DOI 10.14393/EdA-v3-n1-2022-63487

Art + Squat = X

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ABSTRACT

What is the role of artists and art in squats? This text is framed by the ideas of counterculture and "exodus" to autonomy, influenced by anarchism and left politics. Artists are not at home in the capitalist system. Subculture reinforces resistant actions. There are multiple histories of squatting in European countries with communal nature. Art in squats is part of social movement culture. Text details several case studies of New York City artists in the squatting movement there and remarks on artists' relation to the squatting movement in Europe. Musicians, street artists, filmmakers, media activists are also centrally involved. The concept of "monster institutions", social practice art, and the institutionalization of former occupations are discussed.

KEYWORDS

squatting, occupied social centers, artists, subculture, social movement culture

RESUMO

Qual é o papel dos artistas e da arte nas ocupações? Este texto está aparado nas ideias de contracultura e "êxodo" em direção à autonomia, sendo influenciado pelo anarquismo e pela política de esquerda. Artistas não se sentem em casa no sistema capitalista. A subcultura reforça ações de resistência. Há múltiplas histórias de ocupações de natureza comunitária em países europeus. A arte nas ocupações é parte da cultura de movimento social. O texto detalha vários estudos de caso de artistas da cidade de Nova York no movimento de ocupações por lá e comenta sobre artistas no movimento de ocupações na Europa. Músicos, artistas de rua, cineastas, ativistas da mídia também estão envolvidos de forma central em ocupações. O conceito de "instituições monstruosas", a arte da prática social e a institucionalização de antigas ocupações são discutidos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

ocupações, centros sociais autônomos ocupados, artistas, subcultura, cultura de movimento social

This paper was written for a talk of 2012 at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. It is greatly indebted to the researches of the SqEK (Squatting Europe [or Everywhere] Kollectiv).The experiences and researches in New York City and Europe which form the basis of my analysis here are expanded in the 2015 book Occupation Culture, *and glossed by firsthand texts by squatters in the anthology* Making Room. *I have revised and corrected this text some for an anticipated publication in Brazil, in* Estado da Arte, *revista de artes visuals of the Universidade Federal de Uberlândia. But this text is firmly rooted in its moment of optimism – the movement of the squares and Occupy Wall Street. Things have changed a lot since then in this most changeable of worlds.*

Image on a banner dropped at New Yorck en Bethanien, Berlin, ca. 2010.

Artists are involved with squats and occupied social centers. How and why, and the outcomes of their sustained engagement in extra-legal occupations is not so clear. I don't think it has been systematically studied. The problem – for art history, art criticism, artistic production and the institutional ambit of the artworld itself – hasn't yet been clearly defined, the questions guiding research not yet formulated. This history is largely unwritten, or at least uncollated. Basic information about squats and social centers has long been blocked by the arbiters of public knowledge – the journalistic news media, academies and institutions – and available only via underground media circuits. [**FNbloc]**

I.

To frame the question, let's say that the art production and exhibition system runs parallel to, and occasionally crosses over with, the squatting movement. I try to draw a Venn diagram of the interplay between the worlds of squatting, avant-garde art, and radical politics. My diagram turns soap bubbles to smoke... If I add in to "radical politics" what we might call the sustainable city movement, the set of initiatives undertaken by various actors across a broad front of institutional and popular venues, this latter sphere expands considerably. Even so, these are vastly unequal realms. Squatting is a subculture in which not so many artists participate, even in its most public form of the social center. Art is mainstream culture, with far more "official" components than subcultural at any given moment. Radical politics is also subcultural, with a conflicted and oppressed sector in academia.

Artists and art institutions play the role of mediators and introducers of new social information. (They play a similar role in introducting technological innovation.) In this quasi-political role, artists and curators pose questions on behalf of society. Art venues take up the slack for political and institutional systems that can be very slow, or conflicted in response to new social needs. This "slack" – or distance between emergent realities and political understandings and actions – has grown immensely during the new century with its reanimated crusades, hypercapitalist crisis, mass migrations and perilous climate change. In the crisis era of the 21st century, governments are proving increasingly ineffective and corrupt, so much so that occupations, mass demonstrations and revolutions regularly arise worldwide. Political questions have become a leading concern of artists everywhere.

Two Eras, Two Theories

We might say there are two broad theoretical frames for thinking about the relationship between culture and squatting, the first is counterculture, the second exodus. (Maybe they are the same?, one having evolved from the other.) The notion of counterculture is a set of loose formulations first advanced to explain aspects of the youth culture that emerged in the 1960s. [Roszak, 1969; Willener, 1968] In this conception culture, particularly the culture of oppressed minorities, is equivalent to revolution. That's a real motivating idea, a romantic flag. But as Herbert Marcuse and Murray Bookchin have observed, it ignores vast stretches of social reality. "Counterculture" seems more useful as a term to broadly denominate a social field conceived of and operating against a mainstream, be it capitalist or state socialist.

Mural in a plaza inside a building of the Metropoliz okupa in Rome, 2014. Photo by Miguel Martinez.

Counterculture theory lives on in the barbed poetic proposals of the TAZ, or temporary autonomous zone, which has been influential among squatters [Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson), 1991]. Like the Situationist Ivan Chtcheglov's famous "Formulary for a New Urbanism" (1953-58), *TAZ* is a delirious poetic text written by the anarchist Islamist Peter Lamborn Wilson (writing as Hakim Bey). Counterculture discourse emanating from the oldest squats and communes tends to be highly utopian with regular recourse to metaphysics, poetry and incantation.

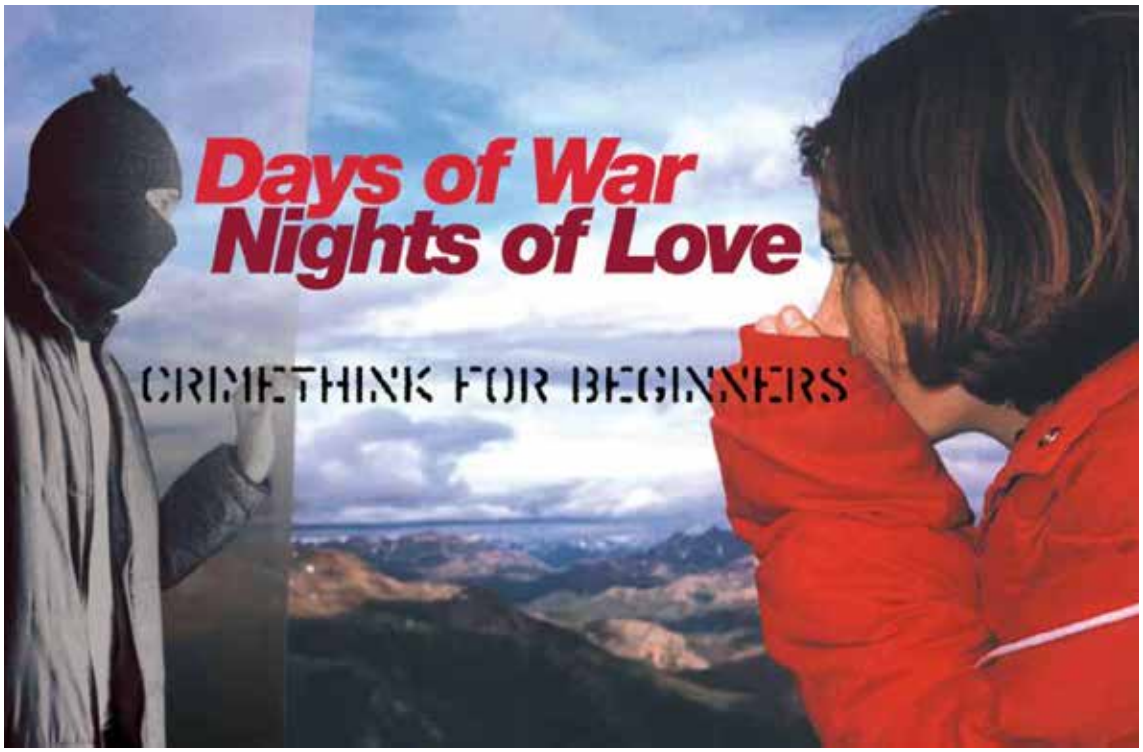
The beat and hippie eras which generated the discourse of counterculture were succeeded by the epoch of punk. This saw the theoretical formulation of subculture [Hebdige, 1979], which has been foundational for cultural studies and sociology of culture. Counterculture, as the Situationists maintained, is recuperable [Frank, 1997], that is, relatively convertible into the discourse of commodities. "Our clothes are a revolution you can wear." Subcultures persist, mutate, and intermingle intersectionally. Squatters are a persistent and mutating subculture, which is largely unrecuperable. Their challenge to the regime of private property is too hot to handle.

