



**HOUSE MAGIC**

**bureau of foreign  
correspondence**

**#4 ♦ spring 2012**



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**This issue** includes articles about recent international developments, U.S. occupations, past and present, more New York City radical history, the schedule of a first-ever historical exhibition on Berlin squatting history (in German), a precis of “spatial interventions” in Hamburg, and a substantial article on anarchists and squatting in Budapest. Also included are the personal journal reflections of the Hungarian activist Maxigas, and an article by Aja Waalwijk of Ruigoord on the long-term festival-making undertaken by the inhabitants of that famous squatted village. Finally an interview with NYC homeless organizer Rob Robinson – we heard from him in “House Magic” #2 – begins to move the ball from the Euro-American court to the global south. **The ne' issue** will be collective – submissions are invited now – and include proceedings of the February SQEK meeting in NYC.

**HOUSE MAGIC Bureau of Foreign Correspondence is an information project on squats and occupied social centers.**

*It is edited by Alan W. Moore, who blogs at “Occupations and Properties,” and can be reached at [awm13579 \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:awm13579@gmail.com). He lives in Madrid.*

*right: mural at Casablanca, CSO, Madrid*

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## Occupy Is the New Squat – and a Whole New Ballgame....

2011 was a revolutionary year. Ways of being and acting that had been relegated to the shadows of politics suddenly became everyday. Occupation wasn't just a desperate reaction to the betrayals of the "creative city," or the brutal budgetary whackings that old peoples' governments are giving to kids in school. And squatting isn't just for punks anymore.

Occupation to provide political, social and cultural space in the city has become a prominent part of the latter-day toolkit of the U.S. Occupy movement, just as it has been for the extraparliamentary left in Europe for decades. That is free and open space, outside of monetary exchange, where people can mainly talk and get together. The Occupy movement sprang up like Spartoi from the austerities of the crisis, a sudden resistance, and what's more, an instant national conversation among the "99%" of people who've been getting reamed by the great downturn of the last several years.

The Occupy movement has brought the obscure utopian world of foreign social centers closer to real being in the United States. There have already been a few shoots – in North Carolina, and Washington, which are covered in this issue. They feel like harbingers of a great reconstructive springtime.

"I beg your pardon. I never promised you a rose garden." That's the USA. Opportunity for those who have money, but for everyone else, no promises. No guarantees. Isn't abandonment, ruin, degradation, pointless squandering of public wealth – isn't that opportunity?

Behind your gated walls, in your extensive grounds – what about the lands you leave behind? You "own" them, but refuse to develop the places the rest of us must live in.

To move from squatter to developer – without a loan from the bank, without the nod from a state official who you've helped grease into office – with assistance only from a Peoples' Development Cooperative, that is, fast action and hard labor...

– Alan W. Moore

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Cover image from *Storefront for Art and Architecture, Strategies for Public Occupation, New York 2011.*



Above is the Market installation at the "Living as Form" exhibition in New York City produced by Creative Time in September, 2011. The show included international examples of political art and creative interventions, curated by Nato Thompson. Many friends of this project were involved, including from left (invisible behind the cut-up DDR flag), Petit Versailles Garden – directors Peter Cramer and Jack Waters ran ABC No Rio in the 1980s; "House Magic" booth with invisible Taylor Moore in it; Gregory Sholette's archive project; ABC No Rio itself; and Temporary Services, the Chicago activist art and publishing group which curated Market. The show coincided with the third annual "summit" of guests invited from around the world to give short talks about their activist art projects (all are archived online.)

This year the editor was among them.

# **BULLETINS – ACTION ♦ MONEY ♦ FOOD ♦ INSTITUTIONS ♦ ACADEMY ♦ ART**

## **Bank of Ideas: A Public Repossession**

Welcome! The Bank of Ideas is situated on Sun Street, Hackney in an abandoned office block purchased several years ago by the bank UBS. It is an enormous space complete with a 500-seater lecture hall. We're open to visitors and guests from 12 noon to 11 pm from Tuesday to Friday and from 10 am to 11 pm on Saturday and Sunday. It has been opened to the public for the non-monetary trade of ideas to help solve the pressing economic, social and environmental problems of our time.

There is also room for community groups and other public services that have lost their space due to Government spending cuts to come and adopt a space for free.

Artists, performers and creatives are welcome to come entertain and to help transform the space. We also encourage games, workshops and skillshares on anything from yoga to yahtzee.



The only prerequisite is that this space is not for financial transactions. Trade in ideas or skills, but no one should need to pay to take part in the Bank's activities.

Everyone should feel safe and welcome in the Bank. Our Safer Spaces Policy asks people to be mindful and respectful of how their ideas or actions might effect others, and there is a No Drugs and Alcohol Policy. As this is a public space any damage or disrespect to the property would be an act of disrespect and violence towards your own community, a community trying to come together to find positive solutions to our current crises. We ask all people who come into the space to come in with respect.

Everyone is warmly welcome and encouraged to come and be part of creating the Bank of Ideas. Email us with your ideas, suggestions and requests at [bankofideaslondon@gmail.com](mailto:bankofideaslondon@gmail.com). Thank you very much for reading! – *bankofideas.org.uk/welcome/*

## **Occupy London protesters take over empty UBS bank offices**

Activists host press conference in building owned by Swiss bank as St Paul's Cathedral camp faces high court action

by Peter Walker and Paul Owen for [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Friday 18 November 2011 – Activists from the Occupy London movement have abruptly changed tactics, following a month of open-air tent protests, by seizing a vacant office complex owned by a major global bank. In the early hours of Friday morning, protesters entered a series of interconnected buildings owned by UBS on the fringe of the City, which have lain empty for several years. They immediately claimed squatters' rights, posting a legal notice to that effect.

By mid-morning, several dozen people were inside, cleaning up patches of damp and collapsed ceiling plaster and hanging giant banners from windows, several targeting the actions of UBS, which has its London headquarters across the street.

In contrast to Occupy's existing camps in the capital – next to St Paul's Cathedral and on Finsbury Square – the new outpost will not be primarily residential but aims to act as a forum for ideas and meetings.

Called by protesters the Bank of Ideas, the buildings, near Liverpool Street, will hold an inaugural conference of Occupy movements from around the UK this weekend. A statement by the group promised a show by the comedian Josie Long and a seminar by Alessio Rastani, the independent financial trader who made headlines in September by telling the BBC that investment banks were now more powerful than governments. "The Bank of Ideas will host a full events programme where people will be able to trade in creativity rather than cash," said Sarah Layler of the group. "We will also make space available for those that have lost their nurseries, community centres and youth clubs to savage government spending cuts." It marks a further sign of the growing confidence of the UK movement, which sprang from an international wave of protests against the perceived excesses and inequalities of the global financial system.

Occupy London has attracted significant attention since opening its camp on land next to St Paul's on 15 October after police thwarted an initial plan for a base next to the London Stock Exchange. A fierce debate was sparked within the Church of England about equality and the right to protest, resulting in two senior clergy leaving their jobs. Unlike their counterparts in the US, who have faced a number of forcible police evictions, Occupy protesters in London have been left alone, in part because of the church's decision to tolerate the St Paul's camp. An attempt by the Corporation of London to have the St Paul's camp removed is set to reach the high court on Wednesday. The Finsbury Square camp is on land owned by Islington council, which has privately told activists it does not have the money to pursue

a court case.

UBS, however, could apply very quickly for legal repossession of the buildings and request bailiffs, backed up by police, to move in. A spokeswoman for the Swiss-based bank said: "We know they're there, and we're taking appropriate action."



*photo by T.Wat*

A building in an adjoining street was occupied briefly by anti-globalisation protesters ahead of the G20 meeting in London in April 2009. Within days, it was stormed by police in a raid which, activists alleged, involved the use of stun guns.

At a hastily-arranged press conference inside the UBS building, about a dozen activists answered questions while sitting on a stained blue office carpet in front of a vast Occupy London sign. The group said it hoped to avoid confrontation with police and had asked UBS about agreeing to temporary use of the site. UBS said it had no comment on this offer.

Aside from the building's size and location, near many other financial institutions, the group said it was chosen as it is owned by a major bank, and one which was bailed out by taxpayers, albeit those in Switzerland. Ronan McNern, a spokesman, said: "UBS is representative of the sort of bank which is not acting in the public interest. This is a public repossession of their empty building."

Another symbolic element of the site is that, while close to many financial institutions, it lies just outside the area administered by the very wealthy – and, activists claim, highly unrepresentative – Corporation of London, in Hackney, one of the UK's most deprived boroughs. The occupation has been assisted by veteran squatters' rights campaigners, who hope to use the site to highlight an imminent new law that will make the practice a criminal offence. Currently, squatters must be evicted via the civil courts as long as a building is empty and there is no damage caused in gaining entry.

One campaigner, environmental consultant Pete Phoenix, 41, showed the Guardian round several dozen of the several hundred empty rooms in the complex. This vast size and emptiness served as a symbol of poor use of resources, he said. "This winter there's people freezing on the streets, and look at all of this wasted space."

There is a slight potential conflict between the protesters' stated intention to make the building a public space and its status as a squatted building. This will be overcome by designating visitors "friends" or "guests." In the interim, the building remains shut to outsiders, making it a different prospect to the open-to-all ethos of the other camps, where passersby and local workers have been welcomed. There seemed little imminent prospect of detente with UBS staff: soon after the first Occupy banners were hung, UBS workers on the other side of the street pulled down all the blinds in their offices. – [guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/18/occupy-london-protesters-ubs-bank](http://guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/nov/18/occupy-london-protesters-ubs-bank)

### **U.S. Artists at the Bank of Ideas**

Celebrate People's History Poster veteran and street artist Lindsay/Pivo recently used a collection of Celebrate People's History posters in an installation she created inside an occupied investment bank in downtown London, dubbed The Bank of Ideas! You can see more photos and learn more about the installation and occupation on Lindsay's blog Glue, a Glove, and Some Plyers. – *from JustSeeds blog, posted by Josh MacPhee. See also "Swoon at the Bank of Ideas" – [andsomeplyers.blogspot.com](http://andsomeplyers.blogspot.com). There are seven short YouTube videos of this artist's talk with slides; it is easier to go straight to YouTube and put in the title, and you'll get the short videos in order by subject.*



## Wildcats in Brighton

Autonomous Social Centre! 29 Western Road, Brighton. Events every day. An abandoned shop front in Churchill Square, Brighton's biggest shopping centre, has been occupied in solidarity with striking public sector workers. The building had been empty since August 2010 and the occupiers are already making repairs in order to rescue the building from dilapidation. The space will be used to form links between the striking public sector workers and other members of the public who are affected by the government's public sector cuts, such as students, benefits claimants and private sector workers. Starting June 30th, the day of the strikes, the space will be open in the daytime and used as a place for people opposed to the cuts in general to meet one another, drink tea, and find out about anti-cuts actions. At 6pm everyday there will be an Anti-Cuts Forum, a public meeting open to all to participate. From 8pm until the space closes at night there will be film screenings and acoustic music. Drugs such as Alcohol, Nicotine and Ketamine are strictly forbidden in the space, along with all forms of oppressive behaviour such as Racism, Sexism and Homophobia. The space is non-party political and is open to anyone opposed to the government's public sector cuts is welcome to the space at 29 Western Rd, Brighton, on the corner of Churchill square. – [strike-herestrikenow.blogspot.com/](http://strike-herestrikenow.blogspot.com/)

## HPD Raid a South Bronx Community Garden

November 9, 2011, New York City – The NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) completed their raid of the Morning Glory Community Garden in South Bronx on Monday, November 7th, 2011. They pulled up kale by the roots, they trashed raised beds, and they erected a fence around the garden so the Morning Glory members could only stand by and watch. The HPD claims the community garden stands in the way of building “affordable” housing in the area, despite there being no concrete bid on the lot. They raided with no warning on Friday, Nov. 4th,

and came back on Monday to finish the job. Morning Glory members and allies attempted to block the Monday eviction, in vain. In the wake of their garden's destruction, Morning Glory members are reaching out to the community board to seek further action.

They could use your help in donations or even an email of support. You can follow updates on their blog Morning Glory Garden, or you can email them at [morningglory-garden\[at\]gmail](mailto:morningglory-garden[at]gmail).

## History of Morning Glory

The garden was originally an empty lot, owned yet abandoned by the city for 30 years. In 2009, South Bronx community members decided to re-imagine the space, creating an environment where children and adults could learn to grow, harvest and cook their own food. In the past few months they had accomplished quite a lot with very little resources. In their own words, they:

“Doubled our growing space, for a total of 15 raised beds; Built a new compost system; Built a large seating area, with shade structure, cafe tables and chairs; Planted our first tree (A peach tree! And it actually produced peaches.); Grown a lot of collards, kale, onions, beans, and tomatoes. Like, a lot.; Organized ourselves as a general meeting with working committees; Hosted an open mic and a community barbecue.”



Before the raid, they were attempting to raise another \$400 dollars to work toward their own CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), which would provide affordable and healthy food for anyone in the South Bronx willing to participate. Grassroots organizing like this should be embraced by the city. It's low cost, galvanizes a community and it allows for self-empowerment, education and fun. Morning Glory understands the mission of

the HPD and doesn't discount the need for affordable housing, however, they make a valid argument, that “affordable housing is def needed, and would be easy to come by if the city would repair broken-down buildings or put rent controls on these new richy-rich developments being built.” They see that the HPD and Mayor's housing plan doesn't really support the communities they claim to. It supports contractors, the city departments, and those who can afford the new and pricy housing. Historically, most urban development leads to the complete displacement of the communities where development takes place. Since the 2002 implementation of the New Housing Marketplace Plan, there has been only one progress report in 2005, before the housing crash. It's now

nearly 2012, and self-mobilized communities like Morning Glory deserve reasonable communication from the city.

### Access to Food

Food access is a major issue in communities where there's not much more than convenience stores and fast food chains. The South Bronx is a "food desert." Morning Glory took this issue into their own hands, and gave the South Bronx access to healthy, organic food. Again, they deserve the respect of the city and answers for an unwarranted demolition. – From "The Big Ceci" blog, [thebigceci.wordpress.com/2011/11/09/hpd-raid-a-south-bronx-community-garden/](http://thebigceci.wordpress.com/2011/11/09/hpd-raid-a-south-bronx-community-garden/) – "meditations on transformative gastronomy"; [morning-glorygarden.wordpress.com](http://morning-glorygarden.wordpress.com) has the story from the gardeners' point of view, including analysis of the news coverage.

### Epizentrum, Vienna – Brief Life of a Giant Baby

July 12, 2011 – In the past couple of days, a group of people in Vienna, fed up of the increasing daily repression of life and the lack of free social space, have taken over an abandoned building in the Ottakring part of the city. Ottakring is ground zero of Real Estate speculation in Vienna. The people are also fed up of rising rents and abusive landlords in Vienna. We are also fed up with how the city government



not only unconditionally supports the landlords but also how the city is doing less and less to help tenants and other social layers who find life in Vienna more and more unbearable. We're comprised of Austrians, immigrants, women, men, youth, middle aged, students, workers and unemployed. We are artists, intellectuals, and free thinkers. We represent a true microcosm of Vienna and Austria.

Vienna is one of the few capitals of Western Europe with a significant lack of Free House Projects / Squats and Community Centres. London, Paris, Amsterdam and Berlin, just

to name a few cities, all have these spaces. Therefore we call for all those that have Free House Projects/Squats and Free Community Centres to come to Vienna to support us and to help us keep the house....

Until a decade ago Ottakring was one of the least desirable parts of the city to live in. It's the historical district of the proletariat and lumpen-proletariat. In recent decades, Ottakring has become one of the largest immigrant districts of Vienna with migrants mostly from the former Yugoslavia and other Balkan lands. Since the past decade, Ottakring has become the centre of a Real Estate speculative frenzy. The poor and the migrants are slowly being priced out of the district.

We want a truly free, independent and autonomous space in Vienna. We are actually doing a community and public service which the Austrian State and City of Vienna should be doing in the first place, of course don't expect anything from the city or the state! We are people dedicated into remodelling the building using our own resources and labour to create a space for living, working, education and food for the community and society at large. We do not support capitalism nor do we have the illusion of reforming capitalism. The era of reformism is past. All across Europe, Finance Capital is using the state to take away all of our social and economic rights which our parents, grand parents and ancestors fought and died for. We are taking what is rightfully ours. Housing is a human right. Food is a human right. We are not begging for what belongs to us naturally. We are asserting our fundamental human rights. We are not criminals nor are we terrorists. We simply want to live as social human beings and to take the first step of creating a new society. The same struggles and day to day oppression which take place in Athens, Madrid, Dublin occur here in Vienna. Vienna is also caught in the web of totalitarian capitalism under the Neo-Feudal Corporate Fascist State. The financial aristocracy (oligarchy) is the same everywhere. Every country and every city in Europe is under occupation by Finance Capital. Like most countries in Europe, Austria confronts the ever growing support for the far right and neo-fascist parties. This house is actively anti-racist and anti-fascist. It is also a zone of anti-sexism, a space where women can be free and comfortable. This is also a house where human sexuality is free regardless of sexual orientation. Therefore, we send this call to all groups across Europe to come to Vienna immediately. We call on all Squatters, Autonomous, Women's Collectives, LGBT, Syndicalists, Antifa, etc. groups to travel to Vienna and support our House! We have plenty of space for hundreds of people to sleep. We also need tools, food, supplies, ideas, strategies and above all numbers to help us keep this building. In short, we are calling for active physical solidarity. This is an urgent call as by the next couple of days the city will begin moves to evict us. If we have more than 200 people, we will be able to repel the city from evicting us by force. WE HAVE STRENGTH IN NUMBERS! Vienna does not have a history of violent confrontations with the state. Riots seldom happen here. This is why we urgently need large numbers as the Austrian police have no experience with dealing with large organised resistance. We



need help from comrades in Berlin and France who have experience in defence in the face of police intimidation.

One Advantage of the legal situation in Vienna is that to be inside a squatted house is not a crime, only the failure to comply with the order to leave is a misdemeanor, fines normally don't exceed around 100 Euros.... – *From edufactory list // at.indymedia.org/node/20911. The Epizentrum was evicted in November of 2011.*

## Riot Dog in Greece

In the Greek capital, any dogs found roaming the streets are taken in, neutered, and given vaccinations. Then they're outfitted with a blue collar, denoting their "stray" status, and released back into the city where they sleep peacefully on the streets, sidewalks, and even at the Parthenon, where they've become something of a tourist attraction.

Greece has been rocked recently by violent protests over the government's "austerity program." And some of the city's stray dogs have now seemingly joined the rioters, perhaps in a show of solidarity. The AP reports: "Photographers have documented the presence of several yellowish dogs at boisterous anti-government protests over the years, barking and baring their teeth at police in what appears to be canine political statements. One, Kanellos ... was a constant companion for over a decade to anarchist rioters until he died, in July 2008." Kanellos still has his own Facebook page, with 10,000+ fans and a song dedicated to him. According to the *New York Post*, one fan asked, "What brings him to the riots? Does he believe in the overthrow of private ownership? Does he see the rioters as his pack?".... [the renowned dog psychologist assays conventional explanations]

But why are these dogs so attracted to the protesters?



