

THE PROCESS OF THE FIELD IN NEW CROSS

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**by members of
The Field at New Cross**

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHING EDITOR

“It’s a non-art space” is how I’ve always described The Field to friends and colleagues. Its a non-art space because in the time from when The Field began until just around the time we began working on this book in June 2016, The Field was purposefully researching ways to utilise critical theory and creative work for political ends. That is, the Field wanted nothing to do with the speculative cultural economy and the art world.

It bares mentioning that The Field is just down the road from Goldsmiths College, the famed arts and theory school. New Cross, London is home to both Goldsmiths and The Field. Political and economic forces let loose in New Cross and the wider Deptford area are in the thrall of the neoliberal cultural economy which is busily conflating cultural capital with every manner of financial valuation... in other words, it is not only suffering from the forces of gentrification but also the violent forces of neoliberal subjectification that racialise, sexualise and make subject of all the varying possible stresses of life under the laws of capital, speculation and racialized violence. Taken the wrong way, the so-called “intellectual cul-

ture” of Goldsmiths just amplifies this violence. The famed bureaucracy of the school seems to take every exchange between and among students as a chance to remind them of the ways in which the state can measure them, mark them, fail them, divide them. It seems to take the extra steps to rub into the wounds of tender minds that dangerous and radical ideas are best used to market ones books, sell one’s artwork, re-brand an entire neighbourhood, and not fail an exam.

So, in this very harsh and clear light, The Field was not to be an art space. It wanted nothing of that poison.

Personally, coming from the very much more fluid and culturally generous world of Los Angeles’ hybrid activist/art scene (and also, to be honest, its art schools), it was the intellectual life of The Field rather than the ongoing trauma of Goldsmiths where I found familiarity and love.

This book demonstrates some of the ways that a non-art space works through and undoes the violence of neoliberal individuation and social isolation. The Field book demonstrates some of the ways that The Field considers the generous and generative fruits of

human thoughts in order to work out other ways of collective being, and considers creative practice as political work rather than the work of producing cultural capital and unhinged individuation.

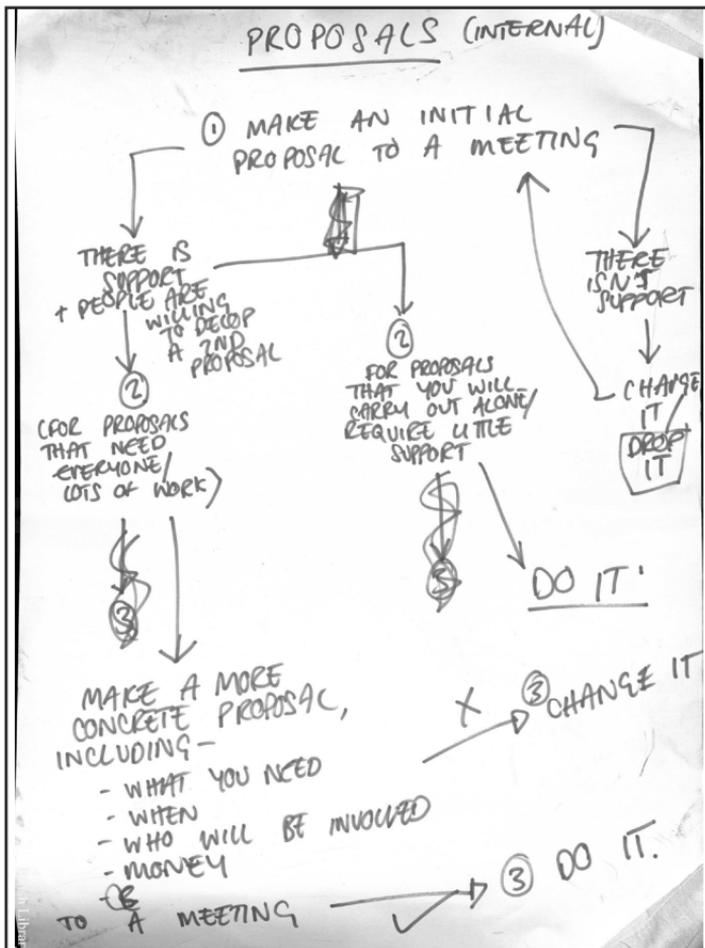
I can not help but think about The Field as a study space for what came after the Occupy Movement. Both the Field and the New Cross Commoners group whose energy led into the project's founding seemed to have brought the stalled energy for the possibility of common being that the London Occupy inspired. It dug deeper into the questions this moment raised for a deeply democratic social practice engaged in questions of social and economic justice.

Finally, as this text has already hinted- this book has been a long-time coming. This book demonstrates the fiery practice attendant to the group's founding and composition until the time of writing in 2016/2017. It has taken 2 more years to get this book out; lives are busy, moments end, things fracture. The Field has moved on to a more routine way of being since Paolo, Rosie and Toby met with Claudia and I in the back-room workshop and realised that this was a simple book to make.

All we needed to do was compile the documents that were so studiously kept.

What good is theory and critically theory if it finds no social practice; that is, if it find no way to socially express itself in place and in reverberation in de-centred life. This book documents one very considered effort to experiment with what it is to be human, in London, and in New Cross. This book needed to be published.

- Marc Herbst



mindmap/worksheet for how to make a proposal if one is a member of The Field.

TYPES OF DECISIONS

① EVERY DAY eg. BUYING SCREENS, TAKING DONATIONS
 FROM INDIVIDUALS,
PROCESS - MAKE THE DECISION YOURSELF, OR WITH WHOEVER IS AROUND
 - CHECK AT A MEETING OR EMAIL IF YOU'RE UNSURE

② NAMED PERSON HAS RESPONSIBILITY eg. FUNDING APPLICATION, UPDATING WEBSITE, FB, REPLYING TO EMAILS
PROCESS - ~~NAMED~~ CHECK DECISION WITH NAMED PERSON
 - NAMED PERSON REPORTS TO MEETING

③ WHOLE GROUP DECISION eg. ~~ASKING~~ GIVING OUT KEYS, AGREEING BUDGET, ~~DECISIONS~~
~~QUESTIONS~~ ~~AND ANSWERS~~
PROCESS - ASK WHOLE GROUP AT A MEETING OR OVER EMAIL
 AT END OF MEETING
 VOTE = CONSENSUS - TIME LIMIT DECIDED BY FACILITATOR

④ IMPORTANT WHOLE GROUP DECISION eg. BIG PEOPLE, STRUCTURE, CHANGING FB TO PROCESS, CORE GROUP MEMBERS
PROCESS - ~~PROPOSE~~ PROPOSE DECISION TO BE MADE OVER EMAIL BEFORE MEETING, 1 WEEK IN ADVANCE.

- CONSENSUS AT MEETING = FACILITATOR DECIDES TIME LIMIT.
 - IF A DECISION CAN BE MADE AT MEETING, VOTE: IF A DECISION CAN BE MADE BY THE END OF THAT MEETING, PROPOSALS (INTERNATIONAL)

① MAKE AN/PROPOSAL TO A CORE GROUP MEETING - IF THERE IS SUPPORT -
 ② FOR PROPOSALS THAT REQUIRE MANY PEOPLE
 OF PEOPLE NEED TO BE PRESENT FOR VOTE - OR WILL DO YOU NEED TO REQUIRE COMMITMENT?

mindmap/notesheet for the types of decisions that can be made.