One political theory speaks of the exodus from capitalist labor relations of a newly composing class. This idea was developed by Paolo Virno [Virno, 1996], and popularized by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. [Hardt & Negri, 2000] As theory, exodus has the academic advantage of emerging from Autonomist Marxism, a rich continental variant

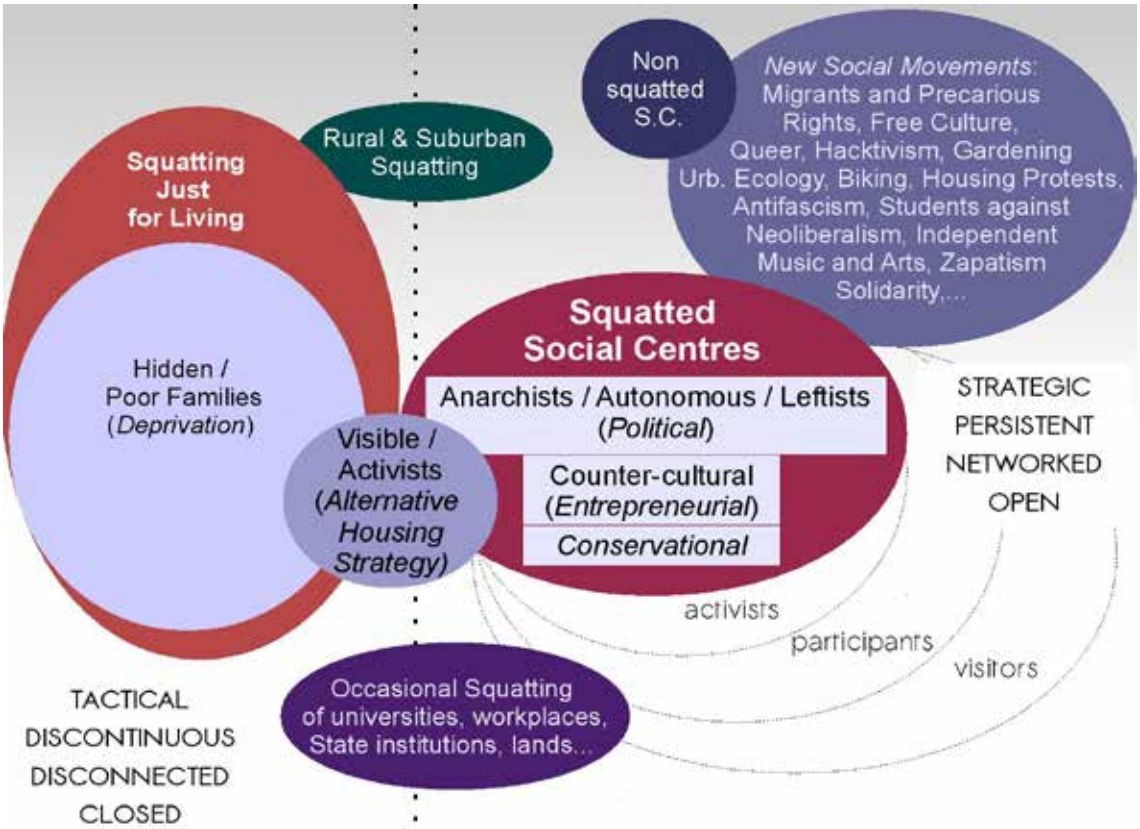
on a traditional school of analytic political thought. The idea that a new class is recomposing, exiting from its former relations with capital and formulating its productive conditions anew is compelling. But it is only partly helpful, and leaves aside the contributions of feminists, queers and global migrants, whose participation is essential to the squatting movement.

The theoretics of communalization were kicked off most prominently by the French Invisible Committee in "The Coming Insurrection" [Invisible Committee, 2007] and the journal *Tiqqun* (1999-2001). This rich line of thought and scabrous polemic, so influential in the social centers, seems less useful in examining the intersections of art and squat culture. (Mural motifs?) It is probably more germane to understanding the old and new blockages to such a synergy.

Two more lines of thought bear on squat culture, and probably more directly than academic frames of political theory and cultural studies. The radical anarchist discourse of the Crimethinc Ex-Workers Collective in North America, closely connected to the hardcore punk music scene, was influential in the life-style anarchism of nomadic crust punks. [Crimethinc, 2001] The CWC website has matured, and continues to post in-depth analyses and historical articles on anarchist and riotous actions, including those of the Black Lives Matter uprising and many Latin American struggles. More recent projects like IGD.org (It's Going Down) have joined Crimethinc and the Institute of Anarchist Studies in a lively Anglophone anarchist infosphere, together with extensive European platforms.



Crimethinc, cover of *Days of War Nights of Love Crimethink For Beginners* (2001).



Miguel Martinez, 2012; chart of different kinds of squatting.

A fourth line of inquiry might run through the ancient question of the relation between art and politics. It is self-evident that culture is imbricated in politics. Writing about art *qua* politics, as and with politics is a quagmire. (To get a sense of it, search "artists as political agents".) This inquiry includes all mainstream artistic production, and is so broad it quickly becomes tasteless, arid, abstract, and utterly remote from the juices of creative or activist lives. Jacques Rancière reanimated the discourse when he was embraced by *Artforum* in the mid-'00s, and later Chantal Mouffe's concept of democratic antagonism became popular. Political thinking aside, life as an artist and/or as a squatter is most often lived outside and against most social and political conceptions of what people should be doing with themselves. I imagine this outside-ness is as much economic as political.

Why Are Artists Involved with Squats?

The majority of artists are always more or less at variance with a capitalist system, that is, they are struggling with this kind of life. That is because most modes of contemporary artistic production demand materials and resources of space and time far in excess of the short- or even long-term monetary return for the sale of the products. Frequently the product is actually unsaleable. The contemporary economy of art is not capitalist, but rather a heterogenous mix of economies [Moore, 2004] based in large part on gifts, exchange, inheritances – (those are the already-rich artists, an increasingly large proportion of the visible spectrum) – patronage and crime, **[FNparc]** as well

as market sales and wage-like labor (called "work for hire" in New York State copyright law). To organize their complex lives, artists rely on regular interaction with their social networks; for this reason they usually shun conventionally isolating wage work. From all this it follows that most artists cannot live easily within capitalist economies. This is the majority of artists who are not "market artists", that is artists whose work does not regularly enter into the realms of speculative commodity capital.

To this basic heterogeneous economic condition faced by most contemporary artists must be added the disappearance of their traditional homes in the city. As advanced economies deindustrialized, the metropolitan working class became superfluous to the new managerial and creative city. "Creative city" means industries – as in "The UK is a global leader in the creative industries" – not a city full of artists. [Rosler, 2011, 2013] During the late 20th century, working class districts were first cleared and then gentrified to make way for the new elites. This is the postindustrial urban ideal, to reimagine and reconstitute the city center as a bourgeois wonderland. In this ongoing process the traditional refuge of artists and creative people in working class districts with cheap rents – called "bohemia" – is expunged. The preferred artists' district in late 20th century U.S. cities is not a messy heterogeneous bohemia of working class, immigrants, artisans and artists, but one arising in the now-empty factory buildings, which, once they are flexibly subdivided into living lofts, become the preferred habitat of elites – a Soho. [Moore, 2010]

The current movement of squatting and occupation then is a kind of re-possession by the dispossessed working and creative classes, targeting the surplus properties set aside for speculative purposes that have resulted from this process of transition. It is first and foremost a direct action complaint against loss – the loss of public housing for working and poor people, the loss of public places to gather without paying money, and, with the increased level of repression demanded by elite populations, the loss of space in the city for public social and cultural expression and experiment.

With the 15M "indignadoes" of Spain, and the Occupy movement in the USA and London, squatting, under the banner of "occupation," shed much of its subcultural stigma. As an often-used tactic, that activist repertoire moved into the realm of the global revolutionary and democratic social movements against globalized capital and its neoliberal government partners. [**FNocc]** Artists were among the leaders in Occupy USA [McKee, 2017; Schneider, 2013], as they have been in many political movements of the past, due to their flexible modes of living and available free time.

Art Against

Besides the social and economic reasons that may lead artists into squats, there is also the special aesthetic. Most broadly, art in squats is cultural action carried out within a transgressive context. (There are surely many mooning souls, artists who blithely ignore this.) The cultural ambit is a mix of subcultural and avant-gardist subjectivities. Youth cultures like skateboarding and graffiti writing, as well as sports like parkour, urban exploration, BMX and motor biking, also systematically explore transgression. It is a truism of the social psychological formation of adolescence in the west that youth develop cultural practices within an ambit of adult disapproval, censorship and illegality – so that transgressive cultural practice becomes an assertion of identity separate from the disapproving elders. "Oh, those kids." This dynamic is familiar not only as a baseline of academic analysis – it was called delinquency and deviance in the 1950s – but as a fundamental of marketing the "cool" consumer products of the style industry. (An emergent "cultural criminology" seeks to take this and other social movement related activities into account; see Ferrell and Hayward, 2011; Ferrell, 2001.)

This subcultural matrix has mingled with the traditional positions of the modernist avant gardes, as "culture against" – against the classical, against conceptions of order at variance with an emerging modernity. It can be easier to create, to conceive, to think dialectically – in oppositional relation to some set of givens, be they ideas, forms, modalities of work, social and economic situations, ideologies, institutions, spaces and places. As society is increasingly seen as illegitimate in its basic workings – as it was for the modernists, when governments waged war and exploited colonies, and as it is for the 21st century activist, a crazed colossus racing through mass extinctions toward planetary collapse – work outside and against conventional understandings and agreements can acquire not only ethical legitimacy, but the status of moral imperative.

