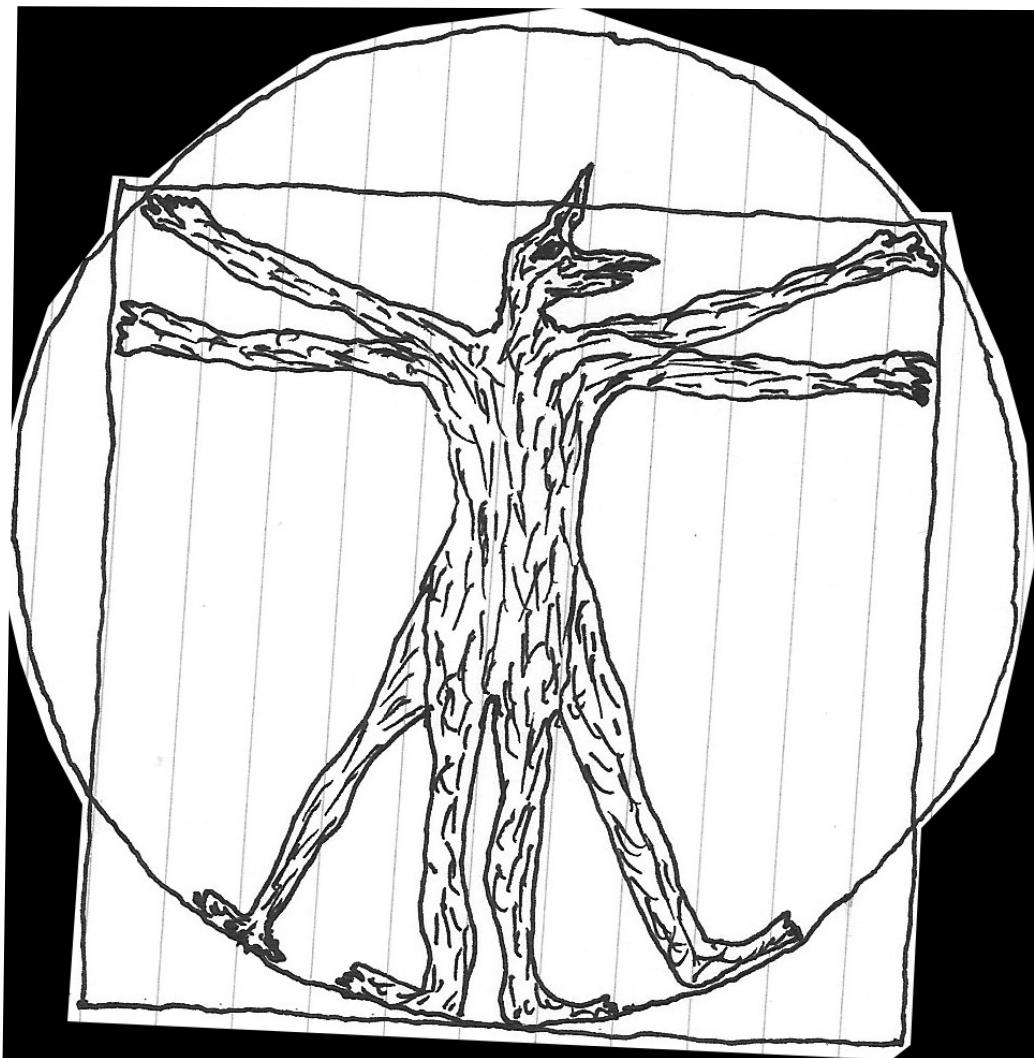


# KAUNO SP(i)AUDA

Counter Culture and Anti-Authoritarian Politics Zine    Issue #4



*On Space*

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## Editorial word

Dear english issue reader,  
This is the forth issue of Kauno Sp(i)auda and the first issue translated into English!

We chose a topic about space: there's been a squat in Kaunas,, Lower Šančiai have been filled with expensive stores for rich newcomers, the station district is getting another shopping mall which will push the poor out of the city centre. EU is trying to close its borders to immigrants who remind us of current and past "greatness" of colonialism and disciplined space. People move towards the centre - the centre tries to stop them by putting up barbed fences, enhancing the budget of the "Frontex" corporation which deals with border security, and creating refugee concentration camps in Europe's periphery and around.

As the first article explains, all space is political, witnesses politics, materializes and changes it. And then practices - we have mostly interviews with squatters from different countries and here about alternatives dear to us, also texts on Šilainiai, Brazilkė, Vilkyškis and collective space. And of course, announcements and trivia at the end.

Life is too Expensive!  
KS editorial staff



*"Only in Kaunas it is possible to live" (inverted social advertisement by Kaunas' municipality: it is possible to live also in Kaunas)*

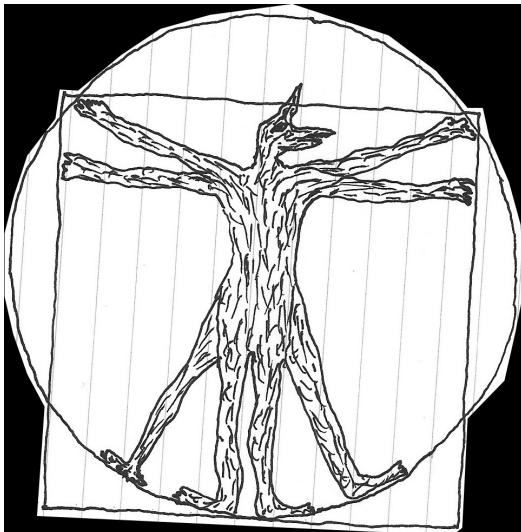
This issue is dedicated to the "Klinika" social centre in Prague, which has been squated for a year already. To the memory of Poznan squat "Od:zysk" which, when faced with the threat of eviction, has been exchanged for 300'000 zlotys without full consensus of its creators. To the DEATH tag (symbolic value grows with time) and its creators. To the squat that existed in Kaunas - the "Green House" social centre. Also to everyone who fights for living where and how they want.

## ON SPACE A LA LEBEBR

*"Change life! Change society" - these imperatives mean nothing without the creation of an appropriate space. New social relations demand new space and vice versa.* - Henri Lefebvre

Space is political. Homes, parks, libraries, supermarkets, streets, cities, highways and airports bespeak of decisions (conscious or not) to form the everyday lives of people who spend time in these spaces. Models of forming and practicing space that may seem common-sense have nothing natural about them. A suburban house isn't more natural than a Soviet apartment block, local grocery - than [insert big shopping mall name], factory - than a permaculture farm. All these spaces have formed and are still forming in different political and social contexts which sometimes may appear necessary - such as the need for security - but manifest nonetheless in a lot of different ways. On the other hand, the universal artificiality of human spaces doesn't mean they are all equally valuable. Planners of Liddes and closed communities spacialize clearly different convictions about the common good than those who try, for example, to save old wooden Kaunas' architecture or create freely accessible social spaces. Decisions about space are always at the same time decisions about people in that space - what they need, what they want, what they are able to do, what they are or should be. Thus where we are is strongly related to how and who we are. To form space is to form available practices in that space, and to form available practices is to form the person which, in the political sense at least, is nothing else than its practices - what is done and told to other people, with them, among them and for them.

Our relation to space is a political one. To be responsible for our and others' life means also to be responsible for space as one of its conditions. The political existence of any collectivity depends on its spatial existence, otherwise it's just an ideology without base and expression. Conservatism would



mean little without churches and palaces, liberalism - without banks and entertainment parks, fascism - without concentration camps. It's harder to say what is a socialist or anarchist space, because social housing blocks, widespread around the world, though providing a living space for a lot of underprivileged people, barely encourage self-government and commonality. Or do they? This question is tackled in the following texts. In any case, not only the way how space is arranged, but also what is allowed and prohibited in it, what is to be protected and what is to be renounced, what is open to others or hidden - this can be decided by us or someone else. In today's world most space is dominated by those who don't live in it or use it. Apartment tenants are watched over by landlords, working people - by their bosses, users of public space - by police cameras, campers - by businessmen who have privatized lakes and forests, etc.

In our imaginations the greater part of everyday and non-everyday spaces exist as foreign lands with foreign rules. Space embodies and solidifies the very hierarchisation of society, witnessing the helplessness, meaninglessness and crudeness of a "simple" person - some govern space while others rent it, temporarily use it or are banished into peripheries and beyond. From EU coasts and borders "protected" by FrontEx to the Gaza strip, to a wall and cameras in place of the abandoned block that we used to play in, the current global neoliberal system homogenizes space as a commodity, divides it and gives out the best pieces to highest bidders, leaving others to deserts of trash and concrete. Most people are systematically robbed of the opportunity to form their everyday existence according to their needs and desires, in the best way that they can imagine. They are robbed of the very ability to imagine that it's possible to live otherwise than presently at all. Otherwise than being dominated by others but afraid of the similarly dominated, otherwise than trading freedom for false security, dignity for comfort, love for supervision, and courage for an eternal repetition of the same.

Hundreds of millions live under the illusion that they can live like their exploiters, if they let themselves be exploited far enough, instead of taking what's theirs and all of ours. What's ours by need of life, own space, meaningful relationships and free activity, rather than the "laws" of the market or bureaucratic "will". Space - as the space of practices, relationships and meanings - is the first level on which the struggle for freedom and responsibility for our lives takes place.

There is no one model how space should be reappropriated and changed. An emancipatory answer to the dictate of supermarkets, endless parkings and sterile euro-renovations could - perhaps even should - be different in each separate case. It's already happening when children play in rubble or shut themselves in their rooms, when crowds take over squares and share food, when students occupy universities and become their own educators, when people without place squat abandoned buildings and factories, when an illegal rave takes place under a bridge, when football is played in an underground garage, when people drink morning tea or coffee in the yards of apartment blocks with their neighbours - when fearful privacy and spectacular publicity are being changed by a participatory commonality. We should have more of this.



## THE STORY OF KLINIKA SOCIAL CENTER AS TOLD BY ITS SQUATTERS

There is quite an old tradition of squatting in Czech Republic. In the 90's after the fall of communism squatting was mostly represented by the squat "Ladrunka" which was even bigger than "Klinika" and lasted for many years. Also there were some other projects. After the year 2000 or around it squatting in Czech Republic was mainly represented by squats "Lada" which lasted for 10 years and "Cybulka".

The history of Klinika started with an event called "Memories of the Future". This event, I think, was two or three years ago. It took place in Prague and there was a big concert in the city centre. Afterwards about six houses were squatted in one moment. Events were held in each of these houses. One of these buildings was held until the second day. It was a huge house near the Prague castle, in the very centre of the city. But all these houses were evicted by the police or by the

owner and these actions received a lot of media attention. After it the collective was formed and they did a few squatting actions, one every half a year. They squatted houses all around Prague, mostly huge houses, either owned privately or by the state. But all these attempts failed, mostly they were evicted a few hours after entering the building.

All that evolved into Klinika. The collective was thinking about squatting a house for about half a year and chose a former lung clinic in the Žižkov district which is well known for alternative culture. The way how it was to be squatted was different than on other attempts. We prepared a project that was sent to the owner, which was the state, a day before we squatted the building. It was an official project but they weren't able to open the envelope because it was just a day before Sunday.

We've done a lot of research about the building in advance. It was known as a place for drug addicted people to take their drugs and sometimes it was temporarily used as a space for sleeping, but it hasn't been inhabited for a long time. It was just a sleepover place for homeless people. What we found inside was a lot of rubbish and needles.

When we entered the house we wanted to look like public workers. We wanted to show that we are really working, not junkies as many people consider squatters to be. There were around 30 people working over there and we filled two trash containers and still a bit of rubbish remained for next week.

So this work was on Saturday (in December) and late in the evening came the first police patrol, so we were working for the whole day without attention. The local police was kind of okay with us. We showed them the paper that we sent to the officials and they went away. But two hours later came the state police. They were more curious, said that we "might be squatters" and promised to report everything to the owner on Monday, so we kind of won the survival for the weekend and had time at least until Monday until the officials start to react.

