This map shows the locations of NYCHA's housing developments throughout New York City and is available for download at www.crattcenter.net.
Site Visit Locations

BUTLER HOUSES
1452 Webster Avenue
Bronx, NY 10456
Subway Lines 4, 5 to 149th Street and 3rd Avenue — transfer to BX41
Bus BX41 local to 120th Street and Webster Avenue

BRONX RIVER HOUSES
1135 East 174th Street, Bronx, NY 10442
Subway: 4 to Morrisania/South Bronx Avenue — walk 2 blocks north to 174th Street

CASTLE HILL
919 Castle Hill Avenue
Bronx, NY 10473
Subway Lines 4 to Castle Hill Avenue — transfer to BX22 bus
Bus Lines X19 to Castle Hill Avenue
BX22 to Seward Avenue

MONICO HOUSES
530 Lawrence Avenue
Bronx, NY 10472
Subway: 4 to Lawrence Avenue — walk south on Westchester Avenue — walk 2 blocks to Rosedale Avenue — walk 4 blocks to Story Avenue
OR: 4 to Parkchester East 177th Street — take bus 36 to Story Avenue — transfer to the BX3 Bus to Rosedale Avenue

PATTERSON HOUSES
959 Central Avenue
Bronx, NY 10451
Subway: 6 to 138th and Alexander Avenue — walk east to 143rd Street and 3rd Avenue

PORE HOUSES
1610 Thirteenth Avenue
Bronx, NY 10453
(718) 981-0600 Fax (718) 981-4983
Street Boundaries: 135th Street/136th Street
Firmin Avenue/Trenton Avenue
Subway Lines: 2, 5 to Prospect Avenue — walk north 4 blocks to 185th Street
Bus Lines: BX21 to 166th and Boston Road

SOUNDVIEW HOUSES
1750 Seward Avenue
Bronx, NY 10473
(718) 642-0770 Fax (718) 642-4293
Street Boundaries: Rosedale Avenue/Laconia Avenue
Bronx River Ave/South Bronx Pl.
Subway Lines: 6 to Morrisania Avenue — transfer to BX27
Bus Lines: BX5 to BX28 - BX6 to White Plains Road
BX27 to Seward and Rosedale Avenue
SCHEMA

I wanted to go over:

- Long-term Goals
- Medium-term Goals
- Short-term Goals
- Action Plan
- Timeline
- Resources

Weekly Goals:

- Monday: Brainstorm
- Tuesday: Research
- Wednesday: Writing
- Thursday: Editing
- Friday: Publishing

Daily Goals:

- Morning: Write
- Afternoon: Read

Questions:

1. What are the key themes?
2. How do these themes relate to each other?
3. What are the implications of these themes?
4. How can we further explore these themes?

Giovana Bosman

19.9.1932

Curies: 1903-1934

5) Misek-Meier
6) Beyond

1) The Quest of the Gramsci: Memory
2) Can it establish a new form of memory?
3) Why would Gramsci today?
4) Can it reveal memories?
5) Will it be an event?

Best,

Giovana Bosman

Orders:

1. Check Copies of Gramsci-Related Thems They Have
2. Show me:
3. Original Books: Gramsci, had in Rome
4. Ask for Original Things (Gross, Shor)
5. Help!!

Dear:

Shalom mitz! On the Gramsci-Library

The Books Who Grainsc Again

The Press-Climbing by hand in Rome

The Books he had in Rome

Covers of Photographs

Rome Con Enlightenment

Suga 1933

Bosco 1934

Storia

Giovana Bosman
Statement: Monuments

Thomas Hirschhorn

I try to make a new kind of monument. A precarious monument. A monument for a limited time. I make monuments for philosophers because they have something to say today. Philosophy can give the courage to think, the pleasure of reflection. I like the strong meaning in philosophical writings and the questions about human existence. I like full-time thinking. I like philosophy, even when I don't understand a third of its reflections. I'm interested in nonmoralist, logical, political thinking. I'm interested in ethical questions. That's why I chose philosophers for monuments. But in contrast to the altars, which are personal commitments, these monuments are conceived as community commitments. There is something really beautiful in the fact that human beings have the capacity to think, to reflect, and the ability to make their brains work. Spinoza, Deleuze, Gramsci, and Bataille are examples of thinkers who instill confidence in the reflective capacities: they give force to think, they give force to be active. I think that to read their books continues to make sense, to question, to reflect, to keep beauty vital.

The monuments are composed of two parts or even more. The "classical part," a form, reproducing the thinker with his features, head or body. This part of the monument is a statue. And there is the "information part," a new part in the monument, the material to be consulted: books, video tapes, statements, biographical documents. This information part with its material responds to the why. The "classical" statue part responds to the who. The information part of the monument is a physical place, a small construction (like in the kiosks) open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, where one can isolate oneself, sit down, study, and get information about the philosopher's work. This part of the monument with the documentation is a proposition to make the philosopher's work accessible to the public: to those who have never been in contact with philosophy, but also to those who are "professionals," specialists, philosophers, or amateurs. I want both aspects of the monument to be equally accessible.

I want to make it possible to first be in contact with information, to read about the work, the philosophy, and then afterwards to look at the statue. I want the monument to be diversely accessible. Thus, the monument is not just standing there, but wants to offer the possibility to inform—about its meaning and furthermore about the thinking of those philosophers.

