

## Research internship at Karolinska Institutet in the Brain, Body, and Self Laboratory

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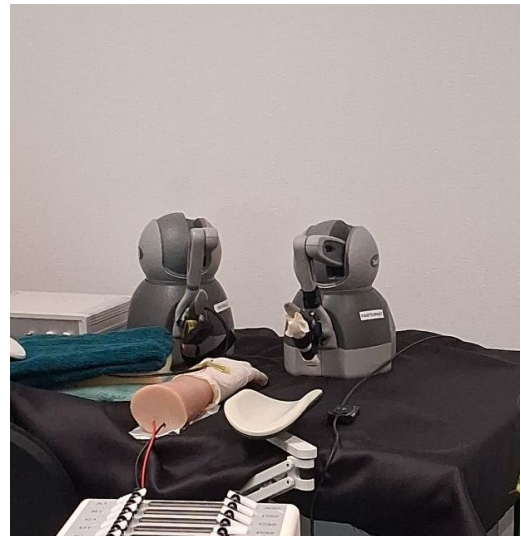
I want to share my experience from my internship at the Karolinska Institutet in the Brain, Body, and Self Laboratory. It was such a wonderful experience that I am still overwhelmed with strong emotions, and after the internship, I returned to Germany inspired, as if I had lived a small, intense life during those three months that profoundly changed me.



Biomedicum building where the lab is located

As a philosophy student who views interdisciplinarity as the ideal for both philosophy and science, I wanted to use this internship to explore for myself the potential of interdisciplinarity and to gain an internal perspective on scientific practices. Since I am interested in the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of corporality, and the philosophy of science, the Brain, Body, and Self Laboratory led by Professor Henrik Ehrsson seemed like the perfect choice because of its thematic focus. I was very fortunate to secure an internship there, and I could never have imagined how wonderful this experience would be.

During my internship, I assisted with a study on how active and passive touching one's own body might affect the way different sensory signals are combined and how this relates to the feeling of owning one's body. Under the guidance of Mariano D'Angelo, I assisted in conducting experiments with healthy volunteers using the rubber hand illusion, where participants experience a rubber hand as if it were their own. During the psychophysical task, participants, with their eyes closed, evaluated whether touches on their real hand and the rubber hand—delivered with varying delays—were synchronous, and whether they perceived the rubber hand as part of their own body. Throughout these tasks, we recorded EEG data to measure brain activity. In addition, I was trained in setting up experiments, collecting psychophysical data, and performing analyses applying signal detection theory.



Rubber hand and robots for the experiment

In the laboratory I had the opportunity to enjoy its welcoming and lively atmosphere. Every week, we held lab meetings where researchers presented their findings, followed by discussions. These meetings usually ended with fika, during which we chatted about various topics. Additionally, I attended talks by invited scientists at the Karolinska Institutet and online sessions organized by one of the lab members in an international cognitive science club, as well as presentations by candidates applying to join the lab. These experiences greatly broadened my horizons and exposed me to how researchers from diverse disciplines discuss their topics.



with my nicest colleagues

I particularly appreciated the very horizontal academic culture of the lab, where everyone was encouraged to ask questions and offer suggestions. We all used first names, and there was no sense of hierarchy—only a spirit of collaboration and mutual support. As a student from another field, I felt very welcomed and at home, which is not always the case even within a single discipline. Members of the lab were receptive to different perspectives on the researched problems, and a genuine openness to dialogue was evident. This atmosphere allowed me to learn a lot and to deepen my knowledge in areas that interest me.

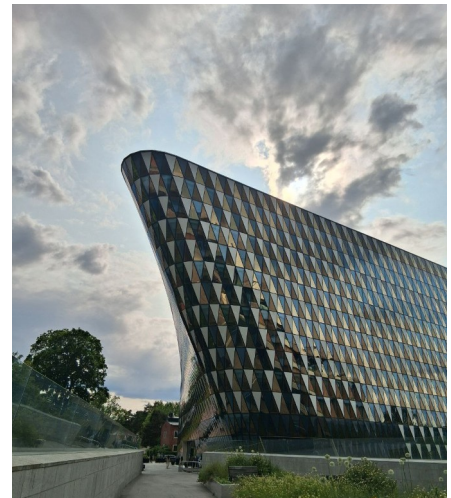


The lab also had an active social life: we went out to eat together after work, played boules, and went on a picnic in a park. The highlight for me was celebrating Midsommar with colleagues at the historic open-air museum Skansen. This lively social atmosphere was something I missed from philosophy, where everyone tends to work alone. Thanks to the kindness of my colleagues, I felt so much at home in the lab that it was very hard for me to leave, and I already deeply miss it. During my internship, I also applied to and was accepted into a master's program in cognitive science, so perhaps this will not be my last encounter with this laboratory, and I stay in contact with my colleagues.

Returning to the academic culture, I would like to note several aspects that I found positive and that seem to me to represent an ideal worth striving for in academia. In addition to the flat hierarchy, I observed that there were more women than men working in the laboratory, which matched my impression of the Karolinska Institutet as a whole, and this impression is supported by statistics. I also appreciated the transparency of all work processes in the lab and the generally friendly working

environment and, of course, the opportunity to work in a very international team, which I greatly enjoyed.

During my internship, alongside gaining knowledge and experience related to the lab's research topics, my view of philosophy became more critical. At the same time, engaging with science renewed my interest in philosophy by giving it more substance and meaning. Seeing how critically experimental scientists approach each of their conclusions and assumptions, how hypotheses are carefully developed, and participating in experiments with different themes carried out by my colleagues, sparked in me not only an interest in the meta-perspective on cognitive science but also enthusiasm for its substantive side. My rather abstract ideas from philosophy of science took more concrete shape, albeit limited within this three-month internship.



Wonderful architecture of Aula Medica



my Stockholm neighbors – bunnies

During the internship, I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to live in Stockholm: in many ways, it reminded me of Saint Petersburg, and in others, my hometown Sosnovy Bor. I grew very fond of its northern soul, shining through the rocky slits that break through the cityscape, its imagination-stirring metro, which felt like strange dreams, and its breathtaking architecture – both historical and modern. I visited museums of Stockholm and also traveled with another fellow scholar and her colleague to see the petroglyphs around Uppsala and open-air museum Konst på Hög. I also went to see Uppsala and Uppsala University and took a boat trip to Vaxholm.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Sverker Åström Foundation for giving me this opportunity. This visit exceeded all my expectations and deeply changed me. I also want to give special thanks to Disa for her support during the scholarship application and throughout the internship. In addition, I want to thank all the Foundation staff for your work, for the wonderful conversations during tea at Micha's house, and for continuing to support participants from Russia at a time when things are especially difficult for us. These times in Stockholm have been one of the happiest in my life.