A problem for cultural workers within politicized activist spaces is that this moral imperative can grow so dominant, so large and insistent, that it squeezes out other points of view, other avenues of approach, like humor, irony, and the kinds of psychological and social positions artists need to inhabit in order to make their work. Moreover artists needs can count for little in the assembly or plenum which runs most centers. This is an issue in the development of politicized aesthetic positions.

Forgotten Pasts (Past Life Regression Analysis)

The "free cities" of Christiania (Copenhagen) and Ruigoord (Holland) are the first and most famous large-scale squats in Europe. Those occupations came out of social visions closely imbricated with culture. They both continue to this day. Shared vision and a daily life of art and artisanal production are centered in the culture of these two communities. The famous "social experiment" in the Danish capital became the home and workspace of artists and artisans working in all media. Experiment and research have constituted a *raison d'etre* for Christiania since its beginnings. [Thörn, et al., 2012]

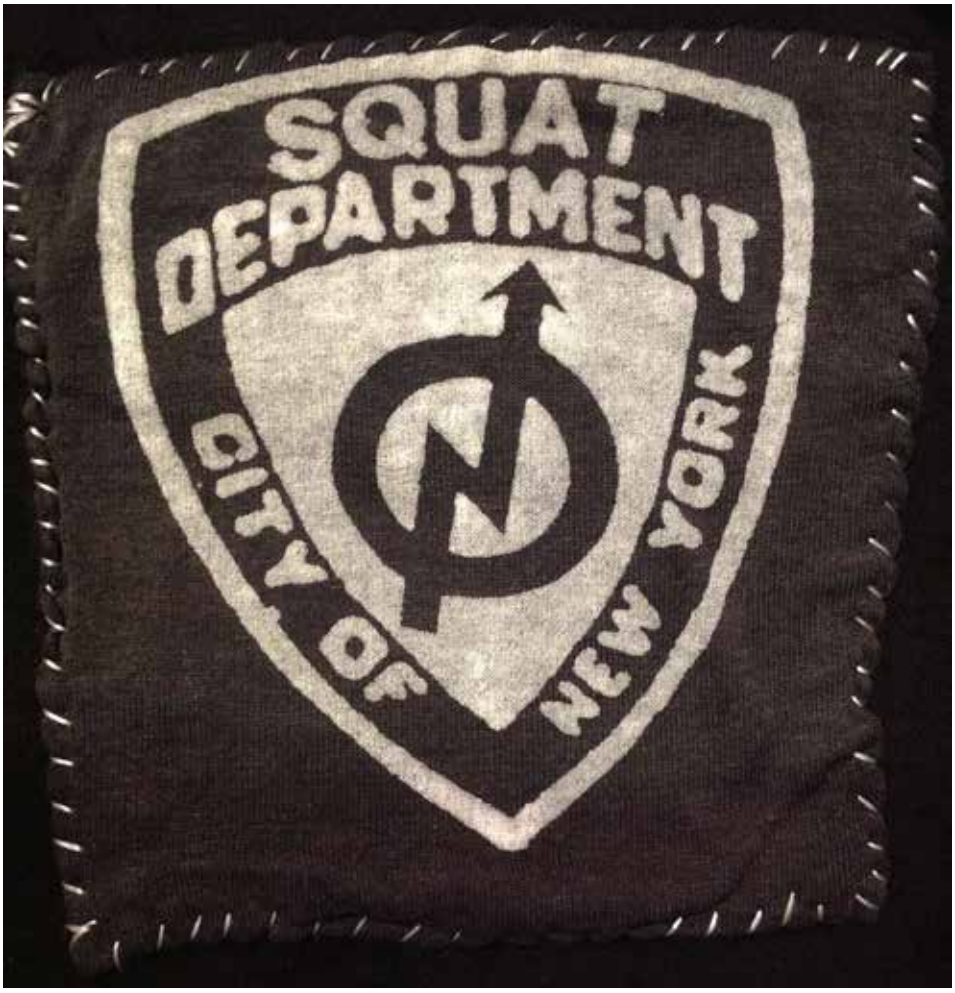
These communities are deeply rooted in the counterculture of the 1960s and '70s. In fact, understandings of "counterculture" have been defined in part by their practice. Their political referents were most likely Provo and Kabouters in Holland [Kempton, 2007], and Scandinavian Situationism in Denmark [Bolt & Jakobsen, 2011]. The global western movement of the day was back-to-the-land communalism [Miller, 1999]. The cultural sensibility of these places as well as their politics combines the utopian, tribal, and metaphysical [Waalwijk, 2012]. They are distinct from more recent counter- or extra-cultural tendencies rooted in the hard-headed, raucous subculture of punk and the politics of anarchism and autonomist communism. "Punks hate hippies."

The relations of these countercultures to mainstream and avant-garde culture are also very different. The social experiments of the 1960s and '70s seem to have been more integrated with the mainstream than those of the neoliberal era. Connections – attention and interchange – between squats and mainstream media and established institutions have been more tentative and clandestine than in the past. (This is changing as corporate online media outlets search for content which appeals to the young.) For one thing, young people in the '60s and '70s were more demographically dominant than they are today. Their new strategies were a surprise and, ultimately, a resource to entrepreneurs of postwar consumer culture [Frank, 1997]. There are many continuities and solidarities between the old squats and the new, but perhaps because of the strong ideological and generational differences these histories have so far not been considered together.

I mention only two intriguing clues: The Rue des Caves "squatted street" in Sèvres on the edge of Paris, was occupied in the 1970s. It is on the periphery of squatting research, and, since it is long finished, barely on the radar of squatters today. Yet the same emblems of anti-gentrification community organizing then being used by the

squatting movement in Zürich [Stahel, 2006] appear in the zines of the Rue des Caves squats [Blanchard, URL], intriguing visual evidence of the pan-European movement of the 1970s. How many more pre-Autonomist squats like this, with painted houses full of musicians, have existed and been forgotten? A recent book, edited by an RAF member living underground in London, collects small essays and many photographs of the 1970s squat scene there [Proll, 2010], that included artists like Derek Jarman, Joe Spence and Joe Strummer. Sculptor Antony Gormley mentions that he lived for six years in a squatted warehouse in London in the 1970s. His daughter worked with the "Mayfair squatters," opening well-publicized artists' squats in posh districts in London recently [Needham, 2011]. In the 1960s, before Gormley's warehouse tenure, the art center movement opened many spaces for cultural activity in the UK. These very often "degenerated" into squats [Gross, 2009]. (See also Vasudevan, 2017.)

The squatting movement that led to the important radical institution of the social center has put a new kind of perspective onto occupations of the past. It is important to understand both the contexts and the life cycles of these earlier self-organized extra-legal ventures.



Shoulder patch produced by MoRUS workers

The "New York model"

I was drawn to this study by my personal history. This begins during the 1970s, when I participated in student activism in the public University of California system. (The anti-austerity student movement in that same university system is a rich source of occupation theory and practice and a key forerunner of the wider U.S. Occupy movement.) In 1980 I was among the artists who started an experimental art exhibition space on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1980, called ABC No Rio [Moore & Miller, 1985]. It began with an occupation of vacant city-owned commercial property for an art exhibition, and continued through 30 years of precarious tenancy, including a full-building squat, until final legalization in the early 2000s.

My project of squatting investigations started as an exhibition at ABC No Rio – "House Magic" in 2009 (the eponymous zine continued until 2016). Later in the 1980s and '90s, some of my friends joined the squatting movement in New York [Tobocman, 1999; Patterson et al., 2007; Starecheski, 2016], and gave over part of their squats to social and cultural spaces. One of these survives, as an art gallery called Bullet Space [Castrucci, 1991; 2010]. Another houses the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Spaces (MoRUS). These experiences have led me to hold a sort of New York model of artists' engagement with squats.

The Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space (MoRUS) in NYC, an autonomous project dedicated to squats, community gardens, and bicycle activism

Who Is an Artist?

When we say that artists participate in squats, we might first ask, Who is an artist? There are artists by profession or trade, earning their living from their work, artists by vocation, who choose to make art regardless of remuneration, and artists by self-description who are trying on the identity for size. Squats host them all. To better understand the role of art and artists in squats, it may be more useful to think of all of these actors as participants in the social movement culture of squatting and occupation. This levels them, regardless of social or economic position or intention. Since this naming is cumbersome, I shall continue to refer to these people as artists. Finally,

I include as "artist" all those engaged in expressive activity, although my primary focus is on those working in visual arts and allied disciplines.

Why Make Art in Squats?