On Sunday we did some program in the house, which was mostly lectures. On Monday officers came and said that we should leave immediately, giving us two days to do it. We tried to do as many actions as we could

in these two days. We invited university lecturers, music bands, held plenum discussions. On Wednesday we put a lot of pressure on politicians and also on this office that was taking care of state property. We wanted the state to negotiate with us the use of building, but they were not okay with our way of entering the house without telling anyone. They said we are criminals and didn't want to talk. The next day we started a petition and wrote a letter to the neighbors. We also created a photo gallery on the internet where we published all the pictures of the place. It touched a lot of people because they found out that the building is state property and somehow belongs to them too. The state wasn't looking after that building and others were feeling that if young people had entered that building, cleaned it in a couple of hours, and there is no other plan for this building, then there is no reason not to let them use it.

Soon after, we were told, as usual, that there is some plan for the building. It was to be rebuilt into a police complaints' office - if somebody complains on police behavior they solve it, but they are not policemen. Just two percent of policemen who are accused of something are convicted, but never seriously. So the office does almost nothing and their head is a very controversial person. Amnesty International has something against him and there is a petition against him, so this bureau is very controversial. And they want to take over the building.

Anyway, on Wednesday we prepared the first neighborhood gathering. There was a band playing and we illuminated the building nicely. We tried to decorate it too. There was a public discussion, and I think around 200 people came. It was very successful. We kept the house illegally for ten days full of negotiations and intense action. Everyone was exhausted from maintaining the house, and it ended, obviously, with police eviction. We didn't give up though, because we felt a strong chance to get the house back.

The fight for Klinika began on another field, which was firstly getting public support. We already had a facebook page. Though we discussed if we should have it or not, it is useful when you want to gather as much people as you can. Through facebook information and many photos we did a huge demonstration which was attended by around one thousand people. Each week

we had some type of discussion either with politicians or with media or with non-profit organisations. We fought on many levels. For example someone else started a campaign with famous people from public life holding signs "we support Klinika". And there were around 50 such pictures. Also we got international support from the Zapatistas. There was one girl from our collective who had recently met them and she said "hey it would be nice if you could make a photo".

We also did one happening through the whole Czech Republic, Slovakia and other countries. People had to find a building in their neighborhood and hang a transparent on it, marking it as an abandoned house and saying that it should be squated. It was called "the day of empty houses". People did this on, I think, more than 20 buildings. This was supposed to be for one day but the pictures kept coming and still are coming from many many cities in Czech and Slovakia. Another support action was called "Day for Klinika". There were 25 events in Czech Republic and Slovakia, such as concerts and workshops. A lot of people attended these events.

The state was pushed to start a negotiation process. Meanwhile the building was empty and guarded by some agency which cost the state about 50 euros per day, more than half a million Czech crowns during the time it was empty. The Czech finance minister was displeased that the empty house was held under payed protection. That put additional pressure on officers. They announced a competition for free use of the building as a non-profit project. There were 3 aplicants: us and two others. One was a guy who is known for his "social business" and behaving like a cool guy who is doing very nice projects, but in fact he is doing business on it. The other project was very bad and they didn't even accept it. That left two of us but that guy said "if you want, it is your fight and I will step out of the competition". We said "of course it is our fight and bye bye". Then this guy went to the government and complained that we were pressuring him to get out of the competition. Yet the whole public opinion was for us: we had already cleaned up and the competition looked just like a play. This guy would have looked like a thief. He also tried to cooperate with us, but he is known for doing business so we really didn't want him with us, even if he had many non-profit organisations. So yeah, we droped his offer, won the selection process and got the building.

Immediately the crew started to paint the walls. On the first Saturday there were about 70 people working in the house, doing stuff like scratching the walls, painting them, preparing the garden. This lasted for about one month and afterwards we started to have a normal program.

Now we are doing concerts, free meditations, lectures, exhibitions, discussions. We're preparing a Tea Room. It will be open to the public two days a week and work like a cafe. We do gardening because there is huge garden. Practical workshops too, because we have a big room for repairing and creating stuff with tools. The biggest event up until now that we are most proud of was the Anarchist book fair, which was attended by 300 hundred people. It was very successful, like a gift for our efforts. It was full of books, lectures, discussions, concerts.

We are also happy that we get the most attention and support not because of concerts or parties, but because of lectures, discussions and workshops. They are attended by much more people than the entertainment parts. There is for example a lecture about how the drugs are affecting your body. This guy is a professor in the university of medicine in Prague. His lectures sometimes draw around a 100 people.

There are more other alternative spaces in Prague where you can go to party. For example the other squat "Cybulka" was known for concerts where people used to party. People go to party on Fridays and the lectures are held mostly during workdays. After the work I would rather go to a lecture than the pub, maybe. But we have a concert room too, it can fit in about 50 people. There are many international bands coming and it is very nice.

We have plans for the future too. For example we want to have a public toilet. Klinika is near a very nice park which doesn't have a public toilet. As soon as we connect water we plan to build a toilet. We also want to prepare a social flat for people who are really in a very poor situation, so that they could stay there for some time, like flats for people in urgency. There are a lot of social workers among our crew. We also try to recycle the rain water and are now constructing a toilet flushing system which would use it.

The government isn't helping us very much with the house. They don't give us any money. In our

agreement it is written that they won't give us anything, despite the fact that we are now solving their problems from before. The water meters were stolen for example and the Prague water service wants us to pay. But the meteres were stolen when the building was still abandoned and belonged to the office. We think that they should pay. So the situation is bad because we are now legalized and have to do things in an official way.

I also have to mention persecution by the police that is now happening in Czech Republic. Because Klinika was a big victory for the alternative scene, it made some of "anti-extremist" police officers really angry. And off course the Right part of the society is not very happy about it too. So what the police is doing now is evicting the Cybulka squat. The squat was legalized, they had an official agreement but the owner said he doesn't want them there anymore, cancelled the agreement from his side and accused the people in the squat of abusing his property. About 200 policemen came on the next day with many vehicles and two water pumps. There were only around 15 people inside the squat at that time. Lawyers who support us have started a court case because of this. The police is behaving like a security agency of private owners, carying resposibility for their property.

The eviction of Cybulka is one thing and the second thing is operation Fenix. About ten anarchists all around Czech Republic were arrested and accused of preparing a terrorist attack. Three of them still remain in prison and about twenty other people were brought in for questioning. The police also stole a data server from one company that was helping with maintaining internet forums of some groups like solidarity networks because there are many anarchist organisations around Czech Republic. These groups think this action was done mostly to gather information about the Left, so called, extremist scene, to block our communication channels. These people who were arrested where accused of preparing molotov cocktails to be thrown at a train.

They got it maybe from some anarchist group, nobody knows, we haven't heard about it really, we haven't heard about anybody preparing any attack. For me it was interesting. When we were in Klinika and we were evicted, one police car was supposedly burnt but it must have been done to accuse us of violence. Yeah, it they said some anarchist burnt a police car but the

the media was over there. They were going around a new car that was supposed to be burnt, but it was new, had nothing on it, really nothing. It was funny to watch the video. But yeah, now they are trying to make terrorists from the anarchists.

Because they are afraid that squatters are not dead and private property speculations are being uncovered. One guy from Ladrunka, the old squat, that is already evicted for many years, said that even in the passionate years after the fall of the soviet regime, even then squatting didn't have such big support as it has now. There is the biggest support for Left Radical Scene now in Czech history. So they are afraid and they are trying to trick and take over our supporters.



### DŽEMPERIO POZA TALKS TO MEMBERS OF A-CASA COLLECTIVE IN CLUJ - A, Z, AND E

Dž: Could you first tell me about A-Casa?

E: We see A-Casa not only as a house, but also as a platform. There is a bigger group with a lot of people but we also have smaller groups working on different issues.

Dž: But still, A-Casa is a house?

E: It started as a physical space, we had been renting it, but then we lost it because the owner didn't want us anymore. Afterwards the group stayed together, we still did events in friendly places around the city or in our apartments. So a common space really made a difference.

Dž: Was the house big?

Z: It was just two rooms. One had a platform with some mattresses where people could sleep, also a small yard and a kitchen.

A: There's a big discussion if we would again be able to divide one place so it can be a home and a social space at the same time. Two people were staying in A-Casa - it wasn't easy. Also, the houses in Cluj are small - you can't move twenty people into one. :) I really think home and political spaces have to be separate considering the size of the houses.

E: The house was used by those who needed it. It was always open and having something happening. Sometimes we had to completely turn it over, like when taking out furniture for a lecture and putting it back afterwards. It was a bit crazy.

Dž: What happened then? The contract ended?

Z: Yeah.

E: No no, we had to leave before the contract ended. If you are a tenant in Romania, even with a contract you basically have no rights. The contracts are only for the safety of the owners. "Our" owners came with a story that they want to rebuild the place, make it bigger, and we have to move out. They were nice and we didn't want to fight.

A: At that moment we also had plans to get a bigger house, more space for meetings, a separate room for events. You couldn't just go to A-Casa to do something because there were always people cooking or making beer or whatever. Two courses from the university....

Dž: The actual university?

A: Yeah, there were two classes. The first started when a professor didn't get paid for the last two months of the course because, they were told, "you're not doing all your classes anyway". So, as a protest against university, they taught in our house. The other was a feminist course, the first feminist course in the university. The teacher was struggling to put it on the official agenda and in the end decided to teach it in A-Casa.

Dž: In private, you also mentioned a concert with two hundred people?

E: We did concerts to be able to pay the rent. It was a bit complicated and not always nice - frustrating with too many people out of control, getting drunk, aggressive, pissing in the street...

A: But we learned from the experiences and in the end were doing parties more during the day, like afternoon chilling with food. It felt safer and we could talk to the people more. If anyone was getting drunk, it was on A-Casa beer (which was strong) and not later than until 10 or 11p.m., when everyone would go home with good memories :) You actually had time to be with the people and talk about what it is all about rather than come at night, drink beers like in a club and then go home without understanding what's different about the house. The last months were different and we decided to do it like that from then on.

Z: Yeah, the people who came during the day were more interested in what we were doing while the night people didn't understand anything what's happening even if we had a big board telling about us put up, they didn't really care. The afternoon things were really nice and better.

E: Sometimes we did thematic events, talking about evictions or food waste.

A: Starting the party with a political discussion.

Dž: "If you want to get drunk afterwards, you have to listen to this now." :)

E: To me, the nicest event was when we invited the neighbors who were threatened with eviction. We had had community walks and had been trying to see what was happening in the neighborhood and bla bla bla. We found these families and tried to talk to them and support them as much as we could. In the end we did this event together where they told their stories. Some people came, including lawyers. We succeeded to postpone their eviction for a year and a half. It was really nice, a lot of different people took part - intellectuals, punks, us... Roma community, Hungarians, Erasmus students.

Dž: "Intellectuals, punks, us..." :D

Z: We're somewhere in between I guess :)

E: I don't know how to describe us.

Dž: In general, what is the situation in Romania and Cluj with squatting, housing, homelessness?..

E: Squatting in Romania is not so new but not the political kind. It's just homeless people trying to find a place to sleep. I cannot say that I visit a lot of empty houses but the one's that I've tried to look around in had matresses or traces of people already living there. Cluj is an overcrowded city.

Z: Rents are really high and everyone who has a space wants to make money out of it.

Dž: Is it like this in Cluj only or in the whole Romania?

Z: I think it's only Cluj. It's the European capital of culture now. There's lots of people coming looking for a job because it's easier to find one, lots of students.

A: I wanted to mention the students, too, because the dormitories aren't sufficient to house everyone. It's

obvious that even if you overprice your apartment, somebody will take it, because they don't have any other choice.

Dž: Is there a homeless crisis in Cluj then?

Z: Yeah, lots of homeless and people living on the dumpster. I think that the dumpster ghetto near Cluj, where two thousand people live, is the biggest in Europe. It's really sad, unimaginable conditions. They live in improvised houses built from garbage without electricity, water or heating.