There is an active part and a passive part. This monument will not intimidate. It does not come from above. It is made through admiration; it comes from below. The monument will not remain there for eternity. The plastic aspect of the monument—cardboard, wood, tape, garbage-bag covering, neon lights—shows its limitation in time and enforces its precariousness. The form conveys the idea that the monument will disappear. What shall remain are the thoughts and reflections. What will stay is the activity of reflection.

The four monuments are to Spinoza, Deleuze, Gramsci, and Bataille. I made the "Spinoza Monument" in a street of the Red Light district in Amsterdam in 1999; I built the "Deleuze Monument" in a public housing space, Cité Champfleury in Avignon in spring 2000; and I made the "Bataille Monument" in the Friedrich Wöhler housing complex for Documenta 11 in Kassel, in 2002.

February 2003
Tribute to Form
Thomas Hirschhorn

The "Gramsci Monument" is a Form; it is a new Monument Form. It is a new Monument because of its Dedication, it is new because of its Location, it is new because of its Duration, and it is new because of its Outcome. Everything related to it and coming from it is new and is—above all—Form. The "Gramsci Monument" is a tribute to Form and my answer to the question: What is Form? To give Form requires making a Statement, fighting for it and being at War for it. It means understanding Form as Resistance and thinking its Universality.

Form is essential in Art; Form is the most important thing. By Form I mean something coming from myself, from my own, something that I am the only one to see and perceive as logic, something that only I can work out and can give. The decision to dedicate a Monument to Antonio Gramsci is Form. The "Gramsci Monument"—in its precariousness—is Form and the decision to do a time-limited Monument is Form. The decision about the Duration of the "Gramsci Monument" is Form. It is necessary to understand "Form" as nonsplittable, nonnegotiable and—even—nondiscussable. "Form" only exists as something entire, undividable, and complete, as an atom or a core—this is hardcore—and this "core" is Form. "Form" and "Aesthetic" are interdependent but not to be confused. Form is what gives ethic, preciseness, and clarity in the incommensurable, complex, and chaotic world we are living in today. Aesthetic is the answer to the question: What does this Form look like? How is it made? What materials are used?

Form never seeks a function, Form is not reductive, Form is never exclusive, and Form can never be qualified with terms such as "the good Form."

To give Form is a Statement and an Assertion I have to stand up for. To give Form is an act of emancipation; it is a resolution and a decision I must take. No one asked me to do the "Gramsci Monument" and no one asked me to do it in the Bronx. The decision about Location of the "Gramsci Monument" in the Bronx is Form. I am responsible for this Form. No one "needs," no one "wants," and no one "waits" for the "Gramsci Monument." This work is an absolute Affirmation, and therefore cannot be reduced to any supposed function. I am doing it because I authorize myself to do it. Working out Form is a matter of production, of taking pride and dignity in this production. Form is never a fact, and Form never refers to the only factual. Form is never an opinion and doesn't appeal to opinion. Form is never a comment and doesn't need to be commented on.

In standing up for a Form it is clear that I have to pay for it, and as the artist I must be first to pay. Why? Why be ready to pay the price for the "Gramsci Monument" and for all my other artworks? Because to do a work of Art is a kind of War—not against something or somebody—but for something, for a Form. Because being at War implies to fight, to insist, to struggle, to make sacrifices and to have a strategy. Because I understand Form as a mission, and doing the "Gramsci Monument" is a mission. I am "on mission," as artist I have my own mission, it's an art-mission, something to accomplish, something to absolutely fulfill, and something to live or die for. "Mission" is a War term—War for Form—never a religious term. To do the "Gramsci Monument" is perhaps an impossible mission but—in any case—it's a mission. Form—as mission—is a commitment, an engagement, and a position. To struggle for a Form is the opposite of thinking "career" and playing tactics. And thinking about "Targets" and "Opportunities" has no place in this War for Form.

As a warrior for Form I must appeal to Art as Resistance. Art—because it's Art—is Resistance as such. Resistance toward aesthetic, cultural, and political habits. The problem to me—as artist—is: How can I do a work today, in my time, which resists the actuality of today? How can I do a work in my historical context today that reaches beyond its historical time? And how can I do a work which is, in any case, Ahistorical? The "Gramsci Monument" wants to be Resistance—Resistance as such. Other terms for Resistance are Belief, Creation, Risk, Dynamic, Positiveness. The "Gramsci Monument" is resolutely based on Positiveness, but this doesn't guarantee a positive outcome; it means that—as a work of Art—it is created in Positiveness, because Positiveness is Resistance. The "Gramsci Monument" in its Outcome is Form. This Outcome will be the Resistance. Resistance is never based on Solution or Justification. Resistance stands opposite to Argumentation, to Academicism, to Contemplation. In doing the "Gramsci Monument" I need to resist all kinds of phantasms. The "Gramsci Monument" is not a phantasm—it is a Dream and as a Dream it will be rebuilt—every day—as new.