The Darwinian Perspective: Since evolution is a continuous process, could we find an answer to the puzzle here? If so, perhaps the following syllogism might explain things: 1) Evolution is a process of change, where overall tendency is for simpler forms evolve into those that are more complex. 2) The complexity of modern human culture is the result of evolutionary changes, some of which came about because of our close relationship with domesticated dogs. 3) Since the

goal of the protesters is to implement change, and the goal of the government is to resist it, dogs are acting as agents for change/evolution.



The Freudian Perspective: Sigmund Freud's ideas on consciousness were derived, in part, from Darwin's theory. I've written a few articles here explaining why I think Freud is relevant to understanding dogs, in part because the human/canine bond is a reflection of the Freudian dynamic of the Id and Ego, i.e., the dog's owner acts as a governing mechanism for the dog's wildest impulses. I also wrote an article explaining how I think dogs are capable of sensing our desires and acting on them. With all this in mind: 1) Human consciousness operates via two energetic mechanisms, the Id and the Ego, a dynamic that can also be seen in how dogs relate to their owners. 2) Every society has its own Id (the unrestrained impulses of its people) and Ego (a government designed to keep a lid on the aggressive energies of its citizens). 3) Since dogs are almost pure Id, they gravitate more toward the side of the anarchists than to the police.....

The protesters want change. Dogs are designed to help them out. – *excerpts from "Political Animals: Why Some Stray Dogs Have Joined the Greek Riots," by Lee Charles Kelley; May 2010 psychologytoday.com; photo from dogatar.com, source maybe Hartford courant.com*

## "Open" Is Not Closing

In the Museo del Arte Contemporaneo de Barcelona hundreds of people have attended the KAFCA Conference [Knowledge Against Financial Capitalism] and discussed during three days about the process of devastation of the European culture and society by the financial dictatorship.

The Conference has been opened by a short communication: the next issue of *Open*, an Amsterdam based magazine, may be the last. Because of the financial cuts that in Holland like everywhere in Europe are hitting education museums and culture in general, *Open* is in danger, but the artists and writers who produce the magazine are finding the way to continue their work in autonomy. In the city of Bologna, an empty space that once upon a time was a cinema, and has been closed because of financial speculation has been re-opened by a group of students, cognitive workers and other citizens. Called by the local Major, the police have dis-

lodged the occupiers, and restored the cultural Nothing. But in Rome, the Teatro Valle, closed because of the cuts, has been reopened by hundreds of actors, writers, artists and precarious workers, the experience is in full deployment, and the Teatro Valle has become the most important cultural venue of the city. These are only some examples of what is happening everywhere. We should not only denounce the cultural devastation that is following the financial cuts. We should start a process of appropriation of spaces and resources, a process of systematic violation of the laws that protect and foster financial predation. We must create and develop the autonomous institutions of Europe 2.0.

The European School for Social Imagination is going to create a webspace for the listing of schools, theaters, newspapers and other cultural spaces and institutions cancelled by the barbaric project of financial desertification of social life, and start a process of re-opening of what the financial class is closing. During the KAFCA Conference (December 1, 2, 3) we have begun to draw a cartography of the new territory that is emerging from the crisis. In the first session Mark Fisher and Alexandra Odette Kypriotaki have spoken about psychic depression and economic collapse in British and Greek landscapes, Francesco Salvini has discussed the relation between cognitive work and conflicts, comparing Spanish and British situation, and interpreting the meaning of the English summer of rage. In the second session Federico Campagna has outlined the authoritarian dangers the debt obsession is bringing about, Valentina Monteiro has told the story of the privatization of the Chilean school in the years of Pinochet, viewing the current student's movement in this long time perspective. Then Francesca Martinez Tagliavia has pondered the problems and possibilities of the image production as a factor of biopolitical change. Pedro Leytao has spoken of an experiment in self-organization in the educational field in the context of the Portuguese crisis, and Andy McGettighan has spoken of financialization and defunding of the educational system.

In the last session Valerio Monteventi has described the current Italian situation, the technocratic government led by Mario Monti, and has tried to elaborate on the concept of Insolvency. Amador Savater has finally drawn the lessons of the Spanish month of acampada. Soon you will find the recorded videos of the Conference both in the kafca.eu website and in the MACBA website too. Furthermore, SCEPSI and MACBA will publish the texts on paper at the beginning of the new year. – *Franco Berardi, December 11, 2011*

### **Occupare: (Latin.) To seize, capture**

CFP for Intersections 2012: "OCCUPATIONS" Toronto, Ontario, March 23–25, 2012, Joint Programme in Communication and Culture at York University/Ryerson University

Occupare: (Latin.) To seize, capture

"Occupy but better yet, self manage.... The former option is basically passive—the latter is active and yields tasks and opportunities to contribute.... To occupy buildings, especially institutions like universities or media, isn't just a matter of call it, or tweet it, and they will come. It is a matter of go get them, inform them, inspire them, enlist them, em-

power them, and they will come." – Michael Albert, "Occupy to Self Manage"

(<http://interactivist.autonomeia.org/node/33609>)



"I think that our political structures are corrupt and we need to really think about what a democratic society would be like. People are learning how to do it now.... This is more than a protest, it's a camp to debate an alternative civilization." – David Graeber, "The Man Behind Occupy Wall Street," interviewed by Seth Fiegerman (<http://interactivist.autonomeia.org/node/33897>)

This is a critical moment, as "Occupy everywhere's" present possibilities for new politics, and new forms of learning, engaging and living with each other. From the recurring occupations of the squares in Greece and Italy to the UK's winter of discontent and the Arab Spring, to the summer of protest in Spain and the North American autumn—at general assemblies around the globe, people are running their own lives, influencing the media and discussing what is to be done without politicians. The recent occupations are an education in direct democracy and the solidarity necessary for action.

Occupy Wall Street, and the occupations around the world, are attempts to build the social compositions that are the precondition for action. They are the working-through of a problem that 'politics-as-usual' works to suppress—the massive exploitation that is capitalism, and the emergence of politics adequate to address it. At this stage, the occupations are the connection of people, ideas and machines—the cumulation of assemblages that might build something. What happens next depends on what is being built now....

### **Arthouse Squat Forum in Moscow**

Arthouse Squat Forum is an international, interdisciplinary festival that will take place this year in 13,000 square meters of the architectural complex of "Arthouse." [Part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, September 24 — October 22, 2011.]

The festival's core consists of approximately twenty independent exhibitions, put together by participants of self-organized creative collectives, representing a wide range of tendencies and artistic directions. With the aim of bringing the contemporary audience and a broad assortment of creative professionals into an active dialogue, the festival curators have supplemented the exhibitions with a program of

Q+A sessions, lectures, concerts, performances, theatrical productions, markets and parties, which will stretch over the course of four weeks.



Guided by the principles of openness and freedom for different creative pursuits – from art, theatre, dance, music and film – Arthouse Squat Forum aims to foster communication between various participants of the contemporary art processes. The festival’s title hearkens to an age of self-organization for artists, which was already a trend in the nineteenth century. In the 20th century, empty buildings gave rise to entire creative communities, enriching the social fabric of the megapolis. Historical squats – among them Bateau Lavoir in Paris, or the later Ruigoord near Amsterdam, Jordan in Amsterdam, the arts neighborhood in Los Angeles, or RHINO, the squat of independent cinematographers in Geneva – all became critical points in the history of world culture. The curators of Art Squat Forum propose using “squatting” as a method of combatting isolation and alienation within the larger creative community. – *Andey Parshikov, curator of Arthouse Squat Forum, art critic*

### Project in the Frappant, Hamburg, 2009

Blinzelbar in Frappant Building: A project space organised and curated by Judith Haman and Heiner Metzger. An art space in the redevelopment area of Altona-Altstadt with projects against social and cultural displacement, against waiting without prospects – for investors and creative managers. In cooperation with the artists we invite, we deal with the topic of “opaque displacement” and work on tangible utopia projects. With incident-related communications, concerts, films, installations and performances.

In March 2009, we had to close the Blinzelbar in the Forum Building. Same as the other 40 artists who had worked in the Forum Building we fed in[to] the nearby Frappant Building. In talks with the owner of the building, with representatives of the press and the local politicians we often have the impression, we talk in a strange language, as it is meant in the idiom of the “bohemian villages,” inapprehensible both the language and meaning.

We will pick out these aspects of the “bohemian villages” as a central theme at our visits in the artist spaces we collaborate, We will formulate the experiences in the wirsindwoanders [“we are somewhere else” – Ed.] #1/2/3 projects and in the discussions about the instrumentalization of artistic activity for gentrification plans. [The Frappant building also was subsequently evicted, leading to the occupation of the Gängeviertel. – Ed.] – from *wirsindwoanders.de/*

### Our Autonomous Life?

#### Auditions for a cooperative sitcom

With: Maria Pask, Nazima Kadir

Is communal living driving you crazy?

Are diminishing housing rights getting you down?

Do you often imagine how “living together” could be different?

GDR invites squatters, central women residents, anti-squatters, ecological villagers and anyone who has a stake in housing issues and practices of co-living to audition for the new cooperative sitcom, 'Our Autonomous Life?'....

Through sharing stories of conflict and power struggles, solidarity and creativity from their own co-living experiences, participants will take part in collective learning processes of collaborative scriptwriting, character building, gesture making and building visual and spatial design constructions. They will work with a professional production team and special guests from diverse fields such as architecture, comedy, social housing and theatre and to depict new narratives of “living together” in critical and imaginative ways in constant reflection on the co-relationships between physical building practices and practice of “building the commons.”

Produced by Casco, co-conceived with artist Maria Pask and social anthropologist Nazima Kadir (whose PhD dissertation “The Autonomous Life?: Paradoxes of Hierarchy, Authority, and Urban Identity in the Amsterdam Squatters Movement” was the inspiration for the project), the sitcom offers a glimpse into the behind the scenes life of a fictional communal living group (woongroep) in Utrecht. It will be filmed within the “domestic set” inside Casco's space designed by artist Ruth Buchanan and architect Andreas Müller as a translation of the GDR apartment – a site that will encourage playfully undoing and reinventing relations and affects with one another.



Audition location: Casco, Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Prepare a brief story on your co-living conflicts including a proposal(s) of practical, spatial, imaginative and/or political ideas for creating different ways of living together. ... Approximately 10 people will be chosen to participate in a 4-part weekend workshop series in September and October 2011 which will culminate in a 4-episode sitcom unfolded monthly at the final GDR exhibition (opening 5 November, 2011) and broadcast locally through RTV Utrecht.... – from [mediamatic.net/page/227717/en](http://mediamatic.net/page/227717/en), September 3, 2011.

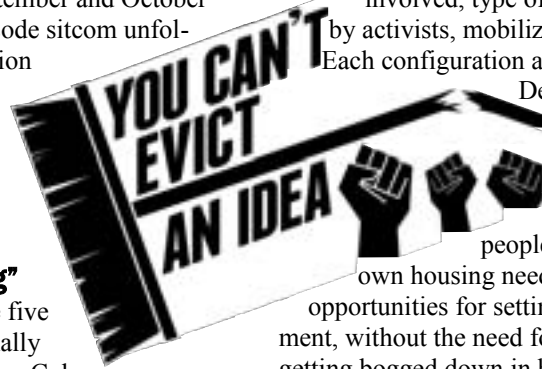
### “The Logic of Urban Squatting”

Hans Pruijt's new article is “about the five configurations of squatting” he originally presented at a SQEK (Squatting Europe Collective) conference in Berlin. “This article is much extended, with an explicit theoretical and conceptual base and various new cases.” Available as a download in draft form at [repub.eur.nl/res/pub/25656](http://repub.eur.nl/res/pub/25656).

Abstract: “Existing frameworks tend to break when applied to the analysis of urban squatting. Five basic configurations, combinations of features that fit together well and are therefore effective, are discussed in this paper. In the case of

squatting, configurations differ with respect to the characteristics of the people involved, type of buildings, framing, demands made by activists, mobilization and organization patterns. Each configuration also entails specific problems.

Deprivation based squatting involves poor people who are distressed because of severe housing deprivation. In squatting as an alternative housing strategy people organize squatting to meet their own housing needs. Entrepreneurial squatting offers opportunities for setting up nearly any kind of establishment, without the need for large resources nor the risk of getting bogged down in bureaucracy. Conservational squatting involves squatting as a tactic used in the preservation of a cityscape or landscape against efficiency-driven planned transformation. Political squatting is a field of action for those who are engaged in anti-systemic politics.”



Frappant building in Hamburg, 2009

# We would like to welcome you to an experiment....

12 November, 2011, Chapel Hill, North Carolina – For the past month and a half, thousands of people all over the U.S. have been occupying public space in protest of economic inequality and hopelessness. This itself began as an experiment in a small park in New York City, though it did not emerge out of a vacuum: Occupy Wall St. “made sense” because of the rebels of Cairo, because of the indignados of Madrid and Barcelona and Athens. All of these rebellions were experiments in self-organization which emerged out of their own specific contexts, their own histories of struggle and revolution. Each were unique, but also united by the shared reality of the failure and decline of late global capitalism, and the futility of electoral politics.

Recently, this “Occupy” phenomenon has expanded beyond merely “providing a space for dialogue” to become a diverse movement actively seeking to shift the social terrain. From strikes and building occupations to marches and port blockades, this looks different in different places, as it should, but one thing is clear: Many are no longer content with “speaking truth to power,” for they understand that power does not listen.

Toward that end, we offer this building occupation as an experiment, as a possible way forward. For decades, occupied buildings have been a foundation for social movements around the world. In places as diverse as Brazil, South Africa, Spain, Mexico, and Germany, just to mention a few, they offer free spaces for everything from health clinics and daycare to urban gardening, theaters, and radical libraries. They are reclaimed spaces, taken back from wealthy landowners or slumlords, offered to the community as liberated space.

All across the US thousands upon thousands of commercial and residential spaces sit empty while more and more people are forced to sleep in the streets, or driven deep into poverty while trying to pay rent that increases without end. Chapel Hill is no different: this building has sat empty for years, gathering dust and equity for a lazy landlord hundreds of miles away, while rents in our town skyrocket beyond any service workers’ ability to pay them, while the homeless spend their nights in the cold, while gentrification makes profits for developers right up the street.

For these reasons, we see this occupation as a logical next step, both specific to the rent crisis in this city as well as generally for occupations nationwide. This is not an action orchestrated by Occupy Chapel Hill, but we invite any and all occupiers, workers, unemployed, or homeless folks to join us in figuring out what this space could be. We offer this “tour guide” merely as one possible blueprint among many, for the purpose of brainstorming the hundreds of uses to which such a building could be put to once freed from the stranglehold of rent.

In Love and Rage, for liberty and equality, – some autonomous anti-capitalist occupiers

## Breaking News: Downtown Building Occupied

Note: this occupation is not an official action of the General Assembly of Occupy Chapel Hill, but is part of the larger Occupy movement.

In the midst of the first general strike to hit the US since 1946, a group of comrades occupied a vacant building in downtown Oakland, CA. Before being brutally evicted and attacked by cops, they taped up in the window a large banner declaring, “Occupy Everything...”

Last night (Nov. 12), at about 8pm, a group of about 50 – 75 people occupied the 10,000 square foot Chrysler Building on the main street of downtown Chapel Hill. Notorious for having an owner who hates the city and has bad relations with the City Council, the giant building has sat empty for ten years. It is empty no longer.

Following the Carrboro Anarchist Bookfair, a group “in solidarity with occupations everywhere” marched to the building, amassing outside while banners reading “Occupy Everything” and “Capitalism left this building for DEAD, we brought it back to LIFE” were raised in the windows and lowered down the steep roof. Much of the crowd soon filed in through one of the garage door entrances to find a short film playing on the wall [Jean-Luc Godard's *Tout Va Bien* according to another account] and dance music blasting.

People explored the gigantic building, and danced in the front room to images of comrades shattering the glass of bank windows 3,000 miles away in Oakland. Others continued to stay outside, shouting chants, giving speeches, and passing out hundreds of “Welcome” packets (complete with one among many possible future blueprints for the building – see above for text) to passersby. The text declared the initial occupation to be the work of “autonomous anti-capitalist occupiers,” rather than Occupy Chapel Hill, but last evening’s events have already drawn the involvement of many Occupy Chapel Hill participants, who are camped just several blocks down the street.

Soon several police showed up, perhaps confused and waiting for orders. Three briefly entered the building, and were met with chants of “ACAB!” Strangely, the cops seem to have been called off, because they left as quick as they came. For the rest of the night they were conspicuously absent, leaving us free to conduct a short assembly as to what to do with the space and how to hold it for the near



future. The group also decided to move a nearby noise and experimental art show into the building. As some folks began to arrange the show, others began filtering across town seeking things we needed for the night.

Within 30 minutes of the assembly ending, trucks began returning with everything from wooden pallets, doors, water jugs, and a desk, to a massive display case for an already growing distro and pots and trays of food donated by a nearby Indian restaurant. Others began spreading the word to the nearby Occupy Chapel Hill campsite, and bringing their camping gear into the building.

Over the next few hours more and more community members heard about the occupation and stopped by, some to bring food or other items, others just to soak it all in. All the while dozens of conversations were happening outside with people on the street. The show began eventually, and abrasive noise shook the walls of the building, interspersed with dance music and conversations, and ending with a beautiful a capella performance, and of course more dancing.

More events are to follow tomorrow in our new space, with two assemblies from the anarchist bookfair being moved to the new location, and a yoga teacher offering to teach a free class later in the afternoon.

As of the early hours this Sunday morning, the building remains in our hands, with a small black flag hanging over the front door. The first 48 hours will be extremely touch and go, but with a little luck, and a lot of

public support, we aim to hold it in perpetuity. Regardless, we hope that this occupation can inspire others around the country. Strikes like the one in Oakland present one way forward; long term building occupations may present another. – some anti-capitalist occupiers

[posted at [occupychapelhill.org/chapel-hill-anarchists-occupy-downtown-building#more-816](http://occupychapelhill.org/chapel-hill-anarchists-occupy-downtown-building#more-816)]

### Police Raid Occupied Building with Guns Drawn

November 13, 2011 – At approximately 4:30 pm, one of the largest coordinated police actions in recent Chapel Hill/Carrboro history took place in downtown. After shutting off both ends of Franklin St. and establishing a perimeter around the building, several dozen police with guns drawn raided the 10,000 square foot Chrysler building at 419 W. Franklin St. Both Chapel Hill and Carrboro Police participated, as well as the fire department.

For the past 24 hours, the large space had been seized by a

group of “anti-capitalist occupiers” aimed at permanently squatting the building which had previously been empty for ten years. Banners and flags were hung across the front of the building and roof, an impromptu kitchen, zine distro, and tool area had been set up, and most of the boards removed from the large windows on the west side of the building.

While some were held down on the ground at gunpoint, a large crowd gathered outside the building, taking up a lane of traffic and screaming at the police....

Just looking around the crowd during the raid, there’s more new and old faces showing up to support this occupation than ever before. This is definitely only the beginning. [from [trianarchy.wordpress.com](http://trianarchy.wordpress.com)]

### Why?

“Along with facilitating citizens’ ability to exercise their constitutional rights, it is also a critical responsibility of all levels of government in a free society to respond when

rights of others are being impinged upon,” Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt said in a statement issued Sunday night.

