I would argue that these illustrations, photographs and film stills were probably as important as, the performances or films in reproducing the images of the Gustavian. When the 20th century drew to an end, heritage bloomed and so did historical societies and re-enactment groups performing new identities. Parades, films and the time travels of the historical societies, these different ways of populating the past will be the focus of this chapter. All of them can be categorised as heterotopias in the sense that they create spaces separated from other spaces in their attempt to break from traditional time. In this chapter I will scrutinise the ways in which these heterochronies are created, the visuals and objects generated, and how they relate to the concept of authenticity. What strategies have been used to create an authentic experience and how does experiential authenticity relate to a material authenticity?

There are different levels of authenticity, and we can speak of authenticity as real, ideal, performance and strategy. Authenticity as real is linked to notions such as reality, realism and representation, and it is mainly object-related – the real thing! This could for example be the furniture in the period rooms of Nordiska Museet. However, it could also be the real site or real person, such as when historical sites are repopulated by the people of the past, for example when the courtiers in courtly dress once more populate Gustav III:s Antikmuseum. Authenticity as ideal speaks of an authentic national identity expressed in, for example, a Swedish Gustavian aesthetics. It could also be related to an authentic lifestyle, where history and time travel could be used
to explore alternative and possibly more authentic identities. *Authenticity as performance* approaches heritage as an experience, as something people do, for example the social activities of a historical society.\(^{823}\) This closely links to an understanding of authenticity as a feeling that can be achieved. *Authenticity as strategy* deals with marketing and place branding, for example when using historically informed performances in the development of a heritage site or when promoting a film. In a 1996 government bill, the possibilities of collaborations between different actors and art forms to create re-enactment and drama were pointed out as an important resource for cultural tourism and regional development, however, as we will see in this chapter this was not a new idea.

The history of places may be the starting point for plays staged in an authentic environment with both professional actors and amateurs. Here there is a connection with the branches of art and successful ventures are generally based on a broad collaboration between different actors. Quite often this creates a basis for cultural tourism.\(^{824}\)

The chapter is divided into three main parts; the first part explores how the Gustavian was mediated in historical parades, tableau vivants and social events in the 1890s-1910s, the next part focuses on the production of silent film period drama in the 1920s-1930s. The last part investigates two historical societies active in the 1990s. The history of places may be the starting point for plays staged in an authentic environment with both professional actors and amateurs. Here there is a connection with the branches of art and successful ventures are generally based on a broad collaboration between different actors. Quite often this creates a basis for cultural tourism.\(^{824}\)

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5.1 Spring Festivities at Skansen

Skansen, the open-air museum in Djurgården, Stockholm, was founded by Arthur Hazelius and opened in 1891. The museum included buildings, animals and plants but also people from the different regions of Sweden. The houses were first populated with dolls, but these were soon exchanged for real people. At Skansen the visitors could enjoy a free afternoon, enter the houses and meet people from all over Sweden, dressed in folk costumes from different regions. Although the main focus was on the agricultural farming culture it also included historical and national romantic aspects. The recurrent festivities at Skansen typically refer to older traditions connected to the farming year or church calendar. They also included days that were considered important to the nation, and commemorations of old heroic kings and artists like Bellman. The festivities often included historically informed performances with a mix of professional and amateur actors dressed in period clothing. Artists assisted museum staff in choreographing these events, ensuring the demand for authenticity was met and creating the right mix of education, emotion and entertainment.

The first spring festivities at Skansen ran from 31 May to 6 June 1893. They were seen as the crowning celebration during the year and were in part a fundraiser for Skansen, which suffered financial difficulties during the first years. The festivities also became part of Hazelius’ educational efforts and
were one of his many initiatives to strengthen patriotic love with a wider audience – the aim was religious revival, education and the formation of a Swedish people.825 The festivities ended on 6 June, a day that later developed into Sweden’s national day.

The spring festivities were an experience for all the senses, and they included dances, speeches, recitals, a market, food stalls, and a historical parade and elements of re-enactment and tableaux vivants. Arthur Hazelius referred to these historically informed performances as time pictures (“tidsbilder”).826 The historical parades at the spring festivities were usually a chronological display of different periods and events in history but they might also focus on a specific period. Another recurring feature was plays about Bellman.827

The amanuensis Sigrid Millrath (1872-1940) started working for Hazelius in 1892, and became a valued co-worker, responsible for organising all the practicalities regarding the festivities, which could include getting hold of clothes or horses for the historical parades.828 Apart from managing the festivities, Millrath was responsible for the textile chamber, the accounts for the café at Bredablick, inventories in the houses at Skansen, and also took part in planning the advertising for all the activities. One of Millrath’s first challenges was to engage support for the festivities from women of the upper classes. These women, referred to as “Vårfruar”, would act as donors and volunteers who helped with the preparations. They were also considered role models and would hopefully inspire others to fulfil the ambitions of Hazelius. Millrath succeeded in her mission and found about 100 suitable women who were “filled with patriotic love and a will to do good”, and convinced of the benefits of Hazelius’ project.829 Many women returned year after year. Anna Wallenberg (1838-1910), the matriarch in the prominent banking family Wallenberg, became the strong leader of the women who contributed to the spring festivities.830

830 Anna Wallenberg was a much appreciated member of various committees, organisations and societies. She was e.g. the director of Handarbetets vänner, and the only female member of Gripsholmsföreningen and a member of the Swedish Royal Committee for the World Exhibition in Paris. Anna was married to André Oscar Wallenberg who was the father of Knut Agathon Wallenberg who helped set up the “teaterlån” that helped realise the demolition of the old opera house and the construction of the new Royal Opera described in the introduction of this study. Linder G. Anna Wallenberg. Idun, no.13(1898):98

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The spring festivities re-enacted an ideal society where every participant knew their “natural” place, men and women, rich and poor. The women from high society who worked as volunteers at the festivities were there primarily because of their social background and upbringing, not because of their “ethnographic naturalistic legitimacy”, like the other women who participated. Still, people from the upper classes were assumed to carry an “inner likeness” with the people they portrayed in the historical parades and plays, and were chosen to play the more prominent historical characters. When helping out during the festivities, the women from the upper classes dressed up in folk costume and mixed with the “regular” museum workers, which seems to have created some confusion with the visitors. At first there were some objections among the women against wearing the folk costumes, but costume was mandatory and the museum provided the models.

During the festivities there were historical camps, music and parades. The organisers worked hard to create a complete and authentic experience for the visitors and the clothes were an important aspect of this. Some of the costumes worn in the parade had to be borrowed from the Royal Opera, which was well equipped with period clothes, old and new. Academic and artistic competence was brought in to achieve this all-embracing experience. However, when the 1893 parade was commented on in the press, not all comments were positive with reference to the level of authenticity.

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832 “De hade redan den inre porträttlikheten – bildningen – och då behövdes endast kostym, frisyr och gester för att vinna en god gestaltning av den historiska personen i festtåget” Bäckström, M., 2012, p. 240
833 Linder, G. Skensens första vårfest 1893. Idun, no. 22(1918)345-348, p. 346
834 “Det bländande solljuset dödade all illusion i pudret och perukerna och låter de gamla seltygen och wagnarne se ännu spöklikare ut.” Anon. Epistlar från Stockholm Vårifesterna på Skansen, Kalmar, 10.06.1893
There were several artists who helped with the preparations in 1893: Gustaf Cederström (1845-1933), August Malmström (1829-1901) and Count Georg von Rosen (1843-1923).835 Ellen and Julius Kronberg (1850-1921) choreographed the parade, which included a Gustavian theme that was a mix of parade and tableau vivant.836 The rococo and the Gustavian period strongly influenced Julius Kronberg’s work. During the spring festivities, visitors had the opportunity to view his painting of the King Karl XII (1682-1718), which was placed in a tent close to the historical Karl XII camp set up in 1893.837

835 Anon. Stor värfest på Skansen. *Aftonbladet*, 30.03.1893
836 Linder, G. Skansens första värfest 1893. *Idun*, no. 22(1918)345-348, p. 347
837 Anon. En värfest mellan regnskurar. *Dagens Nyheter*, 02.06.1893

Figure 66. The Crown Prince. Spring festivities in 1893. Ellen and Julius Kronberg’s daughter Margherita Kronberg (1888-1927) acted as the crown prince Gustaf Adolf in the parade. *Idun*, 1918, p. 347
copy of the painting was on view at the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1 May-30 October 1893. During his career Kronberg received a number of prestigious commissions for public buildings, and in 1891-1894 he worked on three plafonds for the Royal Palace. Kronberg’s studio was later bought by the collector Wilhelmina von Hallwyl (1844-1930) and donated to Skansen in 1921.

Figure 67. The Spring festivities in 1893 included a performance at the Bollnäs cottage where Gustav III and his court attended a wedding. Many of the participants wore original 18th century clothes on loan from the Royal Opera. Illustration in Idun, no. 22, 1918, p. 347

The Gustavian period became a recurring theme in the yearly historical parades at Skansen. To mention a few examples, in 1895 the parade “Strödda bilder ur Sveriges historia” included historical figures such as Gustav III with his secundants and a group of German craftsmen dating from 1770. The festivities that year also included a play from the 18th century, “Den ena för den andra”, written by Gustav III. The play was performed in a small open-air theatre.838 The rococo orchestra “Les petits rossignols” played during the festivities in 1900, and the courtiers and ladies played their instruments with


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refined grace according to an article in Idun.\textsuperscript{839} A theatre play, written by Mårten Altén (1764-1830), \textit{Misstaget or Den gamla fröken} (1796), followed the musical performance.\textsuperscript{840} These historical performances were a common feature at the time, and there seems to have been a public interest in Swedish theatre history, promoted by Oscar Levertin for example.\textsuperscript{841} In 1920 the theme was once more the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and the programme included tableaux vivants from the court of Gustav III, a visit to Haga and a masked ball. The organisers were especially pleased with the trip to and from the ball, for which the museum’s old carriages were used. Torch carriers in period costumes accompanied the carriages, and all the participants at the market wore 18\textsuperscript{th} century period dress.\textsuperscript{842}

When the museum director Gustaf Upmark Jr. described the spring festivities in the museum’ annual \textit{Fataburen} (1916) he portrayed a potential conflict in making the festivities too populist in their character. As a director he found that it was important to keep the bond to the museum and base the program on cultural historic research. Still, it was important to offer a programme that attracted the much-wanted general public.\textsuperscript{843} As an indulgence to the public he mentions the temporary open-air dance floors and selling of alcohol, which was allowed only during the spring festivities.

Historic plays and tableaux vivants were also a popular pasttime outside Skansen. There were frequent mentions in magazines such as \textit{Idun} about plays, parties and other social occasions. These could, for example, include a recital of poems by the 18\textsuperscript{th} century poet Anna Maria Lenngren (1754-1817) or more contemporary plays such as \textit{Noblesse Oblige} by Mary de Geer (1861-1922), see the illustration below. Nevertheless, these festivities and parties were events separated from everyday life, and not expressions of lifestyles, as it often would be for re-enactors of later date. Closely related to these plays and the tableaux vivants at the historical parades was the early production of historical films, of which a couple focused on the Gustavian period. Plays, tableux vivants and films were all known as “living pictures”, which was also the generic name for early film in Germanic countries.\textsuperscript{844}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{839} “kavaljerer och damer från tredje Gustafs dagar traktera med utsökt behag sina respektive instrument efter ett program i 1700-talets stil.” Anon. Från Skansens vår fest. \textit{Idun}, no. 22(1900):351
\item \textsuperscript{840} “Där är den gamle sirlige onkeln, en verklig gustavian i hållning och skick, hans ståtliga baronessa, den lilla svägerskan une beauté passée, de bägge hettefrade älskarne och betjänten, alla värda att se och applådera.” Anon. Från Skansens vår fest. \textit{Idun}, no. 22(1900):351
\item \textsuperscript{841} Levertin, O. \textit{Teater och drama under Gustaf III: litteraturhistorisk studie}. Stockholm: Geber, 1889
\item \textsuperscript{842} “…företogs i en av museets gamla vackra vagnar och med fackelbärare i tidsdräkter, tog sig synnerligen bra ut.” Upmark, G. Skansen 25 är. \textit{Fataburen Redogörelse för Nordiska museet}, 1916 p. 39
\item \textsuperscript{843} “…sådant som verkar tildragande på den stora allmänhet, hvars närvaro man önskar”, Upmark, G. Skansen 25 är. \textit{Fataburen Redogörelse för Nordiska museet}, 1916 p. 164
\item \textsuperscript{844} Sandberg, M. B. \textit{Living pictures, missing persons: Mannequins, museums and modernity}. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003, pp., 8, 277
\end{itemize}
The journalist at Idun described Vadstena gille as a successful and brilliant party with a fashionable audience, rich in youth and female beauty as well as social brilliance and distinction. The party was organised by Adelns Diskussions Klubb (ADK, The Discussion Club of the Nobility founded in 1902, later known as Svenska adelspartiet) at Grand Hôtel, Stockholm. The proceedings went to charity. The party included song, recital, and the theatre play Noblesse oblige. The title of the play denotes a concept that implies that nobility is more than mere entitlements and that nobility should also fulful social responsibilities. In this case this responsibility included marrying according to your social status rather than out of love. Idun, 1906, Stockholm, p. 136
5.2 Silent Films – On Location

In 1896 the first film screenings in Sweden took place in all of the three largest cities in Sweden. During the 1897 General Art and Industry Exhibition in Stockholm films were screened in the Old Town of Stockholm, a part of the exhibition that was a collection of reconstructed 16th and 17th century Swedish city buildings. The screenings were referred to as “living photographs” or “living images”. Even though the placing of the cinema might have been a coincidence, it does disclose something about the closeness between historical re-enactment, reconstructions and the new medium of film. The pictorial tradition of early film shared many similarities with the theatre but also tableaux vivants, and displays in wax museums and museums of cultural history such as Skansen. Historic sites were often used in combination with studio shots.

Period drama has always been a popular genre and tales from history became a recurring theme during the “golden age” of Swedish silent films. The first films with sound were screened in 1929. Numerous period dramas were produced in the 1910s-20s, and these films helped mediate both imagery and narratives of the Gustavian period. The imagery from these films was circulated in the press, which published stills from the films and occasionally additional publications were available that included both scripts and stills. In 1925 the journalist and writer Sven Stolpe (1905-1996) concluded that people in general had a good idea about the period of Bellman and that it had become the property of every man.

Of all the historical periods of our country, the time of Bellman is not only the period most and best dealt with culturally and historically, it is also in a very special way every man’s property.

At an early stage, museums such as Nationalmuseum and Nordiska Museet were interested in using the new medium to document traditional crafts, for

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845 The exhibition was designed by Fredrik Lilljekvist, mentioned in chapter 3, in collaboration with the riksantikvarien Hans Hildebrand (1842-1913) who supervised the responsible committee. The site included buildings from Stockholm as well as other cities in Sweden, reconstructed as full-scale models. It was “…a city of the past that was a pastiche of the past, present and future (…) where the past is commodified (…) where the once was is packaged so as to provide trust and comfort to the present-ly disoriented, where every woman and man is welcomed into the generously padded bosom of the commodity form.” Pred, A. Recognizing European modernities: a montage of the present. London: Routledge, 1995, p. 69-70


848 “Bellmans tid är icke blott den kulturhistoriskt mest och bäst behandlade av alla vårt lands historiska epoker, den är dessutom på ett alldeles speciellt sätt varje mans egendom.” Stolpe, S. Elis Ellis’ Bellmanfilm – en förnam och fullödig filmskapelse. Filmjournalen, no. 31-32, 15.11.1925, p. 508
example. In an article in 1933 Torsten Althin (1897-1982), the director of Tekniska Museet, described film as an important tool, along with photography and taking notes, but he also considered it an excellent way of bringing the collections to life. Althin emphasised the importance of making authentic and scientifically accurate films, preferably filmed on location.

The first film about the Gustavian period was *Gustaf III och Bellman* (1908), an 11 minute long silent film. The story was a mix of Bellman-related narratives and the murder of the King Gustav III, and the setup of the scenes was theatrical in its character. Combining the characters of Bellman and Gustav III in a play was not uncommon and usually the plays portrayed the king as a benevolent regent who cared for his subjects and who could move freely in the capital together with his seconds. The professor of literature Johan Stenström has described the varying functions of these types of mediations of Bellman; they helped support a specific masculine ideal, the idealising of the 18th century and the formation of national identity. The scenes in *Gustaf III och Bellman* were recorded at Haga, Gröna Lund, Hufvudsta Gård and in a staged scenography of the old Opera house. Shooting most of the scenes on location can be seen as a very deliberate strategy aimed to create a sense of authenticity in the film. *Gustaf III och Bellman* was probably the most technically advanced that had been recorded at the time in Sweden, but despite this we cannot be sure that the film was ever distributed and shown to the public. However, we do know that a text describing the film consisting of 14 pages was published by Andrén och Holm in 1909. It is not that far-fetched to assume that this text probably inspired at least some of the readers to re-enact the scenes in the film.

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849 In 1919-21 the art historian Axel Gauffin made three films about art found in the collections of Nationalmuseum, including one about the art of the sculptor Johan Tobias Sergel. However, the response was so negative from fellow Scandinavian museum staff, who claimed that it was too profane and the wrong medium for art, that he waited a decade before making another attempt. Bjurström, P. *Nationalmuseum: 1792-1992*. Höganäs: Bra böcker, 1992, p. 235


Figure 69. Gustaf III och Bellman was produced in 1908. This film still is from the last scene in the film where the king is murdered at the masked ball at the opera. The film ends with the king attempting to get up from the floor assisted by the people close to him, one of them being Bellman. The scenography is created by what looks like the backdrop used at a theatre, while the movements and clothes also have a theatrical feel to them. The director and screenwriter was Erik Dahlberg (1880-1950), who ran two cinemas in Stockholm at the time. The film was recorded at Haga, Hufvudsta Gård and Gröna Lund.

In 1925 the director and playwriter John W. Brunius (1884-1937) created a short silent film *En aften hos Gustaf III på Stockholms slott*. It was not his first historical film, and the same year he directed two films about the King Karl XII, and two years later films about the King Gustav Vasa. The film about Gustav III was intended for the “Red Cross week” but it also acted as a test-film for a longer film that was planned by the production company AB Nordstjärnan, but never realised. The reason might have been the competition from the film *Två konungar*, described below, which was filmed in the same year. The cast of *En aften hos Gustaf III på Stockholms slott* included celebrated actors such as Gösta Ekman (1890-1938) as the king (he also portrayed Karl XII the same year), Arthur Cederborgh, Renée Björling and Dagny Lind. A unique selling point for the film was the large number of people from high society, including members of the royal family, who acted as

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855 John W Brunius was the brother of the writer and art critic August Brunius (1879-1926).
The actors and extras were dressed in period clothing on loan from the wardrobes of the Royal Opera.

