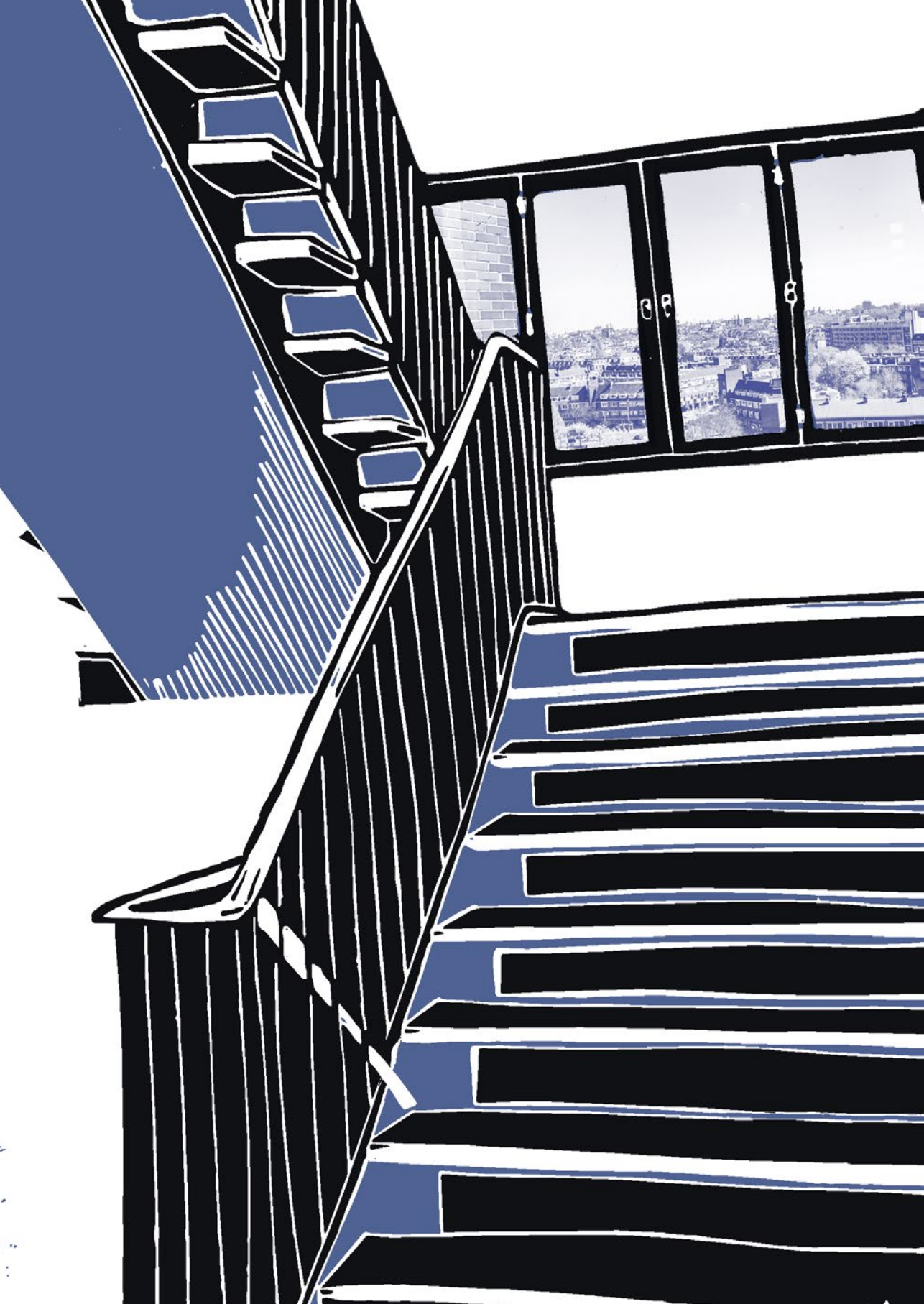


PERMANENCE THROUGH PRINT



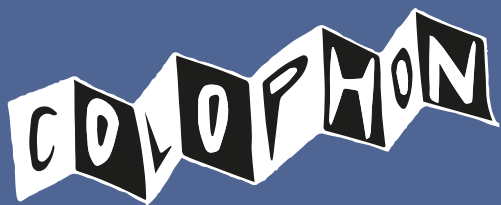


PERMANENCE

THROUGH

PRINT

KLOKKENHOF



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Squatting always continues, but a squat rarely remains forever.

PERMANENCE THROUGH PRINT

is a series of zines in which squats are portrayed before they disappear.