Art—because it's Art—is based on Universality, consequently the "Gramsci Monument" wants to be a universal artwork. There is no Art which doesn't own "Universality." Universality of Art is the condition granting to touch the Other, the Reality, and the "Truth."
As an artist, Universality is my belief and my will. My aim is to be in touch with the Reality, with the World, with the one, and with the unique World we are living in. It is only by aiming at "Universality" that one can implicate a "Non-Exclusive Audience," and it's only by aiming at Universality that I can bring "Politics," "Love," "Philosophy," and "Aesthetics" into the core of the "Gramsci Monument." Universality is just another term for "Equality" and for "Justice." To aim with insistence at "Universality" is a way of fighting "Tradition," "Identity," "Culture," "Particularism," and "The Personal." The "Gramsci Monument" wants—through its Dedication, its Location, its Duration, and its Outcome—to be a Form, a Universal Form.

December 2012
Unshared Authorship
Thomas Hirschhorn

In doing my work in public space and furthermore, in doing works involving residents on location such as the upcoming "Gramsci Monument," I am confronted with the question of "authorship."

Unshared Authorship
Consequently I want to propose a new kind of authorship: the Unshared Authorship. This means that I, the artist, am the author of the "Gramsci Monument"; I am entirely and completely the author, regarding everything about my work. As author—in Unshared Authorship—I don't share the responsibility of my work nor my own understanding of it; that's why the term: Unshared. But I am not the only author! Because the Other, the one who takes the responsibility of the work also, is—equally—author. The Other can be author, completely and entirely, in his/her understanding of the work and regarding everything about the work. That's why, again, the term: Unshared. Unshared Authorship is a statement, it's an assertion, it's offensive, and it's a "hard" term in opposition to the "soft" term "collaboration." Unshared stands for clearness, for a decision, for the "non-exclusive," for the opening toward "coexistence." Unshared means saying yes to complexity, and implies multiplication, not division. Today's issues about claim for "responsibility" come from those "shared responsibilities," which push you to the "I am not responsible for this, I am only responsible for that!" excuses. Unshared Authorship—we could also say "Unshared Responsibility"—allows me to take responsibility for what I am not "responsible" for. Furthermore, Unshared Authorship allows me to be author even when I am not the "author." This is the essential, this is the new.

Equality
I believe in Universality and in the universal power of art to transform each human being. Other words for Universality are "Equality," the "Non-Exclusive Audience," "Truth," "The One World," or "Justice." Other words for Belief are "Resistance," "Intensity," "Movement," or "Creation." I want to confront my Belief with reality—through my work—and I want to be engaged with art in absolute Equality. "Belief" and "Equality" are both constitutive for art. "Belief" is to be absolutely convinced of this, to follow it as a decision, as a hope, and to use it as a weapon, as an affirmation. I cannot understand the skeptical, the disappointed, the resigned, the cynical, the critical—nothing can be done when there is no belief in equality. Belief in equality is a strength, it's active, and it's a resistance to objectivity or neutrality. With a part of dream and innocence, the notion of Unshared Authorship can build throughout "equality" and "non-exclusivity," a basis to engage directly "The Other." There is no artwork—that stands as such—based on inequality or exclusivity.

The Other
The only possibility to encounter the Other is "as equal." This is not easy and is being avoided by today's many circumstances, conditions, and contexts. To resist this I must allow myself "Equality," I must authorize myself to assert "being equal." This means establishing a relation with the Other out of my belief in equality. This means concerning the "Gramsci Monument" that in order to encounter the residents of possible sites that will host my work, I need to follow my belief in equality without forcing an attitude, remaining truthful to myself. Should equality not be the most obvious thing? Unshared is the contrary of unequal. To act in Unshared Authorship is an act of emancipation and of
self–understanding that doesn’t require response. To establish a contact with the Other—through art—must be something “given,” something essential, something absolute. It is a necessity for any artistic "fieldwork." For the "Gramsci Monument," I am doing this alone and solitarily, because I am convinced that the only possible contact with the Other can happen "One to One." This is not self–enclosure or a romantic attitude. Only a “One to One” contact can create a dialogue or even a confrontation with the Other.

I or Me

I have always understood “me” or “I”—which I use often and with no bashfulness—as something already including the Other. The Other, the reality, the world—my own world also—should be included within “I” and “me.” I’m not first nor last expressing this, but the term “Unshared” in Unshared Authorship—enlarges the entire dimension of “I” and “me.” I want to do everything to use art as a tool for involving the Other—throughout my work. That is the problem and the challenge, and why I love so much to do a work of art. I want to do a work in which the affirmation: the Other is included in “me” and in “I,” takes a form. This is my competence as an artist.

February 2013
"Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses, The Bronx, NYC
Thomas Hirschhorn

