

# PEOPLE'S HOUSING PLAN

**PREAMBLE:** The People's Housing Plan is a way for grassroots organizations, artists and activists to change the conversation about housing in New York City, moving beyond the policy goals of established nonprofit organizations and political parties. By signing on to this platform, we commit to integrating it into our work and coordinating with others to advocate for it. Organizations and individuals can support the plan's five points using an array of tactics, including petitions, speaking events, publications, street art, protests, disruptions, rent strikes, occupations, and more.

1. **End homelessness in New York City.** Immediate housing for all homeless people through new construction or seizure of vacant "warehoused" properties. Citywide moratorium on evictions.
2. **Universal rent control.** Apply rent control laws to all rental properties in New York City. Institute an immediate rent freeze, and phased rollback of rents to 20% of tenant income.
3. **Transfer distressed buildings to tenant ownership.** Transfer properties using the 7A receivership process or eminent domain. Tenant ownership in the form of cooperatives, mutual housing associations, or community land trusts.
4. **Repair and expand high-quality public housing.** Full funding for the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) and full repairs and enhancements for all NYCHA properties. Begin construction of new, high quality public housing with community centers and art spaces. Provide free language services for all NYCHA residents.
5. **Democratize development.** Institute direct election of community boards with veto power over development decisions. Expand public input into the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). Moratorium on upzoning until these reforms are completed.

#nycnot4sale

# ARTISTS:

~~IN THE BUSINESS  
OF GENTRIFICATION~~

NYC NOT  
FOR SALE

# ARTISTS CALL TO DE-GENTRIFY

Gentrification is mass displacement. It is driven by the profiteering of landlords and real estate developers, and facilitated by the 1% bankers and politicians at City Hall. It is an accelerating crisis in every borough of New York City, from Bushwick to Chinatown to the Bronx and beyond. Every day we read about a new “frontier” identified by developers, who smugly adopt the language of colonization. Every day we see and feel this process as working class communities of color are forced out of their homes to make room for ultra-luxury businesses and condos. Every day we hear our politicians talk of “inclusionary zoning” and “affordable housing” in ways that are unaccountable and out of touch with the precarious economic conditions of the great majority of New Yorkers--especially those of us who do not reap the benefits of white supremacy.

Artists are caught up in this violent process. We are part of the problem. Landlords, developers, and politicians seek to use our creativity, and our desperation. Heavily indebted from pursuing higher education, we juggle unpaid internships, freelance museum jobs, art handling gigs, and precarious adjunct positions while scrambling for places to live, work, and show. We are easy prey. While they deploy racist tactics of harassment and neglect against long-term residents in targeted neighborhoods, developers seek to lure us in to “add value” to the area. We are baited with space, with exposure, with connections, with parties that commodify and aestheticize the “grittiness” of working class neighborhoods slated for colonization—sometimes with assistance from local celebrities willing to sell out their own communities.

We are put in a double bind. We are encouraged to take up housing that appears to have been available, but only at the expense of families who have resided in these neighborhoods for generations—for some of us, the neighborhoods where we ourselves grew up. We are used as Trojan Horses, and we too are disposable once property values have sufficiently risen. This is a well-designed formula of predatory artwashing, as the community of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles have put it. This process depends on our silence and our complicity. This must end. We must move beyond guilt and resignation in the face of what is too often declared to be an inevitable or natural process of urban growth. It is time to expose and denounce the formula for what it is. It is time to call out developers as well as art institutions that seek to instrumentalize us and to turn us against our fellow tenants and workers.

We, as artists, are linchpins in the process of displacement. We are thus in a strategic position to stop it in its tracks by refusing to play the game. We can strike at the nexus of art and real estate market. To the developers, we are weapons of mass displacement. By loudly refusing this role, we can become weapons of creative resistance in solidarity with the communities where we live and work. To paraphrase Audre Lorde: art is not a luxury. It is a vital resource in our struggles for life, land, and liberation. We are part of the problem, but can become part of the solution. As artists, we add our voices to a declaration that resounds in every borough and beyond as communities rise up, find one another, and build a movement to take back the city for the people: New York City Is Not For Sale.

# ARTISTAS EN CONTRA DEL DESPLAZAMIENTO

As artists, we can and should resist becoming weapons of mass displacement. We can and should act in solidarity with the communities in which we live. We can also support and participate in a city-wide movement that declares NYC Is Not For Sale. A first step is to take this pledge of resistance to the fine art of gentrification.

## WE WILL:

- 1. Get to know our neighborhoods.** Respect our neighbors as fellow workers and tenants. Learn about the history and contemporary situation of the places we are occupying. Find out who and what we have displaced. Come out for community meetings and actions to hear what is going on and to meet people. Be humble and mindful as newcomers. Learn to listen, and check our privilege in whatever forms it may take.
- 2. Boycott predatory actors.** Do our homework about who's who in the real-estate game and the policy landscape. Name, shame, and publicly refuse to work with landlords, developers, and politicians who are baiting artists with opportunities to lease or show in properties targeted for gentrification via rezoning, warehousing, or the harassment and eviction of tenants. Avoid curating shows or displaying work in galleries and institutions that collude with real estate speculators. Shun “Trojan Horse” businesses that are paving the way for luxury consumption zones, from galleries and pop-ups to restaurants and hotels. Boycott Airbnb and VRBO for the role they play in decimating tenants' rights and escalating rents.
- 3. Support local economies and struggles.** Commit to shopping at longstanding locally-owned businesses in order to help sustain vulnerable local economies. Support workers cooperatives, cultural centers, food justice, and community land projects that are cultivating the commons. Consult with local organizers to identify any information, skills, resources, contacts, or space we can offer in support of those already working to defend the neighborhood. Understand that gentrification and police violence go hand in hand, and that both reinforce patterns of white supremacy. Stay on the watch for abuses by both landlords and cops, and be ready to report what we see. Get outside of our comfort zone, and put our bodies on the line with direct action if we are able to do so.
- 4. Amplify the NYC People's Housing Plan.** Educate ourselves about how flawed the De Blasio housing plan actually is, and question how arts and cultural policy are being used within it. Refuse the politicians' claim that there is no alternative to a system that treats housing and land as for-profit commodities rather than social goods to which all should have equal access. Use our work as artists not just to express support for the Plan, but to creatively organize with our friends, families, and neighbors as we make this beautiful vision into a collective reality: block by block, a movement to de-gentrify New York City.

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