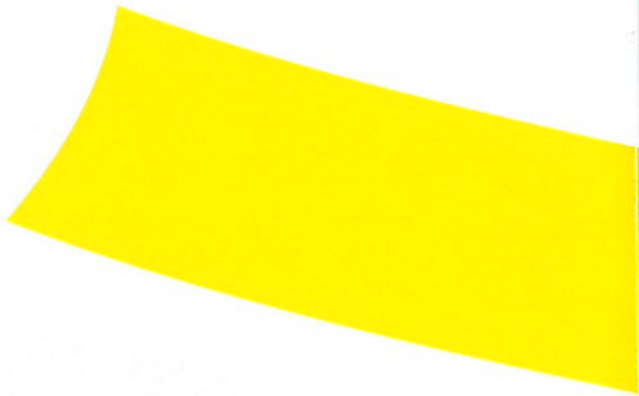
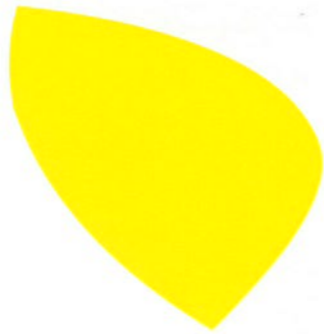


UNLEARNING
THE RULES OF
COLLECTIVITY

Giulia de Giovanelli

Unlearning the Rules of Collectivity .

Giulia de Giovanelli



an xPub Book

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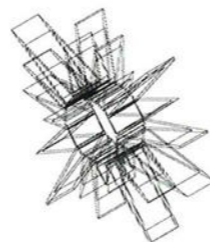


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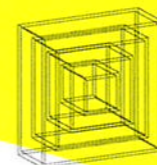
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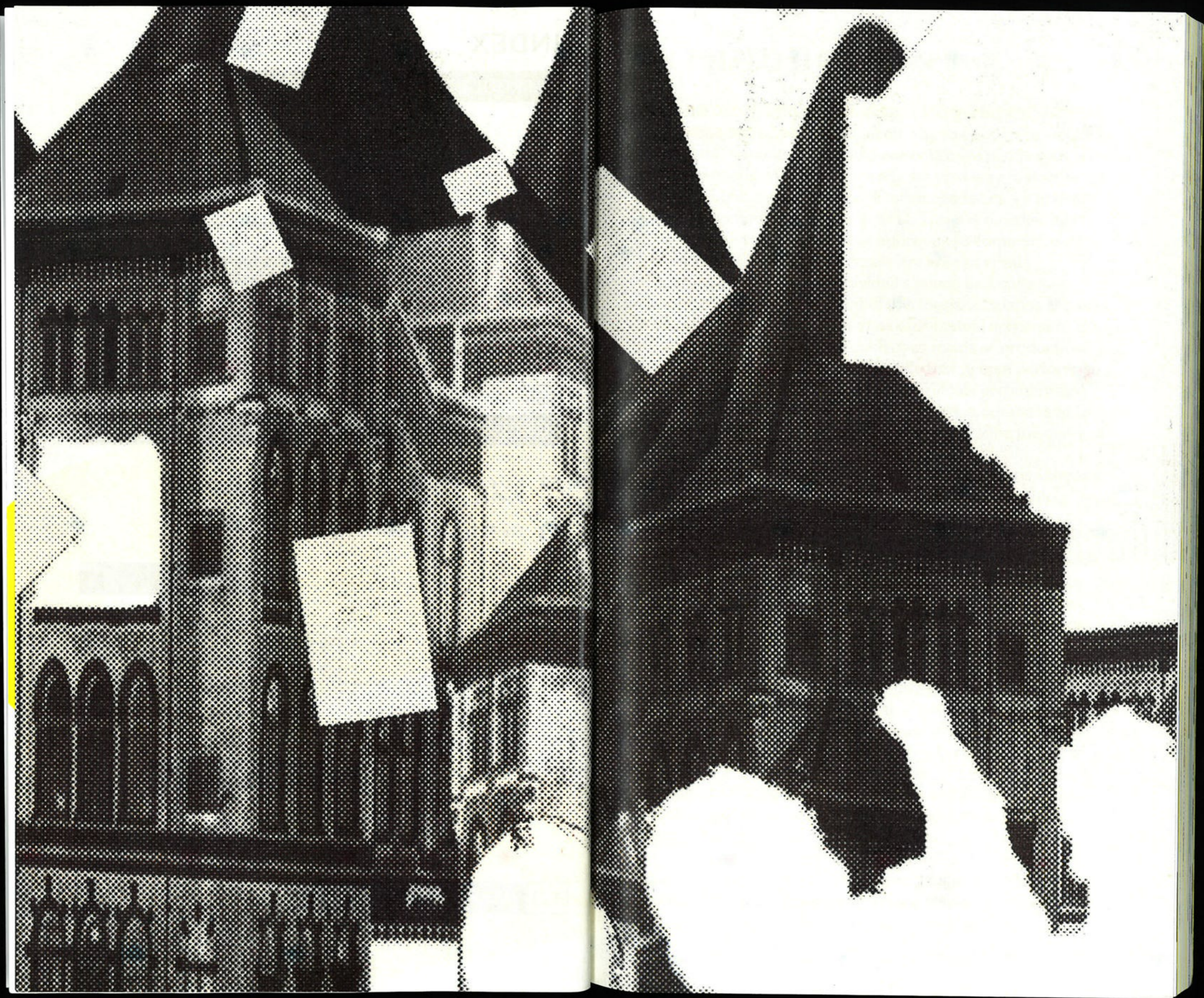
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Humans are able to shape and imagine a better model for cooperation than the one society allows them to. Our democratic society, based on a politic of consent, seems to often exclude forms of opposition, in favor of an homogenization of difference. It is important to start discovering practices and discourses that aim to accept forms of opposition as fundamental for any forms of cooperation. This text explores both personal experiences in forms of collective living alongside a series of political, philosophical theories that reflects on this urgency. With this text, I want to propose a few directions that ideally invites the reader to investigate some options of balanced and dialogics forms of community. The options are named by the **actions of sharing, appropriating, unlearning and playing.**