Figure 70. When the society act as ghosts at the Royal Palace, photographs from the recording of En afton hos Gustaf III på Stockholms slott in 1925. The focus of the article is placed on the members of high society who acted as extras in the film. The film was made as part of a fundraiser for the Red Cross. Idun, no. 25, 1925, p. 548-549

The scenes were filmed at the Royal Palace in Stockholm and the different sections show Gustav III and his court watching at a music and dance performance, a card game, and the king dressing up in costume. Prince Carl (1861-1951) head of the board of the Red Cross initiated the idea to film in the palace. The journal Idun published a photographic report from the film set at the Royal Palace with the headline När societeten spelar gengångare på Stockholms slott (When the establishment plays the role of ghosts at the Royal Palace). The anonymous reporter in Idun suggested that the film was recorded in the most authentic space. “Huglek” at Aftonbladet considered it ideal to be able to film in real palace interiors. The text also implies a spiritual link between high society then and now; when high society acted as extras, it was as if they were ghosts from the past, and their participation made the film

857 "För övrigt medverkar ett stort antal vackra damer och herrar ur societet. Man kan alltså väga ett antagande att filmen “kommer att gå”. Anon. Hos Gustaf III på Stockholms slott. Dagens Nyheter, 03.05.1925
858 Anon. När societeten spelar gengångare på Stockholms slott. Idun, no. 25(1925): 548-549
even more authentic. This attitude repeats the status people from high society had in the historical parades at the spring festivities at Skansen.

The silent film *Två konungar* (1925), directed by Elis Ellis (1879-1956), described the life of Carl Michael Bellman, his relation to Gustav III and the murder of the king. The film was based on a play written by Ernst Didringson (1868-1931) in 1908. *Två konungar* premiered in Stockholm on 9 November 1925. At the premiere the staff at the theatre wore Gustavian style period clothes. Rudolf Sahlberg (1879-1949), who was an experienced and appreciated kapellmeister at the movie theatre Röda Kvarn, arranged the music, and almost all of the critics found that it was the music that made the film work. The film consisted of six parts and the events that unfolded were, according to the script, quite dramatic, but the director’s efforts to create an authentic stage for the film caused the drama to end up in the background according to the critics.860

The journalist Sven Stolpe emphasised the importance of authenticity and referred to Ellis, not only as a skillful director but also a well-educated cultural historian.861 The director employed several experts to scrutinise the work. The costumes in *Två konungar* were made from drawings by the professor of art history Sixten Strömbo, who at the time was a curator at Nationalmuseum and responsible for the Royal Collections (slottsamlingarna). The masks were copied from the 18th century artist Louis Jean Desprez’s (1743-1804) drawings. The theatre historian Agne Beijer oversaw the reconstructions of the open-air theatre at Drottningholm and the masks. It was Beijer who had rediscovered the old Drottningholm Palace Theatre and reopened it only three years earlier in 1922. The efforts of these experts were duly noted in the press material for the film.

Everything has been done to create a style that is characteristic of the time – and they have succeeded. In no essentials did this fail and a long series of beautiful pictures passed our eyes (…) you had a feeling of turning over the pages of an magnificently illustrated book.862

The locations were also carefully mentioned, with some scenes recorded at the Filmstaden studio in Råsunda, owned by the production company AB Svensk Filmindustri, but most was filmed at various historical sites: the Royal


861 Stolpe, S. Elis Ellis’ Bellmanfilm – en förmän och fullödig filmskapelse. Filmjournalen, no. 31-32, 15.11.1925, p. 508


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Palace, Drottningholm Palace, Haga, Gripsholm Castle, Tessin Palace, Djurgården, the Old Town and by Lake Mälaren. Moreover, Stolpe saw it as a great advantage that some sites were preserved in their original state, and even more importantly, that they could be used for this purpose. Ellis was very happy about how accommodating the different authorities had been; the king had shown a personal interest in their efforts to have everything recorded at locations that were as authentic as possible. The Royal Court even let the film crew use Gustav III’s carriage and the boat “Vasaorden”, which had been reconstructed only two years earlier, after a fire. The director proudly declared to the journalist “Ingemar” that the film had also contributed with a carefully reconstructed open-air theatre at Drottningholm, and that this theatre added one more attraction to the site.

Figure 71. The open-air theatre that was reconstructed at Drottningholm for the film Två konungar in 1925. The theatre historian Agne Beijer assisted in the reconstruction and the making of the costumes for the film. Drottningholm Palace Theatre had been inaugurated by Beijer only three years previously. The illustration is part of a photomontage. Senaste nytt från svenska filmen. Idun, no. B 9 ½ (1925), p. 95

864 “…få allt inspelat på så autentisk mark som möjligt.” “Ingemar”. Två konungar. Filmjournalen, 15.11.1925, p. 517
The journalist and actor Siri Hård af Segerstad (1883-1945) visited the set of *Två konungar* while they were recording at Haga and recalls a drastic meeting between curious spectators, who had forgotten about time and space and entered the staged 18th century. In the end the shooting had to be moved to a place where it was easier to prevent present-day intruders who interrupted the romance of the past.

The whole thing had to be repeated. Not only had the camera caught 18th-century chivalry but also the curiosity of 1925 in the shape of the jazz youth of our time. Defying the weak force posted to keep the road clear, the onlookers forgot time and space and ran into the arena, and by doing so spoiling many metres of film, time and money. A more suitable place was found where the palace was on the one side and a fence on the other side of the road made it easier to prevent the present day from penetrating into the romanticism of days gone by.866

The actor and singer Åke Claesson (1889-1967) who made his film debut in *Två konungar*, was already familiar with the role as Bellman and would return in three more films as Bellman, *Ulla min Ulla* (1930/38), *Sol över Klara* (1942) and *Hans majestäts rival* (1943). The Danish actor and film director Arne Weel (1891-1975) played the king, but neither the director nor the critics seem to have been completely satisfied about a foreign actor doing the role, revealing some rather vaguely formulated ideas about what Gustav III, or a Swede for that matter, should look like.867 Similarly, the director argued that the casting was a bit more complicated in a period drama, the actors had to fit the idea that the audience had about the historical character.868 When sound was introduced in film this also meant that all actors who wished to remain on the screen had to learn to speak with a Stockholm accent. Another consequence was that there was less Nordic collaboration in the vein of *Två konungar*.869

In all three films the directors used different strategies to obtain a sense of authenticity. The films invited the spectator into real historic sites of the past and if stage sets in studios were used they were often made to resemble the period rooms that were a popular feature in museums. In both cases it was imperative to create a feeling of authenticity. Some actors were seen as better


867 “Han är för det första för liten; vidare är han dansk!” Stolpe, S. Elis Ellis’ Bellmanfilm – en förmam och fullödig filmskapelse. *Filmjournalen*, no. 31-32, 15.11.1925, p. 527


869 Kindblom, M. *Den svenska drömfabriken: historien om Filmstaden i Räunda*, Stockholm, Stockholmia, 2015, p. 46
at playing historical characters than others and here ideas about class and national identity played an important role. Moreover, it seems as if the emphasis was placed on authentic locations rather than narrative. The locations are always commented on in the reviews and the directors and people involved invested a lot of effort into creating sets that were as authentic as possible. The filmmakers approached the managers of historic sites since their permission was needed, and it is clear that filming at the Royal Palace added to the “value” of the film. Occasionally, as we can see in *Två konungar*, experts such as art historians and theatre historians were involved to help “authenticate” the film. Their role was emphasised in the promotional material and the films can be seen as successful collaborations between the film industry, museums and heritage sites and expertise providing costumes and props.

The historical parades at Skansen and the commercially produced period films described acted as a source of inspiration as well as offering a creative outlet for private individuals and historical societies interested in the Gustavian period. They provided models for how, together with others, you could enter the past, assisted by the right clothes and scenography.

### 5.3 Historical Societies

In 1808, when the statue by Johan Tobias Sergel portraying Gustav III was inaugurated at Skeppsbron, a central location close to the Royal Palace, the people who gathered were yet again able to openly show their support for the dead monarch – the king had become a figure of the past. Before that, at the end of the 18th century, Gustav III’s old supporters such Gustaf Mauritz Armfelt (1757-1814) and Johan Albrekt Ehrenström (1762-1847) had to meet in secret to commemorate the king. In the century that followed the celebrations of the Gustavian period mainly focused on the singer and composer Carl Michael Bellman. People “played Bellman” and in this context Gustav III was portrayed as the benevolent monarch and Bellman as his loyal poet. The desire to re-enact the Gustavian period and “play Bellman” continued and we will now make a leap to the historical societies active during the “heritage boom” in the 1980s and 90s, a period when people became increasingly interested in this first-hand way to explore history.

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870 Marketing material *Två konungar Romantiserad skildring från Gustaf III:s och Bellmans dagar*. 1925
Source: The Swedish Film Institute


Wandering between different periods with a longing to experience the past has always attracted the human mind, Eugène says. In all times there have been similar societies and there are quite a number today.\textsuperscript{873}

In the 1990s there were a number of societies that focused on different aspects of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, to name a few: Gustafs Skål, Gustavianerna, Augusti Orden, Olof von Dalinsällskapet, Svenska Linnésällskapet, Bellmansällskapet, Skandinaviska Swedenborgsällskapet, Tessinordern, Sällskapet för 1700-talsstudier, Westgiöta Gustavianer and Par Bricole.\textsuperscript{874} Some of them could look back at a long history – others were new. In this text we will look more closely at two of these societies, Gustavianerna and Gustafs Skål. These societies have focused on time travels and social events, trying to recapture the life of the past.

Sällskapet Gustavianerna was founded in 1989, and still has members across Sweden that appear in period dress at events at different historical sites. The name refers to the faithful supporters of Gustav III, as well as artists of the Gustavian period. In 1809 Gustavianerna became the name of the political supporters of Gustav IV Adolf, who fought to keep his family on the throne. The spokesman Eugène Udeborn described the twenty members in 1994 as humanists with different specialities, music, art or politics, of which many worked in places that related to their interest in history.\textsuperscript{875} In the article 

\textit{Allt var bättre i kärlekens århundrade} (Everything was better in the century of love), some of the members of Gustavianerna explained why they were attracted to the 18\textsuperscript{th} century and mentioned aspects such as: the love between people and nature and art, the men who dared to be more feminine, that you felt so feminine in 18\textsuperscript{th} century clothes, and a feeling of familiarity.\textsuperscript{876} A recurring theme in articles featuring the society is exactly how much effort and money it takes to achieve authenticity in the clothes that they wear. In an article in \textit{Fêa Livia}, their interest in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century is described as fanatical and the writer concluded that since so much effort and money was needed, the society was less accessible to new members than most other societies for live roleplaying. Additionally, according to the article, in order to become a


\textsuperscript{874} This is not a complete list of societies. However, these are the ones that have been mentioned in the material and in interviews. One might also consider adding scientific societies founded in the Gustavian period, which tend to celebrate their past in different ways.

\textsuperscript{875} In Ahlström’s article from 1993, she mentions that Gustavianerna has 40 members. Some of the members of Gustavianerna originally belonged to Augusti Orden. In 1998 the number is about 100 and most of the members were 25-35 years old, according to the article Bark, S. På jakt efter den tid som flytt. \textit{Dagens industri}, 30.05.1998

\textsuperscript{876} Ahlström, G. Allt var bättre i kärlekens århundrade. Föreningen Gustavianerna lever mitt i 1700-talet. \textit{Expressen}, 14.03.1993
full member you had to be on trial for a year before you could be accepted as a genuine Gustavian.\textsuperscript{877}

\textbf{Figure 72.} Most of the societies featured in the magazine \textit{Fēa Livia} concentrated on the medieval period or fantasy. Gustavianerna focused on the Gustavian period and their spokesman Eugène Udeborn tells the writer at \textit{Fēa Livia} about their high ambition to learn about the period and to faithfully recreate the clothes. \textit{Fēa Livia}, July no 6, 1994, p. 17

\textsuperscript{877} Summanen, H. Gustavianerna. \textit{Fēa Livia}, no. 6, 1994, p. 18
Gustafs Skål was founded in 1993 and is still active. The society Gustafs Skål is named after a song written by Carl Michael Bellman around the time of the coup d'état in 1772. The society organises public events as well as events for members only. The activities in the 1990s included courses, lectures, parties, and participation in festivals, picnics, etc. Many of these activities took place either in a pavilion, built in a Gustavian style in the 1920s, situated at Beatelund or at a more urban location at Kristinehovs Malmgård, renovated in the 1950s. Common sites for excursions were Drottningholm, Skogaholm Manor at Skansen or Ekotemplet at Haga. Some of the members also worked at these sites as museum educators. In 1998, the chairman Erik G Olsson, refers to the members of Gustafs Skål as academics, conservators of the built environment, craftsmen and artists. Some of the institutions that the society collaborated with in the 1990s were Stockholms stadsmuseum (the City Museum of Stockholm), the K. A. Almgren silk weaving mill and the Royal Armoury. Elisabeth Söderström (1927-2009) a famous Swedish soprano and creative director at Drottningholm Palace Theatre in 1993-1996, acted as the patron of the society from the start.

The society is open to anyone who shares its interests and it is organised as a regular society with board meetings and minutes. The annual publication *Gustafs Skål* has been distributed to the members of the society since 1993. The publication demonstrates the variety of interests that related to the society in the 1990s. There are articles about reconstructions of 18th century sites as well as preservation of the inner city of Stockholm, film, literature and opera reviews, antiquities, historical events or historical fashion and food. The ambition of the editor and chairman of the society, Erik G Olsson, was to present content that was also relevant to a wider audience.

In 1996 the society had 40 members aged 16-69 years. One year later the number had reached 60 members. Gustafs Skål is based in Stockholm and most of its members live in the city or close by. In the 1990s there were regional branches of the society in Jönköping and in Kalmar. The regional members commented in the annual publication *Gustafs Skål* about the difficulties in being so far away from the capital and explained the role that the society might have in a smaller city. One of the members in Jönköping wanted the society to help prevent their city to becoming a backwater – where the vernacular darkness of the 19th century would be allowed to persist.

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878 I have studied material relating to the society that dates to the period 1993-2000. However, most of it would probably still be valid.

879 Anon. På jakt efter den tid som flytt. *Dagens industri*, 20.05.1998

880 The journal was first named Gustaf Skål, this was quickly changed into Gustafs Skål, as an indulgence to a modern use of the Swedish language.


5.3.1 Historically Informed Performances

The historical societies Gustafs Skål and Gustavianerna usually do not re-enact a specific event. Living history or historically informed performance would probably be the best terms for describing what happens when the members are engaged in populating museums or heritage sites. Historically informed performance is a comprehensive term, closely linked to an educational task and normally associated with museums. This type of performance helps to encourage other styles of learning and engagement with the past than the guided tour or the book on history. They all adhere to authenticity in different ways, where “fantasy live” and “historical re-enactment” can be placed at each end of a sliding scale – the former being open to “fantasy” and the latter more dependent on historical research and aiming for authenticity, of clothing, of weapons, of dancing, of methods and historical facts. Moreover, it is often a replay of a specific event. A common denominator for these different ways of engaging and entering the past is that the participants use themselves; their own body becomes a tool, and they do it together with other participants, sharing the experience with them. It can happen in different places, historic sites, museums, preservation societies, or in an anonymous field. Living history is a first-person interpretation of the past that also has a sense of educational value. Living history generally focuses on daily life or practices from a historical era and the audience is often invited to engage with the performer. Living history developed in the United States in the 1960s and 70s, and what separated the living history movement from other museum initiatives was its purposefulness and interest in the immaterial, social aspects of the lives people led in the past.

The historical societies focusing on the Gustavian period do not seem to have considered themselves an active part in the “lajv” or re-enactment movement of the 1990s. Instead the society Gustavianerna’s activities are described as creative re-creation of history in Fêa Livia, a magazine for the re-enactment movement. And there were some crucial differences between the groups: for example, the members of the 18th century societies were usually a bit older, worked in cultural institutions and focused on a very specific point in time. Even though there seems to have been an understanding between the

884 The term “levandegörande” is used as a Swedish equivalent to “living history”. See e.g. Andersson, E. Living-history: en lek med historien: angående en metod för levandegörande på friluftsmuseet med exemplet Jämtli historieland i Östersund. Univ. Diss. Gothenburg University, Gothenburg: Institutionen för kulturvård, 1994
886 Sveriges Roll- och Konfliktspelsförbund (The Swedish Gaming Federation), referred to as Sverok, was founded in 1988 and in 1997 the organisation had about 20,000 members. Many of their members were interested in live role-play, in Swedish referred to as “lajv”.
887 Summanen, H. Gustavianerna. Fêa Livia, no. 6 (1994): 16-17
groups they maintained that they resolved their longing for the past and escapism in slightly different ways. The journalist and historian Anne Hedén commented on these differences in an article in *Dagens Nyheter* in 1996. She found that the younger re-enactors were more pragmatic than the older ones; they went into the woods, did their role-play and went back home once it was finished.888

At the end of the 20th century many museums wanted to establish a closer relationship with their audiences, and become “socially inclusive environments for life-long learning”.889 This meant that an educational relationship developed alongside an ambition of enhancing the visitor’s experience. This also included generating new stories that reflected the plurality of the past. The living history movement was part of this and helped develop new ways of communicating history to a non-specialist audience.

In the 1990s media portrayed the activities of the historical societies as one of many ways of escaping reality, away from the grey and stiff in search of a more simple and harmonic life – when the heroes were kings and poets.890 I would argue that despite the impression the reader might get from the often ironic and distanced journalists, the members of these societies were far from passive consumers of history and heritage, and they used bodily experience and imagination as tools for learning, forming identities, expressing creative skills, not only as an escape from mundane everyday life. The societies and their members represented a new type of historian who went from reading and looking to immersing themselves in the past, hoping to experience what it was really like.

Additionally, several of the members of the historical societies Gustavianerna and Gustafs Skål pursued a professional career within the museum sector, and in the 1990s many of them worked as museum educators.891 At the time they were often feeling frustrated with what the museums were offering the visitors, and some of the members were involved in introducing new activities at the museum, activities that were centred on experience-based knowledge and costumed interpretation.892 In 1994, Raphael Samuel

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891 Interview, chairman of Gustafs Skål Erik G Olsson, 05.12.2013

spoke out in defence of living history in his book *Theatres of Memory*, a book that explored the role of the past in contemporary England. The book was also a reply to Patrick Wright, Robert Hewison and others’ criticism of heritagisation in the 1980s and 90s. In the book Samuel defended heritage as a positive force in society, a force that could turn history into an activity that started with the individual rather than a profession.  

