

MAGAZINE FOR CREATIVE ACTIVISM

ISSUE #6

- ① CREATIVELY HUMAN
- ② SCALPEL
- ③ THE
- ④ ANNUAL USE
- ⑤ POINTLESSNESS
- ⑥ NOMADIC
- ⑦ OAK
- ⑧ FREEDOM
- ⑨ WARM
- ⑩ BUILDINGS
- ⑪ AFFINITY
- ⑫ THEATER
- ⑬ PERFORMANCE
- ⑭ EVERYONE
- ⑮ TRANSPORT
- ⑯ // WHATEVER.
- ⑰
- ⑱
- ⑲
- ⑳ YOU CAN ALSO BE AN
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WHAT IS MAŠTA?

Mašta is an open platform for creativity, freedom and action. The word Mašta means 'imagination'. It also means 'whatever'. Whatever you imagine can be part of the magazine. We call it organic creativity: positive, open, experimental, unconventional, challenging, playful, provocative. Mašta is a space where people from all over the world can both inspire others with their initiatives and get inspired by the actions of others. Mašta invites people to change the world around them with micro revolutions powered by creative and positive energy. To create a new perception of reality for themselves and others.

WHO ARE WE?

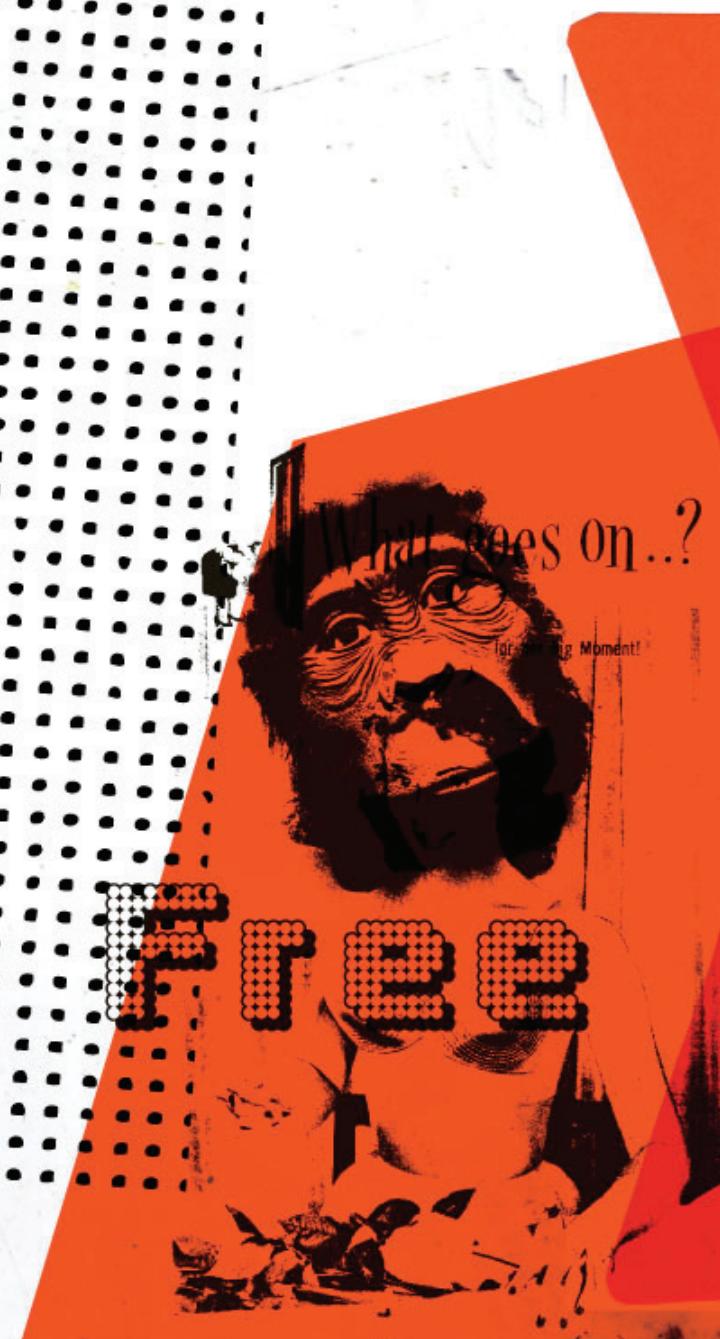
We are an international collective of activists, artists and activists, makers and researchers, journalists and other creative souls. We are here to explore, provoke and inspire, looking for the way of changes, learning from you and sharing the experiences around us. We are here to report and multiply creative acts that reflects the world we actually live in.

PLATFORM

We realize the magazine to create a platform for young people to share their opinions on the world, politics and life with the perspective of creative expression, activism and exchange. We receive reports from individuals and groups who do creative actions in the streets and in other places in public space. Images, articles, artwork and ideas are shared. All this together makes Mašta possible.

YOU WANT MORE?

You can download the past five issues from www.mastazine.net
Creative Acts welcomes you to share your work too.
Contact via editor@mastazine.net



FREE



MAGAZINE FOR CREATIVE VISION

TOPIC? NO TOPIC!

The complexity of today's society requires new ways of finding and defining freedom

If there is a name given to freedom, is it still... free?

It's like reading a Stephen Hawking's book and stretching your brain cells to the size of the Universe, while listening to Shirley and Spinoza radio.

Rebellious thoughts, that remove restrictions on creativity, left behind the ritual dances around pedestal, where the topic is imposed, has lead us to the theme of "No Theme".

MAŠTA means "whatever" or "imagination", because it is about all possible imagination. This issue of MAŠTA is an experiment to see if no rules can liberate imagination and turn the magazine into an explosion of creativity.

Is having no theme the same as the narrowest theme imaginable? MAŠTA has taken this challenge and left the theme to go out into the fields. Aimlessly walking, or rather researching randomnesses and coincidences. Reflecting on society through various creative acts has resulted in this vivid zine for collectors of errors and trash as well as change initiators and makers.

Trash and ceremonies as well as slums and advertisements have the potential to inspire, knowing that waste can be upcycled, rituals can be exaggerated to absurdity and commercial posters on billboards can be remade into farcical reverse messages. Though ... can pointlessness be validated?

Enjoy your journey through the streets of Berlin, creative spaces of Palestine, the Kingdom of Errors and let us know, what are your thoughts about ...
no topic!
the Editor

A painting of a man in a dark suit and tie, looking down at a large, open book he is holding. The book has a green cover and is filled with white pages. The background is dark and textured.

4

CREATIVE ACTIVISM AS PART OF HUMAN NATURE

Words by: Kaj Derkx

T

he ability to change the world accordingly to ones will is inclined in human nature. This is evident by the fact that we, at least a large amount of the human population, are living in enormous supernatural settlements. These settlements, we call 'cities' or even 'metropolis', might not look like a natural environment at all but why do we think that? Isn't the ability to change our environment, the world, to our ideals a natural instrument?

Making the city our natural environment.

Of course the establishment of a city is of a different matter than the emergence of, for instance, a forest or a mountain. But stating that such a happening has nothing to do with nature would imply that you distinguish humanity, and with that also your own being, from nature. Such speculation would result in either a position that places humanity above nature or in another position, positioning humanity as a different entity next to nature.

The consequence of the first situation, that places humanity in a hierarchical way above nature, would be that mans choices and actions would be necessary better than natures course.



It doesn't need much argumentation to show that this is not the case as man-made changes contain numerously more errors than those that naturally occur. You can, for instance, compare urban waste management to it's natural counterpart. You will immediately see that nature is much more effective in dealing with it's waste-products than humanity and thus shows the first position as untenable.

The second position, that places the human kind as a separate entity next to nature, will withstand more criticism. Only it will find very little support from empirical science, which can be assumed to be a objective source for arguments. This can be explained by the fact that the empirical sciences derive from the same human ability to consciously interfere within the environment as that what made it possible to build cities and commit, what we call, creative activism. For instance, biology and sociology can find many applications or similarities within humanity which we share with the rest of nature that this position becomes too speculative to hold on to. So if the human kind, with all it's qualities, is a natural species, why wouldn't the urban environment also be a natural one?

If an anthill is considered a piece of nature, than a city, that provides a place to live for a similar amount of inhabitants, must also be considered a natural environment.

As it is natural for any life-form to depend on their own qualities to survive, it is normal that mankind uses it's consciousness to enhance their environment in order to increase their chances of survival. So it is logical that the inhabitants of a (large) urban area will try to make enhancements in their environment. The changes that are made in this context might not directly have anything to do with survival but will have an effect on the relation somebody has with their place of living.

The effect might be that you gain understanding of your neighbourhood, have sharpened your cossciousness of your environment, practised the primary human survival mechanism. You'll have probably changed your environment into a shape in which you feel at home and comfortable. Doing this you have done that what any human naturally would have done in an environment that wasn't fit for them to live in: change it into something you can live in the way that fit's your way of living.

In reality, many urban environments don't look like they have got to the shape they are by those who live in it. Often it is the city government that plans everything out and hires architects to design buildings. This can lead to the idea that this very human quality, the ability to consciously enhance the environment, is something which is reserved for only the government.

While it actually is something very natural for every individual of the human population. Therefore making these kinds of changes has become to be known as 'creative activism', for those who do practice it are seen as people who take action compared to those who don't, while actually it is a natural attribute, also known as instinct. It now may seem that, as a human individual, you may do with your environment anything your heart desires but nothing could be further from the truth. The case is that every creative act, in order to be a natural addition to the status quo, should be a "good" one.

Here we come to the hardest part of creative activism: considering if what you are doing is good and and when it becomes vandalism. Of course it is not probable that you will do something that you consider to be not good but it is important to make the value of your action a general, or even universal "good". It might be impossible find out if your action is universal good but a simple way to find out if it is not "not good" is asking yourself the question: could this action be stated as a universal law in this situation? When this question can be answered with a positive answer, then, at least it can't be "bad".

Now of course this question can't be answered ultimately in a split second, but don't let that stop you from making an action of which you consider to be good. The importance is that you will be able to recognize the value of what you are doing. After all, creative activism is about acting.



INTERNATIONAL ERRORIST

"THE ONLY REAL FAILURE IN LIFE IS THE FAILURE TO TRY."

THIS IS THE STORY OF A GROUP OF YOUNG ARTISTS USING POETRY, VISUAL ARTS, MUSIC AND THEATRE TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE AND ERROR HAS COME TO BE THEIR CORNERSTONE.

ARGENTINA, 1997:

The Etcétera group was formed during a particularly significant moment in recent Argentinean history, preceding the collapse of the corrupted neoliberal dream of Carlos Menem on the late 90's. It was from within this precipitous climate that they came to squat an old print shop in Buenos Aires, which turned out to be the former residence of the surrealist poet Juan Andralis. Soon they started to perform in the streets, calling for justice, healthcare and a better education.

Etcetera worked along with HIJOS (Children for Identity and Justice against Forgetting and Silence) during their "escraches" (going to the houses of unpunished accomplices of the dictatorship to make people aware through all kind of performances).

Those turbulent times and the influence of surrealism became a perfect 'test bed' for their creations; their artistic vision grew, but also the social dimension of their actions.

