

ARTFORUM

Copenhagen

“Terms of Belonging”

OVERGADEN - INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Overgaden Neden Vandet 17

September 2–November 5



Althea Thauberger, *The Next 78.6 Years*, 2011. Performance view.

One quiet irony of the international art world is the persistence of national identity; rare is the wall text or label that does not denote an artist's nationality alongside his or her date of birth. “Terms of Belonging,” a group show currently on view at Overgaden, is less a focused investigation of nationalism, however, than a series of interpretive frames, each revealing the edges of another.

The eleven graphic posters from [Johan Tirén](#)'s series “Epilogues,” 2009–11, shift the official language used in reports by the Office of Regional Planning in Stockholm into the past tense. It's a subtle alienation with a surprisingly complex effect, pushing the lexicon of contemporary policy back into an appropriately utopian past. [Olivia Plender](#)'s installation *Machine Shall Be the Slave of Man, But We Will Not Slave for the Machine*, 2008, gives us a concrete version of a similar distance, by way of a desktop monitor, which plays a video titled *Bring Back Robin Hood*, 2008. Slyly juxtaposing our preferred method for ingesting history with that history's graphic representation on a nearby wall, she narrates the story of the Kindred of the Kibbo Kift, an interwar British youth movement partially inspired by Robin Hood. Walk away too early, though, and you'll miss the movement's depressing descent into nationalism, as well as Plender's own denunciation of charismatic leadership, an incidental elision that contrasts with the contractual restrictions faced by [Kajsa Dahlberg](#) whose *Femø Women's Camp: Film and Agreement*, 2008, documents an all-female camp on the island of Femø in Denmark. The agreement—signed at the behest of the women at the camp—dictates what the artist could (and could not) include. This kind of consensus, directed against the outside in order to preserve the relations within, activates the presence of several local mothers and their children, invited to the gallery by [Althea Thauberger](#) for *The Next 78.6 Years*, 2011. As mothers, children, and art lurkers alike ambled idly to and fro it was unclear, at certain moments, who was performing for whom, and on what terms each of us belonged inside.

— [Stephen Squibb](#)