



***Horizontal Art and Action* Free University / *Arte y acción horizontales* Free University**
Saturday, October 11, 11:30am-4pm / Sábado 11 de octubre, 11:30am-4pm

Pedro Albizu Campos Plaza
East 13th St & East 14th St between/entre Avenues B & C
East Village, Manhattan

The Free University of New York City is an experiment in radical community education and an attempt to create education as it ought to be, building on the historic tradition of movement freedom schools. First conceived as a form of educational strike in the run up to May Day, 2012, Free University-NYC has since organized numerous days of free crowd-sourced education in parks, public spaces, museums, and subway stations in New York City.

Our project is born out of a recognition that the current system of higher learning is as unequal as it is unsustainable, while vast sources of knowledge across communities are all-too-hidden and undervalued. With tuition increasing at public and private colleges, the exploitation of adjunct labor, and the larger and larger amounts of debt that students are expected to take on, a university education is becoming a rarefied commodity only available to the few. As a study/action alternative, Free University-NYC welcomes diverse networks of political education to learn, grow, and transform society together.

Free University-NYC welcomes you to an afternoon of workshops, teach-ins, dialogues, and performances by artists and community activists to learn and share power together (in Latin America, a process called *horizontalidad*). In the wake of losing 5 Pointz, Brecht Forum, Gathering of Tribes, Rebel Diaz Arts Collective, City College Morales/Shakur Center, 285 Kent, and soon Death by Audio, and also seeing public art become the front-lines of gentrification, we need art and actions that envision creative social change while practicing it.

This event is part of the Art in Odd Places Festival (ArtinOddPlaces.org).

Free University-NYC le da la bienvenida a una tarde de talleres, diálogos, o performances que nos ayuden a aprender y compartir modos de empoderarnos juntos—un proceso que en América Latina se llama *horizontalidad*. Tras la pérdida de muchos espacios, como 5 Pointz, Brecht Forum, Gathering of Tribes, Rebel Díaz Arts Collective, City College Morales/Shakur Center, 285 Kent—pronto Death by Audio—y ver que el arte público se ha convertido en un frente de batalla en el proceso de gentrificación (aburguesamiento), creemos que necesitamos juntarnos para compartir un arte y acciones que imaginan el cambio social desde la práctica.

Este evento es parte del festival "Art in Odd Places" / "Arte en Lugares Extraños" (ArtinOddPlaces.org).

Statement of Intentions

As participants in the Free University:

1. we support the empowerment of each person to challenge the histories and structures of oppression that marginalize some, and divide us all. These may include ableism, ageism, classism, heterosexism, racism, religious discrimination, sexism, transphobia, xenophobia, among others.
2. we commit to learning about these different forms of oppression.
3. we understand individual freedoms are not above our collective safety, well-being, and ability to function cooperatively; individual freedom without responsibility to the community is not the Free University way.
4. we seek open and compassionate classrooms.
5. we encourage open and non-oppressive dialogues.
6. we strive for accessible interchanges of languages, knowledge, and discussions.
7. we understand and respect that there are differences among us.
8. we expect to listen and be listened to.
9. we are confident we can learn without policing or being policed.

Deliberate disruptions, accusations, violence, or other violations of this code are not within the spirit nor the hopes of the Free University.

***Horizontal Art and Action* / *Arte y acción horizontals* - Schedule**

11:30am – Welcome, Opening Remarks, Statement of Intention

Ongoing: Portable Writing Center

12-1pm

- Visualizing Solidarity from Ferguson to Gaza to Hong Kong
- Organización y reproducción de la cultura (arte) como una forma de resistencia dentro de las comunidades indígenas migrantes en Nueva York
- Songlines
- Anti-Gentrification Rap

2-3pm

- DOCUMENTS OF RESISTANCE, part 2
- Free Money Movement
- I Hear You
- Drawing Towards Cairo
- Visualizing Our Network: Radical Spaces for Building Counter-Power

1-2pm

- carving/sculpturing
- Exploring the Gentrification (k)NOT
- Open Source Public Space: Creating and Reclaiming
- Performative Documentary for Youth Organizing

3-4pm

- B to C: Before Campos - Walking Tour
- Empowering community and everyday through art practice
- “Acting”
- Action Art and Intervention Behind the Iron Curtain
- Would You Like A Letter For A Rainy Day?

DESCRIPTIONS:

ONGOING:

Susan Naomi Bernstein
“Portable Writing Center”

To survive the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras*
be a crossroads.