Richard Sennett describes in his book *The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation*, a form of interaction which doesn't aim to solve questions by finding common ground as "dialogical" (Sennett, 2013). The risks of misunderstanding and differences are instead taken as qualities that help to clarify mutual understandings. Divergences and cultural differences are characteristics of every individual and collective living form, and can also join people together.

The first chapter, **SHARE!**, narrates the story of the village where I was born, Cembra. This village is where I learned how to move and collaborate with others. It is used as different example of a community that balance individual needs and collective responsibilities. Particular focus is placed on the act of regulating in relation to this form of community. The regulations of this village and how they are written, are a translation of the rituals and habits of the people.

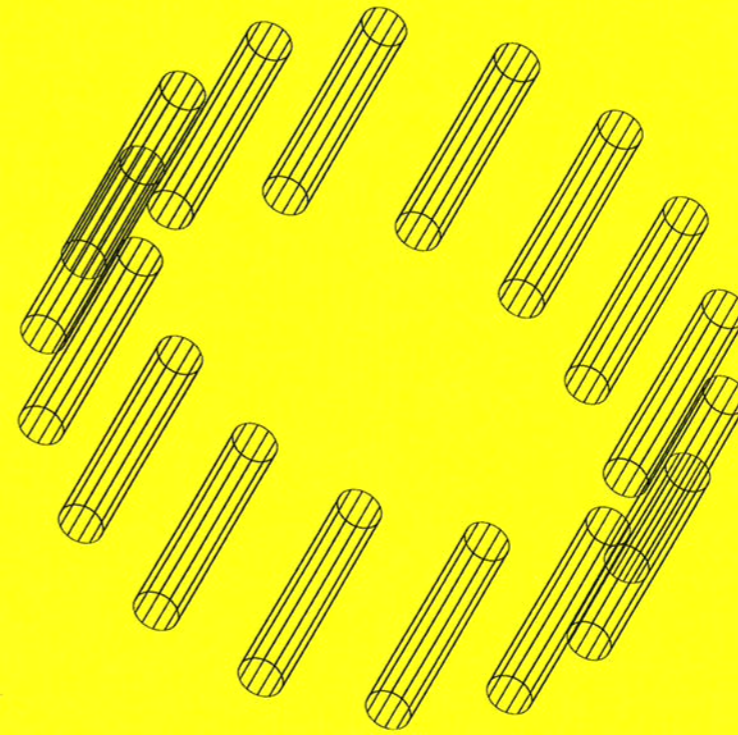
The second chapter, **APPROPRIATE!**, explore the history of the spatial arrangements of the residential community *The Poortgebouw*, a former squat based in Rotterdam. By living in this community and by reading through its history, I learned that life in the big community of a city allows also different smaller collaborative living forms to exist. The way the community functions is the translation of the will of multiple generations of inhabitants, all the while adapting to the policies of the city.