The decision to do the "Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses, the Bronx, is an essential decision. Such an important decision can only be taken after a long process of fieldwork; it cannot be taken by an institution or an administration, it’s an artistic decision and as such has to be the outcome of a process. This process is fieldwork. The fieldwork for the "Gramsci Monument" consisted of visits to Public Housing sites all around the City: to begin with, I visited forty-six projects in the five boroughs, then reduced the visits to fifteen sites in three boroughs where I met with residents, presented my project, and tried to find out if a cooperation might be possible. I finally focused on seven sites, all in the Bronx: Castle Hill, Soundview, Monroe Houses, Patterson, Bronx River, Claremont and Butler Houses, and Forest Houses. There, I had several encounters with residents who are actively involved in their neighborhood. To discuss with all of them was instructive, fun, and truly helpful. I admired their commitment, their implication, and their thoughts toward and for the neighborhood, which reinforced my conviction that the question of the site is a question of human encounter. Therefore the decision to do the "Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses was taken in common—by Erik Farmer, President of the Forest Houses Tenant Association, and myself. It was the one who invited me to do the "Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses together with his neighbors in the spirit of coexistence and cooperation. The encounter with Erik Farmer was decisive also, because he was the one who asked me to give him a book of Gramsci to read. I met Erik Farmer thanks to Clyde Thompson, the Director of Community Affairs/ Employment and Training at Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Centers—which is located at Forest Houses—it was Clyde Thompson who sent me to him. The Encounter and Discussions with Clyde Thompson were very important to me, and I remember it as a beautiful moment when I met him for the first time in the office of Diane Herbert, the Director of the Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Center at Forest Houses. It was in August 2012 when Diane Herbert and Clyde Thompson welcomed me, listened, and questioned me about the "Gramsci Monument." I realized immediately that I was making a real encounter. I remember this moment as a moment of happiness—the happiness of an artist creating the conditions of a dialogue and a confrontation through Art, his Artwork! Therefore to do the "Gramsci Monument" at Forest Houses, the Bronx, NYC, doesn't come from my understanding of Gramsci but from my understanding of Art. They offered me their time to speak about my project and explain the "Gramsci Monument." I was challenged and taken seriously. These where the real encounters between me and the...
Other—and one can easily understand that without these encounters, no decision regarding a possible location can be taken. This is why the "Gramsci Monument" will take place at Forest Houses.

"Presence and Production"
The guideline for the "Gramsci Monument" is Presence and Production: I call it a "Presence and Production" project. "Presence and Production" is a term I use for specific artworks that require my presence on-site and where my production takes place during a given time on a specific location with the cooperation of others. I think it is important to use your own terms, terms you invent as an artist, and agree with.

As I once said, I never use the term "participatory art" in referring to my work, because someone looking at an Ingres painting, for instance, is participating, even without anyone noticing. I never use the terms "educational art," "community art," and my work has never had anything to do with "relational aesthetics." The Other has no specific ties with aesthetics. To address a "non-exclusive" audience means to face reality, failure, unsuccessfulness, the cruelty of disinterest, and the incommensurability of a complex situation. Participation cannot be a goal, participation cannot be an aim, participation can only be a lucky outcome.

To be present and to produce means to make a physical statement here and now. I believe that only through presence—my presence—and only through production—my production—can my work have an impact in Public Space or at a public location. To be present all the time at the "Gramsci Monument" means to understand full-time presence as a noble task, as the task of taking responsibility. The artist is not present because he is the artist (the creator of the work)—he is present because being present is the most important. To give his time, to share his time, there is nothing more important elsewhere. That is the commitment and the meaning of my presence.

The issue is not "The artist is present" as announced on exhibition opening cards. The terms "charismatic," "artist-leader-pedagogue" are inappropriate, they convey something unknown, distorted or cynical. I am not complaining, I am not crying, I have always seen my mission—as an artist—as taking over responsibility. Responsibility for everything touching my work, but also responsibility for what I am not responsible for. To work out "Presence and Production" projects demands my absolute responsibility. This is sometimes misunderstood, but that's what I mean by:

"I am an artist, not a social worker." When doing art in Public Space, there is nothing more beautiful and more persuasive than to proceed from Art as Art. And by insisting on the notion of Art, doors are open for the other, open to encounter what the other does not know and does not want. Precisely because Art can achieve something which one does not want. This is what is unique about art and philosophy. Therefore I do not distinguish between a person who could be a "receptive participant" and the person "hanging around." Not making a difference can only be justified in regard to the principle of Equality—which demands making no difference in regard to all differences. It is not always easy to insist upon this, but if I resolutely keep to it, this assertion can lead to miraculous and enchanting moments, which—to me—are the most sublime and beautiful moments in my work. The "Gramsci Monument" will remain an affirmation of an autonomous artwork that is made in a gesture of love. This gesture doesn't necessarily call for an answer; it's both utopian and concrete. I want to create a new form, based on love for a "non-exclusive audience." My love for Antonio Gramsci is the love of philosophy, the love of the infinitude of thought. It is a question of sharing this, affirming it, defending it, and giving it form.

February 2013
Why Gramsci? Why New York?
Thomas Hirschhorn

Why Gramsci?
The decision to do a monument dedicated to Antonio Gramsci comes from my commitment toward Art. As was the case with my other monuments to Spinoza, Deleuze, and Bataille, my competence to do the "Gramsci Monument" in the Bronx, New York City, comes from my understanding of Art In Public Space today, and not from my understanding of Gramsci. My decision to dedicate four Monuments to these four Philosophers comes from my schema:

3) The "Love" and "Philosophy" parts can generally be considered as positive, and the "Politics" and "Aesthetics" parts as negative. I am aware and even interested by this fact, because I understand the world I live in as "One," undivided and unique, as a world with the positive and negative, but also with the "not-only-positive" and "not-only-negative." I therefore decided that my work would always include all four parts.

4) Dividing the circle in the four parts—"Love, Philosophy, Politics, and Aesthetics"—creates four intersecting points: "Love/Philosophy," "Philosophy/Aesthetics," "Aesthetics/Politics," and "Politics/Love." I decided that the intersecting point "Love/Philosophy" would be dedicated to Spinoza, the intersecting point "Philosophy/Aesthetics" to Deleuze, the intersecting point "Aesthetics/Politics" to Bataille, and the intersecting point "Politics/Love" to Gramsci.