E: Also it's important to mention the gentrification in Cluj. You can see it everyday, a lot of new things appear.

Z: A lot of people are thrown out of the city. It is also connected to a lot of people who get evicted from previously state-owned houses. These buildings were nationalised during the "communist" era. After the revolution the state started giving the property back.

Dž: Doesn't the government have to compensate this by providing some other place?

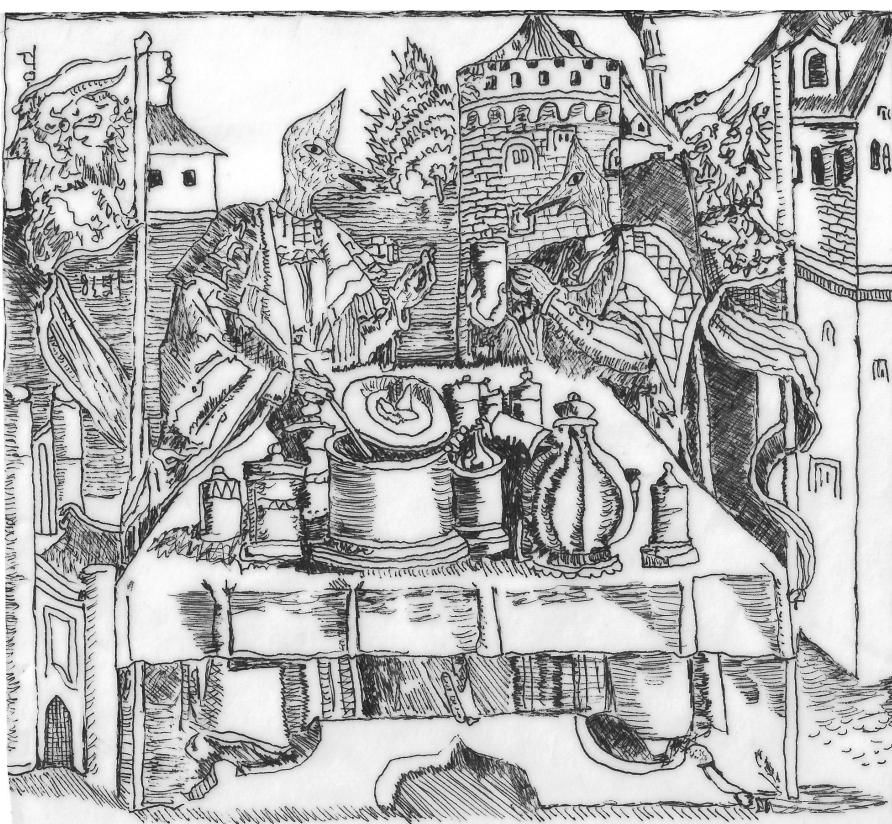
E: Yeah, they send you to the dump... That's the option that the city hall gives you.

A: Or they let you live in the street. In Bucharest there are cases when people become owners overnight - only on paper. Property agents just invent owners to get the places. It's shitty - an entire business.

Dž: I've heard something about a political squat in Bucharest which evicted the previous squatters. Would you say that it's counterproductive to do political squatting in a situation when there are so many [homeless]..?

Z: No, that was a specific situation. The squatters who kicked out the Roma family which was living there created not a political squat but an artsy hipsterish fancy "alternative" space. We talked to some guys from there and they said: "Yeah, we kicked those people out because we produce things and they were doing nothing, just creating mess in the house".

A: I even think they were used by the owner to get the Roma people out. The administrator realised that it's better to give the building to architecture students because it's fancier, and perhaps impose rent later. They were also more likely to clean the space, which was a benefit too. The Roma people weren't evicted forcefully (the argument the squatters use in their defense) - they were living together for two months while the space was being cleaned.



Just after the cleaning was done they were told that "this is a project about this and this - you cannot live here". From what I know, the students have different positions too. While one said, "come on, we are productive and they aren't doing anything", some others were saying, "we try to do our best for them, we give them jobs that we pay for, like cleaning the house, but they are kind of lazy and don't do much." After the big scandal when the leftists in Bucharest made street art saying that the squatting project is shit, some of the students realized that they made a mistake which can't be undone.

E: In the end, I wouldn't say that political squatting is counterproductive, just that you have to be aware. There are enough spaces for everybody. I think we really need some kind of squatting action - just go, make some event and leave (we cannot afford to stay) - just to illustrate the idea of reappropriating space. The youth doesn't have places to meet. If you want to socialize as a human being, you need to have money.

Z: Go to a bar...

Dž: Talking about bars – you make your own beer and have your own bakery? How did that come to be?

A: We had the idea of having a bakery from the beginning because one of "us" is a baker. His dream was to have a big oven, and some people from the mobile kitchen collective supported the idea. In the end, they found a guy who could build the oven relatively cheaply.

Z: Now he makes forty loaves of bread three time a week and it's impossible to get one if you just drop by - you have to call a night in advance and ask to put a loaf aside for you - people are going crazy because [the bread] is so good that you just eat it without anything. But [the baker] doesn't want to do it like an everyday job because then it's no fun.

Dž: Back to homelessness, gentrification, high rents... Just as an exercise of imagination - what do you think could be done against that? How can people fight that?

E: For me, the most important thing is to understand what is happening. Even if I really want to help, just thinking about the problems and actually meeting the people are very different things. What I learned from talking was something very different from what I imagined I could do. I think we should listen more and have less pride about being able to solve everything by ourselves.

A: I agree - listen more. Sometimes you can imagine solutions like taking people out of the garbage and putting them in a flat...

Z: But it's not a solution.

A: For some of them, it's not a solution - for some it's a dream. It can really differ from case to case. What people like us can do, if you want to put it that way, is having a space that we want and getting in touch with the community around. Talk with them, see if you can involve someone in your space, get them interested in your discussions and agendas. Personally, I don't think you should go to a community just because you want to solve their problems.

Dž: Problem solvers are sometimes exactly the reason why they are having problems, right?

A: Exactly.

Dž: Any last thoughts?

A: Come to Cluj :D

Dž: "Welcome" :)



## CULTURE, URBANISTICS AND DESIRE OF COLLECTIVE SPACE: KS TALKS TO JJ

*The pretexts to have this conversation were personal experiences of space, films watched and books read, as well as anthropological inquiry into Vilkyškiai.*

### [breaks; Culture]

KS: So you talk about Vilkyškiai, a village in Western Lithuania that went empty during the WWII and saw newcomers moving in after the war. As they were accommodated in historical buildings formerly belonging to the local manor and distillery, they adapted these spaces to their needs and thus acted completely "ahistorically". You said things like that happen quite often after historical breaks. So I thought about the appearance of squats, perhaps it's a bit far fetched, but perhaps villages are a bit different in the sense of time and it's cycles, whereas city is a place where "breaks" happen all the time?

JJ: Yes, I agree, these are breaks, too. Reclaiming property rights after the fall of the Soviet Union was also a break in the way of thinking, a break of the very concept of lived space. In 1990, we also had a dream of occupying a green wooden house in Žaliakalnis [one of the most prestigious districts of Kaunas], I wanted to have myself a workshop, friends wanted to play, organise events and live there. Now it's boarded up and decaying, but then it was of prime condition, there were talks about someone reclaiming it as their property, but that never happened and so it has been empty for 20 years. We did not dare to squat it, and negotiations were in vain, so it was left to decay.

I think it was in the heritage list, with its posh wooden architecture, Jewish elements, decorations etc. Property that is not needed; it seems that property is less and less related to human needs and more and more valued for its value itself. That's what I call a "break": the coming of times when a house is not a place for living or activities, but mere object of wealth. Cities and towns are full of houses like that. Speaking of Vilkyškiai and interpretations of their being, culture here is a violent concept. For some reason, both in the past and in the present, culture is always deemed more important than the survival of particular persons, and the latter becomes "their own business". Looking at it from a distance of time, it starts to appear as if they had to somehow respect that culture and cater for it, etc. – we're talking of people who moved into spaces completely alien and unrelated to them, who had no idea of this "cloud of culture" above their heads, this full network of symbolic rituals and unnecessary details... What they did was taking these forms as pure matter and molding this pure matter according to their needs. This, for some reason, is perceived as wrong. "They did not understand it, they destroyed it". They did not understand our high culture, these uncultured newcomers. But what is culture? If we leave moralising aside, culture is exactly the ability to live in a space and adapt it to one's own needs.

### [gentrification, Kaunas, bricolage]

KS: Yesterday, we watched a documentary [Flag Wars] on a black district in Columbus, Ohio, which became "historic", i.e., everyone needed to take good care of their homes. It used to be ghetto, now it's heritage. So, African Americans with no money had to either move out or find the money. The district became popular, mostly through a business device by a real-estate agency, among wealthy gay couples. So the situation became really interesting, as one discriminated group started gentrifying a district inhabited by another discriminated group. There is a scene, in which a sick black woman, who looks really old, but is, in fact, only 39, is brought to court. Here she is, all trembling, fresh out of hospital after liver treatment, and the court wants to know: whether she'll be able to renovate the house, whether she'll replace the joists, whether she'll move old cars from her front yard.

JJ: Pure horror. One is also required to take care of one's space in Kaunas, for example, where we are now is zone A, and zone A is... there is some lofty explanation.

KS: What are the requirements?

JJ: You mustn't do most anything... Somehow we managed to change our windows before this zone A was established, since it was really really cold and a copy of authentic wooden windows would have costed me 11,000 litas [~3300 euro]. I do not know what I would have to do to get that kind of money, one can come up with many things, but I wouldn't do that. So here we are, disrupting "the zone". And how many old ladies live in this zone A in their old houses, and they have to renovate them with respect to the original architecture, using only the best material? What do they do?



KS: So they are brought to court?

JJ: No, not yet, their houses are falling apart, simply. They cannot even change their windows, especially if they're of modernist architecture, made of little wooden elements... It also happens when villages become "ethnographic" and their inhabitants cannot do anything with their houses anymore, neither build an outbuilding, nor re-roof their houses with slate or tin, nor enlarge windows – and keep on peering to the world through tiny gaps – nor replace the door – people are taller nowadays, you know... Complete nonsense.

KS: In that film, when a black homophobe was asked whether he understands that he lives in a historic neighbourhood, he answered "in '67, I heard on the radio that I live in a ghetto".

JJ: "This is our heritage, this is 'us'", and those who have been living in these houses for their whole lives, are suddenly "them", the enemies of the culture, for they want an affordable window. "Heritage" is a holy word. When I was a teenage art-school student, we had a semestre or two of drawing the city: that's when I

discovered the beauty of Brazilkė [a neighbourhood of Kaunas at the end of Žaliakalnis, named after repatriates from Brasil in the inter-war era].

KS: Brazilkė is by the castle, right?

JJ: Where the slope starts towards the Neris River. Benediktinių street is a bit more luxurious, but the slope is characterised by shabby narrow streets. Then there is the other slope, "Compote", an inter-war neighbourhood of poor Jews centred around the minor synagogue, there's Vaisių street, then Kriausiu, Slyvų, Serbentų [respectively: Fruit, Pear, Plum, Currant]... The steep slope goes towards Kalpoko street and Neris. The beauty of this place stems from bricolage: annexes are being stuck to old wooden houses, or someone decides to enlarge their first floor where there is no ground floor, so they use scaffold... This makes for the most beautiful place in Kaunas. My course-mates went and drew the Old Town, and I spent a year in Brazilkė. Why can't we understand urban architecture this way?

KS: Well, because the urbanistics department of Kaunas municipality do not read Lefebvre. And perhaps because the aforementioned first floor may collapse.

JJ: But it doesn't.

KS: But one can stick more annexes to it.

JJ: For sure. But no one builds their house so that they would fall from the first floor in their bed. No, they build it with care, using the materials around. Here, see that green house outside my window: they found some spare slate and fixed their roof with it, it was a bricolage roof and it brought me joy. There were also labels on each panel of slate, so it was decorated that way for almost a year.

