

Based on the desire and need of highlighting the curator's position in the art scene in North Bothnia, the project Curera was initiated in the spring of 2022 by Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten. The project is divided into three overlapping and parallel parts that contribute to promoting the profession in different ways; by creating dialogue with potential clients and contributors, as well as initiating public activities at various locations in North Bothnia. The aim is for Curera to function as a starting point for learning, future collaborations and change management.

The curators in Sweden represent a limited professional body with extensive specialist skills. Today, there are approximately 2 300 curators in our country, two different curatorial educations at university level: one at Konstfack (University of Arts, Crafts and Design), and one at Stockholm University. There's also a newly established association called Svensk Curatorförening (Swedish Curators' Association) with the ambition to work for the curators' interests. The majority of the active curators are freelancers who usually have a number of side jobs outside of their curatorial activities. Today, the understanding of the curator's role is often insufficient, and in the cultural policy



debate, this professional group is often absent. A large part of the problem lies in how the curators are being categorized, perhaps better described as a group without affiliation, at least when it comes to the possibility of applying for grants or financial supports for their activities – from developing ideas to implementation.

## Few curators but an important profession

During COVID-19, the curators, like many other professionals in the cultural field, were affected by cancelled public projects. In a cultural economy that meant for many people a loss of income and layoffs of staff, the curators became part of the exhibition production that was spared – a professional competence that was replaced internally by producers, educators or exhibited artists. Today, curators – compared to artists – cannot receive any kind of funds, such as working grants, to protect their professional life. The lack of a strong national community that can advocate for the profession became particularly obvious during the pandemic. Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten believes that it is important to strengthen the relationships between curators, donors, and institutions in order to increase the understanding for each other and contribute to even better conditions for artists and visitors.

As mentioned, there's a limited number of curators in Sweden – but in North Bothnia they are almost non-existent. Since the professionals more frequently find their projects at the larger, well-funded institutions, the majority of this group works in Stockholm. At present, there's a need to diversify the curatorial working methods, which for many have been designed according to current metropolitan conditions, and that for a long time. The opportunities in the northern parts of Sweden are better than ever for developing interesting art projects. North Bothnia has a unique artistic landscape that is constantly changing. Therefore, we see Curera as part of that development, in order not to risk losing this important profession or missing out on exhibition productions and projects that add value, i. e. the curator's task.

## Curera contributes to the development of the art life

Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten's work is based on the ambition and need to show and convey various artistic expressions throughout North Bothnia, inviting to participation and offering new experiences.

Geographical location should not be in the way of experiencing qu-



alitative exhibitions, activities or public design processes, but large parts of the curatorial competence in North Bothnia are emigrating towards the larger institutions or major cities. In Curera, curatorial expertise is engaged in various local contexts, which in turn contribute to the development of the art life in different regions. In dialogue with regional, national and international curators, more and richer art experiences are being created, making the region attractive to more people in and outside North Bothnia.

Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten sees this as an opportunity to start a formative, networking and long-term project around conditions that can strengthen the curator's role in and outside North Bothnia. By applying local contexts, we see opportunities to create a close understanding between different actors that can influence the working method of both individuals and organizations.

## *Konstfrämjandet Norrbotten, June 2022*



**Konstfrämjandet  
Norrbotten**