I decided to do the "Gramsci Monument" because I love the work and the life of Antonio Gramsci. That is my response to "Why Gramsci?" My love includes everything coming from him, without exception. I am a "Gramsci-Fan." As a fan—as every fan—there is no criticism, no distancing, and there is no limit. Being a fan cannot be explained or justified, but I can and will clarify, for myself and for you:

"Why Gramsci?":
Because he was a hero.
Because he was a revolutionary.
Because he was ready to pay the price for his commitment.
Because he was a strategist.
Because of his passion for the Political.
Because of his proposition to define one's own position.
Because of his hate of indifference.
Because he wrote Notebooks and Letters in Prison, and each one is a beautiful and strong foundation, from which to build an education.
Because his faith in the capacity and competence of the human being was unlimited.
Because he wrote: "Every human being is an intellectual," which is echoed by Joseph Beuys declaring that "Each human being is an artist."
Because he understood Art and Philosophy as a friendship-movement.
Because of his question: "Is Philosophy independent from politics?" which then encourages me—as an artist—to ask: "Is Art independent from politics?"

There are four important points in this schema:

1) From the very beginning, I decided that my work would assert itself and move in the Form-field and Force-field divided into four parts: "Love, Philosophy, Politics, and Aesthetics."

2) My work doesn't necessarily have to cover all four parts equally, but each part should always be touched to some extent.
Because his texts are a toolbox for everybody who is willing to confront today’s reality. Because of his definition of what crisis is. Because he wrote constitutively about art, as “Art itself is interesting, it is interesting in itself, in that it satisfies one of the necessities of life.” and “The content of Art is Art itself.” Because of his fight for Universality against particularism. Because of his love of ideas and also his insistence to make these ideas work, to act and be efficient with them.

Because he wrote: “The only justifiable enthusiasm is that which accompanies the intelligent will, intelligent activity, the intelligent richness of concrete initiatives which change existing reality.” Because he is an example of loyalty. Because he was fearless. Because to read his writings today is such an encouragement.

“Why New York?”
It is easy to explain why I want to do a monument dedicated to Gramsci, but less so to give reasons for “why in New York,” simply because there is no reason, and this is the point! But there is a logic. It is my logic—it is an artistic logic. It is my logic not to “choose” specific cities, specific contexts or specific community places for my Monuments. Because what I am looking for are universal places. Places where terms such as “Universality” confront reality, complexity, chaos, and contradictions of today. This is the “Universality” I am interested in—the Universality which fights particularism and obscurantism. Not “Universality” as a harbor of dreams, but “Universality” as a beautiful and absolute idea, an idea one has to fight for at all times, an idea to be reconstructed everyday—anew, as the “Gramsci Monument” itself.

It might be quite clear already that my decision to do the “Gramsci Monument” dedicated to the Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci is not a political decision but an artistic one. I am aware of today’s confusion and misunderstanding regarding what is “political!” And the “Gramsci Monument” gives me—once again—the occasion to clarify and insist on what differentiates “working politically” as an artist—which I want to do—and “the political” in art, which is only a “trademark” like many others. The meaning of “working politically” or “acting politically” is to decide for myself who is my hero. This is the artist’s own decision, according to his logic. What is crucial and what makes a big difference, is that no one asked me to do a monument dedicated to the cofounder of the Italian communist party Antonio Gramsci. And no institutional power, no official, no historian, no scientist, no politician suggested I do a monument dedicated to Gramsci in New York City.

Antonio Gramsci is my hero—I am not trying to convince anyone of adopting my hero, just as no one has asked me to do something for his hero. The only decisive thing I want is to do something, myself, for my own hero! I would be happy if the other establishes himself his own hero and hierarchy of heroes—in order to give form to the human capacity of self-determination, of self-authorization, of self-determination, and of emancipation. The “Gramsci Monument” must be a Universal Monument, it must be mentally transplantable anywhere in the world, in other cities, other locations, other public housings or places where people are living. This is the ambition and the affirmation of the “Gramsci Monument.” The only valid answer to “Why New York?” is: because it’s a universal work of Art. Universality—which is the condition for every Artwork—means Justice, Equality, The Other, The Truth and The One World. The “Gramsci Monument” exists at Forest Houses, in the Bronx, in New York City, in the USA, in America, in the World, in the one World, the unique World, in our World.

April 2013
Antonio Gramsci visse in questa casa.
Dear Kelly, dear Megan,

here is my debrief:

The meeting with Diane Herbert and Clyde Thompson was good, they are very concerned by "what is the benefit for the community" - and about the community. Antonio Gramsci was a great discussion, we talked about "the three models" and their take on my project to them, I told them that I am not a social worker or an artist who serves the community - I tried to tell them that I have only to observe the three, they understood that.

It was a nice moment - the fragile beginning of a real dialogue between equal human beings. I loved this short moment. I made no concessions in anything and they were attentive to this, so I will have another meeting on Wednesday with them in order to present precisely my project to 4-5 people of the neighborhood.

I went to go there with Yamii (I hope she can) in order to already present them "the ambassadoras".

I will think about how to make my presentation technically and I will talk about this with you on Monday morning at 8:00, the other meeting (with Terrance) was not interesting, he just gave me another name and another number to call.