In this first edition, MO SIEN
TITO and CRIOYO

who live as squatters in

KLOKKENHOF

talk about their motivation to start squatting, about their expectations for the future, their experiences in the building, and the search for community.

Their stories are supplemented with short historical and theoretical reflections on the Klokkenhof building.



SQUATTING KLOKKENHOF

Klokkenhof was squatted in the summer of 2024 and found itself at the center of a media storm not long after. The apartment complex from the '60s was largely empty, awaiting a planned but postponed renovation. Over the course of a few months, a few dozen squatters moved into the vacant apartments. Newspapers soon began to write about the "hellish" conditions in which the remaining tenants allegedly lived. Mayor Halsema came by in person, the city council expressed its outrage at the events, the proprietor, Vesteda, eventually called in security, and everyone agreed that the squat had to go. Except for the judge, that is, who refused to order an eviction and instead ruled that Vesteda and the squatters had to come to an agreement together.

During all that time, hardly any attention has been paid to the role of real estate investors such as Vesteda in driving up rents; or the inability of real estate developers and city planners to create affordable housing and a vibrant living environment. The squatters themselves remained shadowy figures causing nuisance, while the motivations for squatting or the housing shortage as a social crisis went undiscussed.

If it had been up to Vesteda, Klokkenhof would no longer even have existed. The original plan was to demolish the old apartment building with its 144 social rental homes and replace it with

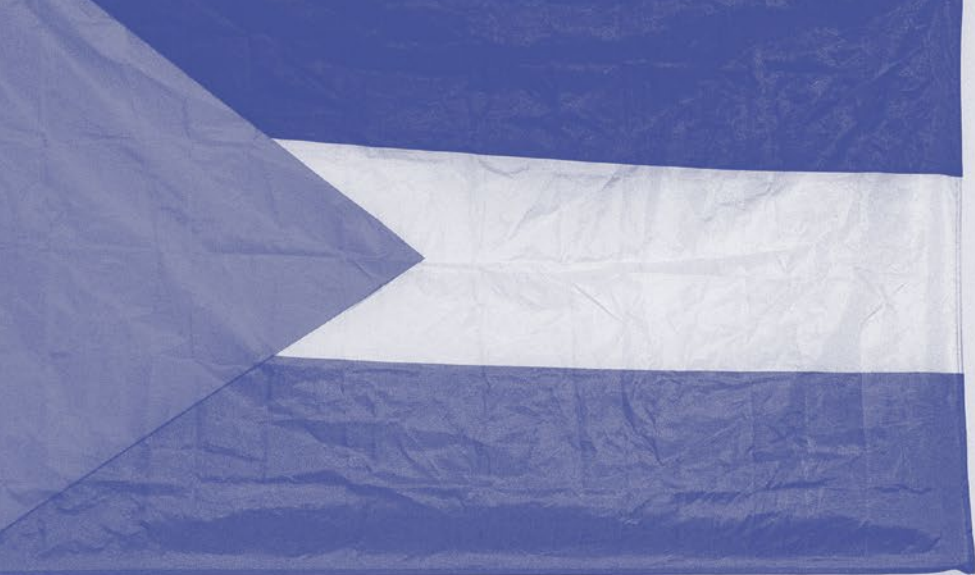
a large newly-built complex with mid-priced rental apartments. But in the meantime, Klokkenhof was designated a municipal monument, which prevented the demolition. According to the new plans, the homes will be renovated. But this means that the social housing units – all of them tiny studio apartments – will still be transferred to the much more expensive mid-price segment. According to tenants' rights organization Bond Precaire Woonvormen, Vesteda has been forcing tenants to move internally through temporary contracts since 2010. As a result, a large number of residents do not have a permanent contract, which means they don't have a right to return to the building. New tenants and new contracts provide the opportunity to raise rents.

Put simply, Vesteda's approach results in affordable housing being replaced with more expensive housing, pushing people with lower incomes out of the neighborhood. This makes Klokkenhof characteristic of the ongoing transformation of the city into a less affordable, less accessible, and ultimately less free place. But the simple and fairly arbitrary decision to award monumental status to Klokkenhof when it was long written off as ugly and already intended for demolition, thwarted Vesteda's investment plans. The subsequent squatting of the building opened the way to a renewed social use of the vacant space, without conditions in terms of income, gender or place of origin. For the duration of a squatting action (and then the next, and the one after that, and so on...), the possibility of a free use of urban space asserts itself.



