

*Collective Act #006*  
*How to represent Sweden*

date: 25 September 2010  
 location: Ethnographic Museum, Stockholm

**Collective Act** is a series of social gatherings where I invite diverse individuals to share a themed experience, where I throw a question on their society at my guests. About 10 participants discuss the topic accompanied by the food corresponding to the theme of each gathering. I play the role of organiser and mediator in the actual event.

The activity started as my response to what I perceived as a difficult and cold social climate both in Sweden and in the local art world, using food as social media. Each *Collective Act* has specific theme. Discussion topic, guests, food, location, date, etc. are all set according to the theme, and are often related to my Japanese heritage.

Instead of giving social criticism, I try to give the participants the cue for reflecting their social conditions and challenge the social issues, as well as to interlink the participants by sharing the experience at the table.



(top) Participants eating lunch at teahouse Zuiki Tei at Ethnographic Museum  
 (middle) Participants discuss how to represent Sweden in Japanese traditional room at the teahouse (bottom) Japanese Bento (lunch box) I made with autumn flavours as social media for *Collective Act #006*



I invited Swedish people to come and discuss what they want to present about Sweden, its culture, nature and society, and which stereotypes of Sweden that they want to refresh, when they are abroad or when they have foreign guests - when they become "ambassador" of Sweden. The discussion took place right after General Election, where extreme right-wing party got seats in the parliament.

Reflecting my background to the social platform and social media of this edition of *Collective Act*, I held the gathering at Japanese traditional teahouse at Ethnographic Museum and served Japanese lunch box with autumn flavours.

The talk revolved around more mentality than physical representations: equality and openness in the society, and its change through time, and how Swedishness has been promoted through its culture, such as films.

The result of the discussion was communicated in Brazil where I was selected/invited for a residency programme as Swedish representative, and my investigation around the theme has continued.

*Collective Act #008*  
*Bridging the Antipodes*

date: 25 May 2011  
 location: Jardín Japonés, Buenos Aires



(top) invitation sent to the participants (middle) alfajores with Matcha flavour produced in collaboration with a local traditional confectioner, served on the plate by Paloma Garcia-Ortiz, who makes contemporary ceramics referring to old-time objects (bottom) discussion view at Jardín Japonés in Buenos Aires



In Buenos Aires, antipodal to my native Japan, I organised *Collective Act* to discuss how the old and the new, the local and the foreign exist together in Argentina. I chose the theme based on my impression of the city maintaining the coexistence of multiple facets, and on my interest in the physical and psychological distance between Argentina and Japan.

It was a contemporary hybrid version of tea service in Japanese Garden on an Argentinean national holiday, with Matcha Latte, a contemporary twist of Japanese tradition, and Alfajores, a local popular sweet that has its roots in Arabia and was brought to Latin America by Spanish, in Matcha flavour as a gesture of adoption and adaption.

The entire discussion was active and intensive. The complex history of Argentina in relation to neighbouring and former ruling countries appeared as the important background, and the most dominant issues discussed were the definition of "local" concerning its history, and the continuous wave of new immigrants, especially related to economy and education. The local expression *Lo atamos con alambre* (= to fix it with wire) reflects the Argentinean mentality, and repeatedly came up during the discussion. It has two dimensions in a certain problematic situation, of finding the way around to fix it, and of mending it hastily knowing that sooner or later it will come up again.