“This weekend a group of protesters broke into and entered a privately owned building in downtown Chapel Hill. ... The Town has an obligation to the property owners, and the Town will enforce those rights ...”....

“Officers also learned that

strategies used by anarchists in other communities included barricading themselves in buildings, placing traps in buildings, and otherwise destroying property,” said the statement released by Sgt. Josh Mecimore. “The group in the ... building used large banners to obscure the windows to the business and strategically placed members on the roof as look-outs.”....

The group printed a flier that proposed a possible new use for the space that would include a free clinic, kitchen, child care, library and dormitories, among other uses. The flier acknowledged they were breaking the law by entering the building.

“Make no mistake: this occupation is illegal,” it said, “as are most of the other occupations taking place around the U.S., as were many of the other acts of defiance that won the little freedom and equality we appreciate today.”

[from text by Katelyn Ferrel and Mark Schultz, *The News and Observer*; [newsobserver.com](http://newsobserver.com)] Eviction photo by Katelyn Ferrel.



## Seattle occupation: “a sign that we constitute a real threat to capitalism...”

On the Occupied Warehouse on Capitol Hill in Seattle, Washington state, by Anonymous: Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, at 6pm, 70 people gathered at Seattle Central Community College and marched through Capitol Hill behind a banner that read “You Can't Evict An Idea, Occupy Everything.” This demonstration was called for on the news that Seattle Central Community College and the state were filing an emergency ban on Occupy Seattle's encampment at the college.

The march ended at a warehouse on Union and 10th Avenue East, and the doors were opened to the excited crowd and flyers were handed out. Once inside, occupiers immediately began cleaning up the space, stringing lights, hauling in furniture, food and supplies and unfurling banners. As of 8pm, the cop cars that were parked across the street surveilling had left. There are plans for a dj later tonight, and an assembly to decide further what this occupation will look like. We invite you to help us hold this location indefinitely!

Across the country, homes and buildings sit empty while we struggle to pay rent, avoid foreclosure, or stay off the streets. Once the Union Cultural Center, this building was emptied earlier this year to make way for yet another luxury apartment building. Where this space once housed dancing, it is now a box of stale air. According to the Capitol Hill Seattle blog, it is set to be demolished next week. We must wonder how long it will sit as a chainlink-guarded gravel lot. They wish to tear it down; we wish to breathe life back into it. We welcome you to our new social center.



Gentrification has left Capitol Hill a graveyard of half-finished condos and barren lots. Just a few blocks from here, residents of the Marion Building apartments were displaced in 2008 by developers. Rather than comply with his orders, the final resident shot himself just twelve hours before his eviction and set the building on fire. Three years later, the building stands untouched, save for the scorch-marks and the graffiti. These wounds are everywhere around us, and they run through our flesh, too.

In the face of this everyday misery, we have chosen what many have taken up before: the struggle to reclaim our lives.

Whether out of necessity or as a political statement, squats all over the world have served as crucial social spaces, as oases in the isolating desert of life under capitalism. There is no more true public space left, so we must take it. This is not a protest or simply a response to the current economic ‘crisis’ (for we saw it coming all along), this is a response to the crisis of economics.

This is an occupation.

In the face of eviction from parks and squares, Occupiers everywhere have begun to seize bank-owned property, abandoned city buildings, universities, and houses in foreclosure. Already in the Central District, autonomous occupiers have squatted a partially built house on 23rd Avenue and made it their home. “There are homeless people. There are empty houses. That makes no sense.”

But the logic of capitalism is the logic of false scarcity: while billions go hungry, food rots on the shelves of grocery stores and crops are destroyed to drive up prices. What if we stopped living in fear?

The possibilities for what we might create in this liberated space are endless. We have many needs and every intention of fulfilling them. In the short term, this might look like a lending library, a kitchen, a theatre, a clinic, a meeting hall, a childcare center, a dormitory, a free store. Taken to its logical extent, this and other social spaces could be a step in the direction of an autonomous life, cutting ourselves free from the noose of rent, wage slavery, this prison world, and the police that maintain it all.

Welcome to our new center of resistance. We occupy this building for ourselves, and in solidarity with our loved ones in the Oakland Commune, Chapel Hill, Cairo; in the squats of Barcelona and Amsterdam; with the Duwamish people who were ousted from this very land a century ago. We do this to conjure into being, however briefly, an entirely different world.

Let us be clear: this is only the beginning, a hint of what might come. If we are arrested, if we are removed from this building with guns in our faces and our hands bound behind our backs, it is neither unexpected nor a sign of failure. It is instead a sign that we constitute a real threat to capitalism and to the very concept of private property. There is no other option left but to recognize which side we are on. We say this not as martyrs, but as those who have chosen to live.

Friends, join us! We have our whole lives to gain.

[from [pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/1157](http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/1157) reposted to [indybay.org/newsitems/2011/12/03/18701622.php](http://indybay.org/newsitems/2011/12/03/18701622.php)]

*This occupation was evicted the following morning with 16 arrests. A long discussion about the specifics of gentrification including many conservative and reformist voices took place on the above-mentioned Capitol Hill neighborhood blog ([capitolhillseattle.com/2011/12/14/occupy-capitol-hill-occupy-coming-back...](http://capitolhillseattle.com/2011/12/14/occupy-capitol-hill-occupy-coming-back...))*

# On the Capitol Hill Occupation: Eight hours of life in a dead world

Background: Last night around 75 people entered an enormous empty building on Capitol Hill after a march entitled, "You Can't Evict an Idea! Occupy Everything". Hundreds of people came in and out of the building: writing slogans, dancing with friends to live bands, giving speeches, and sharing food. The building is set to be demolished shortly for luxury apartments. Police and SWAT raided the building at 3AM that morning. 13 arrests.

We have all dreamed of it. Some of us have even seen it before, but never here, never in Seattle. They say it's too liberal, too clean, that our time has passed, that the city is theirs.

Last night we shattered their mirage. We all felt the specter of our own possibilities as we ran through that empty vast building. What before was dead, we made alive. Those who entered acquaintances, left comrades.

The building may lie dead again but the life that was breathed into it lives in each body that entered its beautiful expanse.

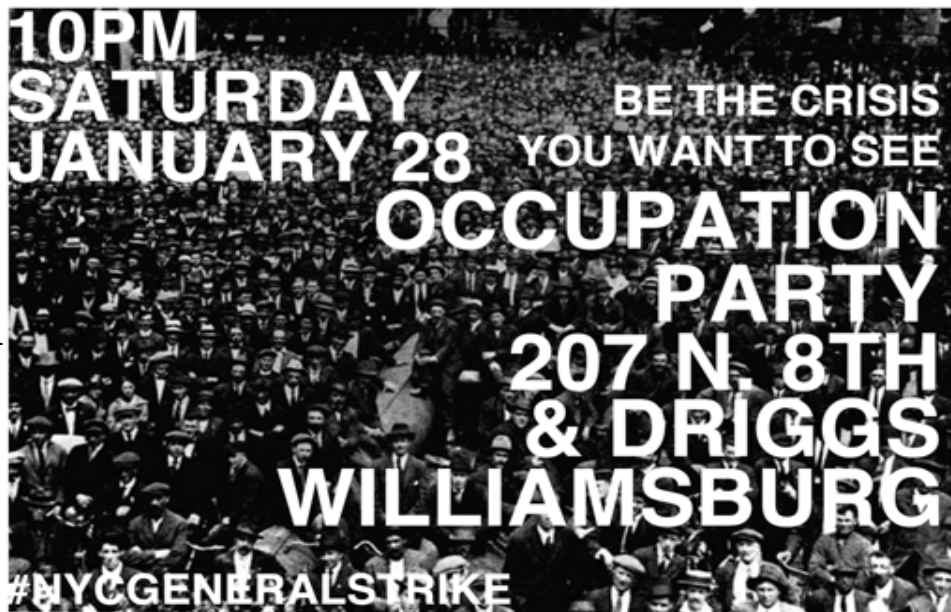
Capitalism may kill us. The crisis may torture us. But the revolutionary spirit of our possibilities makes us immortal.

You can't evict an idea! Everything for Everyone! [from [pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/1161](http://pugetsoundanarchists.org/node/1161)]

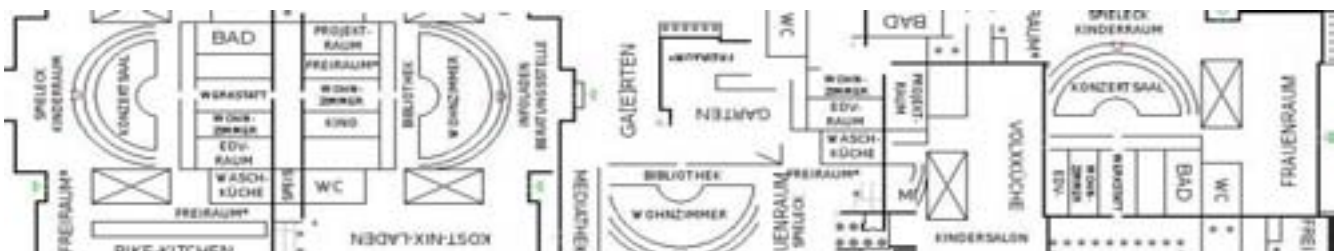
The Occupy Seattle warehouse action began on December 2nd, 2011, as a march protesting the planned eviction of the Occupy Seattle camp from Seattle Central Community College moved into the city. OS had moved to the college campus when they were forced out

of the public Westlake Park by police in November. The college president was driving the eviction effort, even though numerous faculty, including the AFT union, supported the occupiers. The march went to an abandoned warehouse in the Capitol Hill district, and the occupation began. "A national call out to occupy buildings had been requested by Occupy Wall Street in NYC with coordinated actions planned for Dec. 6th. OWS related groups have already occupied buildings in New York, London, Santa Monica, Portland, Oakland and Minneapolis." Given earlier experience, the occupiers did not fear police eviction. Yet at 3AM the next morning, police moved on the warehouse, first blocking off the street and keeping media far away from the scene. Consequently, no video of the eviction exists. Heavily armed SWAT units carried out the eviction. Mainstream media did not show up to cover the event. This occupation had not only international, but local historical resonance as well: "In the 1970's three different occupations were staged in Seattle. One was an occupation of Fort Lawton, an abandoned military base. Even Jane Fonda participated in that protest. An empty school building was occupied and activists took over an old fire station. In those halcyon days before the events of 911, the police and city officials left the protesters alone. In the end, the city gave the buildings to the community activists and they are still providing services for the community

today." [From "Police SWAT Team Raids Occupy Seattle: Media Black Out," by Mark Taylor Canfield, reblogged at [dailykos.com](http://dailykos.com).]



floor plan diagram of short-lived Epizentrum occupation in Vienna



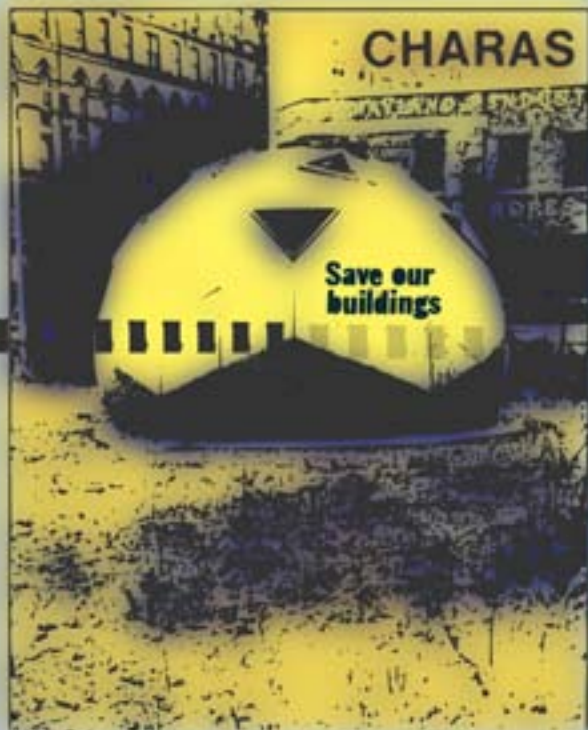




This collage commemorating the evicted and demolished Youth House hangs in the cafeteria of the new building

# CHARAS

CHARAS / EL Bohio was a spin-off of the Real Great Society (an activist group rehabilitated Puerto Rican gang leaders co-founded by Chino Garcia) that served as a point of community innovation, energy and growth. The former school's high ceilings, large windows and noble exterior attracted and became a hub of creativity, as well as community organizing. "For over 22 years this cultural center was a mecca for the arts and community service, providing a venue for free art, rehearsal, performance and community space, workshops, training's, school programs."



In its early years Charas worked with engineer/futurist R. Buck Fuller to adapt geodesic domes to the needs of poor communities. The main aim was to teach the local inhabitants alternative lifestyle methods of housing. It was mostly a technically oriented endeavor that became instantly recognizable by the numerous geodesic dome built in vacant lots.

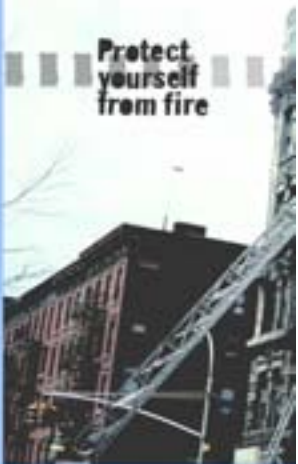
Epicenter of the grassroots, community revival movement, the building wasn't just a city landmark, but a national landmark, since it was in places like the Lower East Side and the South Bronx, that the revitalization movement spread across the country. "Founded as a pair of community-based and Latino led organizations, Adopt and CHARAS, the building was transformed into a community center as El Bohio after the city abandoned it in the late 1970s... The initiative mirrored a local and nationwide citizen-led rebirth of centers and helped to catalyze the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood."

The term 'Loisaida' was coined by play-writer / activist Bimbo I. Beyond referring to a particular urban place, to say Loisaida (a neighborhood) was to say Ambulant, one of the diverse organizations housed at Charas/streets.

After the Tompkin Square Park riots of the 80's El Bohio also became a public auction to condo developer Gregg Singer despite widespread opposition.



Protect yourself from fire



CALIDAD DE VIDA EN

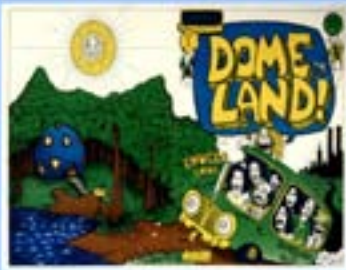
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bo Rivas as a discursive space for Puerto Ricans and the multi-cultural coalition born from the political relationship to the Lower East Side neighborhood. (as opposed to Alphabet City or the East Village) communicated action and the values of working-class autonomy and self-help. Rivas was founder of El Teatro as/El Bohio. During those early days Bimbo and Chino would promote the Loaisalda concept of place and identity by performing skits of their plays on the

o became associated with many shows and events from the Anglo and Latino Punk community. In 1998 the Giuliani Administration sold the community center at spread community and political opposition. Charas was evicted in 2001 and after much legal wrangling the evictor did not succeed in turning the building into a 19 story dormitory for students. Yet, the century-old school building on East 9th Street, once a vital part of the city's social history for the last decade became better known for just being empty.



In 2006 the Landmarks Preservations Commission voted unanimously to landmark the old P.S. 64. The panel recognized CHARAS for its role both in rescuing the building from the waves of arson and disinvestment that plagued the Lower East Side during the 1970s and early '80s, and for serving as a "physical and symbolic center" of New York's urban homesteading movement. Commissioner Roberta Brandes Gratz said the vote to designate P.S. 64 was one of the commission's "most significant decisions," because it marked the first time the LPC was recognizing the role of grassroots groups who used "self help" and "sweat equity" to preserve buildings in the face of municipal neglect.

In an update to the saga, Singer has a new asking price of \$40 million. This is a slight increase over the \$3.15 million that Giuliani handed it to him for- and is ironically looking for a nonprofit theater company to take the basement theater space in order to qualify for tax benefits!

QUALITY  
E IN

IN SPACESHIP EARTH

Text & Archival Research : Libertad Guerra



**Ken Hiratsuka's modern petroglyph is mounted on the wall of the 11th Street bar on New York's Lower East Side.** The artwork depicts events and aspects during the prime of the Chico Mendes community garden on East 11th Street, which was directly across the street. Now the site is a row of “moderate” income dwellings; at least that's how they were conceived that way... The garden itself was bulldozed by the city administration of Rudolph Giuliani in 1997. Though many of these figures and images are probably only known to Ken, some are clearly recognizable: the two dancers at the lower center (likely Ken and his dancer/choreographer wife Gloria McLean), the videographer to their right (probably the Swiss-born Alex Kayser, a frequent visitor to the garden and Ken’s studio across the street); the Mermaid figure to the extreme lower right depicts the mural which is still partly visible on the wall of the building adjacent the garden. Various plants, flowers and shrubs are distributed across the stone, including a large tree. The tripod in the upper left quadrant held a circular grill on which Ken and others roasted fish and seafood, and appears to show either a live lobster or crab entering the fires of Hades. There are also various fish figures distributed across the stone, including what appears to be a depiction of the pond where live fish swam. The female figure near the center top is probably Gloria, doing a performance with a colored string or rope. The female figure toward the right is probably Christa Gamper, the Swiss dancer and choreographer. According to others (though I have some vague memory of it too), there was also “a wood shed and chapel to Santa Clara, set on bushes of mint and roses.” The fish pond was “surrounded by religious icons, including a Buddha, the Virgin Mary, a statue of a Native American and an African idol carved on wood.” I wouldn’t doubt most of these are on the stone somewhere. The spiral at the center (aside from being an emanation of radiant energy) is a mystery, though perhaps it was the stage on which many dancers, musicians and poets performed, including myself.