## **[private space and the desire for the collective space]**

KS: Let's talk about non-private space. I think that's one of the more interesting things about squats and other autonomous zones: there are usually more inhabitants than there are rooms in them, there is always someone staying over and you cannot throw them out, for they have been evicted from their own place or just happened to come by, and they are bringing 14 more people with them, so what can one do, and then there's a spontaneous party... Private space really shrinks in this situation. One builds up one's room in order to keep sanity, but one can never order the common space according to one's representational needs.

JJ: And thank God for that. I don't think it's only about

occupied or squatted space: if a person is somewhat social, they won't be the only ones to have their key, so even with one's private space one never knows... Squats are, most probably, just an extremity of this scale. This used to happen in those afterwar "communal manors" or factories reorganised as blocks of flats. Each new person would get a new partition that wouldn't really partition anything. My parents used to live behind a curtain in Šnipiškės [a district in Vilnius, now partly turned into the "new centre" of skyscrapers]. On the other side of the curtain, another family used to live; they became friends and, after I was born, they moved to the same block of flats. I think it was an intentional move. So things kept on moving the same old way, common life of two families, the "walls" were laughable, the kitchen was common... So it was both common and private at the same time. Nobody would hang deer's antlers in these after-war communal flats, or portraits of ancestors, there would be, perhaps, a photo on a shelf to commemorate some person who passed away, but it was not for representing oneself, no tables and plates that "suit the owner's personality"... When I hear these stories, it seems like those tiny spaces did not seem too tiny for their inhabitants. This unbelievable density of living only comes up after I start questioning them about that. But it was all ok. So it's not only about needs, it's also about the diminished inter-personal distance when such closeness is necessary.

KS: I don't think I could handle living like that.

JJ: You could.

KS: But I'd be miserable.

JJ: When need be, you'd go and walk in the forest. Or you'd work the fields outside.

KS: It seems that the goal of housing struggles, which is, first of all, spaces adapted to each person's needs and dignity, is fine, but it's not all what one would want: there's also desire for collective space.

JJ: ...joy of collective space.

KS: So, to eradicate poverty, it's not enough to go back to the welfare state, which would provide each with an individual room, social benefits and individual life.

JJ: And separate spaces for commonality, i.e., cultural centres.

KS: ...beats the purpose...

JJ: Indeed. I heard stories of the times past in Vilkyškiai: how someone would borrow a movie projector from their work, would bring it back home, to their common house, the neighbours would hang bedsheets in the kitchen, and they'd screen films and enjoy them together, the children would sneak out of

their beds to see it, too, so the parents would go and drag them back to beds... Or how they would bring tables outside during celebrations, for it was impossible to do it in their "flats", or how the food in the kitchen would be used in common, and so on... There are also stories of how painful it was to move to new, luxurious private houses that they got to build with permission from the collective farm's administration. I was listening to all that and I felt that I really like it! And there's nothing I can do about that. But they kept on moving to private houses, for that is the standard of welfare. "So life wasn't all roses, but then..." Wasn't it? Then why do you tell these fun stories so enthusiastically? I think they do it because they know the standard of a life story: first, we were poor, but then we achieved this and we got that, and then we got this... We visited one family in their new house, a huge one, completely faceless, not even fully lived – that's how big it was – the husband would spend days in the workshop, he renovates some sort of German crosses from the cemetery; the wife does not need such a huge house, either. They welcomed us in a cold guest room, "I'm so sorry, I only got to know you're coming an hour ago, it's only then that I turned the heating on". But then they started telling stories of their small, communal house, where they only used to have one room for themselves, and the rest was common... The husband joined in, they started talking one over the other, it seemed that life had a completely different taste before "welfare" and big personal spaces appeared.

KS: Conditions of our lives – work, university, busy-ness – are not good for communal living. Neither is our imagination of ourselves as human beings...

JJ: It is, most probably, like that, this communal living always comes as inevitability, but this inevitability has two sides, and its "darker" side is not that cruel, it brings certain joy... Once this inevitability is gone, one is presented with some choice: one can move to a flat with two bedrooms, or three, or four, or even to their own house, but one also loses something during this process... that is my point, this "inevitable" life is also full of beauty and value.

KS: One complete communist told me a good argument against universal basic income once: well, if everyone gets 1000 euros a month to sit in their rooms and do entrepreneur-ish things, there might be no collectivity left. So is it not better for all of us to be a little less effective, but happier? Or, even if collectivity is not a "goal", it is still one of the subjugated, unresearched life models – that might be its appeal, too.

JJ: Lots of people fantasise about collectivity, but they also have other fantasies of their "dream house", their representation. Thus it happens, one keeps one's fantasy of collectivity repressed in order to get something "in the long run", and if one does, one finds an opening, one buys some space and arranges it



according to obligation and not according to desire. This space is not for living, it is for representing life: but where is the joy? What next? Well, one needs another pretty space of representation, e.g., a summer house. I see a culturally coherent self-narrativisation here: a CV, which is prepared with having future in mind and oriented towards a "standard dream"; it would be so nice to learn how to live without this imaginary of the future. The newcomers to Vilkyškiai, who moved from bad conditions to worse, found bare walls that are "culture" to someone, and for them they were pure concrete, wood, and bricks. They built what they could build from these materials, and they lived quite happily for a decade or so... this happiness stemmed from commonality, from particular minutes, moments, creative interactions, and not from representation or fulfillment of one's imaginary future. One does not find this happiness in CVs: "here, can everybody see how successful I am, how I achieved all my goals, how I struggled for them, how hard I worked, how much I bought and acquired..." How can we increase the number of that former happiness in our culture? I don't think a political system can do that.

KS: And I think it can. This is exactly the political aim, direction, against which, whenever and wherever its traces appear, the current system always resists...

JJ: But do you understand that it's not the fault of

those who resist? It is just how they imagine the truth and beauty.

KS: Partly because they live in spaces of that sort.

JJ: Yes, but they live in them because these spaces are promoted to them, from their early childhood, as perfect spaces one must strive for. They meet "culture" in concert halls, opera theatres, museums, manors, and palaces: all the places of tourism, "culture", collection. Bricolage mode of production, through which one could change and improve everything, even the "holy" work of art, despite of its author – some Bach, Bernini or Michelangelo, or great architect – is thus ousted.

### [for what, against what, and how long must we fight?]

KS: So here's a question: whose fault is it and how to fight it. I don't think anybody is guilty for "culture", but it exists as an anonymous structure one can wage war against.

JJ: This "anonymous" structure has names... but how will you wage war against them? By articulating?

KS: By showing what is possible and defending what is repressed. Such a position, of course, can become purely defensive and nearly insignificant in the big scheme of things, sustaining just some space where "we can do good things" and "we" feel good in – but that's it. "Our" discourse is shrinking, and it can move you from one periphery to another, even more peripheral. So when we say "perhaps we can be as happy in this peripheral periphery as we were in the former one" we basically allow ourselves to be pushed around by "culture" as it pleases. If one does not attack, one is easily pushed aside.

JJ: I think retreats happen with age, inevitably, one loses the will to fight... there are cases where that doesn't happen, but most often it does. You know, when I was 13 or 14, I walked to the opera theatre barefoot, that was my protest against opera, which I was a student of at the time. They asked me to put on shoes in the theatre, I took out a pair of slippers and put them on. Then it seemed like a huge achievement to me, but now I wouldn't do it, it's just absurd.

KS: You'd think of a better strategy?

JJ: Perhaps, I don't know, most probably I'd just leave that temple be. It also happened with the [squatted] Atgaja [ecological movement of the late 80s-early 90s] house. Yes, on the one hand, we were evicted by the new-old owners – the Catholic church – but on the other hand, everything had been over even before that. Most of Atgaja already had families, were

pregnant or raising children, everybody went their own ways, to work, to study, no one really needed that house anymore.

KS: Well that's why we should attack the very obligation to work.

JJ: Sometimes, one works out of hunger. Yup, there is something essential in this. Struggle transforms its own appearances, its principles.

KS: You talk of these processes as if they were self-sustainable and not constructed, as if there actually existed the veil of ignorance.

JJ: Perhaps they are not self-sustainable, but the hegemony of high culture has been constructed through ages, to a T, including economics and other fields of life, it's a system. Do you want to collapse it from one point?

KS: Well, one does not "collapse" it at first, one starts at the beginning, or, if it's possible, from the middle. You start by creating alternatives and then start moving things around, or you do it together with others... It is not do or die or war against everyone. It's most important to see the creation of alternative space not as something utopian, but as something very simple, intuitive, and everyday.

### [the other urbanistics]

KS: We need a new approach to urbanistics, human-directed, understood through human. The main problem here is that this approach exists, but not many want to apply it.

JJ: I don't know, perhaps the art of architecture is necessary, perhaps it's not that bad, it comes up with something inventive every once in a while. But I never quite got the purpose of, say, interior designers in lived spaces. Nonsense. I think all that's really needed are technological specialists, who'd assure that a bookshelf would not fall on a bed, but that's about it.

KS: One also needs water and warmth in winter.

JJ: And the rest can be done by the inhabitant, as she wants it, everywhere.

KS: So nobody really gets this interior design?

JJ: No no, there are people who understand it, and not only in Scandinavia. There are interior designers in Lithuania, what they really do, God only knows, most probably they go somewhere and design interiors, just like these art experts at art galleries who evaluate your flat and choose a painting that suits you. Imagine that, chooses a painting for you! :)

KS: Specialist knowledge is a wonderful thing.

JJ: I do not quite imagine what kind of attitude towards one's lived space this requires.



Nestaučia Lefebvre'o Kauno urbanistikos skyrius...  
Lefebvre is not read by Kaunas Urbanistics department...

KS: A non-lived attitude. That is where I see a radical difference of squatted spaces: the construction never ends, and even if someone tries to end it, they only sink to hopelessness and passive aggression, so one has to finally come to terms with the nature of that space, hide one's neuroses and accept the ever-changing nature of things. It's not that things don't get better in squats, they do, but they never come to their final "Ordnung".

JJ: It's like that not only in squats, it's everywhere. I have experience in renting, there were times when I would move once every half a year or so. So I move in, dust the rooms, put my stuff down. Then stuff starts finding its places, a table appears, whichever form or design, then other furniture comes from friends, neighbours or former inhabitants. Then this furniture moves to different places, stays there for a while, then everything somehow reorders itself and, after a month or so, here, I feel like it's "my" space, but how I came to feel that, is not clear. Paintings and other things follow you to your space, but you don't really think "how I could improve things" or "what would really define me as a person". This is completely opposite to the classical imagining of space: exterior and interior are my mirror images, they are me, my achievements and hobbies, my taste, my interests...

KS: Isn't this "classics", just like all classics, but a discourse of minority imposed on majority?

JJ: Of course, and it is imposed violently, by villifying

and accusing people of "not understanding" culture, "destroying" it etc. You destroyed it by living in it! Or, how many people talk of other people's houses and how ugly they are. Well, that's quite true, towns are full of these horrible unused concrete castles that are impossible to heat, but then, there must have also been some sort of necessity for people to pursue this classical Soviet representation.

KS: But one cannot really be angry at these geniuses of the wild 90s. I see them as monsters that show the system to itself. Just imagine how fun it would be if everyone built a concrete tasteless castle and lived in a shack next to it!



## TARTU SQUAT ANA HAVA. INTERVIEW

DŽ.P.: Wanna tell about yourself first?

Tartu squater: I was living in the squat for one year and then started to travel. I used to work too but after we got problems with the eviction I quit my job to do more stuff in the squat. Now I'm helping with organizing events.

DŽ.P.: Were you at the Ana Hava squat from the beginning?

T: Not really. Others came to the house in 2010, it became publicly active in 2011 and I joined in 2012. It was active for one year already when I discovered it.

DŽ.P.: Could you then tell about the history of the squat? Like, who does it belong to, what kind of house is it, where?

