

RESÅRMADRASS

001002-001009 KL 11.00-18.00

HUR

HORNSGATAN 76

HUDKRÄM

001010-001015 KL 12.00-18.00

HUR

DROTTNINGGATAN 90 B

KORV

001016-001019 KL 12.00-19.00

HUR

SVEAVÄGEN 84 A

HOW

A public piece HUR / HOW by Kristina Matousch and Liv Strand.

HOW operated for seventeen days in Stockholm, Sweden, October 2000. We had taken upon ourselves the task of manufacturing three objects with the help of bypassers knowledge, this without having acquired any prior theoretic information on the various processes. A coiled mattress was made outside of a bed shop, a jar of skin lotion was composed by a perfume shop and a sausage was prepared by a hotdog stand. The objects had been chosen according to their generic appearance so that the discussion could focus on their content. They were made from a collective effort where the gathered knowledge was instinctual. We assumed the role of the specialist in order to influence the process of production out of our experience of how different advise turned out when practised.

HOW was made with support from the Fund for Artistic Development at the Royal University College of Fine Arts, Stockholm.



Parked the HOW-car outside KungSängens shop on Hornsgatan and erected the work-table on the pavement. With paper and pen in hand, and the advice of passers-by, the making of a sprung mattress could begin. In the afternoon we bought boards and springs. The rest of the day was spent cutting boards.*

Two women, who were obviously sisters, came up to us. One of them imagined the bed being a kind of nature-bed with a layer of moss or lichen on top. "Though that might create a problem with the moisture from the moss, or if it dried it might get hard and brittle." The other sister intended to buy a bed in the near future. She thought it would be good if the bed could be soundproofed, for example, using glass-fibre blankets.

A builder gave a long lecture on how to build the frame. He explained that we should put a narrow board on top of a wider one and then fasten the crossbars to the wider board with screws, so as to get an even surface for the springs all the way out to the edges of the bed. He knew a lot about Hästens* beds and that the difference in quality between beds depended on how the springs were placed.

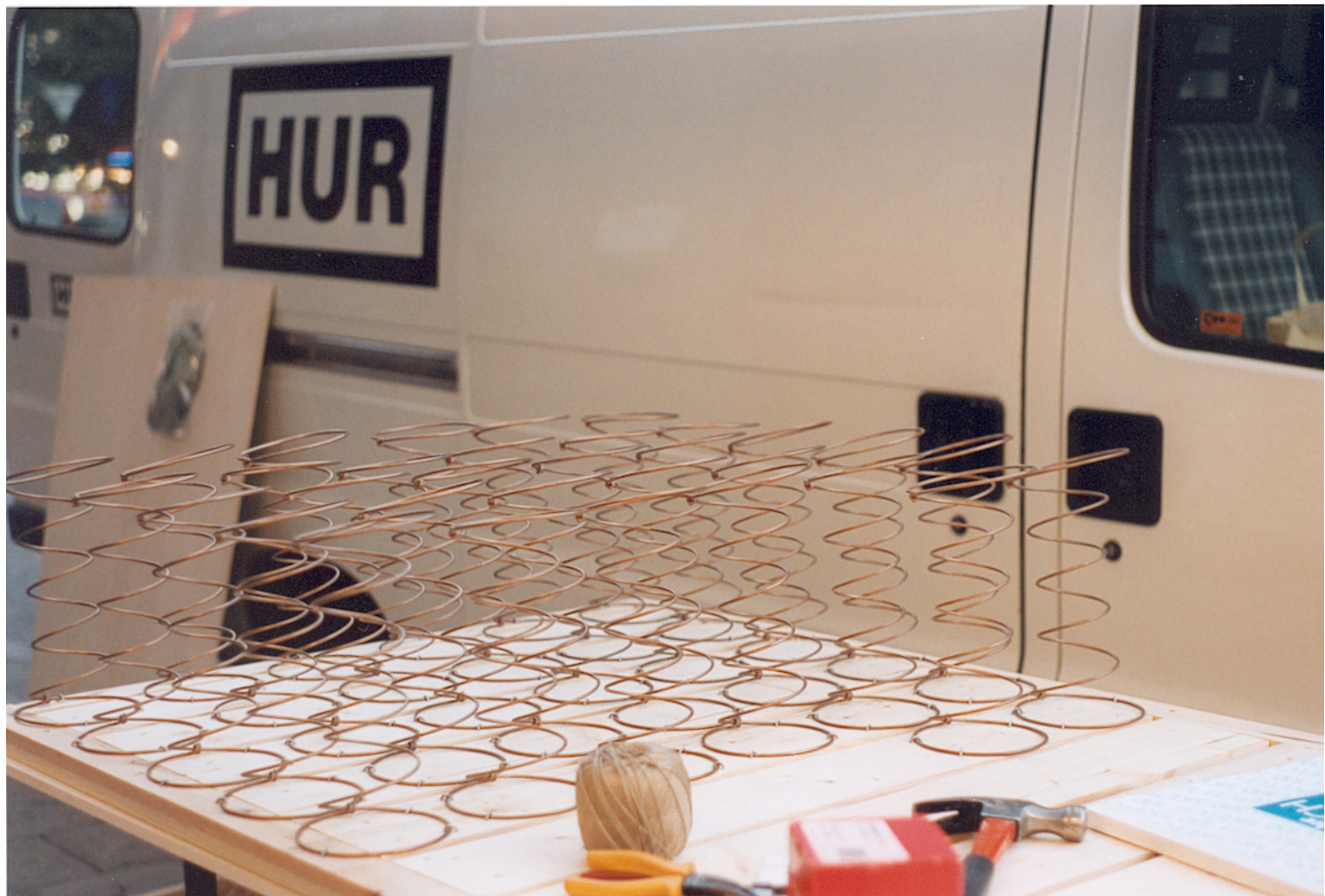
They can be placed in straight lines or in hexagonal patterns (like honeycomb cells) – he preferred the latter.