It invites us to play games with the past and to pretend that we are at home in it, ignoring the limitations of time and space by reincarnating it in the here-and-now. It pins its faith in surface appearances, visible artefacts ‘evidence… which can be seen, touched and photographed’, rather than aggregates and abstractions. For a history of master narratives, or evolutionary theories of growth, it substitutes one of moments which can be intercepted, and arrested – as in the postmodern novel – at any point in time. Instead of being an alp on the brain of the living, the past dissolves into a thousand different views.

In an editorial from 1996 Erik G Olsson compared the activities of the society with the expedition the Norwegian ethnologist Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002) made on the raft Kon-Tiki raft in 1947, an example of experimental archaeology where an element of romanticism and adventure was part of the investigation of the past. He added that these explorations might contribute to understanding the past in a new way. He describes how fun it can be to enter a painting by eating the food, sense the smells and try on the clothes and in doing so take part in a laboratory experiment in history. Naturally, you could read about all the facts in a book. However, it was more fun to learn crafts, dances, music and cooking their way.

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Figure 73. May we present the 18th century? Everything that makes life worth living.
Gustafs Skål offered their services, dance shows, music, catering, lectures and courses, wine tasting
and a model theatre. The contrast between the modern classroom and the 18th century costume is
striking and this clash of the modern and the Gustavian is a recurring feature in the visual material.
This full-page ad was published in the members' journal Gustafs Skål, 1999, back cover.
5.3.2 Performing Identities

In his book, *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity*, the American philosopher Marshall Berman (1940-2013) described the instability of contemporary life, its inherent contradictions and how we fight to hold on to something real as everything melts around us. Berman’s description of contemporary life seems to correspond with the feelings that the members of the historical societies *Gustafs Skål* and *Gustavianerna* expressed in interviews in the 1990s. The members describe how they feel that they are living in a rapidly changing world, mainly because of new technology and economic decline. The 1990s was a turbulent decade when heritage was, as it always has been, implicitly political and used by different actors to support different ideologies. Sweden suffered a severe financial crisis and there were violent expressions of racism and political extremism. It is possible to speak of a crisis of “Swedishness”. History and images of the past seem to have been the one thing to hold on to, something that could give you a feeling of comfort and security. Val Horsler at English Heritage has also described this feeling of being disconnected and looking at the past to find some stability in relation to the re-enactment movement in Britain.

And we sense, imperceptibly, the loss of an anchor. … At a time of radical change in the way we live, work and enjoy ourselves, we are in danger of isolation within the continuum of human life; we feel disconnected. So we increasingly look back at the past and try to understand and relate to it.

A strong interest in history is one of the incentives to become a member of a historical society, while others might include the possibility to assume another persona, express individual creativity and skills or simply want an outlet or an escape from the monotony of everyday life. The members often refer to their activities as *time travels*, a joint venture that you do together. The “rules” for these time travels differ between different societies but also according to the specific occasion – it becomes a shared negotiation. Often there is a mix of the private and the public in the societies’ activities; it could be a picnic in a park or commemorations of Gustav III at Skeppsbron, close to the Royal Palace in Stockholm. However, there were very few, according to Olsson, who understood the member’s serious interest in history. According to the members’ own accounts and journalists’ descriptions, some people were even provoked by their appearance in period clothing in everyday places such as the underground, while others they met appreciated that the members created

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896 *All that is solid melts into air: The experience of modernity* was originally published in 1982.
a carnival out of the grey everyday. However, the fact that the societies and their members made themselves noticeable probably contributed to a feeling of solidarity within the group.

A regular comment in interviews is that the members of these societies in the 1990s were looking for something in the 18th century that they felt was lacking in their own time. Among the things they were looking for were peace and calm, simplicity, purity and beauty, and culture. Being a member of these societies offered you the opportunity to move beyond the given circumstances and time of your birth. You could choose “...to live within multiple pasts; not to remain fixed in one identity but to perform within many.”

The journalist Gabriella Ahlström suggested in an interview with Gustavianerna that if you felt lost – you could go find a time that suited you better. “In the cradle of history lie unforeseen possibilities for a new and exciting life.” She explained the need for escapism by referring to the economic slump, lack of culture, growing sense of alienation and general worry. A trip to Mallorca she concluded was no longer enough; people wanted something more, you had to travel in time – back in time. You only had to decide on a point in time, and with the means of art, music, literature and historical objects you could get there. And you would know when you arrived, she claimed, because then you get a special feeling of belonging, a feeling of coming home. The text alludes to the recurring idea of the past as a safer, better but also different place.

Time travels were undoubtedly among the most important activities for the societies and for these travels the members of the societies usually did not adopt a different persona, rather they claimed that they were themselves – it was not a role but a time that they wished to enter.

We think that we are interesting enough as ourselves Jonas Wallin says. Our meetings are serious, not a game. We have no need to take new names and pretend.

903 “Vi tycker att vi är tillräckligt intressanta som oss själva, säger Jonas Wallin. Våra träffar är seriösa, inte någon lek. Vi har inget behov av att ta nya namn och lätsas.” Ahlström, G., 14.03.1993
This is something that sets them apart from the lajv or re-enactment scene in general. According to Erik G Olsson, members were often asked whom they really portrayed. His response was that, basically, the idea is that you are your-
self, 200 years ago. However, Gabriella Ahlströmer concluded that, as an onlooker, it was not easy to spot the difference between role-play and being you; it seemed to her as if what happened was play and reality at the same time. When they met, the members spoke differently, kissed their ladies and called them “madame”, sometimes they spoke French and they moved with grace and dignity. Smoking and swearing were banned. They mingled in an 18th century manner, and all members kept up appearances, trying not to break the spell. Eugéne Udeborn, spokesman for the Gustavianerna, explained in the article in Fëa Livia from 1994 that they wanted to “taste” the period but they did not wish to role-play. However, he admitted that when you were dressed in 18th century clothes it might change you. This transformation is referred to in a number of articles. The members acted as themselves but in a manner that would be appropriate to the 18th century, and according to Udeborn, they very carefully avoided topics of conversation that did not work in an 18th century environment.

In the spring festivities or the films presented earlier, there was a recurring idea that people from the upper classes were better suited to re-enact the roles of the same class. This idea is not visible in the material from the 1990s; instead you were free to pick whichever class you preferred to belong to. Nonetheless, class was discussed and sometimes it caused controversies. Why did the societies focus so much on the cultural history of the upper classes? The chairman of Gustafs Skål admitted that the 18th century was a time when most people were poor. However, he goes on, the members of the society live in Sweden today, and consequently they now belong to an aristocracy of the world, which would make it natural also to seek this role in history. Further, he claimed that every period has its share of injustice and its share of grandeur, and while being aware of the former we should also remember the latter. To an outsider this recognition of grandeur rather than poverty might be startling. However, the fact that the members of historical societies could perform class positions different from their own does not mean that it is a simple celebration of traditional hierarchies. Through their choice they actually claim that class is about performance, and thereby it becomes possible to question the legitimacy of privileges given through family or connections. The liberty of placing yourself in time and exploring the possibilities could also include gender identities. Even if you did not replace your identity completely with a historic persona, dressing in period clothes might give you the liberty to escape the daily repetitions of gender performativity. Gender, or class for that matter, is not stable, as the professor of comparative literature and rhetoric Judith Butler has claimed, “…rather it is an identity tenuously

904 Olsson E. Att vara sig själv. Gustafs Skål, 1997, p. 3
905 Ahlström, G. Ahlström, G. -Allt var bättre i kärlekens århundrade. Föreningen Gustavianerna lever mitt i 1700-talet, Expressen, 14.03.1993, section Söndag
906 Summanen, H. Gustavianerna. Fëa Livia, no. 6(1994):16-17
constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts.*”

In this sense, time travel and dressing in period clothes can help challenge gender stereotypes, or if you like, to indulge in them. Thus, being a member and joining in on the time travels, along with a commodification of pastness can become a way of expressing your identity and “the finding of the true self through the appropriation of pastness”, and perhaps you could speak of a self-realisation rather than role-playing.

5.3.3 Body, Clothes and Artefacts

The body is an important instrument for understanding and being able to sympathise with people from the past. Let’s imagine the 18th century and then imagine your body in it. It probably smelled, or it reeked of perfume, it was hungry, or it was stuffed with patisseries, it was constrained, it was natural or authentic. Whichever version you choose to build your ideas on, a re-enactment of a bodily experience of the past might give you the feeling of *pastness*, the past is thus reanimated through a physical and psychological experience. Even if they often are, these societies do not need to be historically accurate or representative if they do not want to. They do not have any such responsibilities. If your motivation is to escape modern life and you go travelling in time or elsewhere you are hardly likely to want to put your body in danger, subject it to hunger or torment – instead you pick a destination that appeals to your senses in a positive way. Those who nonetheless want to acknowledge war and hunger could join groups that focus on military re-enactments, for example.

The control of the body and how uncomfortable the 18th century might have been reoccurring themes in the journal *Gustafs Skål*. Members of both societies describe the transformation that takes place when getting dressed. *Gustavianerna* and *Gustafs Skål* use a combination of control and transformation of the body as a vehicle for time travelling, but also as a means to explore class and gender roles. For that reason, the ability to control postures, speech, clothes and food has become an important aspect of these societies.

An erect and fine looking figure was the ideal of the time. Your shoulders must not hang and you should carefully control your movements (...) when walking, your steps should not be too long. Nor should you sway the upper part of your body and your head should be kept absolutely still.


The impression is that the more you were able to discipline the body, in the same way as they would have done in the 18th century, the closer you might feel the past. Clothes and makeup were used as a way of entering a mood that will help you get a “period rush”, where everything fits, where everything becomes as unified in character as in a painting by Pehr Hilleström Sr. Consequently, being able to conduct yourself in the right manner was an important skill that was acquired by the members through study and practice, and courses in dancing, singing, fencing and sewing are regularly offered to the members. The skill of dancing is mentioned in particular.

For the occasional participation in parades and films described earlier, it had been enough to borrow clothes from the wardrobes of Skansen or the Royal Opera. However, in this context the difficulties and the joy in making and finding clothes and accessories became an important activity that united the members of the societies. To assist the time travels there was a need for specific skills, including certain craft expertise, such as, seamstresses, wig makers and textile historians. During the 1990s there developed a small commercial industry catering for fabrics, wigs and shoes. Around this industry developed a network of historical societies, with individual members who were part of the heritage industry, the textile industry and other actors. Sever-

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al members were also active as entrepreneurs or helped market the products and services of this industry.

In the journal *Gustafs Skål* we find adverts, mainly for second-hand bookshops, textile shops, wig makers and other businesses relating to the activities of the society. These were both well-established businesses and new entrepreneurs. To mention one example, in 1998 the journal reports that a seamstress, Harriet Olsson, has moved from Visby and established her business in Stockholm. In Visby she used to create medieval outfits but had changed period when moving to Stockholm. On a larger scale of production there were several commercial initiatives that focused on reproductions of historical textiles, for example IKEA (the patterns were later used by Ljungbergs Textiltryck in the Authentic Historic Collection, which was developed in collaboration with Lars Sjöberg) and Durán Textiles AB (see fig. 85). Many of the reproductions were printed on cotton fabric (kattun), which is easy to wash and use. They are often used and sold in combination with the furniture described in the previous chapter, and today many of these fabrics can be found in museums and historic house museums, both as part of reconstructed interiors and in clothes worn by the staff.

Figure 76. What ever you need: at Gustaf's Skål you meet the craftsmen who create your 18th century. The photograph shows the embroidery made by the seamstress Harriet Olsson, who changed her production from medieval reconstructions to 18th century clothes. Photographer: Erik G Olsson. Illustration in Gustafs Skål, 2000, p. 47
Articles about fashion and textile were published on a regular basis in *Gustafs Skål*, often referring to academic research within the field. Apart from looking up available research, the members of Gustafs Skål used clothes shown at exhibitions, paintings from the period for example by Pehr Hilleström Sr., and films for inspiration. Erik G Olsson concluded that there were two different roads to travel, either the idealised world of portraits and fashion prints or a possible truth – a truth that usually has left little evidence. He then mentioned that something that we actually do know something about is the clothes worn by the nobility at court, the national dress. This dress and its different executions have been well documented, and there are detailed royal decrees and original garments that have been preserved. Olsson saw these favourable circumstances as an opportunity that should be explored by the members and he concluded that they should use as much knowledge and imagination as possible.

It was Gustav III who introduced the national dress (*nationella dräkten* also known as *svenska dräkten*) in 1778 to prevent luxury consumption of imported fabrics, and the court was to set a good example. It was a reform for the nobility and the people who attended court, both men and women wore it, and it was adapted to everyday use as well as festive occasions. Adhering to the instructions of the king, it was Jean Eric Rehn who designed the national dress. Gustav III harboured great faith in the psychological influence of clothes, and hoped that the historicising character of the dress would fill the wearer with nationalist esprit. Also, before 1778 the king wore historicising outfits from time to time, for example during the coup d’etat in 1772. Moreover, the king was very deliberate about what clothes should be preserved for the future by the Royal Wardrobe.

The national dress has become a symbol of the Gustavian period, but the inspiration for the dress dates back to the early 1600s, and can be seen as part of the interest the king had in history and theatre. It can also be understood as a deliberate attempt from the king to enforce a patriotic or national feeling at the time. The court wore the costume for men until around 1809. In 1823 it was replaced by the new king’s court uniform. The national dress for wom-
en lived on in the ceremony in which women were introduced at court until 1950. The last time it was worn was at the state opening of parliament in 1974. The present Queen Silvia revived the dress for women in 1988 as an official dress for the ladies in waiting, the women functionaries of the Royal Court.

In 1994, the society won second prize in a competition about who could make the best historic short film on video. The competition was initiated in conjunction with the exhibition The Quest for a Swedish History (Den svenska historien) and the participants were allowed 15 minutes to present a historical occurrence based on an object in the exhibition. Gustafs Skål told the story of the national dress. The competition was done a collaboration between Swedish Television, Historiska Museet and Nordiska Museet. The organisers of the competition referred to the participants as “video historians” and advised the winners to contact their regional museums and look for further collaboration. The competition allowed private actors to contribute to the writing of Swedish history by using the video format, which was becoming more readily available to more people. In a comment on the competition Erik G Olsson explains that the prize might not have been that important, but it was important to the unity within the society and peoples ability to collaborate.

The process behind getting hold of suitable clothes is carefully described in an article published in Gustafs Skål 1994. Adam Johnsson, one of the members recalls that his choice of clothes had been inspired by the exhibition Hovdräkt anbefalles at the Royal Armoury. He also explains how useful he found Eva Bergman’s (1903-1984) dissertation about Gustav III’s national dress, published in 1938. But, more importantly, he says that his national dress will always remind him about his brothers and sisters in the society and how they helped him. And he hopes that he will be able to help someone in the same way.

In all probability, without her knowledge the costumes would never have become a reality. When you, as a novice, are going to plan and procure material you might feel very uncertain (…) I know that my court dress will be a great source of joy. I will wear it with pride and remember its originator.

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917 Email from Erik G Olsson, 29.01.2014.
Figure 77. In Pehr Hilleström Sr.’s painting Spelparti hos statssekretare Elis Schröderheim we can see two men on each side of the table wearing the black and red national dress. At the right end of the table sits a woman wearing the black and white female version. The painting depicts a game of cards in the home of state official Elis Schröderheim (1747-1795) in 1782. The host welcomes the Princess Sofia Albertina (1753-1829), who is entering the room. This painting is also included in the functionalist manifesto acceptera (1931) as an illustration to accompany the statement – In the past culture was unified in character. (p. 150) See chapter 4. Part of this painting was blown up and used in the exhibition Med hemmet i blickpunkten at Sven Harrys konstmuseum in 2015. See chapter 3. Courtesy: Hans Thorwid, Nationalmuseum

The ability to travel in time is intimately related to material culture, and much effort is put into wearing the correct clothes, and surrounding yourself with objects and paintings of the time.920 Authentic objects and places help you reach the right frame of mind, where you can achieve moments of true escapism. The sources used to create the right scenography are for example diaries, pictures, recipe books, novels, plays, films, objects, places and archives.921

This sometimes humourless attention to historical authenticity is occasionally commented on in Fēa Livia and criticised. This is not the ideal for many

921 A popular diary is that of Märta Helena Reenstierna, known as “Årstafrun”. It was written in 1793-1839 and was published in the 1940s and republished in 1993. Reenstierna, M. H. Årstadagboken: journaler från åren 1793-1839. D. 1, 1793-1812. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1993
of the readers belonging to the “lajv” scene, who felt that when people strive to achieve historical correctness they miss out on creativity and community feeling.\footnote{E.g. Hedin, O. Drapan. Föa Livía, no. 5, 1994, p. 27} However, I believe that we must consider the search for authenticity as vital for the feeling of community within these historical societies. Paying attention to authenticity might be what separates you from other groups – a feeling of “we are the ones who know what it was really like”. Nevertheless, knowledge about the past could have its drawbacks, as one of the informants in Ulrika Anderson’s essay about Gustafs Skål testified; sometimes knowledge can be constraining, and give you the feeling that it is impossible to ever get it right.\footnote{Andersson U. I en annan tid - En studie av hur 1700-talet kan återskapas i 1900-talet. Student essay, Institutet för folklivsforskning, Stockholm University, Spring semester, 1997, p. 9} At the beginning of 1995 the chairman writes in the journal Gustafs Skål that the society has achieved a reputation for being serious and that their members have high pretensions. This, however, needs to be addressed in order not to frighten any potential members. Olsson writes that new members did not need an academic degree; one only needs to be willing to learn and have fun. We can conclude that knowledge and feeling are not always compatible. Even if the authority of the expert, a museum curator or an academic, is generally accepted, it is important to note that indexical authenticity in this context can be the outcome of a relation rather than an essential quality of an object. Consequently, authenticity can become an agreement between the members of the group.

5.4 Staging the Past

Heritage sites and museums have a performative, even theatrical quality, and the space and the narrative design of the displays, invite “visitors to respond in ways not dissimilar to those of a theatre audience.”\footnote{Jackson, A. and Kidd, J. Performing heritage: Research, practice and innovation in museum theatre and live interpretation, New York; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011, p. 2} In order to create a perception of non-mediation in these spaces, you need to create “a stage” that is conceived as authentic. Artefacts and heritage sites, original or recreated, can be used as a material stage that helps provide a rich and vivid impressions as well as matching the pre-understandings and expectations of the participant.\footnote{Holtorf, C. The time travellers’ tools of the trade: some trends at Lejre. International Journal of Heritage Studies 20, no. 7-8(2014):782-797, p. 793} I would argue that it is in the combination of the performative and the material that spaces of heterotopia can be created, and in these spaces various aspects of the past can be explored.

