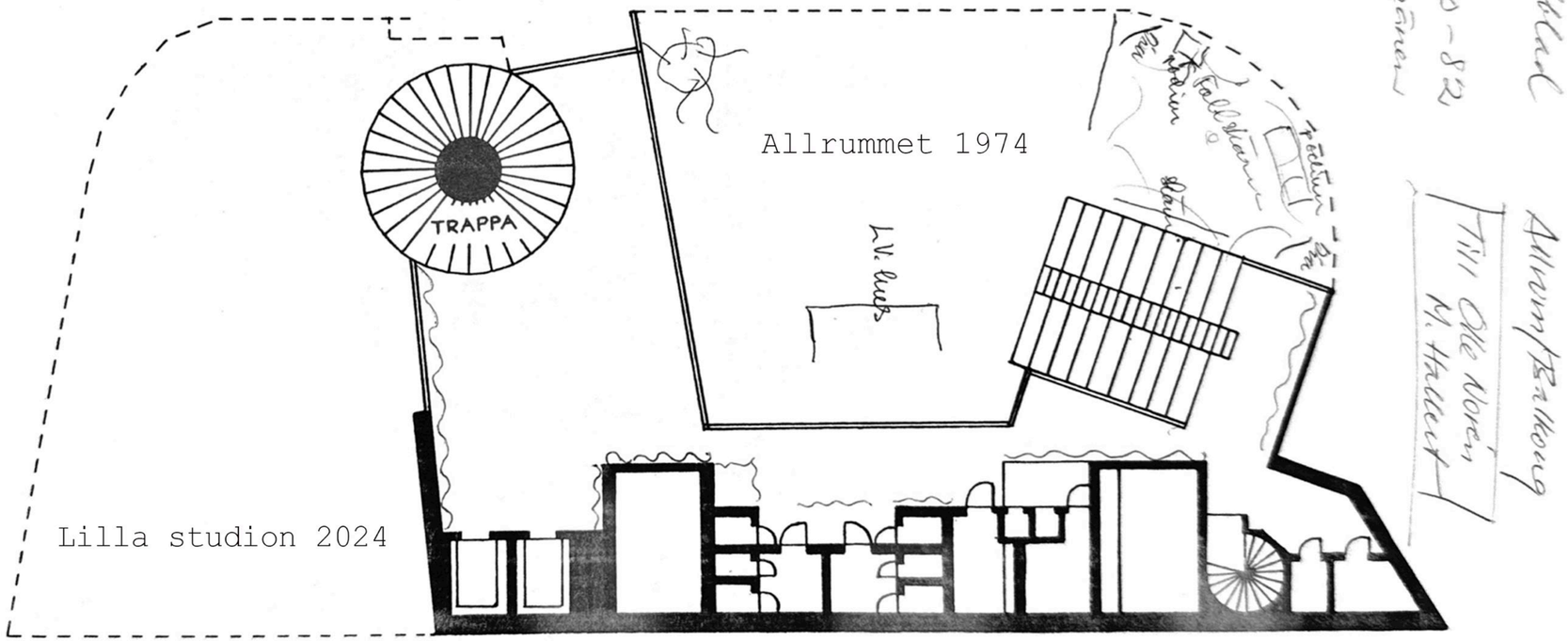
Allrummets återkomst

A process based and site-specific artwork by Alvaro Campo
Commissioned in 2024 for the 50 years of Kulturhuset Stadsteater in Stockholm.





In the fall of 2024, I was asked if I could make an artwork for the 50 years of Kulturhuset Stadsteater. One of the requirements was that it should be participative (in some way), the other was of course that it might point and connect us to a possible futures.



In Per Arbhom's book about Kultuhuset, there was a photo of a family working on a large clay sculpture. I was impressed and thought that this is not something we see very often today. It was in Allrummet, Kulturhuset's historic experimental workshop that opened in 1974.

Kultu
spänn
de fö
kultu
och f



The more I looked in the archival material the more interesting it became.






ALLRUMMET
GLOBAL
TERMINAL
SKÄRANDE
VERKSTAD
Animation











These large-scale experiments are clearly a thing of the past. But what is fascinating is the playfulness that serves as the driving force behind all these experiments...