"The idea of Etcétera was always to work with a type of cathartic theater. What was important for us was to generate an instance so that what was asleep inside those who created the "escrache" could come out through theater: anger, pain, fear, hysteria. To let out what had been repressed and what is rationalized in political militancy."¹

Their motto was, as they still proclaim to be: *"To encourage the spread of creativity like a virus infecting the social sensitivity and flooding with intensity the everyday's life. May the liberation of the unconscious poetic forces unleash new subjectivities while producing new objectivities and forms of art and science still unimagined. May homes be like small theaters, and buildings be molded like sculptures. May the metaphor take over reality spreading poetry to every corner of life like a liberating elixir."*

Words by: Rubén Gómez García

• (1) (4) International Errorist: The revolution through affect, by Santiago García Navarro (<http://www.latinart.com/aiview.cfm?id=353>)



- WE ARE ALL ERRORISTS.
- THE BASIS OF ERRORIST ACTION IS ERROR.
- ERRORISM IS A MISTAKEN PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION.
- RITUAL OF NEGATION. DISORGANIZED ORGANIZATION.
- ERRORISM'S FIELD OF ACTION ENCOMPASSES ALL PRACTICES TOWARDS THE LIBERATION OF HUMAN BEINGS AND LANGUAGE.
- FAILURE AS PERFECTION, ERROR AS TRIUMPH.
- ERRORISM: IT ISN'T, AND IT IS. IT GETS NEARER, IT SLIPS AWAY. SELF-CREATES AND SELF-DESTROYS. LIVES UP TO ITS OLD AND NEW FORMS.

THE FIRST ERRORIST MANIFESTO



SPACE TO CREATE AND INTERACT WITH THEIR SOCIAL CONTEXT. THEY FOUND IT IN THE STREETS,

THE INTERNATIONAL ERRORIST

Due to the visit of the former president of the United States of America, George Walker Bush, to Mar del Plata to attend the IV Summit of the Americas in 2005, the group started researching the topic of terrorism, media, and society. Etcétera was particularly focused on exploring the stereotype of the “terrorist.” Those were the times when the anti-terrorism laws were being reinforced worldwide, in a reaction to so called “extraordinary times,” and the “war on terror.”

“It was a trap because the law depicts symbolic attitude to be dangerous. It said that whoever looked like a terrorist was dangerous [...] we thought about how we could answer this; we needed to hold up a mirror.”²

These laws were, and still are, in many cases in conflict with the Declaration of Human Rights. The British “Prevention of Terrorism Act” which allows “control orders” for people “suspected” of involvement in terrorism, this act frees government to opt out of human rights laws. The very same year the British police shot an innocent man in the head seven times because he ran in a suspicious way... and they claimed it to be “a series of ‘unfortunate’ coincidences”.³



• (2) Federico Zukerfeld. Interview with Hürriyet Daily News. Istanbul 14/09/2009

• (3) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3144996/Jean-Charles-de-Menezes-shooting-Police-commander-went-to-wrong-room-for-strategy-meeting.html>



Etcétera came to the idea of reflecting this issue through theatre, and the "International Errorist" was founded. Their first action took place during the Mar del Plata summit, when they participated in the counter-summit called, Summit of the People. There, they participated in the marches and even performed a parody on the beach with stereotypical (T)errorist actors, in front of the astonished law forces. This "movie" was called "Operation Bang."

*"Our main idea was to form a kind of parody to the Middle East. In the same style as other actions of ours, the idea was to appear dressed as terrorists, so that the image would be disseminated by the international mass communications media, who are the same ones who constructed this figure. We sought to have that figure spread a message: "watch out, they are also waging a war there, watch out, this could be the next point."*⁴

More errorist actions continued in the following years. One of the latest happened in May 2010, when the Argentinian cell came to the streets to (counter)celebrate the 200th anniversary of the May Revolution against the Spanish Empire. There is also an exhibition touring the world under the name of "Errorist Kabaret," which plays visually with some historical characters and the concept of error, which also documents the story of the movement over the years.

Errorism proclaims error as a philosophy of life and they are an international movement, claiming to have autonomous cells everywhere. They invite people to think, play and re-interpret the concept and stereotypes of error in our society: "Error is something good." Could error be the holy grail of XXI Century? As we know, trying to keep it out of the equation has not really work so far... So why not give error a chance?

After all, we are all errorists... Aren't we?

"For us it's really important that a critical political language should be accompanied or carried out with one foot on the barricades and the other in dreams." Federico Zuckerfeld

LINKS

- ETCÉTERA GROUP: <http://grupoeetcetera.wordpress.com> (spanish)
- ERRORIST KABARET: <http://erroristkabaret.wordpress.com>
- ERRORIST-TV: <http://www.youtube.com/groupEtcetera#t=0>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/erroristas>

YOU CAN ALSO BE AN ERROR



FEDERICO ZUKERFELD IS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE ETCETERA COLLECTIVE IN ARGENTINA IN 1997, AS WELL AS ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE ERRORIST MOVEMENT ALL OVER THE WORLD.

I saw a sticker of you near the Bethanien Squat in Berlin. Have you heard of any other places where people practice Errorism? If we believe "error" to mean a way of life, a philosophical and existential position, the international errorist movement is in full swing. The social conditions and the state of the world are leading many to adopt this philosophy of life as their own. It is a movement without just one way to operate. But every day we find more adherents to errorism in different parts of the globe.

In Buenos Aires we are several groups and individuals supporting errorism. There is "The Subject," which is an independent publisher that has recently published a first edition of the Errorist Declaration (already translated to more than 12 languages). And there's also Sub Coop, a cooperative of photographers which has been responsible for the documentation of our actions, and Kynodelia-(Tristan Tapias) editing the latest videos of street performances.

Already at the international context we have found followers in different parts of the world. Examples include: "The Errorist" (Hilary Koob-Sassen and Andreas Köhler) a collective of music/visual arts/performance based in London, the newspaper CQFD (in Marseille, France), the errorist punk band Varlin (Vasque Country). Errorists groups are also active in Colombia, Mexico, United States, Russia, China, Turkey, and new cells are being created in Germany, Holland, Austria... But the field of errorism also includes the social sciences and schools of thought; and counts on the support from philosophers, theorists and activists such as Brian Holmes, Stephen Wright, and Franco Berardi.

In your opinion, what is the role of Errorism in creative activism?

The field of activity of errorism is wide, and for what you call "creative activism" errorism would be a sort of "tester." In the field of activism there is always a sense of effectiveness, of "not being wrong", but in any creative process the "wrong" is fundamental, and often the solution comes out from that inspiration. The role of errorism as a practice is linked to spontaneity, to devote yourself to the experience without the fear of being wrong. A leap into the void where error is something expected and not avoided. Then, errorism can help to inspire many practices linked to activism, political art,

urban intervention and so on. There are no recipes, error never fails.

As a proclaimer of error as a philosophy of life, can you Explain to us your point of View about the Different kind of errors in Society, are there "good" and "bad" errors?

To be specific on the explanation: we understand that in a capitalistic system operation modes are often communicated through using the word "error" when in fact there were implicit "plans" or "strategies" behind that: such as the "errors" made by pharmaceutical companies:

"The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday that its scientists will investigate the theory of an Australian expert claiming that the influenza A virus has been the product of "a human error" in a laboratory."...or international financial organizations: *Human error; the cause of the global financial crisis: World Bank and IMF: The world was aware of the most important economic meeting in recent decades. The world's top financial authorities acknowledged that a human error was the cause of the financial crisis. "This has been a man made catastrophe." said Robert Zoellick, World Bank director.* An errorist mistake is an "aware mistake", a failure naturally lived. Mistakes are people who understand that the error is inevitable and from there perform their daily activities.

Why is error so seldom understood as a necessary part of the evolutionary process of learning?

Traditional education teaches from examples, using error as a variable to measure knowledge. In traditional education the error must be eliminated. The one who crosses to the 'error experience' must be punished in some way. It is about minimizing the idea that error is good, while on the other hand, promoting the idea that the matrix of education is the experience of trial and error.

When a boy or a girl at school is "wrong" they will be (depending on who they have at their side as a guide) discouraged, sanctioned, criticized or excluded. In this type of society, error is doomed. But to errorists, the experience of error is the experience of knowledge. Because knowledge and experience are acquired, lived, and transmitted (like it or not) from "the experience of error". In this society, "to error" is criminalized, life is intended to be structured under the martial law of the market and the concentration on "consumer groups". This society is sinking while looking for the continuous implementation of "efficiency or optimization" in all relationships in pursuit of one goal: success.

Losing the fear of being "wrong", to fall into error, leads to pushing the limits; an evolution of the latent creative potential, which otherwise is inhibited by structures that determine moral values and social behaviour in traditional education.

That's why errorists claim the urgent need for a general de-education; a sum of collective projects, in experiences of transmission and exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge; a self-formation of individuals and groups whose subject of study is life itself. Errorists take an active role, empirical and participatory in society, in the creating space for struggle and resistance by the de-education and the liberation of error.

Billboards under your scalpel



"Ultimately, any sign is susceptible to conversion into something else, even its opposite."

[Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, 1956]

When we think about culture jamming as a culture to subvert existing messages of mainstream institutions and visuals of corporate advertising or as something that disrupts the viewers status as a passive consumer, and shocks them, it's perhaps the photo manipulated adds of Adbusters on Nike, McDonalds or Calvin Klein that usually come into our minds. This way of reusing pre-existing artistic elements is a well known strategy that the Situationists from the 1950's made common use of. They put politically engaged texts as subtitles for well known movies or changed the talk bubbles of existing comics.

A form of culture jamming can be traced back to the medieval carnival which Mikhail Bakhtin sees as a subversion of the social hierarchy, a temporary suspension of hierarchical rank.

We don't need to go and re-design, print and plan forever in order to subvert some really evil advertisement on the street. An artist from the USA, Posterboy is a real jammer, making billboard mash-ups in the subways using only his scalpel. Making collages by cutting parts of one billboard and assembling it onto another and by using this technique, deriving new meaning is probably the easiest thing in the world.

Since it was supposed to be so easy Masta team went on a mash-up crusade through the streets of Berlin, and these are some practical notes out of

Explore the surroundings

Make sure you assess the height of the billboard/commercial you would like to edit. If it is higher than you can reach, a recruited friend and a bike can help. If your pick is on a very busy street, try to do it at night when there is less traffic and people. It is always more fun to have company, and a lot safer when the other one watches for the authorities.

Cutting

When cutting with a scalpel or a pocket knife, try to cut as deep as possible.

Use the scalpel or pocket knife to lift up the edges and with both hands rip off the piece of poster. If there is more than one layer of posters, it should come off surprisingly easy, if not, then it is almost impossible to rip it away without tearing it to pieces.



Posting

When you see videos of Posterboy, you don't see him using paste or any type of glue, the pieces he cuts out stick elsewhere, but that depends on the type of glue used on the billboard. If the one you are using doesn't stick, then use wheat paste to reattach the piece.

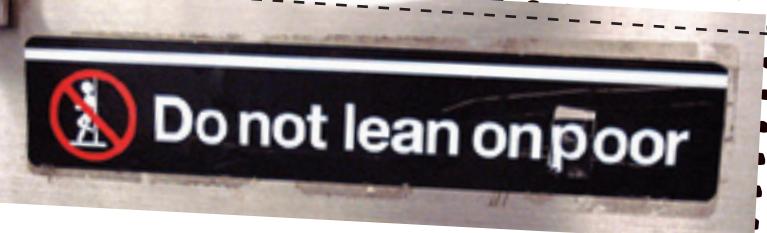
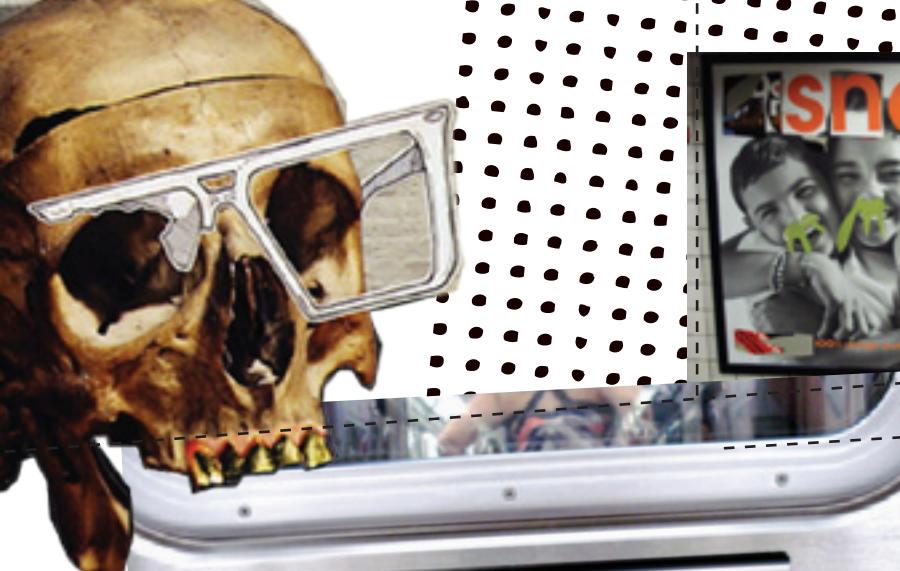


Don't forget to watch for the authorities, and take a picture afterwards so you can inspire other people! Have fun!