In chapter three we were able to identify at least three different ways of populating museum spaces; there could be traces of life left in the room, a newspaper, some clothes casually tossed over a chair or some artificial food
on the table. Or the museum could set up mannequins with appropriate clothes, sometimes without wax heads, sometimes with. Occasionally these would re-enact a specific event or at least historical figures. The third alternative has been to let real people into the display, as we have seen in Skansen since the late 19th century. The people in period dress could be staff, volunteers or members of historical societies. Museum director and researcher in museum studies Kevin Moore has referred in *Museums and Popular Culture* (1997), to “the power of the three”: the real thing, the real place, and the real person. The real persons in this case are the people who have lived and worked at a site. These real persons are increasingly revived in historically informed performances offered to the public.

Over the years the members of the society have become an attraction at events all over Sweden. They are often called in as lecturers, they dance and appear as ‘living pictures’ and occasionally participate as an extra attraction in guided tours at Drottningholm...

Already in 1993, a journalist at *Expressen* reported on the success the historical societies had made, taking part in events all over Sweden. Gustafs Skål and Gustavianerna participated in different public events, most of them at historic sites and museums, but also at private and corporate events. In the 1990s it was possible to book members to appear in costume, offering food and music, and in 1998 an article in the financial newspaper *Dagens industri* declared, “Det är inne med 1700-tal” (The 18th century is trendy). According to the article it cost SEK 500-1000 per participating member to engage the societies for your own fashionable 18th century event.

On the evening of 23 March 1994 actors, staff at the Royal Armoury and the historic society Gustafs Skål repopulated Gustav III’s Antikmuseum during the opening of the exhibition “Hovdräkt anbefalles”. The exhibition told the story of the national dress since 1778, when it was worn for the first time, until today. The exhibition was produced by head curator Lena Rangström and designed by Tony Lewenhaupt, and featured a number of tableaux with mannequins. The reviews were mainly positive, and the theme of the exhibition made several critics consider the role of the present day monarchy but also Gustav III’s patriotic ambitions. Design critic Susanne Pagold saw a parallel between Lars Sjöberg and IKEA’s marketing of the prerevolutionary and aesthetically pleasing 18th century, and the exhibition at the Royal Armoury. Although, she found that IKEA had succeeded better in their use of

926 Moore K. *Museums and popular culture*, London: Leicester Univ. Press, p. 137
929 The exhibition was open from 24 March 1994-31 January 1995.
the past than the designer had with new dresses for Silvia’s ladies-in-waiting.930

Gustafs Skål was invited, according to their own annual publication, to spread some splendour and joy at the opening of the exhibition.931 The opening was held in the recently reopened larger south gallery of the museum and the ambitious programme included music, speeches by various prominent people, including the queen, a play and the appearance of Gustafs Skål.932 The performance Ur Slottets Garderob (Out of the Palace Wardrobe), was written and directed by Ture Rangström, who worked as a curator and dramaturge at the Drottningholm Palace Theatre (1970-1981) and who later became the director of another 18th century theatre, Confidenzen.933 The participants, including the staff, wore costumes from the Royal Dramatic Theatre and Stockholms Parkteater. Gustafs Skål wore their privately-owned clothes.

In the presence of museum directors, royalty and invited guests Gustafs Skål helped perform Ur slottets garderob, which included the monologue Ett inventarium (An Inventory). The play presented the history of the dress and original quotes from the period revealed contemporary attitudes.934 The text also included thoughts on how the clothes affected the statue of the body and how people moved when wearing the dress. Moreover, the monologue described how music gave life to the bodies of the sculptures, made them soften and blush. The spirits of the place were released as the clothes from the inventory were used to dress the freezing muses, slumbering heroes and goddesses living in the palace.935

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930 Pagold, S. En Maoostym för adelskvinnor. Dagens Nyheter, 08.08.1994, DN Kultur
931 Olsson, E. G. Hovdräkt anbefalles. Gustafs skål, autumn 1994, p. 15
932 The exhibition Gustaf III Kläder för tid och evighet was inaugurated in January 1998 and the programme resembled that of the inauguration in 1994 with music and a theatrical performance “En kungaskiss – en Sergelsk fantasi” written and directed by Ture Rangström. The clothes were borrowed from Confidenzen and Sveriges Television (the Swedish public service television company). This time the inauguration took place in Rikssalen in the Royal Palace. Members of Gustafs Skål were present at the inauguration, although, if their role is not defined in the programme.
933 He later became the director at Strindbergs Intima Teater. In the 1990s he was responsible for directing a number of festive events, for example the king’s 50th jubilee of the king and national day celebrations at Skansen. Nationalencyklopedin, Ture Rangström, http://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/lång/ture-rangström-(f-1944) (accessed: 12.09.2016)
935 “Marmorkinder rodnar… Stela läppar mjuknar och fuktas…
(…)
Jag släpper loss den fjättrade anden i lampan och klar alla frysande muser, slumrande hjältar och knottriga gudinnor som bor här i slottet.” Rangström, T. Ett inventarium, Archives of Livrustkammaren, 1994, E567-44:13

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Figure 78. The large gallery was repopulated with people dressed in the national dress at the opening of Hovdräkt anbefalles, 23 March 1994. Many of the participants were members of the historical society Gustafs Skål. Photographer: Göran Schmidt. Courtesy: Exhibition documentation, Archives of Livrustkammaren

I would argue that the fact that these sites are populated changes them, not only for the moment, it changes the expectations we have of these spaces and the experiences we bring with us after our visit. Moreover, these sites will respond to the expectations and potentially also change the material and conceptual staging of the sites, favouring the staging of a more experientially based authenticity that brings the freezing muses, slumbering heroes and goddesses back to life. Using this type of performance as a way of reviving “what was” can still be contested in a professional context. Not only because it gives priority to learning through experience before learning through cognition, but also because of an uncertainty concerning how performance relates to history and indexical authenticity. However, iconic and indexical authenticities are not mutually exclusive. Every perceived cue that contributes to authenticity has both properties. A chair can be built in the 18th century (indexical authenticity) and it may also work as an illustration of a certain style, a visual verification (iconic authenticity). It is a graded scale whereby something is more or less iconic or indexical. Iconic authenticity may actually have the capacity to foster a perceived connection with the past to a higher degree than indexical authenticity, which of course has implications for museums and heritage sites. Can iconic authenticity really promote people’s perceived connection to the past to a higher extent than pure indexical authenticity? The idea that the authentic experience and the authentic material don’t always coincide is a challenging thought.
The architect or curator can create an iconic authenticity that helps visitors perceive the connection with the past to a higher degree than an indexical authenticity would. The aura can thus be migrated and the feeling of pastness can be created. However, does this mean that the experience is more important than the actual age of a site or artefact? Could we refer to it as a “virtuous deception”? And is there ever such a thing as pure indexical authenticity once we have opened the door? It seems as if the opportunity that remains to the museum or heritage site is to put the visitor in charge by providing the visitor with the information, and to admit and promote the time layers we add and give visitors the tools they need to make up their own mind.

Figure 79. Mobile lady. The photograph is taken from Anne Hedén’s article På rymmen från samtiden published in DN Mars, 26.02.1996, p. 26. Courtesy of the photographer: Anne Mossberg

The historical societies Gustafs Skål and Gustavianerna did not have that many members; numbers seem to have varied between 20 and 100 in the 1990s. These are not high numbers, compared to some of the historical societies specialising in the medieval period or military re-enactment. It is, however, interesting to note how their limited numbers did not impair their ability to gain media exposure or influence in the museum sector, in which many of

936 Holtorf, C. From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: archaeology as popular culture. Walnut Creek, CA.: Altamira Press, 2004, p. 112
them were involved. Images featuring historic spaces populated by people in period dress have become increasingly common in marketing of heritage sites and museums. Consequently, the photographs of populated spaces have now become part of the marketing narrative and thus the expectations that visitors have of a place. TV and film productions, advertisements for heritage products and possibly also historical novels help contribute to these expectations. These sometimes very stereotypical images might result in a quest for a symbolic authenticity among visitors, and in the end museum curators will have to respond to this. This is a quest that is the result of a social construct that can have little to do with reality, an iconic authenticity.\footnote{Wang, N. Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience. \textit{Annals of Tourism Research} 26, no. 2(1999):349-370, p. 356}

Then she unfolds her mobile phone with its antenna and all that and starts talking as her hat feathers wave about, and the Skansen visitors look almost blissful to witness such a wonderful clash between modern technology and history. What does this clash really show? Technology and history hand in hand or is the lady with the mobile only confirming a chaotic feeling of time going in circles and that progress being nonsense?\footnote{"Sedan vecklar hon ut mobilen med antenn och allt och börjar prata med vippande hattfjädrar och Skansenbesökarna ser närmast saliga ut över att få bevittna en sån lyckad krock mellan den moderna tekniken och historien. Vad nu den krocken egentligen beskriver: tekniken och historien hand i hand, eller så bekräftar Damen med mobilen bara en katoisk känsla av att tiden går i cirklar och att framåtskridande är båg." Hedén, A. På rymmen från samtiden. \textit{DN Mar}, 26.02.1996}

A recurring theme in the articles about historical societies in the 1990s is the conflict but also the potential surprise and humour that transpires in the meeting between history and modern life. It might be a person in an 18\textsuperscript{th} century dress who is on the phone or sitting in a car. Not only did these clashes make visible the tensions between modern technology and past lives, it also reveals the writers’ and photographers’ fascination. Why did people do this and what could it tell us about ourselves, our time and our relationship with the past?

The clash between the past and the present, often exaggerates the difference rather than the meeting between the two. This meeting between past and present is the concept, what is signified, the photograph of the woman dressed in 18\textsuperscript{th} century clothes holding the mobile phone becomes the signifier, and together they construct a sign of our longing for but also our distance from the past. This sign can become myth, confirming perhaps that the past is a foreign country or as the journalist Anne Hedén suggested, that progress is myth.\footnote{Hedén, A. På rymmen från samtiden. \textit{DN Mar}, 26.02.1996}

Considering the potential impact these images might have on the staging of museums and heritage sites in the long run, I would argue that these images should be considered important actors that will help shape the
role historical societies will continue to play in heritage management in the future.

5.5 Conclusion

The performance of heritage can include many different activities, heritage visiting but also curating and the management of heritage. This chapter deals with how the past has been populated and focuses on parades, films and time travel. Together with the exhibitions and furniture described earlier, these performances have played an important role in confirming the role of the Gustavian period and in the construction of nation and national identity. Historically informed performances can be included in what Anthony D. Smith has referred to as extra-literary genres, often aimed at the “masses”, which gives them a special role in the forging and reproduction of nations. Moreover, these parades, films and societies have in a very real sense helped provide an aesthetically appealing image of the past.

…it is not the things or places that are themselves ‘heritage’, it is the uses that these things are put to that make them ‘heritage’. (...) ...material culture is used as aids to remembering/forgetting, and as prompts for recalling and authenticicating cultural and social experiences.

Heritage is mediated by, but also created in, historically informed performances, and as Laurajane Smith suggests, these performances help construct cultural and social values and meanings, and by focusing more on the intangible aspects of heritage, it can help us see how heritage is used, and the work it does in society. This focus does not, however, imply that the tangible is irrelevant – on the contrary. In this chapter we have seen how objects, clothes and sites have been vital as aids and prompts for historically informed performances. Although originals may be used, it is not the original material that is in focus, the stage and the prompts generally rely on other sources of information to judge their authenticity. It can be the form and design, use and function, location and setting, all of which can help achieve the authentic spirit and feeling. The requirements for the stage depend on the context, and are, as we have seen, the source of continuous negotiations.

The process-oriented search for authenticity, in how to dress, behave and talk, that is typical of the historical societies has contributed to an unmistakably...
ble interest in exploring, academic, literary and archival sources, for example. This ambitious search for authenticity seems to help strengthen the sense of community among the members of historical societies. However, there are also examples of when authenticity can be perceived as a problem, as it prevents you from entering a full-on experience of the period. The activities of the historical societies have contributed to knowledge production in various ways, especially in relation to museum education, where the societies have helped develop new ways of making the visitors engage with the collections. In this sense these groups have been important in the development of the post-modern, increasingly experiential museum. *Authenticity as performance* approaches heritage as an experience, as something people can do, as with the social activities of a historical society. This closely links to an understanding of authenticity as a feeling that can be achieved. Historical societies involved in time travel, revision and re-imagining of heritage have had a significant impact on museums, collections and heritage tourism.\(^{943}\) Museums choose to include people as traces, mannequins or real people because they assume that, in one way or another, they would contribute to their authoritative interpretation and mediation of the period, the site or the objects in them. In return, the museum can help authenticate the activities of the society through their authority as officially sanctioned heritage institutions.

The museum director Stefan Bohman proposed at a research seminar in 2000 that we would see a continuation of what happened in the 1990s, where the general public and the public culture sector would gain influence at the expense of political and official power and professionals within the sector.\(^{944}\) This was a scenario where artists, theatre people and non-professional cultural heritage workers would contribute more to the museums. However, what constitutes professional cultural workers as a group can be difficult to define, and in most fields of cultural work the amateurs might even out-number the professionals.\(^{945}\) Cultural work may simultaneously appear as a hobby, a profession, a calling and ordinary work, and these different categories might even involve the same person. Many of the members of historical societies also have a professional interest in the period and there are close-knit networks between members of the societies and smaller commercial enterprises that produce and sell heritage products. We must recognise that history and heritage might be performed in all of these roles and they all belong to the same network.


In the same sense that other visitors to museums and heritage attractions do it, members of historical societies also help create “…their own experiences through their imaginations, emotions, and thought processes, and imbue objects in the setting provided with their own personal meanings.”\footnote{McIntosh, A. J. and Prentice R. C. Affirming authenticity - Consuming cultural heritage. \textit{Annals of Tourism Research} 26, no. 3(1999):589-612, p. 607} To a certain degree this might also be what the museum or heritage site is after, in the same way as artists are brought in to make “comments” on the display or collections. This performative authenticity may challenge the authorised heritage discourse, as it is done on the initiative and with the consent of the museum or heritage site. To go beyond that means that you have to move outside these spaces, and many of the activities of the societies and the artists’ “comments” happen in alternative heritage sites not yet identified as heritage. Here, the members of historical societies can enter into a more personal relationship with the past and the experiences that might or might not be sustained by the authorised heritage discourse.
Figure 80. The exhibition Gustaf III at Nationalmuseum in 1972. The coup d'état in 1772 is one of the most important events associated with the king. The objects linked to this date have become highly symbolically charged. During the coup Gustaf III and his supporters wore a white band on their arm. The white band was portrayed on a giant backdrop that was part of the exhibition Gustaf III at Nationalmuseum 1972-73. This display also featured a headless mannequin of the king mounted on a horse. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives
6 Negotiating Heritage as Retro-Utopia

Our interest in the past can be founded on different feelings, such as nostalgia, nationalist sentiment, veneration, enjoyment and escapism, often connected to the aesthetic allure of the objects and sites of the past. In times of turmoil the claim that is made, over and over, is that we need to know our history or we will be lost. David Lowenthal has described in his book *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998) how we can be beleaguered by loss and change, and that our solution is to cling to the past for stability.

Hence preservers’ aversion to letting anything go, postmodern manias for period styles, cults of prehistory at megalithic sites. Mourning past neglect, we cherish islands of security in seas of change.  

However, this longing for stability and security in the past is deceptive. The past has always been contested and is the result of constant negotiations. In this chapter we will take a closer look at how different versions of the Gustavian period have been used to confirm the present and help create a vision for the future. In chapter two we saw how the Gustavian period and style have overlapped when defining the style, and arguably the contested uses of the period also affect the way we relate to the style. In this chapter we will explore how some artists, historical societies, official institutions and political groups have made use of Gustav III and the Gustavian period during the 20th century.

Firstly, we will look at the commemorations in 1922 and 1972 of Gustav III’s coup d’etat on 19 August 1772. The events described were reported and discussed in the daily press and all took place a very short distance from each other, close to the Royal Palace in Stockholm. Secondly, the situation in the 1990s and the project *Historieåret* (The Year of History) are discussed. The third example explored is Yinka Shonibare’s video work *Un ballo in maschera* created in 2004. The artwork and its reception remind us that the past always carries the potential to be understood in varied ways and that these different understandings can be used to confirm and inspire visions of the future. All of these usages show the period’s potential for dystopic, utopic as well as retro-utopic visions.

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6.1 19 August 1772

In order to understand the interest extremist groups have had in Gustav III, we need to return to 19 August 1772, when Gustav III seized power in a coup d’etat ending the Age of Liberty and restoring the royal autocracy. The views of what happened that day, its effects and how it should be remembered are a matter of dispute, and since 1772, various actors have commemorated the coup in different ways and for different reasons.

Figure 81. The inauguration of Drottningholm Palace Theatre features top left. The lower right photo depicts commemorations of the 150th anniversary of the coup d’état in 1772 outside the Royal Palace in Stockholm. The two other photographs document the demonstrations in connection to the Swedish prohibition referendum on 27 August 1922. A cut-out from Vecko-Journalen, 1922, p. 827.