TODAY

- removing paint, priming + filling front, back + sides
- getting paint off window frames inside.
- getting tomato plants from Dig This
- making planter boxes
- research plant guilds
- trellis - get + put
- window locks

During The Field's construction phase, we would post a note out front about what needed to be done. In that way, friends and people off the street would come in and know what to do.

TODAY

• WINDOWS

Getting paint
off front

Plan for Saturday

Scaffolding
board planter.

8. PICK UP SOIL.





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TIMELINE

Autumn 2012 Bianca and Paolo fall in love with Silvia Federici and think about ways to exit Goldsmiths and engage with the (reproductive) life of the neighbourhood. Alice, Lawrence, Dan look for spaces in New Cross (an area in South London, near Goldsmiths) that they could get without paying rent.

February 2013 first New Cross Commoners gathering at New Cross Learning, a local library that used to be run by the local Council, Lewisham. The library was closed because of the cuts (UK austerity measures), it was occupied, and after negotiations with the council, it's now run by people living in the neighbourhood (Kathy and Gill with the help of many others). Orsalia and James are there as well. Also Sharon from the poetry workshop joins the New Cross Commoners.

May 2013 Rosie joins the New Cross Commoners

June 2013 New Cross Commoner mapping of empty spaces in New Cross, Alice and Lawrence join the New Cross Commoners.

September 2013 Party in the Park, we get a stall as New Cross Commoners and talk to people and think of organising something around food as a way to get together with other groups like the local food co-op (Carlos).

November 2013 first in a series of people's kitchens in New Cross, we experiment with the format to make the dinner not just a social event to save wasted food but also a place to talk about our life in New Cross. Maru and Constance join the New Cross Commoners.

December 2013 New Cross Commoners publication

March 2014 reading of Marta Malo de Molina on militant investigation

April 2014 Jacob joins the New Cross Commoners and organises a reading on Exodus and Marsh Farm. Finn was there as well.

May 2014 Tatiana joins the New Cross Commoners and organises a reading on gentrification.

June 2014 The Field is not officially open yet but it's ready to be used.

June 2014 Ilma (River) joins The Field, she organises the [undoing] “fear and anxiety” meetings and after a year she leaves.

July 2014 Toby joins The Field and burns out several times along the way.

August 2014 gathering with Starhawk at Grow Heathrow.

August 2014 camp in the north of Italy hosted by Bianca and Fabio.

November 2014 official opening of The Field.

January 2015 The Field gets £3578 funding from Lush.

January 2015 Alex and SolFed join The Field.

January 2015 Ron joins The Field and organises Doctor Bike (bike repair workshop).

February 2015 Simon, Beth and Emma join The Field, Emma leaves after some months.

March 2015 Marc and others organise the 24 Hour Commons.

March 2015 an attempt to get funding from Goldsmiths University fails miserably.

April 2015 The Field's group gets disbanded in the attempt of opening more the place to other people and groups. Roles are instituted at The Field.

April 2015 Crowdfunding for The Field's garden: a greenhouse, a workshop, a disabled compost toilet and more gets built.

May 2015 The Kitchen on Wednesday starts: everyone can cook, with the support of people from The Field.

May 2015 Marea Granate starts using The Field.

Summer 2015 Dan K and RUSS join The Field, RUSS leaves in January 2016 (also) because it's too cold.

July 2015 Ben, Lottie and Radical Assembly South East London join The Field.

July 2015 Royston and NCBI start using The Field.

July 2015 John starts to teach sewing at The Field.

Autumn 2015 Mohammed and Ngozi appear at The Field.

September 2015 Robert, Roy and Mental Health Resistance Network join The Field.

September 2015 Jilna joins The Field to organise Inclusive Community Yoga and Yoga for Women of Colour.

October 2015 Caoihme, Carolyn and Queer Caff join The Field.

October 2015 Andy starts the Fruitvale Film Club.

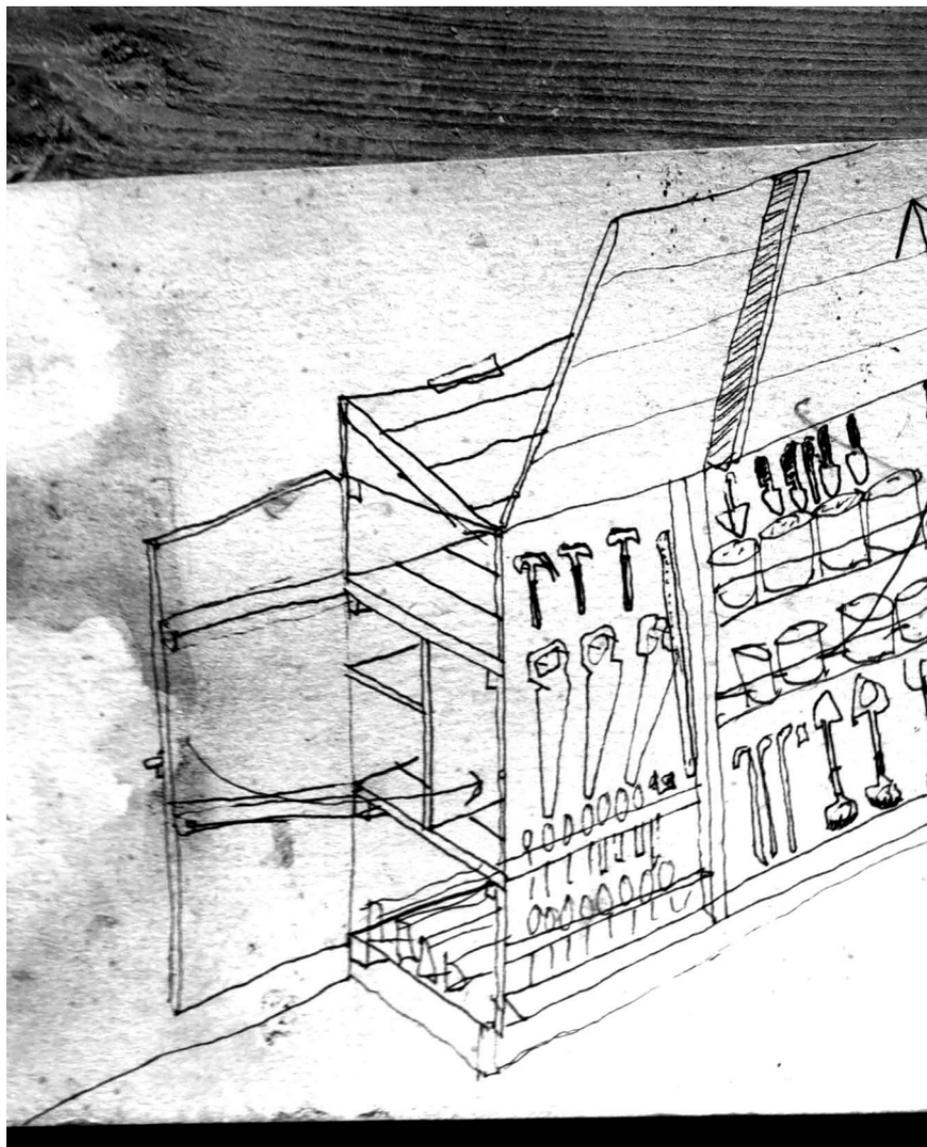
November 2015 Sophia joins The Field and organises readings and art related meetings.

November 2015 Cristal and London African Choir join The Field.

January 2016 Lola and Clive / London Black Atheists join The Field.

February 2016 The Field gets £5595 funding from Lush.