T: There are two houses. One is so damaged that we don't use it. It used to belong to an important politician from the pre-war times and is now under protection of a heritage organization. The house that we're using belonged to this guy's son. He was more than a hundred years old and was living in Switzerland. He used to be a rich businessman. The house was selected because of this ownership situation - the owner was far away and without any contact with Estonia because he had been insulted for some of his father's actions and had problems with that.

It all started when a group of activists had a rented room for anarchist and alternative library. It was in a social centre where they had to ask for permission for every event so they were searching for a new place for the library. When they got this big house, three floors, they started to have other rooms, like freeshop, a hall for events and so on.

DŽ.P: How did they find the house? Were they scouting the city?

T: They had an internet group for people interested in squatting. Somebody from this group who was passing by the house got interested in it. It was in a really good place and in good condition. A little bit damaged on the outside but nice inside. People actually didn't have to break in. There was a garage in the yard and one guy was using it. This guy had a key from the house.

Dž.P.: The house hasn't been abandoned for long then?

T: After the owner moved to Switzerland, the house became a police department or something but stood abandoned for 20 years afterwards.

Dž.P.: How many people live there now?

T: Four people are living and more come to prepare for events and help with the upkeep. At the busiest time, ten people used to live there.

Dž.P.: I heard that there was a split in the group?

Change of people?

T: Yes. I wasn't in Estonia at that time. I heard that one of the main activists left because she couldn't stand the meetings anymore. Always having meetings and deciding everything by consensus perhaps is a good idea but there was one person who organized most of the meetings and did most of the speaking. She became a kind of an authority figure with time. Others became frustrated and some decided to leave the house.

Dž.P.: So now the main rule is "no meetings"?

T: Well yeah. At least no planned ones. It's more like, "oh, we're all here, let's talk about that or other".

Dž.P.: Has the squat ever been in danger? Any threats of eviction?

T: There was one big eviction threat when the municipality sent a guy with some papers telling that we have to leave in a month. But they didn't have any legal rights to do this because the owner hadn't complained. We found a law student who helped us out and had a meeting with the municipality. There was also a lot of public attention. A lot of people were writing articles and we were on the news. The municipality at first decided to postpone the eviction date but after a demonstration of a 100 people they let it go.

Now there's also a threat because the owner died and some people want to buy the house but haven't yet done it. Some come to the garden and tell us that they are going to buy it.

Dž.P.: Mhm. So there were a hundred people who came to the demonstration, others who wrote letters to the government and some lawyers who helped. How did the squat grow such support? Why did people want to

defend it even if they were not living there?

T: One guy for example is the main organizer of a festival which we participated in by hosting some events in our squat. He thinks that if we exist not only as a squat but also as a social and cultural centre, it should be important to other people as well, not just us. That's why he and some others supported us. When our eviction threat got public, at first there was one negative article criticizing us but then others came to our defense. Some people said that the squat isn't safe but then someone from the fire department wrote an article saying that the condition is good enough. I think the people wanted to fight for justice, saying that the city government doesn't have the right to evict us and that we're important to the whole neighborhood and city.

Dž.P.: I was quite amazed by the level of technology in the Tartu squat. The solar panels, self-sustainable off-the-grid life...

T: We wanted to be really autonomous and independent from the city. We were really lucky that one guy knew how to do the electricity system and make solar panels. Everything was quite experimental. We didn't know a lot of things at first but learned by searching for information and learning from our comrade. He doesn't live in the house but he's the main fixer.

Dž.P.: It sounds like everything's going really well. Now, how big is Tartu, a hundred thousand people?

T: Yeah, the second largest city in Estonia.

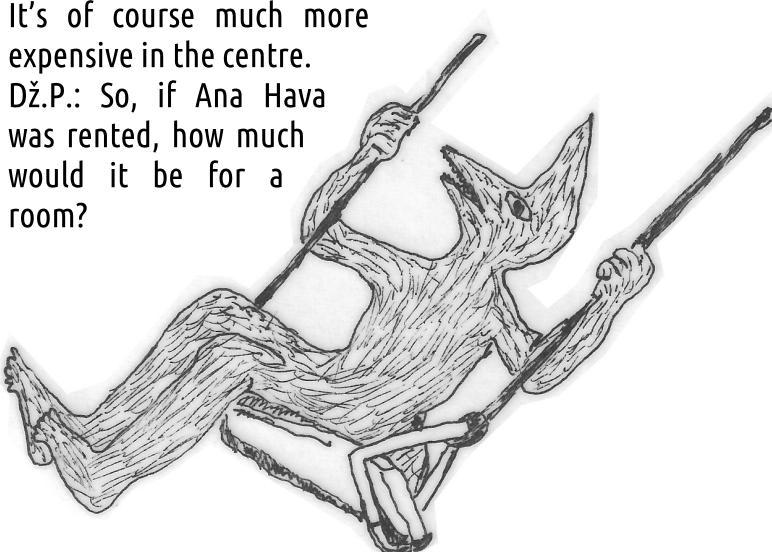
Dž.P.: And a university town too?

T: Yes.

Dž.P.: How much would rent normally cost?

T: It really depends on the district. I was living in an area really far from the centre, in a one room apartment and it cost about 150 euros, taxes included. It's of course much more expensive in the centre.

Dž.P.: So, if Ana Hava was rented, how much would it be for a room?



T: I think 100-200 euros plus taxes.

Dž.P.: Which I suppose are pretty high during winter?

T: Yes. Heating during winter costs a lot. The minimum wage in Estonia is 3 euros per hour, meaning that most of your pay in winter is spent on rent on taxes.

Dž.P.: Ok, to end the interview, could you just sum up why squats should exist, why do you and Tartu need Ana Hava?

T: If there are people who want to organize or create things by themselves but don't have enough money for it, they get a place where to do things. Other people can use the squat as an alternative cultural and social centre which isn't based on your income. Plus, if people really need to have a space to live and don't have enough money for paying rent, squatting is a very attractive option.



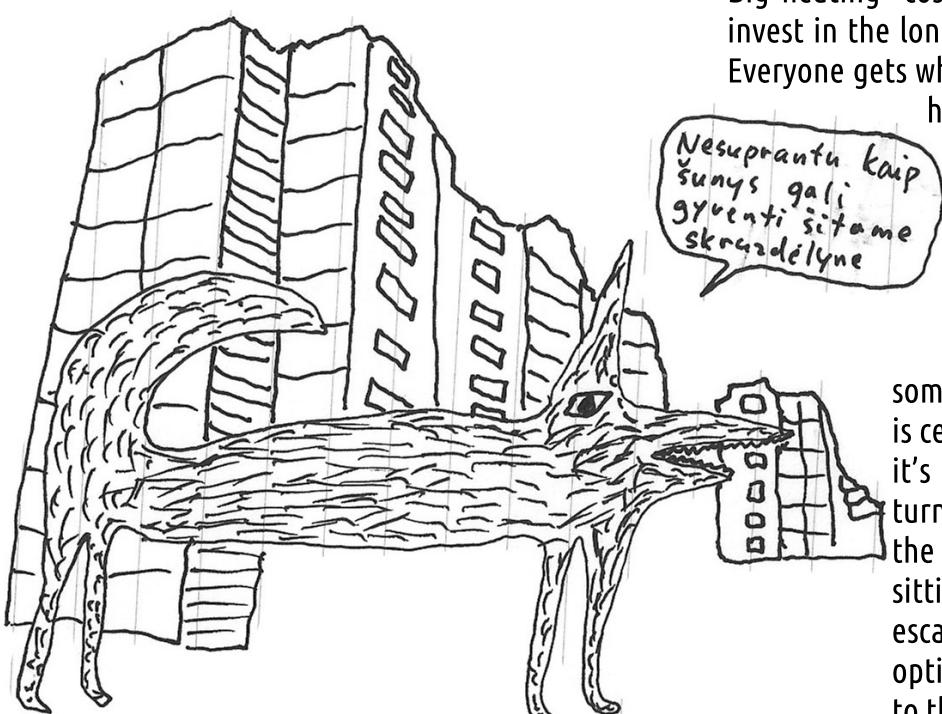
## ON ŠILAINIAI

There is nothing more wonderful than to leave Šilainiai - you leave and it makes you immediately feel better. You escaped from it. You enjoy a horizon without so many verticals and grey colors that irritate your eyes; but maybe it's all just an illusion? The escape from Šilainiai is a just a lie of which I'm going to gibber here. Probably everyone has heard of the Russian Soviet movie about the man on New Year's Eve, who after drinking with his fellows, got on the wrong plane and flew to the wrong destination but managed to get to the area with the same identical name with the

same street name and lock for the apartment door (The Irony of Fate, or Enjoy Your Bath!, 1975). Me, myself, I come from Šilainiai and my poor drunk dad experienced similar story as in the film; drunk in the night searching for his home in Šilainiai. You had to see his happy face when I opened the door for him. Somehow I knew from the beginning that Šilainiai is not just the usual living area, Šilainiai is one of these areas strategically built, or retrospectively coined for serving the industry of another area. You can say that Šilainiai was the engine of production for Vilijampolė. The construction of Šilainiai began much later than it was planned officially. The promise to provide women workers with the private kitchen would be almost realized later, in the eighties. Finally, the queues of people hustling in over-crowded dorms to get the "individual" (family) apartment shortened but the situation changed after the nineties quickly, state provided flats became private property. Shockingly enough the private property in Lithuania makes 97 percent of real estate which means in pure economic sense that market of real estate, like nowhere in Western Europe, is the basic space for manipulations. First of all, people who need social housing are the very last to get it, the state has no interest to interfere in this market. The consequence being that rent prices depend on owners opinion, the ability to pimp their apartment. There is no reason to be surprised that the Center or euro-style development always wins and that social stratification gains a strong foothold by justifying the imbalance of investments in the name of progress, the future, everything which is not the past. Big heating costs? Solve it yourself! Get a repair or invest in the long-term expensive general renovation. Everyone gets what she deserves, even in Šilainiai! You

have a right to decide for yourself what windows to install in the balcony.

"I don't understand how people can live in this ant-house", my dad complains as he covers the windows to hide from the house across from ours, in the same yard. Ah yes, to say something about the 'yard'. Well the yard is certainly not a playing ground anymore, it's a car parking lot...Public space turning into car space is a great symbol of the area – what was once a place for sitting and playing is now reserved for our escape vehicles... well there is still the option of sitting alone at home or walking to the shop.



"I don't understand how dogs can live in this ant-house"

We must not forget TV is another popular means of escape. In general people of Šilainiai give no shit about their hood except, maybe, the desire for two floor garages, otherwise nothing is lacking here. What? Did you grow up in Šilainiai? You know what you have to do. Get more channels and don't stare through window too often.

From my family I can guess that people of Šilainiai have a wish to go away from the grey zone or to change at least the area or even the country. Usually the ones who have a hope to leave the area, but not the country, are from petite bourgeois class with steady job and ability to make small cosmetic repairs in their flats. They complain and cry about the heating expenses but pay them with the hope that one day they will find a better place. That hope remains eternal...no one is very enthusiastic about that grey oasis with pretty stable real estate prices (which is to stay stably low) which resemble the prices in other similar areas like Šilainiai.

I would really like to get more into the repair styles of Šilainiai. At first it all looks like it's very dynamic process testifying to our common welfare. Wood panel floor, plasterboard sometimes on the ceiling, sometimes on the walls; no tapestry, the fashion of tapestry passed already; polish furniture with sharp handles - the tendencies here are very obvious. If someone tried to convince me that there are various design versions then I would suggest waiting for new call of "Senukai" sell out that usually happens on Wednesdays. One should look at window blinds; you will immediately notice that curtains became exception or delicacy. Here, homogeneity, does not coincide with progress idea, at the same time it does not have the same magnetic force you see in the metropolitan district.. Šilainiai does not care about the magic progress. Clearly we can imagine how homogeneity is explained by Vytautas 1, or Vytautas 2 or any other patriotic conservatives through the lens of Soviet times: it is definitely the time when everyone was put into same looking flats and yards, same kindergartens. However, the question remains what determined the same grey proletarian reality after the Soviet monster was crushed (excluding the colorful window blinds)? After all, everything changed opening so many possibilities for so much choice, but grey stays as it is...as it is hard or luckily impossible to change grey adding up or mixing in more colors the grey just becomes uglier. The base stays the same for Šilainiai to pursue the same name.