A retired master builder thought it was important to have a relatively firm bed when you are old.

Two men thought it would be really easy to make the skin cream. "All you have to do is to mix herbs into that white stuff."

A real innovator wished to see the development of a system where the stiffness of the springs could be adjusted individually. "Rails and wing nuts could be used to squeeze the springs together along a threaded bar. For example, the bed could be firmer under your bottom and softer under your legs." He also came up with a smart suggestion on how to avoid your bank account being emptied if you have your debit card stolen.

* Swedish manufacturer of luxury mattresses and beds.



The day began with us washing away vomit from the pavement – used about ten buckets of water. The bottom frame was joined together using plugs and the laths fixed with screws. Continued working on the bed while discussing with many passers-by how to best place the springs. The springs were first placed uniformly and fairly evenly, but in the end we chose straight lines.

It irritated an elderly lady that modern beds, in her opinion, were too wide. She recommended the health shop's ice cream with genuine fruit flavour.

One woman wanted a velvet bed with golden fringes.

A man with butchers in the family and lots of experience of the mattress business claimed that the springs must overlap. He told us to start all over again. We tried to apply his knowledge to the springs we had already placed. After he'd left we thought we might have been fooled by his persuasive manner.

An upholsterer got drawn into it. He explained that you have to tie down the springs with strings.

"They have to be placed in straight lines and turned the same way." He said it was very complicated, nothing to be tried in a hurry. He promised he'd return.

A young man knew that there are eight coils in the springs used in Hästens beds.



Tied down and fixed springs all day. Bought plaster.

A guy working nearby thought it possible to make a gun using the same premises we had used to make the mattress.

A pregnant woman took it upon herself to try tying down the springs in a less laborious way. After a while she realised that the best way to do it was that laborious way after all.

A man suggested placing a pea in the upholstery and then seeing what it would be like to sleep on the bed, "or why not use the whole packet of peas?".

A man who described himself as a keen consumer of culture and a bon vivant appreciated the social aspect of the project. When he wasn't occasionally working on newspaper design he was voluntarily unemployed so that he could spend time reading, for example. He thought the mattress was as complex as women.