The illustration above is a photographic report from the popular magazine Vecko-Journalen in 1922. The photograph in the top left corner shows Drottningholm Palace Theatre and the Apollo statue in front of it. In 1922 the Drottningholm theatre had been re-opened after “a hundred years of sleep”. Even though this sleep had been disturbed on occasion, it was an exception-
ally well-preserved 18th century theatre that once more opened its curtains to
the public. The photograph in the bottom right corner shows the 150th anni-
miversary of Gustav III’s coup d’état in 1772 being celebrated at Slottsbakken,
situated next to the Royal Palace in Stockholm. The celebrations were organ-
ised by Föreningen Sveriges flagga, förbund för nationell fostran. The chairman of the
association was the professor of pharmacology Carl Gustaf Santesson (1862-
1939). Föreningen Sveriges flagga was founded in 1918 and focused on providing
people, primarily school children with knowledge of and love for their past
through lectures, articles and commemorations.\footnote{“kunskap om och kärlek till det stora och goda i sitt eget förflutna” Thyselius, E., Söder-
berg, V. and Lorents, Y. (eds.) Nordisk familjebok: encyklopedi och konversationslexikon, 3. Stock-
holm: Nordisk familjebok, 1923, p. 1160}

The commemoration in August 1922 included a military parade, music,
song and a historical retrospective by the teacher and writer Olof Örström
(1869-1949). Örström wrote extensively in the genre of popular history and
was interested in the education of the public. He would later give his support
to the Nazi leader Birger Furugård, and became the editor of Den svenska
folksocialisten och Det Antisemitiska Kamporganet Hammaren, an anti-Semitic publi-
cation.\footnote{Lööw, H. Nazismen i Sverige 1924-1979: pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan. Stockholm: Ord-
front, 2004, p. 37} Örström’s speech portrayed the coup as a glorious revolution, since
it had cost not a drop of blood.\footnote{The speech is reproduced in at least three different newspaper articles published directly
Stockholm firade igår minnet av statskuppen 1772. Svenska Dagbladet, 20.08.1922, and Anon.
Aftonbladet, 19.08.1922} He described Gustav III as a patriot as well
as a man of humanity. In the daily newspaper Dagens Nyheter the coup d’etat
was described as unbloody and commendable and the king as the progenitor
of Swedish revolutions.\footnote{“oblodigt och eftersträvansvärt mönster” “De svenska revolutionernas föregångsman”
“Åberg”. Ett minne för dagen. Dagens Nyheter, 20.08.1922} The reporter in Svenska Dagbladet described
the coup as “glorious” and maintained that people today should feel grate-
ful towards Gustaf III who saved the kingdom from a state of discord and
impotence.\footnote{“tillstånd av split och vanmakt” Anon. Den 19 Aug Minnet. Svenska Dagbladet, 19.08.1922} The festivities ended with the actor Ivar Kåge (1881-1951)
reciting Fredrik Nycander’s (1867-1944) poem “Den vita bindeln” (The white
armband). The white armband was worn by Gustav III’s supporters during
the coup and is still occasionally worn by monarchists, nationalists and histori-
cal societies that wish to associate themselves with the king, the period or the
nation state. Nycander was an actor, writer and playwriter who wrote plays
and poems in a national romantic style. His oeuvre included historical dramas
about Vikings, local history and regular plays.\footnote{The poems include Svenska skuggor, Gustavianskt galleri, Ranrikes runor and Carl XII:s
dröm. One of his open-air plays Engeldirektssagan was performed at the spring festivities at
Skansen in 1919. Åhlén, B. and Fries, C-T. (eds.) Svenskt författarlexikon: biobibliografisk handbok
till Sveriges moderna litteratur 1. 1900-1940, Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, p. 612} After the recital professor

948 “kunskap om och kärlek till det stora och goda i sitt eget förflutna” Thyselius, E., Söder-
berg, V. and Lorents, Y. (eds.) Nordisk familjebok: encyklopedi och konversationslexikon, 3. Stock-
holm: Nordisk familjebok, 1923, p. 1160
949 Lööw, H. Nazismen i Sverige 1924-1979: pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan. Stockholm: Ord-
front, 2004, p. 37
950 The speech is reproduced in at least three different newspaper articles published directly
Stockholm firade igår minnet av statskuppen 1772. Svenska Dagbladet, 20.08.1922, and Anon.
Aftonbladet, 19.08.1922
951 “oblodigt och eftersträvansvärt mönster” “De svenska revolutionernas föregångsman”
“Åberg”. Ett minne för dagen. Dagens Nyheter, 20.08.1922
952 “tillstånd av split och vanmakt” Anon. Den 19 Aug Minnet. Svenska Dagbladet, 19.08.1922
953 The poems include Svenska skuggor, Gustavianskt galleri, Ranrikes runor and Carl XII:s
dröm. One of his open-air plays Engeldirektssagan was performed at the spring festivities at
Skansen in 1919. Åhlén, B. and Fries, C-T. (eds.) Svenskt författarlexikon: biobibliografisk handbok
till Sveriges moderna litteratur 1. 1900-1940, Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, p. 612

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Santesson led a cheer for the memory of the king. *Dagens Nyheter* reported that there were many policemen present at the demonstration, but that everything had been peaceful.\(^{954}\)

Fifty years on, in 1972 the commemoration was less peaceful and the statements in the press more varied and critical of the coup and its consequences. The professor of history Sten Carlsson claimed in an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* that there would be no commemorative celebrations in 1972, since royal coups were no longer held in high esteem.\(^{955}\) Other articles portrayed Gustav III as a dictator, and described the events as a military coup, comparing it to more contemporary events in other parts of the world in the 1970s.\(^{956}\)

![Figure 82](image)

**Figure 82.** King Gustaf VI Adolf (1882-1973) celebrated his 90th birthday on 11 November, 1972. The celebrations involved spectacular fireworks and an illuminated sign with the years and monograms of the two kings placed on the façade of Nationalmuseum. Photographer: Margit Järestedt. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum’s Image Archives

Nationalmuseum created a large exhibition – *Gustaf III*, which opened in November 1972 and closed in March 1973. All departments of the museum were involved in the making of the exhibition, along with some external institutions. The director general Bengt Dahlbäck (1917-1991) was the chairman of the working committee, which also included Gustaf Näsström and Lars Sjöberg. The production was based on teamwork, breaking down some of the old structural barriers in the museum, an approach that the museum hoped would result in a multifaceted portrait of the king.\(^{957}\) The exhibition accentuated cultural history and discussed both the personality of the king as well as architecture, theatre and how the king used his power. Rather than focusing

\(^{954}\) Anon. Minnet av Gustaf III:s statskupp firat. *Dagens Nyheter*, 20.08.1922


\(^{956}\) Widding, L. Kungen diktator efter militärkupp. *Expressen*, 19.08.1972

on one perspective or one story about the king, the exhibition Gustaf III offered several perspectives, positive and negative views, about the monarch and his life. Bengt Dalbäck explained that the museum knew how controversial the legacy of the king was, and the diversity of voices was an answer to this situation.\textsuperscript{958} Particular emphasis was placed on guided tours and the museum could proudly declare in 1973 that the public had been offered 816 guided tours of the exhibition. During the five months it was opened, the exhibition had about 200,000 visitors.\textsuperscript{959}

The appointed exhibition designer Lennart Mörk (1932-2007) worked as a scenographer at the Royal Dramatic Theatre and his designs contributed to an exhibition with a distinct visual dramaturgy. The exhibition scenography carefully created narrative spaces and spatial choreographies.\textsuperscript{960} The large windows facing the Royal Palace on the other side of the water were opened specifically for the exhibition, and this created a visual connection not only to the Royal Palace but also Johan Tobias Sergel’s statue of Gustav III (1808). A few months before the opening of the exhibition in 1972 this had become the site of a more disruptive and violent commemoration of the king.

On 22 August 1972 supporters of the extreme right gathered to celebrate the 200\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the coup. Ulf Hamacher (1920-1993), one of the leaders of Sveriges Nationella Förbund (SNF) had called for a meeting at Karl XII:s Torg, a square close to the Royal Palace in Stockholm.\textsuperscript{961} SNF was joined by Nordiska Rikspartiet och Nysvenska rörelsen. There was a speech at the statue of Karl XII and then the group marched to Sergel’s statue of Gustaf III at Skeppshbron not far away. A wreath was placed at the foot of the statue. Demonstrators from the far left, Revolutionära Marxisters förbund, confronted the group, threw the wreath in the water and the police intervened. During the turmoil a small orchestra, Fosterländska musiksällskapet, continued to play. Events such as these were repeated during the 1970s. In 1972 the newspaper Aftonbladet commented that the Nazis were no longer hiding in the woods, they were demonstrating in the heart of Stockholm. The one thing that seemed to unite the different groups of neo-Nazis was the wish to overthrow the present regime in Sweden, and the journalist concluded that it must have seemed suitable to celebrate a coup that had turned the king into a dictator.\textsuperscript{962}

\textsuperscript{962} Anon. Nazisternas hyllningskrans åkte i sjön!. Aftonbladet, 20.08.1972
Figure 83. Johan Tobias Sergel’s statue of Gustav III at Skeppsbron was inaugurated in 1808. It was placed there because it was the site where the king had returned from the Russo-Swedish war of 1788-1790. The king had initiated the war to weaken Russian influence in Sweden. Sergel’s statue references to Apollo di Belvedere, and he managed to portray the king as a patron of the arts as well as a warrior king and a keeper of the peace, holding an olive branch in his right hand. This photograph of the statue is included in Axel L. Romdahl’s textbook Konsten i Sverige: från medeltidens början till vår tid, published in 1943, p. 149.

Two years later, in 1974, the group Nygustavianska samfundet was founded to commemorate the Gustavian period. On 19 August 1974 they marched from Stortorget, via Skeppsbron and the statue of Gustav III and then to Skeppsholmen where they placed a wreath by “Svenskstenen”. This is a monument from 1890 that honours a victory for the Swedish navy in 1790.

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963 Nygustavianska samfundet, M/S Gustav III. Svenska Dagbladet, 14.08.1976
This programme was repeated in 1976, but this time they took the boat to Skeppsholmen.\textsuperscript{964} In an ad in \textit{Svenska Dagbladet} they invited those who were interested to come and join in. There were other commemorations of dead kings: in 1974 \textit{Narraförbundet} celebrated the King Karl XII on the day of his death, 30 November, and in 1976 \textit{Lützenförbundet} celebrated the King Gustaf II Adolf. In an article in \textit{Aftonbladet} in 1981, a journalist declared that the most popular pleasure among neo-Nazis seemed to be to celebrating old Swedish kings.\textsuperscript{965} By the 1990s, 30 November had become a highly politically charged date, with demonstrations and violence. 19 August, on the other hand, had lost much of its significance as a political symbol.

\subsection*{6.1.1 Contested Heritage in the 1990s}

At the beginning of the 1990s there was mounting public interest in heritage and history in Sweden. This wave of popularisation of history in Sweden coincided with one of the worst financial crises of the century, with high unemployment rates and drastic changes in the political climate. Three new political parties entered parliament in 1988 and 1991, and the Social Democratic Party lost the elections in 1991. An increase in immigrants, due to the war in former Yugoslavia, meant that the demographics had changed.\textsuperscript{966} In the mid 1990s the SOM Institute presented a trend analysis of public opinion, which stated that the Swedes had become more isolationist, people were generally more negative towards immigration, international aid and collaborations.\textsuperscript{967} This coincided with the “IT-revolution”, globalism and a sharpened individualism. Despite negative opinions on international collaborations, Sweden became part of the EU in 1995.\textsuperscript{968} These gradual changes in society brought with them a displacement of power and ideologies involving many areas and actors.\textsuperscript{969} Additionally, these changes meant that Swedish identity was questioned, explored and partly redefined in debates that included the participation of museums, academics, historical societies, journalists and oth-

\textsuperscript{964} Nygustavianska samfundet, M/S Gustav III. \textit{Svenska Dagbladet}, 14.08.1976
\textsuperscript{965} Gedin, M. Leve kungen!. \textit{Aftonbladet}, 11.08.1981
\textsuperscript{966} For a long time, the Nordic countries have presented themselves as ethnically uncomplicated, homogenous, ancient nation states. Even if this wasn’t true, the 1990s implied a change in the self-image of these states. See e.g. Löfgren, O. Det nationella på skämt & blodigt allvar. \textit{Tvärsnitt: humanistisk och samhällsvetenskaplig forskning}, Stockholm: Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet (HSFR), no. 2(1992):2-11, p. 8
\textsuperscript{968} In his dissertation historian Erik Axelsson discusses the use of history in the public debate in Norway and Sweden in relation to membership of the EU, 1990-1994. The construction of the past was separated along political lines and the content of the national narrative was a cause of debate. See: Axelsson, E. \textit{Historien i politiken: historieanvändning i norsk och svensk EU-debatt 1990-1994}, Univ. Diss. Uppsala University, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2006
\textsuperscript{969} These changes are explored and described in Ivarsson Westerberg, A., Waldemarson, Y. and Östberg, K. (eds.) \textit{Det långa 1990-talet: när Sverige förändrades}. Umeå: Boréa, 2014.
ers. Some of the questions asked were: what did it mean to be Swedish? Could the answer be found in the past? Who owned the right to the past? What was the best way of experiencing and learning about the past?

In retrospect, the professor of history Dick Harrison, who is active in the field of popular and public history, explained that as long as things were going fine for Sweden, people were less interested in history and looked only to the future. This changed in the 1990s a time of financial crisis as well as outspoken racism and political right-wing extremism and this new situation brought a crisis of Swedish identity, according to Harrison.

By the end of 1992, if not earlier, Sweden was a country adrift, its population cut adrift from major elements so long taken for granted. Sweden, the model welfare state, was no longer the model welfare state. Sweden, the most ultra-modern of all ultra-modern states, was no longer committed to ultra-modernity.

One of the responses from the museum world was the project Historieåret (The Year of History), which opened on 21 March 1993. During this year a large number of exhibitions about Swedish history opened nationwide. The aim of the project was to make people more interested in and more knowledgeable about Swedish history – to give Swedish people their history back, as the organisers phrased it. When asked why this was important, Sten Rentzhog, the director of Nordiska Museet 1988-1991, replied that otherwise you might risk losing your identity. If Swedish people rediscovered their history, it would give them a more open and positive view of their contemporary situation according to Rentzhog. Moreover, a loss of history could also mean that there would be difficulties in the country asserting a strong position within the EU.

Ignorance was also seen as a potential opening for...

972 Several of the exhibitions linked to the project continued into 1994.
right-wing extremism, which at the time was trying to promote an alternative Swedish history, focusing on the Swedish empire in the 17th and the 18th century.

The opening of the exhibition at Nordiska Museet was broadcast live on Swedish television and members of the royal family were present at the event. The project involved Nordiska Museet, Statens Historiska Museum (The National Museum of Antiquities), regional museums, local museums and Sveriges Hembygdsförbund (the Swedish Local Heritage Federation). During The Year of History, the Swedish History Museum and Nordiska Museet in Stockholm produced a joint exhibition Den Svenska Historien (English title: Quest for a Swedish History), which presented “Sweden’s history from earliest times until today” and offered visitors “a fascinating cavalcade of events”. Den Svenska Historien (The Quest for a Swedish History 1523 - Today) became a huge success audience-wise, 460,000 visitors came to Nordiska Museet and in total about 2,5 million visitors are estimated to have seen one of the exhibitions that were part of the project.

The year before, in 1992, ethnologist Jonas Frykman stated in an article in Populär Historia that Sweden was “made more Swedish” in a calm and pragmatic way, partly because of our peaceful, non-dramatic history. He made the comparison with younger nation states, where memories that can be turned into a source of national pride are more recent. Probably, his description would have been quite different if he had written the article ten years on. During the 1990s there were many expressions of Swedish nationalism that were both violent and disruptive. These events remind us of the self-image of Sweden as a peaceful nation with a non-aggressive version of nationalism, an image that was called into question in the 1990s. History could be highly controversial and politically charged, even in Sweden, and “telling it as it was” became the mission of many historians and museums.

The historical societies we met earlier were occasionally met with scepticism in the 1990s, at a time when nationalism and history were highly charged territory. They had to respond to this in different ways and considered themselves as reclaiming history from the extremists; much in the same way as different national symbols such as the flag were later reclaimed from the right wing.

The chairman of Gustafs Skål, Erik G Olsson remembers that at first many did not see a difference between Gustafs Skål and these other, more controversial groups, who used history in support of the ideology of the

977 The Swedish History Museum covered the period up until 1520 and Nordiska Museet took care of the period after that. Rentzhog, S. Preface. In A journey through Swedish history, Nordiska Museet and Statens Historiska Museum in collaboration with the regional museums, Lindqvist, H. Stockholm: Bra böcker and Tipstjänst, 1994, p. 3
980 Interview, chairman of Gustafs Skål Erik G Olsson, 05.12.2013.
extreme right-wing. On the evening of 24 January 1996, when the society Gustafs Skål met below Sergel’s statue of Gustav III to commemorate his 250th birthday, they lit “a light of tolerance” as a symbolic act separating them from darker uses of heritage, before singing the first national anthem of Sweden “Gustafs skål.” Historical societies were not alone in their fear of losing history to the extreme right-wing; many of those who worked with history at the time were worried. As a response to this fight for ownership of the past, the media involved researchers who helped present an image of Karl XII that differed greatly from that of the extreme right-wing that celebrated him as a hero who fought for Sweden, united the nation and made the country great. It was considered important to respond to this portrait of history and present alternative readings of the past, not least because discourse is always both constitutive and constituting – which means that the way in which we create, discuss and talk about heritage matters.

There were numerous uses of the Gustavian period and Gustav III during the 20th century that could be considered controversial. However, as we have seen examples of in the 1940s and the 1990s, the Gustavian heritage has also been used to promote a state-supported, non-aggressive type of nationalism. In the 1990s the image of Gustav III as a warrior king, an image that he himself was interested in conveying, had definitely given way to the theatre king, a patron of the arts. It is possible to speculate that during the 1990s, it might also have seemed fitting to promote a style that alluded to classicism and Greek and Roman antiquity. This was a narrative and aesthetic that could be seen as part of a shared European past, defining as different those who lived beyond its borders.

6.2 A Masked Ball

On the evening of 16 March 1792, Gustav III was shot at the Opera in Stockholm. It was a plot within the nobility, but in the end it was Captain Jacob Johan Anckarström (1762-1792) who shot the king in the back. The king died of his wounds thirteen days later, on 29 March. Guiseppe Verdi’s opera about this event, Un ballo in maschera, was performed on stage for the first time in 1859. In 2004, the British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare MBE took up a residency in Sweden, and decided to use this historical event and the operatic interpretation of it as inspiration for his first dance-film production – Un ballo in maschera. The film was a co-production between Moderna

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981 Anon. Födelsedag i ljuset av tolerans. Svenska Dagbladet, 25.01.1996

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Museet and Swedish Television and was first exhibited as part of the exhibition *Fashination* (25 September 2004-23 January 2005).

Since the 1990s, museums and historic houses have increasingly used their potential as creative spaces in order to recharge and reinvent themselves. One way of accomplishing this undertaking has been to invite artists and scenographers to comment on, challenge and develop the theatrical and scenographic assets of these spaces. However, these spaces have also been attractive to artists because of their specific properties and their influence on artworks. Beth Lord, senior lecturer in the history of philosophy, pinpoints one of these specific qualities when she describes museum displays as spaces of representation where you can “experience the gap between things and the conceptual and cultural orders in which they are interpreted.”

According to Lord, because they are spaces of representation, they can critique their own historical foundation in a way that fits both postmodernist and poststructuralist thinking.