HELP-OFFER: Simone Battisti, one of the new gallery-directors at Gladstone is a great fan, he is Italian (from Rome) and he offered to make phone calls to Rome - in Italian - whenever for whatever we need. I think this can be very helpful - I also propose to speak about this real opportunity on Monday, have a nice weekend - both of you!

take care - take care,

Thomas
DEAR CLYE,
I HOPE YOU ARE DOING WELL. I JUST TOOK A LOOK AT THE PORTFOLIO I SUBMITTED TO MYTRAP.

I TRAVELLED TO NEW YORK LAST WEEKEND. I WILL BE IN THE CITY UNTIL NEXT WEDNESDAY. IF YOU WANT TO MEET ME, YOU CAN CALL ME.

DEAR CLYE,
I WAS THINKING OF COMING TO NEW YORK NEXT WEEKEND. ARE YOU FREE THEN?

I CAN COME BACK ANY MOMENT.

DEAR CLYE,
I HOPE YOU ARE DOING WELL. I JUST TOOK A LOOK AT THE PORTFOLIO I SUBMITTED TO MYTRAP.

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I WAS THINKING OF COMING TO NEW YORK NEXT WEEKEND. ARE YOU FREE THEN?

I CAN COME BACK ANY MOMENT.
PROPOSITIONS:

Ramp to Platform
Example: 

"GRASSI-BANNERS"
Exemple:

Using the existing structures and the existing furniture
Extending it
**Sketches**

**Principle of Construction**

- **Fountain**
- **Pool**
- **Platform**
- **Pavilion**
ERIK FARMER AND CLYDE THOMPSON
INVITE YOU TO A COMMUNITY GATHERING
TO MEET ARTIST THOMAS HIRSCHHORN

Come meet artist Thomas Hirschkorn and learn more about his project, "Gramsci Monument," taking place this summer, from July 1-September 15, at Forest Houses.

EACH HUMAN BEING IS AN INTELLECTUAL A.G

Saturday, May 4th, 1-4 pm
Location: Forest Houses Community Center Gymnasium

Food and drinks will be served.
All are welcome to attend.

"It is one thing to be particular, another thing to preach particularism." Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 3)

"Is philosophy independent from politics?" Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 8)

"The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born." Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 3)

"In mass politics, telling the truth is, precisely, a political necessity." Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 6)

"Reality' exists independently of the thinking individual." Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 7)

"Quality should be attributed to men, not to things." Antonio Gramsci (Prison Notebook 1)
HOUSING, HEGEMONY, HISTORY: A FRAGMENT

Reinhold Martin

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New York has had many “ground zeroes.” For a few hours, one of these was located at the intersection of Forest Avenue and 163rd Street in the Th Bronx. Forest Houses, which temporarily hosted Thomas Hirschhorn’s Gramsci Monument, now stands at this intersection. But on December 13, 1952, a citywide civil defense drill was conducted there, in which it was imagined that, at 8:40 am, an atomic bomb had been detonated 2,500 feet above the intersection of Boston Road and Southern Boulevard, about ten blocks to the north. City officials selected the 163rd Street site for detailed evacuation and firefighting exercises related to the drill. At the time the site was a demolition zone, which the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) was clearing to make way for the construction of the new public housing complex. Shortly after the imagined blast, firefighters and rescue workers with recently upgraded equipment descended onto the half-demolished structures to contend with smoke bombs that had been detonated and fires that had been set to simulate post-attack conditions. The New York Times described the scene like this:

The test in the Bronx was grimly realistic, for it was held in an area of dismantled old houses with jagged walls, piles of bricks and broken windows... Towers of water leaped skyward as the pumpers fed 3,600,000 gallons of water into the “devastated” area.

Miles of wire and hose were strewn through the streets—the wire to maintain contact with top defense officials, the hose to reduce the fire hazard. At the scene, Arthur W. Wallander, former director of the New York City Office of Civil Defense, said the test was going “very well.”

The first section of Forest Houses opened in 1954 and the remainder in 1956. Funded by a combination of New York State housing loans and New York City bond issues, the group of fifteen cruciform residential towers ranged from nine to fourteen stories in height on 19.6 acres across three city blocks that had been combined into two. Intended as what NYCHA termed “low-rent” housing, for “low-income” residents, the qualifying minimum income for tenancy was higher than any other previous New York State-sponsored public housing at the time. The complex, designed by the architectural firm of Rosario Candela and Paul Resnick, was built on land the city had acquired between 1950 and 1951 through a combination of condemnation and purchase as eminent domain. Somewhat ironically, for most of his career Candela had been among New York’s most prolific designers of bourgeois apartment buildings, with twenty-four addresses on Fifth Avenue and twenty-three on Park Avenue to his credit.

1 I am grateful to Jonathan Paskowski for his invaluable assistance with the research for this essay.


3 Unused NYCHA Press release, May 16, 1956

4 Deeds acquired by NYCHA for the site are listed in a NYCHA Legal Department memo, “Deeds for Filing at the Vault—Forest Houses,” December 27, 1951, New York City Housing Authority Collection, La Guardia and Wagner Archives, Box 0073E1, Folder 5.