– Michael Carter, NYC, 2/3/2012

# Ausstellungen

## Freitag 09.09. bis Sonntag 02.10.

Fotausstellung **Allein machen sie dich ein**  
 Fotausstellung über das **Georg von Rauchs** Haus und die **Jugendbewegung in den 70er Jahren** in Berlin mit Bildern von **Jutta Matthess**. Collagen von **Kat** u.a.  
 ...> Regenbogenfabrik (Lautsitzer Str. 22, Kreuzberg)

## Freitag 09.09. bis Sonntag 18.09.

Plakatausstellung **30 Jahre Häuserkampf**  
**Freitag, 09.09. 18 h** Ausstellungseröffnung  
 19 h Film: **Unter Geiern** (Westberlin 1981, 56 Minuten) und Diskussion  
**Samstag, 17.09. 19 h** Filme: **The Battle of Tutenhaus** + **Sag niemals nie** (Mainzerstraße)  
 ...> Jugendwiderstandsmuseum der Galliläa-Kirche (Rigaer Straße 9-10, Friedrichshain, Öffnungszeiten Mo, Di, Mi, Fr, 9.30-16.30 h, Do 13.30-19 h, Sa 10-16 h)

## Fr 09.09. / So 11.09. - Mi 14.09. / So 18.09. - Di 20.09.

Fotausstellung **Aufgeräumt - Berlin räumt seine Subkultur**  
 Fotausstellung über die bewegten letzten 10 Jahre in Berlin  
 Foto: **Görlitzer Straße 39** (Kreuzberg) Öffnungszeiten: Fr, 09.09. ab 18h / So 11.09 11-19 h / Mo 12.09. 11-14 h / Di 13.09. 11-14 h / Mi 14.09. 16-19 h / So 18.09. 16-19 h / Mo 19.09. 16-19 h / Di 20.09. 11-14 h

## Sonntag 11.09. bis Sonntag 18.09.

Fotausstellung **!!Aufgenommen!!**  
 Berliner Häuserbewegung Anfang der 80er Jahre.  
**So 11.09. 14 h** Eröffnung mit Musik  
**So 11.09. ab 15 h** Erzählcafés & Zeitzeugenberichte  
**Sa 17.09. 15 h** Kollektivist\_innen berichten  
 Die Ausstellung umfasst eine Auswahl (ca. 80 Fotos) von verschiedenen Fotografen. Sie wurde von der **AG für Bildquellenforschung und Zeitgeschichte** (ABZ e.V.) und vom **Umbruch Bildarchiv** erstellt. Fotografien u.a. von Michael Kipp, Manfred Kraft, Barbara Klemm, Peter Homann, J.P. Böning, Wolfgang Krowe, Ann Christine Jansson, Ulrich Sauerwein und Thomas Leuner. Wir wünschen **Diethart Kerbs** beste Genesung und hoffen, daß er bald wieder in unsere Ausstellungsgruppe „aufgenommen“ werden kann.  
 ...> Fraenkelufer/Köhlfurter Str. in Kreuzberg neben der Synagoge

## Montag 12.09. bis Dienstag 20.09.

Comics & Cartoons Ausstellung **Harald Juch & Dettel Surrey**  
 Comics & Cartoons zur Hausbesetzerbewegung 1980 bis 1984.  
 ...> Rathaus Kreuzberg (Yorkstraße 4-11) Montag - Freitag von 9 - 20 h & am Wahlsonntag

# Infopunkt im Mehringhof

als Anlaufpunkt für interessierte, Desorientierte, Wohlorganisierte etc.

...> 2. Hof (Aufg. re) Blauer Salon (Gneisenaustr. 2a, Krzb.) Sa-So 12-19 h & Mo-Fr 15-19 h  
 Pressekontakt Tel. 0176 383 413 42 / Info Tel. 0157 872 10 777

Mehr Infos: [www.geschichte-wird-gemacht.net](http://www.geschichte-wird-gemacht.net)

# Programm vom 09.09. bis 18.09. ...> Woche der Widerspenstigen

## Freitag 09.09.

**19:30 h** Diskussionsveranstaltung **Kiez Klausenerplatz - Nur noch für Reiche? / Vorsicht Wohnungsnot! / Monopoly im Chamissokiez**  
 Zur Entwicklung der Wohnungspolitik in Berlin!  
 ...> Kneipe im Regenbogenhaus am Klausenerplatz (Nehringstraße 34, 14059 Charlitz)

**ab 14 h** Festival **Disteln im Beton - 20 Jahre Bunte Kuh**  
 Programm unter [buntekuh.blogspot.eu](http://buntekuh.blogspot.eu)  
 ...> Bunte Kuh/KüBIZ (Bernkasteler Straße 78, Weissensee)

## 19:30 h Videokundgebung und Info für „Berlin von Unten“

Videoschmipse! zu Freiraum-Kämpfen und Widerstand gegen steigende Mieten und Verdrängung aus dem Zuhause; angereichert mit Infos zum Aktionstag zum Wahltag: „Ob ihr nun wählen geht oder nicht-ändern tut sich nur was, wenn wir's selbst in die Hand nehmen.“  
 ...> Heinrichplatz (im alten Kreuzberg)

## Samstag 10.09.

**13 h** Demo **Uns wird's zu bunt!** Überwachungsstaaten wegwuzeln!  
 Block auf der **Freiheit statt Angst** Demo  
 Im Anschluss: **Stadtrallye** im Rahmen der „Woche der Widerspenstigen“  
 (weitere Infos zum Linksradiokalen Block: [outofcontrol.blogspot.de](http://outofcontrol.blogspot.de))  
 ...> Start: Pariser Platz (Mitte)

## ab 14 h Straßentest Reichenberger Straße

**16 h** Lesung **emanzipatorischer Kinderbücher** (u.a. „Unsa Haus“) mit Zuckerrübe im Tempel. Nebenbei gibt es **Reikü** (Kaffee und Kuchen) und im Anschluss in der **Erreichbar** einen kurzen Vortrag zur Geschichte des Hauses.  
 ...> Reichenberger Straße (zw. Lautsitzer & Ohlauer Str., Kreuzberg)

Wir bedanken uns bei Netzwerk für die freundliche Unterstützung



## 14 h Tore auf im Linienhof

Offene Werkstätten: schmieden und schweißen für Anfänger\_innen und Fortgeschrittene an. (<http://linienhof.blogspot.de/>)  
 ...> Linienhof (Kleine Rosenhalestr. 9 (+10), Mitte)

## 18 h Erzählunde/Diskussion Es ging voran - Innenansichten der Berliner Häuserbewegung

**Keine Atempause: Schneller wohnen - härter arbeiten**  
 Mit Musik (Detlev K.) und bunten Tüchern. Bitte damalige Gegenstände mit persönlicher Bindung mitbringen.  
 ...> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneisenaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

## Montag 12.09.

**17 h** Diskussion **Gewollte Gentrifizierung - and the investor takes it all!**  
 über staatliche Steuer- und Abschreibungsmodelle im Immobiliengeschäft.  
 ...> XB-Beliebig (Liebigstr.34, Friedrichsh.)

## 19 h Lesung Kreuzberg K 36.

Lesung aus dem gleichnamigen Buch. Geschichte(n) inside aus der Kreuzberger Hausbesetzer-Bewegung 1977 bis 1983  
 ...> Fahrradraden Radlust (Lautsitzer Platz, Skaltzter Straße 95, Kreuzberg)

## 20 h Lesung Gender und Häuserkampf

Nachgezeichnet und dargestellt werden die Debatten, Auseinandersetzungen, Konflikte & Diskurse um Gender, Sexismus/Homophobie und die anti-patriarchalen Kämpfe sowie der eigenständigen Organisierung von Frauen/Leben-QueerTrans/Tunten in den Häuser/Wagenplatzbewegungen in der BRD und Westberlin von 1969 bis 2010.  
 ...> A Café / New York im Bethanien (Mariannenplatz 2a, Kreuzberg)

## Dienstag 13.09.

**20 h** Lesung **Lesershow Kreuzberg**  
 Mit dem Punkrockbar den **Martin Goldenbaum**, **Thilo Bock**, **Frank Sorge** & **Robert Rescue**.  
 ...> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneisenaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

## 19:30 h Infoveranstaltung für Berlin von Unten - Aktionstag

Während die Schächten zur (in die) Urne gehen, nehmen wir uns die Stadt zurück. Alle wichtigen Infos zum Aktionstag am Wahltag (18.9)  
 ...> Meuterei (Reichenberger Straße 58, Kreuzberg)

## Mittwoch 14.09.

**18 h** Vorstellung des Konzeptes **Selbstverwaltung**  
 ... am Beispiel der HPS und anderen Projekten und gemeinsame Diskussion mit grandioser Salatbar  
 ...> HPS (Heilpraktikerschule in Selbstverwaltung, Martinienplatz 2a im Bethanien, Südflügel 206)

## 19 h 30 Jahre Kinderbauernhof: Was wir brauchen, müssen wir uns selber aufbauen!

mit alten Filmen von der Besetzung über Räumung, Infos, Getränke, Bilder, nette Gespräche und zum Abschluss Lagerfeuer  
 ...> Kinderbauernhof am Mauerplatz (Adalbertstraße/Ecke ehem. Grenze)

## 19:30 h Internationalismus wird gemacht!

Die Solidaritätarbeit der 80er Jahre war geprägt durch die Unterstützung bewaffneter Befreiungsbewegungen. Woran orientiert sich Internationalismus heute? Kurzberichte und offene Diskussion  
 ...> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneisenaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

## 20 h Diskussionsveranstaltung Besetzt - Gesichert? - Bedroht!

- Beispiele akut oder potenziell durch Privatisierung und Mietsteigerungen bedrohter Häuser/Hausgemeinschaften  
 - Privatisierungs- und Mietpolitik am Beispiel der GSW  
 - Praktische Modelle für die langfristige/dauerhafte Sicherung ehemals besetzter Häuser (Hausgemeinschaften)

**Forderungen und Aktionsmöglichkeiten gegen Privatisierung, Spekulation, Gentrifizierung und Mietsteigerungen**  
 u.a. mit Hermann Werle (Berliner Mietergemeinschaft), Vertreter\_innen von Genossenschaften und Mieterinitiativen  
 ...> Festsaal Kreuzberg (Skaltzter Straße 130, Kreuzberg)

# 30 JAHRE HÄUSER UND BEWEGUNG



## Programm Regenbogenkino

- 09.09. 19.30 h | 10.09. 0.21 h**  
**Allein machen sie dich ein**  
 BRD 1973/74, 73min., Ein Dokfilm vom Rauch-Haus-Kollektiv  
 Am 12. 9. mit Einführung zur Jugendbewegung Anfang der 70er Jahre
- 09.09. um 21 h | 10.09. um 19 h**  
**15.09. um 20.30 h | 17.09. um 19 h**  
**Schade, dass Beton nicht brennt**  
 Dokfilm vom Novemberkollektiv, BRD 1981, 81 min
- 11.09. um 11 h Kubat-Dreieck**  
 BRD 1988, 45 min, autofocus videowerkstatt Berlin
- 11.09. 12 h Das Zögern ist vorbei**  
 MedienOperative Berlin 1981
- 11.09. 12.45 h**  
**Schlesische Straße 25**  
 Berlin 2011, 7:14 min.
- Räumung der Liebigstraße 14**  
 Berlin 2011, 3:47 min.
- 11.09. 19 h Solidarische Ökonomie –**  
 30 Jahre Arbeit am Regenbogen  
 Berlin 2011, 40 min.
- 11.09. 21.30 h | 16.09. 19 h | 18.09. 19 h**  
**19.09. 21 h**  
**Die Strategie der Schnecke** OmU  
 Kolumbien 1993, 115 min.
- 14.09. 19 h Kraak de leegstand** OmU  
 Niederlande 1986, 43 min.  
 Mit Gast und anschl. Diskussion
- 15.09. 19 h Züri brännt**  
 Schweiz 1980, 70 min.
- 16.09. 21.30 h Noise and Resistance**  
 D 2011, 91 min., Dokumentarfilm
- 17.09. 21 h | 18.09. 21.30 h | 19.09. 19 h**  
**Das war das S.O.36**  
 BRD 1979-84, Super 8, 91 min.  
 ---> Regenbogenfabrik  
 (Lausitzer Str. 22, Kreuzberg)
- Theater S.K.E.T. - schnelle kulturelle eingreiftruppe** Wer ist hier der Kiezkiller?  
 B-Movie Berlin!
- 11.09. 16 h** Abhöranlage Teufelsberg  
 Teufelsbeschaussee, 14193 Berlin
- 15.09. 21 h** Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2a,  
 10997 Berlin
- 16.09. 20 h** Gallia-Kirche, Rigaer Straße  
 9-10, 10247 Berlin
- 17.09. 20 h** Jugendtheaterbüro Moabit,  
 Wielestr. 32, 10551 Berlin

**20 h** Konzert **Judiths Krise** (Frauenchor) mit ihrem **Spreegoldprogramm** im Anschluss **Party**  
 ---> Südlöck (Admiralstr. 1-2, Kreuzberg)

**21 h** **Sollkonzert/Party für den räumungsbedrohten Linienhof**  
 Auf zerstörten Projekten läßt sich nicht bauen!  
 HC Punk mit: M.V.D. Krystal Meth, Moderne Krüppel danach **Sister of satan**, Realitätsflucht und weitere DJs.  
 ---> New York im Bethanien (Mariannenplatz 2a, Kreuzberg)

**Samstag, 17.09.**  
**15 h** **Haus- und Hofest in der Willibald-Alexisstr. 34**  
 ehemals besetzt, jetzt akut bedroht  
 ---> Willibald-Alexisstr. 34 (Kreuzberg)

**16 h** **Richardplatz 8**  
 Kaffee & Kuchen, Bilder, Erzählcafé und Filme gegen **Moire** und **RGB!**  
 ---> Richardplatz 8 (Neukölln)

**20 h** **Konzert Früchte des Zorns**  
 ---> Bunte Kuh/KUBIZ (Bernkasteler Straße 78, Weissensee)

**20 h** **Film Häuser, Hass und Straßenkampf**  
 2006 wollte rbb-Autor Eckart Lotzmann wissen: Was ist von den Hausbesetzungen 25 Jahre später geblieben? Wie kam es überhaupt dazu? Lotzmann befragte u.a. Klaus Rattay, den Vater des damals getöteten Demonstranten Klaus-Jürgen Rattay.  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**Sonntag, 18.09.**  
**14 h** **Demo Aktionstag gegen steigende Mieten**  
 aktuelle Infos:  
<http://berlinvonnunten.blogspot.de/>  
 ---> Start Kottbusser Tor (Kreuzberg)

**20 h** **Diskussion / Rück- und Ausblick Wir haben keine Wahl – 30 Jahre und kein bisschen weiser!**  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**14- 19 h** **Tag der offenen Tür im HeiHehaus**  
 Erzählunde mit alten Bildern, HeiHehausfilm und Interviews. Vorstellung verschiedener Heilmethoden, Bewegungsangebote mit Essen und Getränke im HeiHehauscafé.

**18 h** **Hase und der Baumgeist**  
 Lustige und spannende Geschichten vom Zaubere des Hellens aus Afrika, Tibet, Japan, China, Lateinamerika und dem Orient, frei erzählt von **Anette Hartmann** unter Einbeziehung der Zuhörer\_innen.  
 ---> HeiHehaus (Waldemarstraße 36, Kreuzberg)

**18 h** **Veranstaltung hoch die kampff dem vorwärts bis zum nieder mit**  
 Kämpfe, Kleister und Kampagnen, Leitra-set, Papier und InDesign, Tipofhier, Farben und Kopierer, Zensur und Zettelkram: Eine ziemlich willkürliche Reise durch die Welt der Bewegungs-Plakate am wirklichen Ort ihrer Produktion.  
 HKS 13 und Hinkelsteindruck: Eine Front gegen **Moire** und **RGB!**  
 ---> Hinkelsteindruck (Lausitzer Platz 15, Kreuzberg)

**18 h** **Infoveranstaltung Repression und Antirepression / EA Berlin**  
 Berichte und Analysen vom Ermittlungsausschuss Berlin der letzten 30 Jahre Repression gegen die Bewegung.  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**19.30 h** **Generation Umhängetasche trifft Generation Hausbesetzer**  
 Ausstellungspräsentation und Ton-Discschau **1981-2011 – Häuserkampf, Hausprojekt und was jetzt?**  
 ---> Wohnprojekt Zorrow (Grüntalerstraße 38, 13359 Berlin)

**20 h** **Film 9 Tage hinter Barrikaden** (Kopenhagen)  
 danach Veranstaltung mit **Out of Action** zu Traumbewältigung und Burn Out nach/bei politischen Aktivitäten  
 ---> Meuterei (Reichenberger Straße 58, Kreuzberg)

**20 h** **Literaturworkshop mit Michael Wildenhain**  
 Für ein geplantes Buch- bzw. Broschürenprojekt sucht der Autor Michael Wildenhain Texte von Leuten, die sich an den Hausbesetzungen Anfang der 80er Jahre beteiligt haben.  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**Donnerstag 15.09.**  
**16 h** **Diskussion: Gewollte Gentrifizierung – and the investor takes it all!**  
 Über staatliche Steuer- und Abschreibungsmodelle im Immobiliengeschäft.  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**19.30 h** **Autonome Organisierung von FrauenLesben in W-Berlin – Geschichte(n) aus den 80ern**  
 Für FrauenLesbenTrans: Erzählcate zu antisexistischem Kampf (u.a. in der Szene), kollektiven Strukturen, FL-Aktionen, Selbstverteidigung, selbstbestimmte Sexualität, ... und Filmausschnitten aus „Born in Flames“  
 ---> New York im Bethanien (Mariannenplatz 2a, Kreuzberg)

**20 h** **Lesung Die kalte Haut der Stadt** mit **Michael Wildenhain** (Ex-Besitzer und Buchautor)  
 ---> Versammlungsraum im Mehringhof (Gneissaustr. 2a, Kreuzberg)

**20 h** **Vortrag/Diskussion mit Wolf Wetzel & Andrej Holm**  
**Unser Kiez, unser Stadtteil, unsere Stadt... unsere Steine?**  
 Die Hausbesetzerinnenbewegung -Ost- begehrt ihr zwanzigjähriges Jubiläum, die Hausbesetzerinnenbewegung -West- schaut auf dreißig Vorträgen tauchen alle Fragen auf: Verhandeln oder (wieder)besetzen? In öffentlichen/gewerkschaftliches Eigentum umwandeln oder kaufen? Die alten Zeiten vergessen oder mit ihnen drohen? Vieles steht erneut auf dem Spiel und Prüfstand: Was ist aus den alten Zielen, aus den alten Ideen geworden? Wer hält an ihnen fest, wer verrät sie, wer bestimmt sie neu?  
 ---> Südlöck (Admiralstr. 1-2, Kreuzberg)

**Freitag 16.09.**  
**15 h** **Kameraspaziergang mit der SaU** (Seminar fangewandte Unsicherheit)  
 Die SaU läßt zu einem Kameraspaziergang in den Kameraüberwachten und quartiersge-managten Neuköllner Norden ein, um hier die Zusammenhänge von Kamera-Überwachung, Sicherheitsarchitektur und Gentrifizierung aufzuzeigen.  
 ---> Treffpunkt: Boddinstr./ Ecke Herrmannstr. (Hallesche U8 Boddinstr.)



**Photo of a squatted house on the Hafenstrasse in Hamburg, ca.1980s. Back in the early 1980s,** several issues dominated Hamburg politics. Among others was the first outbreak of HIV/AIDS related deaths, rising unemployment (especially among youth), a re-heating of Cold War tensions over NATO's proposed short range missiles on German soil, and the conflict over a complex of squatted buildings across the street from the St. Pauli Fischmarkt (first squatted in 1981).

The battle between the squatters and the city erupted in 1985 when the city declared all “alternative living spaces” closed and attempted to remove the squatters, initiating a furious and vocal response from the local community. Meanwhile, the squatters barricaded the buildings in preparation of forced removal and numerous voices critiqued the illegality of the city's new policy. It had previously negotiated a rent contract in 1983, which granted the squatters legal rights to the buildings (is it technically still a squat then?). The squatters signed it “B. Setzer”! In German besetzer means “squatter.”

The conflict reached full boil in November of 1987 (after the 1983 rent contract expired) when a massive police force (including the national anti-terrorism force) were assembled to forcibly remove the squatters. This outrageously unnecessary muscle flexing resulted from reports by the Verfassungsschutz (government security office) claims that the squatted buildings harbored links to the RAF (the infamous left wing terrorist group). To this day these allegations have yet to be substantiated. However, at the last moment Mayor Dohanyi offered an ultimatum, promising to end the forced removal if the squatters took down the barricades. It worked, the squat remained and Dohanyi resigned a year later from the ensuing political fallout. The cultural repercussions for St. Pauli were huge: in short, political rebellion replaced the sex industry as the district's defining feature. – posted September 2010 by Matthew Crotty to [matthiashardcastle.blogspot.com](http://matthiashardcastle.blogspot.com). (“Photo courtesy of interwebs.”)