While researching the archive material I found a poster from 1976 when Nyckelvikskolan school had a workshop exhibition in Allrummet. This immediately sounded interesting to me because I sometimes give workshops there.
I asked if they might have something in their archives and was met with great enthusiasm by a colleague who works there as a communicator and is interested in archives.

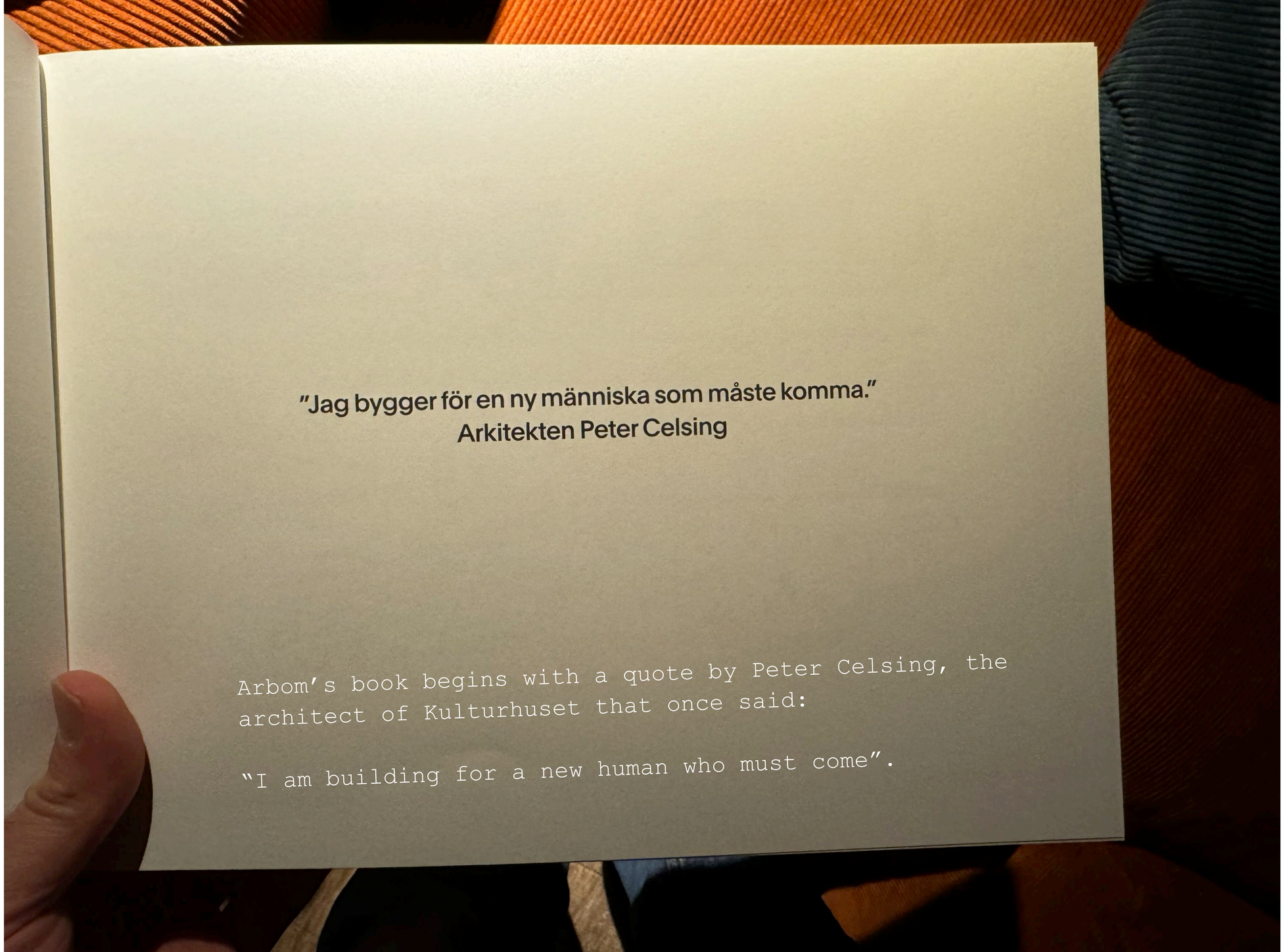
I was given the two following images


NICKELVIKSSKOLAN
i Kulturhuset
16.3 - 28.3
VERKSTÄDER
i Allrummet
STADSMUSEUM i
KulturHuset
Glas i Stockholm
IN
KULTURHUSET


MILJÖTERAPEUTISK UTBILDNING

I made an open call at the school and I was happy to hear that a group of students wanted to join me in this adventure.