- a friend





photos from WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/POSTERBOYNYC

CUT & PASTE

Illustrations by: Javier Albuiszech

REMING THE CITYSCAPE

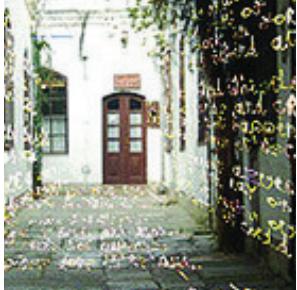
14

„AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR HISTORY, AND FOR JUST ABOUT THE WHOLE OF OUR TRADITION, NONCOMMERCIAL CULTURE WAS ESSENTIALLY UNREGULATED. THE LAW WAS NEVER DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH THE CREATION OR SPREAD OF THIS FORM OF CULTURE, AND IT LEFT THIS CULTURE “FREE.” THE ORDINARY WAYS IN WHICH ORDINARY INDIVIDUALS SHARED AND TRANSFORMED THEIR CULTURE—TELLING STORIES, REENACTING SCENES FROM PLAYS OR TV, PARTICIPATING IN FAN CLUBS, SHARING MUSIC, MAKING TAPES—WERE LEFT ALONE BY THE LAW.“ - LAWRENCE LESSIG, FREE CULTURE.

Words by Igor Stojanovski



Visuals:
Ivan Perusevski (left)
Simon Stojanovski (right)



The project "Skopje Remix", a social and artistic experiment started with publishing 12 photos of our city on a website. A representation on which artists could "splatter" ideas that constitute a fragment of their creativity.

The process consisted of three simple steps: Downloading the photo; making a visual remix; and sending this remixed version of the photo back to be printed.

The most important thing was to use some of the published photos. What was provided was a digital print and a gallery to exhibit the work. It was decided not to set any aesthetic criteria or limitations for participation in the project which actually represents an invitation for collaboration, unity and active participation. The basic purpose was to prove, in practice, that things can function in an immediate and directly democratic manner. The only criteria was for the works to be outside the domain of daily politics. However, that did not mean that one should be apolitical and apathetic, on the contrary, we prompted any revolt against the systems of domination.

As a leading idea, we used the Remix manifesto presented in the documentary *Rip: A Remix Manifesto* made by the web activist and filmmaker Brett Gaylo, which goes as follows:

1. Creativity always builds on the past.
2. The past will always try to control the future.
3. Our future is becoming less free.
4. To build something free, you must limit the control of the past.

The final works were exhibited on 23rd December in the cult art tea house in the old Bazaar in Skopje, called Gallery 7, where the avant-garde visual artists of the 1980's used to meet up and talk about their projects. The basic purpose was to prove, in practice, that things can function in an immediate and directly democratic manner.

SEE ALL THE REMIXES HERE:

[HTTP://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/46199601@N04/SETS/72157623050901165/](http://WWW.FLICKR.COM/PHOTOS/46199601@N04/SETS/72157623050901165/)

DOWNLOAD THE BOOK FROM FREE CULTURE FROM LAWRENCE LESSIG HERE:

[HTTP://FREE-CULTURE.ORG/GET-IT](http://FREE-CULTURE.ORG/GET-IT)

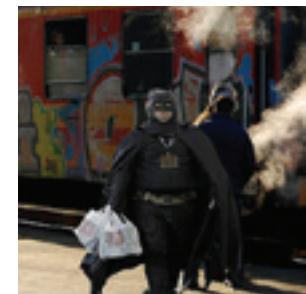
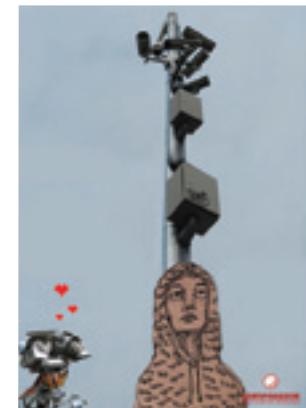
WATCH THE DOCUMENTARY RIP: "A REMIX MANIFESTO" HERE:

[HTTP://FILMS.NFB.CA/RIP-A-REMIX-MANIFESTO/](http://FILMS.NFB.CA/RIP-A-REMIX-MANIFESTO/)

ACT COMPRESSOR:

[HTTP://MYSPACE.COM/COMPRESSORZKT](http://MYSSPACE.COM/COMPRESSORZKT)

[HTTP://CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/SKOPJEREMIX](http://CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/SKOPJEREMIX)



First time I saw this picture I said: "yeah, whatever helps." What the artist thought while painting this piece was a bit different. I had the chance to ask him and he answered: "I wanted to do a piece which inevitably engages the viewer to shift perspective." How do I see it now: it clearly does.

WHATEVER

IN BETHLEHEM

WORDS BY: MALTE REISIG
PHOTOGRAPHER: THRILL.ORG



FAHAD

17



THE PRACTICAL USE OF ART IN SOCIETY

WORDS BY: KAJ DERK'S

THERE are only a few things as abstract as the notion of art. Art is seen by many people as something valuable and an important part of life's. This being the case, it is strange to notice that as many people there are who believe that art is such an important part of life, so few people know why it is so. It is virtually impossible to give a definition of art which includes every artform and artwork. It would be foolish to even try to find one, after all, everybody will recognize an artwork when it's seen so why trying to define it? But isn't it strange that we treasure something which we are unable to give a definition of and seemingly lacks any use whatsoever? For this reason this article is about why is art? rather than what is art?

But before I start of arguing about the use of art, I'd like to clarify the use of this article first to prevent it from becoming as pointless as art itself can seem. Because, would art still be art if you give it a reason or a practical use? I want to look at it from the other side: producing something without any use, something useless, wouldn't that make art a waste of time, energy and material? The fact that wasting is considered something not good opposed to the general idea that art is something good provides a contradiction that should be solved in order to fully appreciate art. It could also help you to think of means on which you can use art in a more sustainable, longer term way, out on the streets.

METHOD

A book that is aiming for an answer in a similar direction is "The origin of the work of art" (1950) by Martin Heidegger. Its main question comes close to ours but doesn't exactly match. It discusses that what initiates the work of art in both existence and essence. Of course this is a very vague description of this books content but what really matters now is the method that is used to draw conclusions. Heidegger starts with reducing everything, including art, to the category of "things". Than he attempts to filter art out of this comprehensive

group of things by arguing about the origin of "things". The filter that separates art from the rest of things is made of the arguments that do so and thus leads to the conclusion about the origin of the work of art. Another example is "The naked ape" (1967) by Desmond Morris, he used a similar method to find out what makes the human kind that what it is by including humanity in the group of apes. The difference with the method that Heidegger used is that Morris acquired his arguments on a more empirical way, by observing the differences.

For this quest I'll use the same method to find out the practical use of art. For the sake of argument I'll add art to the group of things that certainly have a practical use: tools. Up next is to consider what specific place art has as a utensil to explore it's practical use.

HOW TO USE ART AND WHAT HAPPENS?

Stating art as a tool is one thing but actually it's consequences is another. A major characteristic of a tool is that it is something that is or can be used in order to accomplish a certain goal, like drawing a line or drilling a hole. For that I would take a pencil or a drill and take it in use, apply it for what it was meant to do. Of course, when not having a pencil or a drill, your mission could be accomplished with other means but using something that is made for that is specifically designed for this task would give the best result. This brings us to two questions:

- 1) for what goal do we use art?
- 2) what does the usage of art consist of?

The first question I hope to be able to answer at the end of this article so let's start with answering the second question now.



To talk about how art is used, i'll refer to "The origin of the work of art" again, to look at Heidegger's conclusion on what he believes is happening when a work of art comes to existence. Although it is rather abstract without further understanding of its content it is very useful to take notice of it. He states that a work of art 'creates an earth and draws a world'. It comes down to a struggle, within the artwork, between that what it is primary made of: paint; marble; dancers; sound; text; thought; etc. And that what it represents, shows or reflects. To illustrate this, simply think of a Greek statue, van Gogh painting or a Shakespearian play. What you primary see is a piece of marble, a painted surface or a bunch of people on a stage, this is meant by 'earth'. What makes art interesting is not what it's basically consisted of but what makes you think of: the speculative part of what you basically see.

If art is a tool than it should be able to determine its use like you can do with any other tool. First i'd like to determine a tool's goal in terms of Heideggers conclusion. For example a pencil, it actually is a wooden stick with a lead centre which can be considered the 'earth'. When put in use, the 'world' that is drawn occurs as a line on the paper. When looking at a pencil as it was a piece of art you could say that the world that the earth draws up is a lead-line. Can we also determine the use of art this way? Let's see what happens if you use art. When using art, many things can happen, depending on the different media in which art can appear. But what do they all have similar? To keep it simple, to illustrate this i'll take a painting as an example because it's use is the most easy to determine.

Obviously a painting is used by looking at it or, if you happen to be the artist, you make it first. As strange as it may seem I don't think the artist uses the work of art in a different way as a viewer, he only uses a specific artwork as the first one who put's it in use.

The one thing, independent of the medium or the relation you have with a certain artwork, you see in an artwork is that it has been made or rather the enthusiasm that caused the work of art to have been made. This enthusiasm caused the artist(s) to spend energy on making a work that is already complete in itself. Meaning that it doesn't have to be activated to be put to use like a tool.

When using an artwork the enthusiasm with what it was made is released from the artwork when it becomes clear that the piece of art is actually a work that has been made. When this happens, the world mentioned before, is re-drawn in the consciousness of the viewer.

Maybe an artwork is not called 'work' because it is made by the artist but because it is re-made every time somebody uses it! Of course the way it's used varies with every different art-form from looking; listening; experiencing or participating but what always remains the same is that every time one uses an artwork, a world is re-drawn in one's consciousness.

At this moment we could answer the first of two questions, which also happens to be almost the cause of this article. According to what happens when using art, it can be said that the goal of it's use is to re-draw it's world. I'm also pretty sure, not totally, that it can be said that we use art to re-draw or even reset our perception of the world. This we could accept as the use of art in itself.

HOW TO APPLY PREVIOUS FINDINGS TO SOCIETY

Now we have found the immediate use of art in art itself but it still applies only to the individual. The matter is now to apply this into a wider context: society. If that's done we will be able to see why creative activism, or simply changing your environment on own accord, works or is at least always satisfying. This probably won't take so much time because it seems like a simple matter of applying a micro-situation into a macro: translating the use of art from an individual level into the level of society. What you do by using creative activism is interfering in the 'earth', for which everybody in society has it's own perception. It has guaranteed success because you do not directly attempt to change the world, the people's perception of what goes around on earth. Directly changing peoples perception of things is very hard to accomplish and also not very morally desirable.

Opposed to that, changing the earth never hurts, well if you do it thoughtfully, and you leave people the freedom to interpret it accordingly.

When your interferences are being put in use of course, like with art, they also draw the enthusiasm with which it has been made in peoples consciousness. Maybe this is the most important use of art in society: showing people that changing things is a matter of finding the enthusiasm to do so.