Again, the interpreters of fatherland scream maybe

there is nothing wrong in that, what Šilainiai needs is more patriotic tv programs and less polish furniture. IKEA, well that's different, but not for every Eastern European taste. Are you from Šilainiai? Then IKEA is not for you. Some time ago, in early days of Swedish social democracy the plan to make the society into a modern one when using raw wood became a curse. In other words you can call the former movement in different name like "Get rid of cabin style, think modern" or "Good Style" for Everyone. The Swedes were trained to have solid modern taste. One night I woke up in modern horror which was in the shape of Swedish student dormitory, where you could think that IKEA had a plan to suffocate you with ice bags for the freezer. Damn, I am so proud that no one trained me for such good taste because the Šilainiai grey is not as repressive as that Swedish version. I admire the moments when you observe your mother throwing a shoe at the TV, what Swedes would consider as not modern enough. Yes and I admire big flat tvs with pink window blinds - grey all the way! One greyness is from catalogue which orders you to get yourself together, other greyness tells you about obvious shit of everyday. The shit of the everyday originates from Šilainiai and it can bring some delightful troubles if good Lithuanian TV series show up, if more bad graffiti appears, more McDonalds, more bars. I am very serious. Čili pica is not exactly what greyness needs, it needs more shopping malls for sure. Bars would help for the epistemology of greyness. Well, we could already state that the TV is doing just it.

In deep Soviet times active workers' clubs was a wonderful project as well as centers for culture in the villages where you could sit undisturbed and pretend you care about political events. Well today we have shopping malls for that. There you can deliberately pretend to drink coffee from cardboard cup and observe how greyness is failing or succeeding. Maybe we should finally admit that Šilainiai is not only for sleeping...oh please no need for moral explanations about civil society and enlightenment. I guess Marx was right claiming working class as the most alienated or we could say responding to such note that yes there is nowhere so grey as in Šilainiai. Therefore leisure time is of importance to make grey even more grey, you don't need to mask it with actions like "make your yard prettier" or "more paths for bicycles" - oh please you won't fool people from Šilainiai. If you are not able to feel the pain of alienation, Šilainiai is not for you. In Old Town you can experience bourgeois illusion of happiness including all the pleasant falsity, like grey

is not a part of the SYSTEM. Sometimes Šilainiai people also participate in the former deception but just on some special occasions.

If you think that grey has many shades as I thought too..and Swedish still think that way but it only helps to maintain the greyness denying all potential of Šilainiai, potential is silenced even by just calling it sleeping area. So let's stop doing it once and for all.



## **GREEN HOUSE SOCIAL CENTRE. STORY BY SQUATTER AND INTERVIEW.**

- A confession of a Green House squatter –

The Green House was born bit by bit. A reading group in candle light, the first party, the second party, a film screening, a gathering of street musicians, a punk rock concert...One wood oven and two small rooms divided by a shaky wall with a „do not lean“ sign on it. Later on the whole house was liberated from the dark, the dust and the junk. In the last month one could come to a bike repair workshops on Saturdays, communal dinner on Sundays, film screenings and discussions were held, GH hosted a library. A pact was made to only host concerts once a month, but smaller house parties with live music, heated political discussions or a casual conversation with a random guest could happen any time. Next to the house onions, carrots, radishes, spinach and herbs were planted and responsibly watered everyday.

The house was on a constant maintenance and care. Unexpectedly found water pipe increased the quality of life in the house by 50%. The water tap problem was ingeniously solved by reusing a half-cut bottle, a piece of carton and a good quality scotch-tape, allowing for the joy of clean dishes and unlimited amounts of tea and coffee. One of the major renovations was tearing down the „do not lean“ wall, which doubled the size of the room and ensured that the drum set wouldn't get kicked away by the dancing crowd. The Green House was getting nicer by a day, on the last evening a bar, "Weak Will"( Silpna Valia), was opened - even though alcohol wasn't actually sold there, one could elegantly put an arm on the bar while sipping self-brought beer. The parties attracted the most people. A good feeling overtakes you when you see 100 people squeezed in a room of 30 square meters: someone's crowd diving, someone's having a peaceful conversation by the furnace, someone's passed out on a couch and someone's expressing their joy that „something is

happening in Kaunas“ and it's not a new shop, not Kaziukas fair, but a squat “like in the West“.

Nonetheless the parties were not the main aim or activity. Bigger satisfaction would come witnessing the free shop getting filled, the library being used and discussions happening. The House started to gather people around political and social ideas which previously seemed important only for a small group of people. The house was a common space between the private and the public. There were no owners. However, it didn't mean that one could do as one pleases. Decisions regarding squat rules were made collectively together with all the people taking part in or wanting to join the creation and survival of the Green House.

We had a good contact with the neighbours. Some visited the house and helped fixing it up. Those who knew that the users don't own the property supported the squat and were happy that an old abandoned wooden house has finally been brought back to life. Others weren't clear on how the youth got in and agreed with the owner, but were equally happy about the neighbourhood revival.

One day the house was visited by an architect, responsible for replacement of the hundred year old wooden house into a bourgeois apartment building. Surely the architect wasn't happy that the house isn't abandoned. He left after sternly commanding to get out. The squatters attempted to make a usage contract, but were rejected it with an argument that the house is in a state of emergency and therefore unsafe to use. Naturally, we interpreted „state of emergency“ differently than the architect. A couple of people and one dog tripped over a hole in a corridor floor but it was more a result of an ongoing renovation, rather than a state of emergency. Neither the people nor the dog suffered any injuries.

The house had its golden month or two until the second appearance of the architect. Unfortunately, when he showed up the second time, we had to move instantly with a police escort. An evening before that, a huge amount of police force paid a visit to the GH. 7 police mini buses with around 30 officers flooded a concert in search for anything illegal, but they ended up not finding what they were looking for and leaving after issuing a noise warning. Perhaps the popularity of the place reached unfriendly ears, perhaps the owner reported the „intruders“ or perhaps someone called the police on purpose.

The Green House existed for half a year. A lot of work, hopes and emotions were invested during that time. From a party place it grew into an active social space, an example that an abandoned house can be revitalised and made fit for living, cultural and social activities. In a broader context it's a small, but important example of an abandoned city space being changed without gentrification, meaning - without privatising and making it into a money making machine, but leaving spaces public, communal and opened for people's initiatives.



-- Conversation with Green House squatters --

**Q:** In theory most of us are familiar with the idea of squatting – from press, TV or stories from friends. But squatting, just like activism, often ends up in likes on facebook and drunken discussions „it would be so cool...“. So how did the idea materialise and became a real-life social centre with concerts, free-shop, infoshop, film screenings, urban garden, bike workshop and all the other activities?

A: We had a couple of beers in a bar and were going by an abandoned building, which my friend checked out before. We tried to open the door and voilà. We left the door unlocked for a week or two checking if there really wasn't anyone living there.

B: After that we were asking around, looking for info, trying to contact the owners... but they didn't say anything concrete, didn't admit that they own the house. That's when all the activity started little by

little.

**Q:** What did you know about squatting before that?

A: Before joining the GH and the people surrounding it I knew squatting mostly from the media and Lithuanians who squatted in Spain or England...

B: Something unclear, gave me a double feeling. There were a lot of hippies, who have been abroad, where squats were more like community centres. It sounded as something motivating, getting people together. It seemed it could be a spot that had a capacity to change the surroundings, create an alternative. Apolitically in the beginning, later I saw it in a more politicised light.

C: A buddy of mine used to talk about squatting, I started asking – what, what squatting here in Kaunas?! And little by little it started...

D: I got to know from a friend as a sensation that there will be a squat in Kaunas. Sensation because there was never such a thing in Kaunas (or was there?). And because it was a sensation, we went to look. Well, 'coz all that alternative politics and similar stuff are ok in themselves, but they usually don't mix with existing spaces in Kaunas. Alternative spaces in Kaunas are art projects, some parties once in a while, politics usually begin and end with late night conversations with beer. So we went to look if it's a bunch of drunk punks, who broke into a house, dragged some instruments for one evening and are loafing around from wall to wall, or is it something more serious.

**Q:** So what's so special about that space? How does it differ from a flat or a bar?

A: I liked that it wasn't personal or private space; everything passes through you and changes, you change other people. You communicate, things happen, it changes you... Everything constantly boils.

B: It was an open space where one could always come without writing sms „can I come over“, feeling like a guest... You have spare time and you know you can come to the Green House and there will always be people whom you want to meet. So GH was a space where one could find their friends. I don't know if friends is a right word, maybe like-minded people. Accomplices. Here, I said it.

C: You pay a lot of money for a place to live and there are a lot of people who don't have any place. You think about it and eventually realise that there are a lot of empty houses. Also, you see people doing things when travelling, and you try, see what will come out of it. Having a space is crucial. When there is a group of

people wanting to do something, you have to „ground“ yourselves. Not in a bar, where you have to pay money and not at home, which you want to separate from politics and activism

D: Simply a space where you can do what you want. There are no people to disturb, you can play music all day, make food, read, welcome people, play as much music as you want. Do silk painting and it won't stink for other people.

E: I think the main part is ideology, which is not necessarily expressed clearly, the space itself gives an inspiring aura just by being there. I think fuck the money issues, they aren't important, what you can and can't get or do. The essence is that one is always in the system and this is like a rip in the matrix - wow, what's happening! In our generation, when there are no revolutions, only postmodernism, many options and little true experiences. And here you have a sudden uplifting feeling, like something is happening, like you are doing something real. And the space is real - you can feel it with your entire body, your senses. Not just fucking around. For me that's the point.

F: My dad came over to the Green House once. It was a bit strange for him, but he liked it and encouraged us. Through the GH I realised that I can actually talk politics with my parents. And when we meet for dinner or something we can talk about the GH and or some protest.

**Q:** What about that ideology, the politics?

A: Politics is important for me, otherwise I would have never ended up in that soup. I'd be some artist, could do something with that space, that would be it. It's important for me to have an ideology, so there is a visible expression, so people are reached, to have a feedback, communication and not to create something for yourself and put it on a shelf.

B: One way or another, squats are autonomous spaces in a state. Squatters want to do much, pay for nothing... all these actions become political no matter what you do, of course it touches radical politics - anarchism, anticapitalism. To create a public space, to produce - it's a political act.

C: I was completely apolitical before, wasn't familiar with it. It was only text book stuff - what's left, what's right... But I didn't know any underground. I started understanding something from anthropology studies.

**Q:** What did GH achieve, what was the biggest success and maybe even continual value?

A: The first party. We were unsure, didn't know what strategy to take with the house - to be an open squat or a closed one, how the neighbours will react, what will happen when the owner appears. We were squatting together for the first time in Lithuania. It's very difficult to predict what's gonna happen when there is no concrete experience. A spontaneous party, organised in a week in the middle of winter was a great success. Many people came and everything gained a momentum from there on.

B: One of the nicer things were people's reactions and understanding, changing through time. In the beginning people used to say "I didn't think this could happen in Kaunas" and ask to inform about what happens next. Infoshop - I didn't expect a lot of people at first, but there were, several, not too many, but reading honestly, consistently. You notice through time that people get engaged through one of the options.

C: Biggest continual value is probably growing circle of comrades, friends. People found people, we had many guests, got many things, got to know squatters from abroad, learned all kinds of practical things through fixing and renovating.

D: Everyday life, preparations.

E: We entertained the punks of Kaunas, who think of Kaunas scene as totally dead, we sent a message about squatting.

**Q:** So, one most important thing is ...?

A: There is no one thing. There are many aims we raise for ourselves, go towards it systematically and either reach it or not. So I think that in general it's important that new people joined, new people got to understand what they want from a space and what to do about it - we need more of those.

