

Essay: Anarch-etiquette/Fresco Removal workshop

Daniele Pario Perra

“Preserving the local Anarchy”

Gijs Briët

Two months ago I was an unaware inhabitant of the city, never participating or even observing the (inconspicuous) spontaneous communication of the public space. Saturated with the overkill of tags and graffiti in the streets that the small gestures of protest, aesthetics, love or jokes go unnoticed. Thereby being a mindless participant in the public environment, only guided by the formal communication of the municipality to reach different destinations. Within the past two months we've been challenged to step out of 'the allegory of the cave' and observe the inconspicuous, exploring the city, seeing the small details of spontaneous communication.

During the process of observation, finding, seeing and reading where the first main objectives. Noticing large varieties of text by the same artist as Laser3.14 in Amsterdam, commenting on local events, joking about spatial matters or protesting against political changes, but never knowing who or why the artist provided this spontaneous communication. Later realizing the importance of some of the messages and the people (or what they represent(ed)) behind some of this type of communication. In specific the importance of a very simple symbol; the circle A. especially what it represent locally in the Netherlands.

Seeing the A of Anarchy most people see the negative hard-core demonstrators, rebellion against all that is formal, punk rock, violent evacuation of squatters etc. But what do these squatters represent besides all the revolt, rebellion and punk rock. What messages do they send by squatting to the local community and to the authority?

The squatting law in the Netherlands was always exemplary showing others countries a very socialist view on the free occupation of empty buildings. In the '60 and '70 there was a lot of vacancy in and around the city centres, badly maintained housing that was to expansive to rebuild or redevelop or waiting for new ownership. Squatters occupied some of these buildings. Sometimes due to financial reason but this type of occupation also presented benefits that spread beyond the individual or community of squatters. By occupying these buildings a solution was presented for the long-term vacancy and the prevention of decay of the buildings surroundings. Sometimes even presenting other functions besides a cheap living environment but creating room for a musk, as was done in the city of Amsterdam. This social and communal very local orientated goal of squatting over time has changed to places that from to outside (the authoritarian view) are primarily focused on Revolt. While exploring the room in the Poortgebouw we spotted besides the well known Anarchy symbol text that indicate the realization decay in the squatters community, messages as '*Never Forget*' and '*Instinct of Survival*'. An indication that the symbol for an alternative lifestyle trying to be separate or free from the regulated society is out of date.

The cause for his could lie with to economic growth of the inner city, no longer needing to occupation by squatters, thereby pushing to occupants to defend their beliefs stronger and more violent with the shrinking of their fragmented communities. Even making squatting illegal perhaps in a time when this alternative lifestyle is again needed to prevent decay of all the empty office parks along the periphery of the city.

Instead of promoting the negative aspect of the “circle A” we most emphasize the importance of the beginning of it and present it as a possible solution for the million square metre vacancy around the Dutch greater cities. People might even say that the Anarchy symbol is changing from a rebellious symbol into something that arises nostalgia.