I was looking for a place, but the rental prices are crazy. And at this point we had freshly squatted the People's University in Osdorp, and my friend there said maybe I have something for you and then connected me with someone here. I have to say I was really lucky. Back when I was looking for a place I had the possibility to pay rent, but not anymore today. I lost my job. Better to be jobless than work for that bastard, to be honest. So it's also a statement. Fuck capitalism and all that shit. I don't want to be inside this kind of system. And that's also what I'd been doing when I was still in Egypt. Not necessarily squatting, because that almost doesn't exist in Egypt. But I am originally a performing artist and I was using performances as a form of resistance. In Egypt we don't really have a squatting scene. If it's done, it's done at a really small scale. It's a whole different story than here. Here squatting has a proper history. It's not just an action, it's a whole movement. It's a whole form of resistance.

The first two weeks for me here I was on alert all the time, because it was my first time living in a squat, I didn't know anything about it. The police would just show up; once we had the police standing in front of the building for seven hours. I couldn't leave, and nobody could visit because they wanted to ID as many people as possible. They literally changed shift in front of the door. But it was also a nice bonding time, because then it was me and a couple of other people who live here all hanging out together





in one of the rooms. And somebody made a fake account for Uber Eats and ordered pizza for all of us, which was really nice. Being here really also makes me feel more energetic, more like having a purpose, more alive.

I've been living in the Netherlands since 2017, and I hadn't really experienced community, or being part of a group of people caring for each other. Until – and sadly it stayed this way – until October 2023. Then I started being included or finding myself in that activism scene. And I realized: those are my people. And living here has given me such a strong feeling of community, which I also was missing. It really feels not just as a community but also friendship, which is something I hope is gonna last after we get evicted. Whether living together in the next place or not.



1 HOUSING CONSTRUCTION WITH A SOCIAL MISSION

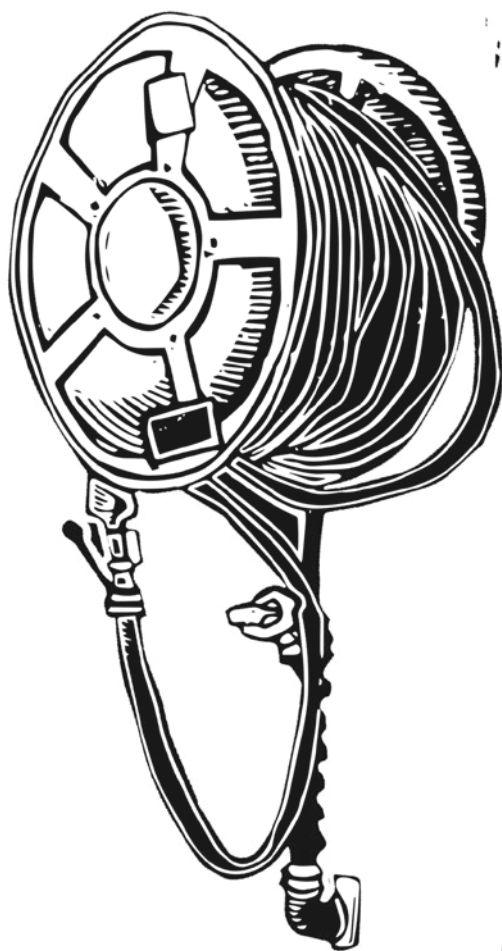
Klokkenhof is one of the “hof” buildings that were built throughout Amsterdam by property developer Huibert van Saane (1903–1981). The apartment building on Surinameplein was completed in 1961 and became known as the second “skyscraper” of the city. It has a sleek and understated appearance. Apart from its exceptional height for the time, the mosaic on the façade depicting the Biblical Ruth, and the carillon of 28 bells giving the building its name, it has few characteristic features. The one thing that makes Klokkenhof special is that it was built specifically for unmarried working women. Late into the post-war Reconstruction Period, it was still difficult for this particular group to find housing. With 144 homes for women, Klokkenhof met an urgent social need.

Van Saane played an important role in the post-war Reconstruction Period, notably through the import of prefab building systems, but his career began in the time of the major pre-war urban expansions of Amsterdam. Social-democratic municipal

policy promoted the construction of large new housing estates in which workers could be housed under better conditions. Van Saane was an entrepreneur, and he wanted to prove that building affordable, high-quality workers' housing could be cost-effective. To achieve this, he focused on using high-quality materials that last a long time and require little maintenance. An architect by training, he also carried out certain design innovations himself, such as moving the storage space from the attic to the ground floor, and making the stairwell more efficient. He himself remained the proprietor of the buildings he had built, which ensured long-term financing, allowing rents to remain at a low level. He opposed the commercial housing trade, which needlessly drove up real estate prices and ensured that the management of buildings was in the hands of, as he put it, "landlords who have no understanding of their task, which has a social side as well as a financial one"; a statement that seems to be aimed directly at housing managers such as Vesteda.

