

An Artists' Guide to Not Being Complicit with Gentrification in the Hudson Valley

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Adapted from text by Heather M. O'Brien, Christina Sanchez Juarez and Betty Marin (June 19, 2017, *Hyperallergic*)

You hold power!

Yield responsibly!

Take care of you & of each other!

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We write in hopes that more artists will finally break free from the status quo, step into their power & consider their roles in the revolution on the local level.

We recognize that art has been made into an industry that must be acknowledged in order for artists to challenge their complicity. Reclaim what & why art is & can be!

In this spirit, we share just some of the lessons we've learned through our organizing & pedagogical work. See this as a "101" for folks who are brand new to the topic. Questions? Be in touch. We love & appreciate you so much.

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Glossary!

Artwashing: the use of art & artists in a positive way to distract from negative actions by an individual, organization, country, or government.

Class: the system in which people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic status (i.e. "middle class" based on income).

Gentrification: the process where a poorer urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

Privilege: unearned advantages granted to specific groups of people because of their membership in a social group.

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1. Become involved in housing struggles! Did you know the Hudson Valley is gentrifying? While some of this change may *seem* fun, it also makes it too expensive for less-privileged people to live here. Committing to this work is not always easy, but we must choose to stand with our neighbors who are most at-risk or stand up for ourselves/ask for help when in need.

We realize that artists usually contribute to first waves of gentrification but we can choose to support each other & demand things that protect us all like Good Cause eviction regulation, limits on short term rentals & housing for all people.

Housing is a human right!

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2. Learn your rights (especially those with racial, educational, or class privilege)! We become part of the problem when we don't know our rights. Abusive systems operate on the notion that we do not know their rights. Learning our rights is the first step to building collective power, taking care of ourselves & each other. Call Legal Services of the HV or ask around!

3. Don't call the cops! We all have

a stake in neighborhood safety & can choose to do this work without criminalizing the poor & people of color. Most fine arts spaces represent a white supremacist capitalist system that is protected by police. **Plan an alternative ahead of time!**

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4. Interrogate the spaces you choose to enter & work with! If spaces don't ask questions about their impacts (regardless of their intentions) we should not settle on them. Many art spaces & projects ultimately serve as investment projects to boost property value for landlords, developers & realtors. Is it worth supporting a space that may contribute to someone losing their home? **Build your own spaces!**

5. Share institutional power! What is an art institution's intent when they only temporarily feature a social movement or a less-privileged artist in their space? Marginalized artists should lead the way, full time, long term. **There is enough opportunity for everyone!**

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Resources to look up and follow!

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley | www.lshv.org | (877) 574-8529

Art/Life Institute of Kingston

Beacon 4 Black Lives

Dutchess County Pride Center

Food Not Bombs: Newburgh

For The Many

Kingston Walks 4 Black Lives

Millions of Butterflies New Paltz

Newburgh LGBTQ+ Center

Rise Up Kingston

Take Care Recording Co.

Thrift 2 Fight

Trans Closet Hudson Valley

- Look up "Mutual Aid [Your Town]"!
- Volunteer at a food distribution or community fridge!
- Get to know houseless community members & those on the margins!

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What if we see our role as artists as being deeply tied to the health of our neighborhoods? How can you use your art to do effect change?

Celebrate845's mission is to organize, recognize, & celebrate(!) marginalized & working class creatives across NY's Hudson Valley via pop-up & virtual offerings.

We love you!

www.celebrate845.com