May 2016 The Field moves from a structure based on roles to working groups, alongside a number of other changes.



Plans for the toolshed at The Field



Handwritten text, possibly a signature or a note, located in the lower right quadrant of the page. The text is written in a cursive or script style and is somewhat difficult to read due to the handwriting and the angle of the page. It appears to be a name or a set of initials.

INTRODUCTION

Intro 1

In 2016, we put together the publication you are reading in response to an invitation coming from our friend Marc. The editors of the publication are Rosie, Toby and Paolo, but the material comes from a collective and intricate process of organising the New Cross Commoners and The Field. Of the many people taking part in this process, a few are acknowledged in the timeline of this publication. The timeline could have been extended to include more events and people and things, we apologize to people who got left out of it. We have invited collective feedback on the process of this editing, and here we say, “what you see is what you get.”

Marc has been involved in this process intermittently, as much as his nomadic peregrinations have been allowing him to do so. With his acute reading of this process, placed in the wider field of his knowledge about grassroots initiatives in different parts of the world, Marc approached us with a question around the “split between matter and spirit” that plays out

in our organizing and how “this split is not always as clear as it seems”. In the newly built workshop, at the back of The Field’s garden, the four of us (five since Claudia was there as well that day) started thinking together this publication, discussing the tension between “matter and spirit”, spirit and body, imagination and reality in the context of the New Cross Commoners and The Field.

The New Cross Commoners could be placed on the side of imagination and the spirit, The Field on that of matter, reality, the body, but here it’s where the split gets complicated and contradictions emerge. Contradictions internal and across, and not proper to either of these two organizations, exist as well. We attempted to record these contradictions and tensions in this publication.

The New Cross Commoners is a collective based in New Cross, London, that has been experimenting with a different way of learning, learning outside academia and from the neighbourhood, learning how people live and organise themselves in the neighbourhood. This has not been only learning by reading, discussing, meeting people, but also by doing, often

using the form of a “people’s kitchen”: skipping food and cooking it together in free and open meals. Inspired by Silvia Federici’s ideas on reproductions and the commons, much of our efforts went into the care of a collective process that could open up to people other than (ex)Goldsmiths students.

When The Field appeared, we saw the opportunity to open up the process further in a fixed space in 385 Queen’s Rd: one room, one floor, a big garden at the back. with The Field, doing became a priority, the building required a huge amount of work to be repaired and it still requires a lot of maintenance. Suddenly, many more people living in New Cross joined the process through the re-construction of the derelict building: clearing its garden, patching the roof, raising and repairing the sunken floor, unblocking the sewage (an ongoing process), building a disabled accessible compost toilet, constructing a greenhouse, and so on and on. As time went on, as you can see, the labor seemed to move from fixing infrastructural necessities towards building semblances towards utopian possibilities. All the while, that sewer line kept being blocked.

Well, some of those people involved in The Fields' reconstruction are still coming to The Field. The building was more or less ready to be used, and over time we felt The Field's group was closer and more homogeneous than ever, closer than what The New Cross Commoners used to be. We decided to do without a "core group" to make it easier for other people to join The Field and make use of it. But such an opening is something that has to be created and constantly taken care for, it cannot simply be declared.

Many groups and people started using The Field and the calendar of the social centre soon was packed. It became very difficult to take care of The Field's "collective" because there was no formal collective anymore. To take care of each other became difficult because of new people appearing (and disappearing) all the time, because the amount of work increased, and some of us started burning out, some others got fed up and found something else to engage with.

An important issue for some of us is the difficulty of having others seeing The Field simply as a venue that can be booked and used for free, a venue that hosts events, no matter how we've tried to communicate something else in the different Field's "mission state-

ments”. This issue has to do again with reproduction, the reproduction of the matter, of the building itself, and the reproduction of the spirit, of the collective life of The Field and of people using it. Reproduction is often ignored or taken for granted— this is what Federici and her friends claim since the 70s and this is what we still experience here, even if the context is different and has changed. We are so much accustomed to a culture of service, no matter how “participatory” this culture has become.

Although, for those of us who put the cleaning, fixing and repairing labour into it, material reproduction is very much tangible at The Field, the reproduction of the “spirit” is often hidden work, it is largely unrecognized and under-valued, and the lack of collective care might lead to individual burn out. Our friend Ilma / River was saying this from the beginning, when talking about affective labour in the group, and the necessity to institute a space where we could come together and share our feelings and tensions about the relationship with the place and with each other. People burn out, though for the majority the tangible work of the space’s physical development still has priority, while the possibility of maintaining The Field as a home for collective mutual care seems not really

taking place (yet). How to carry on that form of care from the life of a collective (New Cross Commoners) to the life of an institution (The Field)?

What we share with this publication are some of the contradictions and tensions through the documentation of part of the massive project of (reproductive) labour in the form of thinking, writing, discussing, deciding, that goes into the New Cross Commoners and the The Field. The material we gather comes from old and newer emails, discarded documents, maps and drawings hiding now under the floor of The Field, and many other fragments that do not appear on websites pages (e.g. the new cross commoners website, in the “toolbox” page, collects notes and texts wrote as minutes and reflections after some of the activities organised in and outside The Field (for more info, see <https://newxcommoners.wordpress.com/toolbox/>)). In its way, this is a documentation of the reproductive process of The Field and the New Cross Commoners. To communicate such process is not to represent either project but to give a sense of how people and things come together, and fall apart again, in the attempt to create forms of collective organising that are different from those very familiar to all of us dictated by neoliberalism and capitalist principles. Sometimes

it feels like fighting against what our bodies have learned and absorbed so deeply, sometimes it feels tiring, sometimes it feels we are doing things that nowhere else would be possible.

The timeline of this publication goes from the autumn of 2012 to the summer of 2016. In the timeline we did not place many of the public events that signal the life of the New Cross Commoners and The Field and are already publicly documented. Rather, we mention those other “events” that had some kind of impact on the life of the The Field, from “Rosie joins the New Cross Commoners” to “Ilma leaves The Field” (but now she is back as “River”).

Initially we tried to gather material for the “Index of Personalities” and of “Groups” by inviting people and groups to write a few lines about themselves. Not many reacted to this invitation and we decided to use pictures for the first index and an alphabetical list of all the groups / events / projects that have used The Field so far for the “Group Index”. The systematic order of the list flattens out the actual presence that each group and project had at The Field, and this flattening out gets balanced with the selective nature of the timeline.

In “Mission Statement” we’ve collected old and new statements of The Field, some of them soon aborted and replaced, others resulting from long and complex workshops. All of them are different, to some extent. In “Positionalities” we’ve gathered fragments of conversations we’ve had throughout the years to give a sense of the different and contradictory positions that have come to be part of the process. In “Documents” and “Mindmaps” we’ve collected texts we have written, and drawings that we have made that would give an idea of the unfolding of the process of thinking and rethinking the New Cross Commoners and The Field.

And here the intro carries on, with another take on it, in the spirit of documenting the contradictions of different voices that cannot be ordered alongside a matter / spirit opposition.

Intro 2

At the first meeting for this publication Marc came to us with the idea of examining the classic split between spirit and matter—the New Cross Commoners considered at first thought to be put on the side of spirit and The Field on the side of matter. That evening, sitting in the unfinished workshop at the end of the garden, with extension cables running from the building to provide just a little light and heat, and surrounded by screws, tools, wood and water running in from the ceiling, the five of us immediately deemed that spirit/matter split to be too simple.

One is not removed from the other, and rather than revealing to us the overlooking of one in favor of the other, what The Field has shown is the absolute inseparability of spirit and matter.