Van Saane's first major success was the Krugerhof from 1930, in which all his innovations were implemented in an integrated way. This was also recognized by the municipality, who considered Van Saane's construction methods as an example for social housing. And so it was a commercial project developer with Christian leanings who showed the largely social-democratic municipal officials the path towards cost-efficient high quality housing construction for the working class. The social mission of

modern urban planning stretched out to every detail. A modern, well-ventilated, standardized kitchen was developed especially for the Geuzenhof project on behalf of Van Saane. The new buildings had to have central heating, hot water and tiled bathrooms. There would be a radio connection, a play area for children, in many cases a large communal courtyard, and separate laundry rooms. For the first time, working-class people gained a degree of living comfort that had been reserved for the affluent classes until then.







I have lived here since September, October. The reason I came to live here is that I was kicked out of my house and I had nowhere to go. I was already talking to a number of people who lived here, and they said that if I really couldn't go anywhere, I could come and live here. They helped me with that, it all went very naturally. So I was very happy, but at the beginning I was also a bit skeptical, because this building also has a rough edge. But the living space is well-maintained. And there are some sketchy people, but I couldn't go anywhere else, and when you get to know people, they're not as sketchy as you thought.

I really experienced the lawsuit as a victory in community and in togetherness and in solidarity. Before that, I noticed that we were getting bogged down by ideals and principles, or ideas, or getting very stuck in a kind of intellectual battles; it was no longer really possible to talk to each other, because we had such different ideas. But when the lawsuit came a lot of people were really ready to do something. I put a lot of effort into that, by collecting everyone's names, for example. That's quite strange because as a squatter you always want to remain anonymous, but because this was a civil case, that was not possible. For me it has also brought a lot of peace that they now know my name. Before that I had the feeling that I had to hide, but now I know that I don't have to, I now dare to be a little more myself with the tenants. I am someone who likes to talk to everyone, and I feel a little less anxious now.

Vesteda had asked the tenants to collect evidence against us. And many have done so, creating a kind of fear. While it is actually quite sad, because those tenants have been living in very bad conditions themselves. I talked to a tenant who used to live there, and he showed pictures of what kind of water came out of the tap: it was full of sand. The spaces are draughty and noisy, there is asbestos. It's a shitty situation in which we are both victims of a huge company that doesn't care about us, so I think it's a shame that Vesteda managed to turn us against each other. Instead of having filed a joint lawsuit against Vesteda, for example; because the rights of the tenants have been violated as well. It's just a shame that they can get away with it that way. This also has to do with how they communicate about us to the tenants. They always tried to blame everything on us: for example, there are leaks in the building because they have not closed the pipes properly, and then they say that it is because of the squatters. They hired security, but that security is really fucking intimidating, they write "homo" on our doors, they have wrecked the elevators, they are sometimes drunk, and Vesteda tries to put all of that on us. I just want to live in peace. It's sad that the tenants are afraid, I don't want to make their lives difficult, I just want to have normal relations with them.

2 THE PRODUCTION OF CONTROLLED SPACE

The urban expansion of Amsterdam in the twentieth century offered planners, architects and administrators a unique opportunity to design and put into practice a rationalized vision of the urban environment. Cities, especially historic city centers, are highly complex environments. The accumulation of people, especially in the old proletarian neighborhoods with their confusing layouts and clandestine dwellings, poses a problem in terms of social control. Revolt often arises from these kinds of places, where people not only share miserable living conditions, but are also in close contact with each other precisely because of this, and solidarity spreads rapidly, and barricades are easily erected. Urban planning therefore always aims to make the environment *legible*, to reduce complexity.

The most famous example of this is the so-called Haussmannization of Paris, the replacement of the old, cluttered street plan with wide, straight, forbidding avenues, the main purpose of which is to facilitate police control and make barricades impossible. But as René Boer shows, this rationalization of Paris itself can be traced back to the preceding French occupation of Algiers and the destruction of the Kasbah.

This is not a mere detail. Reducing complexity, making the environment legible, preparing nature (both human and otherwise) for productive purposes, and standardizing all forms of production are all aspects the state-led project of capitalist modernity, and as such intertwined with colonial practices. This project always seeks to apply an external order to an environment that is considered wild and uncontrollable. An organically proliferating, untamed, unruly nature is an inadmissible phenomenon from the point of view of modern planning.