Artists come to squats for many reasons. Their reasons may not be explicitly political in the ideological sense, but can be economic as we have seen. The squat provides free space to work, access to materials, and a tolerant usually democratic community. (All of these provisions must be "paid for," however, with volunteer or recompensatory labor which involves significant social discipline.) The other attractive condition is also social. One stratum of artists is provided with space and social conditions conducive to creative work. Those provisions are for students in educational institutions, and artists in competitive residencies. Those who cannot (or will not) enter, or are locked out of this system are those who go to squats, maybe to work, but certainly to socialize. Here the dimensions of class, income, or choice of field (e.g., graffiti, or punk and rave music, which are not taught in schools) enter into the picture. Many artists don't go to squats at all, and may remain unaware that they even exist. Maybe squats can be thought of as an artworld of the subaltern, zones for the proletarianized underclass of the artworld, like Henri Murger's bohemia of old [Murger, 1851].

It's Not Art, but Social Movement Culture

In an essay introducing a globally ranging exhibition of political graphics and video, Dara Greenwald and Josh MacPhee contend that what they exhibited was not art, per se, but "social movement culture." This notion broadens the frame around political graphics to include, among other things, the social formations movements create, and their relationships to communications technology. Greenwald and MacPhee also suggest aspects of a new conception of the artist – the artist as an agent of change, and the amateur turned artist in service of a movement. The social movement culture Greenwald and MacPhee talk about is developed through the egalitarian operations of quotidian life in encampments (and by implication, squats). Their example is the numerous women's anti-nuclear peace encampments of the 1980s and '90s. [Greenwald and MacPhee, 2010; Greenwald, 2008]

Camps, Not Squats?

An aside – A question around the relation between squats and art concerns culture not only in protest camps, but in chabolas, favelas, or camps for migrants and refugees. These unregulated illegal encampments are usually constructed outside the city. They are not considered together with squatting of buildings by predominantly white Europeans within the city centers. Nevertheless, the culture of the camps is an important question to investigate. Consideration could take off from historical studies and reports on cultural services and artisanal industries in refugee camps. In addition, many artists and artists' collectives have worked in camps. Helio Oiticica's work in the favelas of Brazil in the 1960s is famous. The Living Theatre also worked there, and were jailed for it. The Democracia group has worked in La Cañada Real slum of Madrid for their project "Sin Estado" [Democracia, URL]. During the recent migrant crisis camps and squats have seemed to merge as many squatters have taken up the migrants', aiding them to obtain and defend irregular housing [SqEK, 2018].

At Least It's Expressive Culture

If we don't say "art," what kinds of expressive culture exist in squats? One example: We often find them festooned with banners. This expressive usage is general, and marks a building as a squatted space to public view.

The image is then disseminated in photographs. The banners use a vocabulary of simple forms, symbols, pictographs and lettered slogans, which recur from squat to squat in different countries, and which we might characterize as typical of the expressive culture of squatting movements. The image of the festooned squatted building is one of the more typical images of radical direct action of the recent decades. Festooning marks the space out using the paraphernalia of political demonstrations. The visual culture of squats then has a lineage in popular political pageantry. As in any visual art practice, this usage changes and evolves, with influence from spectacular and well-publicized predecessor examples.

While the formulation of social movement culture is very useful, it specifically concerns those artists who are committed activists within the squatting movement. It also demotes extra-legal symbolic and aesthetic activity to "mere" visual culture, i.e., to the status of a scenography of political action. What of the other artists working in squats?

It seems we have a double frame here – art culture and movement culture. Popular left anti-capitalist movements which are in the business of liberating space for public and private communal use explain their activities differently from artists. Liberated space is very useful for artists, and many commit to opening and maintaining it. Although artists, given their ambiguous position within capitalist economy, may concur with activists' ideologies and objectives, finally artists' activity is explained by itself; artistic production is the intention.

Squat Art Punk and Rap

Punk subculture is most often identified with squatting, especially in the U.S. popular mind. Did the punk subcultural movement – loud music, extreme fashion, silkscreened patches and stickers, tattoos, sexual egalitarianism – make squats? Concerts of punk music draw dedicated fans, some ideologically committed to anarchism, others coming for the drinking and sex. These fans supported squats financially. How about graffiti?, the aerosol paint mural movement. It began as part of the hip hop subculture, and continues as such. Although there is still a strong distinction between these two kinds of artists, graffiti is a part of the increasingly valorized street art genre of artistic production. [Lewisohn, 2008] The bright graffiti mural is always present in occupied zones, marking out the walls of squatted spaces as different from other urban locations. Did the hip hop rap poetry music movement make squats? This globalized mode of cultural expression is so heavily policed it is de facto criminalized in many cities, but social centers find room for the angry songs of the socially excluded. How about experimental music? This highly academicized minoritarian mode of audio art has no commercial audience to speak of. It is entirely dependent upon the school environment, state subsidy, private patronage, or – the ambit of experiment with electronic media that exists in social centers.

All of these cultural trends or artistic movements, through their production, exhibition and social networks, have contributed to squatting actions, and to the arising and maintenance of squatting as a movement. Indeed, all of the characteristic workshops and interest groups that are to be found in many extra-legally occupied builldings comprise productive cultural networks which, together, sustain the squatting movement.

To say "punk and rap" or hip hop, is to point first to the main lines of cultural production that sustain much squatting. This is the most consistent and visible creative production and exhibition which comprises the culture of squatting in the cities I have visited and the squat projects I have studied on the web. By culture I mean what you find when you go there, the studios maintained and meetings held, and the events that are organized publically. There are many other significant lines of cultural and artisanal work in the squats and social centers, each of which bears a separate examination in terms of its unique character and its specific relation to its extra-legal environment.

These lines of work include libraries, archives, literary circles, free schools, film screening rooms, hacklabs (computer workspaces), bicycle workshops which both repair and invent, silkscreen workshops, painting and sculpture studios, dance, theater arts, circus, etc. These elements of squat culture all have their own networks and interrelationships. Infoshops and archives relate to the bookstores and libraries of the city, and occasional book fairs. Hacklabs relate to urban media labs, and also to other projects like pirate radio and internet TV production. All of these are cultural activities, and all on some level are understood as art, or enter into artistic practice as tools or as subjects. All of them are sustained by squatting.

Other Parties, Other Musics

Other kinds of music and dance have been involved in occupations and squatting. The free parties organized in the 1970s by Ruigoord (and later commercialized by entrepreneurs [Waalwijk, 2012]) happened around the same time as the large communal gatherings on public land of the Rainbow Family in North America. These were succeeded by the raves and mass trance dances of the 1990s some of which (in Rome) preceded occupations and long-term squats of the urban spaces in which they were held. This is a complex relation between culture and squatting which I cannot unpack here. Plus, while I have pogoed, I have never trance danced. As I write in Spain, *botellones* and *macrobotellones,* mass assemblies of young people socializing and drinking on the street, are taking place as virus restrictions ease. These are fearfully covered by TV. What might this transgressive use of public space lead to?

Seth Tobocman, cover of War in the Neighborhood: A Graphic Novel (Autonomedia, 2000). Crying out from a balcony is Jorge Brandon, "El Coco Que Habla," a homeless Puerto Rican artist.

II.

I now shift to consider the question of the art/squat relation in terms with which art historians feel comfortable – the monographic, the formal and the institutional.

To consider this problem in the traditional way, however, reinforces the unspoken idea that squats and social centers are, or should be thought of as entry points to the mainstream, launching pads for conventional careers. They're what wild young artists might do. Much the same problem bedevils the study of artists' collectivity, that is the idea that once they get serious, artists leave their groups and collectives and concentrate on their solo careers. [**FNcolab]**

Monograph

Biography reveals the networks and milieus that sustain individual achievement in the arts. Art history traditionally writes social and cultural history as sidebars to the monograph. Classic art historians write monographs of famous people. I now follow, writing first only of the famous, or those who maybe will be because they are now successful. A number of artists who have achieved mainstream success have a background in squatting, or have worked in occupied social centers. Others are sympathetic to the movement for housing and free social space. Their involvements are various and complex, but I shall here glance at some of them. This glance at some artists' involvement with squats moves more or less in order of prominence in the global artworld. Shepard Fairey is a "hot" artist in 2012, Antony Gormley is a well-established museum and gallery artist, the painter Daniel Richter has a strong market in Germany, and Christoph Schäfer has a widely recognized standing as an academic.

Shepard Fairey

Fairey was never a squatter. But his troubles with squatters illustrate the disjunction between an art culture that valorizes transgression and the culture of the squats. Internationally renowned U.S. street artist Shepard Fairey (born 1970) painted a mural in Copenhagen in the summer of 2011 which became the focus of controversy and a target of alterations. Painted on a wall facing a vacant lot, the mural commemorates the Ungdomshuset or Youth House which had stood on that vacant lot until it was evicted and demolished in 2007. It depicted a white dove floating in a patterned background above the logo "peace." The termination of the long-term occupation of Ungdomshuset by the city of Copenhagen led to a long series of demonstrations and riots culminating in a new location for the Youth House on the edge of the city. This mural by a famous visiting artist was resented. It was attacked by paint bombs, and the artist himself was assaulted on the street. These were expressions of rage by local activists at the notion that Copenhagen would pay a famous artist to make a mural emblematizing peace when there was no peace.

