

## Organising Discourse Open Lecture

### **Onkar Kular (UK)**

Time: Wednesday 25 March 2015, 4.30 - 5.30

Venue: Konstfack, Mandelgren (next to Svarta havet)

LM Ericssons väg 14, Stockholm. T-bana: Telefonplan



*Slow Motion Accidents Workshop: Risk Centre, 2013*

The third of the 2015 Organising Discourse Open Lectures looks at the research and practice of the British designer Onkar Kular. The lecture is used as an opportunity to map out a landscape of research in relation to his current role as Stanley Picker Fellow for Design at Kingston University, UK.

### **Snowflakes**

In the 2013 Errol Morris documentary, *Unknown Known* Donald Rumsfeld describes a method of communication, research and action based on the allegory of 'snowflakes'. On his personal website *The Rumsfeld Papers*, Rumsfeld further defines the methodology by declaring that the snowflakes were:

"A system of communication with the employees of DoD (US Department of Defense), as I would initiate a topic with a short memo to the relevant person, who would in turn provide research, background, or a course of action as necessary. In the digital age it was much easier to keep the originals on file so I could track their progress. They quickly grew in number from mere flurries to a veritable blizzard. The term "snowflake" covers a range of communications, from notes to myself on topics I found interesting, to extended instructions to my associates, to simple requests for a haircut. There was no set template; some are several pages and some just a few words."

Rumsfeld states that when reviewed together the snowflakes not only provide an insight into the day-to-day activities of a US defense secretary but also offer a larger panoptical view of the role of 'defense' within the Bush government.

To coincide with his recent award as Stanley Picker Fellow of Design at Kingston University he will adopt the allegory of the 'snowflakes' as an opportunity of mapping his own research focus on institutional environments that have been designed and constructed for training. He will also use the opportunity to speculate on the potential pedagogic role of simulated training environments in relation to citizenship. The lecture will include anecdotes that act not only as supporting research but also as internal agents within a number of recent projects.

**Onkar Kular** is a London based designer and artist. His work investigates how contemporary design practice, its processes, methodologies and outputs, can be used as a medium to engage with and question the understanding of cultural and popular issues. His work uses a range of different media, appropriate to the particular research project to include new objects, films, events, performances and installations, and is disseminated internationally through exhibitions, workshops, lectures, film festivals and publications.

Recent exhibitions include *Crafting Narrative* a Crafts Council Touring Exhibition, guest curated by Kular the exhibition investigated the role of narrative and narrative structures within the design and production of artifacts. In May 2014, he designed and curated *The Citizens Archive of Pakistan* together with Sanam Maher, bringing together a variety of personal stories to critically revisit the history of the Partition today. Other notable exhibitions include *Risk Centre*, at Arkitekturmuseet in Stockholm on constructed environments used for risk and safety education and *I Cling To Virtue*, with Noam Toran and Keith R. Jones, recently exhibited at the Museum of

Modern Art, Antwerp which presented a mixed-media collection of objects, narrative texts and videos that reveal the intricate trajectories of the Lövy Singh clan, a fictional East London family of mixed descent.

Onkar Kular is currently a Stanley Picker Fellow in Design. His project for the fellowship extends ongoing research and ideas around constructing simulated environments for education and training.

**ORGANISING DISCOURSE** is an independent postgraduate course at Konstfack, exploring and developing platforms for discourse within the crafts, design and architecture. It aims to support and invigorate the development of new conceptual and physical spaces for presentation and display, meetings, discussions and debate, research and modes of production, etc. Within the crafts, design and architecture, it focuses on experimental, investigative and critical practices. Course leader is Magnus Ericson, project coordinator, curator and guest teacher at Konstfack, University College of Art, Crafts and Design.