"Jag bygger för en ny människa som måste komma."
Arkitekten Peter Celsing
Arbom's book begins with a quote by Peter Celsing, the architect of Kulturhuset that once said:
"I am building for a new human who must come".

and if it was visualized like this in the 70s…

What would it look like today? And what about in the future?

I decided to make a remake of Allrummet and to invite participants to help visualize this possible future being.




We first made a workshop with clay
to make a common decision on where
to begin our process.

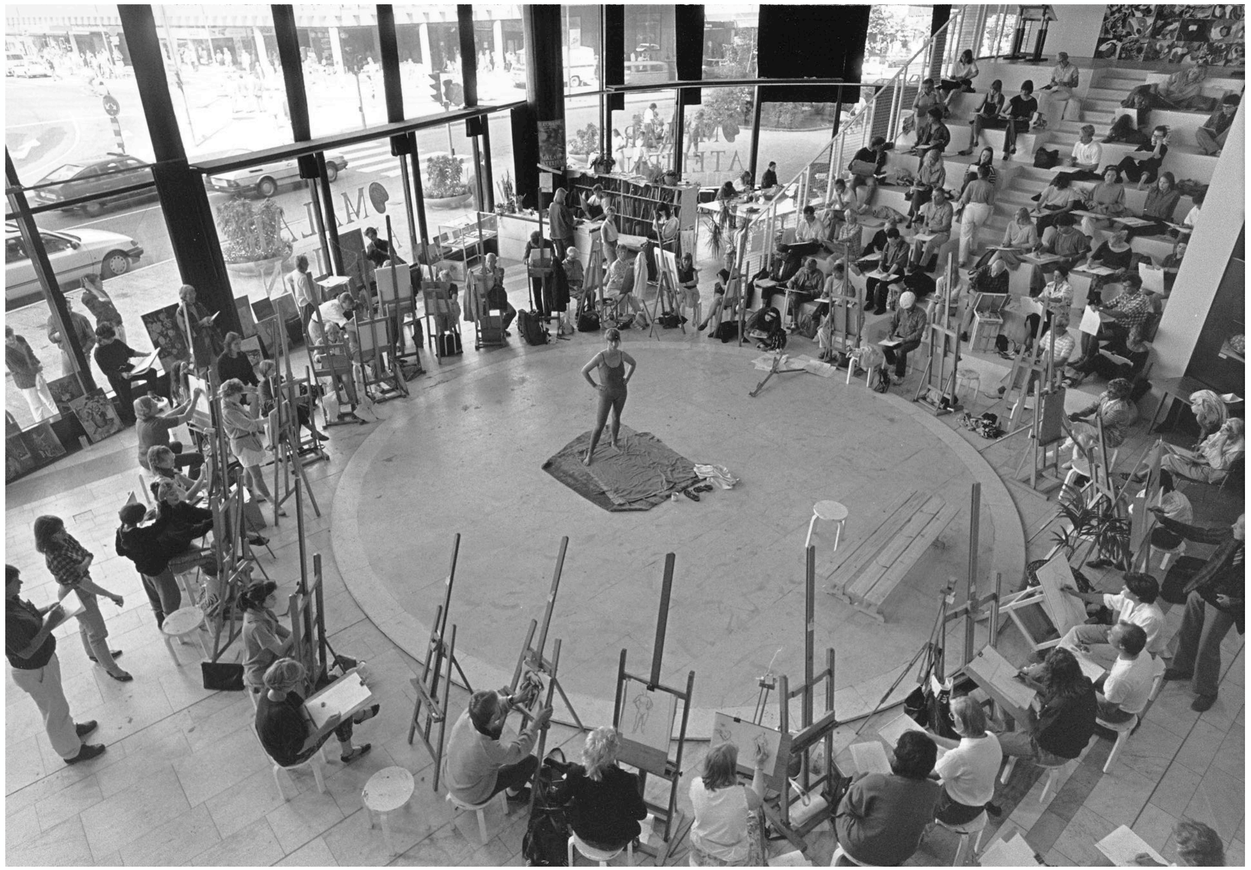

And soon we were all working
here, in this room, to build up
our new experimental workshop.