Displaying contemporary art in historic houses and gardens has become an increasingly popular trend in the last twenty years or so. The artwork and the historic house relate to each other in ways that have implications for how they are communicated, experienced, interpreted and received. Numerous actors are involved in this type of interventions; curators, artists, visitors, galleries, critics, tourist organisations, governmental support for the arts, local interest groups, filmmakers, academics and many more. The interventions have partly been initiated by new challenges for museums and historic house museums. These challenges include new perspectives brought on by the influence of New Museology, which has made curators increasingly aware of a history of power that could be addressed by a new set of norm-critical approaches inspired by, for example, gender studies and post-colonial studies. It also prompted an awareness of potential new visitor groups. The artist Fred Wilson’s exhibition *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society in 1992 is often referred to as the starting point for these kinds of interventions. Wilson described the aim of his installations in an interview in 2002, in which he says, “I try to imbue the museum with those denied or lost histories.”

In the meeting between contemporary art and a historic site, art usually takes on an instrumental role in acting as comment on or entering into dialogue with the house or the collection. They are also a response to the push for democratisation, assisting in creating an atmosphere where more visitor groups feel welcome, and where the plurality of the past is recognised by generating new stories. Another driving force is the experience industry, which demands more atmosphere and stories. And there is no doubt about it

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interventions create new experiences by using all the senses, evoking feelings such as curiosity, sensuality, and adventure.

It is a bold and radical interpretation of Swedish history. It helps us to see our heritage with new eyes. It is really exciting to bring about a meeting between different cultures and artistic expressions in this way.986

This is how the programme director at Swedish Television expressed his ideas about Yinka Shonibare’s artwork Un ballo in maschera in a conversation between himself and the artist during the filming of the video work at the rococo theatre Confidencen, Ulriksdal. The artwork refers to the murder of Gustav III but also Guiseppe Verdi’s (1813-1901) appropriation of this event, the opera Un ballo in maschera. Shonibare’s artwork is a mix of different types of appropriation of the event, the opera and the site that in the end all refer to his previous work as an artist. He has appropriated a content referencing Verdi’s opera but also the original historical event. The choreography for the 30 dancers was created from stylistic elements found in 18th century dance, an appropriation of style. Shonibare has described how he loved working with the scenography, and how they researched 18th century dance but found that it was not dynamic enough and that they decided to exaggerate it and combine classical and contemporary dance.987 The choreographer Lisa Torun had worked in London for ten years and had just returned to Sweden in 2003.

The dancers acted out the performance in Confidencen, a reconstructed rococo theatre at Ulriksdal. The Confidence theatre was rediscovered in the 1920s and restored in the 1980s and 90s. Gustav III visited the theatre many times and it was here that he first tried his skills as a writer for the stage. However, this is not the theatre where he was killed, which was the old Opera house, demolished in 1892. Confidencen also bear little resemblance to the Opera house.

Shonibare created a “moving tableau” without beginning, middle or end. The open narrative in Shonibare’s film leaves the faith of Gustav III more open-ended than in Verdi’s opera, he gets up again after the assassination, seemingly fine, we never see him die. Shonibare lets the audience decide which version prevails, does the audience want him saved, is he forever saved or is he forever shot, is there room for redemption? Do you as a viewer let yourself indulge in the beauty, in what Yinka Shonibare has described as this “terrible beauty”, referring to a poem by W B Yeats? Shonibare seems to suggest that the past and the present are in a constant loop, where we as an audience always have the choice of conviction or redemption. However, it is also in part true to what happened in 1792. The king did not die immediately but suffered from the wound and died only later. He managed to keep up appearances and were carried out of the room and later put in a chair in which he was carried to the carriage that took him to the Royal Palace. The chair he allegedly was carried in is in the collections of Nordiska Museet. It was given to the museum in 1936 and is referred to, by the museum, as an

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988 Kent, R. Yinka Shonibare MBE. Prestel, Munich, 2008, p. 20
important historic relic. The same scene is recorded in the silent film *Gustaf III och Bellman* (1908) described earlier. If we compare these two films they actually share many similarities, emphasised by the silence and the dance, including the slightly twitching almost spasmodic moments of the choreography, emphasised by the embryonic technique in 1908.

![Figure 85. Yinka Shonibare, Un Ballo in Maschera (A Masked Ball) digital video, 32 min loop. 2004. Photographer: Bengt Wanselius/SVT. Courtesy: Moderna Museet](image)

All of the dancers wore Venetian style masks and costumes that were copies of the clothes used at the Swedish court at the time of the murder. The king’s original costume and mask have been preserved in the collections of the Royal Armoury, along with the murder weapons. The cut of the costumes worn by the dancers is familiar to a Gustavian period. However, the textiles Shonibare used were bought in Brixton in south London. These ‘African-print’ fabrics have a complex background, inspired by Indonesian batiks, manufactured in the Netherlands and England and then exported to West Africa. The fabrics are the result of colonialism and Shonibare keeps returning to them in his work as an artist. By using a mix of a Gustavian cut and a new fabric Shonibare challenges the way we perceive them, he creates a hybrid, which opens up a number of questions about the past and its implications for the present. Shonibare was also interested in the king’s “sexual ambivalence”,

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which he found to be confirmed in portraits of Gustav III. In the film he let women portray the king and the murderer Jacob Johan Anckerström. Another conclusive aspect of the performance is that there is no music; all we hear are the footsteps, the fabric of the clothes and the breathing of the dancers, which helps enhance the sense of presence of the bodies in the room. The journalist Erica Treijs, who reported from the shooting of the film, recalled how this silence acted as an “instrument of torture” as the dancers did their best to take direction.

Shonibare has described how, in his film Un ballo in maschera, he was using Gustav III as a metaphor for power and its deconstruction. The loop was a way of recalling the repetition of power that “…always returns to the same point – the ambition to expand imperially is not very different from what’s going on now.” In many of his artworks Shonibare has turned cultural stereotypes, national or racial essences on their head, as well as questioning the winners’ side of the story. Typically it is British history and colonial ambitions that are in the line of fire and Shonibare skilfully uses the art historical canon to deconstruct the past. Well-known paintings are re-enacted as tableaux vivants and photographed as in the photo series Diary of a Victorian Dandy (1998) or with headless mannequins as in Mr. and Mrs. Andrews without their heads (1998). He has also parodied the concept of the period room in the work Victorian Philanthropist parlour (1996-97). In his works he identifies and works around the politics of representation. He has described the work Victorian Philanthropist parlour as “ethnicizing the aristocracy”, a concept that seems to be applicable also to Un ballo in maschera. In an interview in 2009, Shonibare explained what it was that attracted him to the story in Verdi’s opera:

When the invasion of Iraq was first announced, I was in Sweden in a residency. Gustav III was fighting wars with Denmark and Russia. Things were not great at home, but he had these expansionist ambitions. So I was thinking about America and expansionist ideas and the cost. Gustav spent a lot of public money on this useless project, his wars, ambitions that weren’t going anywhere. Most people have no idea that video is about Iraq.

992 ”Värkande fötter, kliande masker och prasslande klänningar för sitt bästa för att ta regi medan allt akkompanjeras av taktfast räknande. En, två, tre, fyra – och vänd!” Treijs, E. Afrikska tyger i centrum på maskeradbal. Svenska Dagbladet, 02.09.2004
994 Downey, A. (accessed: 08.09.2015)
995 Shonibare, Y., Slade contemporary art lecture series 2011-12, University College London, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtzTHHKC8qA&list=PLtBDHq5apG9lmXqEj8fJZBuW SGLKuhJw5P&index=2 (accessed: 11.07.2016)
In the film Shonibare uses seduction as a weapon to question power, privilege, class and their consequences, while also revealing the cycles of violence and repression that repeat across time. *Un ballo in maschera* is not the first or only time that Shonibare has made a comment on Swedish history. Earlier that same year, Moderna Museet bought the piece *Vasa ship*, which is a model of the 17th century warship that sank on its maiden voyage in the inlet to Stockholm. In this case Shonibare uses his favoured textiles to create the sails for the ship. This kind of re-take on history is a recurring theme in Shonibare’s art, and what makes it interesting in this specific context. He repopulated the Confidencen theatre with dancers dressed in hybrid costumes, enacting his version of history on instant repeat, and in this intricate way Shonibare manages to open up the metaphoric screen that has been carefully wrapped around the Gustavian period.

### 6.3 Gustavian Retro-Utopias

As we have seen, the same historical event or objects from the past can be given different interpretations, and we can be sure that the use of different historical periods and narratives will always reveal contemporary anxieties, both our misgivings and desires. How should we understand the commemorations of the period and the revivals of Gustavian style – as a nostalgic longing for the past, or part of utopian thinking – a past perfect that can be realised in the future? Is it possible that Gustavian spaces, original or recreated, can ever become the real place that utopias lack?

Creative nostalgia reveals the fantasies of the age, and it is in those fantasies and potentialities that the future is born. One is nostalgic not for the past the way it was, but for the past the way it could have been. It is this past perfect that one strives to realize in the future.

Svetlana Boym has described the concept of nostalgia in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), and she argues that nostalgia is a feeling of loss that appeared at the time of the Romantic Movement and the birth of massculture. Industrialisation and modernisation increased people’s longing for slowness and continuity, which they believed they could find in the past. In this sense nostalgia is shaped by what we want for the future, and thus nostalgia can become a creative feeling. Nostalgia has also become associated with a specific aesthetic expression.

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Any strict compartmentalization of future utopia and nostalgia for an idealized bygone human condition is invalidated by their constant interplay in Western thought.998

Could nostalgia, creativity and utopia be connected? In their introduction of the book *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (1979) the American historians Frank E. Manuel (1910-2003) and Fritzie P. Manuel (1914-2012) explore the interplay between utopias and nostalgia. The authors find that the end of the 20th century was the *twilight of utopia*, an impoverishment of the utopian imagination.999 Perhaps utopian visions, which had been embodied in hundreds of works since the 15th century, were already fully explored? At least, concluded the writers, it was more difficult to envision utopia today, utopias were more specialised. A few years after the publication of *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, in the beginning of the 1980s, the writer and future professor of literature and visual and material culture, Patrick Wright, registered how the idea of a national utopia was slipping away, it was no longer staged as a vision of possibilities, rather as a “dichotomous realm existing alongside the everyday”.1000 He found that the positive energies of a national heritage were put into the separate and regulated space of “stately display”. Thus, heritage became something finished, exhibited as the past. Active uses of history became decoration – “in the place of memory, amnesia swaggers out in historical fancy dress.”1001 At the end of the 1980s, as the Berlin Wall was torn down, many declared the end of utopia altogether.

As a response to this loss of faith in utopias the professor of German and comparative literature Andreas Huyssen wrote an article, *Memories of Utopia* (1995), where he made an observation similar to that of Manuel that the disjunction between nostalgia and utopia might be overstated. Rather, he proposed that nostalgia might in fact be a revitalisation of the utopian desire. His article was a reply to contemporary neoconservative attacks on utopia, which claimed that all utopias were inherently totalitarian and terroristic, and that the end of the 20th century would be the end of all utopias.1002 Huyssen suggested that rather than a disappearance act, there had been a shift within the temporal organisation of utopia, a shift towards the past. This utopia was more than a post-modern pastiche; instead the past was “invested with utopian energies very much oriented toward the future.”1003 In his book *Documents of utopia* (2015), art historian Paolo Magagnoli discussed experimental docu-

999 Manuel, F. E. and Manuel, F. P., 1979, p. 801–803
1001 Wright P., 2007, p. 139
1003 Huyssen, A., 1994, p. 88
mentary art projects. He agreed with Huyssen in the claim that nostalgia is not inherently conservative and argued that nostalgia was far from opposite to utopia. He goes on to state that nostalgia can provide “positive models of resistance to the status quo.”

In this sense nostalgia has an interlinking imagination of the future. “It is related to a way of living, imagining and sometimes exploiting or (re)inventing the past, present and future.”

Two months after the author’s death, Zygmunt Bauman’s (1925-2017) book *Retrotopia* (2017) was published. Bauman defines retrotopias as “…visions located in the lost/stolen/abandoned but undead past, instead of being tied to the not-yet-unborn and so inexistent future…” *Retrotopia* becomes the response to our loss in faith in some future ideal state, instead the past is used as an alternative future. It is not the past ‘as such’ that we return to, rather it is a golden age that is projected onto the future. The Gustavian period seems to find itself positioned exactly there, ready to be filled with the dreams and emotions that we want. In the material of this study it is possible to find a number of retro-utopic visions connected to the Gustavian. In textbooks, exhibitions, advertising and the time travels of historical societies, the shimmer of the golden age of culture points not only to the past but also to the present and the future – the Gustavian period as a time when things were more authentic, tasteful, simpler, of better quality, when even poverty had an advantage.

Maybe the best thing about the 20th century was in fact the 18th century and maybe it is also just that which is typical of our society. Our love for the Age of Enlightenment is at the same time an homage to the pleasant sides of the 20th century. The distance to the 18th century has now increased to 300 years, but hopefully we can still let the Age of Enlightenment also illuminate the new century.

In the editorial column in *Gustafs Skål* 2000, Erik G Olsson asked the reader, what will people remember about the 20th century, will it be considered the best of times or the worst? He stated that many of the ideals of the 18th century were realised in the 20th century: freedom, democracy, equal rights etc. And he hoped that the values of the Age of Enlightenment could be brought into the 21st century.

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A Gustavian Retro-Utopia is closely associated with a search for the real, a pre-industrial society with authentic materials and traditional craft done by hand. It is an idyllic existence with a slower pace of life. The 18th century is often presented in lifestyle magazines such as *Antik & Auktion* as a counter-weight to stressful modern life. Most of these articles fall into two categories, either readers are given tips on how to design their own home with inspiration from the past, mixing old and new, or they are allowed to visit the homes of the real connoisseurs. Some of these homes are not only described as beautiful; they are also a refuge from modern life, time capsules that transport you to a simpler and more tasteful way of life. These examples of commodification of the past show how nostalgic feelings and values can be manipulated for different ends, sometimes ending up with a regressive nostalgia, a retrotyping that prevents us from sensing historical movement or change. “Through retrotyping we only ever see the past in its Sunday best”.1008

In her dissertation *IKEA of Contradictions. IKEA’s values and mentality in the times of change* (2008), Hanna Lindberg describes how IKEA’s line of 18th century furniture and the PS collection provided “…medicine for those experiencing homesickness created by post-modern homelessness” by returning to “…golden eras for Swedish people – nationally and internationally.”1009 Much in the same way as the historical societies found comfort and security, for example in the cradle of history. At the time there were many who criticised this longing for security that was found in the past.

The welfare system is collapsing, the Gulf Stream is turning, the century is ending. Of course you long for the good old days. I also long for times long gone. We were much more progressive in 1723 than in the 1990s.1010

To mention only one example, the architect Mårten Claesson questioned the large reconstruction project recreating the burned down Katarina Church in Stockholm in the early 1990s. It was the architect Ove Hidemark who was responsible for the project, and at the same time he was involved in the reconstruction of Gustav III:s Antikmuseum mentioned earlier. Why not let a contemporary architect draw the new tower, as they did in 1723, Claesson commented? He found that there were strong nostalgic sentiments in Sweden aiming for “original ideals and a lost national identity” that in reality did not reflect an original state, which is always mixed and subject to change. He was

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afraid that the consequence of this nostalgic philosophy would be that the 1990s would leave none of their own marks on the history of architecture.

What happens if we combine the utopic longing and the feelings of nostalgia? Retro is implicitly linked with a loss of faith in the future. However, based on a study of the retro-Gustavian, I would like to disagree on this point. It is not a loss of faith in the future as such; rather it can be a loss of faith in the future of the majority. It can be used in a search for alternatives, a way to dream about and to visualise the future. Perhaps Oscar Levertin’s longing around the turn of the 20th century to get away from the grey and bourgeois world that followed the death of Gustav III, the consumer’s dreams in the 1950s about having slotsästhetik in their own homes, or Sörby as a house for the future in the 1990s can be seen as a search for alternatives for the future?

We can conclude that the retro-utopias that took the Gustavian period and style as their stepping stone were not one unified utopia. There is no one visionary, a singular person or movement that creates the image of the 18th century. Instead there are, as we have seen, several actors that interact: academics, museums, advertisers, craftsmen, historical societies and individuals. This multitude of actors has ensured that there are a number of different elements sustained within Gustavian retro-utopias – including nostalgic nationalism, aesthetic refinement, and pre-industrial originary authenticity.

6.4 Conclusion

Gustav III has been constantly negotiated as a historical figure, and historically informed performances such as parades, commemorations and art works have played a vital role in these negotiations. Similar to Sergel’s statue at Skeppsbron, the image of Gustav III has had the ability to change, maintaining the contradicting elements of autocracy, culture, war and peace. The manifestations of 22 August 1772 in 1922 and 1972 commemorated Gustav III as a warrior king and autocrat. However, this role has never gained any wider recognition with the general public, despite the efforts from the extreme right. Instead there are two other monarchs, Gustaf II Adolf and Karl XII, who have been more successfully appropriated for this purpose. Flags, anthems or processions have actually been the exception when it comes to Gustav III; rather he has been commemorated as a patron of the arts, much thanks to cultural institutions such as museums, theatres or opera houses. This does not mean that the role of the king cannot change in the future, what we do with the past is always an open question. Yinka Shonibare’s artwork Un ballo in maschera is an example of a type of appropriation of the dead monarch that claims his relevance in our own time, although not in the way you might expect, and not in the one-sided way we have seen so far.
Historic sites have been considered interesting as creative spaces because they offer something different than the white cube or purpose-built art museums. Carefully reconstructed spaces are increasingly opened up to artistic and scenographic interventions such as Sublima små stunder (1993) at Gustav III:s Antikmuseum or Yinka Shonibare’s film recording in the partially reconstructed theatre Confidence. Such interventions have provided bold and radical interpretations of the past, much needed at the time by the museums that were adapting to demands from the visitors, politicians and the experience industry. Moreover, they were responding to one of their possible responsibilities in society, to show alternatives and contradictions in the present and the past. There are a number of ways that this has been done; by showing that there exist or have existed parallel ideas and values and that there are alternative solutions to problems in society. Also they demonstrate perspectives that are not otherwise seen in the public debate, in short – museums should show the opportunities to do things differently or think differently.

It is true that heritage has helped define and produce the modern period, including notions such as the nation state, but we must also remember that it functions as a proof of the idea of the world as open to human transformation.