The third chapter, **UN-LEARN!**, identifies different models for re-thinking power distribution and communication

in collaborative environments. The chapter is built on the foundation of Gregory Bateson's pedagogical and anthropological research. He draws the idea of learning to learn, also called "deutero-learning" (Bateson, 1987), which is the acquisition of knowledge and contextual informations. This pedagogical idea is the learning by adapting and listening to the required conditions in which you are in. This concept is for me similar to the dialogical forms of communication theorized by R. Sennett : the process of interaction that happens while we learn something new shouldn't resolve in stating resolutions, but it can adapt to the situation by opening up to the diversity of the environment. As in a dialogical form of interaction, the elements of doubt or disagreement cannot be eliminated by a play of dominance and submission but they can create a fertile terrain for a different way of thinking. Educational models can enforce ideas of collective right directions and define common sense. My proposal is to refuse unidirectional institutional logical categories in order to start fully embracing the complexity of being together. Here the word institution is used in a wide sense, institutional categories mean in these terms stable and official ensemble of practices, languages, and political ideologies which have decisional power onto our lives. Embracing complexity would mean to develop empathetical and dialogical forms of exchange that allow divergences to exist.

The last chapter named by the action **PLAY!**, describes my methodology and examples of works that aim to fantasize about alternative structures of power. An audience should be invited to think, to use imagination in order to refuse pre made concepts and allow their temporary conditions of togetherness to lead their opinions and behaviors. The audience is a participant, not a spectator. Art and education can help representing a world made by a plurality of different people and audiences. Using these kinds of strategies in art or educational projects, interests me and represents my personal artistic and research goal.

This thesis places me as subject and object of a research on collaboration and dialogical structures for cooperation.



SHARE!

This is an extract translated from the first declaration of squatting by the Rotterdam Overage Kraakgroepen:

"Last night we, Rotterdam squat collective, together with 50/70 men and women squatted the Poortgebouw, which was for years vacant. We did it because we think it is asocial in times of housing shortage to keep buildings empty (...) while it protests against the celebrated vacancy law. (...) Squatting is a defense of a property against the investors and speculators which crushes the fundamental housing rights. (...) At the same time squatting is a fight against municipalities and governments which are not succeeding in solving the housing shortage. Our purpose is to make the building livable, to set up a weekly squatting consultation hour and to use the building to co-organize activities for young people in the neighborhood" (Rotterdam Overage Kraakgroepen, 1980, Translation).

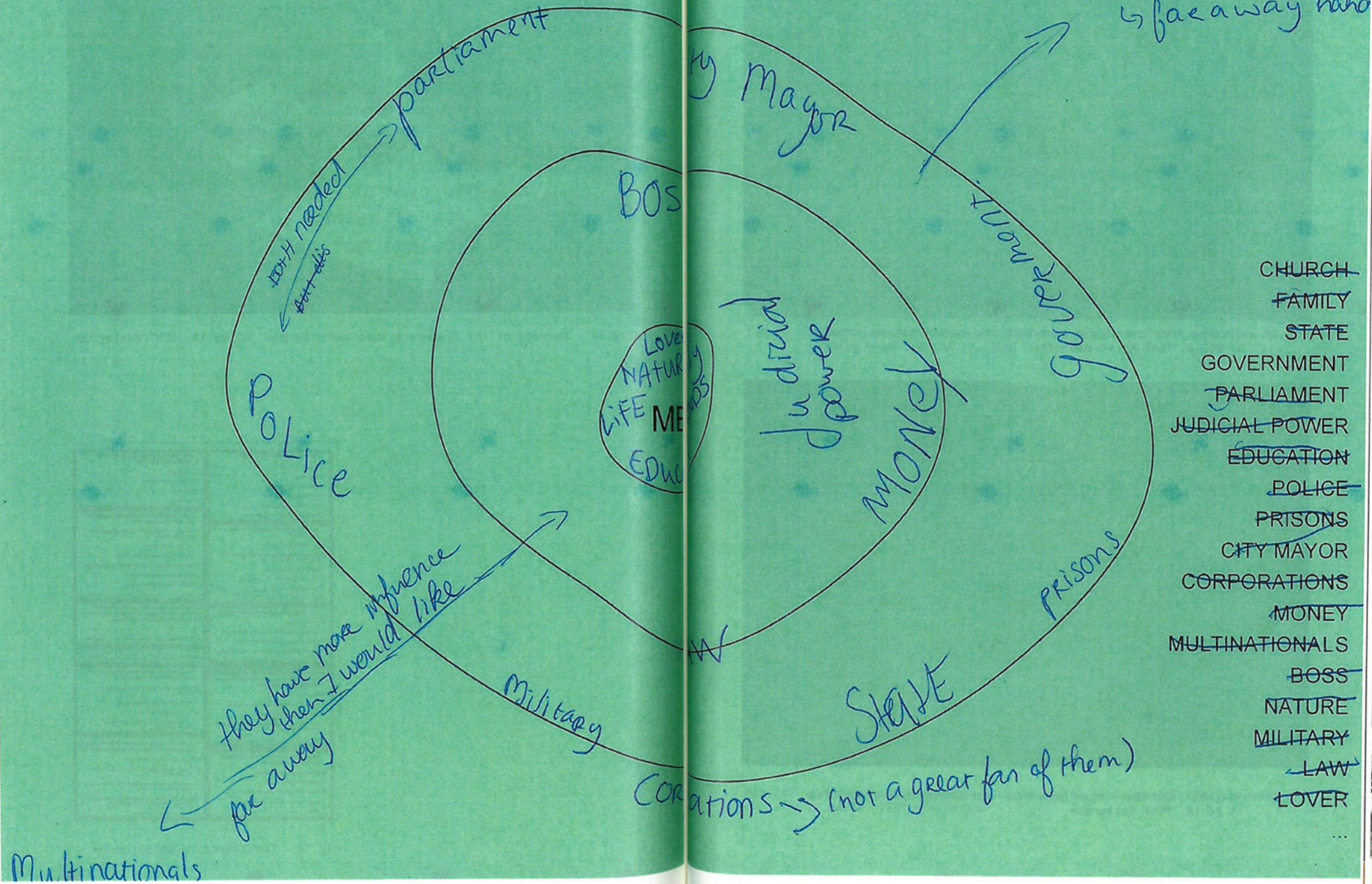
The action happened on the night of a Friday 3d of October in 1980. The police couldn't stop the action because it was legally and professionally executed. Squatting was a legal practice before 2010 in the Netherlands. There were two conditions for allowing people to claim any space as their home: the property had to be vacant for more than one year and present the basic requirements for being claimed as living space. The group was then able to start using the Poortgebouw as their living space. The goal of the first group of inhabitant was to make the space livable, transforming it from office space into an autonomous zone:

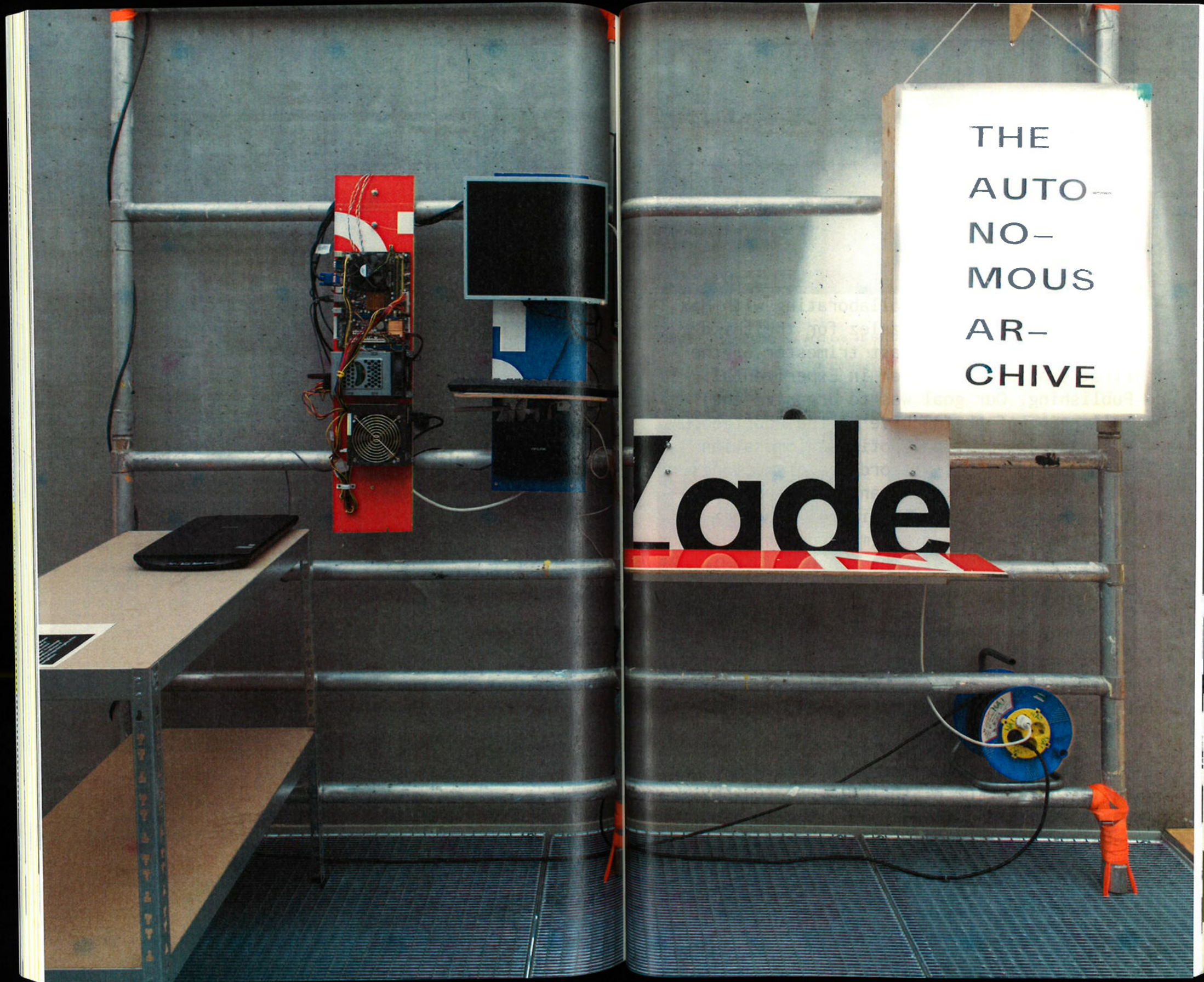
a youth center with housing and socio-cultural or political activities.