Three skateboarding lads asked if we were building a Hästens. We explained to them how the mattress was built, which they thought was "wicked"

according to them that which is "wicked" is something that you get paid for.

The upholsterer returned. He told us to fasten a stainless steel round bar called a "ten" along the upper edge of the mattress as a frame for the springs.



Found a tube I could fasten to the upper edge and around the springs. Chose the tube since the round bar didn't fit the round corners of the mattress. Bought a rubberised horsehair mat, cotton wool and three different types of fabric for the facing of the mattress.

Finished fixing the springs. Made a cut along the tube and fitted it around the springs. Faced it with thick woven fabric and fixed it with tacks, cut it at the corners so we could insert foam rubber blocks, a type they call "pytt i panna" in the shop next to us.*

A family used to dissecting beds at home said that foam rubber blocks were needed to add support to the corners.

One provoked man, an artist, thought the project didn't add anything new but merely mimicked what had already been done in the USA fifteen years ago. He started undoing strings and claimed he was part of the artwork. "Create something new instead!" He was a painter and suggested that we too should paint.

A woman continued to fantasise about the pea and the moss. She imagined an irrigation system in the moss so that the pea could grow. Sweet pea stalks would curl around the bed.

One man was of the opinion that it would be better if we didn't sew the upholstery onto the bed, but instead sewed a padded sleeping bag that could be placed straight onto the springs. "Ideally with moss and a branch or two next to it so as to evoke some sense of nature. Preferably it would be fitted with a convertible hood so the bed could be outdoors."

* A traditional Swedish dish containing diced meat, onion, potato, beetroot, gherkin and raw (or fried) egg.



Fixed the thick woven fabric with tacks again and placed the rubberised horsehair mat on top, then two layers of cotton wool before facing it with a fabric made of cotton.

One lady suggested that it could be faced with a transparent plastic sheet instead of fabrics so one could see the interior.

One man told us that the average person turns approximately twenty times during a night's sleep.

A very upset man said the project was pointless and that we were pathetic. He wanted to know who funded the project and was relieved to hear that at least it wasn't the Swedish National Pension Fund. He was a food critic and had just been to see Alice Timander*. Gave him the nickname "the hag". He had blond curly hair and a squeaky voice.

We asked a gentleman if the mattress needed to be completely symmetric. He suggested that you could lie with your head where the springs were somewhat chaotically arranged and where the mattress was bulging.

A man from KungSängens shop said that the bed was too hard and that their beds were better.

The upholsterer passed us on his way to drink his evening beer. He gave us 9.5 out of a possible 10.

* A Swedish celebrity.



Removed the cotton fabric so we could sew the cotton wool to the horsehair mat, as the surface wasn't even enough. Loosened the fabric slightly. Cut the last piece of fabric to the shape of the bed. Pinned together strips of fabric around a string so it could be sewn up and used as a braid for the edges.

A man fantasised about us taking our clothes off and then lying down on the bed naked next to each other.

A ninety-year old lady told us that she made sausages as a ten- year old, both pork and barley sausages. "It's tastier if you smoke the meat. It's good that you're making things that might otherwise be forgotten."

A woman with two kids was on her way home to mend the holes in her own bed. We gave them some springs and staples.

A woman pulled at the fabric to see if it was possible to make it even. She wasn't completely satisfied and suggested that we could sort out the dents with more cotton wool.

Four young lads tried the bed. They found it hard to believe that the mattress had been made there on the pavement. They had a look underneath and then helped us turn it over.



001008

Started sewing the cover by hand. Planned writing a letter of invitation to the Princess Victoria, inviting her to try out the mattress containing the pea.

An architect who had bought a frying pan the other day reflected on how it could be that the mattress had only cost 100 crowns. He related the price to all the stages needed for the making of it.

One man came to relate a story about a lorry. The lorry, that was too high, had got stuck in a tunnel. Experts were called to the scene but were at a loss as to what to do. A little lad who was passing by told them to let the air out of the tyres.

A number of ladies gave us plenty of advice on skin cream and sausage making. One lady used to hang her sausages from the kitchen ceiling to dry.

Someone said that you consume everything beginning from the inside and working out. The surface is the semblance of the product.