The twentieth-century urban version of this culminates in the modernist vision of the functional city, in which living, working and recreational functions are separated. The rationalized city is divided into these separate zones, which are connected by large access roads, equipped with modern means of transport. This reduces both the urban environment and its inhabitants to singular functions. It is a vision which mainly works from the top down, operating on a scale that is not accessible from the street level. Modernist architect Le Corbusier accordingly proclaimed the “death of the street”. The street as a place where people move in disorderly ways and with multiple or undefined purposes, had to be replaced by the street as a rationalized connector for traveling from one zone to the next. In Amsterdam, these functionalist precepts were translated into large urban expansion plans by architect and planner Cornelis van Eesteren, a major proponent of modernist urbanism.

The rationalized city is a city in which the planner and the administrator exercise maximum control over the space, or, rather, *produce* this space as a controlled environment. There is therefore always an element of capture present in planning: the repression of a complexity that is seen as disorder, as the (semi-)human version of a wild nature that resists attempts to make it productive. The rationalized construction of workers' houses, perfected by scientific methods, is the complement of the rationalized forms of production of the factory. In both environments, regularity, predictability, control, and standardization are the norm.







I've lived in Klokkenhof for a few months now.

Before, I was in Shadia Abu

Ghazaleh campus. For the short time

Shadia was squatted, I'd been living in its communal space almost every day. Shadia was way more political than Klokkenhof in its internal structure: a strong statement of resilience in solidarity with the Palestinian people. A table of discussion for local abuses in uniform, a breeding ground for poetry, an inspiring hub for theater performances, a place to discover Levantine folklore, food, music and literature. But also a nest for neurodivergence and gender non-binarism. Overall an extended family, a place to heal, learn and love together. After Shadia's eviction I found myself with some comrades looking for a new space, as I was still renting while holding on to the desire of exclusively living through squatting – something I've been wishing for over 10 years. I strongly believe squatting functions to claim individual and collective housing rights, but it is also extremely necessary to create a safe room for asylum seekers threatened by the risk of deportation. It's a clear message of solidarity in a public urban context, a critical self-reflection for whoever's holding a rather privileged position.

Squatting often comes with and within discomfort, and the social stigma weighing on homeless people, refugees and anarchists makes tenants reluctant to be open for a dialogue – especially with non-Dutch speaking residents. In the case of Klokkenhof,

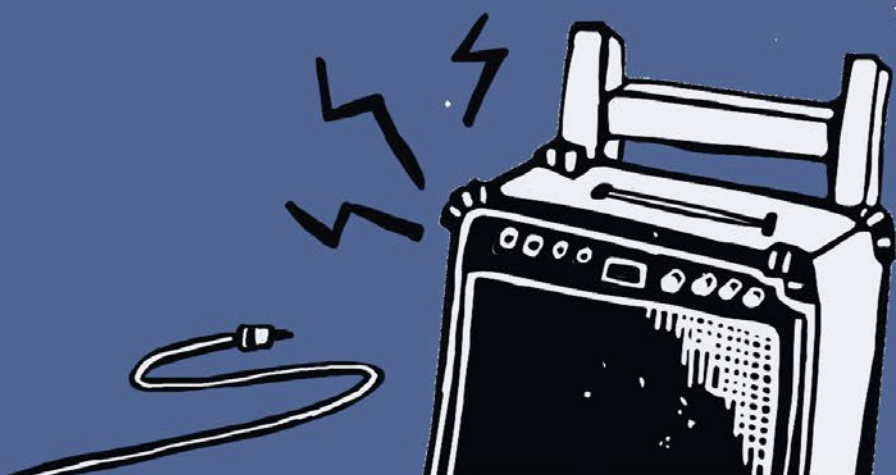
both Vesteda and even some tenants themselves did everything possible to antagonize the community of dissidents occupying the building. From PowNews, to AT5 and Telegraaf, a series of articles filled with bigotry, fear and sensationalism has been published and systematically used to justify the false claims and accusations made by some Dutch wealthy residents, despite a clear demand for social housing in a city where the current emergency is seriously marginalizing lower classes and leaving people on the streets. Amsterdam's mayor Femke Halsema herself has shown up in a theatrical manner to meet and "encompass disappointment" with renters and journalists in the building, adding insult to injury. Klokkenhof was in fact originally conceived as an accessible residency for single, working-class women, as part of a less speculative urban development free of institutional investors.

A wise comrade once reminded me that "you cannot study the revolution from a book, you must be an active part of the revolutionary process itself first – then you are writing that same book". Militancy still remains the most important aspect of anarchy for me, leading those refusing the narrative of the current status quo to rise up loudly, breaking the coercive silence of state repression. It's hard for me to think about squatting without acknowledging first the need for uprisings and insurrections, because there are certain essential aspects and values part of the fight against capitalism which can be fully understood only by participating in strikes, riots and

boycott actions – and most likely during clashes with nazi-fascists and authorities. Once such dynamics are comprehended, being in the squatting scene can be a joyful – yet bittersweet – experience, as it facilitates the access to a chaotic network of self-determined punks that scour the city in search of empty buildings, food leftovers and other wasted goods thrown away or forgotten by consumer society. An intricate web of displaced folks and psychonauts actively connects volunteer-run events based on mutualism, from vokus to crowdfunding, solidarity marches, free markets, radical art, painting, autonomous films and documentary screenings, aid workshops, permaculture, political lectures and more.

Underground culture is a fragile system. Klokkenhof as many other spaces is meant to be an example of alternative ways of living, but it implies several serious concerns about safety, especially when it comes to patriarchal structures and sobriety – two realities often intertwined, yet unspoken in present-day debates. I'd recommend two zines about these topics: "Betrayal – A Critical Analysis of Rape Culture in Anarchist Subcultures" and "Towards A Less Fucked Up World – Sobriety and Anarchist Struggle" – both available to download in Sprout Distro's web archive. Systemic violence is an invisible hand, poisoning cultural frameworks from within, insinuating itself through those weak intellectual fractures opened by collective traumas. It is something that has been forcefully internalized after centuries of hegemony, ethnic cleansing and colonization, disconnecting

collective consciousness from its ancestral indigenous roots. The Netherlands is the emblem of European slavery, and Dutch culture normalized the objectification of human beings through it. The horizon of land liberation can only exist if we truly collectively recognize and embrace the inner work which constantly needs to be done, as unlearning is a lifelong healing process. Oral tradition is still the foundation of endemic habits, a memory of freedom, knowledge, history, and cultural values across generations of steadfast resistance. It encompasses stories, songs, and teachings passed down through spoken word, playing a crucial role in maintaining identity, cultural practices, and historical understanding. Recognizing and respecting it, is essential for upholding the right to self-determination, cultural preservation, and justice.



3 SQUATTING AS ANTI-PLANNING

In Amsterdam, Van Eesteren's pre-war functionalist expansion plans were implemented during the post-war reconstruction with the development of new neighbourhoods like Nieuw-West and Buitenveldert. This is where the functionalist separation of residential and other areas really comes into its own. The housing shortage, the decay of the city center, and the increase in car traffic led to plans for the construction of motorways, metro lines and office buildings right through dilapidated historic neighbourhoods like the Nieuwmarkt and the Jordaan. But the threat of destruction of the old, not-yet-rationalized neighbourhoods unleashed the first major resistance against functionalist urban planning as such. From the top-down planning perspective, a dilapidated neighborhood is an obstacle to the provision of living comfort; a cluttered street plan is an obstacle to the promotion of traffic circulation; historic buildings are an obstacle to the construction of office buildings. But for residents, the liveliness of the living environment is precisely not related to rationally determined, plannable goals.

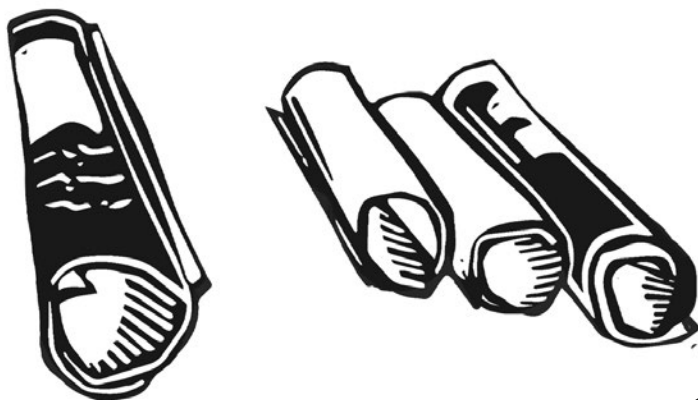
The mass protests in the '60s and the '70s against the planned destruction of the Nieuwmarkt neighborhood launched the squatting movement in

Amsterdam. The resistance to functionalism is not a reactionary aversion to modernization as such, but to the authoritarian, hierarchical, top-down way in which the urban environment is controlled by planning. Urban protest, squatting, and the most effective expression of urban discontent, namely riots, are the manifestations of an attempt to democratize urban planning, of what Henri Lefebvre would call the "right to the city". Squatting manifests itself from the beginning as anti-planning, as a kind of surrealist parody of modernist state-led planning, as the preservation of old, illegible environments, and the transformation of that environment through its propertyless appropriation. It deliberately creates illegible zones, areas consciously made intransparent to the disciplinary view from above. It is the continuous projecting of what James C. Scott calls a vernacular order, and thus in its own way a form of planning.