5 Earlier that year NYCHA adopted a resolution for acquiring the property for the site, “Resolution Authorizing Acquisition of Certain Real Property at the Site for Forest Houses” (New York State-Aided Project No. NYS-52) January 11, 1951. NYCHA Collection, Box 0073E1, Folder 5.5. Following Candela’s death in 1953, Resnick seems to have supervised the design and construction of Forest Houses. Resnick is listed as having “Building Plans Filed” by early June 1951. “Building Plans Filed,” New York Times, June 9, 1951. In the same issue, the New York Housing Authority’s Rosario Candela and James Chipman (New York: Acumen Press, 2000), an architectural rendering shown on an undated draft of a brochure credits Candela and Resnick with the design. Undated draft of a brochure, “A Community Plan for Its Future: Forest Houses,” Suburbs 1 LI Bronx 1930-1999, Box 3, Folder 6, CHPC records.
The demolition of the site's existing mix of tenement houses, apartment buildings, and shacks, and the erasure of three blocks of Forest Avenue and one block of East 164th Street, had resulted in the realistically "devastated" area required for the civil-defense exercise. But the destruction of existing neighborhoods through "urban renewal" was not yet as controversial as it would later become in New York, most infamously in the confrontation between neighborhood activist Jane Jacobs and urban planner Robert Moses that climaxed in the mid-1960s. Instead, the principle, citywide issue addressed by NYCHA planners working on the project, by independent housing advocates, and to some extent in the media, was the racial integration of public housing. At Forest Houses, to avoid the ghettoization of minority populations, NYCHA set up a "Balanced Community Committee" in partnership with local civic organizations, including the Forest Neighborhood House, a progressive settlement house one block north of the site. The committee was established in 1952 to act as a liaison with community organizations, to publicize the goal of a multiracial tenancy, to attract a diverse mix of potential tenants, and to recruit volunteers to interview applicant families.

A 1955 draft report in the files of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council (CHPC) evaluated the outreach programs, which also included a series of community conferences and educational programs, as follows:

In all instances was found an acceptance and understanding of the Balances [sic] Community Committee's objectives, as well as an awareness that this social experiment was a big step in the right direction of concern for the needs, abilities and potentialities of human beings, realizing that the "technique of the small bite" was reaching out beyond the concept of housing for shelter and reaching into the area of housing families in communities.

This "technique of the small bite" meant small-scale local engagement to offset the public perception of heavy-handed central planning associated with urban renewal. Among this technique's instruments were brochures inviting potential tenants to apply. A draft for one such brochure, also held in the CHPC archives, shows on one side a photograph of a multiracial group of men gathered around a table, juxtaposed with an architectural

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6 Sylvia W. Stark, Citizens Housing and Planning Council of New York (CHPC), "Report on Site of Forest Houses," Draft, February 27, 1950; Subseries 1.1 Bronx 1930-1999, Box 3, Folder 6, CHPC records. As Forest Houses was being designed, the planner Robert Moses had begun to exert control over NYCHA from his post as a member of the City Planning Commission and chairman of the Mayor's Commission on Slum Clearance and in order to leverage its budget's toward tabula rasa "urban renewal" exercises with which his name later became synonymous. See Nicholas Dagen Bloom, Public Housing That Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 112.


8 "FOREST HOUSES - BRONX, NEW YORK: PILOT PROJECT," marked "Rec. 16 December 1955," p. 3; Subseries 1.1 Bronx 1930-1999, Box 6, Folder 13, CHPC records. The report details the activities of the Balance Community Committee and other outreach programs associated with the project.
rendering of the planned housing complex. On the other side is a series of rhetorical questions to potential tenants, posed in this format:

Dear friend,
If you and your family are looking for an apartment;

If you want, along with a home, a wholesome community in which to live;

If you are anxious to help your children grow into mature healthy citizens;

If you believe that good facilities should be made available within walking distance of your home;

If you would like to participate in a plan in democratic living;

Where people of many races, religions and cultures will be neighbors

Where city departments of housing, police, sanitation, health, education, water supply, gas & electricity, parks are eager to cooperate in this project

[...]

Then we suggest you apply to live in Forest Houses. 9

Hegemony, as we know from Antonio Gramsci, tends to construct "community." 10 This often occurs in small and unobtrusive ways ("small bites") that can go by almost unnoticed. In this case, fear of a common enemy, at the end of the Korean conflict and at the height of the Cold War, was expressed theatrically in the civil-defense exercises. But it was also coded as an invitation to participate in "democratic living," a tone that was reinforced by the priority given to military veterans in tenant applications. Meanwhile, in other channels, bureaucratic documents nervously referred to the existing neighborhood as "substandard" and unsanitary, or, in the case of a CHPC report, simply "a typical slum area." 11 These pictures of uncertainty and insecurity converged on the December day in 1952 when the entire city abruptly and quietly paused, awaiting the "all-clear" sound of three bursts from the air-raid siren, while thousands of firefighters, rescue workers, and volunteers continued to practice emergency measures at the future site of Forest Houses.