The fabric made people feel nostalgic – they thought it was nice.

001009

Completed the sewing of the cover. Wrapped the mattress in a protective plastic sheet.

Nike, a little girl, test-jumped the bed.

“The hag” phoned us on our mobile and told us that he was in Falun*. “I’ve received a lot of calls from people who are upset about your project. I just wanted you to know that. Haven’t they written about this spectacle in the newspapers, yet? I mean it’s their responsibility to do so.” He denied that he had been here when we pointed out that his voice sounded familiar.

Rolf Steinberg and Siv Johansson from The Royal University College of Fine Arts tried the bed – they suggested sebum and magnesium oxide as ingredients in the skin cream.

A nice man tried the bed.

“It all looked a bit sad and hopeless so I thought it might be some kind of art project”, said a young artist.

* A town in the northern part of Sweden.



*Parked outside Parfumerie Soleil on Drottninggatan.
Spent a large part of the day in discussions about skin
cream. Bought ingredients in the afternoon.*

One man mentioned that manufacturers of skin cream used recycled fat from restaurants.

A girl suggested that we should use fat extracted from plastic surgery, as in the film “Fight Club”.

One person thought we needed “loads of E12, X, Y so one can’t tell what it is, IQ 10”.

A girl said, “Skin cream consists of ninety percent water and a bit of oil. We are all being fooled by the beauty industry. We wash ourselves with soap that makes our skin dry, which then forces us to use creams to restore the fat balance.”

“Wheat germ oil and vitamin E oil can be purchased from the health shop. Agar-agar is good for the consistency, better than gelatine which is derived from animals.”

Josif, from Greece, offered to return with dried grass, the decoction of which could be used as a treatment against psoriasis. He gesticulated and told us that “the thumb is physics, the index finger is mathematics, the middle finger is geometry, the ring finger is chemistry and the little finger is logic”. After that he clenched his hand to form a unit.

“Sewing machine oil” was one verdict on our first cream.

A couple of Englishmen thought it looked like porridge.

An all dressed up lady churlishly wondered how this could be art. She had worked as a pharmacist but didn’t want to share her knowledge with us.

Someone thought alcohol should be used to make the cream lighter.



Today's mixture turned out grainy and greasy. It contained glycerine, aloe vera, water and pectin, which was heated up and beaten. Another mixture containing gelatine turned out all gluey.

A lady who lived in a house nearby claimed that the most costly component in all expensive skin creams was cucumber juice. She dabs her face with cucumber every morning, and when it dries out she pricks it with a fork so that new liquid seeps out.

Josif returned with a bunch of dried grass and three apples. We were told to boiled it all in 12 litres of water for 25 minutes. The grass is called Amphotrite in Greek.

A girl said, "ammonia is good for the skin, especially children's urine."

A woman whose husband works in animal care knew that one had to be careful with using magnesium externally.



Had great problems with the consistency of the skin cream. Used beeswax in one mixture, which curdled and produced a hard lump. One cream containing gelatine turned out too runny, another one ended up as runny as water. However, in the end we achieved some good results, the consistency was perfect but when applied stood out like beads on the skin.

One man used liquid margarine when his skin needed softening.

Somebody had called the highways department to complain about how we had parked the HOW-car.

The woman who dabbed her face with cucumber every morning gave her friend a demonstration using our cucumber.

A skin therapist who usually makes her own herbal creams at home used equal amounts of water and oil in her mixture. "It won't curdle if you do that. Beeswax makes the cream thicker."

One guy knew that you have to beat the beeswax mixture until it has cooled down, otherwise it will curdle.

One man thought the transparent cream looked like lubricant. "Vitamin E is sexually beneficial."



Mixed a variety of creams, one with agar-agar which turned out oily and a bit fluffy, another one containing magnesium powder which curdled and one cream which the skin absorbed well. Tried using olive oil instead of almond oil and cucumber juice instead of ordinary water, it didn't retain all the liquid and was rather greasy. One containing sheep fat smelled of mint and was disgustingly greasy.

A mother with her son stopped by. He wanted to sample all the creams. His mother recommended an organic oil of the brand "Julita" made from rape.

One man thought HOW was a commercial enterprise and that we were stupid relying on the help from passers-by without knowing anything ourselves. After a while he realised that it was an art project so he retracted what he'd said.

One woman whose father had been an experimental medical doctor told us that sesame oil is good for the organs of elimination (the skin, the kidneys and the liver). "The skin, which is 20 square meters in area, consists of the intestine and the skin. Charcoal tar works wonders on the skin. It's also a remedy against asthma if used aromatically in the sauna.

Lavender makes you drowsy and irritates the skin, rosemary is refreshing, camomile soothes and is good for the intestine."

One man called one of his company's chemists. The chemist said we were on the right track as far as the ingredients were concerned.

An eccentric fellow, distributing junk mail, spoke about structures in society. He thought the project was relevant. "It's good to make things from scratch." We also discussed whether the tree we were standing next to was a small tree or a large bush.

A dark-skinned man thought the greasier cream containing olive oil was the best he had ever tried. We gave him some in a plastic bag.



Made a variety of creams. Finally decided what The Cream would consist of: water (some of it from cucumbers), almond oil, beeswax, zinc oxide, glycerine, aloe vera, Atamon (sugar, sodium benzoate E 211, benzoic acid E 210) and vitamin E oil.

Someone suggested ascorbic acid as a preservative.

Two girls said the smell of cucumber was fresh and that the cream had a cooling effect.

One woman who worked with the manufacturing of skin cream told us that you mix the oils and the water-soluble liquids separately and then heat them up. After that you mix them and add the beeswax. She had doubts about using the preservative Atamon, she used benzoic acid instead (after she'd left we found out that benzoic acid is one of the ingredients in Atamon).

The girl from Parfumerie Soleil tried two different creams. The olive oil cream was according to her a perfect night cream. The white cream she found both moisturising and greasy.



Produced the final cream and made a number of tests using olive oil and the Amphitrite (Greek grass) concoction. Many sampled the creams and wanted to buy some. Gave away the beeswax, concoction and the recipe to those who wanted to make the cream themselves.

One man knew that “agar-agar is used for cultivating bacteria in”. That’s why he thought it was repulsive to use it in the cream.

Two men gave us advice on how to use plantain. One thought it was best to grind them whereas the other favoured drying.

The eccentric fellow who had been here before conversed with us for quite a while about a variety of things, for example, why ordinary people need experts. “They need experts not for the sake of acquiring new knowledge but to confirm what they already know. The role of the expert is first of all to create a sense of certainty so as to protect us against uncertainty. There is no other place in the world where difference is as opposed as it is in Sweden. This is because Sweden is not made up of parts where the people have unified but is a product of

warring kings. The country has been created from the top of the hierarchy where difference is seen as a threat that could split the country. That’s why difference is opposed.” When he studied philosophy he had written an essay on the different lifestyles in soap operas (comparing Dallas with Melrose Place). He had done this instead of examining Kierkegaard’s lifestyle, which had been the point of the whole exercise. According to him the lifestyles portrayed in different soap operas have more in common with the reality of young people. To describe that was more important than following the course outline of the university, which “only deals with dead men’s theories instead of teaching us how to think for ourselves”.

The woman who dabs herself with cucumber brought along two small jars, which we filled with samples.

One man was tremendously upset by the fact that we gathered knowledge from the street. “That you both ignore and consciously avoid looking for the available research is offensive.”



Bought a mincer on my way to Elena's Street Kitchen on Sveavägen. Talked about sausages for nearly 3 hours before anything was bought. Took the HOW-car to Östermalmshallen to buy sausage skins (animal intestines). Fried a sausage containing a soft mixture of beef, pork meat, potato flour and spices. The sausage meat burst out of its skin and in the frying pan.

One man thought a lot of fat was needed. "The fat makes the sausage cook evenly since it conducts the heat and cooks the meat." Pork fat, he reckoned, lard.

One man said that the contents in sausages were more of a secret than the contents of the sprung mattress. "Its components had already been established in the 16th century."