*These texts are transcribed from display panels exhibited in "Living as Form," curated for Creative Time by Nato Thompson in fall of 2011. The exhibition was mounted in a disused portion of the Essex Street Market, a Depression-era public market building on the Lower East Side of New York. "Living as Form" was a compendium of international creative social and political projects; forthcoming as Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011.*

## Hamburg:

### Gängeviertel

August 22, 2009, 4 o'clock in the afternoon: Disguised as a courtyard party, 200 artists squat 15 buildings in the city center of Hamburg, the last remnants of the Gängeviertel, old working class houses and a factory building, right between the Springer publishing house and the Unilever high rise.

Two hours later thousands of people visit the houses, watch exhibitions, discuss and party. And the wonder happens: the police stays away, and the next day, all newspapers, even the conservative ones, run double pages on the friendly artists' squat in Hamburg.

Years before, the houses had been sold by the city to a Dutch investor, who planned to demolish most of the old buildings. Due to the financial crisis, the investor had difficulties to cough up the money. Komm in the Gänge joined the Right to the City network and launched a city-wide discussion on urban planning and politics, leading to some changes in policy and laws of the neoliberal Hanseatic city.

In November 2009, 3 months later, the artists achieved the impossible: the houses were bought back by the city. And only now, in August 2011, city and squatters signed a cooperation agreement, which gives control over the houses and the renovation works to the squatters.

### Unser! Areal

...appropriates the planning process for the vacant Alte Rindermarkthalle (old cattle market) in Hamburg, St. Pauli, both conceptually and physically.

Conceptually, since 2010 Unser!Areal has helped the people living nearby to express their ideas for the future of the hall in a Collective Production of Desires, inspired by Park Fiction. The desires, gathered in a first poll among 18,000 local inhabitants, are sent back into the neighbouring quarters in the form of so called "phone books." They express a strong opposition to the initial plans of the city to streamline the hall into an entertainment center and at the same time suggest manifold clever, socially beneficial uses.

Physically, Unser! Areal has recently entered the estate with five "planning cubes," each seven feet wide. Unfolded, the cubes open up a space for the local inhabitants in which a self-determined planning process can go on with drawing, painting and architectural bricolage. Film screenings, discussions and practices in urban gardening accompany the process.

While the city of Hamburg has finally refrained from

having the "illegal" planning cubes removed, the struggle about the future use of the hall is in full swing as the city now plans to set it up as a mere shopping mall.

## Spatialized Struggles

The growing Right to the City movement relates to the urban thinking of Henri Lefebvre, whose theory influenced Park Fiction in the mid nineties. Starting in 2009, Hamburg's Right to the City network (rechtaufstadt.net) connects different spatial struggles (by now over 40 initiatives joined the network). It thus echoes Lefebvre's idea, that space is produced by social interaction, movements and imagination.

Suddenly, tenants work together with artists and squatters, radical leftists with allotment gardeners, ravers join forces with people fighting for sustainable energy, guerrilla gardeners cooperate with neighbours who want to set up a community run production center with a fab lab. [?]

Is the Hamburg Network an example, how emancipatory movements can operate outside the narrow frame of party politics? How people can get a foothold on the slippery terrain of post-fordism, by connecting spatial struggles?



*mural on former squat, Auguststrasse, Berlin, 2011*

## No BNQ

Spring 2009, only 200 meters away from Park Fiction, new investors buy half a block of houses. They want to kick out the old tenants, modernise the old houses, build 82 costly



condos, and then sell the whole complex (called BNQ -- Bernhard Nocht Quartier) again.

The bad news are made known, and neighbours found No BNQ.



*mural on former squat, Auguststrasse, Berlin, 2011*

A multitude of activities is started against the investors' plans, their advertising event is hijacked, and on a street party against the project, neighbors start an alternative planning process.

NoBNQ develops an integrated urban concept for the houses: cooperative housing and low rents, combined with innovative use of the commercial spaces, with a Fab Lab, an open digital, community-run workshop, as its core element. Around it, small companies like Ameise record pressing plant, the Gyro Gearloose Playground in the backyard of a neighbouring cafe, would provide jobs and places of learning for local kids and grownups.

To promote the idea, the Fab Lab Truck from the Netherlands [fablab.waag.org] starts production right in front of the investor's buildings in August 2010. The city's administration, however, doesn't approve of the idea. The neighborhood Concept for Friendly Takeover cannot be realized.

The investors' plans, on the other hand, are altered dramatically. Because of the pressure, all tenants have a 10 year rent guarantee (rent is frozen until 2021); instead of 82 private condos, there will be 67 tenant flats, plus 40 social flats in a cooperative house.

NoBNQ is a founding initiative of the Right to the City

Network.

## Park Fiction

Park Fiction organizes Collective Productions of Desires for a park in Hamburg's Red Light District, St. Pauli, since 1995.

Today the neighbourhood park has been realized. Designed by the residents, it is located with a view over the harbour, in a significant and beautiful place, that the city's government wanted to sell to private investors. A costly building was planned here originally, but the neighbourhood stopped the development in 1997. After ten years of struggles the park was inaugurated in 2005.

The plans were stopped by a clever Network in the community.

Instead of just protesting against the government's plans, this network organized a Parallel Planning Process in the community, creating Platforms of Exchange between people from different cultural fields: musicians, priests, a headmistress, a cook, cafe-owners, bar-men, a psychologist, children, squatters, artists – Interventionist Residents.

Instead of doing activism proper, Park Fiction made the struggle as well as the planning process work as a Platform of Exchange and Production. Lectures, talks, discussions, exhibitions and film-screenings employed the Local Knowledge, people started to make-each-other-more-clever.

Special Tools were developed to make planning more accessible; the Plasticine Office, the Archive of Desires, questionnaires and maps, the Garden Library, the Action Kit (a portable planning studio with an unfolding panorama view of the Elbe River, for house visits), a telephone Hotline with answering machine for people who get inspired late at night.

Park Fiction organized the planning process like a game. Consequently, instead of handing out textual leaflets explaining how to access the process, Park Fiction gave out a Game Board showing all the possibilities to become part of the project.

Margit Czenki shot her film "Park Fiction: Desire Will Leave the House and Take to the Streets" on Super 8 and 16mm in 1998, to capture the different voices and the moment when "art and politics made each other more clever."



Construction of the Park started only after Park Fiction was invited to Documenta 11 in 2002. Ideas were developed into buildable designs by the residents and Park Fiction in collaboration with Arbos landscape architects. The Teagarden Island (based on the drawing by a boy called Yusuf made in 1997) features artificial palm trees (you can hang your hammock between them and enjoy the view over the harbour), and is surrounded by an elegant 40 meter long bench.

There is an Open Air Solarium and a Flying Carpet, a wave-shaped piece of lawn surrounded by a mosaic designed by Sabine Stüwesand, inspired by the Alhambra. A flat steel Palmtree is copied from a carousel on Hamburg's Funfair.

The Bamboo Grove of the Humble Politician and the Dog Garden (featuring the long-desired Poodle-Shaped-Boxtree) were realized in 2005 along with the Boule Field “Abolition du Travail Aliéné” (abolition of alienated work), idea by Bernd Ehemann, and the Tulip Patterened Tartan Field by Nesrin Biguen. (The tulip pattern is a secret reference to the tulip era in 16th century Turkey, a time cherished in the collective memory of many Turkish people for its tolerance, the flourishing of the arts and the extensive exchange with the west.)

The Woman Pirates Fountain and the Strawberry-shaped Treehouse, however, are not financed yet.

## Park Fiction Archive

The plans for a Park Fiction Archive of Independent Urbanism, floating in the air in rugged El Lissitzky style in a

container, mounted on pillars, were thwarted by local authorities. It is now housed [under] the new rooftop of the [adjoining cafe and nightclub] “Golden Pudel Klub.”

As a start, Park Fiction organized an International Congress in 2003, inviting Sarai from Delhi, Maclovio Rojas from Tijuana, Ala Plastica from La Plata, and Isola Art Center/OUT from Milan, the Schwabinggrad Ballett and Ligna from Hamburg – groups that manage to create Unlikely Encounters in Urban Space.

*Park Fiction website: [parkfiction.org](http://parkfiction.org) // See an archives 2009 talk by Christoph Schäfer about Park Fiction and other projects; search “Christoph Schaefer - Factory City” at [techtv.mit.edu](http://techtv.mit.edu)*

*Bibliosol, the library of the 15M (15<sup>th</sup> of May, 2011) movement in Casablanca CSO, Madrid*



*Bookstore Oh21 in Berlin was once an infoshop in a squat.*



*banner from the web page of the new Youth House, Copenhagen*

# Steps East: To Budapest

*When I was teaching in Tampa in 2007, I did some work with Rozalinda Borcilla's collection of radical cultural materials from eastern Europe. (My class was trying to annotate the global list of artists' collectives and projects compiled by the artists' groups C.Cred, 16 Beaver Group, and Temporary Services – at [collectiva.wikispaces.com](http://collectiva.wikispaces.com). This listing project is continued today at [groupsandspaces.net](http://groupsandspaces.net).) Rozalinda collected these materials during visits in 2005. Among the places she went was the AK57 space in Budapest, where she met the activist Maxigas. What follows is Rozalinda's blog post of her visit to AK57, and excerpts from Maxigas' blog. Rozalinda met Maxigas during her visit, and quotes him in her text. He is a Hungarian anarchist activist, hacker, and intellectual who writes in English. I have chosen some texts here about the history of Hungarian anarchist groups in relation to squats and centers, and in a sidebar, his own recent "political business trip" to London. – Editor.*

**Groups, Spaces Budapest: AK 57 - Mayhem Central, squatters headquarters, anarchist center of operations Budapest, Hungary, June, 2005** – The single most salient feature of the urban environment in Budapest, even for a visitor making their way through the city for the first time in

fifteen years, is the number of abandoned or vacant buildings. In the city center alone, on our first evening's walk from one bar to the next, we counted fourteen vacant multi-story buildings over less than 20 blocks. There were many more walks to and from many more bars over the next few evenings, and it became impossible to keep count. And almost all the pubs we ended our evenings in were set up in the courtyards of abandoned buildings; surrounded by trees, ivy-covered walls and hundreds of laid-back patrons, it was impossible not to wonder about the four stories of windows above us, vacated, in many cases, years ago. One was a former school with dozens of classrooms; a former bank, or ministry, factory or apartment building.

The city is trying its best to be a new European metropolis investing in gigantic cultural institutions, revving up tourism and packaging history as its primary selling point, all requirements for what Europe considers a successful urban center. Covering itself in the signs of European representative democracy, the transition period in Hungary has been primarily a ruthless plundering of common property by a corrupt political class. As in the case of Romania, holding public office has become the fastest way to seize vast industrial properties, real estate and lands from state ownership and transfer them into one's own pocket at, shall we say, preferential rates. The proliferation of large, hip bars as a way of dealing with the courtyards of vacant

buildings does little to disrupt the city's newly constructed European facade. Camouflaged on hostile streets, an estimated 30,000 homeless in Budapest have become skillful at invisibility.

On Friday, 30th October 2004, a vacant former [state] socialist shopping Mall in the center of Budapest named Uttoro Aruhaz was occupied by squatters. It was the first such action in the city, an experiment to prove to the public, and to ourselves, that it is possible to occupy a building in Budapest.

Driving this new movement is a campaign for the right to housing to force the issue into visibility precisely as winter was approaching and the situation of the homeless was more and more precarious. But the squatters were a heterogeneous bunch, some affiliated with the Greens, some Reds, some anarchists, many independents activists and students and writers alike and some squatters wanted to create autonomous spaces as headquarters for already established projects such as Indymedia and Food Not Bombs.

Many of those involved in the short-lived but much publicized squat of last October are reunited around AK 57 a small flat on 57 Dohany Utca, which many refer to as the Basement, or the squat that is not really a squat. Maxigas explains to us that the space is owned by a previously failed foundation of some sort, and is occupied with their blessing. Participants pay only building taxes as well as utilities. But this is not a squat really, it is a seed for a squat, a legal flat that rehearses the workings of a squat a headquarters and center of operations, a place to return (after evictions). What is developed here as individual projects can be transplanted to the next squat. Our



*mural at Tutzrakter, Budapest*

conversations at the Basement are about activating potentialities.

There is living space (people come and go, we are told, and many foreigners that are passing through find a bed there through global word of mouth), an illegal bar, a communal cooking space for nightly meals (most popular on the week-ends), a workshop (featuring a badge and stencil area) and an info-shop/anarchist-bookshop/library. “We are black and red and green,” we are told. “There are eco-anarchists, communist anarchists and ontological anarchists. There are formal and informal affiliations to political parties or activist groups or NGO’s, and many of the squat regulars play multiple roles in multiple collectivities from indymedia to street art to the contagious AFK (autonom fiatalok kozossege or autonomous youth collective, in which membership is by self-appointment), to a local crimethinc cell. We are anti-institutional and so we have no formalized collective structure, but we have many different affiliations.” We are curious about this strange intersection of forces that seems keen not on sources, but destinations — not on existing social relations, but on transformation and consequence. “How do you find people, or how do people find you?” we ask. “How do you actually work?” The response comes with the swift casualness of the self-evident: it is a matter of needs.

So check out AK 57 next time you are in Budapest. Do not pass through the dark hallway in too big of a hurry. On our visit we were introduced to what began as a sticker exhibition, but quickly became an exercise in collective culture as visitors started treating the walls less as an exhibition and more as a free exchange area. People understand that where you take, you can also give back. A visit is the best and quickest way to be introduced to different projects, groups, networks and general mayhem that intersects in the Basement. Find the redesigned Hungarian shield or a local favorite, the re-appropriated right-wing slogans. Help cook if you want, and spend the night if you need. Ask about the Horizon Research Institute [<http://hi.zpok.hu/>], and its subdivisions: the Casual Biennale, the Peter Greenaway Society and Party Culture, to name a few. Try to talk about relational esthetics here [the theory of curator Nicolas Bourriaud] and you might make people vomit — the playful re-enactment of Peter Greenaway films, illegal parties,

political campaigns, research, performances and national organizing intersecting here spill out of any institutionalizing frame with a vengeance. This is a recent space, a young convergence still in tremendous flux. Whether or not it is sustainable is uncertain, and perhaps not the heart of the matter. The attitude to longevity here is relaxed, but different from the rather self-conscious short-term performances of mini-utopia we have become so accustomed to. The language once again is one of necessity and potentiality, an actual investment in notions of transformation: “we stay as long as we can.” [posted June 2005, to [commonplacesproject.org](http://commonplacesproject.org)]

### An Introduction to excerpts from “Anarchism in Hungary”:

*Excerpts from Maxigas' blog at [maxigas.hu](http://maxigas.hu), rearranged by the editor:*



I am doing some research on the history of contemporary anarchism in Hungary, from the era of the system change [end of state socialism and one party rule] until now. When I started to do anarchist organising I had the feeling that we are lacking any context and our group has to reinvent and rebuild everything from scratch. I still stand by that, but as the years passed I realised that there has been a lot of more or less similar initiatives before us and there are people that can share their experiences and lessons learned from the earlier groups. I hope to aggregate what data is available so that when new people come into the scene they can already have some sense of historical consciousness. On the other

hand the work of course should be useful and interesting for historians as well.

The apropos for the research is the upcoming book “Anarchism in the World” by Yayın Kolektifi (Publishing Collective, afaik). The idea is to compile a non-Western-centric history of anarchism. I was asked to contribute about recent developments. There will be subjects like:

- Anarchist Movement in Japan
- Anarchists in Chinese Revolution
- Indian Anarchism
- Anarchism in Turkey
- Anarchists in Eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania, East Germany, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria)
- Anarchists in Africa
- Mexican revolution and anarchists....

### **Local Traditions: Anarcho-Communism**

Hungarian anarchist tradition basically stems from two roots. The first is the work of Hungarian anarchists — like Batthyány Ervin or Szabó Ervin — around the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mentioned in the previous article. The other, much more lively tradition is the historical experience of the 1919 Soviet Republic and the uprising in 1956 (in the case of the latter a principal source is the confession of Angyal István). These latter events contain minimal explicitly anarchist content, so their mention begs explanation. In the international workers’ movement the anarchist and the council communist currents have numerous theoretical, practical and historical parallels despite the fact that they often distance themselves from each other and refuse to cooperate. Many Hungarian anarchists act like that too, but there are also many who acknowledge or even stress these parallels. That is how it is possible that in Hungary it is not uncommon to meet anarcho-communists who cite Marx and Proudhon, Bakunin and Pannekoek, or even the big Hungarian Marxists like Lukács György (also known as Georg Lukacs) and Mészáros István.

### **The Transition Era**

The era of the transition was naturally characterised by the growth in self-organised activity. Autonomous groups proliferated and tested state control in an increasingly unstable political situation. The most diverse concepts existed side by side about the transition and the reorganisation of society, often in lively discussion with each other. It is revealing that during those years several anarchists took part in the founding of parties. For example, they organised the Direct Democratic faction of FIDESz (the current party in power), which was able to provide 3 of the 11 representatives of the party around the end of 1988 and the beginning of 1989.

By that time the so-called second public sphere has formed: a network of scenes, groups, events and cultural products that operated in the grey area between the public and private spheres. One of the most characteristic elements of the second public sphere has been the samizdat publication (Hírmondó, Beszélő, Demokrata, and the third

way Égtájak Között). These periodicals of limited circulation were first produced on typewriters, and later with various machines, but still not with press technology. Production and distribution was organised through conspiratorial methods, since the content was officially banned. The key figures of the second public sphere, like the samizdat writers, has been the subject of continuous police surveillance and harassment. On the other hand, very few received prison sentences of multiple years.

As control slackened, the second public sphere opened up and became known and available for more people. For instance publications previously circulated in closed circles could be sold on the street. The morale of the population has been favourable for mobilisation. At the same time the international relationships through the Iron Curtain grew stronger. Thus, political activists could meet each other and exchange their views, while young people discovered such cultural currents as punk and anarchism. In such social contexts the first anarchist initiatives of the era begun.

### **Autonómia Group (1988-1990)**

The group was the first anarchist organisation of the era of transition (1988-1990, the transition to the multi-party system). It started with meetings at a private flat in August 1988, and the founding declaration was signed at the Eötvös Club cultural centre in November 17th, 1988. Then on, the group met at the same room publicly and on a weekly basis. It did not have any registered legal form or official leadership. There was not even formal membership — persons belonging to the group participated based on their own needs and activity. There has usually been a few hundred people at the events from which 50-60 can be considered active members. They issued numerous flyers and calls, organised several demonstrations and in the summer of 1989 they published the single issue of the Autonómia newspaper in a thousand copies.