A few of us met at some point last year to ask—“What is a Resource?” and whether or not commons should be considered as resources. It was proposed then, that rather than being considered a resource, a passive backdrop, an entity to be manipulated and used by utilitarian calculation, The Field, and other commons, are better conceived of as tools—a tool both

of matter and spirit, a technology of spirit and substance. Resources can conjure up images that fit neatly in standard economic logics—they are to be used, manipulated and worked upon, they are inputs in the narrowest understanding of production. Resources have little or no power or efficacy before they are injected into narrowly defined production processes.

Crucially, as a tool, The Field changes what it is possible for us to do and achieve, it transforms the state of affairs in a way that a mere passive resource does not. It is not simply a supplement to the process of spirit, but fundamentally enters into the capacity of the spirit and alters it—it alters the body and our ethical capacities. In as much as ethics ask—“what can a body do?”—a tool transforms our ethical power of action.

If we see in commoning an effort to find new values, new ways of relating to one another and the world, new ways of being together, then we can ask, “what tools allow us to find and practice these new values?” What tools can we make that allow us to place value on actions and practices that the market or state would normally exclude from in its narrow schemes of measurement? The Field, as a tool, has aimed to-

wards increasing our possibilities of action, and with that it has aimed to expand what we are able to value—the reproductive work that is excluded from economic calculation, the interpersonal relationships, the group dynamics, the modalities of relation. But part of The Field's ability to reveal and allow these things goes down to the fact of its materiality—the fact that it is grounded in matter which allows it to transform the spirit. And conversely the exploration of spirit through both The Field and the Commoners allows them to bring new modes of vitality to its matter.

However, we should also be aware that, as a tool, it is often when something in it is broken, when something of it fails or falters, that we can notice it the most. Then it reveals itself to us, and its status in transforming what is possible becomes clearest—when one of us overworks, when the drain is blocked and sewage floods the garden, when the heating doesn't work rendering the building unusable in winter, when a swarm of mosquitos emerges from a neglected waste water butt, when the state apparatus fines us hundreds of pounds for failing to appease its bureaucracy precisely enough. It is at these moments that we are confronted with the friction of a broken

tool—a friction that can weigh heavily on body and mind, matter and spirit, a friction that can transform the lightness of new values into the pressure of failure.

When, under the banner of the New Cross Commoners, the question we asked was—“what is a resource?”—and the topic that became regularly discussed was the status of The Field, some boundaries shifted. As ever, when examined it was not easy to see where The Field and The Commoners begin and end. When many of the projects and groups that have merged at The Field are examined they reveal roots in a shared and open modality, a legacy of a whole host of commoners that is not attributable to a bounded collective or even period; one that overflows any timeline, list or group identification, that reverberates throughout a range of projects, practices, and people. From my position, the modality of commoning is not one of boundedness or group identification, but rather a creeping expansion, a spreading infection, whereby certain modalities, certain practices, certain values and ways of being, reemerge in unexpected locations and at unforeseen times, so often simmering just below the surface in a way that makes them hard to spot. It is in such ways that ‘spirit’ continually un-

folds into ‘matter,’ allowing matter to speak back and transform the capabilities of spirit.

All of these processes require continual care. If the tool is not oiled, it falters; if the spirit is not nourished, it despairs. So the crucial importance of reproduction is not only that of the reproduction of the spirit, just as it is not only the reproduction of matter—it is care for both. At various times one suddenly raises itself above the other, creating an imbalance and disjunction that is felt differently by each of us according to our given position at that time—what is given more importance, the discussion of a text that might lead to new possibilities, or the clearing of a drain blocked back by months of waste? How can both be brought together so we are both caring for our material conditions, and our affective states? And how in turn are our material conditions caring for or impinging upon our affective states? Or, put differently, how can we move beyond a division of spirit and matter to a position where the tools that we create transform both our bodies’ and spirits’ powers of action, where both our physical and affective conditions are not only catered and provided for, but cared for and nourished?

Intro 3

The Field is fleeting, in that we may only have the building for another three years. After that time the landlord may decide to knock the building down and sell the land to developers, whose flats will surely sell at a high price. If we're lucky he may decide to let us keep it for another 5 years, but all is uncertain. Either way, it seems strange to some that we'd decide to pour so much sweat blood and tears into a building which we do not own and probably never will, and which we may get turfed out of relatively soon. What will survive, and is the bare bones of all events, projects and collectives which have occupied the building and garden of 385 Queens road, are the human connections forged. These are multiple and various. Without these bricks and mortar matter we would not have congregated and allowed our separate lives to intertwine and affect one another in the spirit of the project. These spirit and matter guided the development of our weekly Kitchen, which for me has always been at the centre of The Field. The Kitchen is our weekly self-organized and open community meal, feeding 20 to 50 people. It is here where I have made many friendships and spent many happy hours. For my introduction to this book I thought I would write

something about how it demonstrates the organization of the space.

As Toby and Paolo have expressed in their introductions, one of the major preoccupations of the core group who started The Field is about how it can exist not just as a venue but as a cohesive project in itself. We didn't want to run a traditional community centre where groups could book their slot and not have anything to do with each other. For me what has stopped it from being just a venue from the beginning are these friendships and interactions that have grown and flourished— the social life of the place. In its initial months the process of renovating the building and clearing the garden solidified these relationships; many people came by to help and through this the social aspect of The Field had already begun; sharing food and beer at the end of the day, sharing tools and learning skills. For once we were working not because we were under some obligation but because it was fun, though maybe those unblocking the drains would disagree! And moreover, we knew we were building something for ourselves, a shared resource.

Before Alice, Lawrence and Dan found The Field, we as the New Cross Commoners read a text by Jo Fisher

on the Ollas Comunes (Common Pots) in Chile. These were communal kitchens, where women would cook collectively as a way to survive under Pinochet's dictatorship. By pooling what they had, they found that the food went further than when they stuck to their own kitchens. They also found that cooking together had a radical potential; in sharing their personal experiences they practiced a form of feminist consciousness raising, which gave them more confidence and agency in a political and social context that disenfranchised women. Inspired by this text we decided to start our own 'People's Kitchens' in New Cross. Through them, we wanted to get to know the different community groups in the area, and any collectives we thought might be enacting the 'commoning' that enthralled us. Together, we went as a group to New Covent Garden market to skip vegetables, bought some staples from 56a's food co-op in Elephant and Castle and made an arrangement with Flour Power City, a bread factory in New Cross. They gave us all the bread they overproduced. We made many friends through these kitchen events. But due to the fact of having to find a different venue each time, they were labour intensive and irregular. This made it difficult to sustain the organizing energy.

Luckily The Field had already begun. This meant we'd have our own building to organise our own projects and ideas. As soon as we could install cooking facilities at The Field, we set up a weekly pay-what-you-can dinner, with a different chef each week cooking for anything between 20 and 60 people. This engaged people in much the same way as the people's kitchens, but with a different chef each week taking the pressure off the small collective of people running The Field. This took much of the labour out of the planning and scheduling process. It also provides a small income to put towards bills and council tax. Having our own building to host events meant we could run the kitchen every Wednesday. For me, it was this continuity which cemented the relationships between people helping to create The Field, and attracted new people. It quickly became the core of The Field's social life.

To ease the process, there is a rotating role as coordinator of this kitchen. I have taken on this position for a month or two a few separate times. It involves many different tasks; organising bread pick-up, liaising with the weekly chef, making a short speech that thanks the chef and explains where the donations go to, and giving anyone attending the meal the chance to let others know about any other events at

The Field or nearby. The most important aspect of this role however, is simply acting as a host, which is more work than it sounds. In doing this role I've always felt it is important to make people feel welcome, to go up to any new person who steps through the door and introduce myself and The Field. It is easy to forget that not everyone feels comfortable walking into somewhere– they might look through the window and feel that there is nobody they feel any identification with, or step inside but feel useless because nobody came to say hi and tell them how they could help with the food. Whilst anyone cooking or helping would hopefully welcome a new person, the host's job is to see that people don't get missed out and that anyone who wants to help can do so.

This coordinator role is not always an easy job to take on. Once you've done it every week for a month you can't help but relate to it as a job, and when that job is unpaid or taken for granted it's easy to get grumpy about it. When a chef doesn't show up and you end up having to plan, buy the food and cook for 50 people alone, or when it's an effort to get people to tidy up their own plates, you begin lamenting the future of self-organised projects. When people still relate to The Field as a service to always be provided by someone

else, what happens when those people at the heart of the organization get tired, or move on to something else? I once ended up being stuck in the kitchen coordinator role for 6 weeks with no end in sight when we only plan it for 4 weeks. No one from the fundraising working group had stepped up to take my place. At the end of my tether, I made an exhausted speech to everyone sitting 'round the dinner tables asking for someone, anyone, to take on the role. It worked with relative ease! I realised I should have spoken up about my exhaustion weeks before. I had been until the moment I spoke up, relying on the same few people that usually coordinated The Field whilst at the same time being cross that I was making myself one of those people that were relied upon. Karl (Job de-Centre attendee) and Richard (board game club organiser), two people who hadn't taken on a central role before, rose to the challenge and what for me by myself was a mountainous task became a task easily shared between them. It was also meaningful in that they both started coming to meetings after that. Through their kitchen responsibility they felt they could now have a say in how The Field is run beyond the wednesday evening Kitchen.

Whilst cooking and eating together in this way has political significance, the Wednesday Kitchen is the point in the week that is not centered on attendees having similar politics or common goals. Well, goals beyond cooking, eating and talking. It attracts Field regulars, those who might be opposed to some of the other activities at The Field, as well as other community members, irregular visitors, community members, people who walk in from the street and those who may not see themselves as especially 'political'. This openness means we have attending the dinner a plethora of people and viewpoints; like the time I spent the evening chatting with Ben from Radical Assembly, a radical left group who use The Field to organise direct actions, as well as Trilogy, a Congolese jewelry maker who volunteers for the conservative party.

Through the Wednesday Kitchen, people attending or running different projects at The Field have been able to meet each other and cross-pollinate, and bring to life The Field as a project, rather than just as a venue. I'll use myself as the beginning of an example of this. I was a part of the New Cross Commoners before The Field, we now use it for reading groups, meetings and events and as a base for anything we do. I started a

campaign to re-open a local covered reservoir, and held a meeting about it at The Field. Through the dinners I met Debbie, a local legal assistant and New Cross resident. She'd been attending the Common Company Cafe, a cooperative cafe started by my friend Jacob. Debbie joined my reservoir campaign and then brought along Jim, another regular at the cafe. Another project I co-run with a few others from the New Cross Commoners is the Job de-Centre, a mutual care and anti-work collective, which also meets at The Field. John has come to this from the beginning, he also comes to the Wednesday Kitchen, often helping cook with the volunteer chef. For a time, John had been volunteering with the Eat-A-Rainbow Food Co-op, where Oli also volunteers, and Oli is probably the most active user of The Field's garden. This demonstrates a bit of the complex of interactive ecosystem that links these people and groups that pass through the Wednesday Kitchen.

Later in this book you will see an email about a friend of the New Cross Commoners, Valeria. She told us about a similar type of social centre to The Field, where they were able to map out the arrival and path of each person who came there. I imagine a map of people at The Field as names and projects infinitely

expanding and multiplying, all connected and in a way that is never more than two degree of separation from the Wednesday kitchen which sits at the centre.

INDEX OF PERSONALITIES

The Field is a place where many people meet.

We tried to gather a list and bio for everyone who's here, but judged the task too daunting.

When reading this book, recognize that The Field and the New Cross Commoner is built upon relationships between individuals, all with distinct perspectives and personalities.

The Field IS PEOPLE



INDEX OF GROUPS

(the following is a list and description of many of the groups who have met at The Field)

Admin Group - Takes care of general admin, finance, and chairing admin meeting, as well as coordinating other working groups.

Aesthetics of Resistance Reading Group - Written in the 70's about the 30's, The Aesthetics of Resistance discusses political histories on the left and self-learning through following the discussions of a small group of working class young men. A central thesis of the book is that through the analysis of works of art and literature new forms of political action and social understanding might be developed. Come and read this dense and challenging book and discuss this together over a series of sessions. All welcome but particularly those interested and involved in art and political activism.

Art as Commons - Art as Commons is an experiment that aims to make use of art as a shared resource, against the control of the State and the enclosure of the art market and the "art world". As New Cross

Commoners for more than a year we have been using texts to learn how to organize different forms of commoning in our life. With Art as Commons we'll also try to make use of art to explore different ways of sustaining our lives collectively.

After a few sessions we tried to turn Art as Commons as a project to get funding through the Arts Council. We failed even to write the application.

Babel's Blessing - Babel's Blessing is a grassroots language school project, running low-cost evening classes in marginalised and diaspora languages (currently Arabic, Hebrew, Yiddish, & British Sign Language) and free ESOL classes for migrants and refugees.

Be Yours Truly - We each have an essential inner nature which is intrinsic, given and 'natural'. Over the noise of familial and societal pressure our quiet inner voice and dim instinct can easily remain undetected and unheard. But our whispering inner voice, which never dies, guides us in telling us what we want and don't want to do.

When we listen to, follow and satisfy our instincts we begin the process of being true to ourselves and Becoming.

We stop being true to ourselves when we neglect, overlook, or suppress our inner, deeper nature. It is possible to actively repress our given nature and instincts, but doing so takes energy.

Brick Lane Debates - Brick Lane Debates, a collective that puts on participatory left educational events around London.

Caliban and the Witch Reading Group - Silvia Federici's understanding of the commons and commoning as a collective activity of care have been extremely important for the New Cross Commoners throughout its existence. We invite you to join us to read together this inspirational text looking at the history of the body in the transition to capitalism.

Care Collective - Care Collective are a group of disabled and able-bodied queer trans intersex people who have created this group in order to create a safe and reliable network which is open for all who need assistance and want to offer support to others. We are a Disabled QTIPOC led collective although we are not exclusive.

Common Company Cafe - Ever wanted a cafe to hang out in without the pressure to constantly spend money? The Common Company Cafe is a cafe run by its members and users every Saturday afternoon.

Anyone can become a member for £2 a month and get free tea and coffee. Members will also be able to input into the running of the cafe and get a discount on cakes.

Communications Group - Deals with all forms of communication at ranging from the public facing emails, the website and social media to the notice boards and flyers and posters.

Community Co-working Space - During the day on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, The Field is used by independent local organisations as shared office space. Office space is a resource most independent groups working for social change cannot afford. This space is for groups who are based in the area, are fighting injustice or oppression and/or creating more just alternatives to the current system, and do not have access to other resources. The Field offers a stable, cheap or free base for this work, and a place to meet and collaborate with others working toward

similar aims. Get in touch if you would like to use the space for your organisation.

Community Reiki - This is an evening dedicated to reiki, together with the Reiki Master Nicky Jarrett, who will introduce the practice of reiki and will offer short sessions for people to understand how reiki works in practical terms. This is a series of reiki meetings that will lead to a level 1 course to enable people to hold collective and mutual healing sessions at The Field. The meeting is free and open to all.

Community Legal Workgroup - We'll be pulling together resources for legal assistance at The Field. Open to all.

Colectivo - Colectivo is a free and open access space to share and explore experiences of depression and anxiety through creativity. On the 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month we will get together to have meaningful conversations and get creative finding ways to heal. The first session will be an informal, drop-in space and the second session will be an arts workshop - a chance to exchange ideas and learn new creative methods.

Dissonant Images - Futures of the Moving Image. Meeting of filmmakers, artists and writers from Germany and London to share ideas on current projects for possible collaborations.

Dr Bike - Every Tuesday from 4-6pm a trained bike mechanic will be at The Field, doing minor repairs & tune-ups, replacing small parts like brake pads & cables, checking your bike for safety and advising on major repairs, for FREE.

Easter Sewing Workshop - The Sewing Classes will be aimed at individuals with some sewing experience, to intermediate level. Learning various hand and machine sewing skills/techniques, simple alterations/repairs, revamping items of clothing, students will design and make a simple item of their choice. The skills obtained over the duration of the course, will give individuals the basics to start up their own niche sewing project, prospects of employment and a life skill. Other advantages include social inclusion, meeting new friends, productive use of time, team building skills, self development, role models, leaders and discipline.

Femmes of Colour Brunch - This is a space for people of colour of all genders who are also femme. There will be a vegan brunch available, donations welcome. It will be an informal space for femmes of colour to get together and have conversations, laugh, cry, sing, share and heal. What happens in the space will depend on what participants want the space to be. The session is being organised by Rudy Loewe and Tobi Adebajo. Rudy will bring tarot cards and crystals, for if folks want to engage in a ritual.

This session welcomes femmes of variant genders and is open to folks who identify as people of colour.

(Undoing) Fear and Anxiety Group - Guidelines (some to say beginning of the meeting, some just being included into the description people interested need to read before deciding to come to the session):

We are all here for the same thing, we are not against each other. Let's not make the session as a battle-ground but as a space where we can construct something together.

First thing: look after yourself, know your own limits and make a choice about what you share and what

you keep private. It is ok to leave, it is ok to ask for somebody to talk to after workshop (there will be appointed people every session).

Confidentiality about the personal stories people share.

To believe people when they share a personal narrative and accept it. It is ok challenge arguments and causalities, but not somebody's personal experience or their whether they acted right or wrong in that situation.

Be respectful – not to interrupt when someone is speaking. Don't speak over someone, keep your mobile off, don't be late and treat each other with respect.

It's your Choice – We each get to decide what we want to do or say, in the group. Encourage one another, but don't push. All activities are optional.

Share the space: If you're confident speaking in groups, remember to hang back sometimes and leave space for others. Those who are quietest often have something amazing thought going on in their head.

Diversity: There are so many ways of seeing the world, embrace the diversity of experience and understanding in the room and learn from one another. Differences of opinion are fine. Just make sure you own your own view and keep it respectful.

Field Kitchen - Every Wednesday evening we hold a pay-what-you-can meal. Each week a vegetarian meal is cooked by a different volunteer chef. Come from 6pm to help with preparations or from 7.30pm to help with eating. Volunteering to cook at this event is a great way to meet new people, and contribute to the running of The Field. Come to one or two meals first or get an idea of how it works, and to volunteer yourself for the next week.

Fundraising Group- Does all forms of fundraising at The Field, including organising, facilitating and managing the Wednesday Kitchen.

Fruitvale Film Club – Aliveness and Solidarity through film- The London Campaign Against Police and State Violence is a friends- and family-led campaign group against all forms of police and state brutality against communities in London and beyond. We are putting on a monthly free film screening at “The Field” in New

Cross, to provide a space where it is possible to share and discuss experiences of police and state brutality. This could include mental harassment through – for example – constant stop and search, or physical violence. F.F.C will take place on the last Sunday of every month at 3pm and will last a few hours.

Friends of Nunhead Reservoir - This is a campaign group for those who know and love Nunhead Reservoir, for us to fight to reopen it as a public space. Also, to share stories, photos, artwork, questions and concerns.

It has come out of a meeting where we shared stories about the times we've spent there, and talked about our frustration over having lost such a beautiful and special place to hang out.

If you didn't already know, Thames Water have installed a high, razor wired new fence inside the original one, keeping the reservoir completely impenetrable with guard dogs and other security.

Gardening Group - For those who want a space to grow some food, or learn new skills in growing , or

just be outside meeting your neighbours – We're looking for people to help look after the garden at The Field.

If you fancy getting involved, have ideas for things you'd like to do or workshops you'd like to organise from the garden – come along to one of our weekly garden days, where you can meet the team, share your ideas, and lend a hand in the garden.

Hannah Arendt Workgroup- In these sessions we will read one of Hannah Arendt's primary texts, *The Human Condition*. Arendt scholar, activist, and writer Fred Dewey will facilitate the working group. Fred's book is *The School of Public Life*, and he joined us for an evening last year. The aim is to read a few pages aloud each session, interpreting and discussing them as we go along. No prior knowledge or reading before the session is needed or required. Just come. All are welcome!

Housing and Employment Advice - Run by South London Solidarity Federation on the last Tuesday of every month, providing independent advice and support on employment, housing and benefit issues. Check the calendar for exact date/time.

Job De-Centre - The job de-centre is an experiment to help us work less and learn how to rely less on money and more on each other. It functions like an indefinitely repeated drop in session, a mutual coaching, a mentorship where everybody can be the expert: people bring together their skills to heal each other from individualism, consumerism, competition and all the other illnesses capitalism brings with it, and to give mutual advice on how to counter precarity and collective care and local resources.

LONDON AFRICAN GOSPEL CHOIR - Co-founded by Crystal Hardwicke to help London's African community to promote the gospel, create a platform of excellence for African gospel singers and musicians, and popularise the African interpretations of gospel music. The live repertoire on offer includes traditional and original songs from all regions in Africa in local languages and in English, but also incorporates interpretations of African-American classics.

London Black Atheists - A safe space and a support group for people who are leaving religions. Our mission is to help spread reason and rationality in the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and reduce the harmful effects of religion.

Marea Granate Londres/15M Assembly - Marea Granate (Maroon Wave) is a transnational non-partisan organisation formed by emigrants from the Spanish State and supporters, which aims to combat the causes of the social and economic crisis that have forced us to emigrate. Our collective was born in the light of other recent social movements in Spain over the last years. We are somehow the extension of them abroad. Our wave is maroon like the color of our passports, the symbol of our forced migration.

Maintenance Group - Looks after the maintenance, development and cleaning of the building, as well as keeping vital items like bog roll topped up.

Movement for Justice study group- Movement For Justice is an independent organisation fighting for civil and immigrant rights. We will be using the space every day from Wednesday 27th to Friday 29th December for a Christmas intensive political study.

Mindfulness meditation session - A weekly session, that will begin as a led meditation session, where we can learn some of the basic techniques of mindfulness meditation. Over time we hope that the leadership of each session will be shared between different

participants, bringing to the session their own practices, approaches and experiences. The session is very much open ended, in that there is no set goal to be achieved, and instead will be steered by the desires of those participating.