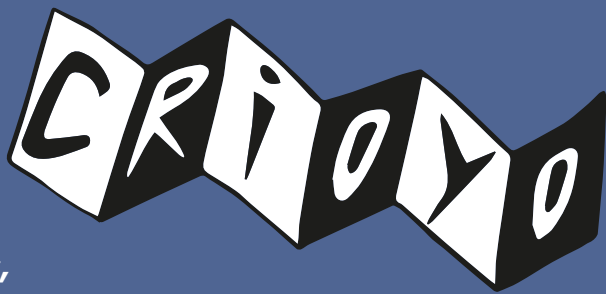
Squatting keeps the city porous, as René Boer calls it. Porosity is what distinguishes the urban experience from both the countryside and the suburbs. Cities are places of freedom and vice, they are the areas where degradation and impoverishment always loom, where the wealthy are in close proximity to the impoverished masses, places where a rebellious proletariat is located, where sex work finds a home, and where apparent chaos constantly proliferates. Functionalist urbanism, even in its social-democratic version, seeks to "clean up" this unruliness of urban life. Which leads to the paradoxical situation that urban life is (at least partially) deprived of its

urban character. The post-war suburbs are like gigantic villages, residential areas on such a scale that the typical urban density of connections, the disorderly overlap of functions, is undone. There is a certain trade-off: when working people win better living conditions, the planners obtain improved possibilities for control.

This drive for control appears on every level. Van Saane seems to have personally selected the residents of Klokkenhof. The ladies had to be of "impeccable behavior", of a certain age, and they had to be employed. Even in a social provision like a flat for unmarried women, access to a basic need such as housing is conditional. The emphasis on the moral virtue of women is another demonstration of the "unurbanity" of this view of urban life; or, more precisely, nowhere is the capacity of planning for urban discipline so clearly apparent. Van Saane knows how to realize his own urban utopia at the micro level; an apartment building that rises high above its surroundings, full of completely identical living spaces, where there is only room for virtuous ladies.







I went through a sudden breakup and thought: okay, I have to do something else now, and I'll refuse to pay rent again. But I didn't have a group yet to do this collectively, so I started asking around a bit. That's how I got to know another squatter, and he brought me here. We went here immediately, it was empty, and I could stay if I wanted. It was very simple, I didn't have to do anything. That was quite strange, because I expected that I would have to do it myself. So that's how it happened. Very vanilla story actually.

At the beginning, I didn't have the feeling that a lot of people wanted to live here. A lot of homes were barricaded by Vesteda. Things were smashed, power was cut, the toilets didn't always work. It had been made partially uninhabitable. I myself have also been involved in opening other new apartments, removing barricades. And because I got this easily, I felt that I now had to make an effort for new people, and for the rest of the group. My room has also become a kind of hostel. There are constantly people over when I'm there. I have my kitchen, I have my toilet, shower, running water, everything works, but there are people who just don't have anything. No electricity, no water. Not even a toilet.

I think we should squat more. Renting, for someone with my income, is obviously impossible these days. But I also think it's too easy, it's the easy way out. I find the way we are forced to live ridiculous in general, not only in this city, but also in the

Netherlands, in Europe. Our lives are sold back to us. We are treated as if our lives are worth nothing. I think it's ridiculous to say, I'll just accept it. I'm going to work full-time just to be able to pay that rent. And I understand that people do that, I have done it myself, and maybe I will do it again someday. But I'm definitely going to squat again after this. I think we should start doing that en masse again.

I think the community aspect is very important. You can have that anywhere of course, it doesn't necessarily have to be through squatting. But living together is different from having a shared hobby or interest. Community, self-reliance, and, on a personal level, my own dignity. To take something back from fucking slumlords and the government. It's a fight, but I don't care. Life is a fight. In this way you can be an example for others, you can inspire people. There are a lot of people in this city and in the Netherlands who look condescendingly at what squatters do, I mean, you see the comments. At the same time, there are also so many people who get inspired and want to do it themselves, or also want to show resistance in some other way. And that is also a very important aspect for me. But it's not necessarily the main thing, it's also about what I need in my life and what the people around me need. For me, that is most important.