Since its founding in 1934 as the country's first public housing authority, NYCHA has built and maintained housing for a mixture of income groups that currently includes over 400,000 residents. This mixture reflects a longstanding debate in the United States regarding the purpose and legitimacy of housing built under the auspices of federal, state, or municipal agencies. When the construction of the neighboring federally aided Forest Houses South (later renamed the McKinley Houses) was announced in 1958, it was noted that the development would also stand adjacent to another new complex, the Martin van Buren Houses, which

9 Undated draft of a brochure, "A Community Plan for Its Future: Forest Houses," CHPC records. As it happens, the "small bite" was also broadcast on television when, as the CHPC report also noted, New York City Civil Service Commissioner George Gregory Jr. was featured on the NBC program This Is Your Life, with testimony from two families from Forest Houses who, as the CHPC report put it, "had the opportunity to explain their part in the experiment as well as the value and importance to them and their neighbors." "FOREST HOUSES - BRONX, NEW YORK: PILOT PROJECT," p. 5.

10 I am using the term "hegemony" in one of the several senses in which Antonio Gramsci develops it in his Prison Notebooks, as the consent to domination elicited by a mixture of state and civil society through the manipulation of culture. Relevant references are scattered throughout the Notebook. For one example, see Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks Vol. 2, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 177. For a detailed account of Gramsci's use of the term, see Perry Anderson, "The Anarchist and the State," in New Left Review 100 (November-December 1976), pp. 5-78.

11 Thomas F. Farrell, Chairman, NYCHA, "Application to the City Planning Commission for Approval of a 'Plan' and 'Project' relative to a State-Aided Low-Rent Public Housing project to be known as Forest Houses in the Borough of The Bronx," February 6, 1950, Box 3, Folder 6, House, p. 1.
was planned for residents with somewhat higher incomes. (Martin van Buren Houses was ultimately not built, and the McKinley Houses was later extended onto its site.) Referring to these plans, NYCHA chairman William Reid argued that “the city was avoiding ‘economic segregation’ by putting two types of public housing together,” which would result in a “socially healthy” environment for residents and local businesses.12

By the time the McKinley Houses opened in 1962, however, federal, state, and local public housing programs had already begun to experience the long series of cutbacks that would culminate in 1973 with the Nixon administration’s moratorium on new federal housing projects. The subsequent Carter administration briefly reintroduced traditional, federally funded construction, but after 1981 the programs were essentially replaced with private sector incentives, vouchers, and other market-based policies. Although NYCHA has been recognized for its relative success in maintaining the nation’s largest stock of public housing, like many other public agencies it has increasingly sought partnerships with real estate developers and other private sector entities in order to compensate for the loss of public sector support.13

The turn was complete when, in 2003, the office of New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development announced a policy initiative called “The New Housing Marketplace” that prioritized publicly subsidized private development. The initiative followed in the wake of federal HOPE VI legislation from the 1990s, which had funded the demolition of public housing and its replacement with privately developed “affordable” (rather than public) housing for mixed-income groups. Dedicated to what the Bloomberg

13 Bloom, Public Housing that Worked, p. 245.
administration called "harnessing the private market to create affordable housing," the program emphasized partnerships among city agencies and private real estate developers to build new housing for a range of income levels, although in this case ostensibly to complement rather than replace existing public housing stock. The presumed self-evidence of market relations, and hence their hegemony, was confirmed despite the absence of any supporting ideological claims, which by this point would have seemed redundant, so thoroughly had such assumptions colonized the civic imagination.

In 2013, shortly before Gramsci Monument was constructed, one such project opened on what had once been the grounds of Forest Houses. Suitably named Arbor House, and equipped with a rooftop hydroponic garden and "a living green wall installation in the lobby," the project was built by the Blue Sea Development Company on formerly public land located on a corner of the Forest Houses site, with direct public subsidy. The developer bought the land from NYCHA at below market value under the provisions of the Bloomberg plan, which, despite its language of "affordability," was and remains a privatization engine designed to encourage speculation on increasingly scarce inner-city sites.

We are able to hear in the language of the original Forest Houses integration policies a self-assured, white-identified paternalism that sought, for its own economic and political purposes, to smooth the roughest edges of racial and class inequity associated with the American housing system. We are typically less attentive, however, to the structural violence implicit in the simple exchange of "public housing" for privatized "affordable housing" in the civic lexicon. This exchange constitutes the latest step in the delegitimation of public sector investment in basic urban infrastructures, and their systematic exposure to market-oriented development. In that sense, the "community"—the historically contested "public" of public housing—constructed (however problematically) by and for Forest Houses no longer exists as an object of official political discourse. Arbor House is only one of many instruments of the new hegemony that testify to this official nonexistence. It does so not only by turning its back on Forest Houses to present a greenwashed visage to the street, but also—and more forcefully—by tacitly discounting the residents of public housing as a nonconstituency, by virtue of their nonparticipation in "the new housing marketplace." Regardless of income, race, or other social markers, the uncertain public of public housing has vanished from the dominant political imaginary, leaving millions of persons living in its wake.

Gramsci Monument, erected across an intersection of pathways between Buildings 8, 9, 11, and 12 in the Forest Houses complex, opened up a temporary breach in the alternating rhythm of what Gramsci called a "war of maneuver" and a "war of position." With respect to housing in the United States (and increasingly, worldwide), the real estate industry, which has relicished the prospect of public land made available through coercive privatization-as-last-resort, has fought a war of maneuver. In response, housing residents, who constitute a bulwark against perennially threatened demolition, have been forced to conduct a war of position, by continuing to lay claim on the category and rights of the "public." The celebrated Arbor House, just around the corner from the Monument's makeshift forum, marks that war's most recent front line.