Fairey addressed the missteps by his public statements and by modifying the mural. He invited a local group of aerosol artists, RaxArt, to paint a historical section on the bottom imaging the violent police attacks on the Ungdomshuset. When our research group SQEK visited Copenhagen at the end of 2011, the RaxArt section had been almost totally obliterated by further tagging and paint bombing, attacks which we were told police had encouraged. **FNSqekcop** True or not, the demotic assault on the RaxArt mural amounted to a literal coverup of a record of state violence.

Mural on an evicted squat, Berlin, 2011.

In his own text on the incident, Fairey wrote: "I have always understood that street art is nothing to be precious about. The fate of the mural is out of my hands now, but I'm sad that such a great piece by the RaxArt guys was attacked. It was clearly a piece about social justice and I find the attack senselessly barbaric.... I'd say... [it was] demoralizing... [but] listening to Black Flag ...it is imperative to RISE ABOVE" [Fairey, 2011]. In reflecting on the whole experience, then, Fairey refers to the ethos of both street art (of which graffiti is a major, but not the only part) and punk rock (the California variety, circa 1980s). These two modes of practice overlap with squatting and contemporary punk rock – Ungdomshuset was a major European venue for punk acts – but they are clearly not congruent! Fairey was never part of a squatting movement. He was a skate punk in his youth, and his work came out of skater punk sticker culture. As a street artist, Fairey was arrested many times, and continued to put his work up illegally after achieving success. Skater punks are nomadic often oppressed users of public space, so their issues are similar, but they are not squatters. Fairey's position as a successful artist gaining museum exhibitions and municipal commissions (he did a number of other city-funded murals in Copenhagen that summer) also compromised his subcultural position. What is more, his practice of appropriating imagery from revolutionary movements of the past (e.g. Cuba) without crediting them had already drawn criticism from artists on the left.

Antony Gormley

Antony Gormley, a famous British sculptor, spoke publicly in defense of squatting in the United Kingdom. He discussed his own squatting in a factory in King's Cross during the 1970s. While it isn't clear how that situation developed, Gormley said, "the landlord of the factory was very, very positive about us being there. We had everything we needed including 25,000 sq ft of work space. A lot of the artists' space organisation of the '70s was to use unused [public housing] council and commercial properties for studios.... I think it's a principle that should be continued" [Needham, 2011]. Gormley was speaking while publicizing a charity auction with works by well-known artists being sold to benefit housing for single homeless people, the same people whose squatting or "rough sleeping" in abandoned buildings had just been further illegalized. He also talked to the press about the economic needs of younger British artists, speaking to the elites on behalf of his community against a repressive government policy – the law criminalizing squatting – which he believes would hurt artists.

Daniel Richter

Richter, like Gormley, addresses his city's governing elite. Daniel Richter (born 1962) is a well-known German figurative expressionist painter. I was told he was a squatter in Hamburg during the 1980s before entering art school. **[FNmal]** As a wealthy artist, Richter owns properties which house artists, and has been consistently critical of Hamburg cultural policy for failing to support artists and squandering cultural funds on foolish projects [*Hamburger Abendblatt*, 2010]. He is involved in and supports the Pudel Club, a cafe restaurant and artists social club run by the group that produced Park Fiction.

Christoph Schäfer

Christoph Schäfer is a Hamburg artist who, together with a large group of collaborators, produced the Park Fiction park on a patch of vacant land on the city's waterfront during a period of intensive development of that traditional working class neighborhood. Features of the park were developed through a process of "visioning" by local residents – among them the squatter community of the Haffenstrasse – beginning in 1994, and laboriously lobbied

through a resistant city government. Park Fiction got a boost when their project was featured in the Documenta exhibition of 2002. Schäfer and his friends developed a bar restaurant near the park called the Pudel Club which has become an important artists' meeting place and event space. Schäfer continues involved with a variety of anti-gentrification and popular participatory city planning initiatives as part of a Right to the City network. **FNcs**

Fly Orr, drawing of Italian Autonomist theorist Franco Berardi (aka Bifo) speaking at a 2016 conference at Scugnizzo Liberato, in Naples.

Under-Knowns

Actually, the artists who have most closely identified with the squatting movement are not famous at all. To discover who they are and what their work means in its relation to extra-legal occupation and alternative living practices would make a good exhibition. Some of those who could be in such an imaginary show are the New Yorkers Seth Tobocman, Fly Orr, **[FN – Fly Archive]** and Andrew Castrucci. [Moore & Cornwell, 2002] Musician and painter Peter Missing is part of this lineup. He relocated from New York to Germany in 1993, and moved between Hamburg and Berlin. All of these artists identify as squatters. Their art has consistently treated of squatting, its experiences and affects. They are less known in New York, probably because they work outside of commercial galleries. How many other artists like them are to be found in Europe? Just for a start, performance artist Mark Divo and draughtsman Ingo Giezendanner *aka* Grrrr, who both worked in Zürich.

Prominent artists (e.g., Gormley) and artworld academics speak more generally about public policy rather than taking specific positions supporting squats or social centers. Academics in particular tend to step to one side of the issue, speaking instead on questions like preservation, gentrification, sustainable development and the fallacies of the creative city model.

Strike Up the Band

The same kind of double frame of art and squat movement culture – could be made for musicians, since those artists have consistently been involved with squats. Indeed, it can be argued that big building squats could not exist without the income they derive by providing venues for musicians to play. The website Book Your Own Fuckin' Life networked the European circuit for punk bands for many years (they relaunched at byofl.org [defunct; on archive.org as of 2021]). Thurston Moore, a member of the band Sonic Youth, recalls touring squats and social centers in Europe in his foreword to a book of photos of U.S. punk houses [Banks, 2007]. Many U.S. bands had this experience – their recollections are scattered through innumerable small fanzines – archives of which are contained in social centers – and websites. In other genres, global music star Manu Chao played at the Rue des Caves on the periphery of Paris in 1985 [Blanchard, URL]. The Clash came directly out of London squats. Other squats, like the Rote Flora in Hamburg, have regular evenings of DJs playing different styles of music, including music that caters to immigrants. Since they are poor, immigrants aren't usually solicited as audiences by for-profit music venues. I was told by a music promoter that in Italy popular African musicians cannot find mainstream venues due to racism. Their concerts are a windfall for the social centers that are happy to host them.

It's All an Act

Next, is the question of form. I use "form" here to mean a general description of how an artistic expression is conceived and delivered. Graffiti and street art is often like a form of squatting itself, that is, the support occupied by the work is deliberately non-permitted. (Banksy's street art is a famous example.) Outside of visual art, the clearest special use of forms particular to squatting and occupation occurs in the field of theater and performance. But the question of performance quickly becomes complicated.

Squat ateliers teach or workshop performance techniques of various kinds – e.g., dance, comedy, rap and circus. Circus is especially congenial to squat culture, since it is physical, material, and historically nomadic. Occasionally occupied free spaces have hosted theater ensembles, like the Teatergruppen Solvognen or "Chariot of the Sun" (1972-83), **FNsolv** which was integrated into Christiania in Copenhagen, or Volxtheater Favoriten, and their

outgrowth the Publixtheatre Caravan (Volxtheater Favoriten; 1994- ongoing), **FNvolx** a travelling project based in the legalized squat Ernst Kirchweger Haus (EKH) in Vienna. Both these groups do (or did) strongly political performance work, also extra-legal public actions and demonstrations. Both grew up in and worked out of squats.

More broadly, extra-legal spaces are continuously involved in performance activities, from the execution of street demonstration tactics and squat defense – performance for police and media – to the everyday. Squatters and their guests perform or pose for photographs and videos which stage the public image of the squat when mounted on the squat website or posted to social media. Some of these performances can be dramatic and spectacular, such as the acrobatic lockdowns at Can Masdeu during the 2002 eviction attempt. The lockdown in defense of ABC No Rio in New York in the late 1990s became an element in a painted sculpture by Seth Tobocman which depicts a seated protestor, her neck secured to a building with a bicycle lock, being approached by a policeman.

Mural at Can Masdeu, Barcelona, 2012. This okupa is a former hospital with extensive gardens for both the commune of occupiers and neighbors

Squatter Film Festival

In two films, performance in defense of squats is prominently featured, providing a major part of the entertainment value of the film. The documentary film, "Laboratorio 3. Ocupando el vacío" (2007) records a performance by occupiers appearing in the windows of the building in the Madrid barrio Lavapiés. This public performance is a dramatic version of the static Facadenaustellungen (facade exhibitions) of Berlin squats. "Okupa, crónica de una lucha social" (Octavio Royo, 1996) begins with a long shot of the fireworks display – an episode of symbolic anarchist bomb-throwing – that accompanied the police charge that evicted the Cine Princesa in Barcelona. Both of these films use rather obvious cinematic tropes, although they do double duty as public demonstration event and eviction defense. I think (certainly in "Laboratorio") the actors were aware of the filming and performed with attention to the filmic requirements of the camerapeople.