Their calls, declarations and press coverage reflect the anarchist spirit and the goals of the anarchist movement. They focused on individual and communal autonomy exercised with respect to the principles of direct democracy. According to their ideas, autonomous communities organised in social and economic life can replace all kinds of central control. Their social ideal was the network of autonomous communities of free individuals organised on a volunteer basis. In the sphere of economy they consider workers’ councils based on the workers’ individual ownership to be the building blocks of the free society to come. They refused the institutions of power, the state structures, and have no ambition to take part in organisations that seek authority. In line with the international trends of modern anarchism they stand by the protection of minorities, feminism, anti-racism and ecology.... [street demonstration]

The single issue of their newspaper reflects the political direction of the group. The declarations emphasise the basic principles of anarchism and urge everybody to organise autonomous communities. Several articles deal with the local social conditions, and the ambiguity of the transition.

Although they supported the installation of a multi-party system, they stated clearly that bourgeois democracy will not solve the basic social problems, the lack of personal freedom and autonomous communities. Their concept of social transition is that the people who become conscious organise from below and form their own communities, a process that propagates and renders central control redundant.... [contents of journal described]

### **Organisations formed following the dissolution of Autonómia**

The GEO association existed as an official organisation between 1990-1995. Its goal was the formation of an anarchist life community in the countryside which can provide for the political and economical independence of its members. According to the plans they would have strived for an increasing level of self-sustenance. Around 40-50 people were mobilised around the idea with 15-20 people forming the hard core. The members bought land near the Hungarian-Austrian-Slovenian border spanning 8-10 hectare altogether. This could have been the economic basis of the coming community. The more far-reaching plans included a community that spans borders, so contacts were established with Austrian and Slovenian anarchists. On the Hungarian side the price of land was low because of the isolation caused by the Iron Curtain, but on the other side land was still expensive. Consequently, no similar initiatives started on the other side of the border. During the first years the members of the group travelled to the area regularly. There was even a small farmhouse on the patch of one member. They planted fruit trees and organised presentations in Berlin and Amsterdam, but — since finally nobody moved there — the initiative died and in 1995 the members dissolved it formally as well.

The Nap anarcho-punk group was initiated by punks belonging to the Autonómia Group. A few dozen young people influenced by the punk subculture associated with the group from 1990-1992. An empty house in the Nap (“Sun”) street in Budapest was squatted some time before, and the community from there can be considered the antecedent of this group. That house in Nap Street (occupied in December 17, 1989) can be considered the first squat in Hungary after the change of system. In the early 1990s there were squats in several towns, for example at Szeged, Szentgotthárd or Veszprém. The most widely known house in Budapest was in Liliom Street which was taken over by a French artist group in the summer of 1991 and another small group moved in after they left. After some time an official cultural centre was established at the place which operates to this day.

The Nap anarcho-punk group participated in the organisation of anti-militarist demonstrations and concerts. A solidarity demonstration with Berlin squatters on November 23, 1990, that resulted in police action, is associated with the group.... [histories of subsequent groups]

### **Turn of the Millennium**

Around the turn of the millennium there was a

generational break in the anarchist movement. As a result, a whole new set of people got involved in organising, but also the experiences of the previous cycle took long to transmit. With the disappearance of the old groups many anarchists found themselves in a vacuum. On the other hand, since travel abroad was not restricted any more, a closer international cooperation started, working through specific groups and mostly individuals.

By the middle of the 1990s what many anarchists stressed during the transition era became an accepted social reality — namely that the multi-party system and the market economy does not bring either general welfare or individual freedom. Social differences grew suddenly and dramatically, partly driven by the process of privatisation. The system of the parties that were founded during the transition stabilised and the existing parties started to follow each other in power.

The horizon of social change thus grew narrow, and in response lifestyle revolution and personal expression came to the foreground. On the other hand, as an effect of the alterglobalisation movement many anarchist-like “institutions” appeared, such as Food Not Bombs, the infoshop, the freeshop and Indymedia. IMC Hungary operated from 2001 until 2010 and more or less successfully provided a platform for the information flow between the various anarchist and activist efforts, both at home and abroad. It also gave space for debates that arise from these contacts.

### **Centrum Group (2003-2007)**

Centrum Group formed in the process of two exhibitions that thematised squatting, the second one being the Guerrilla Propaganda Workshop at Dinamo gallery (2002 autumn). The group aimed to occupy a large property in Budapest in order to establish self-organised and self-governing initiatives and an anticapitalist living community. The group did not explicitly advocate any ideologies — its members were mostly activists, students and punks. However, anarchists were at the hard core of the group and this shaped the theoretical debates and their practice. All in all, the group is associated with four squatting actions: the former Úttörő Áruház (“Pioneer Shopping Mall”, November 2004), the former Flórián cinema, the house under Kazinczy Street 41 (October 2005), and finally a property at the Újpest area of Budapest.

All these attempts were short-lived because the activists did not construct strong barricades or seriously prevent the evictions in other ways. The meetings drew 10-30 people and the biggest action (at Kazinczy Street) involved around hundred people. The activity of the group generated a media attention unprecedented in the 2000s, thanks to the fact that direct action and self-organisation were virtually absent from the public consciousness at the time. The last two occupations resulted in legal proceedings against 41 and 6 persons respectively. In the first case the court accepted the defence of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union which argued that squatting is not detrimental to society. Since Hungary does not have precedent law, the decision had no

lasting impact: already in the second case the court found the squatters guilty releasing them on probation. The group soon dissolved, acknowledging that they failed to find a strategy to achieve their goal.

A whole series of more or less lasting initiatives were born in the halo of Centrum (see the poster Our Goal is Life by the Model Museum of Budapest Squatters project). These roughly complemented each other in the context of a holistic movement building idea, but because of the overlaps in personnel they easily lost their wind. From 2005 to 2007 the activists of Centrum operated the activist/anarchist club AK57 where they held a freeshop, a library, an infoshop, workshops and living spaces. They held public and closed events as well. Two successive commune experiments were built on these experiences including around 8-10 people. The second one fell apart in 2009.

### The 2010s

Since the decline of the second generation it is not clear yet where and how anarchism will resurface as an effective movement. The gap has been bridged somewhat in spirit, physical and human resources by the infoshop project, which has been reorganised in a number of spaces (squats, AK57, in Tüzoltó Street, at the Tűzraktér cultural centre, Kaszinó community space, Romház and Béla Club). Kaszinó operated in 2010-2011 in an old casino building (in the old sense of the word) between Nyár Street and Klauzál Street. According to the aspirations of the participants the activities here aimed at realising autonomy and forming a

community based on a community space. Besides actions, exhibitions, education and workshops there was also time for looking at collaboration and communication with local and foreign groups. In contrast, Béla Club was founded by more experienced activists and so far it has housed lectures about the history of working class struggles, parties, and meetings. The rent is financed through membership fees. Meanwhile in the art scene there has been a continuous production of works and projects in the anarchist spirit, often presented in Liget Gallery. There is also a group called Community of Anarchists which organises regular meetings and distributes leaflets under a black and red flag at major demonstrations.... [anarchist magazines and websites]

In 2006 the Öszöd speech triggered the first real riots and street fights of post-transition Hungary which shocked the general public. Since then the far right have successfully established a colourful and fertile array of subcultures which spawned not only the Jobbik party which is in the parliament at the moment but various paramilitary groups as well. Meanwhile FIDESz (a right wing party) returned to power in 2010 commanding an overwhelming majority, now using totalitarian methods to ensure its hegemony in all social spheres. A part of society answers with moral panic, which sometimes manifests itself in the street in the form of demonstrations and self-organisation within the limits of democracy. Anarchists have not found themselves in such a difficult historical situation since the change of system, but the anarchist idea have never been so relevant and anarchist practice so necessary.



Graphic for SQEK seminar, Copenhagen, December 2011

# Leaving for London

[Excerpts from Maxigas' blog at maxigas.hu, rearranged by the editor.]

## RAF in Budapest

2009-3-5 – Meeting Astrid Proll at a discussion organised by the Goethe Institute was not too inspiring – in fact her speech was essentially what I learned from the *Weather Underground* film [2002]. She also seemed to have censored herself a lot, which is understandable for sure. So only a few scattered notes: one point she stressed and which was really new for me is that the superior fame of the RAF amongst similar organisations operating at the time was due to their well-chosen friends and enemies, namely a fanatic RAF researcher and Axel Springer the journalist and media magnate, who conducted a true news war against them at the time.

One typical misunderstanding was when Proll said that they had no idea what they were fighting for (no programme) but they were motivated by rage against exploitation, imperialism, etc. and their prime objective was to mobilise the masses around these issues. The liberal listeners and media and as far as I understand even herself understood this as a very good reason to dismiss the whole story as some youngsters running wild without self-reflection. However, my interpretation is completely the opposite. RAF was a marxist-leninist organisation with an anarchist spin, and such a strategy completely falls in to the line pursued in this tradition. The communist critique starts from the analysis of the material conditions of everyday life and it is purely negative: it is an attack on the system and a call for mass action. If they would have had a programme of a plan for the future they would have been a vanguardist bolshevik style of organisation that I really despise because they want to impose their will on the people. The plan for the future should be decided by the people through spontaneous mass action and self-organisation and the world of communism cannot be possibly conceived by anybody living under capitalism!

We didn't ask any question but some comrades went on record in the news reports prophesying a general havoc for the coming years incited by the same problems [for which the] RAF fought their war, thanking [them] for the example. True indeed, as another questioner asked: "Were the methods of the RAF more cruel than those of the capitalist system we still live in?"

## Free Food

2009-3-22 – I was sleeping until noon and left the flat with a big immigrant style bag full of clothes for the freeshop. There are many leftover things in the flat and we put them in the freeshop so other people can take them if they need. We organised an event for the 90th anniversary of the Hungarian Soviet Republic at the infoshop, not because it was perfect but because it was a really interesting historic experience. At the end we didn't project any movie but the 3+ hour discussion was quite satisfying and I learnt a lot. Finally, I visited our friends and got home with the bag full of free vegetables that they collected from the market today. Every Saturday somebody from our informal federation is going to the market and asking for leftover vegetables. It combines

with trips to a bakery on Tuesday and Friday to get free bread into a steady supply of free food. The system is grassroots, unofficial, informal, involves around a dozen people and each person has to work around 8 hours a month to participate. If you are interested, drop me a line with the subject "no wage labour."....

## Public announcement: Maxigas disappeared to London from Budapest, watch the news for appearances!

2009-8-7 – To cut a long story short: I arrived on 2009 June 19, Friday 2AM. A week later I had a squat to stay in, a social centre with a freeshop to organise, and most surprisingly a job that pays. It was an incredibly intense week that went smoothly nonetheless, since most people around me were so laid back and easy going that the roller coaster ride felt like a river cruise. Things only get thick now that I look back on the flotsam I left in Budapest.

That was the lead for the impatient, but I am sure there are some of you out there that want the full story, so it goes like this: "&" welcomed me heartily and took me to a walk on Brick Lane where we found some "Off License" shop. It means that they sell alcohol into the night, similar to what we call "24h" shop in Budapest – with the obvious differences that they are less common, more expensive, and open less hours. Anyway, for me the most significant of all those nuances is that they sell cider, my drink of choice, and one which is sadly missing from the shelves of shops in Hungary. It was him that later showed me the canals of London with their narrow boats. Often times London feels like a small town compared to the massive citiness of Budapest – while foxes are extinct in Hungary as far as I know, on the London canal bank we saw one with our own eyes, and "&" said they are far from uncommon in the UK capital.

"&" lives in Ocean Estate, a squatted council block. Imagine 5 blocks, each at least 3 stories high with 8 flats per storey, filled with 200 or so squatters. It's a massive operation, but don't phantasize about a black army like it would be in Germany. Although squatting is still a somehow underground and recognisable subculture, squatters are a really diverse branch at Ocean Estate (and most other places), ranging from poor Asian immigrant families through the usual suspect alternative artist types to upper middle class kids who want to save up on rent in the summer. I haven't met anybody on our floor who had a strong political consciousness.

&'s flat had a guest room, and that's where I lived in the first days, gradually moving over to Noncommercial House. The atmosphere was very welcoming, especially "–," who is a real hippie squatter with an irresistible smile. There is a kind of balcony/corridor going along the length of the house, with the doors on one side and the vista on the other – the only social space, which is nonetheless pretty effective, at least on our floor there are always neighbours hanging out, and they are always open to a chat. Many people work, many people not, some are going away all the time, and some are stuck in London for various reasons. They are open and social, but if you look at the big picture, there is a lack of gravity in the building: passivity seems to creep through the



walls behind your back while you are having a conversation with somebody. Investigate later...

We went around Soho ... with “&” after the interview, checking out the fashionable bars. I had some time to clear out my mind, and drink something and smoke something, although not in adequate quantities. The worst was that I discovered the lameness of London: it is prohibited to smoke inside, so a bar is not a really useful establishment any more for the only thing most people do in Budapest: drink, smoke and talk at the same time. By the way, later I also realised that the classic English bars, albeit architecturally interesting social spaces, are in fact filled with rude, boring sports fans watching TV and blabbering amidst botched acoustics. I guess that's one good reason to have squats and squat parties, where laws don't apply so you can smoke until you and others choke. By the byway, I was at a Brazilian night in a club in Brick Lane the other night, and to my surprise it turned out

that not smoking in a club makes for an even more disgusting smell than the usual smoke-n-sweat mixture – solely the sweat remains which makes you feel like in the shambles.

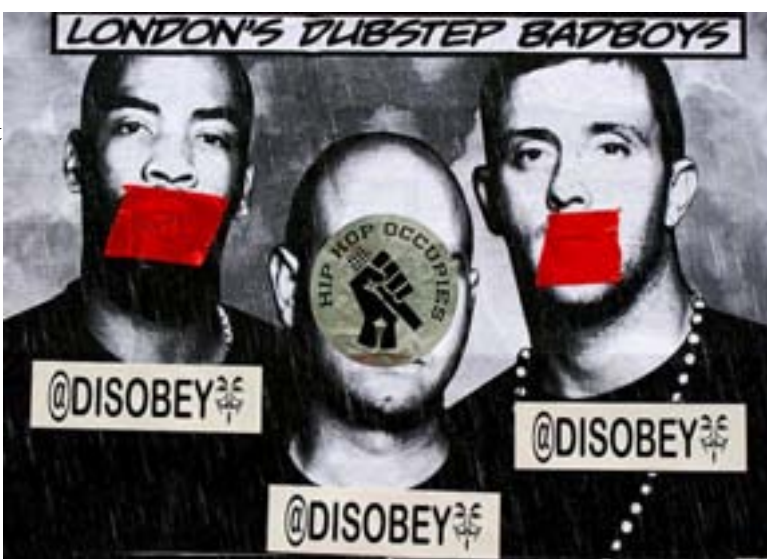
In the evening I was to meet “b” at the Rampart, the only stable place during the years in the fluid London underground scene for us. It was a terrible moment to arrive on site, seeing that half of Rampart Street – the “living quarters” – has been demolished, in such a way that the facade was still standing but going

around the block I could see the somewhat familiar furniture sticking out of the bare floors, most of the back part of the building reduced to piles of bricks. Like the death of a hero after an apocalypse. The doors were closed with no sign of the squatting workshop we came for, but finally “{” came around to the rescue, informing us that the thing happens a few streets to the north in Commercial Street. “Look for the building with a big black flag on the roof.” That's what we did, and around 11pm we found the place where I finally felt at home: a ruined building is like a supermarket – basically the same all over the world. And the questions that self-organised activists discuss in dim lighting are not that diverse either. However, the people here were markedly less subcultural anarcho types than in other places I've visited.

The next days I mostly spent going to these workshops organised by London Free School and discovering some of the other autonomous spaces of London: the Sunday breakfasts in the volunteer-run Pogo vegan cafe that are something of an establishment by now; 56a which is a combination of a food coop, the best infoshop in London and a bike repair workshop

with a genuine connection to the local people; the ancient Freedom bookshop with its old-school anarchist air; the Advisory Service for Squatters with its sinister underground bureaucracy, etc. I owe IMC Hungary a scene report about this anyway, so I write about it later (and in Hungarian hehe). Generally, I spent the weekend in “political business trip” mode, going around gathering info on the scene and trying to find the interesting people, places, etc....

I was definitely on the edge of burning out as an activist, having fought for 6 years for a social center and trying to establish the basic infrastructure for revolutionary organisation in Budapest. On the other hand I saw very interesting things coming out of London and I had phantasies about sinking comfortably into an established scene without having to participate in everything and worry about all the problems. I thought a metropolis would also give the necessary inspiration of moving on from my university years towards even



*altered poster from Seattle*

more interesting things, be they Phd, professional work, dropping out or being a lighthousekeeper in Bretagne. Those month I felt very old in Budapest, repeatedly having the feeling that I am wasting my time. I sought another playing field, a field of operation full of surprises but within my field of experience. In retrospect, I found what I was looking for.

On Tuesday there was a meeting about the future of the house, and to my (second) surprise my tentative proposal of a

freeshop got through. We spent the next week doing the “24/7 occupation” thing which means that ideally at least one person is always on the premises in case the owners or their lot comes over to check out. While walking on the street with a crowbar can get you arrested for “going equipped,” squatting itself is legal in England (not in Scotland and other UK parts) [*this is no longer true – Ed.*], so the building was thought to last for some time, not like our 24 and 36 hour squats in Budapest – where walking the street with heavy tools is not a problem. Because of the occupation I began sleeping over and spent less time at Ocean Estate, and during the next weeks I gradually moved here which came to be called Noncommercial House.... At the end of the week I felt part of the whole thing, and the job offer seemed serious enough as well. I reported back to my closest associates that after one week in London I found a suitable political project to continue my militant activities, a wellpaying job to feel safe as an immigrant, friends to trust and a squat to stay....

# On Nomads and Festivals in Free Space

by Aja Waalwijk

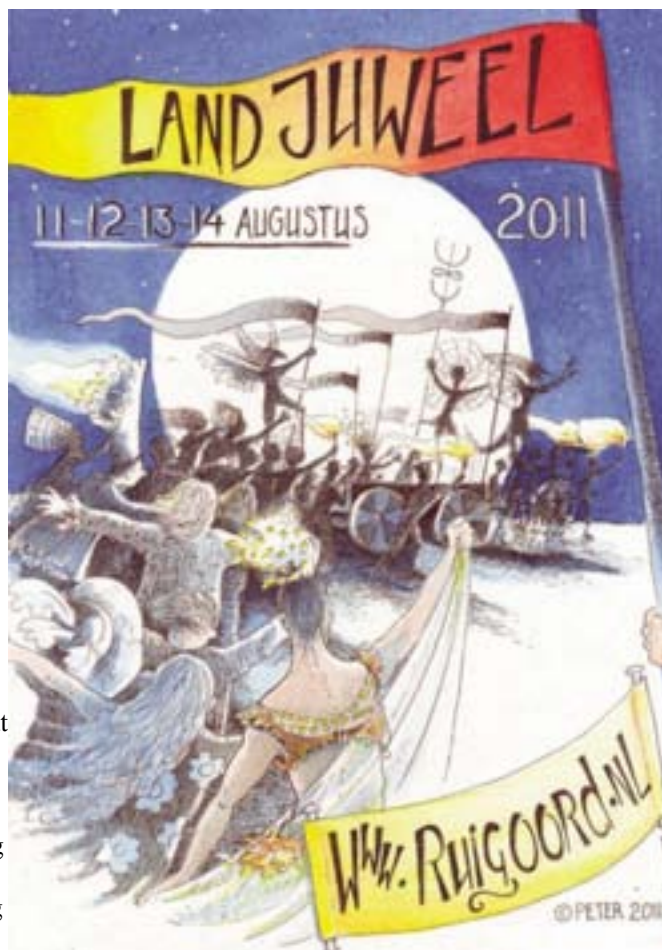
An Autonomous Zone or free cultural space is a topographically open space, be it landscape or building, a Freiraum or “free space” embedding counter-cultural traditions and values like the ones promoted by Provo (happenings), the Situationists (Power to the Imagination), Woodstock (pop-festivals), Rainbow Gatherings, Trance Parties (Boom), Squatting Movements (Christiania, Ruigoord, UfA-fabrik), Goan hippies, the Burning Man Festival, etc. Autonomous Zones, sometimes called Liminal

Zones, are places of self-realization, places where ecstatic energies flower. Liminal Zones lie between defined areas without belonging to any of them, like door thresholds (*limen* in Latin). They have a topographical as well as a psychological connotation....