Nostalgia and the dream of a past perfect can become a creative feeling that connects nostalgia, creativity and retro-utopia. However, the examples presented in this chapter show the relevance of asking: who is it that uses the past and for what purposes? What does the golden age of the Gustavian period actually consist of? The answer to this question will differ depending on who and when you ask. We should be aware that this and all other historical periods have the ability to harbour different dreams and provide models of resistance to the status quo, although whether they should be considered positive depends on your perspective. If the past only becomes retrotyping, dismissing any critical voices, it prevents us from sensing historical movement or change, believing in the illusory and persuasive comfort and safety of the past.

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Figure 86. Temporary storage, Konstslöjdavdelningen (The department for applied arts) at Nationalmuseum. Undated photograph. Courtesy: Nationalmuseum Photo Archives
A century of Swedish Gustavian style is a close investigation of the intersection between art history and cultural heritage in Sweden. The Gustavian style has been part of an authorised heritage discourse for over a century, supporting ideas about national identity, authenticity and taste. This canonical role makes it interesting to study how the style has been defined, revived and mediated in different modes of representation. Therefore the dissertation seeks to map out the mediations of the Gustavian style in Sweden in the period 1890s-1990s, and to determine the role that academia, commercial enterprises and museums have played in reproducing and promoting the style. Furthermore, it explores how the mediations of Gustavian style have related to a more general heritagisation process and what influence art historians’ understandings of styles have had on defining cultural heritage, its preservation and promotion. What are the contents and values mediated through narratives and displays of the Gustavian style, and how has the Gustavian style constructed meaning over time? And lastly, how and when have these changes occurred and how has the Gustavian heritage managed to maintain its relevance over time?

After an initial study of the material, scanning the late 19th century until today, the main emphasis of the investigation has been placed on three periods, the 1890s, the 1930s-40s and the 1990s. The first period was characterised by the formation of the discipline of art history, the building of collections, museums and the heritage movement, as well as the revival of the Gustavian style in interior design. The period reveals an intensified interest in the preservation of Swedish cultural heritage, including the Gustavian period. However, it is possible to identify a number of seemingly opposing movements – preservation, demolition and new constructions, all existing in parallel, which could be expressed in ways that were visually very striking. The museums and the discipline of art history, including students and teachers, were closely linked to the emerging conservation movement, and apart from numerous exhibitions, commemorative events and historical parades, historic sites were increasingly surveyed, documented and researched at museums and universities. This close collaboration between museums, academics and the conservation movement became one of the main characteristics of the Swedish heritage sector during the first half of the 20th century.

Historicism and modernism helped shape furniture production in Sweden in the 20th century. This was dual influence echoed in a lively debate in the
1930s and 40s about period furniture involving art historians, critics, consumers, designers, museum curators, suppliers and producers. Period furniture became an important component in the debate, which often focused on notions such as authenticity, beauty, honesty and taste. Moreover, the material explored in this study shows how Gustavian style period furniture not only survived functionalism, the style was actually integrated within the functionalist project and promoted as the national and historic roots of the movement, providing arguments for serial production as well as the use of honest materials. The furniture production of the late 18th century was promoted as the historic roots of functionalism, an idea that was re-launched during neo-functionalism in the 1990s.

During the Second World War there was an increased interest in defining and describing what characterised Swedish art history, and we see an increasing number of textbooks on the subject. Likewise there were many exhibitions that focused on the Swedish 18th century. The Gustavian style was able to contribute to the imagining and defining of the nation at a time of crisis and where political pressures only allowed for specific expressions of nationalism. In the exhibition catalogues from this period curators and museum directors emphasised the importance of clarifying national cultural heritage in times of turmoil. 18th century art and applied art seem to have represented an appropriate manifestation of nationalism that didn’t promote aggression while at the same time allowing for nationalistic sentiments to be expressed openly.

What characterised the late 20th century was the relatively high profile that heritage held in the public consciousness. New heritage sites opened to the public and there was an increase in the number of protected sites and objects, a situation identified as the “heritage boom”. There were several examples of full-scale reconstructions at historic sites and museums during the 1990s. These projects relied on a combination of art historians’ competence and qualified craftsmen working with traditional materials and techniques. These reconstructed spaces added experiential, scenographic as well as pedagogical qualities to the presentations of Gustavian style. There were also a number of historical societies that played an active role in museums and the heritage movement.

7.1 Style in Words

Chapter two analyses and compares the descriptions of the Gustavian style making it possible to identify shifts in the selection of characteristics, in this case the characteristics of the style, the time frame, how the style relates to ideas of a national style and how illustrations have helped define the style. The analysis includes eight textbooks published in 1914-1998 aimed at students and a more general audience.
The story of the Gustavian style, as told in the textbooks has a basic dramaturgy that is repeated with minor variations. A condensed version would be: Gustavian interior design represents a golden age of Swedish arts and crafts. The Gustavian style is an adaption and translation of foreign, primarily French influences. The architect and artist Jean Eric Rehn is the prime driver in this process of translation. It is the translation that makes the style Swedish and it is influenced by the climate and the temperament of the Swedish people. King Gustav III played an essential role in the introduction and his travels to Paris and Rome mark changes in the style. In this narrative, period and style are often mixed and the dates for the style generally correlate with the reign of Gustav III and Gustav IV Adolf, i.e. 1771-1809. The dates set also depend on whether the focus is on painting, sculpture, architecture or interior design. The style is usually divided into two or three periods; however, there is no agreement on names or dates for these. Even though it is possible to establish some main features in the descriptions of the Gustavian style, as I have just described, a comparison over time also shows the difficulties of “pinning down” a style.

The values ascribed to the Gustavian style are generally presented in the textbooks as essentialist values, and can be placed into five categories: 1) ethereal qualities such as simple and light, 2) solemn qualities such as sober, dignified and peaceful, 3) absolute qualities such as ideal and definitive, 4) architectural qualities – load-bearing and horizontal-vertical and 5) cultivated qualities such as elegant, distinguished and refinement. The characteristics described are more or less constant during the whole period and some of the adjectives used are: cool, dignified, elegant, ideal beauty, light, peaceful, rational, restrained, simple, sincere and straight.

The eight textbooks have led a long life; they have been re-printed and studied by generations of art historians. The textbooks offer the reader expert knowledge, produced by art historians prominent in their field and who helped set the agendas, providing an epistemological framework that defined debates about the meaning and nature of the past and its heritage. Moreover, through these books, these art historians become the stewards of the presentation and evaluation of the past, making sure that the public was properly educated and informed about the significance and meaning of the Gustavian style. This educational effort was supported by other fact-builders such as museums and lobbyists organisations. Considering this, it is possible to argue that these textbooks have been important in shaping the authorised heritage discourse.

Surveys and Illustrations

The illustrations used in textbooks have generally been perceived as silent intermediaries, but the examples presented in this study suggest that we should engage more critically with illustrations, as they have the ability to shape as well as confirm an art historical canon. This study shows how the selection of objects and sites included in the canon was largely dictated by surveys and collection activities carried out during the first half of the 20th century. The photographs documenting these sites and objects, have been used over and over in textbook publications. However, because of reduced costs for reproduction, as well as the extensive digitalisation of collections carried out at the beginning of the 21st century, this situation is most likely to change in the future.

Surveys and museum collections were also imperative in making stylistic comparisons and dating anonymous objects. Consequently specific images and objects have played a conclusive role in defining Gustavian style. The main examples described in this study are the photographs taken by Märta Claréus at Nordiska Museet and the illustrations of the Gripsholm Court Theatre. These frequently reproduced images became halotypes, to use a term from zoology, and in the role of halotypes they became important actors shaping the Gustavian style. These halotypes also include original furniture that has been used to make copies, reconstructions and variations, for example the Haupt chest of drawers at Nationalmuseum. The fact that these objects of applied art, acquired and on display already in the beginning of the 20th century, were reproduced in numerous textbook and as period furniture has made them familiar to many new generations of art historians and part of the Swedish art historical canon presented in textbooks and exhibitions.

Many of the illustrations were photographic reproductions of objects found in museum collections. This affected the appearance of many of the photographs, which were fashioned by a photographic discourse established in the photographic studios of the museums and the surveys initiated at the beginning of the 20th century. In the photographs we can see how each item was singled out and photographed against a plain backdrop “museum collection style”. The white or almost white backdrop played a vital role. The “neutral” background and the black and white of the photograph accentuated the shape of the object. Placed next to each other the cavalcade of single pieces of furniture emphasised the objects importance as part of an evolutionary progress, a style. However, there is a change in illustrations over time moving towards contextualisation and colour. Still, it is interesting to note that the original or recreated Gustavian rooms in the textbooks are never populated.

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1014 A holotype is the single specimen upon which a new nominal species-group taxon is based in the original publication. Definition from International commission on zoological nomenclature, article 73 http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hostedsites/iczn/code/index.jsp?nf=true&article=73 (accessed: 01.02.2016)
Visual material that includes populated spaces can instead be found in art and popular culture, for example films or in marketing material.

7.3 A Swedish Style

Cultural heritage, including the Gustavian style, has regularly been used to promote different ideologies and power structures. In Sweden, art history began to establish itself as an independent academic discipline at the turn of the 20th century. This was a point in history when the nationalist movement was strong and several museums with an articulated national purpose were built to promote a national identity, for example Skansen and Nordiska Museet. Nationality was understood as an objective fact rather than an ideological construct, but this fact still needed to be staged, explained and nurtured on a regular basis and the museums played an important role in this. The nationalistic agenda was motivated, for example, by claims that Swedes were not proud enough of their history and that they were too receptive to foreign influences.1015

Some of the textbooks on Swedish art history published in the 1940s triggered a heated debate about what Swedish art history should be and how it should be written. The textbooks were based on the assumption that nation, state and society are an entity, a natural form and the basis for scientific inquiry, a methodological nationalism.1016 The questions they implicitly raised were: what makes something Swedish, is it the maker, the site of production or the result? The textbooks offered a number of explanations of how foreign influences reached Sweden. All textbooks included in the study emphasised the importance of travels – Swedish artists who travel abroad and foreign artists moving to Sweden. However, many also emphasised the negative impact the return to Sweden had on Swedish artists, and how foreign artists suffered in Sweden’s harsh climate. This focus on cultural influences in the textbooks gives us a good idea about how the country related to Europe and the rest of the world during the past century. Gustavian Sweden is described as being very much part of Europe. The inspiration and indeed the artists were imported, but the authors seem to agree that these foreign influences were translated into something particularly Swedish. It was made Swedish, but it was also improved. Nevertheless, the more specific role of foreign influences has been interpreted differently by the authors, and any possible conflicts seem to be based around issues such as: who is a Swedish artist, what is Swe-

dish, how did new influences reach Sweden and is there a link between art, taste, temperament and landscape? The focus on the national meant that other possible critical perspectives, such as class and gender, were subdued in most cases.

One of the most debated questions at the beginning of the 1990s was who should convey Swedish history and whose history is it that should be conveyed? The end of the Cold War coincided with a severe financial crisis and new membership of the EU in 1995. At the same time extreme right-wing nationalistic groups were gaining in support and attention. Cultural heritage was reframed as an economic resource and a way of establishing Swedish identity in a European context. Entering the EU meant giving up an element of national political independence, which some saw as a threat to both independence and to a Swedish identity, which in turn was contrasted with a regional or European identity. In this situation the Gustavian period and style were, as we saw in the 1940s, found suitable for expressing a non-aggressive Swedish nationalism and when marketing Sweden internationally.

7.4 Exhibiting Gustavian Style

This study includes an analysis of the documentation of fifteen exhibitions produced in Sweden from 1891 to 2015. Naturally, the exhibitions of the Gustavian style have adhered to the changing trends in the museum world. We can see that as part of the modernist museum, exhibitions of the style have played a public role as part of the nation state and the focus has been placed on education of the general public as well as the collection and classification of objects. The post-museum that developed in the 20th century presented the Gustavian style as more of a process or an experience. However, the post-museum has far from replaced the modernist museum. Moreover, the exhibitions have been based on rhetoric of value and the rhetorical object, and the style has been used to further certain arguments, aesthetic, academic and political. In this sense, these fifteen exhibitions can be found to reflect our changing perceptions and interpretations of the past, present and the future.

The displays reflect and interact with different attitudes to style and the history of style. One important distinction made in the discussion about the exhibitions is that between the historically and the aesthetically informed display. However, if we study the content of the exhibitions, these two approaches are often found to complement each other in the same exhibition, revealing the dual theoretical and ideological approach found in most displays of the Gustavian style. This duality reflects a tension was also present within the

1017 Hooper-Greenhill, E. Museums and the interpretation of visual culture. London: Routledge, 2000, p. 152
discipline of art history during the first half of the 20th century – a tension between style and content, art and cultural history, feeling and reason.

At the turn of the 20th century, art history was on its way towards establishing itself as an independent academic discipline, and stylistic comparison was one of the favoured methods available. The bonds between the academic discipline and the museum institutions were very strong at the time, and classifications used within art history largely determined the way the collections were chronologically displayed in period rooms and showcase rooms. The aesthetically pleasing displays of Gustavian furniture emphasised a classification and separation that appeared natural. The classifications were made according to style and maker, sometimes place of origin. The large museums in Stockholm significantly influenced the layout of regional and local museums, for example placing the period rooms on the top floor and the vernacular and Sami exhibitions on the bottom floor. The chronologically arranged display cases in the showcase room reflected the idea that style was determined by craft skills, material, tools and techniques, while the period rooms reflected the appreciation of the Zeitgeist, the spirit of the period. Throughout the 20th century the artist Pehr Hilleström played an important role in the way Gustavian life and interiors have been reconstructed and apprehended. His paintings were appreciated because of their ability to encourage us to step into the painting and “make space”.

The aura of the authentic historical artefact has long been at the heart of museums and historic houses. Even if these spaces have always been staged, in ways that adhere to contemporary practice, it has been important for the institutions to maintain an aura of authenticity. The authority of the institution and the sense of authenticity are closely linked to each other. If we look back at the displays at Avfdelningen för de högre stånden at Nordiska Museet or Konstslöjdavdelningen at Nationalmuseum around the turn of the 20th century, we find a condition that might be described as internal authenticity. The displays focused on confirming the material authenticity of the objects and the authority of the institution’s interpretation of them.

In the 1930s and 40s many museums created more clean-cut displays founded on new aesthetical ideals. The style ensembles at Nationalmuseum, described in chapter three reflected this aesthetical modernistic approach, emphasising the artistic qualities of the individual piece and its maker, leaving the objects to speak for themselves by revealing their presumed inherent aesthetic qualities. The objects were removed from context, and arranged as individual objects according to style, artist or function and placed in front of a neutral backdrop. Thus many of the displays resembled the photographs produced by the museums at the time.

In the late 20th century, an increasing number of exhibitions included reconstructions of spaces that relied on art historians’ competence as well as qualified craftsmen working with traditional materials and techniques. The sociologist John Urry has described how the aura of authenticity was under-
mined by the development of the post-museum, a museum that acknowledges a diversity of perceived authenticities.\textsuperscript{1018} Urry saw three major changes in this new museum: firstly new types of objects were preserved since the range of histories deemed worthy of representation increased, secondly visitors were expected to participate rather than stand in awe in front of the displays, thirdly the process behind the display is revealed, and in some cases even how it was made to appear authentic.\textsuperscript{1019} The carefully reconstructed spaces described in this study all adhered to this development of the post-museum. Moreover, they were opened up to artistic and scenographic interventions such as Sublima små stunder (1993) at Gustav III:s Antikmuseum or Yinka Shonibare’s Un ballo in maschera (2004), filmed in the partially reconstructed theatre Confidencen. These artistic and creative interventions occasionally provided bold and radical interpretations of the past. Professor of museum studies Eileen Hooper-Greenhill imagined in 2000 that this new post-museum of the future might be exactly this – a process or an experience.\textsuperscript{1020} The full-scale reconstruction projects in the 1990s can be seen as expressions of this process-oriented museum since they became sites for knowledge production and shared many similarities with laboratories that were open to the public. In these laboratories some of the statements made in texts and exhibitions could be tested and scrutinised by the general public, who became “fact-builders” who could either support or dismiss claims about the past.

7.5 Mediating Gustavian Period Furniture

Throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century there has been small-scale as well as large-scale production of Gustavian period furniture. There are examples of local small businesses run by enthusiasts using traditional crafts as well as IKEA’s multinational business producing 18\textsuperscript{th} century period furniture. Museums have collaborated with commercial enterprises and designers throughout the century creating these pieces of period furniture. They have provided patterns, inspiration and know-how. The study discusses some of the numerous adaptations that had to be made in production to fit the ideals of authenticity.

The domestic environment was the arena for expressing different ideologies in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The general idea was that a good sense of taste would provide people with the ability to make choices that would benefit them in different ways. Smakfostran (education of taste) reflected an attitude, most evident during the 1940s and 50s; however, it influenced public education

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and discussions about taste throughout the 20th century. One of the touchstones of smakfostran was the link between knowledge about the history of styles and the capacity for good taste. The emphasis on education was partially motivated by the idea that a deterioration of taste could be seen as a symptom of decline in other areas such as social, ethical and moral decline. The ideology that promoted the development of smakfostran was initially bourgeois-liberal and the concept of public education was at its core. Art historians and museums were active participants in smakfostran. In Sweden this would later become an essential part of the socialist movement’s ambitions to improve housing and living conditions. In the 1930s and 40s, design became part of a social engineering process, typical of the Swedish welfare state. This process targeted the home from different angles, combining both aesthetical and moral arguments. The ideas about honest and false design, for example, were connected to moral and immoral choices in a way that implies that smakfostran covered more than aesthetical preferences.1021

If you produced and consumed period furniture, what was the right, “tasteful” way of doing it? And how would consumers be able to choose the right furniture for their homes if they did not know how to judge what they saw? The choices made by producers and consumers were seen as important, not only for their own benefit but also for society at large, connecting both moral and pragmatic arguments. Critics, designers and curators were concerned with the public and furniture producers’ lack of knowledge about historical styles. Knowledge of the history of styles was believed to help the public and the producers make informed choices, and help them differentiate between true and false, good and bad, beautiful and ugly. Museums and art historians played an important role in educating designers, producers, dealers and consumers via the articles, handbooks, courses and catalogues they produced. A basic knowledge of art history and the history of styles became an important ingredient in the education of a democratic citizen as well as a conspicuous consumer.

In addition to knowledge of the history of styles, the general public, poor or rich, needed education in order to be able to distinguish between real and false values, to buy the right things, and furnish their homes in a tasteful way. A conspicuous consumer in the 1930s and 40s should not be satisfied with a false and soulless version of period furniture, they were supposed to look for the real thing because there was a factual and spatio-temporal link with what it claimed to be, “an originary authenticity”. A copy was not as good as an original, and knowing the difference becomes a defining mark of taste and education. A Haupt copy that lacked an originary authenticity could be dismissed as a sign of insecurity and escapist, while owning an authentic Haupt

became a sign of unquestioned status and good taste. This idea of originary authenticity was mediated to the consumer in different ways.