On the 7th of October of the same year, the Municipality stated that the squatters were legally tolerated. In November the squatters met the city-government and proposed a plan to self-renoate the building. The aim was to accommodate the space to the HAT Van Dam units living conditions. A HAT unit was a living space created by HAT subsidy, or housing for single person, for a household. The municipality reacted skeptically to that proposal, scared that they would not get enough subsidies for the renovation, and stating they should leave the building on date 31 August 1981. In September 1981 the Municipality of Rotterdam announced their subsidiabile plan to renovate the Poortgebouw into 1-2 person units, the so-called HVAT-units. In the meantime, the squatters didn't want to leave the building. The Municipality was worried that in evicting the inhabitants of the Poortgebouw they would provoke violent strikes with police and squatters similar to the ones were happening simultaneously in Amsterdam. From October 12 on, parties from the Projektburo Feyenoord and the Municipality were meeting regularly to discuss possible evictions or alternatives. The Minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment Marcel Van Dam admitted publicly to appreciate the ideas and strategies of squatters on housing and self-maintenance.

INFLUENTIAL CHART OF POWER

Add terms inside the circles with the appropriate power figures that influence your life.
 The closest to the centre, the more influential they are.
 Feel free to add more...





THE
AUTO-
NO-
MOUS
AR-
CHIVE

Zade

MEDIATION

Mediating is for me a synonym of balancing and has qualities of empathy. My personal artistic research, founded on collaborative models for radical participation asked me many times to develop skills of mediation between people and situations. The first work which made me aware of the quality I'm required to develop, is the Autonomous Archive project. The Autonomous Archive is a project started by collaborating with Max Franklin and Franc Gonzalez for the third Special Issue of the last trimester of the first year of our Master in Experimental Publishing. Our goal was to organize the collection of the archive of the Poortgebouw. The collection is a chaotic agglomeration of legal documents, recordings of meetings, documentation of events and pictures. For our purpose we used a MediaWiki platform as database and we experimented how to creatively manipulate the scanned materials. In the first stage of the project we played with a software which would scan, detect text from the document and translate it into English. From these experiments we produced a small publication, as a first attempt to our research on alternative ways of archiving historical materials.

My role in the project was to initiate and contextualize the historical research. By having constant access to all the information required and to an infinite amount of



Fig.26 The Autonomous Archive at Het Nieuwe Instituut

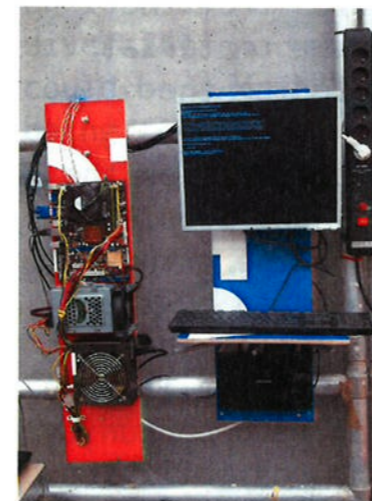


Fig.27 The Autonomous Archive server



Fig.28 Franc Gonzalez and Giulia de Giovanelli at the Het Nieuwe Instituut first launch of Interfacing The Law.