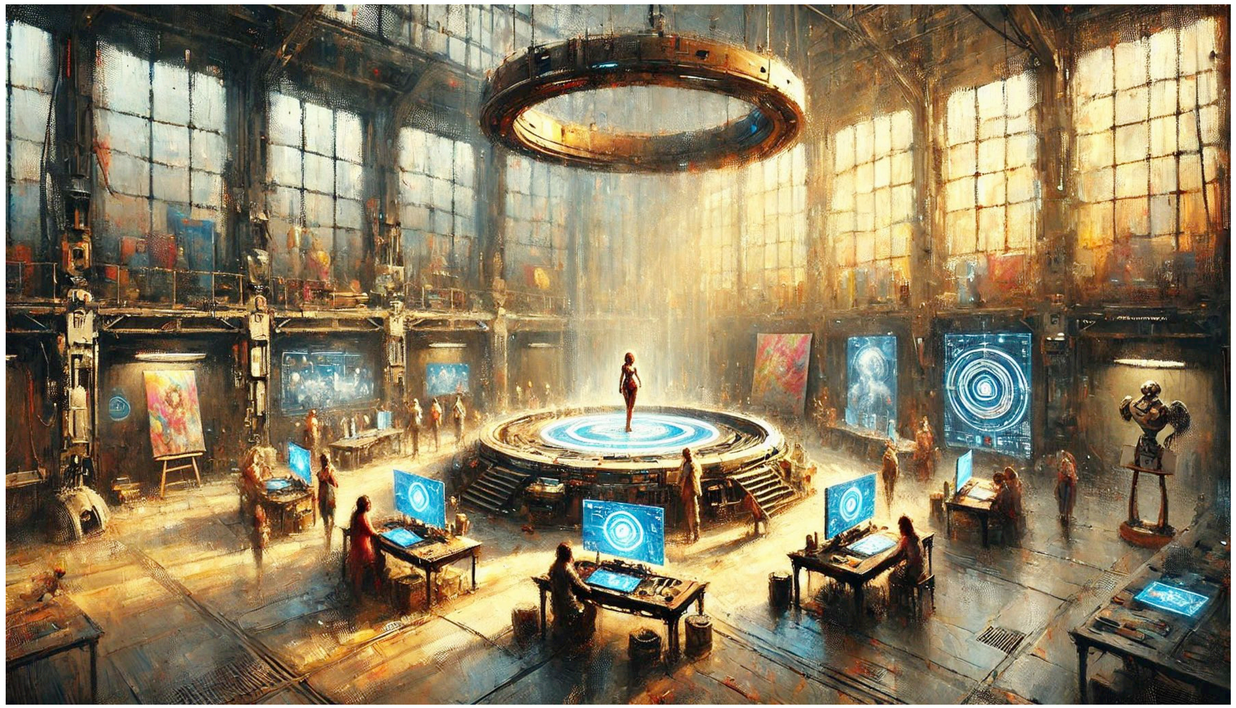






Max and Sven made signs and Stina made a slideshow with the help of AI she turned them into possible future versions of themselves.










While the rest of thre group
worked on making the sculpture.
800 kilos of clay were used to
materialize its body.


Three days later it
was time to open the
doors and invite the
public to join us



Allrummet was open to the public during four consecutive days.

A mother and her daughter had come all the way from Gothenburg to participate, they explained to us that in one part of Ethiopia, there is a tradition where people get together and makes things with clay.



I had posted this picture from the archive on my social media. A colleague replied and said that she knew him, his name is Torgny Larsson and that she had sent the photo to him.



Torgny Larsson
Allrummet var ett fantastiskt ställe! Barn och ungdomar kunde komma in spontant och få skapa i enkla material och metoder. Jag var 21 år och Uffe Lorensson några år äldre: Vi gick på Mejan och blev tillfrågade att hålla i en skulpturverkstad tillsammans med personalen i Allrummet. Tror det var 1978. Vi gjorde dels två stora skivor som vi täckte med flera cm mjuk, våt lera och reste upp vertikalt som besökarna gjorde reliefer i. Vi byggde också och ställde upp två figurer, stora som fullvuxna människor i armeringsjärn och monterade i "ryggjärn" på klassiskt sätt. På armeringarna kunde besökarna klämma fast leran som riktiga skulptörer gör!