**Gloria Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

In the middle second decade of the 21st century, we struggle with a critical contradiction in making art. We feel still desire to create with/for the deep collectivity of community. Yet in our current context— in which Supreme Court law defines corporations as people—we experience the disappearance of all that sustained us in the past: time to create, funding, public space.

We can mourn these losses—and we can assess these new realities as the late Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldúa suggests: As “borderlands,” liminal, transitional, transformative spaces. As we become “crossroads” ourselves, we can begin to imagine a world free of constraint for making art, for creating new possibilities from the lessons of the old—and moving forward to a world “*sin fronteras*,” without borders.

As we write, let us move forward. Consider these questions: What hope might we find from memories of vanished spaces? How might these memories move as toward the future? What opportunities do the crossroads offer us? What possibilities might we imagine? What if time, money, and space were not obstacles, but instead points of resistance—places of struggle and resilience? What steps might we take? How can we involve the collectivity of our communities—youth, elders, those in the middle, those in the margins— in our yearnings for the future? Write with the prompt above—and/or create your own questions for writing. Begin in an appropriate moment—begin now—in peace, compassion, and love.

*Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004), "chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patlache poet, writer, and cultural theorist," grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, at the border of Texas and Mexico. Grappling with the material realities of this site, Anzaldúa worked all her life to create art in the multiple languages and contradictions of Borderlands struggle and resistance. ("Gloria Anzaldúa: Voices from the Gap." 3 December 2012. Web. 6 October 2014.)

12PM-1PM:

NYC Solidarity with Palestine / Direct Action Front for Palestine

"Visualizing Solidarity from Ferguson to Gaza to Hong Kong"

This presentation and dialogue will work through visualizing solidarity by looking at the connections—and the practice of connecting struggles for liberation—from Ferguson to Gaza to Hong Kong, while weaving climate justice and colonization into these examples.

Cinthya Santos-Briones

"Organización y reproducción de la cultura (arte) como una forma de resistencia dentro de las comunidades indígenas migrantes en Nueva York"

Dialogo a través del "periodismo antropológico" y la fotografía documental para conocer y entender la organización y la reproducción de la cultura como una manera de resistencia identitaria, a través de la música tradicional y, celebraciones como el carnaval dentro las comunidades indígenas migrantes—otomíes, nahuas y tepehuas—en Nueva York.

Dialogue through "anthropological journalism" and documentary photography in order to learn and understand the organization and reproduction of culture as a means of identity and resistance through the performance of traditional music and celebrations like the carnival and other fiestas among indigenous migrants communities—otomíes, nahuas and tepehuas—in New York.

Elizabeth Adams & Vita Wallace

"Songlines"

Over the past four years we have helped over 60 neighbors write songs about their blocks, documenting, archiving, and singing the results on singing walks. We will be available to help you write a song about your block, and also to sing and share some of the existing 60.

Sean P O'Connell

"Anti-Gentrification Rap"

Rap performance about gentrification in Rockaway Queens https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_vIiOjvJ2E

1PM-2PM:

seun adewale adelowo

"carving/sculpturing"

Judith Lombardi

"Exploring the Gentrification (k)NOT"

The Gentrification (k)NOT Movie is a consequence of the Gentrification (k)NOT Project. The Gentrification (k)NOT Movie clarifies the meaning of the term gentrification, explores its dynamics as elements of a system that displaces people from their communities. It also examines what (we) might do to prevent gentrification from happening during the revitalization of an urban neighborhood.

Matej Vakula

“Open Source Public Space: Creating and Reclaiming”

In this workshop about producing and reclaiming public space, participants will create user manuals on how to produce public space.

Amy Morto

“Performative Documentary for Youth Organizing”

Last summer I worked at a Christian youth camp and conference center producing a kid-powered performative documentary—that is to say, eight campers volunteered to carry small cameras with them throughout their week at camp and film whatever they thought was important. I compiled their footage and contextualized selections with interviews I took with other campers, counselors, and administrative staff. For this activity, I will show a bit of the final product (given audio/visual media equipment or just my laptop if the group is small enough and the space allows.) I can also talk through the point of performative documentary as it relates to participatory action research and horizontal education, and engage participants in a discussion on how, when, and where to implement these strategies.

2PM-3PM:

Art Workers of Color

“DOCUMENTS OF RESISTANCE, part 2”

Uncovering histories. Amplifying voices. An informal discussion with Art Workers of Color Initiative on race, class, and gender in art institutions. In this discussion we will look closely at various documents of protest by artist of color from 1960s to the present. Afterwards, artist Kenneth Pietrobono will discuss his artwork as it relate to class, race, and gender.