One thing that characterised the idealised conspicuous consumer in the 1930s and 40s as well as in the 1990s was that she made authentic choices. However, in order to believe in the authenticity of period furniture, we need to believe that it is constructed the right way, a processual authenticity. In order for the consumer to judge whether something is iconically authentic, they need to have some idea of how it “should” look and feel. This idea might be shaped by different influences, for example exhibitions, films, books or magazines. The role of the professionals and experts should, however, not be underestimated in this production and many of them have worked very consciously to educate consumers and producers. One of the most important aspects was the mode of production – was it to be handmade or machine-made? Despite the value placed on handmade furniture, the material analysed suggests that the aura of authenticity was not considered to have been automatically lost in the process of serial production; rather it was transformed into iconicity and a pastiche could be accepted if it was done the right way, and with taste and knowledge. This sometimes-controversial production of period furniture would become an important component in the debates about Swedish design, focusing on notions such as taste, honesty, beauty and authenticity. The production of period furniture existed parallel to and in dialogue with the development of functionalism. There were several art historians and critics who promoted the Gustavian style as pre-functionalist and the functionalism of the 1930s and neo-functionalism of the 1990s both incorporated an admiration for the Gustavian style. Even during the climax of functionalism, the production or appreciation of period furniture was never completely abandoned. Gustavian furniture was even promoted as the forerunner of modern serial production, it became an acceptable form of historicism – a legitimised sign of status and taste that was made to fit even in the functionalist apartment. When the 1990s became the decade of neo-functionalism, the nostalgia for the people’s home was flavoured with a Gustavian touch.

7.6 Populating the Past

There are different ways to create experiences that relate to historical periods and the people who populated them, for example parades, tableau vivants, silent films and time travels. These can be categorised as historically informed performances, a comprehensive term closely linked to an educational task that is normally associated with museums. When museums choose to include people, as traces, mannequins or real people, it is because they assume that in one way or another they would contribute to their authoritative interpretation and mediation of the period, the site or the objects in them. In return, museums have helped authenticate the activities of the participants through their
authority as officially sanctioned heritage institutions. At the end of the 19th century, it was popular to create exhibitions that featured real people or mannequins. These were placed in reconstructed sites that you could enter as a visitor, staged worlds at open-air museums, historical parades or tableaux vivants. The visitor became a spectator who was allowed to gaze on and learn from the past. However, a decade later these displays were deemed unfashionable or not scientifically accurate and most displays were “depopulated”.

The first Swedish film featuring Bellman and Gustav III was shot in 1908. Since the invention of film, period drama has helped shape people’s ideas of the past and has always been a popular genre. Period drama invites the spectator into real historical sites of the past and the stage sets often resemble the period rooms found in museums at the time. The directors struggled to create a feeling of authenticity and when they could they used “real spaces”, which meant that historic sites associated with Bellman and Gustav III were mediated on the white screen in cinemas across the country. However, finding the right location was only one of the strategies used by the film directors to create a feeling of authenticity, other strategies included the choice of actor and the support from experts, art historians and theatre historians, for example. The imagery from these films was mediated in the press, which published stills from the films and occasionally additional publications included both scripts and stills.

The heritage boom in the 1990s emphasised experience and in different ways people were given the opportunity to play a more active role in production and consumption of history. Real people were yet again invited to help animate the visitor experience in museums and heritage sites. Food was put on the tables and guides were dressed in period clothing. People joined historical societies, which travelled together in time escaping the ugliness and troubles of the present day. A common denominator of these time travels was that you used yourself, your own body, and you did it together with other people, sharing the experience with them. This forced participants to consider material aspects and environmental and cultural constraints of the past. Time travels and performance played an important role in developing museum education by introducing more experiential approaches to learning about the past. We have also seen how objects, clothes and sites have been vital as aids and prompts for historically informed performances. Although originals may be used, it is not the original material that is in focus, the stage and the prompts generally rely on other sources of information to judge their authenticity. Reconstruction projects and the time travels of historical societies have kept challenging the original material and “the real thing” as the sole keeper of the aura of authenticity. They have promoted a performative authenticity where the focus is placed on the authentic experience and feeling. The question of authenticity was no less important, but it was not necessarily tied to a material authenticity.
The process-oriented search for authenticity in how to dress, behave and talk, which was typical of the historical societies has contributed to an unmistakable interest in exploring academic, literary and archival sources, for example. This ambitious search for authenticity seems to help strengthen the sense of community among the members of historical societies. However, there are also examples of authenticity being perceived as a problem, since it prevents you from entering a full-on experience of the period.

Historical societies should be recognised as important actors in the production of “heritage products” and the commodification of “pastness”. They do this in at least two ways: firstly, the members produce clothes, toys, jewellery and other items that they use themselves or they produce and promote products that are sold to other members or the general public. The members act as customers, producers and promoters of the products. Secondly, they contribute to a commodification that is more complex. Historically informed performances have increasingly become part of the visual make-up and marketing of a site or a museum, either in information material or by attending fairs or events organised by the museum.

7.7 Searching for an Authentic Heterotopia

The revivals of the Gustavian style had the ability to sustain seemingly opposite movements of the 20th century: a disdain for mass culture, a pure aesthetic separated from commerce, while at the same time indulging in marketing strategies celebrating popular culture. These are all contradictory impulses in modernism, which can be united in the concept commodified authentic.1022 This is also the underlying promise made by heritage products, reconstructions and period furniture – that they have the ability to sustain these contradictions and allow the “...consumer to be at once connected to a range of values roughly aligned with authenticity and yet also be fully modern”. Moreover, it helps us understand how period furniture could be sold to people who in most ways adhere to a modern authentic lifestyle.1023

This study explores how the past has been used to create alternative futures, retro-utopias – golden ages that are projected onto the future. The Gustavian period seems to find itself positioned exactly there, ready to be filled with dreams and emotions that we desire. However, if the past only becomes retrotyping, it prevents us from sensing historical movement or change, believing in the illusory and persuasive comfort and safety of the past. We must acknowledge that dreams about the past and the future can look very different, there are dreams about wars and autocratic rule and there

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1023 Outka, E., 2009, p. 4
are dreams about a more authentic and beautiful life. How we understand and use the past is always an open question and we must remember that the world and history are always open to human transformations.
Figure 87. Postcard produced by the textile company Laila Durán Textiles AB. The postcard was sold in museums shops and promoted the reconstructed fabrics the company sold. Undated. Photographer: Laila Durán. Courtesy: Laila Durán/Durán Textiles AB
8 Why Heritage Might Never Go Out of Style

Academia does not stand outside the heritage process, it is very much part of it, and art historians have had a significant influence on how the Gustavian period and its material heritage have been valued, organised and displayed. Art historians have contributed to the canonisation of the Gustavian, often ascribing it values that have been presented as objective, and consequently closed for discussion. This reflects a situation where cultural heritage and the preservation of the past have become caught up in the development of an art historical canon of objects and buildings that favours monuments and materiality, as well as the lifestyles of the political and social elites. Moreover, this canon has been closely linked to what is considered part of the building blocks of the nation-state, representing a national heritage. Because of their influence on the practical side of heritage work, art historians active in academia can be seen as co-creators of cultural heritage “…on par with the everyday work of heritage practitioners”. This execution of power needs to be scrutinised further.

Apart from art historians and museum curators the Gustavian style has found support with the monarchy, commercial enterprises and various state-funded initiatives, for example world fairs and other international exhibitions. Today, much of the material heritage connected to the style is included in collections or protected by law. Throughout the trajectory of re-use and representation of the Gustavian style it has been part of an authorised heritage discourse, mediated through text, images, exhibitions and performances, as analysed in this study. However, Gustavian heritage is also a partly contested cultural heritage, and various controversies have called into question who should define Swedish history and for what purpose it should be used.

Stylistic analysis is still viable within heritage. However, the study demonstrates that the analysis of style can be ideologically charged and potentially problematic. From a limited set of objects, the art historian may generalise and claim things about for example historical change or national identity, conclusions that then influence the narrative told. I believe that for the con-

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cept of style to be meaningful, we cannot understand it as a static category, nor should the objects be defined as static representations, but as active and carrying agency.

This study investigates the influence history of styles and specifically the reuses of Gustavian style has had on design and furniture production and consumption in Sweden during the 20th century. Our world is constantly being redesigned. Choosing the Gustavian style indicates that someone has been of the opinion that this style was the best solution at hand. Bruno Latour argues that there are always choices made in design that can be related to what was a given, an issue or a problem.

...to design is always to redesign. There is always something that exists first as a given, as an issue, as a problem. Design is a task that follows to make that something more lively, more commercial, more usable, more user’s friendly, more acceptable, more sustainable, and so on, depending on the various constraints to which the project has to answer.1027

We can conclude that whether historical modelling, or the Gustavian style more specifically, has been a bad or a good solution has been a continuous source of debate. Period furniture is a symbolic item that balances on the border between what has been considered good or bad taste, revivalism and retro. Museums, antique dealers, journalists and academics have served in the role as re-evaluaters of these objects, and they have used their authority to select, present and value different expressions of the Gustavian. Moreover, they have actively educated the general public in order to turn them into connoisseurs and conspicuous consumers, adhering to ideals concerning good taste and the value of authenticity and honesty. Gustavian period furniture represents a form of “commodified authentic”, which manages to sustain the contradictions of modernism – a modernism that contains and relates to the concepts of authenticity as well as nostalgia. I agree with Elizabeth Outka that the ability to bridge these contradictions shouldn’t be seen as a marketing ploy; instead it is a powerful cultural strategy.1028

Art historians, as much as any historians, work with stories and narratives when presenting their research about the past. Throughout the century there have been different ideas about how to write that story, and at times the history of styles has been the guiding principle, creating a clear chronological story based on similarities and differences in material evidence. However, this approach has not gone undisputed. One of the main disputes within the field of art history relates to the question to what extent art and style can be seen

as expressions of their social and historical context, or if should they be described and analysed on the basis of their current appearance? This dispute has also been relevant for the way museums have organised their displays. Moreover, the way these stories about the Gustavian style have been told in textbooks and exhibitions has been influenced by developments in society at large, political opinions and ideologies. It is, for example, possible to find traces of the nationalism at the turn of the 20th century, the (inter)nationalism during the Second World War, the political struggles of the 1960s and 70s and the search for an “acceptable” nationalism and the emerging experience economy of the 1990s in the mediations of Gustavian style.

In this sense the stories of the Gustavian style can be said to fulfil a purpose, in many cases contributing to a contemporary authorised heritage discourse. The stories help explain or express opinions, for example about what could be considered specifically Swedish traits, what Swedishness looks like, what the relation between art, aesthetics and power should ideally should be like, what the characteristics of good taste and quality are, and how and whether creativity should relate to history and tradition. These were questions that were raised again and again throughout the 20th century. I would argue that the Gustavian as a Swedish national style is the outcome of a long process of negotiations and institutional support, which has turned it into a matter of fact, or a metaphoric screen if you like. The Gustavian has become the Swedish style, constituting an overt but not vulgar symbol of nation and power connected to notions of good taste and even moral superiority. Additionally, the analysis points at the significance of translation, a notion that in itself has been understood as a national trait. I would argue that the idea of translation has helped make the Gustavian style the exclusive claim of Sweden, attributing the national state prime agency, while at the same time acknowledging the foreign influences as necessary. The fact that the Gustavian style has been used to confirm a national identity and promote Sweden internationally ties in with a more general trend during the heritage boom, where cultural heritage was used to help confirm national ideals and essentialisms in a period of political and economical change.\(^{1029}\)

In his book *Science in Action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (1987), Bruno Latour has described different ways in which “fact-builders” enrol people and control human and non-human resources to support their findings.\(^{1030}\) The analysis of textbooks and museum exhibitions confirms that the construction of facts, determining what the Gustavian style is, should be seen as a collective process, a science in action. Moreover, the narratives and displays they produce transmit a specific content and values that have been


used to construct meaning and purpose. The textbooks, exhibitions and educational efforts as well as the production of period furniture analysed in this text are all “elements tied to the claim” – that is, the idea of what the Gustavian style is. However, the apparent simplicity of “the Gustavian story” would make us suspect that we stand in front of a metaphorical screen.

The cultural heritage sector has started to enrol new “fact-builders”, new actors, into the process, including artists, historical societies, professionals from the theatre as well as non-professional cultural heritage workers. These actors primarily contribute a performative authenticity, where the focus is placed on the authentic experience and feeling. This does not imply that authenticity is less important, but it is not necessarily tied to a material authenticity. Although I would argue that the staged authenticity that materiality, original or copies creates could become a crucial part of a performative authenticity, depending on how it is mediated. Historically informed performances as well as full-scale reconstruction projects and artists’ interventions such as Shonibare’s Un Ballo in Maschera can help us open the black box of Gustavian style. They contribute new understandings of the past, and force us to realise that material heritage is never unified and holds multi-layered possibilities that have been carefully closed over time. In his work Shonibare addresses a number of those perspectives that so far have been less visible in the analysis of the Gustavian style and its reuses, for example power, gender and social class. Moreover, Shonibare’s work challenges already existing retro-utopic visions of the Gustavian past. Re-enactments and reconstructions as well as artists’ intermediations can turn Gustavian style not only into a full-scale timber house but a metaphorical house, ready to be taken apart, moved and reassembled.

The Gustavian period is generally presented as a past that is benign and widely embraceable, a stylised optimistic view of a style and period. Still I would like to suggest that the survival of the Gustavian, although in various guises, has depended on the fact that it is capable of promoting more feelings than the regressive or escapist. The use of the past has served changing ideologies over time, it has balanced between “…a chic and cynical postmodern nihilism on the one hand and a neo-conservative world view on the other that desires what cannot be had: stable histories, a stable canon, a stable reality.”

The Gustavian style is historically situated and constantly subject to negotiation and reinterpretation. The style has been able to adapt in a changing society, making it a pre-industrial expression suited to nationalist ideals in the 1890s, modernist ideals in the 1930s, as well as a manifestation of nationalism or post-modernism in the 1990s. Moreover, the Gustavian style has asserted

its role in both official institutions and the heritage industry, often prompting collaborations between the two. I believe what in the end has ensured the popularity and survival of material as well as immaterial aspects of the style is that it has been able to contain a number of contradictions in modern and late modern society, offering a “commodified authentic”. The images of the Gustavian period will always consist of seemingly contradicting pieces; it is an idyllic pre-industrial era, a golden age of culture and art, as well as a time of national assertiveness, and irrefutably, the Gustavian Retro-utopia is a story about Swedish particularism. Moreover, it is elitist, and at the same time it is for everybody. It is escapist, and at the same time it is a creative force generating work and products. It is nationalistic, and at the same time it is celebrated as an imported translation. The ability to sustain these contradictions has kept it relevant within but also outside an authorised heritage discourse. However, the strong interdependence of historicism and modernism and the practical consequences it had in production have so far received little attention in a canonical modernist historiography.

To conclude, there have been a number of different 18th centuries available, each of them with a specific moment of revival, where they seemed to match a specific demand in contemporary society – moments that reflect the agendas, perceptions and arrangements of that time. Gustavian nostalgia thrives in a modern society as it feeds into its never-ending search for authenticity, beauty – for the future. A Gustavian retro-utopia has the prospect of turning into “real” space, a heterotopia, if the sources of authenticity can be accepted. These authentic heterotopias – built on the past to confirm the present while dreaming about the future, are the results of utopic dreams, rarely dystopian dreams of electric sheep, but of futures with sheep with bows herded by a shepherdess in a fashionable silk dress. But suddenly her phone beeps… and we wake up.
9 Appendix - Museums

**Gustav III:s Antikmuseum** (Kongl. Museum, Gustav III’s Museum of Antiquities) is situated in the Royal Palace. It opened to the public in 1794 and was one of the first public art museums in the world. It opened as a commemoration of Gustav III, displaying antique Roman sculptures, many of them bought during the king’s journey to Italy in 1783–1784. When Nationalmuseum opened in its new building in 1866 the art collections were moved from the Royal Palace. Gustav III:s Antikmuseum was (re)opened in 1958. The smaller gallery was restored and opened to the public in 1992.

**Göteborgs Museum** (Göteborgs stadsmuseum, The Museum of Gothenburg) opened in 1861 and contained a diverse collection. Göteborgs Museum was and still is housed in the old premises of the East India Company. In the 1920s the large collections were used to form new, more specialised museums. The displays of cultural history remained in the old building.

**Liljevalchs Konsthall** (Liljevalch Art Gallery) is situated on the island of Djurgården, Stockholm and opened in 1916. The art gallery has a focus on contemporary art in Sweden. Designed by Carl Bergsten, the gallery was one of the first neoclassical buildings in the capital. Svenska Slöjdföreningen held many of their exhibitions at Liljevalchs Konsthall, e.g. the Home Exhibition in 1917, Standard 1934.

**Livrustkammaren** (the Royal Armoury) is the oldest museum in Sweden, established in 1628 by the King Gustav II Adolf. Today the museum is situated in the Royal Palace in Stockholm (it has also been situated in Nationalmuseum 1865-1883 and Nordiska Museet 1906-1977). The museum constitutes a government agency together with Skokloster Castle and The Hallwyl Museum.

**Nationalmuseum** can trace its history back to the Kongl. Museum, which was founded in 1792 and opened in 1794, at the Royal Palace. In 1866 Nationalmuseum opened in new premises at Blasieholmen, Stockholm. The department for applied arts, Konstslöjdafdelningen, was inaugurated in 1885. Contemporary art was moved to Moderna Museet in 1958.
Nordiska Museet (The Nordic Museum) and Skansen. In 1873 Arthur Hazelius opened the Skandinavisk-etnografiska samlingen at Drottninggatan 71, Stockholm. The collection grew and in 1888 the construction of the present building in Djurgården, Stockholm started. The museum building was inaugurated in 1907. The museum is Sweden’s largest museum of cultural history. Skansen is often described as the oldest open-air museum and opened in 1891. Skansen and Nordiska Museet belonged to the same organisation until 1963.

Röhsska Konstslöjdmuseet (Röhsska Museum of Decorative Arts and Design) was founded in 1904 and is situated in Gothenburg. The museum building was inaugurated and opened to the public in 1916. The museum focuses on design, applied and decorative art.

Örebro Länsmuseum (Örebro County Museum) originated in a collection of 28 objects in 1858, which developed into a regional museum that opened in 1887. It was first situated in Örebro Castle and moved to its present premises in 1963.
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