B: That it happened at all. We dared. And showed what „private property“ can become. There are many empty buildings in Kaunas. I hope people will start squatting.



**Rozbrat, Poznan: a talk with Wania, with interludes of Basia**

W: I'm Wania, I have been living in Poland for the last few years. I'm in the squatting movement in Poznan and in Warsaw. I started in Poznan, that's why I can speak a bit more about how it is there, also about Rozbrat, which is one of the oldest squats in Europe. This year [2015] it will be celebrating the 21st anniversary.

KS: How did Rozbrat appear?

W: Some people who started it are still living there. Yes, with some breaks, but there are still people who are involved after those 21 years. It all started with a few guys who did not want to go to the army, they were doing social work. They did not have too much money and they did not want to live with their parents. One of them found an old printing house. It had been ruined, abandoned for many years and he plus a few of his friends decided to, like, squat it. They did not think about "squatting", just wanted to have their own space that they did not have to pay for, where they could live the way they wanted, listening to punk and playing in punk bands.

KS: So they did not know the concept of "squatting"?

W: I don't think so. I think it was more about finding a space for yourself, a peaceful one, where you can do what you want with the tiniest imaginable budget. At first there were just a few people, then they started to renovate it and to discover more and more space there. They built a kitchen, a shower, a stage for punk concerts... Rozbrat is a complex of buildings and it's quite huge, so it took a lot of time to put some life in it. People built walls, made constant ceiling repairs... Now one building is just for housing, people just live there. Another one is for silk printing, one is for gigs and a library, and there's the fourth building for bigger concerts, then there's an anarchist club for political meetings, and the "Bratstvo Trojka" (Brotherhood of Three) anarchist publishing house. There's a bike workshop, where you can come every Wednesday and repair your bike.

KS: Are any of the buildings falling apart?

W: No, because people put a lot of effort and energy to it. The way of thinking about this space is that it's not temporary, that we want to stay, so you have to think about the ceiling, you won't just not-give-a-fuck.

KS: Where is Rozbrat city-wise?

W: It's, like, 15 minute walk from the centre. It's a very pretty area, quiet, with lots of trees, green stuff, living, growing there. Mainly small family homes, stuff like that, some small companies surround it. It's a very peaceful place. I was living at Odzysk [squat], which is absolutely in the centre of the city, and when now I went back to Rozbrat, I felt like somewhere in the countryside, birds singing, trees, peaceful...

KS: What do neighbours think about Rozbrat?

W: There is a good communication with the neighbours, people put a lot of effort to it. If it gets, for example, too loud during some concert, and the neighbours don't like it, they turn the volume down as much as possible.

KS: What does Rozbrat mean?

W: Rozbrat is a definition of a situation: you are cooperating with somebody, but you don't want to anymore, you want to split, divide - that's rozbrat. Separation, but with strong connotations. A funny thing about Rozbrat and how important it is: to go to Rozbrat, first you go by quite a big city road, and then there's a short, perhaps 50 meter-long path that leads to the squat. In Google Maps now it is the Rozbrat Street, you can check it out.

KS: How has it managed to survive for 21 years? Whom does it belong to?

W: It belonged to some private companies... Big, small, medium. I don't know exactly, because it's changing, the land is divided between some companies and the city. The city tries to sell some land, to privatise it, but the thing is - every single time they had public auctions, there was popular resistance. The last time a week before the auction about 2 or 3 thousand people came for the demonstration. I think it is a huge deal when so many people come saying "this place will stay and we will fight for this place". When you want to evict a small family, it's easier than when you want to evict a place that has support all around Poland and Europe. Also, this support is a good reason not to buy it.

KS: In a city of half a million people, two thousand protesters is a lot.

W: Yes, that is a lot. The last auction was in 2009, you can see some photos from it on the internet. The main square was absolutely full of people. There was some police involved, but no riots happened, it was quite peaceful. It wasn't cheerful, the people were wearing masks and stuff like that, but there were no riots... no big riots at least.

KS: I suppose it can become dear to that many people in 21 years, but, in more detail, how did it happen that it attracted this support? Who are the people who come to help Rozbrat? Are they anarchists, punks or somebody else? Does it go wider?

W: It goes wider. Yes, there are anarchists, because Rozbrat was and is connected to the anarchist federation, also punks, because a lot of punk gigs with bands from all over the world happen there. Rozbrat also gets some support from the city inhabitants, because squatters are involved in lots of city and housing struggles. They began to help people that are supposed to be evicted, including the legal way... Rozbrat is also connected with Workers' Initiative, the workers' union, so it is a place where a lot of different people come. Even people from the university, students come because they feel a huge need

for a critical place.

KS: Did the legal situation change, did it become legal?

W: No, it's still not legalised. I think with all the support and the strength that Rozbrat gained in the last 21 years, it will not be so easy to evict it. Plus, it is a place where a lot of people become aware of what squatting and anarchism are. Rozbrat is not the only squat in Poznan right now. Two and a half year ago, because of this support, and because we had a big group, we were able to open Odzysk, a huge squat in the centre of the city. Rozbrat was the beginning of squatting movement in Poznan, but it was not the last place. Right now there are at least 3 squats. When I think about a squat, I think about a place where people live and also make some social activities, something more or less political. These 3 places are openly calling themselves "squat", they have a political side. But I also know a lot of people who move to empty buildings and just squat without saying they are squatters.

KS: I heard about a law in Poland that they cannot evict you so easily if you live somewhere for some time...

W: If you live somewhere for three months and they want to evict you, they need to give you a temporary place to stay. But this does not work all the time. It depends a lot on the lawyer. If your legal team is good, you can find ways to evict people. That happens quite often in Poland: people get evicted against the law by people who represent the law.

KS: Is the situation good for squatting? Are there many abandoned buildings in Poznan?

W: A few years ago, people counted empty buildings, and it's not the precise number, but there are about 30 thousand empty places (flats) in Poznan. That's quite a regular number, in Warsaw it's the same or even more.

KS: Why does it happen?

W: There must always be a number of empty buildings for speculation. In Poznan and Warsaw those tens of thousands of empty spaces are for speculation.

B: If some businessman owns 7 buildings, for him it's easier to have 4 empty, because then the rest are more expensive.

W: That's why there are so many empty buildings, the prices of buildings for rent or buying go up. It's a "natural" capitalist process.

KS: Are there many homeless people?

W: Yes, of course, you often see people in very bad condition on the streets. I think they do squat by themselves. It is a huge problem, because it's a big city, the rents are getting higher and higher, there are at least 6 universities and 100 thousand students. Lots of them rent, and the prices go up and up.

KS: How much would you say an average room in Poznan costs for a month?

W: Depends on how lucky you are, but I would say, if there's a flat with three rooms, or two rooms, it might be that you need to pay about 120 euros a month for a bed in a two-bed room. So, let's say that would be about 250 euros for a double room.

KS: That's quite a lot.

W: It can be less, for example 200 euros for a room in a flat with 4 rooms or so, if it's an old building, but yes, the prices are ridiculous.

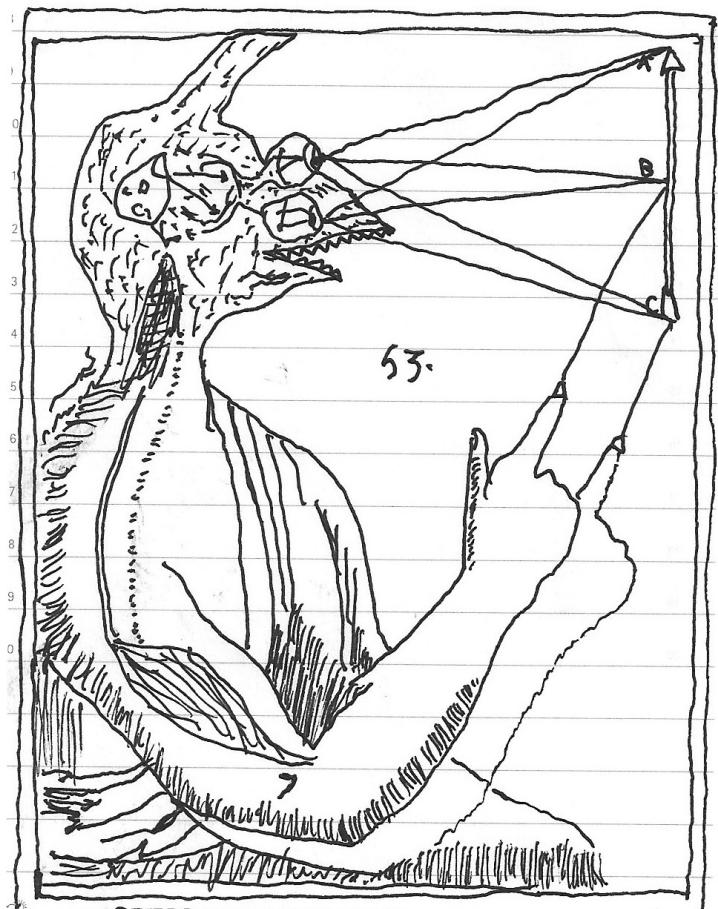
B: It's like Vienna or Berlin, just with the Polish salary.

W: Usually, if you find a job in Poznan, it's hard to find anything that is paid more than 1.5 euro per hour.

KS: Wait, that's less than the minimum wage in Lithuania.

W: But that's the law when it comes to workers' rights. Minimum wage is something you can dream about. You usually get a "temporary" contract and they don't have to even pay you minimum, it's about a little more than 1.5 euro for an hour. Imagine you need to pay 120 euro monthly for a bed. So there's a huge housing problem in Poland and there's always a need for a place to stay.

KS: I don't know if there's such a housing problem in Kaunas, perhaps in Vilnius... It does not seem like there are many homeless people in this city, at least we don't see them.



W: Yes, in Poznan you can also think that you don't see them, because in winter there is a huge action made by police and other institutions. They "hunt" the homeless and put them in some centres, where they are supposed to sleep so that they would not freeze. But that is only what they say, they are just taking the problem away from the city and putting it into closed buildings where you cannot see it.

KS: Is it forbidden to beg in the city or the city centre?

W: It depends, because there is a thing in the law saying that you cannot do it aggressively, touch somebody, come too close, i.e., being insistent is forbidden. It depends on the police and the city guards. It also depends on who you are – if you are white Polish, it's a bit different than when you're from the Roma community. There are about 100 Roma people in Poznan, they also squat, they squat the city gardens. No work, no money, what can you do? The children have to go to school, you have to have a place to say. It's a huge problem, and at the same time it's

not hard to find abandoned buildings in Poznan. You could stand on the main square and you could point at at least three huge abandoned buildings. One or two of them belong to the city.

KS: Is there any official talk about that? Any party or politician that start talking about giving these buildings to the public?

W: There are always talks, especially before the elections, but after the elections everything remains the same, the buildings that were empty stay empty. Nobody cares.

KS: But then at least there's an understanding from the people, not from the politicians?

W: Poznan is a very old trade city, so the main agenda is: if you don't pay, you're a bad person. Yes, maybe people would like the buildings to be renovated, because they should be representative of the city square, but it's not in the way that "people should live there", it's more "they should look nice". They could even stay empty, but they should "look nice".

## Trivia on law & housing in Lithuania

**After one obtains some "non-owned property",** there must be an ad placed on the internet, and it has to be up for 6 months; after a year of looking for the owners, real estate is officially announced to be "ownerless".