4 THE FINANCIARIZATION OF SOCIAL DISCIPLINE

The personal involvement of a project developer, not only in construction projects, but with the residents themselves, is hard to imagine these days. Social control has undergone a transformation during decades of neoliberalism. The disciplining effect of planning as the promotion of social hygiene and control of space, which together was meant to advance the legibility of both the environment and the human population, has been replaced by the logic of financial capital. This changes the character of urban discipline. Who will live in which place and under what circumstances is now not so much dependent on the planning vision of architects and city administrators, but on the flows of financial capital, of the owner and investment structures that lie behind it, and the interests that are served by it.

This is taking place all over Europe. Institutional investors – the pension funds and insurance companies that are the shareholders of housing corporations such as Vesteda – are buying up real estate everywhere, since investing in real estate guarantees “stronger risk-adjusted returns than any other sector”.

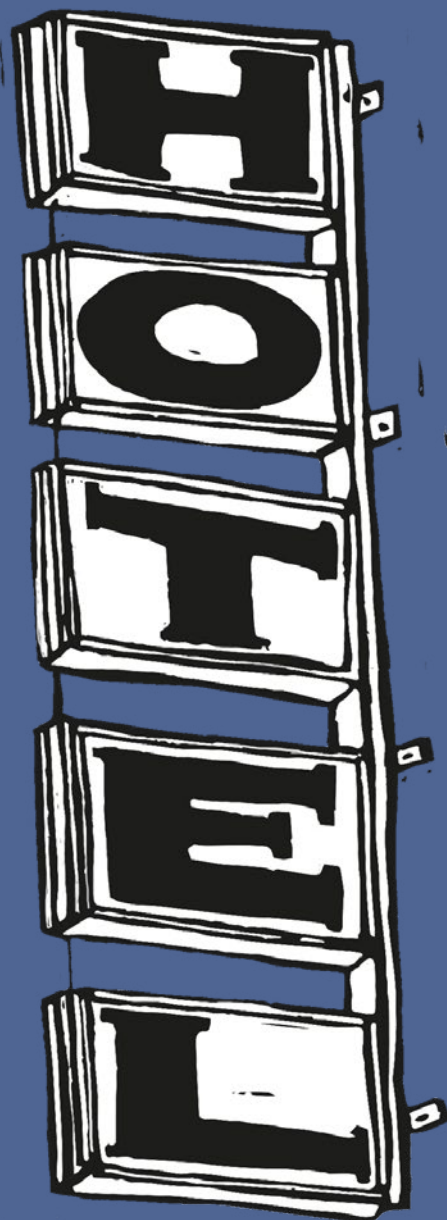


These investments are now worth trillions. Vesteda's tactic, renovating buildings in order to evict residents and raise the rent, is known as "renoviction", and is applied wherever real estate ends up in the hands of financial players. Residential investors such as Vesteda are only too happy to proclaim that their mid-priced rental housing projects are helping to combat the housing shortage, while in reality investors' hunt for returns on investment is pushing prices up further. Replacing affordable housing with expensive housing has nothing to do with a social mission; it simply makes urban life less accessible, less free, less diverse. It turns homes into a place where dividends for shareholders are realized, mere numbers in an investment portfolio.

In that respect, Klokkenhof is symbolic of the housing crisis, which is above all a *crisis of planning*. Profit-oriented housing construction only knows financial criteria. Aesthetic and social cohesion play no meaningful role whatsoever. Planning – the material layout of the environment according to a certain vision of social existence – has been replaced by a financial coordination of investment opportunities. As a result, the city becomes more bland, an innocuous space of sameness, and at the same time more segregated and restrictive.

FUGITIVE PLANNING

Under these conditions, where planning has been replaced by the profit motive, and social discipline is exerted through the logic of finance capital, squatting again takes on its social role as an irrepressible form of counter-planning, opening up spaces for urban life to chart its own course. This planning, this fugitive planning, as Moten and Harney call it, is nothing but the “self-sufficiency at the social level”, the reclamation of the means to shape our own lives communally, without capture, beyond governance. And it makes sense. A city abandoned to financial speculation will engender a subterranean network of protest against the notion of property as such, against rents as such, against restrictions of any kind as to who lives where and under which conditions. Every squat is another node in this vast experiment that learns the same lesson over and over, that housing should be absolutely unconditional, absolutely accessible, absolutely free.



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