MENTAL HEALTH RESISTANCE NETWORK (MHRN) - A growing, nationwide campaigning group consisting of mental health service users and allies, formed in South East London, which exists to fight the abominable cuts to Benefits and Services which pose an unprecedented threat to the lives of all Disabled People. As we see it, this all stems from right-wing ideology and has nothing to do with wider economic benefit - it is simply about cuts and privatisation for their own sake. We lobby politicians and professionals, provide mutual support and useful concrete information, organise and participate in demonstrations, organise concerts and conferences and generally make the greatest fuss we possibly can.

Monthly Maintenance Day - 385 Queens Road is old and needs looking after. Once a month, people who use the space get together to help maintain the building, doing jobs necessary to keep the space open. Its expected that as many people as possible who use the

space attend maintenance day, so please come and help out if you can.

Mutual Healing in New Cross - We are a group of people who just finished a reiki level one course at The Field and we would like to carry on practising healing together with other people. We want to develop a healing practice by sharing the knowledge that people might have in the neighbourhood. We believe that everybody has the potential to heal others, it is a matter of practice and of creating the conditions for healing to take place. We would like for healing to exit studios and private homes and become mutual and part of the everyday life on New Cross. We believe that healing comes with transformation, and transformation should be not just individual but collective, hence political.

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) - The National Coalition Building Institute is an international non-profit leadership development network dedicated to the elimination of racism and other forms of oppression. Rooted in an understanding of individual, community, and systemic change, NCBI leaders work with public and private organizations to further: cultural competence; collaboration and

partnerships; and effective relationships within and across group identities.

New Cross Commoners - The New Cross Commoners is an open collective, or better a collective process, to explore and experiment in the New Cross area with what Silvia Federici and Midnight Notes' people call "commoning", that is, with everyday forms of collective organising around knowledge, food, housing, care, away from the private and profit-driven logic of the Market and from the hierarchies and centralisation of the State.

No Borders Nights at The Field - A monthly Sunday evening get-together against borders. Usually we'll have a short presentation, talk or film about migration struggles, from the frontiers of Fortress Europe to the resistance to immigration controls in our own neighbourhoods. And then an open space to discuss, meet each other, socialise, share food, information and ideas. Third Sunday of each month, 6pm-10pm.

On the Radio with WordPlay! - Love board games? Always wanted to star in your own radio play?

Come and merge the two in our Radio Drama Making Workshop at The Field. In groups you will script, perform and broadcast your very own live radio drama, complete with sound effects - all influenced by your favourite board game!

Performing Mental Health - This 5 week series of workshops will explore theatre as a form of communication which is embodied, performative and artistic (ie. has an abstracted relationship to life). We will explore these qualities in the context of our own experiences of mental health or illness in 5 sessions using different theatrical tools and techniques, and led by experienced theatre practitioners.

The sessions have been designed not to focus on curing or finding solutions to mental illness, but on the social conditions and context in which those with mental health conditions struggle: we hope this approach will serve to create an environment different from a therapeutic one in which the focus is on changing or healing the individual. The sessions will be informal and exploratory, with group relationships based on a mutual sharing/exploration of skills and experiences as opposed to either therapist-patient or teacher-student type relationships.

Projects Group - Keeps in touch with all the projects at The Field to make sure things are going ok, facilitates projects meetings and takes the lead on negotiating more complicated proposals that need collaboration or support.

Politics in Love, Sex, and Relationships (PILSAR)- Come all critical non-monogamous queers, solo polys, triads, polyamorists, unicorns, relationship anarchists, poly quads, polycules, asexuals, demi-sexuals, aromantics, curious monogamous people - and anyone else interested in the issues we discuss - and let's hang out and enjoy.

Queer Caff - Queer Caff is a new monthly queer café in SE London.

Queer Caff is cheap, not very boozy, vegan (GF).

Queer Caff is to socialise, organise and inform each other. Therefore we have an open space, and lots of room for initiatives and theme nights.

Queer Caff aims to be beneficial to others. There will be theme nights, there will be information, there will be films and performance, but not all at the same time.

Queer Caff likes to see people getting involved.

Radical Assembly South East London - RASEL was formed after the election by locals who want radical change. We want to start by doing things ourselves, rallying together to set up or support local campaigns, fight back and try to bring decision making into our communities and workplaces. We don't claim to have all the answers but it would be great if you could join us. We try to support each other and our communities. We currently meet every two weeks on alternating Monday and Wednesday evenings to organise, support and inform each other. We also arrange socials and film nights. Everyone is welcome, including children.

The Rural Urban Synthesis Society - The Rural Urban Synthesis Society (RUSS) is a volunteer-led Community Land Trust based in south London, founded in 2009 with the aim of creating sustainable neighbourhoods and genuinely affordable homes. We have a busy calendar of events led by our 500+ members and an ambitious development plan. Our mission is to reduce our communities' dependence on fossil fuels, increase food security, encourage bio-diversity and provide affordable housing for Londoners.

School of Public Life Reading Group - Fred visited the Field in 2015 to discuss his book “The School of Public Life”, emphasizing the discovery of neighborhood, avoiding activist exhaustion, and building power. He returned in 2016 to conduct a Hannah Arendt Working Group, out of which emerged a neighborhood action. Dewey is author of two pamphlets, “A Polis for New Conditions”, and “From an Apparent Contradiction in Arendt to a Working Group Method”. He was director of Beyond Baroque, in Los Angeles, from 1996-2010 and since 2011 has conducted public, free Hannah Arendt Working Groups in Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Brussels, Asheville, North Carolina, and Los Angeles. Fred helped put neighborhood councils into Los Angeles city law. In the summer of 2017, in Berlin, he expanded his Working Group model to sites across the city, creating a “portable polis” in conjunction with ZK/U’s “Hacking Urban Furniture” project.

[SYMPOSIUM] BOOK CLUB - Monthly free and open-access reading group for artists, curators, researchers and anyone interested in the intersections between art practice and critical theory. All decision-making is collective and participants are encouraged to chair the reading group on a selective and voluntary basis.

Soup-a-Tuesday - On Tuesday's volunteers from The Field and the local community will be running a collaborative cafe making soup, which will be served up on a donations basis. Please come and cook and eat with us.

Also, feel free to use the space for meeting friends, new people, using the internet, and generally contributing to the running of The Field.

Soma Workshop - Soma is a libertarian group experience using playful games to develop collaboration. Created in Brazil as an anarchist therapy by Roberto Freire, Soma is a space for social experimentation despite capitalist formulas of life. It brings out the micro-political through our bodies' response to certain physical exercises, to challenge the authoritarian or submissive behaviour that we discover in our daily lives. Soma encourages perception of how this behaviours reproduces political systems and aims to extend this awareness to other areas of our lives, to challenge hierarchy and social injustice.

The Today Group - We provide self help support group to people who Experienced or or living with Depression and or Anxiety

Every two weeks on Saturday's We will be hosting an afternoon of fun from 12-6pm at The Field with a drop-in cafe open to anybody, - where we'll run art workshops, meditation workshops, reading groups, Indian head massage and a provide drinks and a nice hot meal , please come and join us!

Yoga for Women of Colour -

In this space:

All self-identifying Women of Colour are welcome

Absolutely no yoga experience is required!

The venue is wheelchair accessible

People of all shapes, backgrounds and fitness levels welcome

If you have long-term health conditions or disabilities, contact me to discuss your needs

Please bring a blanket or shawl. Mats are provided

MISSION STATEMENTS

The following is some documentation about our on-going attempts at coalescing on a mission statement.