"Dada Changed My Life" (Daniel Martinez and Olga Mazurkiewicz, 2003; [Martinez, URL]) documents in semi-fictional form the art squat action that saved the historic Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich from commercial development. This action was a clear example of what Hans Pruijt calls "conservational squatting" [Pruijt, 2013] a short term occupation specifically intended to save a building with historic cultural significance. Plans were made to renovate the birthplace of the European Dada movement in 1916 as a corporate showroom. Today it is a museum dedicated to the Dada art movement. **FNisrael** Performance artist Mark Divo, who has done numerous works with and in squatted places, was involved in the Cabaret Voltaire action. The film is atypical among squat documentaries, in that it weaves a kind of story out of the event, including footage of the squat, theatrical events there, and staged conversations with impossibly aged Dadaists.

The New Forms

Photographs published to the web can be used by police to identify squatters and activists. Despite this urgent concern about personal security, squatters continually represent their struggle through still photographs, video, zines, tweets and social media posts. The squats exist powerfully in mediatic space, and everyone in the movement is involved in this symbolic production as performer or "extra".

Curiously, a video featurette produced in Amsterdam in 1994 called "Zwarte kat" (black cat) demonstrates this totalizing presentation of the squat as spectacle and research object. The video, a kind of docu-drama, purports to show the opening of a museum of squatting, the "kraakmuseum Zwarte Kat". A radio interviewer for Vrije Keijser Radio (a pirate radio station in another squat) is toured through their building. The interviewer meets and talks with a worker for Radio Sirene who shows her around. A fashion show ensues, and finally the building is evicted by police, played by the squatters themselves. (The actual eviction of Zwarte Kat followed a month later.) The low-power pirate radio stations which feature prominently in "Zwarte kat" were the forerunners of the hacklabs that later put out squat information to the internet. [Maxigas, in Moore & Smart, 2015] The video today reposes in a special collection of the Staatsarchief of the Institute of Social History, the final archival form of the imagined "kraakmuseum". ["Zwarte kat," 1994]

Mediatic Space

Public mediatic space is rather recent in arising, and is mutating continuously. From consumer video cameras in the 1970s to the corporatized internet of the 21st century, these public forums are being used effectively

by social movements and by artists. Artists played an important role in its development of this infosphere [Greene, 2004], leading the way as consumers became producers.

The connectivity and exposure which mediatic space provides has been indispensable to new forms of artistic activism, and tactical media closely associated with the global justice movement. The squatted social centers in big cities were key nodes in organizing demonstrations against European ministerial meetings to make new free trade agreements during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the so-called alterglobalization or global justice movement. **FN56a** During these years, activist artists developed props and strategies for these demonstrations, often working within the social centers which also hosted the travelers. Some of these props were included in the landmark art exhibition the Interventionists [Thompson and Sholette, 2004]. Tactical media artists pitched in with gusto to the reanimated movements of 2011. A discussion of these newly emergent and very specifically constituted forms of culture in relation to squats would derail the broader objectives of this essay. Interested readers can look at the work of Benjamin Shepard [e.g., Shepard, 2012], Nato Thompson, and Geert Lovink for insights into this political art movement. [For New York City, see McKee, 2017]

Design for Squatting Europe Collective (SQEK) research group seminar in Copenhagen, 2011.

Squatter TV Sitcom

Anthropologist Nazima Kadir teamed up with artist Maria Pask to produce a television situation comedy based on Kadir's research. They were commissioned by Casco, a Dutch design institution. “Our Autonomous Life?” (2011) explores the realities of co-living – cooperative or communal life – as it is lived in squats. “Life” was a more sophisticated type of performance around the issues of squatting and squatting life, undertaken by artists within an

art institution in consultation with squatters and in response to the Dutch 2010 law against squatting. **FNnaz** The work was produced and presented as part of a series of projects and exhibitions, a broad inquiry into contemporary conditions of domestic living from a feminist perspective called the "Grand Domestic Revolution". The GDR project was presented in the Dutch pavilion at the ARCO art fair in Madrid, a rare public presentation of a central aspect of the squatting movement in a mainstream global art venue.

Talking to the CIA

In 2008, in a talk at Yale University, I argued that squatting was congruent with the large scale artist-organized exhibition. This form of self-organization has been a constant feature of the New York artworld at least since 1913. At one moment in the 1980s, the large scale artist-organized exhibition crossed paths with ideologically driven squatting in the form of the Puerto Rican nationalist social center Charas El Bohio. What links the squat and the artist-organized show? First, the matter of duration. The time of an art exhibition is always limited, and considerable efforts are expended to mount it. Squatting actions, too, are usually short compared to long-term legal tenure in a building. The artist-organized show, like the squat, is a social sphere that works differently from the salesroom gallery or archiving museum. Rather than customers, patrons, institutional curators and spectators, artists meet each other, activists, and probably more of the "real public" beyond the art world. Artists involved with squats bring their skills navigating alternative economies – and often their middle class skills in dealing with bureaucracies and landlords. Ideologically motivated squatted social centers can be seen as continuously operating creatively-organized public events. **FNyale**

This 2008 talk was for me the beginning of an argument for squatting as art, as an intrinsic part of the artists' work in the new century. That this might be true is implied by the strange story of the French group UX (for Urban eXperiment). Their work proceeds through surreptitious extra-legal occupation. UX does pro bono anonymous public service work on an impressively grand scale. The underground cinema in the catacombs of Paris is the most exciting, and in fact reiterates a form of creatively motivated "prosumer" organizing within squats and social centers. But the clock repair job is simply weird. [Lackman, 2009; Kunstmann, 2008] It isn't squatting, it isn't art squatting, but a close relative. Call it the mad uncle in the attic while everyone is leading a more or less normal life downstairs. When I first learned of their work, I thought the story was a hoax. At the very least, the art of UX is an innovative practice which critics have yet to situate within understandings of art.

Monster Institutions

Another realm of normative art history is the case study of an institution, its initial emergence and subsequent development. In the case of squats and social centers, this could be the story of the institutionalization of extra-legal situations, and concern matters of cultural policy and cultural management.

In 2008 members of the Spanish network Universidad Nómada broached the question in an issue of the multi-lingual web zine *transversal*. In an introductory text to "Monster Institutions," they sought "to try and explore the extent to which the 'social centre form' today points the way to processes of opening up and renewal, producing, for example, innovative mechanisms for the enunciation of (and intervention in) the galaxy of the precariat; and at the same time, and partially intertwining with the above, the constitution of self-education networks that are developing in – and perhaps result from? – the crisis of Europe's public university system. Ultimately, 'Europe', not as

a naturalised space for political intervention, but as a constituent process; the production of these mental prototypes and mechanisms of enunciation and intervention as an instituent process." [*Transversal,* 2008] **FNmons**

Institutional history is boring for academics, really, when poly-valent theory beckons and object-centered research pays. The artworld also thrives on calculated ambiguity around the origins and operations of its basic structures. The rise of a mode of conceptual art called "institutional critique" may change this. (I say "may" because writing about the practice is usually thick, even obscurantist.) The frame or support of any work of art draws the attention of the artist, even as a work in itself. Famous predecessor examples include various images of Magritte, *La vide*, the empty gallery of Yves Klein (1959), and the urinal as sculpture of Marcel Duchamp/Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven (*Fountain* of 1917). These works call attention to the context of art making and showing, not the thing itself. The latter two were made as critiques of the institutions within which they were found – the commercial gallery and the artist-organized show respectively.

Social Practice

More recently, the question of how to style a place of exhibition as a social space – a space for some kind of interaction between artist and viewer, or to design a participatory environment or sequence of events – has become more prominent as a mode of art. French curator and critic Nicolas Bourriaud called this "relational aesthetics" [Bourriaud, 1998]. In the U.S. this has come to be called "social practice," and often continues the under-valued tradition of community art [Goldbard, 2006]. Numerous educational programs specifically devoted to this way of making art have been established. There has been something of a contest over this in the artworld, because museums, building on Bourriaud's conception of the form, have tried to showcase an authorial social practice art free of specific political content. Against this, Grant Kester has described a "dialogic art" which works within social difference [Kester, 2004]. Most recently, Creative Time produced a show and book *Living as Form* which emphasizes the political effects of social practice art [Thompson, 2012]. (See also later work by Claire Bishop and Gregory Sholette.) Still, it is not clear how any of these practices relate to squats, which lie outside art institutions. Maybe since numerous educational programs specifically devoted to this way of making art have been established their graduates will be looking for interesting things to do.