SHADOWS OF THE MEMORY

20



COLLECTIVE TRASH CAN SCHOOL IN CARTAGENA, SPAIN



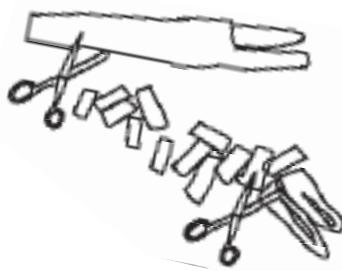
AN UPCYCLING MANUAL

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH TRASH? UPCYCLE IT!

1. A BAG



2. CUT IT



3. MAKE A THREAD



4. CROCHETE



5. DONE!



21

How fashionable! A sustainably-produced Chardonnay, to wash down the organic potato leek potage with 'free range' Cordon Bleu chicken breast. All the while, hounding the other cocktail party guests your personally-fashioned theories on the state of the environment and global warming. Eco-food, eco-fashion, eco-energy... Sure it's a fad, it's hip... and the entire industry should be dick-punched for being so corny. The true organic or sustainable nature of these products has yet to be proven, and not to mention the fact that simply moving most produce multiplies its carbon footprint by factors that largely outweigh any 'sustainable'-labeled means of production. Don't completely despair and throw in the towel, though. There remain a few habits, underneath all the hype, that involve simple daily actions and can have a positive impact on how we are collectively treating our ecosystem. One of the most essential changes that you can make to your daily habits includes the reduction of use and collection of plastic bags used for shopping. Does it really matter if, when you forgo using multiple bags while shopping, your tomatoes and apricots end up finding a new life together? While you are hesitating to mention anything to the homely shop assistant, who is wrapping your cumin goat's cheese in three layers of cellophane and plastic, remember that every minute on Earth there are 10,000 being simultaneously consumed. Even if you have the mind to toss the bag in a bin, it doesn't change the fact that it may take 500 to 1,000 years to degrade in a landfill. Following this

long drawn-out demise, the polyethylene breaks down and derivative substances with varying degrees of toxicity leak into the soil and enter the food chain. Bon appetit!

In Europe, many supermarkets offer more sustainable paper bags or cotton bags at a higher price than plastic. Paper bags are biodegradable, which is a distinct advantage. However, the oil involved in the production and transportation is comparable to the footprint of the dreaded little plastic bag. Re-use of plastic or paper supermarket bags is truly limited. After a few uses, you should be reluctant to put anything heavy in one of those bags that you have stored in a little hutch in the corner of your kitchen. Please humor me for a moment while I ask what if... we could take a few pointers from our own grandmothers, add a dash of fresh perspective and style, and make a proper shopping bag. These can really be made of anything: carpet, belt, old leather wallets, clothes, etc. Make your own!

Do you have anything to share? +

Hang a banner!!!

? Use carabiners or
clips if you
won't have time
to tie a knot.

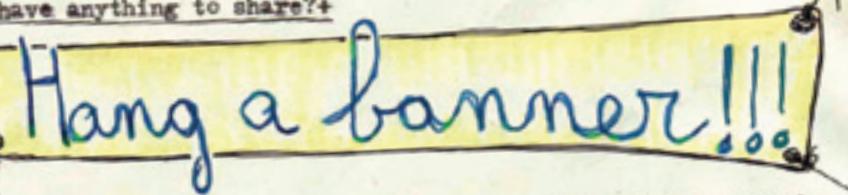
Banners used a lot to spread idea's and issues in public space. Here are a couple tips on how to hang a banner and some things to think about when making one.

//THE BANNER-DROP//

The most common way of hanging a banner is to drop it from the top of a building. Here are a couple things to think of:

- Make sure that when the banner is rolled up for transport you still know how to position it when hanging it. Avoid having to think about that in a tense situation.
- Make U-shaped cuts in the banner so the wind can blow thru. This way the banner will not be blown away so easily.
- Make a scaled design on a piece of paper before starting to paint the actual banner. Use striking and high-contrast colors.
- Sew the cord that you use to hang your banner with inside the sides of the banner (see above) and attach some filled-in the bottom-end as a weight.
- Have fun doing it :)

(This article was made by Kaj with help from 'Recipes for Disaster')



To hoist a banner up aborizental beam pipe or branch, there is a simple firaly attach technique that is very effective but takes quite a bit of preparation. You need: 2 cheap carabiners; 2 large molly bolts and lots of plastic coated clothesline. And 2 socks... -

- Fix a piece of line to the upper end and tie it in a loop, fix a carabiner in the backside.
- Also place a molly bolt on the line. - Throw with same light rope a weighted sock over the pole. - Click line into the carabiner and hoist the banner until the molly bolt

-THE BANNER HOIST-



Last, cut of the thin line and get lost!!!

Note:

Make sure that the fabric you are using is solid or else it might rip when it's dropped. Attach some wood the upper and lower end of the banner to make sure it hangs straight because you won't be able to fix it when the banner is dropped.

SURPRISE!

If you want the banner to drop at a specific moment without anyone knowing who did it, than you can roll

a piece of cord into the banner. Then place the banner on an edge with the cord hanging down. Don't forget to attach the upper side of the banner. Now, to drop the banner, only pull the cord!

Red's go!!



pull

PERSONAL SPACE ACTION

MORNING HOUR IN KIEV METRO, UKRAINE

ALINA KOPYTSA

23

BEING BORN SOMEWHERE MATTERS, BUT ONLY WHEN THAT PLACE DEPRIVES YOU FROM MORE THINGS THAT IT ACTUALLY PROVIDES. IT MATTERS ESPECIALLY IF YOU COME FROM CULTURALLY AND HISTORICALLY RICH SURROUNDINGS, THAT HAVE ALSO ENCOUNTERED TRANSITION, WARS, ECONOMICAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY CRISIS. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRANSFER THAT PAST TO SOMEWHERE NEW? DO YOU KEEP YOUR WAYS, OR BUILD YOURSELF ANEW, REINTERPRET YOUR CULTURAL SELF AGAIN, LIVE IN THE FLUX OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT, EAST AND WEST, OR DO YOU TRY TO RELIVE, REDISCOVER THE MENTAL JOURNEY OF THOSE IDENTITIES IN TRANSITION? THESE TWO ARTISTS LIVE IN THE GAP BETWEEN EASTERN AND WESTERN SOCIETIES AND THIS IS HOW DO THEY DEAL WITH IT.

NOMADIC STRUCTURES

24



The Inner Space Wanderings Of
The Artist Nomad In The Quest
For Identity
Words by: Elena Stojanova

The artworks that I created are representations of inner narratives for the search of identity as an artist-nomad, based on depictions of young women who serve as imaginary theatrical characters and reflections of that quest. After being uprooted from my Macedonian surroundings I encountered a new life, which shattered my previous sense of identity and personal narrative, because of which I felt separated and disconnected in my newfound American (New York) environment. This forced me to create a new world of disjointed and disconnected fragments of my own reality, made up of personal history and newly encountered cultural language. In order to make sense of my world, I clung to elements from my new surrounding that I recognised and created a new imaginary world filled with women much like myself.

Rather than persist in trying to find answers to my quest for a new identity, I decided to use my questions as a way to come closer to new forms, materials and mediums. I looked more closely and honestly at the gaps, imperfections and slippages that exist between my Macedonian cultural background and my New York present, and to make them central to the process of creating this show. Along the way I found that these 'gaps' are an incredibly rich source. All in all, I am glad that contemporary art practice is a wide-open and accepting place: a 'gap' full of possibilities - especially for those who don't quite fit in.

SUBALTERN IDENTITIES

'No need to hear your voice'
Intervention in Public Spaces
Words by: Tepavcevic Nataša
Photographs by: Samuel Tolaj

'No need to hear you voice' was made with the aim to show the mental and physical journey of people in transition. I decided to make the self-regulation process caused by the bureaucracy visible, to show the thoughts of the people who are forced to pass through process of applying for permission to stay.

In order to be heard these people, also called subalterns, must adopt the Western thought, reasoning and language. Because of this, Joanne Sharp and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argue that the subaltern can never express their own reasoning, forms of knowledge or logic; they must instead from their knowledge to use Western ways of knowing. In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern-a space of difference, minatory "Other". My action to raise awareness on such identities was composed of three interventions in public space.

I divided a bridge in the pedestrian zone with one side for citizens of the European Union and one side closed and labeled "under construction". While I handed out flyers, I invited pedestrians to join the action and show their solidarity with all who are considered "others" in a backwards walk from the front door of the immigration office back to the sign at the U-Bahn station pointing to it.

This took place in Friedrich-Krause-Ufer and the people who come here are those whose physical presence is controlled, directed and part of an economic-political project. In Berlin, those people are going to immigration office because they are living on the "visa-line", which means they have to regulate their status from time to time in order to stay within the European Union.

I see my interventions as artistic forms of expressing solidarity and art in general as a platform to raise awareness amongst the people and a way to influence social and political changes.

The Project 'No need to hear your voice" does not address the problems of bureaucracy in EU, but it addresses the phenomenon of the borders as such, the borders in a "world without borders" (EU, globalisation-transition), where borders are open only for capital but not for people.

In my journey to assemble a new identity as artist-nomad, I turn to others. I go out on the street. As I walk, I document my walks in photographs, video and audio recordings and in sketchbooks. I begin to see the kernel of the working method that will lead to an exhibition: to document young women I encounter on the street photographically, to render these women in drawings, and in doing so, to augment and isolate particular aspects of their posture or dress that speak of some narrative, cultural source. This latter part is of key importance to me. I decide that I will make up some source, for these women's pasts when none readily exists, or rather, when one is not readily apparent to the naked eye.

The gallery serves as a spatial representation of this inner narrative, where six industrial plywood panels are installed throughout the space. Enclosing the space on one side of the gallery is a video projection on the wall that completes the gallery experience.





HOAX LETTERS



Hello

Like many other girls, my daughter looks up to Britney Spears as an idol and role model. For her birthday, she has one wish; that we should perform plastic surgery on her favorite dog Misha to make her look more like Britney Spears. I wonder if this is possible, and if so, how much would it cost? I also wonder how long it would take. I would like to receive more information about cost and procedure.

Best wishes

Eric Ericson
Mailbox 412
Birger Jarlsgatan 39
111 45 Stockholm
Sweden

111 45 Stockholm,
SWEDEN

Dear Eric,

I am in receipt of your letter requesting information on Plastic Surgery for your dog. Although Dr. Hagerty cannot perform surgery on a dog, I can give you information on Plastic Surgery for humans.

The doctor's fee for a breast augmentation would be \$4500.00. The hospital and anesthesia fees would be approximately \$1360.00. The total cost would be approximately \$5860.00.

I am enclosing a brochure on the Breast Augmentation procedure. Please feel free to contact us again if you require any more information.

Sincerely,

This is a letter from Eric Ericson, addressed to a Plastic Surgery Center in New York. Along with this, an abundance of other letters can be found in the book "Letters to Foreign Countries" ("Brev till utlandet", Kartago Förlag, 2006).

Dear Sir or Madam

A friend of mine knows a guy that spent time in England who had met someone on the train between London and Manchester. He said that you need a clown to perform at your place 6 days a week all next year. He also said that it was extremely urgent. I just wanted to say that I'll take the job. I'll come over as soon as I can. I won't be able to leave before December 4, because I'm participating in a political gala. If there's anything you need from Sweden let me know as soon as possible. Otherwise we'll see each other soon.

All the best



Eric Ericson
Mailbox 412
Birger Jarlsgatan 39
111 45 Stockholm
Sweden

Dear Mr. Ericson,

Regarding your request, we would like to inform you that the information your friend has provided to you is incorrect. The Consulate provide services to Egyptian Immigrants in the UK and Tourists, but no entertainment services (Clown) are provided. We wish you good luck.