A girl thought we should make a Stockholm's Dove sausage. "Stockholm City Council is culling doves so why not use the meat for making sausages instead of wasting it. You should fax them, I mean, we eat chicken and grouse. You could call it Turtle Dove Sausage." She also found the idea of fish sausages and sausages in various shapes interesting.

Someone mentioned paprika and colouring.

A man from Gotland who was a sausage producer came up to us. He put his finger in the sausage meat and tasted it. He added pepper, salt and would have liked to add some garlic as well. "The mixture is too loose."

A couple of tough lads thought the sausage meat looked like shit or vomit.

A man from RFSL's* bar across the street came up to us and said that his boss wanted to see our permit. Afterwards they invited us for a drink.

A young man whose brother was the chairman of a butcher's union told us that we had to prick the sausage so as to avoid the sausage meat bursting out of its skin in the frying pan. "The pressure increases when you cook the sausage."

* The Swedish Federation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights.



Made some small sausages with plenty of meat in them. Passers-by were eager to taste. One sausage containing mashed potatoes tasted like bangers and mash. Another one containing barley-grain didn't taste too much like a sausage either.

Two young men (one with a beard growing under his chin and on his neck) thought of “Weird Science”, a film from the 90’s in which two spotty guys create a beautiful girl with the help of a computer.

One older woman thought there was too much meat in it. “Why stuff meat in a skin if it’s nothing but meat.”

The man from Elena’s Street Kitchen thought the sausage had an ugly colour. His stayed pink even when it had been cooked. “Yours is grey.”

One woman with a Finnish accent thought the sausage ought to be smoked. “You can by bags for smoking from the shop.”

A chef suggested seasoning with wine, sherry or whisky. He also said that minced meat is much

fattier in the south than in the north.

“Approximately 50% meat and 50% fat in Skåne and 70% meat and 30% fat in Norrland where the animals are leaner.”

Rolf Hansson, an artist, knew everything about sausage making since he had lived in the countryside where his neighbours used to slaughter animals.

One couple ate the whole sausage without commenting on its bland taste. They wanted to buy some if we had any more.



Bought spareribs with plenty of fat on them. Made seven or eight sausages with various ingredients – some also contained red colouring. The chaos and the mess didn't seem to put people off tasting.

It didn't work with the colouring, the stuffing turned out pink and the sausage meat didn't stick to the skin. However, the consistency resembled that of the sausages you get from the hot-dog stand. The trick was to grind the meat twice and to use the right amount of potato flour and liquid. Gave the last piece of sausage to a passing Golden Retriever. Kristina was there on her own the whole day and Liv was bedridden due to food poisoning, though not from eating sausages.

Somebody longed for the North African sausage “Mergeze” which contained lamb meat. The other ingredients were secret.

The sausage producer from Gotland said that, “the tastiest sausage, really, is the smoked one. Most sausage producers smoke their sausages.”

“Mum, I'm hungry. Can I have some more sausage?” said a boy who wanted to eat the whole sausage.



We decided that the next one had to be smoked, after having made two grey sausages.

Bought a fish smoker and nitrate salt. The smoked sausage looked perfect but tasted sour since we had used too much nitrite salt. At last the sausage meat stuck to the skin. Made two sausages, burnt one in the smoker so we fried and tasted that one, put the other one in a jar of formalin.

One man wanted to add some of the gravel under the tree next to us. "It will make the mixture last longer and it already tastes of dog piss."

One woman had, as a ten-year old, seen intestines being washed after slaughter. She had found that disgusting. She preferred sausages to burgers, but thought them not as filling as burgers (she was standing there eating one). "Sausages aren't as filling."

One woman quoted Röde Orm*. "When Loke returned from a long journey he said with tears in his eyes: - Thyme, there is thyme in the sausage."
One woman claimed that smoked meat and salmon cause cancer.

The sausage producer from Gotland tasted a sausage and gave it his approval.

The man who worked in Elena's Street Kitchen said it had a sour taste.

* A novel by the Swedish author Frans. G. Bengtsson. English translation of title: "The Long Ships".

Translation: Michael Akraka