Jim Costanzo

“Free Money Movement”

The Aaron Burr Society launched the Free Money Movement on April Fool’s Day 2009. We distributed 100 \$1 bills on Wall Street stamped with Free Money on one side with Slave of New York on the other. The Federal Reserve Bank was authorized to bailout Wall Street Banks with tax dollars from the 1% that was given as Free Money after the 2008 crash. This resulted in people losing their jobs and homes because of government deregulation and the subsequent corporate fraud. In 2013 the Society added another stamp: Common Good/Commonwealth. We now have two choices: either we have Free Money for the Common Good of the 99% paid for by the nation’s Commonwealth; or we can continue to be Slaves of Wall Street with unending bailouts for the 1%. Today the Common Good would include environmental sustainability based on economic and social justice.

Ari Marcantonio and Jaime Knight

“I Hear You”

Our interest lies in the potential to found paths to community and collaboration through an examination of individualism and the competitive nature of market capitalism. How difference (in upbringing, race, sexuality, language, class, gender, politics, etc...) allows us to be in solidarity or not, and how an exploration of difference may produce mutually supportive structures invested in the heterogeneity of a diverse world. We will organize a participatory performance that examines communication across difference. Using the simple technology of a cup phone, we create a metaphor that depicts the direct lines of communication that connect individuals while highlighting the difficulty of navigating those lines. Before making the first contributions ourselves, we will ask participants to share ways in which their identity has brought them closer to or separated them from those around them, how it has aided or impaired their ability to relate to and communicate with others.

Two groups will form at either end separated by a distance that requires communication through the phone. Individual participants will speak into the phone to give some account or anecdote, or to communicate a feeling about how their identity and subjectivity affect their ability to communicate with others. Their counterpart at the

other end will then attempt to relate what was said to their own group. In this way, the action parallels the content of the dialogue as the participants, in order to communicate what their counterparts have said, must filter the speech through their own subjectivity. The action will proceed naturally as participants who are satisfied with their contributions pass the cup along giving others an opportunity to share. The resulting image not only depicts the difficulty of relating across lines of difference but actualizes the commitment necessary to make one another feel heard by a heterogeneous group of others.

Alexandra Zevin

“Drawing Towards Cairo”

We need to communicate directly with our neighbors, free from the intervention of governments, corporations, and other large organizations. Participants in this workshop will be introduced to "But a Shadow of Myself", an intercultural project in which artists from New York and Cairo use silhouettes to explore themes of identity and collaboration. Participants will get the chance to draw and write in response to art by Cairo participants, and make a collaborative drawing. The workshop will end with a discussion of ways to participate further, including exhibiting artwork in Cairo, drawing collaboratively with Egyptian artists, and videoconferencing with Egyptian artists.

Raquel de Anda

"Visualizing Our Network - Radical Spaces for Building Counter-Power"

Where do artists and activists gather? How do we support infrastructures that generates social change? Is physical space needed to support practices that push forth a new social structure? This meeting of minds will discuss the importance of alternative artist and activist led spaces. Through discussion and play we'll work together to visualize our network and come up with ways of keeping it alive. Information from this workshop will inform a online map of the spaces where artists and activists gather to support each other's practice, and is part of a larger project of making our network visible.

3PM-4PM:

Thea Martinez

“B to C: Before Campos”

A one-hour walking tour of the streets surrounding Campos Plaza Community Center, highlighting the history of the Latin@ activists who fought to build Campos Plaza and other affordable housing in the area.

Michelle Obando

“Acting”

Abramovićian Burden performance, perhaps.

Jon Irigoyen

“Empowering community and everyday through art practice”

I am an artist from Barcelona living in Helsinki making my PhD about art, community and public space. I will discuss different tools and projects that I have develop in Finland, Spain, and Peru, which could be used to empower the community and the perception of the people about the problems we face everyday in relation to public space, inequality, and gentrification.

Carol Schaeffer

“Action Art and Intervention Behind the Iron Curtain”

This presentation will primarily examine action art and interventionist works primarily from post-68 Czechoslovakia, but also will include works from Hungary, Poland and Russia. Partly an exercise in exposure, this lecture is designed to release this region and period of art history from its relative obscurity, and to encourage intellectual comparisons to struggles against oppression across political ideologies. A brief history of central European nations will be provided, providing germane information to the presentation's talking points.