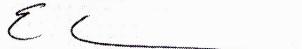
Best Regards,
Consulate General
of the A.R.E. in London

Initially he started with the publication 'Letters to the Community' (Brev till samhället. Stockholm: Kartago Förlag, 2003) These books are made up of letters, proposing astonishingly ridiculous ideas, that he has sent to various companies, institutions and small businesses and their replies. Undoubtedly, these books became some of the funniest books ever published in Sweden.

Dear Sir or Madam

I have been working intensely for many years ministering to my animals in the name of Christ our Lord and Savior. The animals have already learned to appreciate Christian values in a spontaneous and natural way. The next step for the animals now is to enter into a holy union so that they will be able to fornicate without sinning in the eyes of God. It's for that reason I would like my animals to be married by the church. I want the wedding to be beautiful, a storybook wedding. I will be coming to the church January 18 with the animals. If there are any problems please contact me.

Christian blessings,



Eric Ericson
Mailbox 412
Birger Jarlsgatan 39
111 45 Stockholm
Sweden

C. C. K.



16 November 2005

CHURCH of CHRIST the KING

46, Lakeland Road
Plumstead
London
SE18 1PS

Tel: 020-8854-0688
Email: office@ckse.com
www: ckse.com

Reg. Charity No. 294196

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your letter received 14th November 2005. However, **I regret to inform you that we are unable to facilitate your request**, nor are we able to entertain any further correspondence in this matter.

Kind regards,

On

Yes. The so called prank letters have previously existed before Ericson published them. William Donaldson's book 'The Henry Root Letters', published in the eighties, under the alter ego Henry Root, contains letters with bizarre questions and requests to public figures like Margaret Thatcher, the Metropolitan Police Chief, famous television figures, tycoons and tabloid editors. His quirk was to also send a one pound note along with the letters as a fictitious sign of his support. Ericson, however, uses his true name, he is a real member of society, a concerned citizen, a person with ideas, or a weirdo with a large amount of free time on his hands, wishing to get into a lengthy correspondence dispute.

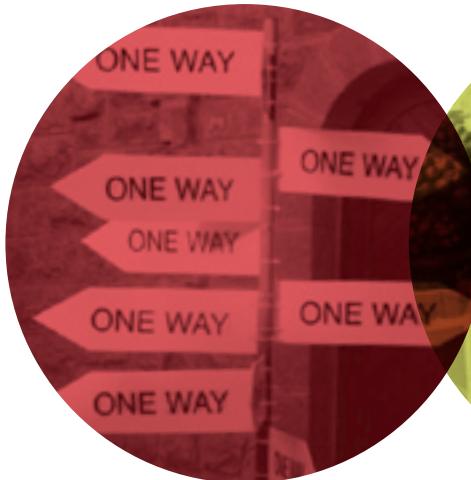
The letters he writes seem simple and even though they try to sound naive you can easily detect high social awareness and criticism within his playfulness which are excellent bait for the answer of the supposed question or the offer.

One other project of his, is the "Bird House". Situated in a field in Småland in Sweden. It is a community for small birds, 8 houses in a row, with 80 nests in each representing the modern way of bird housing.

He considers his projects to be serious rather than weird. He says that the reality is usually weirder than his own ideas.

27





IN THE SUMMER OF 2008 TEN YOUNG ARTISTS DECIDED TO TAKE THE RISK OF BUYING PROPERTY TOGETHER IN THE CITY CENTRE OF RAMALLAH, WITH THE INTENTION TO CREATE AN OPEN ART SPACE.

The Al Mahatta is a place of transitions, a place to meet. It starts from the premise that art can act as a form of liberation and lead to a greater understanding and insight into the lives of others. The phrase 'Al Mahatta' translates to 'station'.

For many people in the world Palestine and its culture remains a mystery. Given the internal and external restrictions on mobility, Palestinian artists have a limited outreach to the world. The limited mobility does not only severely restrict Palestinians exposure to the arts from around the world, but also shelters the talented work created by Palestinian artists.

September/October 2009, Al Mahatta organized its first international artists' workshop. It took place in the town of Bir Zeit in North Ramallah.

I, one of twenty artists, spent three weeks living in a conservatory, creating an exhibition which was presented in the Edward Said Conservatory and various other places around the town. The workshop was process orientated, supporting experimentation in all media forms and targeted emerging to mid-career artists in all fields. It encouraged contemporary work in painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, video, performance, and sound.

These weeks were decisive for many of us participating in the workshop; feeling powerless and disgusted, yet at the same time proud to be part of such talent. We were full of admiration for these young Palestinians binding their forces together to act and make such events possible. Nihilism was sometimes the political posture some of us adopted, though I am certain it is a bleak attitude. It is difficult for me to write about Palestine, the best way for me to share it is through pictures.

The Al Mahatta team, does not receive financial aid for its projects, but is helped and supported by family and friends. The Al Mahatta workshops are a platform for the work of Palestinian artists and creates the possibility to share ideas about art and discuss the conditions of cultural and artistic production in the West Bank. Before the opening of this associative gallery, there was no place dedicated to the contemporary art of Ramallah.

MORE INFO:

- <http://www.almahattagallery.net/>
- almahattaworkshop@gmail.com

ABOUT PALESTINE:

- Joe Sacco, Palestine, Rackham editions <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/01/201011783113578937.html>
- Info-Palestine <http://www.palestine-info.co.uk/en/>

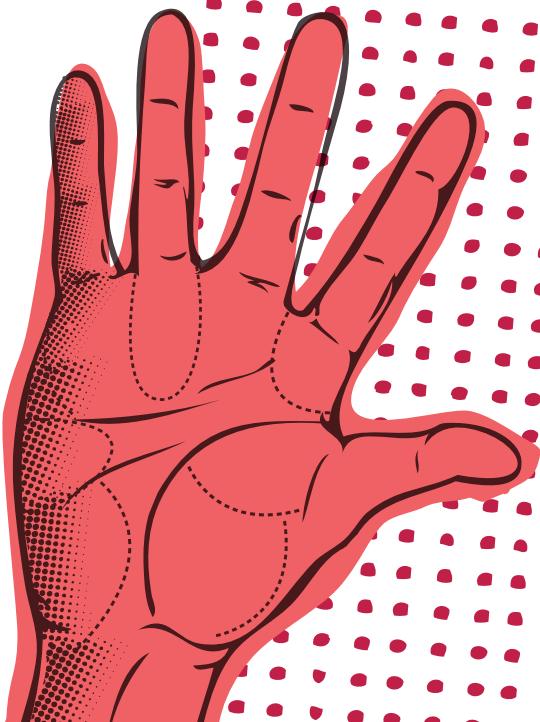


CREATIVE FREEDOM IN OCCUPIED LAND

Words by: Elsa Quintin

29

*THE STORY
OF AN INDEPENDENT INITIATIVE
IN PALESTINE*



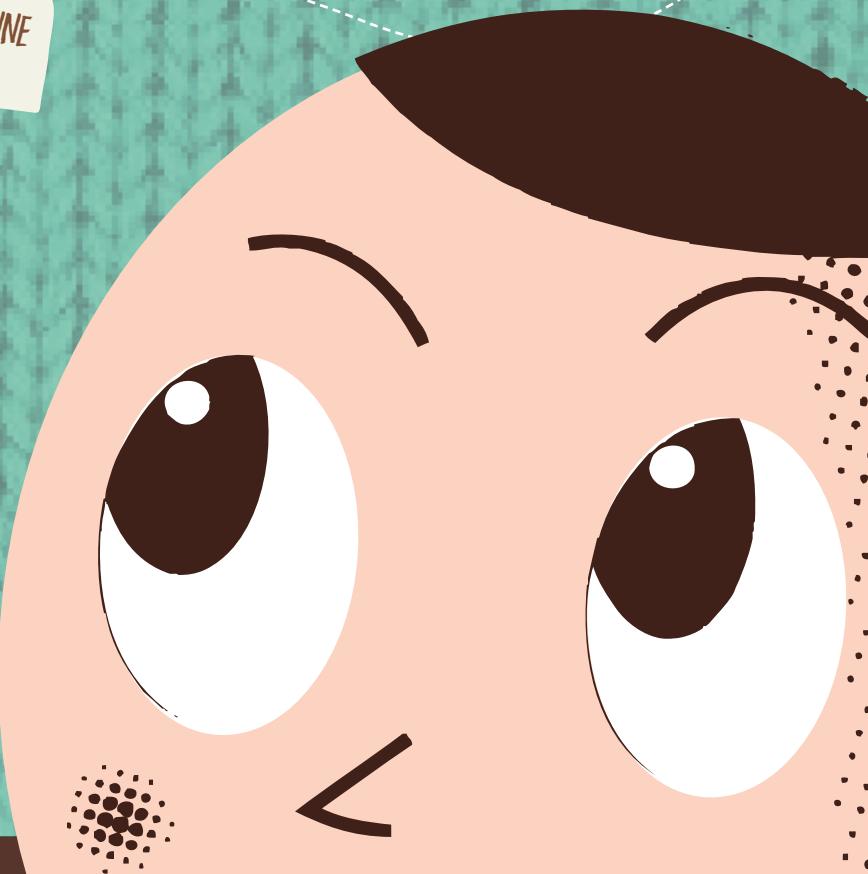
WARM GREETINGS

30

JOEP

ANNE

A COLD WINTER GETS WARMER IF PEOPLE WOULD SPEND IT TOGETHER.
THERE IS A WAY TO BRING THEM TOGETHER DESPITE THE FREEZING
WEATHER OUTSIDE IN MORE PERSONAL WAY THAN POKING EACH OTHER THROUGH FACEBOOK PROFILES: KNITTING
HATS AND HAND-WRITTEN GREETING CARDS
ARE NOT ONLY A SWEET THING FOR
THE HEART, BUT FUN
TO MAKE AS WELL!





IDA



MARK

MARIAN

Not expensive, fun to make, the joy of giving and a pleasure to receive, warm greeting cards have united in the project "Mutsen voor mensen"¹.

The aim of this project is to get as many people as possible to make as many hats as possible and then give them away for free. Every hat would be tagged with a little card with the name of its maker on it. Instead of paying for the hat, people have to write a little note on the card to the person who made the hat. This completes the cycle from consumer to maker in a more social way.

The first thing to do is to contact as many people as possible. Where can one find knitting helpers? Try local retirement-homes, where grandmas might really appreciate their knitting skills being used to bring people together. During the action in the Netherlands it resulted in massive knitting sessions also with catering and cooking.

There is also a lot of handicraft and hobbyist clubs, which you have probably never heard of, that would love to contribute. There are also knitting cafés in which people come together and knit.

Last but not least: the internet. Where you can find lots of groups and forums with people that could help you knit a lot of hats to hand out. It is more than possible to find lots of people over the entire world that would like to knit one or two hats to send. It amounts to a whole lot in no time.

LINKS:

WWW.MUTSENVORMENSEN.NL

[WWW.RAVELRY.COM \(KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS FORUM, INTERNATIONAL\)](http://WWW.RAVELRY.COM (KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS FORUM, INTERNATIONAL))

1. Dutch for "Hats for people"

The second thing: material. Of course you'll also need wool to knit with, but this also doesn't need to cost much. Lots of people have a unused ball of wool at home that they are willing to donate, just ask around and let people know that you need lots of wool. If you don't know them personally, look for internet communities, where people exchange their goods, or give them away for free.

Finally handing out the hats. During the action in the Netherlands, after having knitted for three weeks, almost three-hundred hats were collected and tagged with the names of there makers. It was time to hand out the hats.

This happened on a busy square on cold day in Amsterdam, the knitters brought a party tent, some coffee, tea, and cake and spend the day trying to fit the right hat to the right person. At the end of the day, all hats were put on heads and smiling faces could be seen underneath. The action ended and life went on, but a colourful happy hat or a card by the mirror reminds you how nice it might be to send and receive such a warm greeting.

A STORY OF AN ABANDONED BUILDING



Searching for a source of inspiration, the eye is caught by an abandoned building:
obligatory graffiti on the walls, broken windows, some trees growing through the roof. Its a house and not a house at the same time. A unique space, filled with memories, evidences of life as well as that of oblivion. Sometimes also awaiting treasure hunters, sound technicians, graffiti writers, installation artists, skaters, urban games players, trespassers par-kour people, vjs and more!



LOOKS LIKE

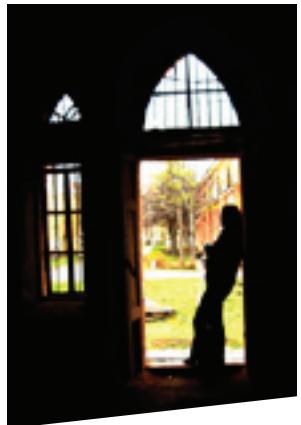
An abandoned building seems to live a life in between – its probably gonna be pulled down soon, or rebuilt into fancy hotel, or just forgotten for an unforeseeable time. Once this very building was the scenery for love, death, a wonderful moment of true communication between people, and misery. There are footsteps from former inhabitants, notes on the walls made by visitors, attempts by Nature to shape the space. Small signs of these moments might still be discernable still in the remains of the brick and mortar, and the accessories and furniture that is lying around - there are many ways of to interpretation the space.

FEELS LIKE

It can be called trespassing, or by other names, but there are people who especially enjoy visiting the abandoned buildings. These treasure-hunters are looking for places where no human has been for years, but the house has lived its own life. Like in Yuriy Norshteyn cartoon „Tale of Tales“ - there are just shadows, flashbacks and echoes, that witness the past life of the house.

Abandoned spaces allows one to be just a visitor - unlike public spaces, where a person tends to be an actor in a situation, rhythm in such spaces is ruled rather by the cycle of the seasons, speed of corrosion and the intention of Nature to reclaim the room. The time of a falling leave can last longer than momentary presence of a visitor.





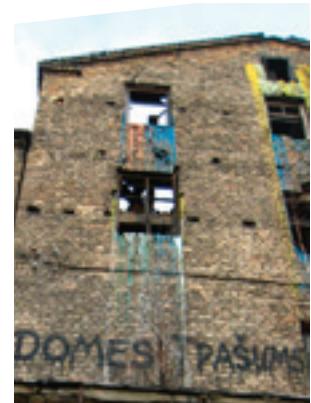
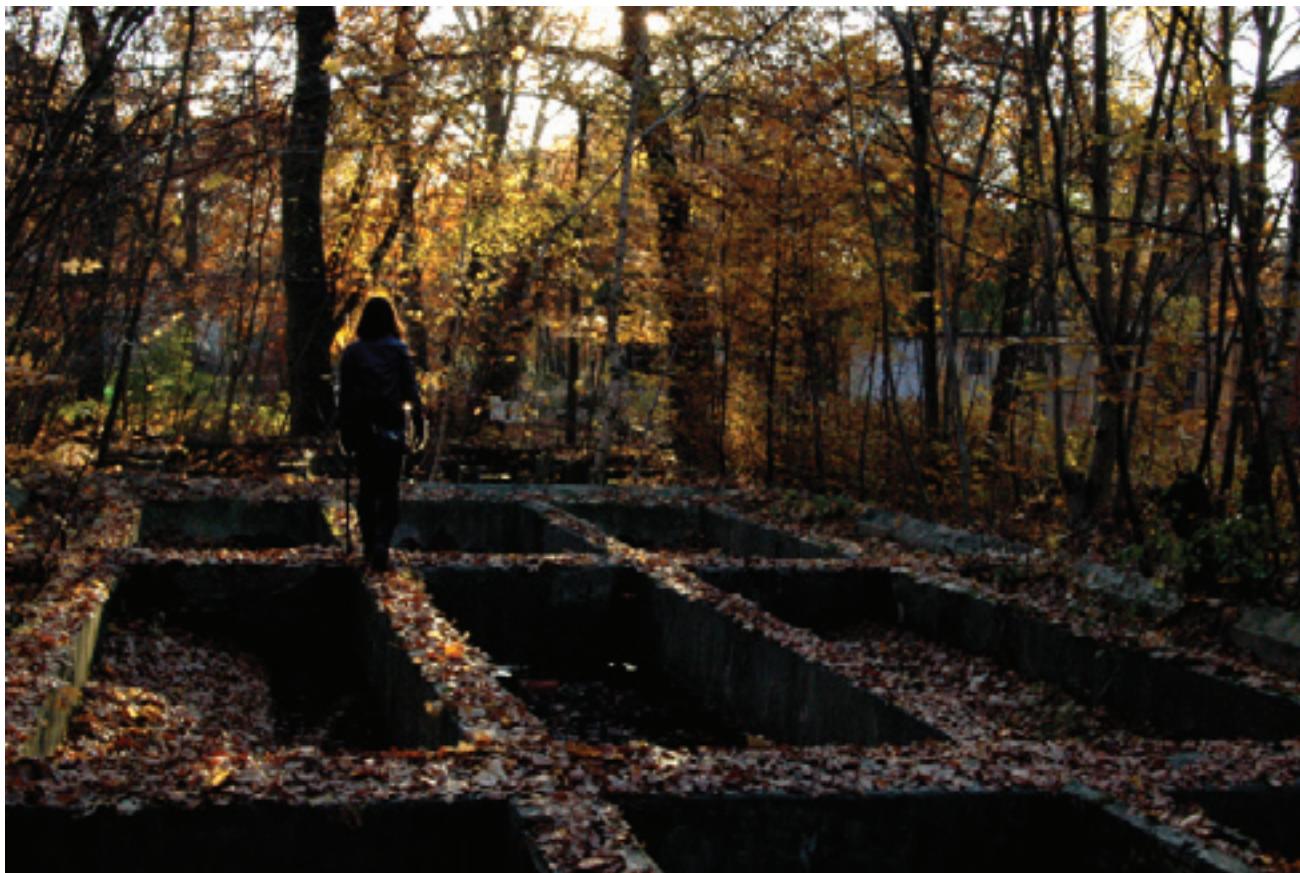
SOUNDS LIKE

Listen ... dripping water, wind caressing the remains of a curtain and wallpaper shreds, creaking doors, that where probably last opened several years ago. Rotting seams and rusted pipes add to the melody's unique timbre.

A house is an instrument – that's how world known composer David Byrne feels about the house, transforming the physical building into gigantic musical instrument by attaching devices to the concrete elements of the building's structure – pipes, pillars, etc. - and making the house sound with the help of wind, vibration and striking. Playing the building just starts with an impulse, but as soon as the house starts to sound, the objects interact and develop their own autonomous melody.

This is not a manual of what to do with an abandoned house. Its just a remark on this special time and space that exists parallel to our own time. For some, abandoned buildings are an obsession. Broken windows, rotten floors with faded patterns, last century wall paper, the smell of a damp wood. These things make people overcome huge distances, drive forgotten roads or walk on floors that might collapse at any moment. Its a space for installation, movement, sound, performance, its a performance itself. It feels like that scene from the movie "Great Expectations", a table with an unfinished wedding banquet can be found, waiting for years for somebody to come and finish the play.

Photos
Left: Lena Mikhaylova
Right upper corner: Liene Bekere
Lower corner: Lena Mikhaylova



LINKS:

- “Playing the building” by David Byrne:
http://www.davidbyrne.com/art/art_projects/playing_the_building/
- “Great Expectations”, a movie by Alfonso Cuarón, 1998.
- “Tale of the Tales”, cartoon by Yuriy Norshteyn, 1979.
- Tresspassing:
<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Tresspassing>

WORDS BY RUTA VIMBA

Photos
Left: Lena Mikhaylova
Right: Liene Bekere

AFFINITY GROUPS

The universal concept of affinity groups to organize not only partisans, environmental activists



DO IT
TOGETHER

or arty hooligans. If you want to make little enhancements to the world, you will have to get out of your chair, away from your computer and out into the world.

You can go spray graffiti, plant a tree, join a demonstration, explore new possibility's of the urban environment, paste posters up or whatever. When you do your action alone you will probably encounter some problems that would not be there if you perform it in a group. For example, digging a hole for a tree is done faster in a group; a poster is posted faster if the person who pastes it doesn't also have to carry the posters and, if the action is not entirely legal, it is more comfortable when somebody is on the look-out for the police. The people whom you perform actions with should be reliable and it's important that you can trust them. It comes down to working in a small group that works like a smooth running engine. This is what an affinity group (AG) is.

HISTORY

The first report of organizing in AG's was in the late 19th century during the Spanish civil war. At this time small circles of good friends, called "tertulias", would meet in parks and café's to discuss their ideas and plan actions.

Later AG's were used by the anarchist labour movement (FAI). Local federation committees were formed and mandated by people from each autonomous AG. Regional committees where mandated by delegates from local federations and so on.

In later years, prior to the second world war, the anarchist movement, which at that time flourished in Europe, was brutally put down by the fascist and communist powers because their ideas. Organisations using AG were endangering the central authority.

Recently AG's are active in a wide range of movements varying from the anti-nuclear movement to anti war movements; from Earth First to the Queer Actions. Some concrete examples of successful usages of AG's are the mass actions and blockades during the WTO summit in Seattle, the G8 summit protests, the climate action camp in Antwerp, graffiti & posterizing or black blocking at protests. The idea of affinity groups has even been adopted by some commercial businesses like Google because it is so effective.

Basically an AG is a group of 3-20 people who work together on projects or direct action. Within an AG it is important that, besides doing

WHAT IS AN AG?

actions together, you also have other things in common for example you are on the same sports club, share a house, play in the or like same bands, having worked together in another action or anything else that connects you besides being in the same affinity-group. ("affinity" means "connected with" or "having things in common".)

This is important because having something that connects you, independently of the goals of your AG is good for the group-spirit. So when everybody is tired from thinking and discussing serious matters you can always go out and do something that everybody enjoys to get your energy back. However everyone in the group should feel the same about a certain project or issue. The intimacy within the group also makes it hard for others to infiltrate, for instance the police, of course this is a very radical example but it is a serious safety-issue as your political AG develops. Your AG should always be able to work autonomously. It should not need any help from outside to reach its goals. Keeping the group small and closely knit means decisions can be made in a split second. When performing actions this is very important because usually there is no time to call a meeting to discuss the problem at hand. This is what makes the use of AG's so effective: they can independently plan actions; be creative; stay flexible; and improvise when needed without anybody dictating what's possible and what's not...

TASKS & ROLES

Each member of the group has it's own task(s), these vary with every action you get into. When everybody knows their role during an action, and they can prepare their own part and a lot of time can be saved when making decisions during the action. There is a wide range of different tasks and roles that can be performed. Here is a very brief list of roles that might be needed in an AG during an action:

General roles that are always needed are: A first aid person; a legal observer (in case there is police involved); a media spokesperson (if you expect journalists); a scout (for the preparation of your action); arrest-able members (group members who declared that they are willing to be arrested if needed in the name of civil disobedience) or a vibe watcher (someone who takes care of the general wellness of the group by, for example, passing out water, giving massages, telling jokes or initiating songs); quick decision facilitator (someone who facilitates in case it's needed to take an unplanned decision).

Then there are a massive amount of possible roles that can differ at any specific action: traffic people (people who hold back traffic in case a demonstration or AG crosses a street); legal support (in case somebody gets arrested); banner maker (if you will use a banner); public speaker (in case you want to address the public out on the streets); catering (food!); barricade crew (people who know how to shut down urban logistics in case of a blockade); climbers (if you want to get in a tree, on a roof or over a wall); actors (if your action involves theatre).

Last but certainly not least: the home support group, this is the group of people that makes it possible for those who get involved in an action to get started without problems. They take care of your plants, feed your pets, walk your dogs, call of your work, calm freaked out parents and pay the rent if needed. They are also the ones that give you a warm welcome and a listening ear when you get back from your adventures.

MICRO & MACRO

The same way as a single person can be a part of an AG, an AG can play a part in a larger umbrella organisation acting as single person might. Within this organisation the AG will get their own tasks.

The AG will be represented by a single spokesperson when communicating with the umbrella organisation. The advantage of this is that in the spokes council meetings basic democratic decisions can be made by representatives and in the AG's individuals can focus on what matters to their efforts without being distracted by macro matters that are unimportant on a micro level.

The results will always be unknown until the final action. All the AG's with their different tasks and roles get together and the results will become visible. There will be a big chance that they will exceed any expectations.

GETTING STARTED

It all starts with an idea that somebody would like to realize or an issue that you feel like acting upon. Hopefully you already know people that feel the same about it. If so, you can get together and have your first meeting.

During this meeting the AG choose a facilitator, this is someone who understands the common objectives of the group and helps planning the meeting without taking a particular position within the meeting. Then it's time to talk about the action itself: who will do it, where will it be, when do we do it and what and how are we going to do? If the action takes place as a part of an umbrella organisation, it is necessary to know what other AG's are already planning. This way you can decide to either support another AG or make sure you do not get in their way. After talked about these things you can start discussing tactics and your target. Take your time listening to different opinions and try to make a decisions and come to a consensus. This way everybody agrees on the decision and you avoid the situation that people join the action against their will.

When this is all done think about what resources are need for the action: will you need banners; a place that can be used as a home-base; police or media spokespersons; art; musical instruments, try not to forget anything to avoid nasty surprises (for instance, you don't want to forget some snippers when you have to cut a fence).

Also try to determine if you have enough people to join your action and if not, brainstorm about who to invite. Good candidates are people everybody trusts and has affinity with.

When all of this is done, you can pick a date for the next meeting. If your AG is part of a bigger plan, don't forget to pick somebody to represent your AG at the spokes council meeting. It's all about communication.

You could write a book about this but the best way to learn is to just do it. As it is commonly said: "direct actions gets the goods". You'll be amazed what you can get done through organisation.

WORDS BY: KAJ DERKIS

www.rantcollective.net/article.php?id=30
www.starhawk.org/activism/affinitygroups.html

The word 'affinity group' is only the formal name for this type of organisation structure. They can also be called: blockade teams, cells, action collectives etc. Of course it is also fun to give your AG its own name that can refer to all kinds of things. For instance there are actiongroups with names as: "Screaming Trees", "Alcoholics against the Bomb", "Den Bosch Hardcore" or "Buckrabendinni Action Tribe".

ADDITIONAL

AND
-
EVE RYONE

YEAAHHH!

40

"AND EVERYONE IS LIKE: YEAAHHH!" ON A CAMPAIGN POSTER, PASTED

IN SEPTEMBER 2009 IN HAMBURG, GERMANY, A RANDOM PEDESTRIAN USED A MARKER TO PLACE HIS COMMENT

ONTO THE STREETS ANNOUNCING CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL'S UPCOMING VISIT TO HAMBURG.

WWW.TWITPIC.COM/1200H/FULL - FIRST PUBLICATION OF THE GRAPHIC PRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM MICHAELA VON AICHBERGER

Later, another passer by took a picture of this slightly altered message and uploaded it to the photo sharing site flickr. So it happened that the popular street art blog <http://just.blogsport.de> discovered this picture and posted it on the 13th of September. This triggered a wave of sharing, forwarding, retweeting as well as various creative reactions. This picture and the humor used in it made so many people *rofl* that some of them started to share audio-recordings of their personal YEAHHH! screamings; and others were mixing those up with former and current recorded and publicly available speeches held by chancellor Merkel. After the first YEAHHH-song was released on the popular spreeblick blog, it didn't take long for a club mix, a dub-reggae mix and an acoustic version to be published by others and linked together.



While some understood this phrase as a joke which could be generally applied to anything that just sounds stupid, others shouted it out as the cynical punchline against the whole political circus. The sentence helped to express in a humorous way a thought shared by many; Politicians often are blatant liars who change the truth slightly or radically, spin their way handily around annoying questions and get lost in their own kind of society.

Here, within just 4 days, it was even clear to campaign observers of the ruling party that the 18th of September in Hamburg can be called a successful day for friends of instant-fun-mobilization. "And everyone is like YEAHHH!" had become the theme of a flash mob to which everyone was invited by looking at the adusted Angela Merkel poster.

Like in one of the nicest devotions to yeah-mobilization, designers Michaelas von Aichbergers graphic, this one tag has mobilized a crowd not only in Hamburg, but also made people to gather in central squaires of other German cities. And even more - with help of interactive media channels like YouTube it has chance to go global.

There are some funny videos online showing the crowds cheering up in different cities to the political speeches, this action also made it into the German public prime time news.

This story reminds once again what impact even a tiny creative expression of one's political opinion may have and it can be seen as an encouragement to go ahead. Contributing to the diversity of opinions and expressions in our media channels is what everyone can do. May we find our messages in a blog or on the street, they can be signs of a vibrant political culture made by the people - beyond empty political rhetoric at party and governmental level.

WORDS BY: MALTERISING

41

WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=JMACQOR0VCQ&NR=1 - THIS ACTION IN THE PRIMETIME NEWS

WWW.SPREEBLICK.COM/2009/09/18/UND-ALLE-SO-YEAHHH-BER-SONG/ - WHERE THE YEAHHH-SONGS ARE TO FIND

A WEDDING

NO MORE THAN A HUGE THEATER PERFORMANCE

42

I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER SAY "I DO".

I always believed that the most ignorant thing to do is to put love and law in a small pond, with no air to breathe and let them swim around. But this year, if only to prove that love and law have nothing to do with each other, I got married.

In March 2009, the King of Sweden revealed the news: "The crown princess is getting married next summer". It seemed to be such a pinnacle event in high-society and lifestyles of the rich and famous.

The hype and excitement also inspired the theater group "Potato-Potato" to start a discussion about marriage. And what did they do? They organized another big wedding.

The "*Kinda Cheaper and Not as Good*" version took place on the same day as the royal wedding, although in a different city. People could register to participate and it was open for the public to join. The fee was 500 Swedish Crowns (around 50 Euros) and it was all inclusive. Clothes, wedding ring, flowers, dinner, party, cake and guests. And of course, the most important - a spouse. I didn't get married because I found the "love of my life". I didn't even know who I was suppose to wed until my "wedding day". I got married to prove a point, and to share it with everyone.

JUNE 19TH 10:00 AM

There they were. The crowd of people who where soon to be wed. The one for me was there. Twenty people seamed like few on the paper but so many when you see them in real life. So many different personalities. Tall, short, happy, nervous, from here and there, younger and older. After a short speech all the couples were revealed to everyone at the wedding. And there it was, the name of the person that would be my wife.

So many questions

The planning of the wedding was chaotic. What are we doing? Can we do this? Is it even possible? The authorities never heard of such a thing before. Is it legal to marry someone you don't know? Is it legal to sign the divorce papers before the wedding papers? A big news paper made up a new rule: only couples who know who they will marry are allowed to put their wedding announcement in print.



JUNE 19TH 2:00 PM

One by one, all the couples are entering the preparation points. I got help to find a dress that would match the outfit of my wife to be, my hair got fixed, we chose flowers, a song and performer for the ceremony, we got information about when to walk in and where to walk out and a professional photographer took our wedding pictures.

It was astonishing. To go this far to prove a point. It doesn't seem to much if you're trying to change something, get married and divorced, what's the harm? People are doing it all the time, every second marriage ends up in a divorce. But we noticed that many people that said that they would join didn't show up for the registration. I guess the idea of love and marriage is deeper buried in our minds than we think.



43

photos by:
Kate Visori
Ilinca Zaharia
Maja Qvarnström

JUNE 19TH 4:00 PM

People really know how to behave during a wedding ceremony. If you haven't been to a wedding in real life, you'll most likely have seen one in the movies. When I walked up the aisle, people rose from their seats. They cried when the soloist sang, they shouted when I kissed my bride, they waved to us when we walked off. But I guess they were also moved by the fact that we were really doing this. Gay couples, lesbian couples, different sex couples signed the papers to show that they don't really need them to prove real love.

We used the system to change it

Did we marry for real? What is that, really? We were legally wed and it is something that will always be registered officially. We had a wedding, we gave our promises for rich and for poor, we exchanged rings and invited our families. It raised many questions: Why do people get married? Why do we use the church to show our love even when our country is secular and the churches are empty the other days of the week? Why is it provocative to marry someone you just met? Why is it provocative to marry someone who you didn't choose?

JUNE 20TH 00.30 AM

"You expressed the fact that you want to divorce your spouse. Is this correct?" All of us got back on the stage in the ballroom to proclaim our will to end our marriages. The same master of ceremonies that married us earlier that day, now had a new speech. We all knew this moment would come, and it was because of this, it made this the happiest marriage ever.

We did all this to force people to reflect on the prevailing norms that apply to the social contracts involved in relationships and to think about what or who a wedding is for.

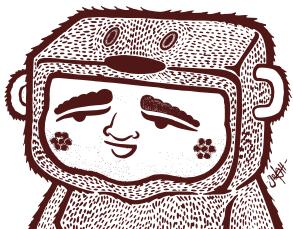
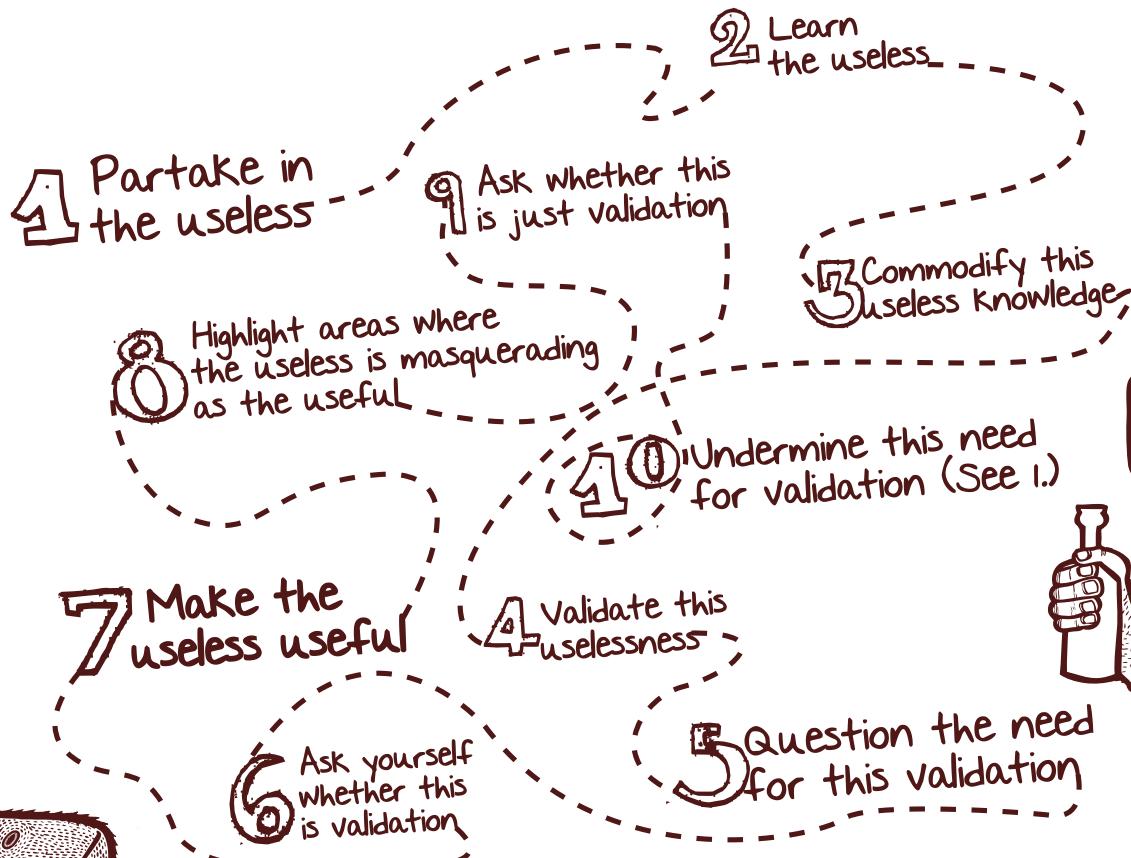
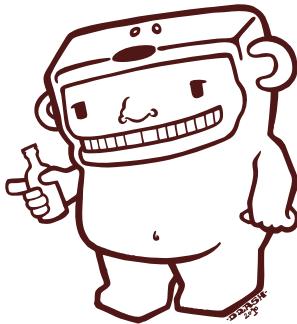
"A wedding is nothing less than a huge theater performance", we exclaimed in our advertising for this event. It has a script, a stage, roles, an audience, costumes and backdrop. And we did it! Yes, we got married. However, while doing so, we tried to reinvent marriage and give it a different meaning: our meaning.