Getting Legal

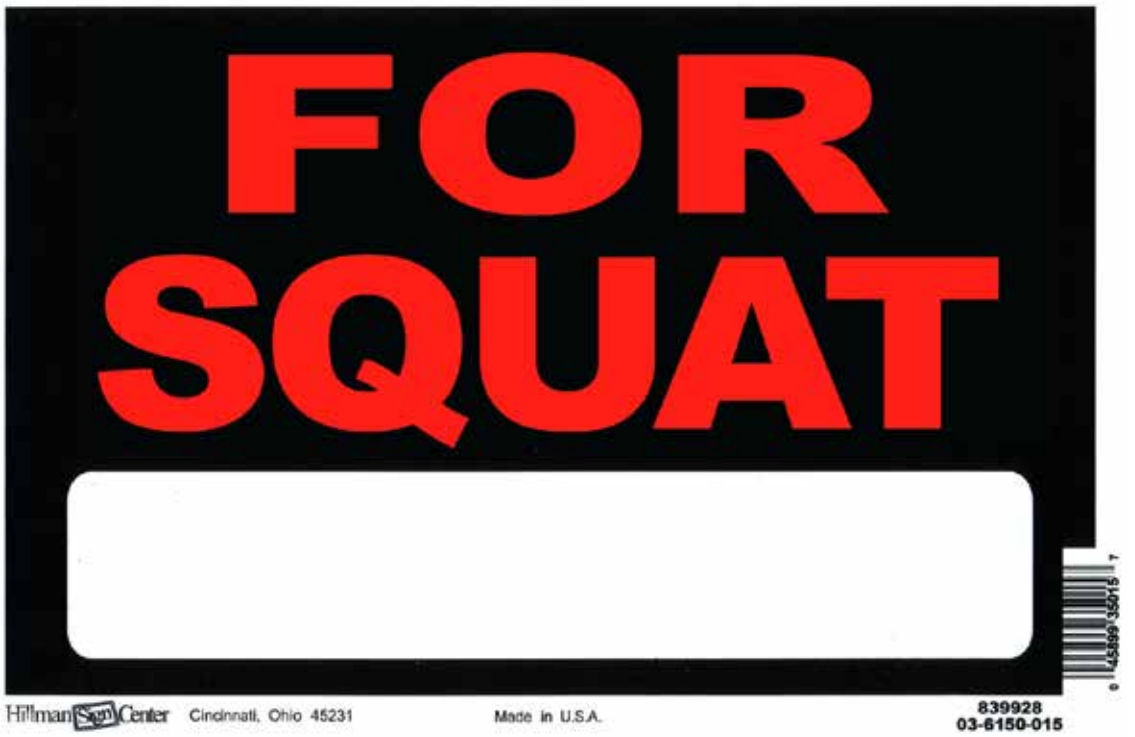
To return to the consideration of the demotic institutional trajectory of squatted places: How do some squats and social centers succeed in prolonging their tenure with the consent of the governing powers? How do some of these become significant cultural centers, and how do they differ from cultural centers initiated by government or private sector?

For the emergent social center, the freshly squatted place, there exists a sort of cry of triumph (often echoed on the website squat.net), and statements of grand intentions. Later, hopefully much later, comes the calls for solidarity, cries for help and the brief elegy for the evicted. But for the slow march towards institutionalization there is little excitement, and finally, no very visible history. There is no poetry and no song, only the slow murmur of bureaucratic negotiation.

Websites for various cultural centers – like Rote Fabrik in Zurich, W139 in Amsterdam, Rog in Lljubjana (evicted 2020), etc. – carry a brief note on the squatting origins of these places. These boring stories contain the best arguments for the social and cultural utility of the practice of taking unused urban space for short-term popular public

uses. **FNwhite** The story of the process of negotiation includes also the specific explanations, justifications, modifications and compromises – often formal contracts **[**Durán & Moore, 2015] that autonomous groups made with the governments and private parties which had power over their futures. These accounts could help to normalize the legalization process with other less accomodating governments. **FN – Naples Protocol**

Even as they exercise their power to evict, state and market powers sometimes imitate the practices and the mediatic shells of squatting, and regularly capitalize on squatters' cultural successes. The city of Amsterdam included squats and big building occupations in official city guides which portrayed the city as a magnet for adventurous European youth. [Owens, 2008] Real estate investors in Madrid moved artists into vacant storefronts for brief periods and called it "squatting" [de Andés, 2009; Vilaseca, 2010]. An architectural group in Copenhagen pilfered the form and slogans of a squatting group for a temporary project on the waterfront. **FNask** The Metelkova social center in Llubjana complained bitterly over being muscled aside for the new contemporary art museum being built on the site they have occupied for years with a wide variety of art activities [Klub Gromka, et al., 2006; see also Babic in Moore & Smart, eds., 2015].



Sign produced by Reuben Kincaid, Chicago, in 2010. Reuben Kincaid is an invented persona; in this moment he is a real estate agent.

"New Institutionality"

But, as we have seen, the Casco design center in Utrecht embraced ideas coming from the squatting movement without obscuring their provenance. That's proper curatorial practice. In Spain institutions respond to the

squatting movement in its form as social centers, although indirectly. The "New Institutionality" program at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid (MNCARS) is a "line of work [that] tests models of construction of new forms of intermediation which can break away from the dichotomies which have traditionally constricted the operation of museum institutions." **FNweb** This is vaguely phrased. In an interview Jesus Carillo, director of cultural programs told me, "this new institutionality project is basically to provide alternatives for cultural production and cultural consumption to the neoliberal." **FNint** This is also somewhat vague. During times of austerity, and with conservative political administration, the MNCARS anticipates budget cuts which will force the institution to rely as never before on private funding, so they can be cagey.

Artist unknown, mural in the courtyard of Centro Social Okupado Autogestionado Casablanca, Madrid (desalojado 2012) the photo in the mural shows the 15M assembly in Puerta del Sol. (15mpedia.org/wiki/CSOA_Casablanca).

One of the New Institutionality meetings in March of 2011 was held in Malaga, at the long-time occupied social center Casa Invisible, which was under threat of eviction by the conservative local mayor. The intervention of the director of the Reina Sofia museum helped to forestall that [Borja-Villel, 2011], and preserve the Casa Invisible as an outpost of independent populist culture under a permission-to-use agreement with the city.

While MNCARS "New Institutionality" project has backed away from direct engagement with social centers, Madrid is full of active ones. Tabacalera, the largest, is legalized, and explicitly cultural in its activities. Still, the 15M movement of the "indignadoes" has strong ties to Tabacalera, and also Casablanca, a still-illegal center which is only a few blocks from MNCARS. (Evicted in late 2012.) The political climate of the federal institutions has turned right, however, so the prospects for local cooperation seem to have dimmed. (Since 2012, the Spanish federal government has wobbled back to the center-left; MNCARS is pursuing new social initiatives under the name "Museo en Red".)

CODA

My Art Squat

The most obvious place to start this essay would have been with the self-identified art squats, that is, buildings that are occupied by artists for explicitly cultural purposes. In my researches, however, I tried to understand the broader squatting movement instead of fixing on artists from the start. In part, this was political. Because of the relatively friendly reception given to artist squatters by some city governments, notably in Amsterdam and Paris, the squatting movement has often been divided. The split between "good" squatters who are allowed to stay and "bad" ones who are evicted has created animosity and mistrust. **FNsqektalk** It is important to have continuous conversations to bridge the gaps between art culture and political culture that allow these antagonisms to grow.

Nevertheless, art squatting is an obvious question to investigate, and I add some references to this activity as a sort of unanalyzed coda to this paper. In some cities art squatting may be anomalous. The legalized social center Tabacalera is unusual among similar entities in Madrid. In other cities it may be the only way to achieve any deal with the city for a use lasting longer than a few weeks. As a consequence of such deals, normative art world administrative practices enter into the world of the art squat. Rue de Rivoli 59 in Paris is a non-stop open studio sale, with artists in more or less tiny spaces present during busy times chatting with friends and sitting by their work for sale. It is totally legal, curated and banal. Also in the longtime Berlin squat Tacheles (since evicted) the backyard became an open-air warren of artists' ateliers with close attention to small sale items for tourists. In Paris, the 8th "Festival des Ouvertures Utiles" ("useful openings"; their Facebook page lists squat events in Paris), was very much like other artist-organized low-budget festivals of art, except that it was "branded" as squat art. While Rivoli 59 has no discernible political mission or engagements, the artists of La Générale maintained and emphasized their political positions ["La Générale," 2011].

I met the artists at La Générale through my "House Magic" research project, an investigation which began as an art exhibition. Other art exhibitions have also tried to grapple with the question of the squat. For example, the exhibition "Now and Ten Years Ago" at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin in 2004 contained artworks done in, or in relation to squatting in Berlin, but they were not in any way a theme of the show. **FNaw** "Arte Ocupa," a so-called art circus, toured Lisbon, Paris (Rue de Rivoli 59) and Hamburg (Gängeviertel) venues in 2010. **FNartoc** A show in Moscow called "Arthouse Squat Forum" was part of the 2011 Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, although it wasn't a squat but a permitted use of raw unrenovated space by Moscow artists

which included an "exhibit of art communities." **FNmos** "Squat" in this case was a metaphor. Although at Christiania in Copenhagen and at Gängeviertel in Hamburg, **FNchris** the occupations of the places themselves began in or as art exhibitions [Bloom, 2007].

Thankfully for the vitality of the independent artworld and the insistence of autonomous social movements, art + squat is never over, and will continue to yield mysterious quantities of X. As I finish the clean-up of this text I see that the Temporary Autonomous Art gang (taaexhibitions.org) has announced their next show – an "open-access art festival in a squatted venue" for October of '21. Wish I could go….