In Holland in the early '70s the Kite Company of Den Bosch and the Amsterdam Balloon Company introduced Kite Flying festivals. These took place at the four cardinal sides of the city of Amsterdam, open sandy areas where new city districts were planned. In the early days, no permission was required to inaugurate a festival in no-mans-land. Admittedly, free space is sparse in Holland. But even the sky is now no longer off-limits for those who endlessly invent regulations and prescriptions. So planning free cultural space becomes our logical next step, planning places where nothing should be planned. Freiraum is a German word used to designate free space. It stands for all places where behavioral constraints are suspended. In theory all public spaces are Freiraums. Behavior constraints in public places are exercised though through, for example, one-way traffic signs, or bans on drinking alcohol, smoking joints, making music, sitting in the grass or laying on a park-bench. Public space is definitely no longer free space....

City nomads, who travel in the tradition of the gypsies, witness hard times. In England the Caravans of Love are under constant threat. Bureaucratic regimes have a fundamental problem with nomads, and display characteristic patterns of repression against them. There were nomadic restrictions in Mongolia during the communist period, NATO troops killed Balkan nomads

trespassing over new Greek national borders in the '50s, and Nazis massacred gypsies during World War II. When you have no fixed address you are said to be hard-to-find and you don't belong anywhere. However, gypsies are in a way the perfect earthlings, since they have never drawn borders around themselves and have never sought a fatherland. (Recently, to get some form of autonomy for themselves, the Roma in Hungary accepted a “minority self-government system.”)



In Amsterdam new forms of nomadism are taking shape. The so-called “City Nomads” once clustered together in caravans as the Human Garden behind the Animal Garden (as we call the zoo in Amsterdam). After the authorities dismantled this wonderful free-space, groups of city-nomads spread to the margins of the metropolis. These wanderers are not simply victims of circumstance. In their urge to be free, many have deliberately said farewell to a fixed abode, financial benefits, identity papers. They've relinquished everything except a caravan, accepting the possible consequence that today in the government's eyes such lack of status might transform nomads like them into illegal foreigners.

The squatting movements in such centers as Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Berlin opened many temporary and permanent free cultural places. Sometimes temporary became permanent and vice versa. In Holland squatting is outlawed now (as a result of a law passed in 2010), though there are still social and cultural squatting traditions in Holland — “social” for those who need housing, “cultural” for those who need space for cultural activities. Of course they are interwoven. Social squats and culture squats often developed into complete cult spaces. The ADM, a squatted industrial complex, is a true mini-society famous for its Robodock festival, among other things, and is still organizing festivals free of control and the supervision of authorities. Most of these free cultural spaces have been “cleaned out” by the government. Squatted military complexes like the one in Baarle in the south of the Netherlands had to be vacated because of the “need” for golf-courses and other money-based planological projects. In the '60s, '70s and '80s,

Amsterdam flourished as a place where youth culture took the initiatives. As a Magic Center, Amsterdam was a free cultural space, a real free-town. You could find people sleeping in the parks, making music in the streets, etc....

“Act first, then legalize,” is an old Amsterdam saying. In 1972, a group of artists and writers squatted the village of Ruigoord. Because of planned expansion of the Amsterdam harbor the village had been almost emptied of inhabitants. In the same year that Ruigoord was squatted, the Amsterdam Balloon Company was created, organizing four kite-festivals around the city before finally settling down in the village. Many actions and festivals have since taken place in Ruigoord, tens of thousands of trees were planted, creating a beautiful forest on the empty plains surrounding the village. Around 2000, the authorities moved in. The forest was destroyed, though hundreds of green-front activists tried to save it from total destruction. Police forces arrived, surrounding the village with barbed wire fences. But in recent years the village has been legalized, and now Ruigoord is a green island surrounded by industries, paying a modest rent to the harbor.

During its many performance tours, the Amsterdam Balloon Company (ABC) created Temporary Autonomous Zones throughout Asia, Europe and Northern Africa; and, of course, in Ruigoord, which remains their home-ground, where many festivals still take place. In Goa, from the late '70s till the '90s, the ABC held yearly performances. When the Balloon Company performs everybody is a participant, borders between the public and the artists dissolve. In 1972, the ABC published the following statement: “The ABC is a floating movement in pursuit of freedom in airspace. Anybody who loves balloons, kites, birds or other soundless heavenly vehicles (sun, moon, earth, stars, comets etc.) can consider him/herself as a member.” The implication was that during moments of action everybody is a member of the ABC. In the early '80s, I decided to join them.

If you want something done, do it yourself. You can create your own free cultural space by being (or getting) involved in festivals and cultural free-havens as a dreamer, thinker, doer or celebrator. To create a temporary or permanent free space all you need are companions, friends who want to lay some creative eggs too, or who know places where things can or should happen. But free cultural space is only possible when there is room or space for it. It's all about territory.

When a Temporary Autonomous Zone turns into a permanent one institutionalization may strike. Institutionalized Autonomous Zones or Institutionalized Free Cultural Spaces are under constant pressure. Direct action on non-institutionalized autonomous space brings about conflicts with the authorities, as we have seen in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, France, etc. In Ruigoord, which is now officially part of the city of Amsterdam, we held a yearly Temporary Autonomous Zone on the open grounds beside the village, our yearly Landjuwel festival. In the beginning, just artists and activists attended. We made works of art out of our tents, statues and sculptures out of what was lying around, had an open stage for poetry, music,

etc. Seeing it all happen, I suggested creating a sculpture route for the full moon night, when we traditionally also launched a balloon. The sculpture route became a theatrical interaction that included performers, acrobats, drummers, etc. This sort of initiative is necessary to provide free cultural space with substance. Form and content are inseparable. Of course, my initiative was related to and only became manifest because of hundreds of other individuals who contributed their own ideas, like Hans Plomp's open poetry stage (you might have heard his readings here), the Insect Sect conjured up by Theo Kley, Max Reneman and the Hippy King Poet Leo van der Zalm, Montje Joling's Why Not Circus, Rudolph Stokvis's balloon ceremony, Henk Spitteler's Freiraum concept, etc.



In 1991, the discovery of America bounced back across the Atlantic. As a reaction to the upcoming 500-year celebration in the U.S., the alternative circuit in Amsterdam participated in the international counter-culturally organized “Discovery of Europe,” involving representatives of indigenous peoples from all over the world. After talking it over with the community at Ruigoord, I wrote the following manifesto:

“America was inhabited by the Indians, New Zealand by the Maori, Australia by the Aborigines. Europe was the robber that disturbed domestic peace. The invaders built themselves a home and now celebrate their 500-year occupation. Ruigoord, a squatted village, in solidarity with the destitute tribes of the world, hereby symbolically offers its grounds as an anchorage for positive energies, a place for

rituals, in short, a stamping ground. We declare Ruigoord 'Stamping-Ground Holland.' We hope that this initiative will be followed by a reaction of our governments in enlarging the natural grounds for indigenous people all over the world."

In 1992, a Stamping Ground festival took place on the open space surrounding Ruigoord. South American Indians and Mongol shamans visited us and blessed the festival grounds with ceremonial dances and other events. In 1993, I initiated the "Dream-time Awakening" festival, which was opened by the Australian ambassador. With the help of some Australian Aboriginal artists, a simultaneous ritual dance was performed in Holland and Australia, creating a Temporary Autonomous Zone on opposite sides of the globe. Our Stamping Ground is now covered with industrial buildings. What was meant to be permanent became temporary. And with that our festival grounds disappeared.

During recent years we have organized our Landjewels within the village boundaries, but the space is cramped and the authorities exercise more and more repressive control. That's why in 2010 we visited the Boom festival instead of organizing our own big festival. We still hold our thematic festivals: poetry, solstice, percussion, I-Ching, reggae, trance, didgeridoo, etc. "You've got to row with the paddles you have," is an old Dutch saying. But our liberty is constantly at risk. Admission fees are sky rocketing. For many it has gotten too expensive. The authorities' demands for guards and fences make freedom fade. In Portugal, Boom [*Boom Festival, "the gathering of the psychedelic tribe," July 28-August 4, 2012 in Idanha-a-Nova, Portugal*] provoked the Anti-Boom Festival exactly because of this. But an unorganized mass-meeting of 10,000 people, like Anti-Boom, can cause a total mess. No infrastructure often means no toilets, polluted water, dangerous drugs, police confrontations, etc. Total Freedom can easily turn into disorder, chaos and crime....

Festivals have become an industry. Besides hiring crowd control, one can rent tents of all sizes, musical and electronic equipment, generators, stages, tribunes, dance floors, bars, projection screens, etc. The core values and ideas of the alternative circuit are taken over and commercially exploited as mass manifestations. Just to mention one example, the relatively new mega manifestation, Dance Valley, takes place not far from the village of Ruigoord and copies everything we do....

Cultural free-havens, be they permanent or temporary, periodical or one-off, can become institutionalized. Organization within a free cultural space takes place on two levels, one deals with internal programming and infra-structure, another turns its face towards the outside world, mostly on the governmental front, be it local or national. If too much is given away to the official control system, autonomy fades. Institutionalization may lead to government control on many levels: police at the entrance, civil police among the audience, firemen controlling every prescribed fireplace, sound regulations and control, obligatory official medical assistance, controls on electricity, food quality, the use of drugs, etc. All this costs loads of money, turning the free cultural

space into an unfree one based on consumption. And then it's not free or autonomous anymore.

In Denmark two important Permanent Free Cultural Spaces were created: in 1970 The New Society appeared in Thy-lejren, and in 1971 squatters transformed a former military complex in Copenhagen into Christiania. They did not appear out of the blue. Gunnar Hjelholt, one of the professors at the University of Copenhagen, experienced his first "international mini-society," as he called it, in a German concentration-camp and wrote a booklet about the positive aspects of the experience. Based on his work at the university, teachers and students, especially in the psychology and sociology departments, started new programs of therapy. Initially, empty villages in Sweden were used for their first experiments with these so called "mini-societies." The best houses were given to the rich, the poorest houses to the poor, an arrangement that naturally brought about conflicts. The rich were confronted with the poor, the old with the young, etc. But as a community they talked and their fantasies about the different social classes faded. Some of the students involved in the experiments were members of the New Student Society, which went bankrupt. The name was changed to the New Society, and since democratization was part of the program non-students were invited to enlist. In Denmark this led to a fusion of the student and hippie movements.



HIP, as an acronym for Housing Innovation Project, implies the search for different forms of living, being and working together. So in Thy-lejren the students and hippies started with a festival organized by the New Society. Temporary became permanent. Many visitors to the festival stayed to build a real New Society. A year later, Christiania was squatted. Though squatting was banned by Danish law, the Danish public largely sympathized with the projects, so the 1990s saw the creation of special legislation. For this reason, people in Thy-lejren and Christiania were not supervised by a government housing committee that set standards for how habitations should look and their lifestyles weren't policed. In Thy-Lejren one could live in a cardboard box, a tent or build a hand-made house. Following the same principles of free exploration, Christiania became a permanent autonomous community for many sub-cultural and counter-cultural groups. Residents there include the Inuit, bicycle freaks, communes of all sorts, alternative architects, the green front and hash-dealers, natural healers, artists, etc.

Common ground (a permanent temporary autonomous zone) is centered at the Field of Peace (Fredens Eng), Christiania's place for ceremonies, happenings and festivals. But there are also many halls in the community available for such collective purposes as exhibitions and cultural manifestations. About 1,000 people actually live in Christiania, and each day hundreds, sometimes thousands, of visitors come there to seek inspiration or to be themselves, to be free, to act freely. "You are now entering the Common Market" proclaims a sign over one of the gates as you leave Freetown Christiania. Actress and culture coordinator Britta Lillesø's biggest concern is to keep Christiania a free cultural space, to keep it a real freetown outside the control of the government. The "official" political and planological machine has worked non stop to get a grip on the place.

Just as the Amsterdam Balloon Company operates from Ruigoord, Christiania has its Sunwagon (Solvogn) theater troupe, which organizes manifestations that blur the borders between life and theater. In one event I witnessed that took place during Christmas time in 1975, hundreds of Santa Clauses gave away goods from Copenhagen's supermarkets and were collectively arrested singing Christmas carols, they carried a big crucified chicken with them on their way to prison. These great city-theater spectacles transform the whole of Copenhagen into a real Temporary Autonomous Zone for hours at a time.

I myself live in a former culture squat, ZAAL 100, in Amsterdam. It's now regulated, combining a living group, small alternative offices, a vegetarian restaurant, stages for music, theater, multi-media, etc. When I first started participating in activities there there was no stage for poetry and the walls were empty. I declared the walls of Zaal 100 to be "Gallery 100, an Autonomous zone for the arts." This means that anybody can exhibit here — I make no curatorial choices. Nothing is insured, so the artists take a certain risk, but when a work is sold they don't have to pay any gallery percentages. For the poetry-stage I have the same attitude.

I also have a studio in Ruigoord, where I'm involved in setting up the yearly sculpture route, and assisting with the poetry events organized by Hans Plomp and the Amsterdam Balloon Company shows. Besides those activities I also run the Nomadic Museum, inviting friends to exhibit on important free cultural spaces. In Baarle, a former squatted military complex, the ambassadress of Mongolia opened the Nomadic Museum exhibition while the local Dutch authorities showed no interest at all.

Free cultural spaces are also playgrounds and laboratories for alternative forms of organization. Researchers in Amsterdam undertook an inventory of the different ways squats functioned and their different organizational structures. One of the major points of distinction was the difference between the ones that organized a bar, versus the techies and the artists. The ones who sold beer often seemed most financially autonomous, because they generated money enough to pay for repairs, etc. The study showed that there are many ways to be organized. Every place had its specific infrastructure, and all of them were valuable models for future development.



Seeking help, a group of Belgian artists/poets and activists from the village of Doel near Antwerp recently arrived at Ruigoord. Doel, as had almost happened at Ruigoord, was about to be erased to make way for harbor expansion. Since the harbor is unlikely to be built and the village is empty these activists see the possibility of transforming it into a free cultural space. To assist them, the Amsterdam Balloon Company cooperated with them in raising an Axis Mundi in Doel, with Ruigoord opening a consulate in Doel and Doel doing the same in Ruigoord. A few weeks later, the Ruigoord Consulate was evicted by the Belgian police. We have yet to decide how we will respond. At the very least, a letter will be forwarded to the Belgian authorities from the citizens of Christiania and Ruigoord. While at this moment the village is a graffiti museum, not so long ago, the Doel activists organized a Do It Yourself Festival — the name indicates the idea: Do it Yourself. If you want to help shape a Permanent Autonomous Zone, go to Doel!

Cultural freehavens like Christiania (Denmark), Thy-lejren (Denmark), Ruigoord (Netherlands), Doel (Belgium), UFA-Fabrik (Germany), Catarredor (Portugal) and countless other culture squats and communes in Western Europe are mini-societies where festivals play a central role. No Permanent Autonomous Zones without Temporary Autonomous Zones within their boundaries! In Catarredor there is a hotel where you can sleep for one euro a night, there's a bar, there are weekly concerts, etc. It's a mini-society of people that

explores living together in a different way. They eat together in changing groups, etc. Mini-societies are not simply laboratories for social relations, playgrounds for alternative architects, artists and farmers, in important ways their ecological and environmental concepts give shape to, or are the real foundation for, trans-industrial landscaping and future city development....

The stress of institutionalization can bring about cooperation. If Christiania, Thy-lejren, UFA-Fabrik, Doel, Rui-goord and Boom join forces, we can make stronger statements about aspects of freedom, ecology and culture in general. This year [2011] Christiania celebrates its 40th anniversary. Ruigoord and Doel and possibly Boom will establish embassies in Christiania, and vice versa. In 2012, Rui-goord will celebrate its 40th. A trans-national conference on free cultural spaces all over the world will be a main aspect of the celebration activities. A physical network complementing a virtual one is the aim — a network leading to collective investment in tours involving artists, musicians, writers, performers, ecological farmers and representatives of tribes from all over the world. Oral traditions will gain importance, and with them the exchange of ideas....

In recent years the Amsterdam Balloon Company has placed three Axis Mundi in, respectively, Ruigoord, Christiania and Doel, building up a trans-national network through cultural journeys to alternative cultural free-places and festivals. The aim of this network is to work together on different levels in the future. Since our city-tribes are pushing for recognition, it is important to find ways to contact other tribal communities in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia.

An Axis Mundi, or “World Axis,” symbolizes the center of the world. Through history it has been the notion projected on a sacred mountain, a column of smoke, a tree, totem pole or an imaginary line to the polar star around which the earth

was believed to spin. Upholding the heavenly dome, depicted as world pillars or trees of life, they form centers for peoples living in microcosmic environments. An Axis Mundi establishes, for example, the four cardinal directions, and for many cultures it connects all the visible and invisible spheres. Seen as rising from the navel of the earth, an Axis Mundi serves as an umbilical cord for people like the Mongolian shamans.

Psychonauts claim space for the spirit. In 2008, the ABC was invited to an inter-tribal gathering in Christiania. During this “Two Urban Tribes” Meeting, a manifesto was written that began with the following lines: “Ruigoord and Christiania, are both urban tribes of people who are different, slightly aberrant, conforming not to what the world dictates, but to their inner voice, their spirit. Tonight we conform our spirits by shifting the Axis of our world to this location, where the magical tree Yggdrasil will be erected.”

The manifesto ends with the lines: “Urban Tribes have a much wider importance than simply representing a nice way of living, an escape for a happy few. We show the world that there are alternative ways of living, working and being together. The world needs experimental zones where alternative models of inter-human relationships, government, decision making and social structure can be developed. They don’t need to succeed, but they must allow us to learn new processes and possibilities. Let’s celebrate life, let’s make this planet sing! We declare Christiania to be the center of our world.”

– excerpted from “*The Emerging Network of Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ)*” by Aja Waalwijk

*All photos are from Herman Kolkman's gallery in picas-aweb; except the last, Peter Frasz's fire sculptures at Zaal 100 gallery, January 2010, photo by Paul van Goudoever*



# Tabacalera: Two More Years of Experiment

by Marta Fernández Maeso

Madrid, January 29, 2012 – A new lease of life for the Tabacalera: Culture heads give Madrid social center an extra two years to operate.

“This is just an experiment, but it's one that's been going on for nearly two years,” says Carlos Calderón, member of a group known as the “Self-Managed Social Center of Tabacalera in Lavapiés.” Since March 2012, this association has run part of the building that used to house the capital's tobacco factory, Fábrica de Tabacos de Madrid (also known as the Tabacalera), located in the Embajadores neighborhood. This was made possible through an agreement with the Culture Ministry under the outgoing Socialist government, which in late 2011 extended the deal. “Since then, we have had the legal backing to be here for at least two more years, creating and offering activities suggested by the local residents themselves,” says Calderón, part of the communications committee. He was raised in the neighborhood and has been familiar with the Tabacalera building ever since he was a child.

Culture heads under the new Popular Party [PP] administration have confirmed that the agreement with the local association stands, although they would provide no further details. Nothing is known yet regarding the National Center for the Visual Arts, which was planned to be housed here on a €30 million budget. “That is as it was, there is nothing new,” noted the offices of the chosen architects Estudio Nieto Sobejano, referring to the suspension of the initiative. But while that project is languishing, the atmosphere at the association could not be more dynamic. The pioneering initiative is experiencing a new boost, as evidenced by the activities taking place on a recent day: everything from cleaning duties to a quarterly presentation of goals by one of several specialized committees that make up the association.

The center maintains a cafeteria, a garden, a patio and a library that anyone may access freely. But the group's main line of action is its free workshops. These cultural, social and educational activities have been varied in nature over the last two years, but they all fall back on an informal rule: “You propose it, you deal with it.” This means that anyone with an interest in organizing an event – say a flamenco workshop, or using a room as an artist's studio or for music rehearsals – needs to take the time to find out what's already on the program, define his or her particular needs, and consider what he or she can contribute, even if that means

just helping out with the cleaning.

So far, the system has been able to keep going, but now there is a sense of greater continuity. “Given that we're good for another two years, we can consider more long-term initiatives,” says Rafael Esteban, a 52-year-old journalist who is a member of the association. A look at the website ([blogs.latabacalera.net/talleres](http://blogs.latabacalera.net/talleres)) shows a variety of options, from language courses (Arabic for beginners has just gotten underway) to circus rehearsals, traditional dance lessons and computer courses. “You can come on any given day, and within half an hour the center has completely changed,” says Calderón.

The assembly that runs La Tabacalera is open to anyone with a link to the center. This is one of the few fixed rules that have been in place from the start, and it reflects the participatory nature of a project that takes a page out of the book of the 15-M [May 15<sup>th</sup>] grassroots movement against economic mismanagement by Spain's politicians. But now, meetings will be more spaced out, with just one monthly assembly for the foreseeable future. Instead, specialized committees (focusing on economic issues, communications, respect [security] and so on) will meet on a weekly basis to make concrete decisions. These committees are also asked to present quarterly plans to the assembly. “The point is to become more operative,” says Calderón.

Besides being home to a pioneering management model, the former tobacco factory is in itself a landmark site, which is why association members take care to preserve the building's integrity. Now that they have two years ahead of them, they plan to make added improvements to a structure that they themselves restored back when the Culture Ministry first let them use it in 2010. The first upcoming reform will affect the bathroom area, and further action will be decided on the basis of necessity. “Now that we're here for at least two years, we could even consider something along the lines of heating,” suggests Rafael Esteban.

Some visitors may be surprised at the building's esthetics and consider it to be a little unkempt: there are bicycles parked in the hallways, graffiti on the walls, [many mural paintings], and signs with all types of messages hanging here and there. It would be easy enough to think the building had been taken over by a squatter community. But this particular “occupation” is sanctioned by the authorities, and the association members seem reasonably happy with the



way it looks. It is worth remembering that they are working on a shoestring budget (they get no public grants and raise funds through special events) and that everyone here is a volunteer. In fact, association members highlight “the fluid contact and the frank cooperation” that has so far defined their relations with the Directorate General of Fine Arts, the government agency in charge of the building, and they say they hope to maintain the same good relations with the new cultural authorities.

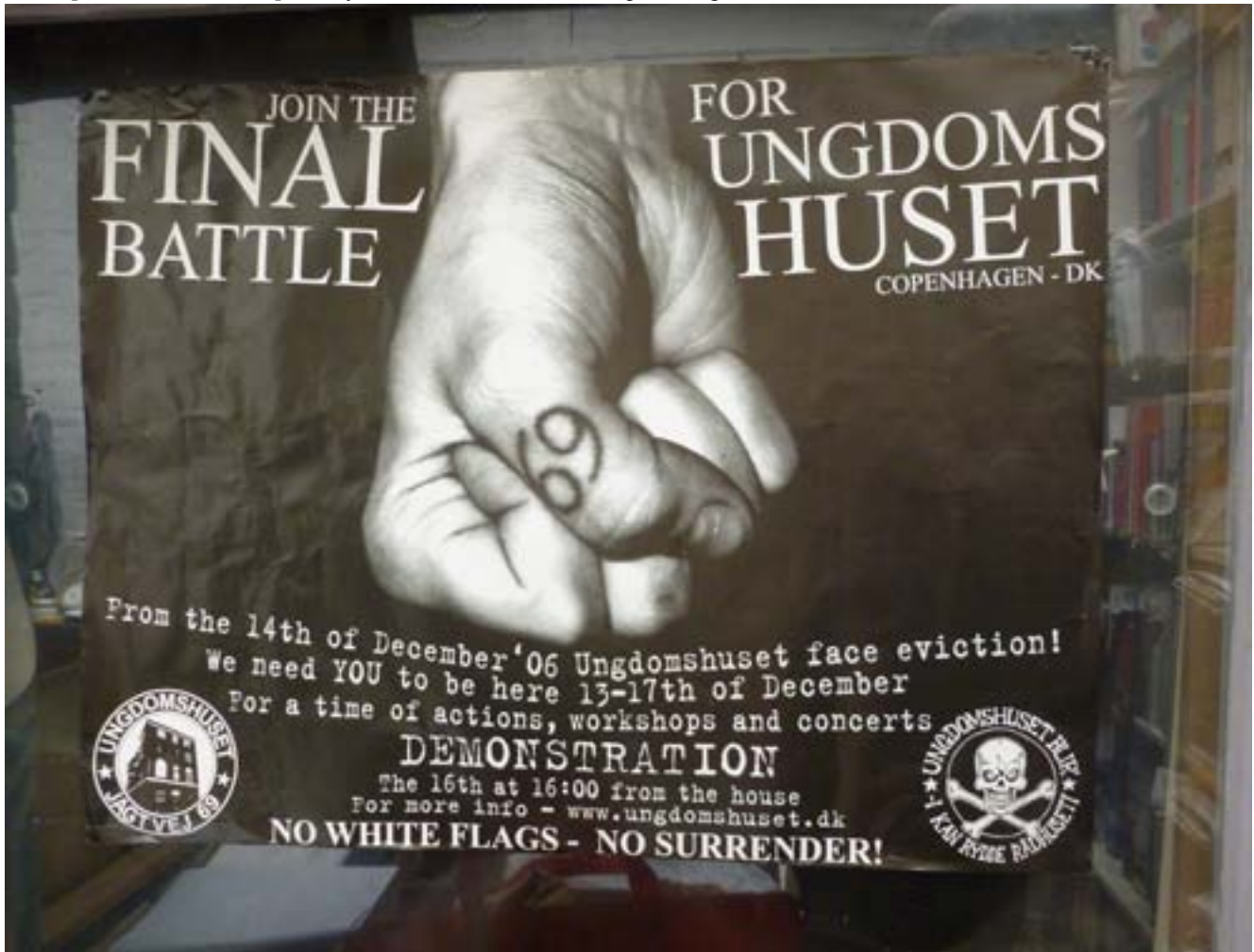
“We are a social center that has opened up a channel of communication with the administration in which citizens play the lead role, rather than being relegated to the role of mere spectators or clients. Now we need to further explore this new institutional approach,” says Esteban.

A security guard [employed by the state] monitors the entrance to number 53 Embajadores in Madrid. His uniform seems incongruous amidst the bicycles in the halls, graffiti and posters on walls. This is Tabacalera in Lavapiés. Pure ambiguity. Can this type of social and cultural management be extended? “It definitely has a future,” says Antonio Fesser. It is surprising that such an optimistic prediction comes from someone who is a partner in La Fábrica [the Factory], a company that organizes cultural events, with public and private support, in turn promoting the Fundación Cultura [Culture Foundation]. “They are models that can

and should coexist,” Fesser explains, due to the good results being achieved at Tabacalera. Jose Guirau, director of the nearby cultural center Casa Encendida, a project of the Caja Madrid [bank], agreed. He welcomed the appearance of the project which added to the supply of social and cultural services in the district. “It’s an interesting gamble, and above all very participatory,” Guirau said. Manuel Borja-Villel, director of the nearby Reina Sofia Museum, also expressed his support for an initiative which, he points out, is not yet well understood. He believes it is “very brave,” because it points the way to a new management model. If it works, that is. “If we are not open culture...”

*This text is mostly from [elpais.com/articulo/english/new/lease/of/life/for/the/Tabacalera/elpepueng/20120129elpeng\\_4/Ten](http://elpais.com/articulo/english/new/lease/of/life/for/the/Tabacalera/elpepueng/20120129elpeng_4/Ten) with some additions from the Google translation of the online Spanish version. Briefly quoted at the end, Manuel Borja-Villel expands on his thoughts in his text “Hacia una nueva institucionalidad” [Towards a new institutionality] in Carta #2, the magazine of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia*

*Illustration is the informal logo of Tabacalera. The term “perroflauta,” dog/flute, denotes the scruffy hippie types in public squares.*





**“Squat on public land, to build housing for our own community. No government permission or money. We are liberating the land for our people.”**

An interview with Rob Robinson from Picture the Homeless and Take Back the Land Movement, New York City January, 2012

*Could you tell us a bit about yourself and how you became involved with Picture the Homeless?*

No problem. I became involved with Picture the Homeless after spending 10 months in a NYC shelter. I was advocating within that shelter for better maintenance conditions, adherence to rules and better food. The director advised me to take my work to a higher level and I joined something called the New York City Coalition for the Continuum of Care (NYCCoC). This group makes up 33% of the vote on how some 60-80 million USD are spent on homeless services. Picture the Homeless had access to the email list of (NYCCoC) and I started to receive emails about the work they were doing. I showed up at a housing meeting in November 2006, liked what I heard and became a member.

I became homeless in July 2001 after transferring from a job in New York City(NYC) which I worked for 13 years. I was given the opportunity to transfer from NYC to Miami Florida to become a project manager overseeing the installation of computer software. I moved from NYC to Miami in March 2001 and by July 2001, four months later I was laid off. I was told “there is no money in the budget for your position”. I tried to give Miami a chance and after two years found myself with no job, an empty bank account

and no income. I was homeless in Miami for two years before returning to NYC.

*Could you tell us a bit about Picture the Homeless and the Take Back the Land Movement?*

Picture the Homeless is an organization founded on the principle that in order to end homelessness, people who are



homeless must become an organized, effective force for systemic change. We have a track record of developing leadership among homeless people to impact policies and systems that affect their lives and our efforts have created

space for homeless people, and their agenda, within the broader movement.

We were founded by two homeless men in the Fall of 1999. The catalyst for our founding was an urgent need to respond to the Giuliani administration’s policy of criminalizing homeless people, broadly supported by the media. The co-founders of Picture the Homeless (PTH) began reaching out to allies for support, a place to meet and to figure out strategies to create an organization of homeless people that could carry out this work. In January 2000, PTH held its first organizing meeting. Picture the Homeless has since

Housing Action Group/Steering Committee of Take Back the Land. I consider Max Rameau of Take Back the Land in Miami to be a friend, mentor and confidant. He has taught me so much. In September 2009, several of us met in Atlanta Georgia and formed the Take Back the Land National Movement... The Take Back the Land Movement is directly challenging those laws which allow banks to reap record profits while millions of families face eviction and homelessness. Challenging unjust laws requires a protracted direct action campaign of civil disobedience designed to prioritize people over profits in a tangible way.

Local campaigns and actions are not directed by a centralized committee, but entirely driven by Local Action Groups (LAG), who operate autonomously and operate large scale in a federated manner. This body is known as the Land and Housing Action Group (L&HAG). In cooperation with the US Human Rights Network the L&HAG facilitates communication among the LAGs and provides them with campaign and technical support. This decentralized network model focuses power, flexibility and decision making in the hands of local impacted communities and individuals.

Take Back the Land models itself off the Landless Peasants Movement in Brazil (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra, called MST), and the Abahlali based Mjondolo land movement in Africa. Take Back the Land is a comprehensive campaign initiative, which includes a direct action campaign and the grassroots initiative to build alternative institutions, such as land trusts,

worked to develop an organization directed and run by homeless people by building an infrastructure that keeps organizational decision-making in the hands of homeless people.

I am a member of the Land &

co-operatives, and other collective ownership and management vehicles to exercise direct community control over land and housing.

*News of Picture the Homeless reached us through the New York tent city action. [See House Magic #2 for this action with Not an Alternative artists' group.] What did this involve and what did you get out of it?*

The tent city action was done for several reasons. To highlight the large amount of vacant land and property being held by landlords merely for speculation. On a daily basis 38,000 people sleep in NYC homeless shelters. That piece of land [in East Harlem] was vacant for over 20 years. It was also owned by JP Morgan Chase which received government funding to prevent it from failing.

Our question is, our tax money is used to prevent a bank from failing but those same banks are foreclosing on Americans and evicting them from homes? This is a contradiction we wanted to highlight. It is also why I am so passionate about Take Back the Land. The only social change that has happened in America has happened as a result of direct action or civil disobedience. That is the foundation of Take Back the Land.

*Could you tell us about other campaigns Picture the Homeless has engaged in and what is planned for the future?*

We have a campaign led by homeless leaders who refuse to stay in shelters – our position is that if you lose your housing and choose to live in public spaces, your constitutional and human rights should not be abused by the police! We fight to end selective enforcement of Quality of Life regulations — “Whose

Quality of Life” is improved by moving homeless people from public spaces? We fight the lack of legal representation for homeless people, pressured to plead guilty instead of exercising their right to trial, and forced to return to



court over and over if they choose to plead not guilty. We are also working to ensure that homeless New Yorkers' right to vote is protected, including in city jails.

The Civil Rights Committee is currently engaged in a campaign against Disorderly Conduct. The police use “Disorderly Conduct” to arrest or ticket homeless people – a key tool in the criminalization, profiling, and harassment of the homeless. We believe that the NYPD should be required to specify one’s alleged violation rather than charge behind the vagueness of ‘Disorderly Conduct’. We demand that ‘Dis Con’ be clearly recognized in practice as a non-arrestable offense. We are currently gathering surveys and testimonies from homeless New Yorkers to build this campaign, and possibly file a lawsuit against the NYPD. This campaign also engages in Know Your Rights and CopWatch workshops. Our goal is to equip homeless New Yorkers with tools that they need to defend themselves and their community from harmful and unjust police abuses....

## About Abahlali base Mjondolo

Abahlali base Mjondolo – the name is isiZulu for ‘people that stay in shacks’ – is a South African social movement of poor, mainly African people centred around the city of Durban. The movement formed after shack dwellers at Kennedy Road blocked a major road for four hours and held it against the police in protest at the sale of a piece of land that had long been promised to the community for housing. The movement now has tens of thousands of members in over 40 settlements. The movement has around 10,000 paid-up members and more than 30,000 active supporters in over 40 affiliated settlements. They have recently formed a national alliance (The Poor People’s Alliance) with Anti-Eviction Campaign in Cape Town, Landless People’s Movement in Johannesburg and the Rural and Farm Dwellers Network. The movement is remarkable for its thoughtful and ethical approach to an egalitarian, directly-democratic evolving politics.



**“We have learnt from our experience that when you want to achieve what you want, when you want to achieve what is legitimate by peaceful negotiations, by humbleness, by respecting those in authority your plea becomes criminal. You will be deceived for more than ten years, you will be fooled**

**and undermined. This is why we have resorted to the streets. When we stand there in our thousands we are taken seriously.”**

Abahlali meetings are usually attended by around 30-40 elected representatives from settlement development committees as well as local settlement residents. Decisions are made by consensus if possible, and by vote if not.

Large decisions are referred back to local settlement committees for further discussion, and representatives also report back on the meeting to their local community. AbM selects office holders at branch, settlement and movement level through open elections at annual assemblies. Office holders are recallable, rotated, and mandated to act on specific issues at open weekly meetings. Office holders are not elected to make decisions but to ensure democratic process on matters relating to the issues. Ethically, it is part of the prefigurative politics that allow a hermeneutic circle between means and ends. This is the reason for ideological fluidity. As the situation changes over time, ideas, goals and tactics will need to be re-evaluated in order to remain relevant and effective.

Abahlali is an intellectually, and ethically, serious project. Meetings are thoughtful, democratic and consensus based. All night ‘camps’ are held every quarter for members to plan, think and strengthen their solidarity.

Mass meetings are characterised by a presentation of the situation and issues from key figures in the community development committee and the movement and then debate from the floor.

Abahlali are resolute in their refusal to allow themselves to be co-opted by the govern-

ment or anyone else. The movement rejects party politics, politicians and NGOs that 'want to use the poor as ladders'. Everybody thinks. We are poor, not stupid. Planning must not just be a technical talk that excludes the people. Democracy is not just about voting. Democratic planning is the way forward.

"Libertarian-communism" (from an Abahlali commu-niqué)

"We are for a living communism. We are for a communism that emerges from the struggles of ordinary people and which is shaped and owned by ordinary people. We are for a communism built from the ground up. We are for a communism in which land and wealth are shared and managed democratically. Any party or groupuscule or NGO that declares from above that it is the vanguard of the people's struggles and that the people must therefore accept their authority is the enemy of the people's struggles. Leadership is earned and is never permanent. It can never be declared from above. It only lasts for as long as communities of struggle decide to invest their hope in particular structures. Often there are many legitimate and democratic structures involved in the same broad movement of struggle at the same time. This is why we always insist that the autonomy of all democratic poor people's organisations must be respected and welcomed."

### About the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)

Since 1997 hundreds of thousands of landless peasants have banded together and oc-

cupied over 200 stretches of unused land in Brazil under the banner of the MST 'Landless Workers Movement'. In addition, 140,000 families have been resettled on land following direct action over the past 10 years. During the



owned by large corporations whose activities it considers to be at variance with the principle of environmental sustainability and the social function of property.

**"If you are poor, it is because someone is exploiting**

**you. Brazil is a very rich country, and there should be a place in it for everyone...If you vote, you change nothing. We could have Jesus Christ as President, and he'd still have to do all the deals that politicians**

**do. He would still not be in control. Unless the people can start to do things for themselves, and unless we can change our way of seeing things, nothing will change in Brazil or anywhere."**...

– excerpted from "Brisbane From Below" n°1 (Brisbane, 2011), [ainfos.ca/en/ainfos25558.html](http://ainfos.ca/en/ainfos25558.html); reposted to [squat.net](http://squat.net)



early 2000s, in addition to occupying derelict farms, *latifundio* – vast holdings owned by absentee landlords – and public buildings, the movement has also invaded and despoiled functioning properties

*Photos of Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra actions (2008?), posted by Sebastiao Salgado at [pictures-of-revolt.blogspot.com.es](http://pictures-of-revolt.blogspot.com.es)*

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