44

WORDS BY:
FREJA HALLBERG

VALIDATION OF THE POINTLESS*



Words: Lauren O'Day
Diagram: Jovan Petrushevski
Drawings: Drash

*This is not validation of my practice. May, 2010



INTRO.



46
Fare-dodging is not only a way to make public transport free for yourself, it can also put pressure on politicians to make it fare-free for everyone.

Planka.nu is a Swedish network that promotes a free public transport and organises fare-dodgers, ie. people who don't pay for the ticket in the public transport system. By joining together in a solidarity fund, it is possible to widen the impact of fare-dodging, transforming it from the individual's desire to save some money into a collective struggle for a free public transport.

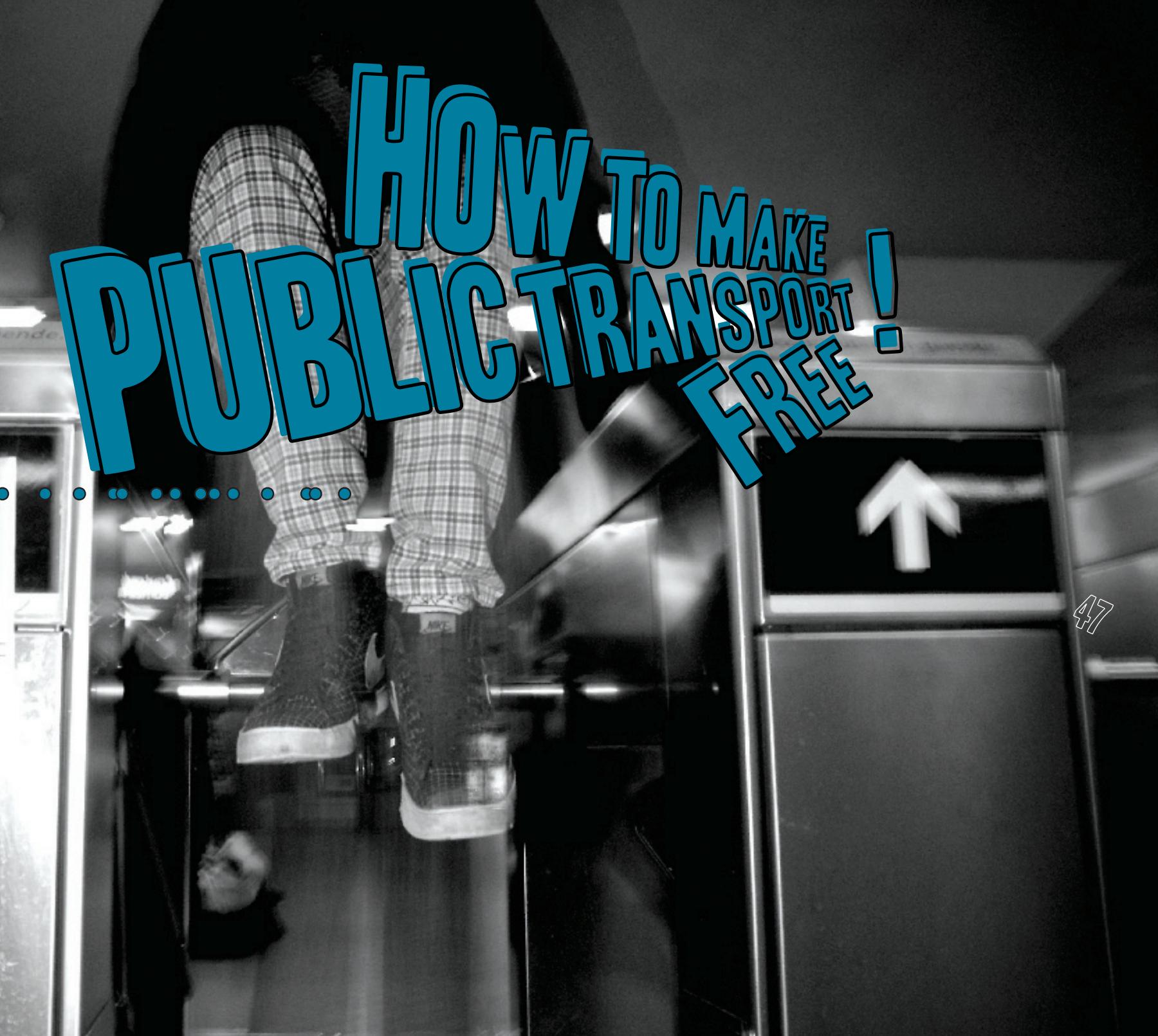
When organizing fare-dodgers, politicians and media are forced to regard it as a political question instead of just a matter of security. Commuters have always been poorly organized, especially compared with motorists and the car manufacturing lobby. That's why it's been easy for politicians to raise ticket prices at the slightest indication of weakening finances. Now the tide is turning, and we should put the problems with ticket-financed public transportation on the agenda. By paying a small amount every month to the solidarity fund, members can pay their fines together when they get caught. The solidarity fund for Stockholm in Sweden costs 10€/month (compared to 70€ for official monthly pass) and if you get caught the fund pays your fine (120€) minus a deductible of 10€.

Planka.nu combine different approaches to doing politics, from classic activism such as demonstrations, subway and street parties, leafletting, rallies to lobbying politicians more discretely and writing policy papers. Beyond that, by putting direct action style politics into system, we are turning individual practice into a collective disobedience. The combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary work, activism and lobbying is an effective way to bring our issue forward.

You can find more information at www.freepublictransports.com

- a global forum for the free public transport movement. There we gather information about local organisations fighting for free public transport, as well as cities which has already implemented it. The aim of the site is to learn from each other and co-operate in our struggle. By following these simple steps you can start your own solidarity fund in your city! If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us at sthlm@planka.nu.

HOW TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FREE !





STEP 1: IS IT LEGAL?

48

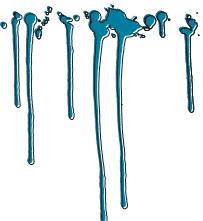
The laws concerning ticketing and fare-dodging in the public transport vary depending on which country you live in. Whether a solidarity fund will be legal or not usually has to do with the kind of fine you get if caught fare-dodging: is it formally just an expensive extra charge issued by the public transport company or is the police or legal system involved? In Sweden it is completely legal to run a solidarity fund, but for example in Germany there seems to be more of a legal problem. If neither you or any of your friends know enough about the law, contact someone who studies law, they are usually interested in checking up on things out of curiosity.

STEP 3: DO THE MATH!

Whenever you start up the campaign officially a lot of people will respond with “but if we don’t pay for the tickets, how will the drivers get paid, etc.” This argument is of course not valid since almost all public transport systems are already heavily subsidized and only a small increase in the regional tax or VAT would be needed to skip the fare. But to avoid the use of this argument, and show the stupidity of fares in the public transport, check out some financial reports from the public transport company or the municipality that runs it. Usually you will find that the fares are not the public transport’s biggest income, and that the cost of having a ticket system (selling them, investing in barriers and smart cards, ticket inspectors etc.) make up a big part of the income generated from selling tickets. In Stockholm around ten percent of the income from tickets go directly to upholding the ticket system, and everyone earning less than 6000€ (six thousand euro) would benefit from a fully tax-financed public transport.

STEP 2: START ON A SMALL SCALE

Get together with some friends or find people online through political communities or mail lists. Form a group and start a small-scale informal solidarity fund. This is a good way to minimize any consequences, while getting to know how the control system works, curiously investigate its possible gaps, and experiment with different membership fees to find the lowest possible fee that still makes the fund break even.





STEP4: THE FUN BEGINS STEP6: ROUTINES CAN BE GOOD!

Now that you have figured out a good membership fee and sorted out the legal stuff it is time for the fun to begin! Figure out a catchy name for your organisation, register a web site, print some stickers, and if you're really serious, register yourselves as a legal non-profit organisation and set up a bank account for membership fees, and get an address where people can send their fines.

STEP5: GO PUBLIC!

Launch the solidarity fund with a press release presenting the concept and the underlying demands for a free public transport. Be ready for a lot of attention. If you have time it is a really good idea to read some guides (for example, The Hasbara Handbook: <http://korta.nu/hasbara>) on how to handle the press since, according to our experience, the attention from the press usually gets huge when a new solidarity fund is started.

One thing that sometimes can be a problem for newly started political groups is to get some routines in their work. Hopefully the solidarity fund will take care of this by making your group have to do some routine administrative work each week. This is something we have had a very good experience of in Stockholm, it is not that much work, a few hours every week to answer emails, register new members and pay fines. But it gives a stability to the group, and a reason to meet every week to write articles, leaflets, do research, plan actions and have a good time. In Stockholm the campaign has been going on for nine years and is growing stronger every year, we even have some people who were there in the start-up phase that are still active. Whatever you need help with, we are here to help you. Do not hesitate to get in touch!

WORDS BY:
Aleksander Berthelsen

MAŠTA 7TH ISSUE # GROWTH

Growth of ideas, and a disastrous growth of problems.

In times of crisis, economical growth is questioned - does this necessarily equal progress? Plants are growing and dying, growth as such, is a part of the life cycle.

Growth needs fuel - its all about resources. Growth with limited resources is exclusive, it exists in competition, but also symbiotic relationships are possible?

Sustainable growth - infinite or finite, but still controversial.

Join the MAŠTA 7th issue GROWTH by sending Your visuals, action reports, analytical articles or action tips related to GROWTH to:
editor@mastazine.net until **10th of January 2011!**

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Contact us: Masta magazine
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Distribution coordinator:
Maria Perez Fernandez
order@mastazine.net

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Editor in Chief:
Rūta Vimba



Proofreaders:
Niti Dhingra
David Pomarede

Webmasters:
Tom Buytaert
Joep Van Delft
Malte Reißig
Alexander Whillas



Cover:
Michelle Yukiko

Art Direction
& lay-out:
Jasna Dimitrovska
Tara Maclean



Editors:
Kaj Derkx
Rubén Gómez García
Malte Reißig
Jasna Dimitrovska
Tara Maclean
Alexander Whillas

INDEX # 6

- 4 Creative activism as part of human nature
- 6 International Errorist!!
- 9 You can also be an error - Interview with an International Errorist
- 10 Billboards under your scalpel
- 14 Remixing the cityscape
- 16 WHATEVER
- 18 The practical use of art in society
- 20 Shadows of the memory
- 21 An upcycling manual
- 22 Manual on hanging up a banner
- 23 Personal space action
- 24 Nomadic structures, Subaltern Identites
- 26 Hoax Letters
- 28 CREATIVE FREEDOM IN OCCUPIED LAND
- 30 WARM GREETINGS
- 32 A story of an abandoned building
- 36 Affinity groups
- 40 And everyone is like: Yeah!
- 42 A Wedding - no more than a huge theater performance
- 45 Validation of the pointless
- 46 HOW TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FREE