**One can easily find a list of unused real estate** owned by Kaunas municipality on kaunas.lt.

**In Lithuania, legal forced eviction** (that can only be legitimised by court and can only happen after the respective legal process!) may only be applied when inhabitants do not pay rent or taxes for three months, when they are actively destroying the premises or "render conditions impossible to live" for those living with or near them. It can also be applied to those who occupied premises illegally (Civil Code art. 6.611)

**Once forced eviction is approved by the court,** bailiffs must leave 30-45 days for the inhabitants to move before using force. If the inhabitant(s) fall ill, the term can be prolonged (Civil Code art. 659)

**It is illegal to evict a family that has children** younger than 14 years old. When it's social housing, "in nine out of ten cases, families with children are not thrown out to the street" (<http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/k>

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**In 2012, a peculiar case reached Panevėžys** region court: since 2010, a citizen had been occupying "shower and other facilities" of a dorm-type house in Anykščiai. The aforementioned citizen "was throwing rubbish around, excreted in the shower, paid no taxes". The accused was only evicted after a year and a half, having spent 25 months in the shower (<http://eteismai.lt/byla/26710200858897/2A%C2%AD316%C2%AD198/2012>)

**In Kaunas, a case on evicting a single mother with little children,** who illegally occupied their social housing, lasted for 5 years, from 2000 to 2005. During those 5 years, the family stayed in their flat.

**In 2008, a few inhabitants of Kaunas appealed the court** to recognise their living premises as theirs. In 2012, the court decided to evict them. In 2013, they were still living in the same premises.

**According to Penal Code's art. 165,** entering private premises by deception and/or violence is punished by public works, fine, arrest or jail for up to two years. However, as mentioned in a certain case, when house's "windows and

and the entrance is free", and it is impossible to prove that that was done by the accused, "the mere fact that the acquitted were found in the aforementioned building" does not mean that they broke into it as understood in the Penal Code (eteismai.lt/...)

**In Kaunas, on average, around 25% of all water** delivered to blocks of flats is not accounted for. "On average", for most blocks of flats don't account only for about 5% of their water.

**During the first 9 months of 2014, "Lesto" electric company found out about 123 cases** of stealing electricity. "The amount of cases was diminished by short winter, for it is winter when we catch the biggest amount of electricity thieves, when they use electric heaters that require a lot of power." (<http://www.lrytas.lt/>...)

### Utopian announcements

**In their vision for 2020 Kaunas city municipality** foresees to build a new 6 storey car parking in place of the demolished Merkurijus, revitalize the part of Laisvės avenue between the fountain and Soboras by building a landing for private jets, and also rebuild the historical gonkė lines to Akropolis, Charlie Pizza and Viči basketball museum in the town square. But this is a distopia.

**The DEATH tag** has been included in the list of UNESCO cultural heritage.

**Kaunas citizens learned to protest!** After the seventeenth multi-thousand protest this year and a campaign of direct action during which people were pissing on all the houses, fences, trees and cars in the city centre, the municipality (which is also considering to delegate most of its rights and obligations to elected local elderships) agreed that free public toilets are necessary. After long discussions, it has been decided that all private and public institutions will be obliged to open their toilets' doors and

lids, no more divided according to a binary understanding of gender. Also, in an attempt to raise awareness about other problems of social justice, the toilets of houses worth more than 100'000 euros will also become public, by arguing that everyone should have the possibility to enjoy heated floors, soft and nice-smelling toilet paper and bidets.

**There will be lots of bicycle tracks.** Everywhere. Really. And good ones. We'll give everyone a bicycle as well. We'll give loads of things - bread, games, a lot, you know. You just come. Like in the West.

**It is already half a year as the construction company "Padjoba" is unable to start construction of an apartment building in Juozapavičius avenue.** The luxurious eight storey building with underground parking and first floor luxury clothing boutiques and raw-food restaurants cannot be built due to an old wooden house standing on the same plot. There have been mysterious disappearances of bulldozer screws and unexplainable

fence fires around the demolition site; workers are met by acrid chemical smell and loose german shepherds when they come in the morning. Four employees of the "Excopa" security company have been removed from duty due to alcohol abuse. "We simply cannot pay so much that people would accept to work in what they think to be a cursed object" - Nerijus Moneybag, the chief architect of "Padjoba", was telling "Sp(i)auda". "It seems that we will have to postpone the project indefinitely or even completely abandon it." The company is counting losses in tens of thousands. Owners of the wooden house have refused contact with the press but posters inviting to a picnic on the territory of the house have appeared all around Šančiai walls and fences.

**The public transport workers union which has reached almost 100% membership in the recent year declared in today's public announcement** that starting from the 1st of January, 2017, all public transport in Lithuania will become free of charge.

Everyone will be able to try out and freely use all the means of public transport, starting from the ordinary trains, busses and trolleybusses (which will have full accessibility), to bicycles, skateboards, canoes, segways, boats, footmobiles and, of course, unicycles. The workers also expect their wages to be raised due to the expected increased flows of people, and promise to completely close down the transportation system in a general strike (which would probably be supported by other unions, most of whose members get to their workplaces by public transport) if the government doesn't comply.

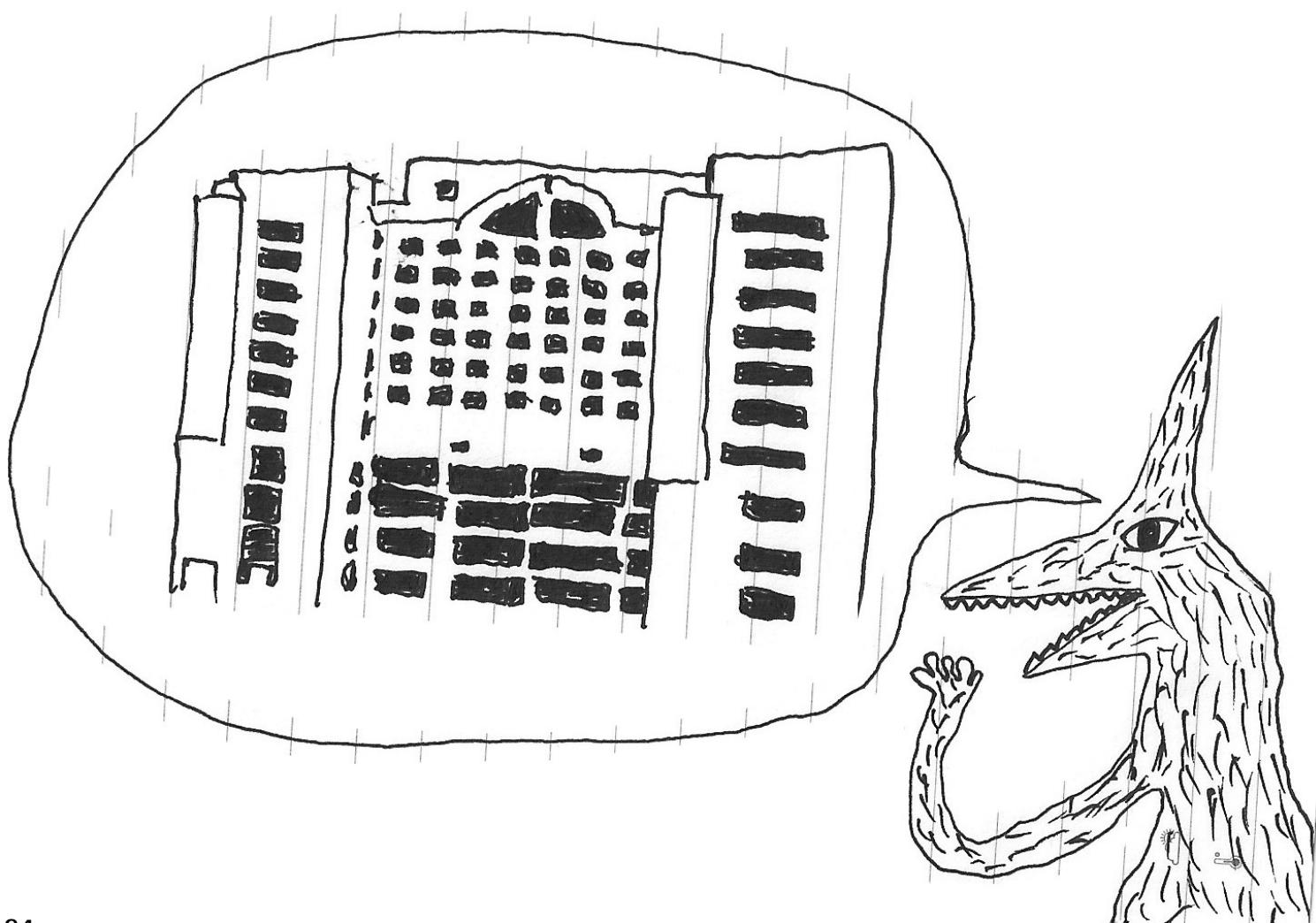
This is an amazing step for Lithuania in the history of practices of public

transportation. Foreign experts forecast that if the union's endeavour succeeds, 80% of Lithuanians will have sold their cars within a week.

**Vytautas Magnus University and Kaunas University of Technology, while moving to new buildings, will turn the former ones into social housing.** After pressure from students and occupations of university buildings lasting for several months, the old huge buildings in the centre and oldtown will be not sold but given over to the society as a common good. Administrators of the buildings will be assigned by university general assemblies - the most favoured candidates at the moment are the newly formed radical

student unions. It is estimated that the four empty historical buildings could house over three hundred underprivileged families of students, single parents, homeless, people with physical and/or mental disabilities, refugees, and people who have had problems with the authorities in the past. Employees of the universities have already voiced their resolution to help the new inhabitants with legal, social and medical problems. Funds for this project will be taken over from universities' public relations departments.

**"Crabsticks&Mayors" Ltd. has purchased the abandoned ghost building** on Mindaugas avenue and forgotten it. Like the others.

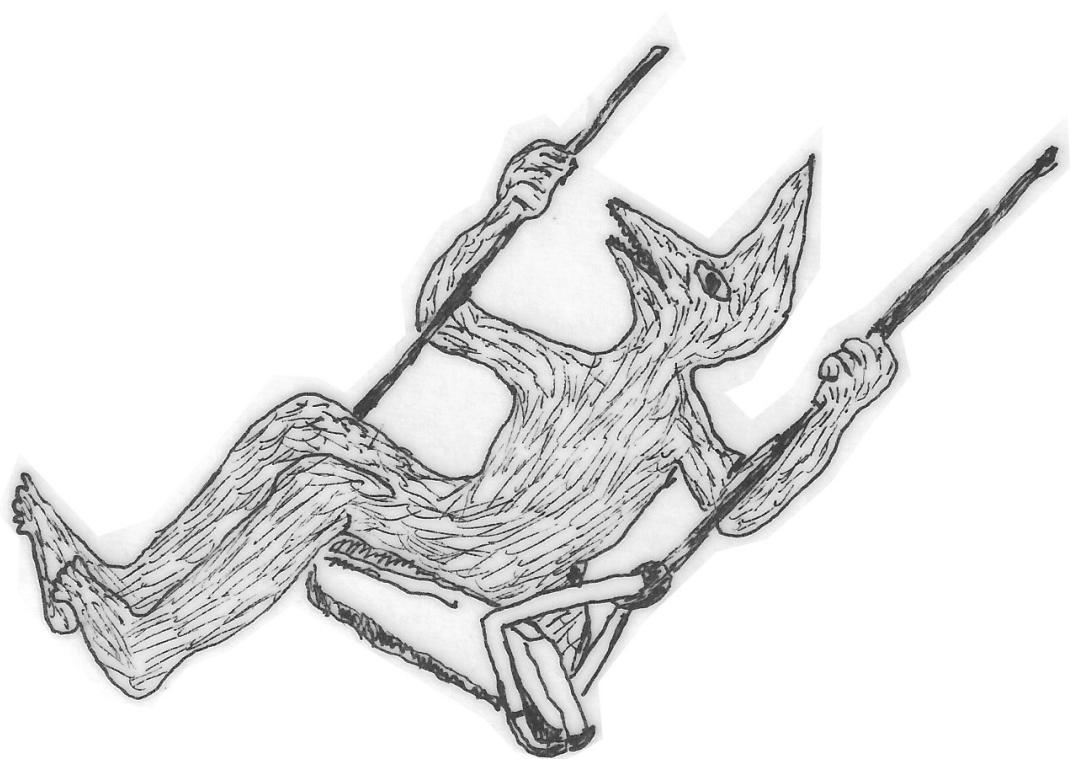


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(So far we haven't had much of a feedback, but one must not stop trying)





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