Following the Soviet invasion of Prague, which signaled the end of the short lived freedoms of the Prague Spring of 1968, artists, dissidents and intellectuals faced harsh retribution for their works from the state. This continued for over 20 years, until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Abstract performance art continued, but often via private or covert means. Artists utilized both urban and rural spaces to enact dérives or other forms of reclaiming space. Some performances were radically confrontational against the state, other acts sought to explore internal reflection. Many performances were purposefully apolitical, neither for the communist state nor for its opposing enemy of western capitalism. Yet under the highly politicized nature of Soviet rhetoric, even apolitical acts were read as resistance to state control, and were thus heavily censored.

How do these works explore anxiety, personal and political? Work and labor? Surveillance? Liberties of the individual? What did performance art during the Cold War actually look like? And what does it mean to make a subversive work of art? Taking the violent self-immolation of Jan Palach as a starting point for resistance acts of this region and time period (his death being undoubtedly a desperate act of dissidence rather than "performance art" in the institutional sense), this presentation will look at the tensions of public performance under oppressive regimes, exemplified in this case by the Kremlin's control over central and eastern European nations.

Getting to know Pedro Albizu Campos Plaza:

Entrances/exits: at the main East 13th st and East 14th street sides.

Bathrooms: Restaurants and cafes on Avenues B and C.

Closest subway: L train at East 14th st and 1st avenue.

A few pieces of the history and ongoing struggles of the Campos Plaza neighborhood:

1979: Campos Plaza housing is built by New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), named after Pedro Albizu Campos (1891-1965). Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Albizu Campos was a Puerto Rican attorney and politician, and the leading figure in the Puerto Rican independence movement. He was also heavily involved in the Irish struggle for independence. Albizu Campos was the president and spokesperson of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party from 1930 until his death in 1965. Because of his oratorical skill, Harvard education, and fluency in six languages, he was hailed as El Maestro (The Teacher). Albizu Campos was imprisoned twenty-six years for attempting to overthrow the United States government in Puerto Rico. In 1950, he planned and called for armed uprisings in several cities in Puerto Rico on behalf of independence. Afterward he was imprisoned again. Albizu Campos died in 1965 shortly after his pardon and release from federal prison, where he had been slowly poisoned for years.

2004: The first Art in Odd Places festival is held in Campos Plaza.

Early 2013: NYCHA announces plans to build “luxury apartments on parking lots and playgrounds” of public housing. In Campos Plaza, “a 97-unit, 90,000-square-foot building could rise on a 26,122-square-foot site that currently hosts basketball courts, a parking lot, and a compactor yard.” (Read: goo.gl/uv76wo)

Late 2013: After Hurricane Sandy, about 700 people in Campos Plaza I Building are left without electricity and hot water for days, some stranded on their floors without working elevators, even as NYCHA demands that tenants pay rent on time. (Read: goo.gl/mLpP1i)

Ongoing/Upcoming NYC Events:

- **Saturday 10/11 @5:30pm:** “The World Stands with Palestine” in Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, 3940 Broadway, Manhattan - [facebook.com/events/714446095301696](https://www.facebook.com/events/714446095301696)

- **Thursday-Friday 10/16-17 @6:30pm:** “Rare Earth” Screening, Conversation, and Catalog Workshop in

CUNY Graduate Center James Gallery, 365 Fifth Ave, Manhattan - centerforthehumanities.org/program/rare-earth, centerforthehumanities.org/program/rare-earth-catalog-workshop

- **Monday 10/20 @5:30pm: “New York Stands In Solidarity with Rasmea Odeh!”**, 26 Federal Plaza, Manhattan - facebook.com/events/1493576454249135

- **Wednesday 10/22 @6pm: “From Then to Now” Panel on 40th Anniversary of Lesbian Herstory Archive**, LGBT Services Center - facebook.com/events/285252768349599

- **Thursday 10/23 @5pm: “Queer and Trans Youth Participatory Budgeting Neighborhood Assembly,”** 81 Christopher Street, Manhattan

- **Monday 10/27 @6:30pm “\$15/hr for all! Social Service Workers Speak Out”** in NYU Kimmel Center, 60 Washington Square South, Manhattan - facebook.com/events/320695674770261

- **Wednesday 11/5: “Naropa at 40,”** Manhattan - poetryproject.org/naropa40

- **several excellent events running until 11/16: “Self Determination Inside/Out: Prison Movements Reshaping Society”** at Interference Archive, 131 8th st #4, Brooklyn - interferencearchive.org

Stay connected with us!

FreeUniversityNYC@gmail.com
FreeUniversityNYC.org

Facebook.com/FreeUniversityNYC
@FreeUnivNYC

Next Free University-NYC gathering:

***Stay tuned for rowdy times with the Free University crew in late October, perhaps on *Halloween weekend??*
Check our website and facebook for updates.***

Notes / Musings / Manifestos: