

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES



decolonizethisplace

"Public Enemy" Remix, The Final Battle

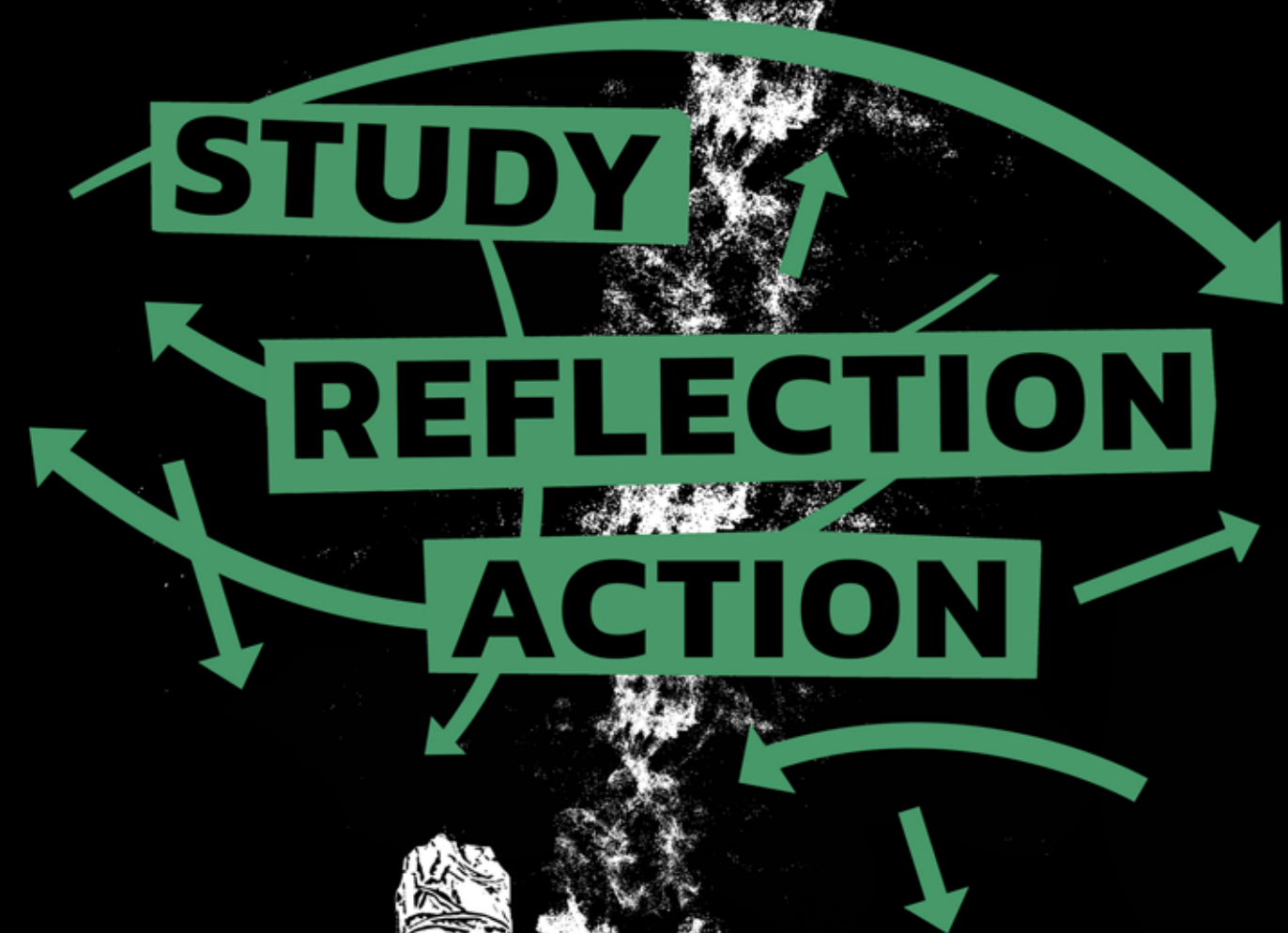
DECOLONIAL

- OPERATIONS MANUAL -

STUDY

REFLECTION

ACTION



1.

Where We Begin

This Operations Manual is an offering produced in tandem with a three-month solidarity initiative housed at the Art Gallery of Guelph on the campus of the University of Guelph. The Gallery and the University are settler-colonial institutions. A sign at the museum reads as follows:

"We acknowledge that the Art Gallery of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer our respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Métis neighbors as we strive to strengthen our relationships with them. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we learn, work, and create."

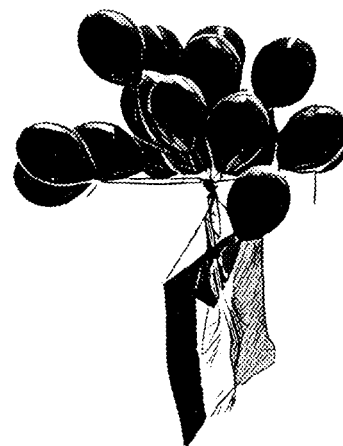
To this we add: we stand in solidarity with the struggles of all Indigenous peoples, whose land was stolen to create the settler-states of Canada and the United States, and who continue to live under siege, surveillance, and violence on their own ancestral territories. This includes the people of the Lenape diaspora, the original inhabitants of Lenapehoking (more commonly known by the settler name New York City), which is where many of the actions we reference in this manual have taken place. We stand with our relations advancing Indigenous resurgence and decolonization. We stand in support of the return of their lands. This is a call to commit and take responsibility to act in dismantling the ongoing effects of settler colonialism. This is where, together, we must begin and persist.

Along with stolen land, the wealth at the origins of the Art Gallery of Guelph also derives in part from the enslavement of African people. Philanthropist Sir William MacDonald built his fortune importing tobacco from the Confederate states during the Civil War. MacDonald was instrumental in creating the settler education system in Canada, including the MacDonald Consolidated School, which was the identity of this building before it was converted into the MacDonald Stewart Art Centre in 1978. The building was renamed Art Gallery of Guelph in 2015. This overlapping of land theft, genocide, and enslavement is at the heart of racial capitalism. It is manifested in settler institutions of all kinds, including those of the art system. Let this manual be an offering of solidarity with Indigenous resurgence and Black liberation on the entwined paths of decolonization and abolition.

2.

Operational Orientation

This Operations Manual is a tool of study, reflection, and action. It is grounded in five years of art and organizing in New York City by Decolonize This Place in collaboration with dozens of groups. The materials presented here are largely but not exclusively focused on actions targeting settler-colonial cultural institutions. Among these are the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum. The strategic intent of this manual is to advance decolonization, abolition, and decolonial solidarity. Encompassing notes, drawings, memes, posters, and photographs that have played active roles in our organizing work, these materials are not presented as a retrospective archival compendium. Rather, we have assembled them together to create an operational device for intervening in the present by sharing an account of what we have learned in the struggle against institutional amnesia, inertia, and denial within the art system, higher education, and state agencies. Many of the actions in this manual relate to ongoing efforts we consider "open files," meaning that the institutions in question have yet to redress outstanding demands. Hard copies of this manual are available in the Guelph gallery for the taking, and its pages have been blown up to a large scale and affixed to the walls for those who may visit in person. The meaning of the manual resides not on these pages, but rather in the creative ways it is interpreted, used, and eventually discarded when no longer needed. The manual aims to make itself obsolete as we move together along the pathways of collective liberation.



3.

Internationalism Against Borders

State, nation, and border are the political trifecta imposed on the peoples and lands of the world over the course of colonial-capitalist modernity. Under vastly uneven conditions and different degrees of "success," the template set by European imperial powers has remained hegemonic in both settler-colonial states like the US, Canada, and Israel and post-colonial states like India and Nigeria. Globalization was once hailed in academia and the artworld as loosening these bounds, but their restrictive violence intensifies by the day even as capital reaps more and more from its freedom of mobility around the world. For most people in the world, crossing borders is fraught and hazardous—it's an opportunity for state scrutiny, humiliation, and detention. For Indigenous people, whose land extends across it, a state border is a violation of territorial rights and customary relationships. As our work crosses the U.S.–Canadian border in a spirit of solidarity, we intend to do more than acknowledge the colonial history and ongoing injustice of these acts of violence. The regional struggle over land claims and self-determination is escalating, and we commit to building long-term relations here in Ontario. We know that we have much to learn from this ongoing work at the forefront of Land Back, a call that channels centuries worth of Indigenous struggle.

The drawing of colonial state borders is also the reason why there are so many diasporas in Europe and North America, populated by communities from every part of the world. The recent resurgence of white nationalism aims to aggressively resist this re-peopling (or "replacement," according to the Fascist fantasy) of the global North. But what set these peoples in motion in the first place? It was the social and environmental devastation wrought by imperialism, legitimized by the belief that European civilization should be spread all over and preserved in monumental form. This is the very claim that white nationalists make today, completing a vicious circle between past and present. As the ideological seams of empire are torn apart and settler democracy melts down before our eyes, we aim to kindle an **International Imagination of Anti-National and Anti-Imperialist Feelings (IIAAF)** that shares colonial wounds but is driven by freedom dreams, from Puerto Rico to Punjab, Palestine to Turtle Island.

4.

Triangulating Struggles

The triangulation of Indigenous Struggle, Black Liberation, and Free Palestine produces a rearrangement of relations that can upend empire. Because colonialism so thoroughly drew its power from "divide and rule," we can still see the legacy of that mentality, even in our own movements. The lesson shared in Audre Lorde's last published work, "There is no Hierarchy of Oppressions," in 1983, could not be more relevant today. A case in point is the recent adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's (IHRA) definition of anti-semitism by Ontario—the first Canadian province to do so. Originally drafted as a powerful statement of anti-racism, it can and should be a tool to help combat the revival of anti-semitic tropes by neo-fascists. But it is also being weaponized internationally as a means to stifle criticism of the Israeli state as well as forms of speech with pro-Palestinian content. We see this distorted application of the IHRA definition occurring within the artworld and on college campuses. Not only is this an effort to chill speech, it also normalizes the assumption that the suffering of one diasporic population takes precedence over another's. We intend to help build the opposition to this pernicious form of state suppression.

The goal of BDS is an entry point for transnational solidarity with the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation and enduring settler colonialism. We see BDS as a tactic rather than a goal, as suggested by the phrase "BDS is the Floor, not the Ceiling". It is among the very few existing tools for people in the United States and Canada to symbolically withdraw their consent from the legitimacy of the Israeli apartheid regime and impact the cultural reputation and economic viability of that regime. BDS has been gaining traction in academia and, more slowly, in the art world in recent years. The endorsement of BDS by the Movement for Black Lives helped make it a test of conscience for progressive artists and academics: Which side are you on?



Staton Island, NY, (Victory Blvd & Bay Street), Dec 13, 2014



Pink Houses, East NY, Dec 13, 2014



The Brooklyn Bridge, Dec 13, 2014



Lincoln Tunnel, Sep 27, 2015



The New School building, Williams March, NYC, Dec 13, 2014



Brooklyn Bridge Roadway, Dec 13, 2014



East New York, Dec 13, 2014



#AbolitionSquare, #ShutDownCityHallNYC, Aug 1, 2016

Decolonization is not a metaphor.
 TRIANGULATION of indigenous struggle,
 black liberation, and a free Palestine
 produce a re-arrangement of relationships
 that make empire look like this.

SUPPLIES NEEDED
 BLACK FABRIC
 WHITE HOUSE PAINT (FLAT)
 KEFFIYEH STENCIL
 3" PAINT ROLLER OR BRUSH
 DROP CLOTHS

HAND PAINT BLK
 TEXT USING A
 2" PAINT ROLLER
 OR BRUSH

30 FT.

5 FT.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

BLACK LIGHTWEIGHT FABRIC

HAND CUT KEFFIYEH STENCIL



Black Out Tour, American Museum of Natural History, Mar 18, 2015



Decolonize This Place, Brooklyn Museum, May 7, 2016



Guggenheim as Preface: Training Ground and Limit Point

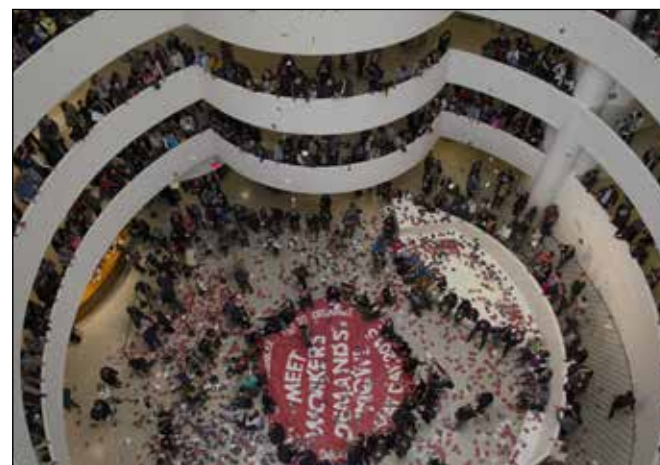
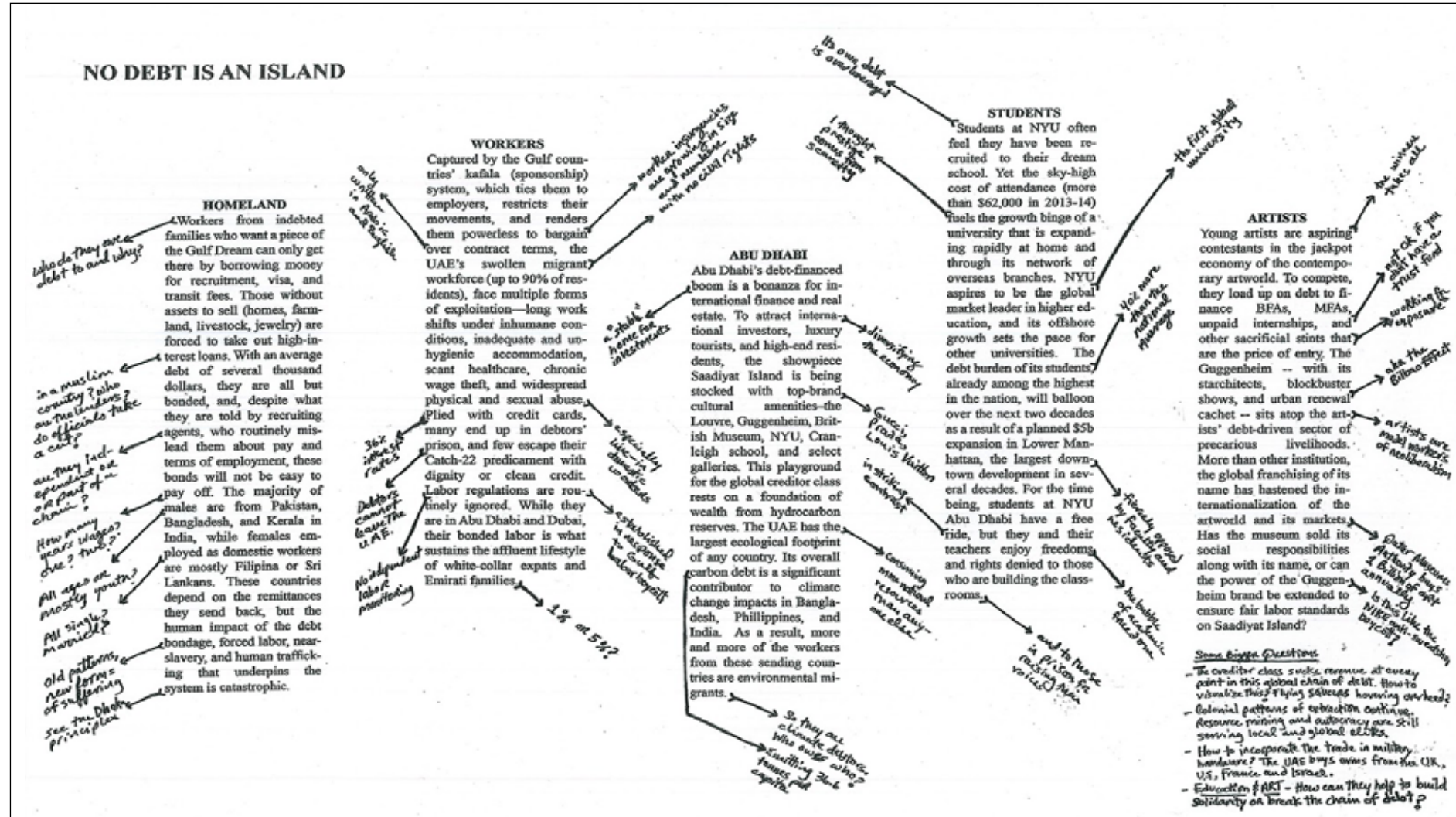
In the years prior to the launch of Decolonize This Place in 2016, the Guggenheim is a training ground for a diversity of strategies and tactics in relation to cultural institutions. A few of us establish Global Ultra Luxury Faction (GULF) in 2014 as an autonomous direct action wing of Gulf Labor Artist Coalition (GLC). GULF is designed to both amplify and supplement the ongoing campaign by GLC to hold the Guggenheim accountable for the oppressive labor conditions of debt-bonded South Asian migrant workers building the museum's branch on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi.

We learn how to activate the space of a museum and leverage the brand of an institution. But we also realize the problems of single-issue campaigns that are limited to specific pieces of reform rather than advancing a broad horizon of liberation. We rectify what we view as U.S.-centric organizing in the city by highlighting that the Guggenheim is a global franchise that demands cross-border solidarity.

We unleash a series of direct actions inside and outside the Guggenheim in New York and Venice. The aim is to amplify the workers' demands and force Guggenheim's board of trustees to meet to discuss how the Guggenheim can build an ethical museum and contribute to strengthening worker rights. One important takeaway is that the default response of institutions to a crisis of governance is to contain and assimilate the crisis through internal processes that allow for stalling, evasion, and damage control while leaving systems that perpetuate injustice intact.

Actions begin in 2014; we utilize the arts of timing, subterfuge and surprise to infiltrate the museum with agitprop materials. We design our interventions to maximize the acoustic and visual potentials of the site. We make our own media, and this synergizes with the coverage by a handful of professional journalists who have been invited to bear witness. The actions, images, and writing run the museum through a new script, hooking the the spectacular visibility and cultural cache of the Guggenheim and the artworld more generally to a story of class struggle: High Culture, Hard Labor.

Actions escalate in 2015; bonds are formed directly with workers in the UAE, with workers centers in India, and the migrant justice movement in New York City. Tactics are refined and aesthetics are multiplied, with each iteration sending the profile of the Guggenheim further into crisis. Projections are made onto the facade of the museum, using the iconic structure against itself. People affix agitprop to the wall alongside priceless masterworks, creating an insurance-scare; thousands of flyers are launched into the atrium, altering the entire atmosphere of the building; on May Day 2015, a dual approach to de-occupy the Guggenheim is deployed: status-insecure immigrant folks and others wishing to avoid arrest hold a picket outside, and inside, a parachute is unfurled on the floor of the lobby reading Meet Workers Demands Now: Living Wage, Debt Jubilee, Right to Organize. Fifteen people commit to remaining in the building after they have been told to leave, and the museum is shut down.



→ Decolonize This Place begins as an action at the Brooklyn Museum.

We have learned the limitations of issue silos and identity-based organizing. We also know that decolonization is a shell game if land, water, and air are not central. We operationalize a decolonial analysis to create a movement formation that can resonate across and between specific sites of struggle, starting with the centrality of Indigenous sovereignty over the land.

The Brooklyn Museum museum prides itself on both its encyclopedic collection of world art as well as being a dynamic venue for contemporary culture. In the spring of 2016, two shows coincide and draw our attention. The first is *Agit-Prop*, an historical survey of activist art ranging from Russian Constructivism to Occupy Wall Street. Images and objects from radical movements are treated as aestheticized relics. The second is *This Place*, an exhibition of contemporary photography focused on the landscape of so-called Israel. Though technically not funded by the Israeli government, the show is a clear example of artwashing in the service of "Brand Israel": it uses the cache of high-profile photographers like Jeff Wall and Stephen Shore to efface Palestinian people and their resistance to ongoing settler-colonial land-theft. Meanwhile, local housing activists had sounded the alarm that the museum, located at the geographical crux of gentrification in Brooklyn, is hosting the Brooklyn Real-Estate Summit, and features a prominent real-estate tycoon on its board.

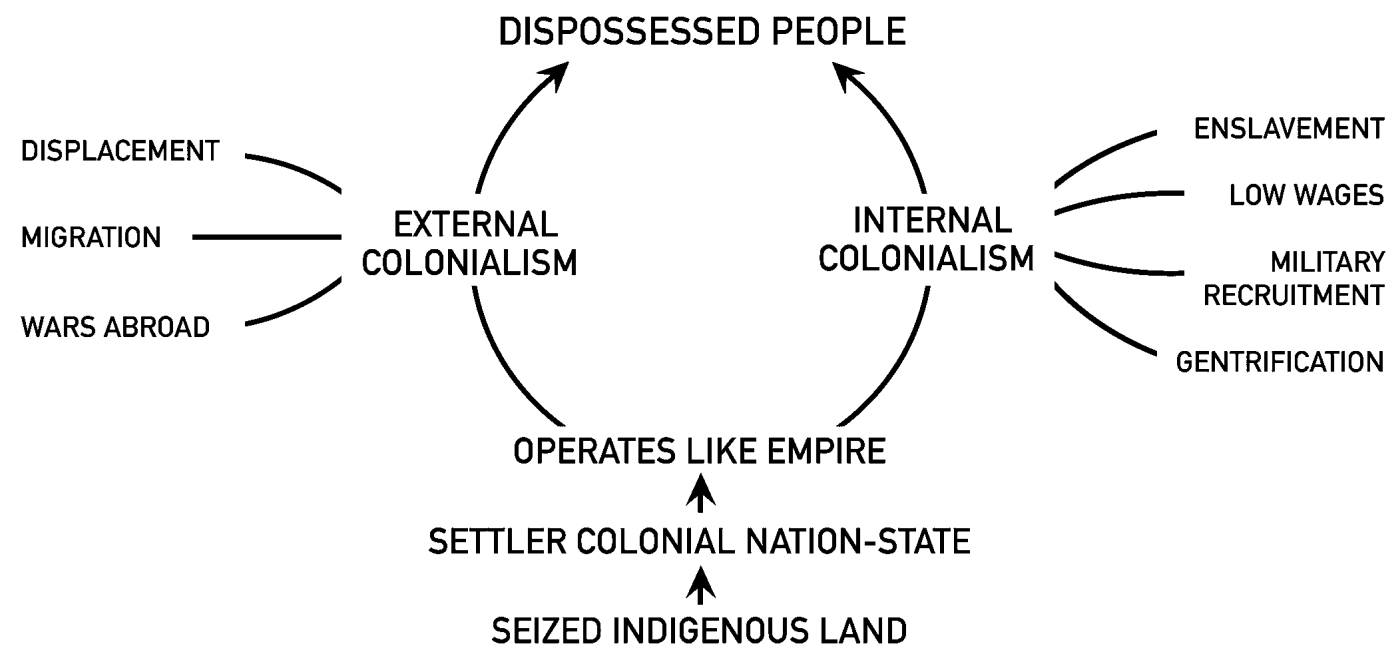
From what seem like disparate parts, we see patterns, connections, and potential points of solidarity. How can we talk about occupation in Palestine without addressing the land we are on: first stolen from Lenape people, pulverized into real estate, and now targeted for mass displacement? These connections between sites and struggles drive our organizing, and motivate the verbal imperative Decolonize This Place, which is always specific to the conditions of its utterance.

It is under the banner of Decolonize This Place that an unauthorized action is staged at the Brooklyn museum on May 7, 2016. The museum sees the action as simply a publicity crisis, and loudly proclaims its commitment to diversity and community while ignoring the demands of the community groups at its doorstep.

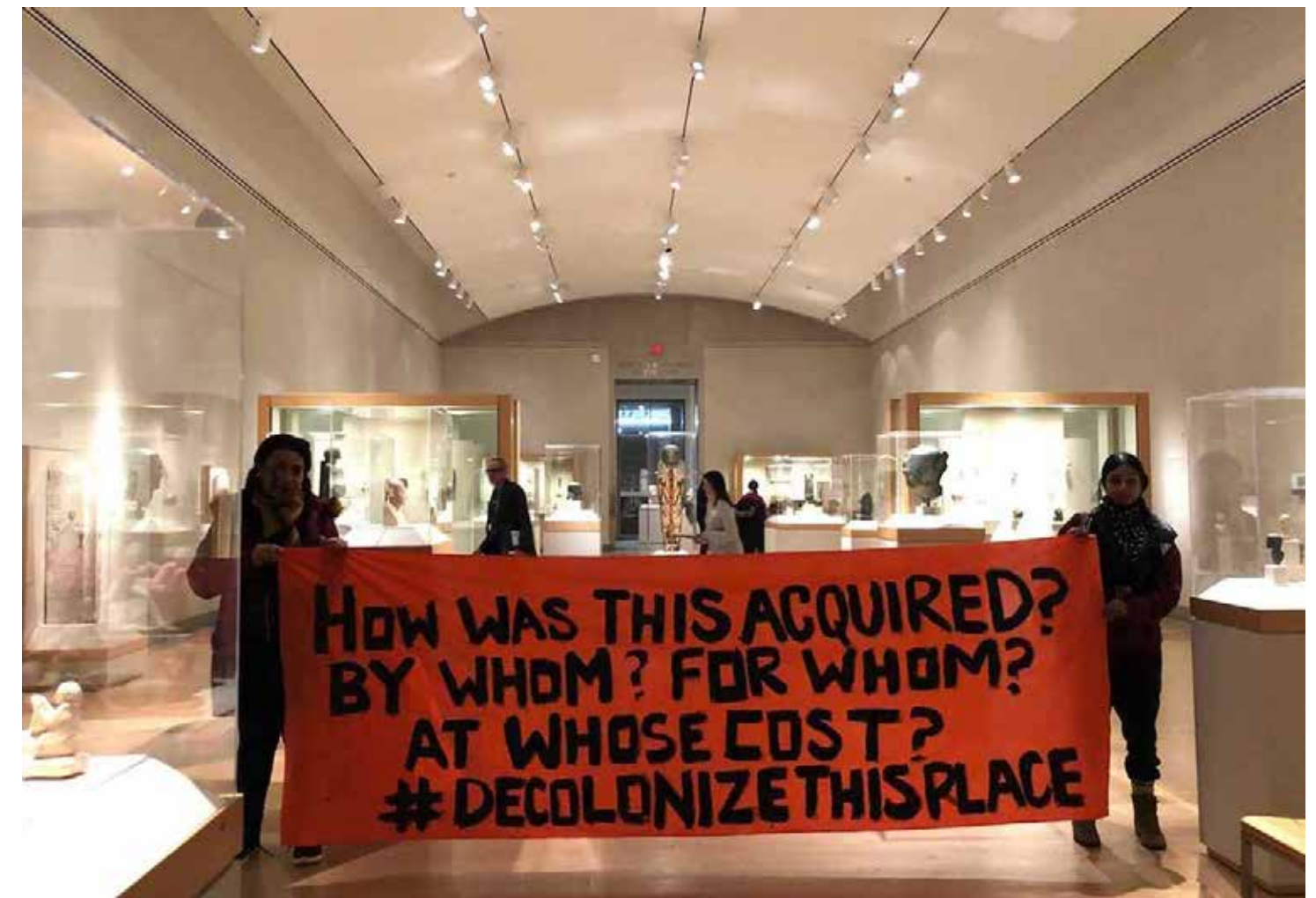
Two years later, a second action weaves these demands into a call for the museum to participate in the formation of a Decolonization Commission. This would redress matters of land, workers rights, and governance. But it now also calls for an inventory of the massive holdings of African and Indigenous art extracted from colonized peoples in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Coinciding with growing calls for restitution and reparations being addressed to French and British museums, the ethos of the action is distilled with the slogan: *They Want the Art, Not the People*.



SETTLER-COLONIALISM IS A STRUCTURE NOT AN EVENT



What we demand of our institutions must be beyond diversity, equity and inclusion. The demand for a decolonization process in the form of a commission is a single demand that allows us to think not just about demographic adjustments to the institution and simply reducing harm, but about rethinking the whole damn system. A process led by the people, in which the institution participates in good faith with stakeholders. No issue is off the table. Everything needs to be unsettled. *Why does an institution need professional curators? An Executive Director? A Board of Trustees?* These professionalized roles are elite concentrations of power. They have stunted our imaginations when it comes to what an art institution could be, how it is governed, and by whom. *Why assimilate to a system that perpetuates so much harm? How can institutions become places not of curation but of collective care? How will the interest of the artworld in decolonization turn this into lasting material commitment? What are people willing to share? What are they willing to give up? Land is at the heart of all these questions.*



→ Decolonize This Place establishes an action-oriented movement commons and organizing hub.

In the Fall of 2016, we receive an invitation to stage an exhibition at the historic venue Artists Space, located at the frontlines of gentrification between the Tribeca luxury district and the working-class neighborhood of Chinatown. We forgo the format of an exhibition, and reimagine the gallery as an organizing hub. In the month before the opening, the Standing Rock struggle escalates against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Using the dormant gallery of Artists Space as a space to meet and plan, the Indigenous-led work of NYC Stands With Standing Rock is inaugurated with an assembly in Washington Square Park, centering the Indigenous sovereignty over land, air, and water as a core element of the subsequent work of Decolonize This Place.

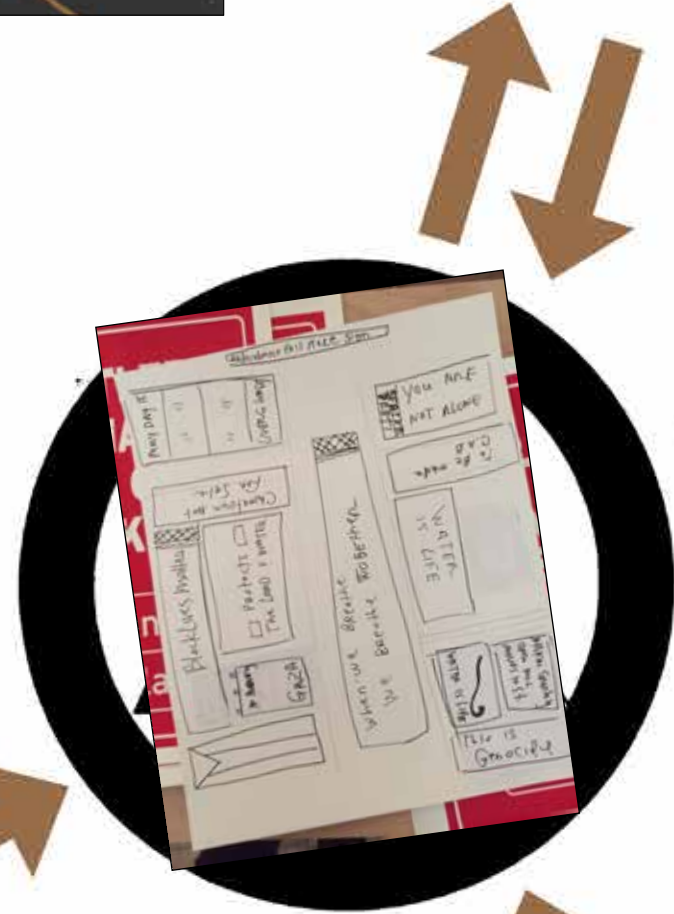
Having an accessible hub in Manhattan facilitates connections between different strands of organizing at a city-wide level: Indigenous sovereignty, Black Liberation, Palestinian freedom, de-gentrification, dismantle patriarchy, and the struggles of workers and debtors in the art system and beyond. The gallery goes from a white cube to a living armory. The walls become an ever-shifting assemblage of banners and posters for use in the streets with collaborating groups including Chinatown Art Brigade, Take Back the Bronx, South Asia Solidarity Initiative, Direct Action Front for Palestine, and Comite Boricua en la Diaspora. We redirect the resources made available to us by the institution like printing facilities, audiovisual equipment, press apparatus, and artists fees into movement work: feeding people, screening films, organizing community meetings, making agitprop, planning actions, and developing relationships. This includes actions that target other cultural institutions in the city, including a march on the pro-Israel non-profit Artis and what will become a years-long campaign at the American Museum of Natural History.

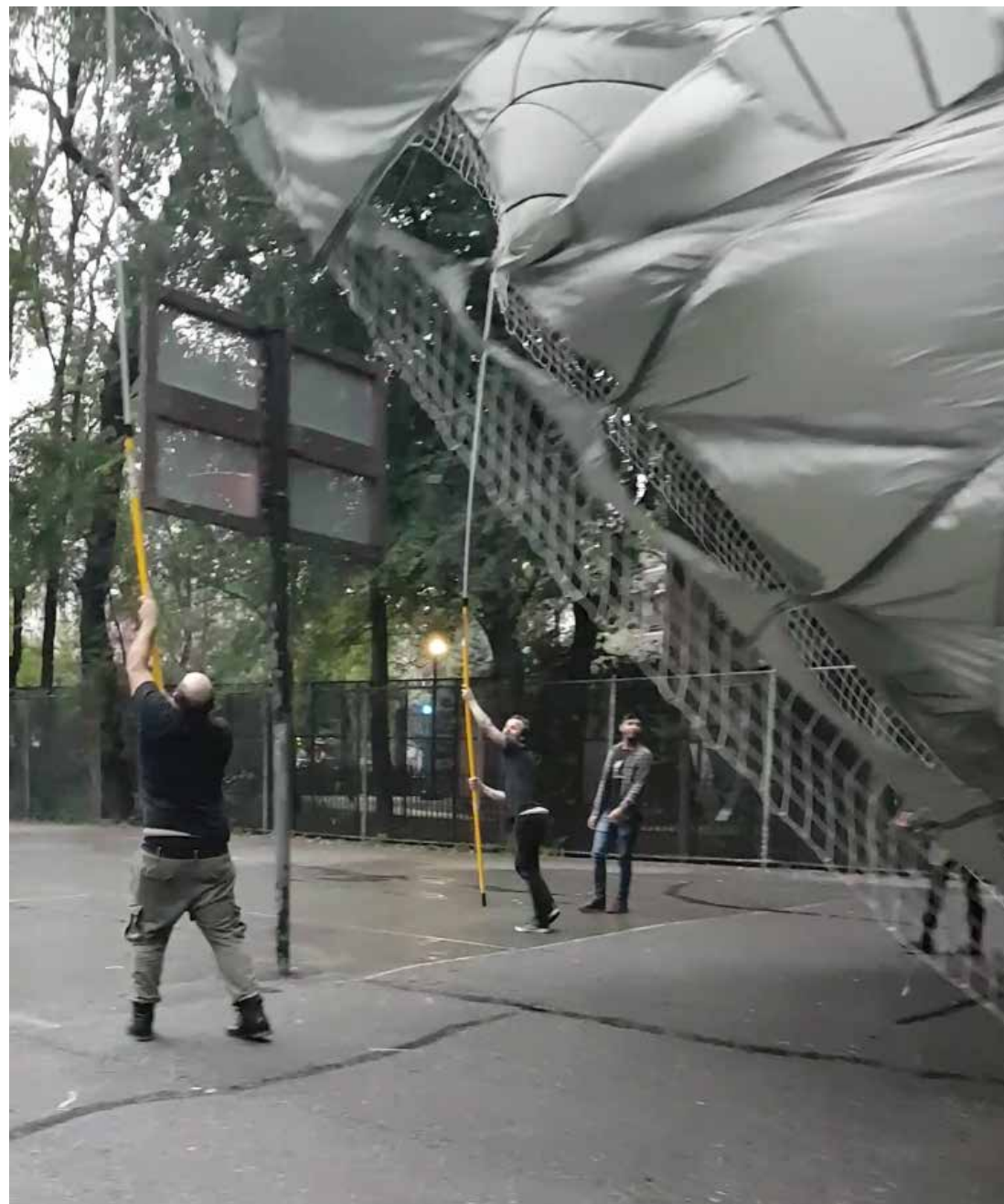
Artis is a nonprofit that recruits members of the global art world into artwashing tours of Israel while carefully avoiding the direct receipt of funds from Israeli state institutions. Artis is located three blocks away from Artists Space. Several hundred people mask up in freely distributed kuffiyeh scarves, and stage a light-projection demonstration at the building that houses Artis while trailed by dozens of NYPD. We demand that Artis sign on to BDS, which would effectively end its reason for being--the promotion of Israel.



The experience of Artists Space leaves us with questions about how artists and organizers approach different scenarios of being invited by an art institution. A starting point has to be that such spaces are not separate from the world. They are entwined with the same forces we are fighting in the streets. But depending on the nature and conditions of the invitation, the relation between the art spaces and the world writ large can sometimes be creatively re-engineered. The default for many spaces is to represent political work as an aesthetic spectacle, or to instrumentalize it to enhance their cultural reputation. Art institutions of all kinds function to assimilate radical work into the culture of the art system. How can we be a force of de-assimilation, not just supplying new content for the art system but putting into question the whole thing? To truly make a space operational, a reorientation of relations is necessary, breaking down the professional roles of artist, curator, and staff into a new collaborative formation where we can take and assume risks collectively. **Art needs to measure up to us and to our movements, and not the other way around. Art needs to connect to our lives in material ways that help us breathe together on the path of collective liberation.**







Note On Training

There can be no radical action without radical thought, and vice versa. This is the basis for training in the practice of freedom: a constant dialectic of learning and unlearning, questioning and imagining, planning and organizing. This training is different from school-bound education, though the space of the school can become one of its operational hubs. Essential to this training is the embodied experience of shedding fear, cultivating courage, developing skills, taking risks, and testing conditions through direct action.

Whether we are talking about massive marches, militant disruptions, banner-making parties, poetry readings, spiritual gatherings, hanging out with friends and family or covering a monument with a parachute, our relationships are key. Such relational organizing is rooted in trust and commitment over time. The sharing of time and space allows for mutuality and care, solidarity and accompliceship, healing and joy, belief and vision, beyond a simple action or campaign.

Desire-driven training honors not only moments of high-visibility struggle, but also the bodily, intellectual, and emotional labor that sustain relationships, movement spaces, worlds, and actions. It insists that movement work is inseparable from reproductive work in all its forms, including the work of art and culture.



➔ A museum of white supremacy is transformed through direct action into a living platform for decolonial solidarity.

The American Museum of Natural History is the most-visited museum in New York City. From its founding in 1869, the museum has been a laboratory and inventory of imperial knowledge. In the infamous ethnographic halls of the museum, non-European peoples are frozen as mannequins in premodern time and sacred cultural objects extracted from their communities are displayed as spectacles of Otherness. This settler mentality is also embodied in the numerous structures and displays honoring the legacy of president Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was, like many of the experts housed at the AMNH, an advocate of the racial pseudoscience of Eugenics. A former general in the Spanish-American war (which created the first overseas colonies of the United States) as well as NYPD Commissioner, Roosevelt institutionalized the settler ideology of wilderness conservation as well. Standing in front of the museum is an equestrian monument to Roosevelt. Mounted on a warhorse, the president is flanked below on either side by stereotypical figures of a Black Man and an Indigenous man, depicted as willing foot soldiers in the course of empire. In 1971, members of the American Indian Movement splattered the monument with red paint, and spray-painted "Fascist" at its base.

While working out of Artists Space in Fall 2016, Decolonize This Place begins a collaboration with NYC Stands With Standing Rock, an Indigenous-led formation of scholars, artists, and organizers. Out of this collaboration comes an unauthorized counter-tour of the museum, a tactic first devised at this by the Black Youth Project 100. The action is held on so-called "Columbus Day," a settler holiday that has been renamed in many cities as Indigenous People's Day. The Anti-Columbus Day Tour is unpermitted, and it takes advantage of the fact that police are unlikely to be called directly into the museum, which would maximize reputational damage for the institution.

No one pays for entry, and the space is gently but insistently taken over as the collective journey begins. Specific community groups lead tours of the halls in which their peoples and cultures have been violently objectified. Creative forms of pedagogy are enacted, becoming moments of ancestral reconnection. The sequencing of halls becomes a chorus of resounding voices that de-occupy the dead space of the museum with a set of common demands: that the museum support calls to rename Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day; that it remove the Roosevelt statue; and that it respect the ancestors by overhauling the exhibitionary and governance structures of the museum itself. The first two demands offer the museum actionable opportunities to show good faith. The third is framed in deliberately wide terms that calls the very existence and viability of the museum into question, even as the tour itself has temporarily shown what a reclaimed museum might look and feel like.

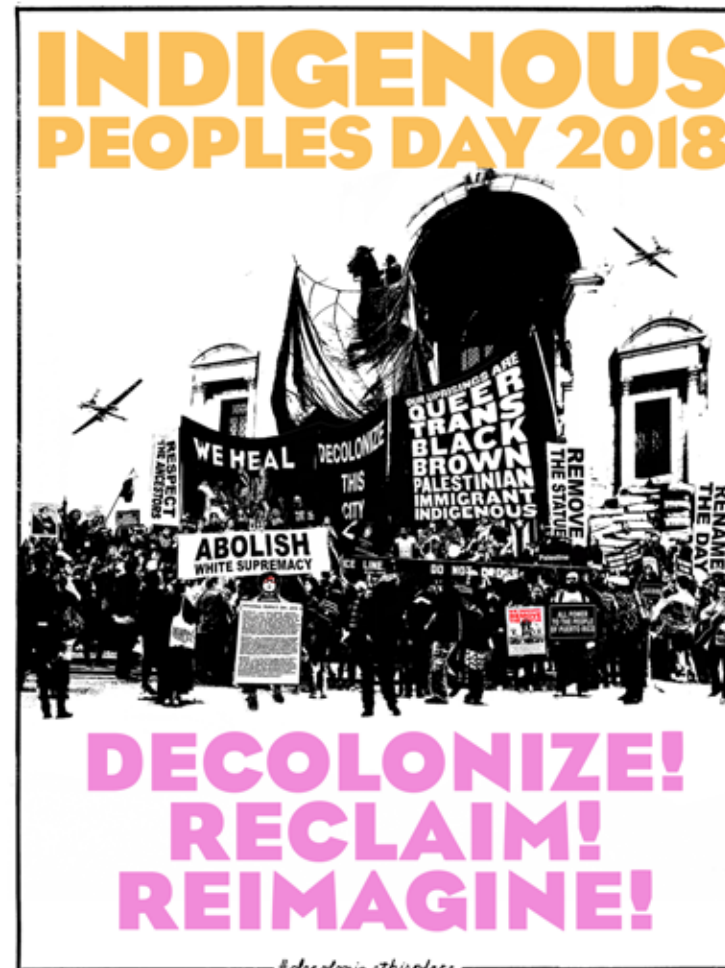
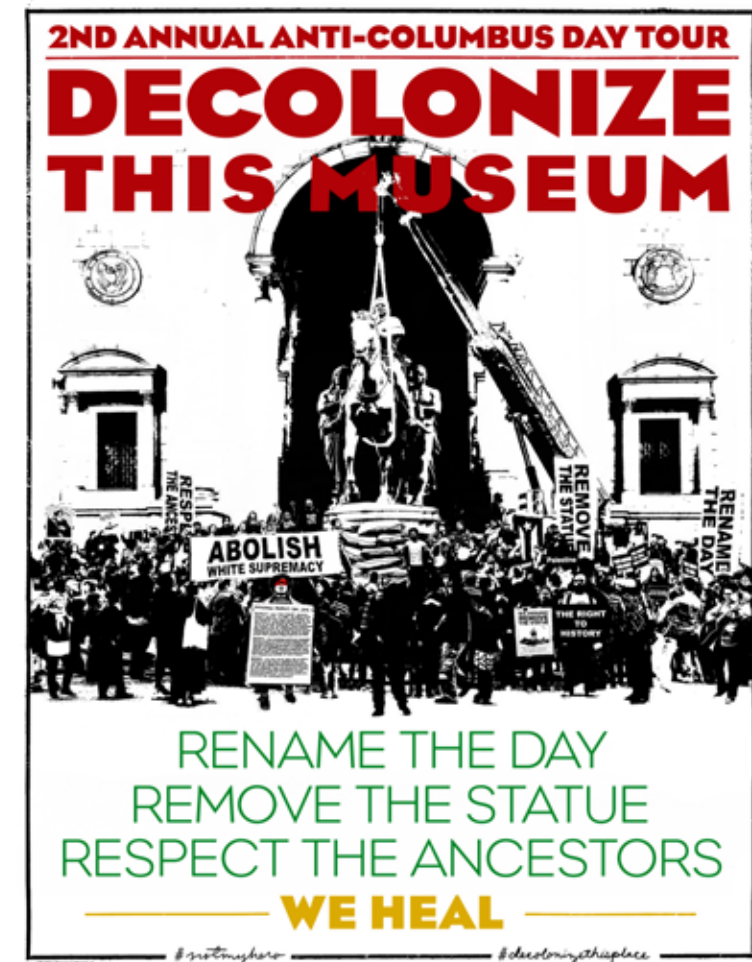
Researching the site, preparing routes, facilitating assemblies, producing materials, performing mic-checks, making and circulating media, planning for autonomous tactics: each facet of the action overall is woven into a process of learning and unlearning, cultivating relations and growing the movement for the future.

The tour is punctuated with an intervention on the Roosevelt monument outside the museum. As hundreds of tour-goers regroup outside, a specially trained tactical team drapes the statue with a military-grade parachute, outmaneuvering the police who are on hand to guard it. Draping the monument prefigures the future disappearance of this widely despised structure, making it impossible to unsee the violence of both the statue and the institution standing behind it.

A commitment by groups and organizers persists in the years that follow. In 2017, more groups and around 500 people participate to transform its halls by those who have the most immediate relation and stake in the matter. In 2018, the Third Anti-Columbus Day Tour brings a thousand people together, and the tour foregrounds autonomous organizing and splinter engagements by various IBPOC groups taking over multiple floors simultaneously and utilizing a diversity of approaches. Sound as direct action, mic checks, dance parties, drumming, banner drops, leafleting, holding ceremony. Everything was happening simultaneously, and no one could experience everything. It was beautiful. Everyone reconvenes in the hall of Northwest Coast canoe: a city-wide assembly to speak and be heard, to share in order to act. This is what a decolonial gathering was meant to look and feel like. This is decolonial aesthetics, weaving together sensory and spiritual forms from multiple communities and traditions, coming together to say to one another: we see you.

In 2018 the monument is splashed with red paint in homage to AIM. It becomes a candidate for potential removal by a Monuments Commission convened by the NYC Mayor as protests against Confederate monuments unfold in places like Charlottesville. Citing its supposed art-historical significance, the Commission votes to maintain the monument. The "controversy" is noted with a tiny plaque at the base of the statue. Inside, the museum alters a single diorama, and screens a video about the monument debate. The museum continues to ignore calls for a decolonization process, and claims the monument is out of its control as it technically stands on city-owned property.

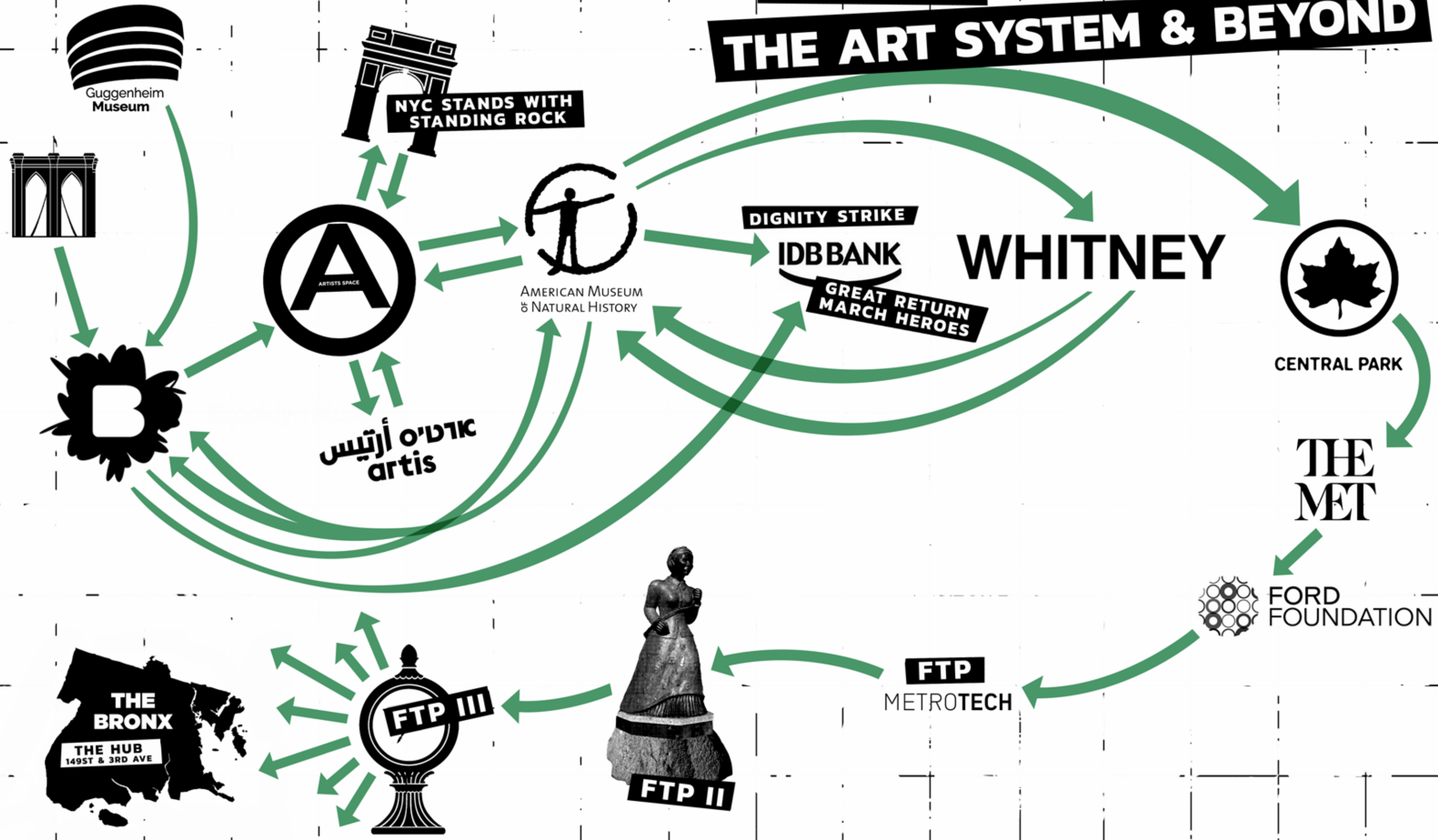
During the George Floyd uprising of 2020, as monuments to colonizers and enslavers fall around the country, De Blasio makes a strategic decision to remove the statue. He rightly calculates that this monument has already become a point of assembly and agitation, and is fearful of bringing the rebellion to the Upper West Side. As of January 2021, the statue still stands.







TARGET: THE ART SYSTEM & BEYOND



decolonizingthisplace

- LENAPEHOKING -
UNCEDED TERRITORY

→ The Whitney Museum: Teargas is Poison, Sage is Medicine

The Whitney's tear gas problem presents some organizing challenges: What does it mean to decolonize a museum that presents itself as the cutting edge of the contemporary, rather than a monument to the past? How can a decolonial formation come together while retaining the specificity of each struggle? Unlike the AMNH, there are no halls to assist in visualizing the violence. The key lies in devising a sequence of actions where different groups take the lead each week, charting a path from tear gas to decolonization.

On November 30, 2018, staff at the Whitney Museum issue an open letter calling for the removal of Warren Kanders from the board of the museum. Kanders is CEO of Safariland, a company that produces teargas used by police against people in places like Ferguson, Gaza, Oakland, Standing Rock, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Mexico border. The workers write in their open letter, "For many of us, the communities at the border, in Ferguson, in the Dakotas, are our communities... Upon learning of Kanders's business dealings, many of us working on these initiatives feel uncomfortable in our positions. We cannot claim to serve these communities while accepting funding from individuals whose actions are at odds with that mission." When it becomes clear that the museum administration will ignore the demand, a city-wide formation of groups take action. Hundreds assemble in the lobby of the museum around three iron cauldrons emanating the smoke of burning sage, making the air heavy and fragrant. "Teargas is poison, sage is medicine," says an elder who addresses the assembly. Fire alarms go off, and the New York Fire Department arrives to disperse the assembly, leaving the museum infused with an aroma of crisis and indignation. The museum is shook, but remains steadfast in its support of Kanders. Director Adam Weinberg declares that "the museum cannot fix the problems of society."

In January, a Town Hall assembly is held at the Cooper Union to address the Whitney crisis. A collective decision is made by a dozen community groups to maximize pressure on the museum through an escalating sequence of Nine Weeks of Art and Action leading up to the open-

ing of the Whitney Biennial on May 17. The script for the sequence moves "from teargas to decolonization."

Each of the weeks is led by a different cluster of groups, whose specific struggles come to speak to each other across the actions through the shared demand to eject Kanders: "One no and many yesses" as the Zapatistas would say. An unauthorized assembly is held within the museum's lobby every Friday night. With a diversity of tactics and aesthetics, the groups curate their actions, bring their people, their stories, their culture into a shared horizon. The Palestine contingent offer a traditional debka performance while the lobby is draped with portraits of martyrs; the Puerto Rico crew brings a mobile sound system and a dance party ensues; dumplings and pizza are a regular feature of the assemblies, and pamphlets, posters, stickers, and scarves are disseminated widely in all directions while everyone photographs, films, and posts on social media.

At the American Museum of Natural History, specificity of struggle was articulated through the Halls. At the Whitney, it is based on the weeks, each of which activates connections between the people and places on the receiving end of Kanders' tear gas, from the U.S. Border to Puerto Rico. The mingling of people and groups over the course of the nine weeks cultivates relations, fosters conviviality, and leads to further collaboration beyond the Whitney. This is the intimate relational organizing that underlies the high-visibility elements of the Nine Weeks sequence.

As the Nine Weeks unfold, hundreds of critics and theorists sign an open letter supporting the demand for the removal of Kanders and the formation of a Decolonization Commission. Hundreds of artists follow suit, including most of the artists in the Whitney Biennial itself. The Biennial opens under the continuing cloud of Kanders, whom the administration continues to support. Several artists in the show directly evoke the Kanders crisis in their works. On the day of the opening, hundreds march from the museum to the luxury residence of Kanders himself.

YOUR BODIES,
YOUR WARMTH,
YOUR CREATIVITY AND
YOUR RAGE ARE REQUIRED.
COME CORRECT.
CENTER THE MARGINAL.
DELIVERING A STERN WARNING TO
THE WHITNEY ON THE IMPERATIVE
TO REVERSE COURSE
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

WE REMIND THE DIRECTOR OF THE WHITNEY MUSEUM, WEINBERG, THAT "THE LAWS OF SOCIETY" HAVE SLAVERED THE LEGAL SANCTIONING OF SLAVERY, THE INDIAN REMOVAL ACT, JIM CROW LAWS, AND INDEED THE ENTIRE JURIDICO-ECONOMIC REGIME OF SETTLER COLONIALISM, WHITE SUPREMACY, AND CAPITALISM THAT UNDERPINS CONTEMPORARY U.S. SOCIETY. SO WE SAY TO WEINBERG: F**K YOUR APPEAL TO LAW. WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL LAW IS NOT JUSTICE. SEE YOU TOMORROW AT NOON IN FRONT OF THE WHITNEY.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

TOMORROW • NOON • DRESS WARM
BRING FRIENDS AND RAGE
TO THE WHITNEY MUSEUM:
NO SAFE SPACE FOR PROFITEERS
OF STATE VIOLENCE. PERIOD.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

TO THE ARTWORLD THAT SAYS WHAT S AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM IS AT EVERY MAJOR ART INSTITUTION SO LET IT BE:
5# MAYBE WHEN KANDERS, HIS ILK, AND THEIR MONDAYS ARE GONE, THE MUSEUM DOES INDEED LOOK LIKE A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE WITH A VERY DIFFERENT SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTS. A PLACE, FOR INSTANCE, RUN BY AND FOR CULTURAL WORKERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES AS A COOPERATIVE PLATFORM RATHER THAN A MONEY-LAUNDERING OPERATION FOR THE ULTRA-WEALTHY. A PLACE THAT DE-CENTERS WHITENESS AND DISMANTLES PATRIARCHY. A PLACE THAT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT STANDS ON OCCUPIED INDIGENOUS TERRITORY, AND TAKES REPARATIVE MEASURES. A PLACE THAT PROVIDES SANCTUARY AND SELF-DEFENSE FROM ICE. A PLACE THAT REPURPOSES THE REMNANTS OF LUXURY INFRASTRUCTURE IN ORDER TO BUILD POWER AND MAKE ART WITH AND FOR THE PEOPLE. A PLACE THAT IS HOSPITABLE TO THE HEALING ENERGIES OF SAGE RATHER THAN A REFUGE FOR TEAR-GAS PROFITEERS. A PLACE THAT IS BUILT ON RADICAL LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS OF CARE. A PLACE THAT UNDERSTANDS THAT CONFLICTS CAN BE POINTS OF CONSTRUCTION. A PLACE, IN OTHER WORDS, THAT IS UNDERGOING A PROCESS OF DECOLONIZATION.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

1. GIVEN THE DEAFENING SILENCE OF THE WHITNEY MUSEUM, WE CONSULT ON CALLING A CITY-WIDE TOWN HALL MEETING TO EXPLORE NEXT STEPS.
2. THE GOAL OF SUCH TOWN HALL TO BE CONVENED BEFORE YEAR END WOULD BE TO BUILD POWER AND RELATIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO ESCALATE IN THE COMING MONTHS THROUGH THE DEPLOYMENT OF A DIVERSITY OF TACTICS AND STRATEGIES.
3. TO OUR ART COMMUNITY: WE EACH HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SPEAK OUT AND ACT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STAFF OF THE MUSEUM AND OUR PEOPLE AT THE BORDER, AND NOT SIMPLY MAKE, CURATE, AND WRITE ON POLITICAL ART AND PROTEST. THE TIME IS NOW.
4. LET US ASK OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER: WHEN WE DO NOT ACT OR SPEAK OUT, WHOSE SIDE ARE WE ON?
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

TO THE ARTWORLD THAT SAYS WHAT S AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM IS AT EVERY MAJOR ART INSTITUTION SO LET IT BE:
4# TO DE-NORMALIZE THE SITUATION EXEMPLIFIED BY KANDERS REQUIRES US TO BREAK THE BLOCK IMPOSED ON OUR IMAGINATION WHEN WE ARE TOLD BE REALISTIC! BE REASONABLE! THIS IS JUST HOW THINGS ARE! IT REQUIRES US TO REIMAGINE WHAT AN ART INSTITUTION COULD BE AND WHOM IT IS MEANT TO SERVE. WHAT ELSE IS POSSIBLE, BEYOND THE UNTENABLE SITUATION WE HAVE TODAY? THE MUSEUM AS WE KNOW IS A SETTLER-INSTITUTION THAT HAS MONOPOLIZED THE DEFINITION OF ART. IT HAS BROUGHT WITH IT AN ENTIRE DIVISION OF LABOR TO ENFORCE THIS DEFINITION, THE KIND WEINBERG INVOKES WHEN HE TELLS HIS STAFF TO PLAY THEIR ROLES AND STAY IN THEIR LANES.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

FOR THOSE WHO ARE WONDERING:
WE DON'T BELIEVE IN CAMPAIGNS PER SE. IF WE ARE TO CALL ANYTHING WE DO A CAMPAIGN, THE DURATION IS OPEN AND INDEFINITE, WITH THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM, AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND WHITNEY MUSEUM, WE ARE MAPPING SITES OF INJUSTICE WITH OUR BODIES, VOICES, SAGE, AND MORE, AS WE TRAIN IN THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM AND ESCALATE FOR THE MOVEMENT YET TO COME, WHICH WILL UNSETTLE EVERYTHING.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

WHEN ARTFORUM REPORTS THAT ACTIVISTS PLAN TO TAKE ON THE WHITNEY MUSEUM THEY MEAN YOU / US/ WE / INDIGENOUS, BLACK, BROWN, QUEER, TRANS, IMMIGRANT, PALESTINIAN / ALLIES / WARRIORS / ARTISTS / ACTIVISTS / AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ON THE RECEIVING END OF SAFARILAND TEARGAS. SO HIT US UP. TAKE AUTONOMOUS ACTION. WE WILL ART AND ACT, ORGANIZE AND RESIST, DISRUPT AND TRANSGRESS. YES, THE PRESSURE IS MOUNTING AND THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS- AS WE HAVE SAID FROM THE BEGINNING: WARREN KANDERS MUST GO! IS NOT A DEMAND UP FOR NEGOTIATIONS.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

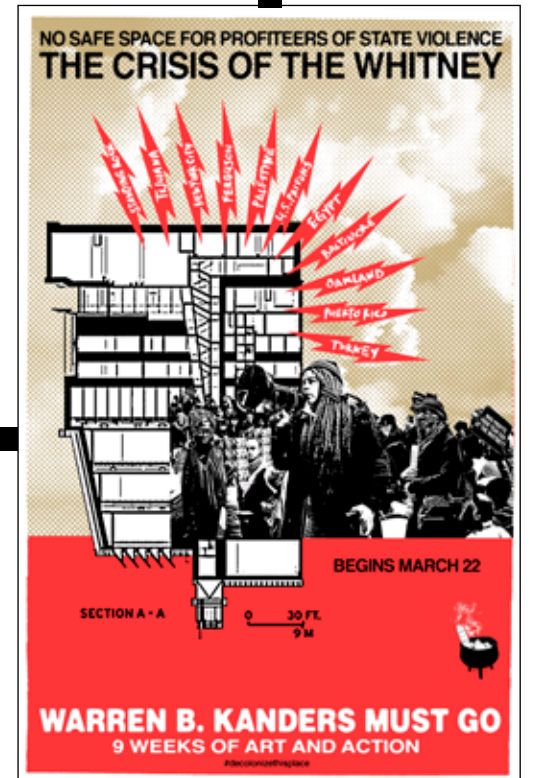
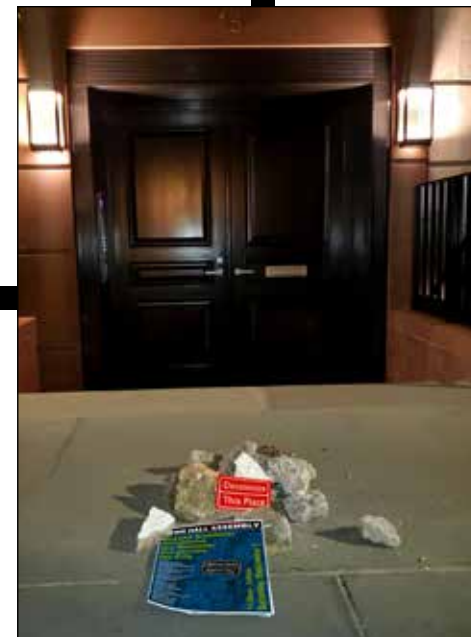
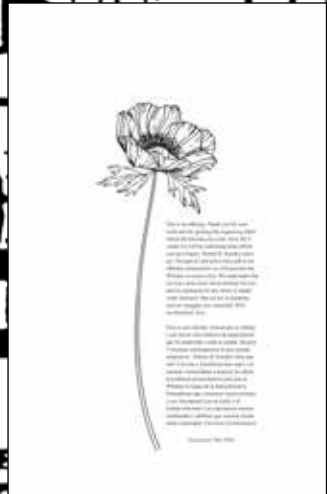
IT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO US THAT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM STILL SMELLS LIKE SAGE. THAT S THE GOOD MEDICINE. TEAR GAS IS BAD MEDICINE.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE



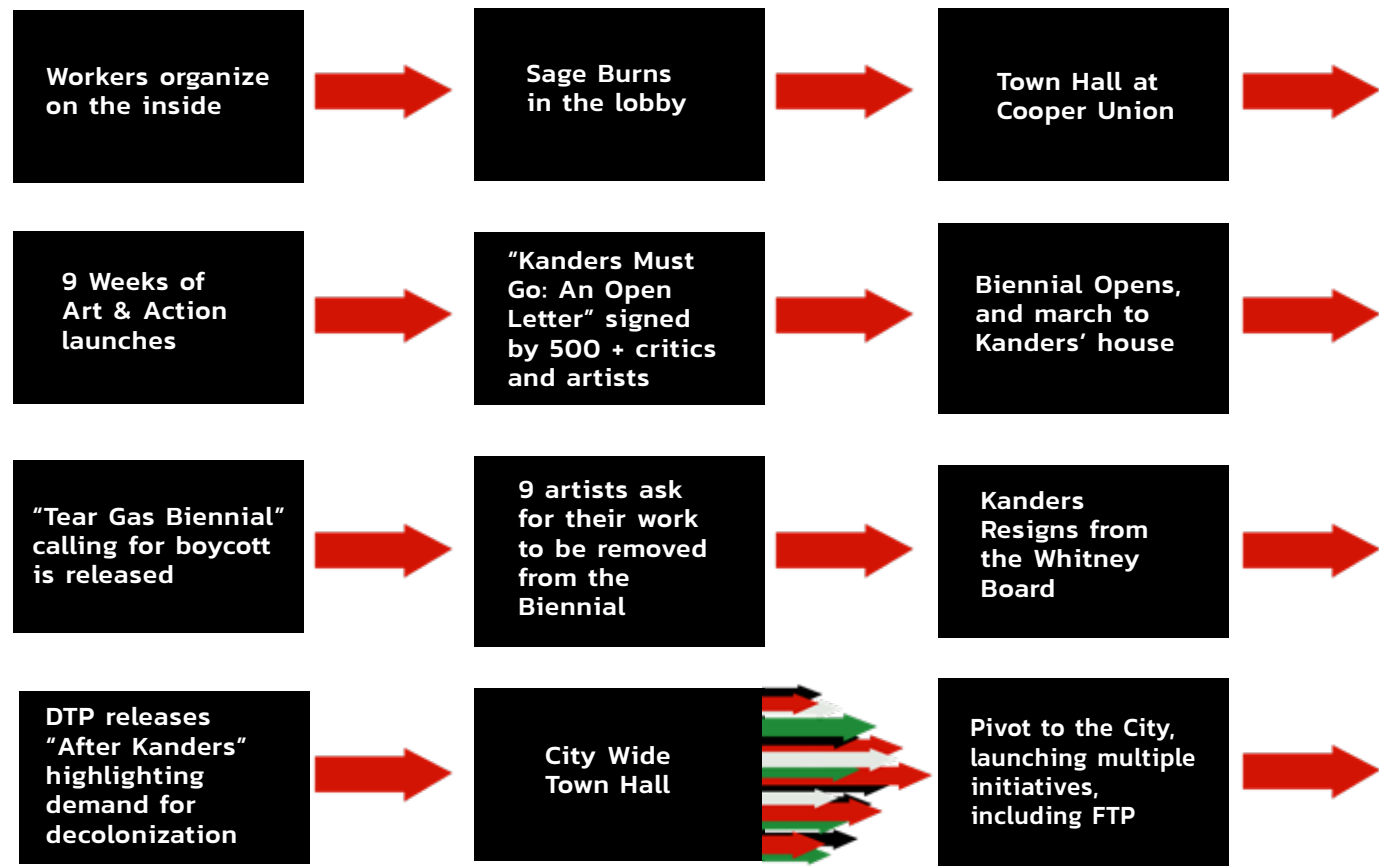
1. GIVEN THE DEAFENING SILENCE BY THE WHITNEY MUSEUM, WE WILL BE CALLING A CITY-WIDE TOWN HALL MEETING TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS. STAY TUNED.
2. THE GOAL OF SUCH TOWN HALL TO BE CONVENED IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE NEW YEAR WOULD BE TO BUILD POWER AND RELATIONS IN ORDER TO ESCALATE IN THE COMING MONTHS THROUGH THE DEPLOYMENT OF A DIVERSITY OF TACTICS AND STRATEGIES.
3. TO OUR ART COMMUNITY: WE EACH HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO SPEAK OUT AND ACT IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STAFF OF THE MUSEUM AND OUR PEOPLE AT THE BORDER, AND NOT SIMPLY MAKE, CURATE, AND WRITE ON POLITICAL ART AND PROTEST.
4. LET US ASK OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER: WHEN WE DO NOT ACT OR SPEAK OUT, WHOSE SIDE ARE WE ON? THE TIME IS NOW.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

PEOPLE ASK WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE TO RACIALIZED GLOBAL CAPITALISM?
WE RESPOND:
INDIGENOUS SOVEREIGNTY,
BLACK LIBERATION, NO BORDERS,
AND
EVERYTHING FOR EVERYONE
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE

TO THE ARTWORLD THAT SAYS WHAT S AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM IS AT EVERY MAJOR ART INSTITUTION SO LET IT BE:
1# PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THAT KANDERS IS THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG, AND THAT IF TAKEN TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION, THE NORMAL ORDER OF BUSINESS, POWER, AND PRIVILEGE IN THE ART SYSTEM IS PUT AT RISK. THAT S OUR INTENTION.
#DECOLONIZETHISPLACE



TIMELINE FOR THE WHITNEY MUSEUM



Months of sustained action from multiple stakeholders creates an unending crisis of publicity and legitimacy for the museum. But, Whitney maintains its allegiance to Kanders. As the show enters its final stretch, a group of nine artists announce they will withdraw their work from the show in protest, given cover by a call issued through Artforum titled, "The Tear Gas Biennial". The threat creates a tipping point, and elements of the board decide to force Kanders out. Once Kanders resigns the artists maintain their work in the show. As a moment

of reflection one cannot help but wonder what if the artists maintained their demand to have their work removed until the staff of the Whitney and the communities that organized spoke, until other demands were met or at least addressed?

Artists and commentators alike remain silent about the second demand put forth by community groups and co-signed by hundreds of prominent artworld figures in their Open Letter to eject Kanders: that the Whitney participate in the formation of decolonization commission

that would "include community stakeholders and guided by a variety of urgent principles: Indigenous land rights and restitution, reparations for enslavement and its legacies, the dismantling of patriarchy, workplace democracy, de-gentrification, climate justice, and sanctuary from border regimes and state violence generally." This silence around the commission-demand raises questions about the role of the artist in struggle: threatening to boycott a show or withdraw work is one way to leverage pressure for a simple and widely shared demand, and to

gain recognition for political engagement; remaining committing to a stance of noncooperation in order to push the crisis to a new level of possibility, where power starts to come undone, is another matter altogether.

One takeaway should not be lost: the removal of Kanders has never been about excising "toxic philanthropy," whether embodied by an individual or as a system-wide phenomenon. It is not about distinguishing bad money from good money. Far beyond Kanders, it has been a gateway to confronting the distribution of wealth and power in a leading institution of the art system whose business as usual harms our friends, families, and communities.

➔ After Kanders, Decolonization Is the Way Forward



➔ By Sean Bonney

for "I love you" say fuck the police / for
 "the fires of heaven" say fuck the police, don't say
 "recruitment" don't say "trotsky" say fuck the police
 for "alarm clock" say fuck the police
 for "my morning commute" for
 "electoral system" for "endless solar wind" say fuck the police
 don't say "I have lost understanding of my visions" don't say
 "that much maligned human faculty" don't say
 "suicided by society" say fuck the police / for "the movement
 of the heavenly spheres" say fuck the police / for
 "the moon's bright globe" for "the fairy mab" say
 fuck the police / don't say "direct debit" don't say "join the party"
 say "you are sleeping for the boss" and then say fuck the police
 don't say "evening rush-hour" say fuck the police / don't say
 "here are the steps I've taken to find work" say fuck the police
 don't say "tall skinny latté" say fuck the police / for
 "the earth's gravitational pull" say fuck the police / for
 "make it new" say fuck the police
 all other words are buried there
 all other words are spoken there / don't say "spare change"
 say fuck the police / don't say "happy new year" say fuck the police
 perhaps say "rewrite the calendar" but after that, immediately
 after that say fuck the police / for "philosopher's stone" for
 "royal wedding" for "the work of transmutation" for "love
 of beauty" say fuck the police / don't say "here is my new poem"
 say fuck the police
 say no justice no peace and then say fuck the police

ACAB: A Nursery Rhyme



→ Becoming Ungovernable: Museum to the City

Prominent voices attempt to rewrite the stakes of the crisis when Kanders was removed. Ford Foundation's Director, Darren Walker, plays a role in tipping the scales amongst the power elite of the museum, and opines in the New York Times that the crisis signals the need to diversify the boards of museums. In a series of media appearances, Walker presents himself as a moderate buffer between oligarchs and protestors, reassuring the ultrarich that diversifying museums need not require the "demonization of rich people." While calling for nuance, Walker appeals for calm and warns of "populist anger" and grassroots groups that "want to destroy the system, want to destroy museums."

Around the same time it surfaces that the Ford Foundation is playing an instrumental role in the creation of four new jails as a "humane" replacement for Rikers Island, a swap that is critical to mayor De Blasio's criminal justice reform. In response, Angela Davis herself issues a call for protests at the Ford Foundation, echoed by

hundreds of Ford fellows themselves in a public letter. Along with abolitionist scholars and organizers, we assemble at the Ford headquarters and unfurl banners that read "If you build it, they will fill it," and "No New Jails on Stolen Land." We are surrounded by a phalanx of NYPD prepared for a mass arrest with zip ties and paddy waggons: an object lesson in the historical complicity between the nonprofit-industrial complex and the forces of counterinsurgency. We send a message to the Ford Foundation that we will not be beholden to their money, opportunities, and misleadership.

When the crisis begins at the Whitney, museum director Adam Weinberg appeals for people to respect "the laws of society." We respond by reminding him that the laws of society have included the legal sanctioning of slavery, the Indian Removal Act, Jim Crow, and indeed the entire juridico-economic regime of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalism that underpins contemporary US society. We know that law is not justice.

The Ford Foundation marks a pivot from the museum to the city at large, and signals the need to continue on the path of ungovernability that we have already tested out and trained for through unauthorized actions at museums. To us, becoming ungovernable is a strategic choice. It creates a crisis of legitimacy for the authorities, which, in turn, provides more favorable conditions to effectively challenge the status. It also helps a movement to maintain its autonomy and stave off cooption from political parties, liberals, not-for-profits, and institutional managers. Becoming ungovernable names the movement of people towards a threshold of freedom with acts of refusal. Such acts both negate and simultaneously create the possibility for multiple affirmations, or as the Zapatistas say, "one no can open up a million yeses." We continue mapping the sites of injustice from the Brooklyn Museum and AMNH to the Whitney and now the Ford Foundation and beyond, to the city.



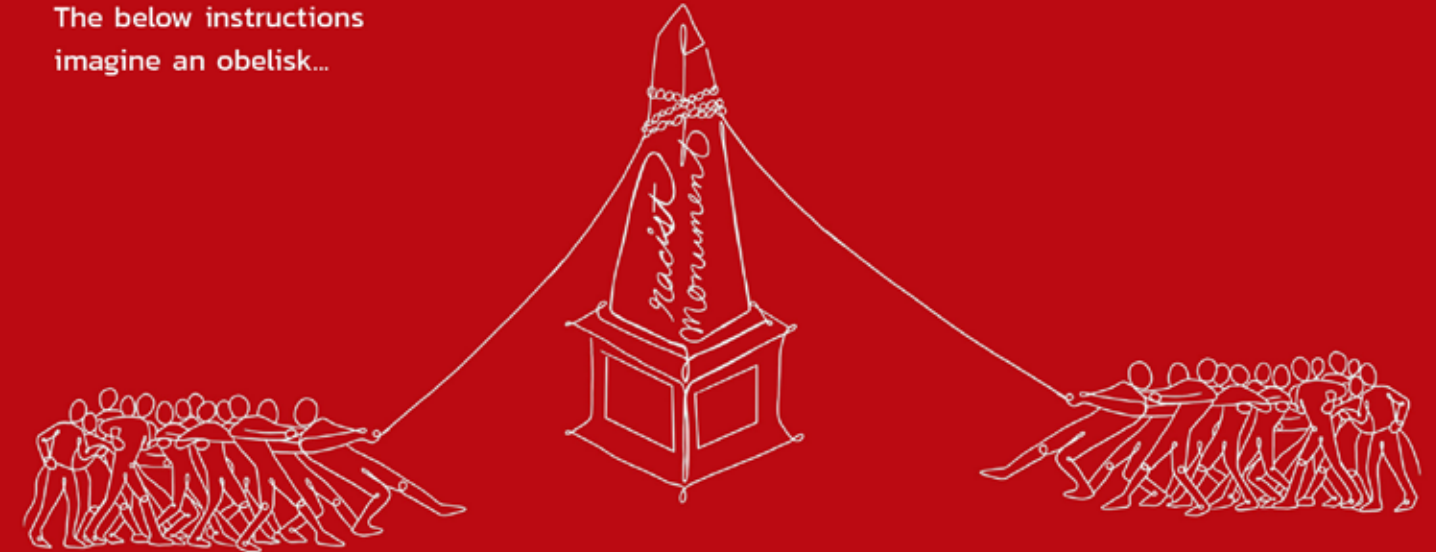
How To Take Down A Monument

from Twitter by Sarah Parcak on Twitter as @indyfromspace

Key to pulling one down a monument is letting gravity work 4 you. You want to get chains not rope extended tightly around the top and 1/3 down forming circles.

For every 10 ft of monument, you'll need 40+ people. So, say, a 20 ft tall monument, probably 60 people. You want strong rope attached to the chain---rope easier to hold onto versus chain. **EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE WEARING GLOVES FOR SAFETY** (there is a lot of safety first below).

The below instructions imagine an obelisk...



You probably want 150+ ft of rope x 2. You'll want to be standing 30 feet away from obelisk so it won't topple on you (your safety! first!). This gives enough slack for everyone to hold on to rope, alternating left right left right. Here's the hard part...pulling in unison.

You have two groups, one on one side, one opposite, for the rope beneath the pointy bit and the rope 1/3 down. You will need to **PULL TOGETHER BACK AND FORTH**. You want to create a rocking motion back and forth to ease the obelisk from its back.

I recommend a rhythmic song. **YOU WILL NEED SOMEONE WITH A LOUDSPEAKER DIRECTING**. There can be only one person yelling. Everyone will be alternating on rope left right left right not everyone on the same side. No one else near the obelisk! Safety first!

It's all about physics and cooperation!

Start by a few practice pulls to get into it. Think of it like a paused tug of war, pull, wait 2, 3, 4, 5 **PULL** wait 2, 3 4, 5. **PULL AS ONE, PAUSE 5 SECONDS**, you'll notice some loosening, keep up the pattern...you may need more people, get everyone to pull!

Just keep pulling till there's good rocking, there will be more and more and more tilting, you have to wait more for the obelisk to rock back and time it to pull when it's coming to you. Don't worry you're close!

#abolishwhitesupremacy #decolonizethisplace

→ FTP: A Precursor to the Abolitionist Uprisings of 2020

Fuck the Police, Free the People. The phrases resound in New York City throughout the Fall of 2019. Ungovernability is being operationalized in the city. The transit authority announces that 500 additional cops will be patrolling the subways. The mandate is to crack down on the supposed scourge of fare evasion, criminalizing a survival tactic of the poor in order to distract from the municipal debt crisis of the transit agency itself. The police surge leads to a wave of brutality against Black and Brown youth on the subways, captured on cell phones by bystanders and circulated amongst friends and communities online. In the first of these, 17-year old Adrian Napier is surrounded by officers with guns drawn. The video goes viral and lights the fuse for an "FTP Emergency Action" at the subway station where the violence occurred in downtown Brooklyn.

The intention is not to march but to facilitate people coming together to take unpermitted action, and feeling empowered in doing so. A mass fare evasion takes place. Hundreds of people jump the turnstiles, enacting the demand for free transit that fare-hoppers practice on a daily basis. Fare evasion is a threshold event for many participants, even as dozens are arrested.

Police attacks continue on the trains, and in late November, people return to the streets emboldened. Trainings and banner-making parties are held in the lead up. Memes distilling the spirit of FTP proliferate. Communiques are circulated, printed, and wheatpasted around the city outlining big-picture analyses of the strategic landscape. Dates and times are released in order to anchor and pace the energy of escalation, while locational details are held tightly. Beyond the most minimal information that is shared publicly, the key is organizing face-to-face, without phones. How do we outmaneuver the NYPD when we know we are constantly under surveillance? Few people know the core tactical plans. But everyone is encouraged to break into affinity groups, rolling with friends. People are making their own banners and planning autonomous actions. Principles of Unity were created, enabling maximum autonomy and respecting a diversity of tactics while staying on the same page. Detours, dispersions, and distractions are employed as we move through the streets and take over subway cars. What unfolds is a strategy of organized chaos that sends the police into a

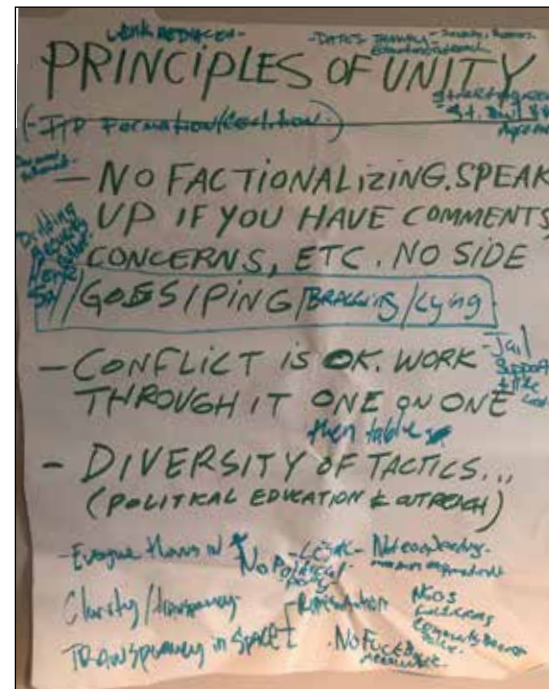
tailspin. Arrests increase but tactics evolve and demands are solidified. Jail support continues to foster bonds of care and solidarity, and a beautiful diversity of aesthetics blossom forth from participating groups.

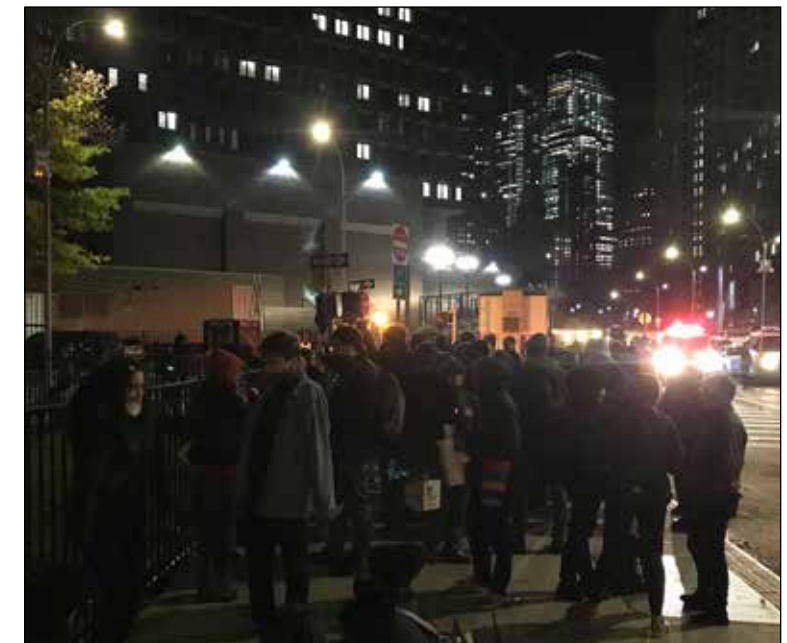
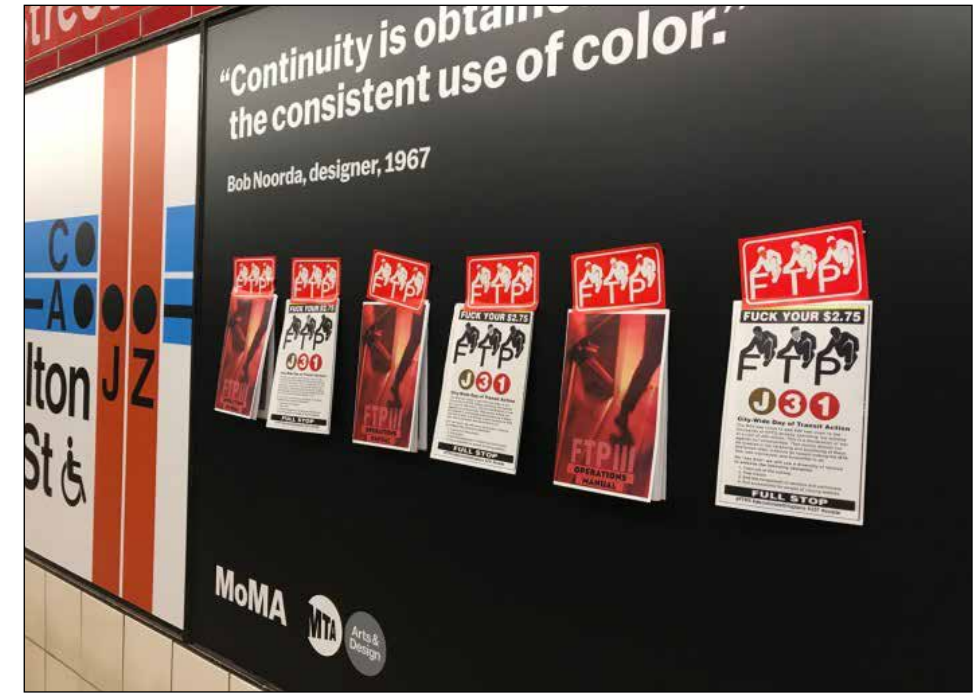
Early in 2020, an FTP call is made for Grand Central Station on January 31st; the station is heavily militarized, but the assembly quickly disperses into the subways like a swarm of bees before reassembling at a site elsewhere in the city. A standoff with police encircled by hundreds in Brooklyn portends a heightening of antagonisms in the coming year.

People are assertively pushing back on police power in a way unseen since the uprisings of 2014 that were sparked in Ferguson. As the popularity of the demands grow and media coverage surges, the state ratchets up its counterinsurgency measures. Transit actions are framed as a violent menace to society, and supposed ringleaders are identified, isolated, and slandered in the pages of the right-wing press in tandem with the NYPD itself. Beyond municipal budgets and transit policy, it is the specter of generalized ungovernability expressed by FTP that truly animates the attempt by the state to demonize the movement.

Months into the Covid pandemic, the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis activates the spirit of FTP across the country and in New York itself, taking tactics, energies, and demands to new levels of abolitionist intensity. "Defund the police" is a pale residue of the uprising, the ramifications of which are only still unfolding.

Since the summer of 2020, cultural institutions have been hot to proclaim that Black Lives Matter, with some even invoking the language of decolonization and abolition that has become currency among artists, critics, and curators. But the record of their actions in response to both the pandemic and uprising show that they have a long way to go to live up to these declarations, and that few are prepared to truly embark on the journey of unmaking themselves from the ground up, starting with the return of land. In the past, we have called for decolonization commissions from below to guide the transformation of these institutions. It's time to push these initiatives forward.





Communique No. 1 in the lead up to FTP3

01/01/2020

Fuck The Police, Free MTA, Swipe Wall Street's Profits

New York's subway lines were built and operated by private companies until they were no longer profitable. The city took them all over in 1940, and they were placed under the control of "public authorities" (NYCTA followed by the MTA). Directed by political appointees, with no public accountability, these authorities were public in name only. After the fiscal crisis in 1975, politically-motivated funding cuts forced the transit system to finance its operations through issuing municipal bonds. In this way, New York's subways were turned into investment vehicles by Wall Street banks all too happy to underwrite the high-yield bonds and manipulate their markets. This arrangement has been very good for investors and very bad for users. Currently, the MTA is \$38b in debt to bondholders and banks, and 17% of its budget goes to paying those debts, ensuring a steady stream of returns.

So what are the police doing in the subways? Criminalizing Black and brown people and poor people, for sure, by publicly punishing those who cannot pay. But they are also protecting the investments of bondholders and banks. Debt service is threatened, not by sporadic fare evasion by a minority of riders, but by the prospect of loan default and free public transit. We evade the fare in mass to force the crisis and end Wall Street's theft. The police are there as a reminder of who's in charge of the system and the revenue streams. Not the MTA, not the governor, and least of all the Mayor. In the public mind, the subway system is failing, but it's working very well for investors, who escape the blame and make out like bandits because they profit from distress. It's time to expose this arrangement. These are Wall Street's trains. Even when they are late, they always run on time.

#FTP3 || #decolonizethisplace || #J31 || #evade || #swipeitforward

Communique No. 1, In Furtherance of The Insurrection

06/02/2020

No More Policing, No More Private Property:

It's no surprise that a line is being drawn between Peaceful Protest and Destructive Protest. And not just by the authorities and gatekeepers like Barack Obama. Protesters are also policing those who cross the line, and, in some cases, handing them over to the cops. Have they learned nothing from the "broken windows" theory used to criminalize communities of color? We oppose any and every such effort as complicit with the counter-insurgency. Private property, for those who have forgotten, is America's civil religion. Stolen land, stolen people, or stolen commonwealth—that is the gruesome story of private property accumulation. Nothing is more sacred to the settler, or to his constitutional law.

The historical origins of U.S. police power lie in 18th century Slave Patrols and Night Watches, formed to protect, and recover, slaveowners' human property. The uninterrupted continuity between then and now is staggering, and sickening. With curfews in place or pending, we should remember how sundown towns used these measures to exclude non-whites.

Nothing gets attention like threats to private property. Nothing goes more directly to the heart of the policing mission. Nothing more graphically illustrates the limits of liberalism. But these are not the only reasons to refuse condemnation of Destructive Protest. The anti-capitalist spirit of this insurgency needs to be seen and heard. Banks and retailers that target, and siphon off, the dollars of poor, Black, and Brown communities are not neutral or blameless bystanders. Nor are the big chain stores like Target that have driven gentrification all over our cities. As for 1% outlets like Chanel and Gucci, we say good riddance.

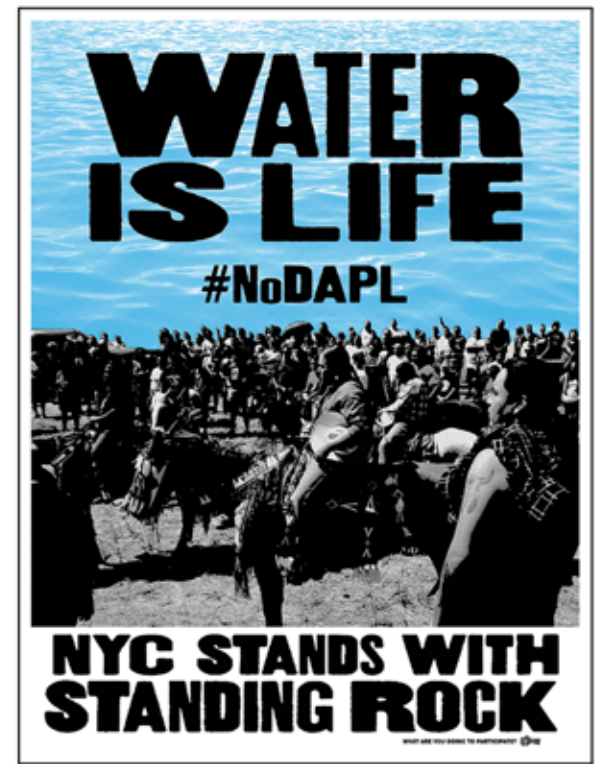
Any strike against these property icons should speak for itself. But some people don't get it. So what do we say to those who denounce these actions as "senseless looting," and therefore as a distraction from the "real" problem of police brutality? Take a hard look at the economic violence of racial capitalism. Tell us that policing has nothing to do with the destruction caused by property accumulation. Cops are not bystanders, they are the frontline enforcers of this system. They always have been.

ARTISTS:
~~IN THE BUSINESS~~
~~OF GENTRIFYING~~
NYC NOT FOR SALE



DECOLONIZE THIS PLACE
 +INDIGENOUS STRUGGLE
 +BLACK LIBERATION
 +FREE PALESTINE
 +GLOBAL WAGE WORKERS
 +DE-GENTRIFICATION
MTL + PLACERIE
 SEPT. 17 - DEC. 17, 2016
 ARTISTS SPACE: 55 Walker St., New York, NY 10013
STRIKE ART
 WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO PROTEST?

OUR UPRISINGS ARE QUEER TRANS BLACK BROWN INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANT PALESTINIAN AND GLOBAL
decolonizingthisplace



Decolonize This Place Movement Generated Posters 2016 - 2020



Communique No. 2, To Our Communities

01/01/2021

Study and Action for a New Year

None of us will miss 2020, which brought a deadly threat into our homes, mass joblessness and hunger, and an attempted coup. Fascism proudly showed its face, and the planet continued burning out of control. But on the flip side, the decolonizer's year belonged to the George Floyd insurgency. Rage, righteousness, and the beauty of dissent filled the streets. The legitimacy of police authority crumbled, white supremacy was shaken to its foundations, and monuments to colonizers and enslavers were made to fall in city after city. As 2021 begins, we encourage people to ask. What was it all a rehearsal for? And what lessons have we all drawn from the successes and failures of organizing on the frontline?

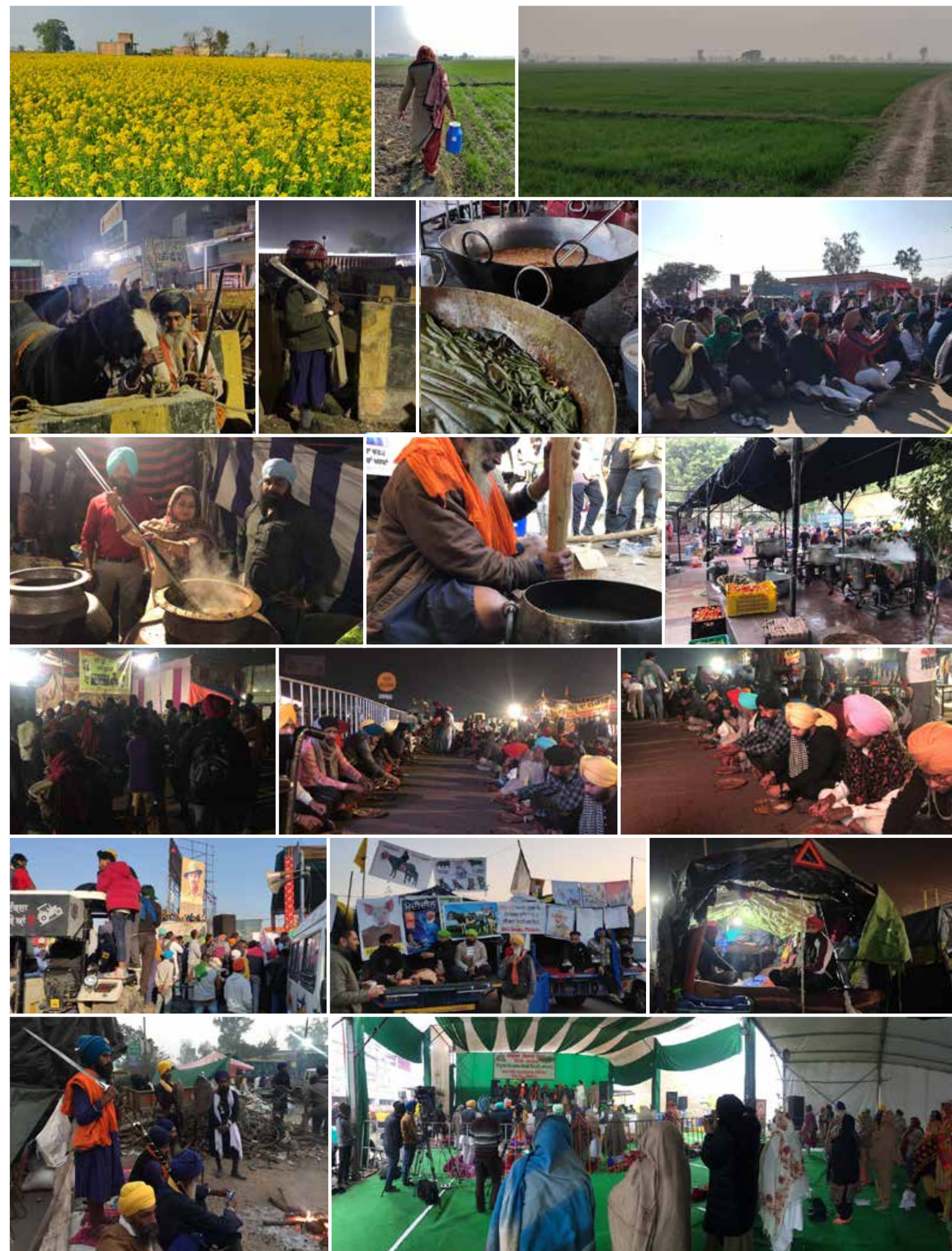
Decolonize This Place always sides with grassroots organizing and direct action, shaped by the radical imagination, and we stand by the need to link people's struggles for liberation. That is our theory and our practice. That is why we see the Palestinian freedom cause resonating not only with Indigenous efforts to reclaim unceded land here on Turtle Island but also with the movements of Black, Brown and LGBTQ people to shake off the colonial power of prisons, police, and social violence. That is why we support worker control and solidarity economies as alternatives to the global pillage of racial capitalists and debt extractors who have ground down so many, including farmers from Punjab, who are resisting corporate control over their land and ways of life. That is why we need to study, and learn from, each other's issues and challenges in order to grow horizontal power and defy our common, predatory enemies.

Responsibility for making these links between causes and then building on our mutual commitments is how we earn another world. But if there's one thing we learned from 2020 about organizing, it's that our relationships-- whether face-to-face or shoulder-to-shoulder on the streets-- hold the most value in this world. So, in 2021, we will continue to strengthen these ties that have bound us together with love, care, and communal responsibility.

DTP has in recent years served as a catalyst for anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist tendencies that have now begun to course their way through the elite cultural institutions. Likewise, the early FTP actions of which we were a part helped to pave the way for the long hot summer's uprising. Some of our favorite museums, however, were a little too hasty in declaring that Black Lives Matter, while doing little else. 🙄🙄 Decolonization, after all, requires some effort beyond committees for "diversity, inclusion, and equity" that aim to adjust demographics while leaving structures of power, wealth, and property intact. The managers of the art system should be on notice: in 2021, there is no return to normal.

Our work this year will reflect and embody the lessons of 2020. We will deepen our organizing at the scales of the neighborhood and the city, and continue building relationships of solidarity across borders. We will extend our work of studying, learning, and acting in service of abolition and liberation: block by block, from below and to the left, with a diversity of tactics. Stay tuned for updates about a series of initiatives that blur the lines between art, organizing, and action. And always remember: when we breathe, we breathe together.

#decolonizethisplace



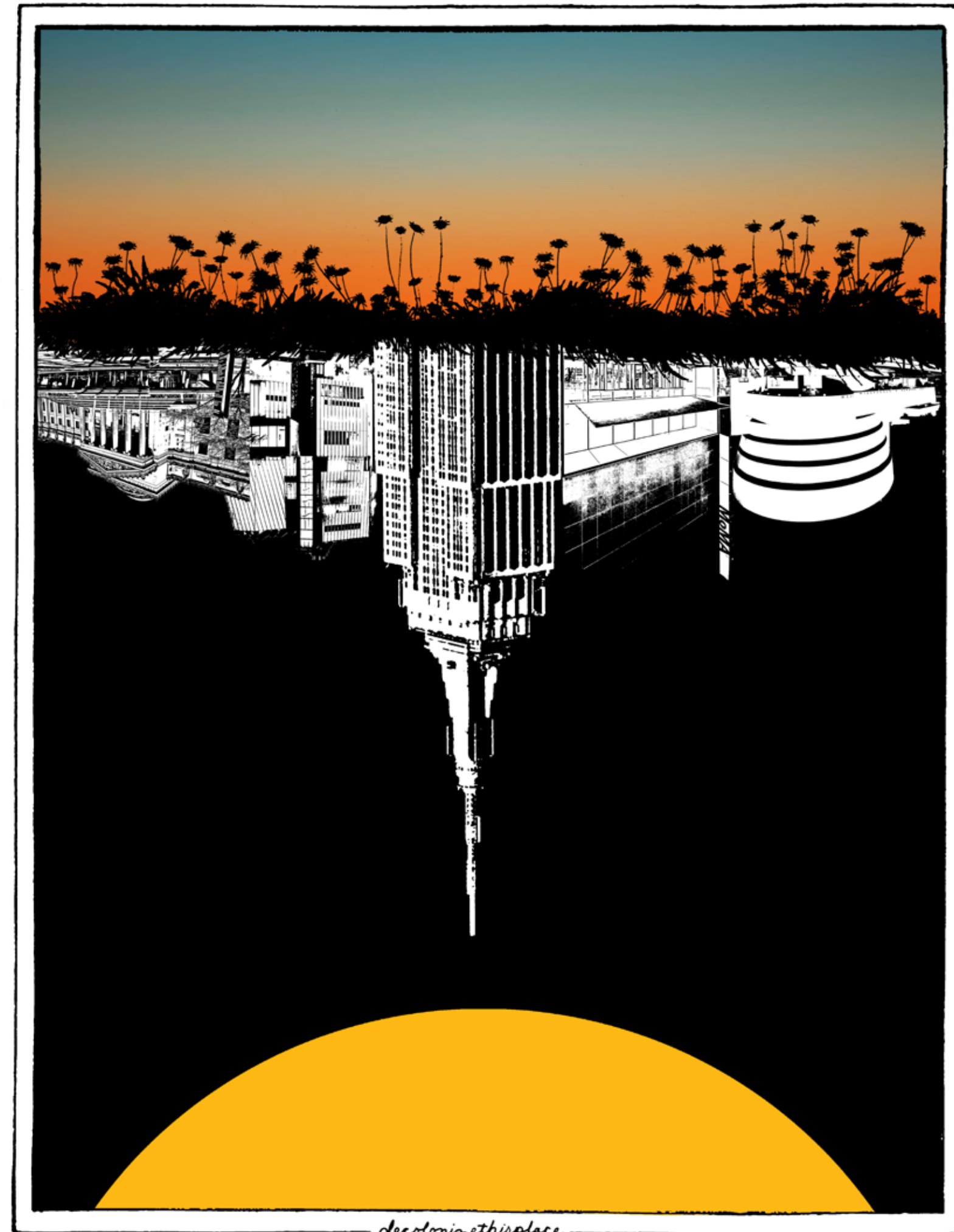
PALESTINE
KASHMIR
FERGUSON
THE BRONX
STANDING ROCK
#dignitystrike





The work reflected in these pages, condensing years, helps us breathe. It is only possible because of a deep politics of friendship, an ethos of relational organizing, and a strong belief that not only do things not have to be this way, but in fact we must live as if it could be different based on what we choose to do and how we choose to live. This work is also the product of many people, colleagues, comrades, participants, family members, lovers, friends, and grassroots groups. We thank all those who put in the time and love to usher something powerful and beautiful into the world and to hold space for each other. We also thank those who used their cameras, social media, wrote, took pictures, made videos, brought family and friends, and organized. Movement-generated anything is always better. If any image should have been credited and we did not, we apologize in advance as it was not intentional. Finally, for all those who wonder about wins as a metric of success, we share: we walk, we do not run because we are going very far.

- Decolonize This Place



decolonizethisplace