Sara Renaud and BIBI, "Giant Face" made from food cans, etc. on the front of 59 Rivoli, Paris, ca. 2010

END NOTES

FNbloc –

The internet has tremendously altered the circuits of media, and the change is more complete every day. Squat[dot]net, an indispensable source of news of squatting worldwide, was very early on the internet. My "House Magic: Bureau of Foreign Correspondence" project was intended to break down the knowledge gap, and to bring squatting and occupation culture to the attention of an Anglophone public. The internet made the project possible; PDFs can be downloaded, and I printed them out as zines as I traveled around. Still, the consumer of information must be proactive, seeking it out; there remains no broad public consciousness of the European movement that is not tainted by ownership propaganda. (See E. T. C. Dee, "The Production of Squatters as Folk Devils: Analysis of a Moral Panic that Facilitated the Criminalization of Squatting in the Netherlands," *Deviant Behavior*, 2016.)

FNparc –

Art's relation with crime is insisted upon by NYC performance artist Penny Arcade (Susana Ventura), which she derives from her experience in the creative milieu of Andy Warhol and Ronald Tavel, homosexual artists during a period when that sexual identity was criminalized.

FNocc –

Occupation during the 1960s was a technique of both radical and reformist movements in the USA, and was used to reinforce demands for change in law or institutional structure. SDS leader Tom Hayden compared the U.S. Occupy movement to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s: "The logic of an occupation, I think, is that if you feel voiceless about a burning issue of great great importance, and the institutions have failed you, the only way to get leverage for your voice is to occupy their space in order to get their attention" (Democracy Now webcast, April 13, 2012). This is not the logic of squatting, which is a form of popular expropriation, extracting use value from properties which are being "warehoused," set aside until their exchange value increases.

FNcolab –

In the artists' group Colab I was a part of in the 1970s-'80s in NYC, those who achieved success left the group, and for years their gallery resumes did not list earlier activities with the group. Increasingly, this prejudice seems to be dissolving. Artists today are more easily managing mainstream presence and continued engagement with their collectives. Also galleries and institutions are increasingly recognizing collectives as important actors in art.

FNSqekcop –

Tina Steiger conducted the SqEK tour in Copenhagen in December 2011. She wrote a master's thesis, "Spaces of Autonomy In Copenhagen and Madrid" in 2011, comparing the Candy Factory in Copenhagen and the Tabacalera in Madrid.

FNmal

Richter spoke to *Hamburger Abendblatt* in 2010 [see references, *Hamburger*], and again on the radio: "Maler Daniel Richter kritisiert Hamburgs Kulturpolitik," August 24, 2009 atdradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/fazit/1022549/ (accessed Oct. '21). In the spring of 2011, I worked with the American-German artist Michel Chevalier to produce a fun exhibition in the occupied social center Rote Flora. It was called "No Wave Squatter Punk (Anti) Art" show (recalled at en.squat.net; my essay "Permanent Cultural Revolution" is at sites.google.com/site/housemagicbfc, accessed Oct. '21). The show included Michel's satirical coda to my talk, a performative spoof of Richter's 'pro-squa'' position – "April 3: Presentation by Alan W. Moore; wrap-up with 'paint polit-kitsch like Daniel Richter' workshop (bring yer brushes!)."

FNcs –

For the Hamburg project see park-fiction.net/, and the film by Margit Czenki, *Park Fiction: Desires Will Leave the House and Take to the Streets* (1999).

[FN – Fly Archive]

With the 2018 acquisition of the "Fly Zine Archive: A Chronicle of Punk, Queer, and Anarchist Counterculture" (title of a 2021 exhibition), the Minneapolis Institute of Art became the first art museum in the country to add a zine archive to its permanent collection. Fly was closely involved with the NYC squatter scene and the Museum of Reclaimed Urban Spaces (MoRUS).

FNsolv –

Teatergruppen Solvognen or "Chariot of the Sun" is documented in a website by Nils Vest, the filmmaker of Christiania: vestfilm.dk/christiania/solvognen/chariotofthesun.html. Some of their early activist interventions are significant in the history of activist performance, [Bloom, 2007] linked to similar Situationist-inspired actions in Scandinavia. [Bolt & Jakobsen, 2011]

FNvolx –

The story of the Publixtheatre Caravan is told in Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker: Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation," *springerin* 1/03 (2003; also in German), and also in Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century,* translated by Aileen Derieg (MIT Press, 2007), chapter 8, "The Transversal Concatenation of the PublixTheatreCaravan: Temporary Overlaps of Art and Revolution."

FNisrael –

Interestingly, the other museum dedicated to Dada was founded by a Romanian immigrant to Israel who was an original participant in the Zurich Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. The Marcel Janco Dada Museum is located in Ein Hod, Israel, a village abandoned by its Palestinian inhabitants in the clearances of the late '40s and early '50s. It is another kind of occupation.

FN56a –

In the international section of the 56a Infoshop archives in London (some six linear feet), there is ample evidence of meetings and events in social centers organizing demonstrations during ministerial meetings in different European cities throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

FNnaz –

The producer was the Casco Office for Art, Design and Theory in Utrecht. (It's an art school, at Casco.art.) Casco's website about the TV show – cascoprojects.org/?entryid=485, and the description of the process of making the sitcom – ourautonomouslife.info/the-process have been demounted. For a scrap of that, see the blog post of 2020 at: theoctoberanthropologist.com/portfolio/our_autonomous_life_sitcom/ (accessed Oct. '21).

FNyale –

"Free Lunch at the Hacienda," unpublished talk at Yale University Art Gallery, October 3, 2008 as part of the Richard Brown Baker symposium. Brown in fact worked for the CIA.

FNmons –

This subhead comes from the "Monster Institutions" issue of the webzine *Transversal*]*Transversal,* 2008], published by the European Institute for Progressive Cultural policy at eipcp.ne. I appropriated the title and some ideas for a brief text, "Monster Institutions: Occupied Social Centers in Europe," delivered as a talk at College Art Association and Creative Time Summit in 2011 (video demounted).

FNwhite –

The Witboek Kraken (2009; "White Book of Squatting") tried to forestall the impending anti-squatting law in Holland. The volume is in Dutch – witboekkraken.nl (accessed Oct. '21), and responds to misleading anti-squat propaganda published as a "Black Book". Banners were put up on cultural facilities around Amsterdam pointing to their antecedents in the squatting movement, "Made Possible by Squatting" (in Dutch). The slogan was adapted by a London group for a 2013 exhibition in a squatted space.

[FN – Naples Protocol]

The city of Naples devised a protocol for the occupation of vacant buildings in 2016. "Resolution 446/2016 is important because it recognises the social value of the experience of living in occupied spaces and not only the economic value of the properties." The Naples protocol was being studied by a group within the Ingobernable social center in Madrid when the center was evicted in 2019. (See wiki.p2pfoundation.net/Naples_Council_

Resolution_of_2016_on_Occupied_Buildings_as_Common_Goods, accessed Oct. '21.)

FNask –

I have this story from Ask Katzeff, a SQEK researcher in Copenhagen. See also "School of Walls and Spaces, Copenhagen," in "House Magic" #1, 2009.

FNweb –

A text by the museum's director, Manuel Borja-Villel, "Hacia una nueva institucionalidad," appears in the museum's house publication *Carta* #2, spring-fall 2011. Over time, the initiative has mutated into Museo en Red, museoreinasofia.es/en/museo-red (accessed Oct. '21). MNCARS is part of related EU-wide network of museums, L'Internationale (internationaleonline.org).

FNint –

Interview with Jesús Carillo, November 2011. He also mentioned their intention to start a foundation to fund political projects outside the museum (Fundación de los Comunes, fundaciondeloscomunes.net). Since then Carillo has left the museum. Still, the pseudopodic extensions of the MNCARS have continued to move cautiously towards the social movements. (See Jesús Carrillo, "conspiratorial institutions?" [2017] at the "glossary of common knowledge", /glossary.mg-lj.si; and *Wrong Wrong* No. 14, n.d., wrongwrong.net.)

FNsqektalk –

The divide between political squatters and artists was discussed conversationally in every SqEK meeting, and referenced in several papers.

FNaw –

While there was no catalogue for the show, curator Axel Wieder showed me images of the works in this show in Berlin in 2005.

FNartoc –

The project of Carlos Henrich was documented with a catalogue at arte-ocupa.vipulamati.org/postais.html. (This site is much reduced but limps on, accessed Oct. '21.) One of the venues for his show was in Lisbon at Galeria Zé Dos Bois (ZDB), which I visited. It was not a squat, but an old ruined palace which artists got permission to use in return for a renovation with scavenged materials. It was an important contemporary art center in the city (interview with Natxo Checa, deputy director of visual arts, Galerie Zé Dos Bois [ZD]), Lisbon, 2012).

FNmos –

Moscow Art Squat exhibition website was at arthouse-sf.com/en/ (demounted). Many surprises await in this line of research. In checking that URL, I learn of "Detsky Sad (Kindergarten), the legendary Moscow art squat" of the 1980s.

FNchris –

Interview with Christina Eberling at Gängeviertel, 2009.

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Received on: 2021-10-05

How to quote:
Moore, Alan W. (2022) Art + Squat = X. Revista Estado da Arte, Uberlândia. v.3, n.1, p. 169-205, jan./jun. 2022. https://doi.org/10.14393/EdA-v3-n1-2022-63487