Alvaro Campo
Torgny Larsson fantastiskt Torgny! Var den här en av skulpturerna?
3d Like Reply

Alvaro Campo



3d Like Reply

Stina Ekman
Torgny Larsson vilket minne!
3d Like Reply 1

Torgny Larsson
Alvaro Campo ja det stämmer!
3d Love Reply 1

He replied to my post and it turns out that he had been working in Allrummet in the seventies and had together with his colleague Ulf Lorensson come up with a clay workshop, together they had made this sculpture. I started to feel that our attempt to bridge over time was working.



The next day I heard that someone wanted to meet and there he was Torgny himself, after about fifty years, he was so enthusiastic and talked about Allrummet and I managed to capture this image.



He immediately joined us.





Over 500 people participated, I don't have the exact numbers but it was far more than we had expected.

This would mean that at least 500 people put their hands in the clay and collaborated to imagine a future together.





The atmosphere was calm and people came for an hour or two, some stayed longer, it was nice, it was also a kind of social event, people were talking and standing around the sculpture, connecting with it, relating to it... it was fascinating and somehow I feel we all became happy doing this together.

For me, art is an investigation, it's a pursuit of ideas, ideas that challenge us, that make us reflect and wonder and explore and experiment with what might be possible.

Of course, we thought it would be great to fire it and make a large ceramic sculpture. But we also reflected on the fact that it served an even more interesting purpose if it was not fired, not consumed. 500 people have put their hands in it and our idea was to send the same clay 50 years into the future to the 100th anniversary, and in 50 years 500 more people would use it again to make another sculpture and and then pass it on again.

One of the students said to me: "Imagine being the artists who receive the clay at the other end, 50 years from now … what an incredible experience.

“Yes, and you might be one of them”, I replied



After the event, the sculpture was scanned. We could now go to the next step, making it permanent. The sculpture would go from digital to bronze and the clay would be preserved and made visible in the installation.



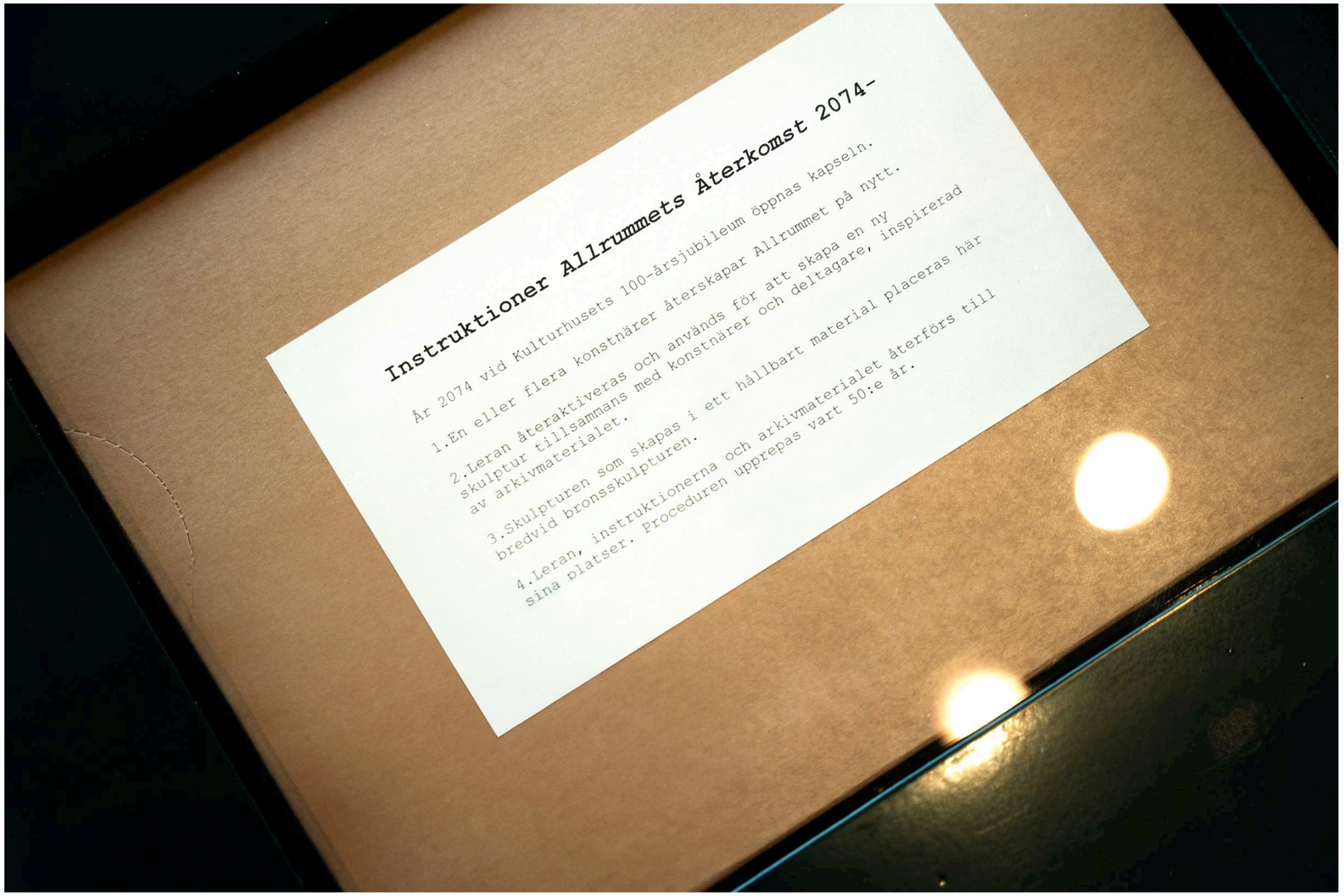
A few months later, a 40 cm tall version was made in bronze and a new workshop was organised, this time inviting people who worked at Kulturhuset to help us place the clay into the capsule that would preserve it for the coming 50 years.







The sculpture was installed on the fourth floor of kulturhuset, the capsule is designed specifically for the space to become part of the building. The green color is Celsing green, the same color that was in the original architectural design for this floor.



Instructions in English

In 2074, on the 100th anniversary of Kulturhuset, the capsule is opened.

1.One or more artists recreate Allrummet anew.

2.The clay is reactivated and used to make a new sculpture together with artists and participants, inspired by the archival material in this box.

3.The resulting sculpture is made into a sustainable material and placed here next to the bronze sculpture.

4.The clay, instructions and archive material are returned to their places, including this and the later projects. The procedure is repeated every 50 years.

Next to the sculpture, an archival box containing an archive of Allrummet’s activities and past projects, including this one. On the box, a set of Instructions for the future.

A performance was organised on the day of the inauguration.

The archival box and a last bit of clay are placed into the capsule before sealing it.





The capsule here is being sealed for the coming 50 years.



Some Reflections

Last but not least is the question of how do we actually bring these ideas into the future?

Is it possible to ensure through the institutional structures that something happens 50 years ahead into the future?

This project seeks to open up for experimentation with what we know but also with the hope of reaching, what we don’t yet know.

It seems that we have reached an interesting paradox, for an institution, 50 years is not so much but for the institution’s operations- 50 years is not really imaginable today at least not in the terms of everyday operations.

If we ask the following questions:

How do we ensure that this artwork stays in place for the next 50 years?
How can we ensure that Allrummet really returns?

The answer to both of these questions seem to be: that we cannot ensure these things, at least not with the ordinary tools that we have at our disposition.

But these are not problems that absolutely need to be solved now, these are the questions that the artwork is asking about the future.

Allrummets Återkomst was inaugurated on the 4th of April 2025.

The participating students from Nyckelvikskolan were:

Tilde Fors, Malva von Knorring, Vilda Blanckert, Norma Höller Bäckström, Elin Karlsson, Sven Olsson, Thalía Llanes García, Stina Pedersen, Max Samuelsson, Sanne Liv Drougge, Theodora Lindström, Lea Regnholm

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(kulturhuset)