Notes for an aborted mission statement
(date unclear)

All the activities hosted by The Field will activate at least one of the following aspects:

1 - anti-greed: to challenge consumerism, accumulation, gentrification, exploitative labour

2 - transversal: to challenge hierarchy, privileges, fascism, racism, homophobia, ageism, ableism

3 - collective: to challenge individualism, segregation, enclosures

[add positive terms like playing, learning, ?]

Collect a series of examples, like yoga, hair cut, acupuncture at the common house

The Field is a space to experiment a different way of

living together, by challenging the above and find alternatives to it.

(Principles as at 22 July 2014)

Local: The Field is an independent project that is created and managed by people that live in the local area. We want the things that happen here to respond to the needs and desires of people who live here, and to be situated within and relevant to life in New Cross. We want to build a community and economy around The Field, based on relationships on solidarity and trust, that will allow us to work together on actions, projects and experiments both within The Field and the local area.

Direct participation: We want anybody who comes to The Field to be able to contribute to what is created here. Collectively we would welcome people joining in with decision-making, future events, plans and ideas, physically building and shaping the space and asking questions of what is happening here. Rather than The Field being a service provider to THE community we would like people and groups to lead projects while participating in The Field.

De-money: We want to reduce our reliance on money as far as possible. We will try instead to get what we need through gifts and exchange and re-use. Money is impersonal and brings dynamics that can be difficult to control. We would rather work together through personal interactions and networks of relationships.

Transversality: The Field seeks to engage people from different backgrounds and generate a space where differences (gender, class, race, sexuality, ability, age) can be discussed in a creative manner. We seek to encourage modes of working together that avoid rigid hierarchical structures while remaining conscious of the power dynamics inherent to collective work. These are transversal modes of working together, neither vertical nor horizontal.

Un-work: we will try to move from working simply or mainly to earn enough money to live towards directly doing things that need doing (including providing us collectively with what we need to survive and thrive) through these interactions and networks of relationships.

Commoning: We will develop and manage resources together. We aim to increase our common space, time

and ownership, building a social and economic environment of greater interdependence, controlled by ourselves. We will develop commons in the local area through our activities.

Creativity: We're interested in creativity as a collective, everyday activity, rather than something institutionalised and individualised. We think creative practice holds within it the potential to build new worlds and shatter old ones, to learn to see new possibilities and work through old traumas. Because of this, we want to reclaim our ability and time to be creative, and use it as a means to experiment with and artistically reorganise our lives.

New Cross Commoners and The Field [text written for The Field's website in 2015 and removed after a couple of months]

The New Cross Commoners is an experiment in commoning which started at the beginning of 2013 and soon got intertwined with the life of The Field. The nxc started with exploring the neighbourhood to understand how people organize themselves from be-

low – commoning around housing, knowledge, food, care (at the New Cross Library, Sanford Housing Co-op, New Cross Poetry Workshop...). To learn from, in and with the neighbourhood has been the primary activity of the nxc: the nxc's commoning has been developed primarily (but not only!) around knowledge, through a desire for learning not just from books but also from experience, of moving away from the academic production of enclosed knowledge, of turning theory into practice and action. In september 2013 we started experimenting with people's kitchens, bringing together the conviviality of communal eating with discussions about the life of the neighbourhood: we have consolidated a format that has been later used in other contexts in New Cross (e.g. Our New Cross). Throughout all these experiences we also took care of the nxc / ourselves as a forming, changing, open collective, and when The Field became a reality a bunch of people identifying themselves as commoners was ready to be the first component of what is now the group organizing The Field. Since then the nxc has organized monthly meetings, always open to everybody, to carry on exploring the neighbourhood (walks with Neil / Transpontine to Convoy Wharf, with Rene and Ayreen / 16 Beaver, bat walk with Cliff Hammett) and read about other experiences to learn

how to rethink and reshape the / our life in the neighbourhood (e.g. on militant research, ollas comunes, exodus collective, gentrification in New Cross, park fiction, isola art centre...). What we have been learning with the nxc is documented in the “toolbox” section of the website. Much of it has accompanied people in thinking and shaping the organization of The Field. The nxc will continue accompanying The Field as a kind of wandering free school open to everybody and to everybody’s contribution – if you like to propose a walk, an exploration, a workshop, a reading that could help people change for the better the life in the New Cross, get in touch: [newxcommoners\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:newxcommoners(at)gmail(dot)com)



Unofficial and not validated vision for The Field (December 2015)

The Field

The Field is a place run by volunteers to build social solidarity in the neighborhood. What is social solidarity? We live in a fragmented society were com-

petition is the norm and we are pushed to think for ourselves individually. We are divided individually but also according to race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion. Divide et impera they used to say: separate people and it will be easier to subject them. New Cross is changing a lot, someone calls it regeneration but it should be called gentrification: the government withdraws its support to the people and sells off what is public to allow for global investors to make their profit. Soon only the rich will be able to stay in New Cross. Social solidarity is helping each other to prevent that. We don't have recipes, but we have a space that different people already use, people that do not usually come together: white and black, old and young, middle class and working class, English and migrants, Muslim, Christians and atheists, straight and queer and trans etc., the "minorities" are still lower in numbers but this is gradually changing. What can happen when different people who have been kept separated for a long time can come together, meet each other, confront their differences and find out that to support each other against the selling off and social cleansing of the neighborhood is better than trying to survive?

The Field is not an easy place to run, it is an old building, there is always something to fix and take care of, there is no rent to be paid at the moment, but there are always expenses. This means that it's important for people and groups who use the space to contribute to the life of The Field so that others don't burn out! An easy way of contributing is to cook for the kitchen on wednesday. There are millions of other activities and tasks that can be done. And many more activities where you can meet people who try to think differently and change things in New Cross (and the world!) for the better.

(Draft 'Constitution' as at 6th April 2016)

Ethos and Values

The Field is a space where we seek to engage across differences, that values and respects people and challenges oppression.

The Field is a space where we recognize and engage with conflicts as a basis for change.

The Field is a space where we share skills and knowl-

edge; where we negotiate and work collaboratively.

The Field is a welcoming and inclusive space run and maintained collectively by the groups who use it.

The Field is a community of people that work together on common projects.

The Field is a space where we take care of each other; learn how to organise ourselves and what it takes to share resources.

Aims:

To be a collaboratively run community space in New Cross.

To be a community of people that can explore an alternative way of living.

To be part of an existing, diverse community of local people and institutions.

To explore collective organising and common ownership.

To be project and a community that is socially and economically sustainable.

To engage with and support other initiatives resisting the impact of capitalism on the community.

Vision:

That The Field is and will be a space in which people can begin to organise their lives in ways that are not defined by the logic of the market.

To experiment with new or alternative forms of economic organising and social relations.

To help create the conditions in New Cross and London for solidarity and collective action.

To provide space to groups who align with some of our objectives.

To bring groups together to collaborate at The Field.

To build a diverse community of people around The Field who will sustain it and are sustained by it.

To initiate engage and support other similar activities happening in the neighborhood.

Mission -

The Field is a space where we care for each other.

The Field is a space for groups that want to address issues relating to oppression and alternative political/economic systems.

To experiment with self organisation, common ownership, local and non-commercial exchange.

To develop and foster a culture and practices that would counter precarity through mutual aid, solidarity and direct action.

To develop and sustain practices that would counter gentrification and affirm the right to stay in New Cross with little or no financial resources.

To develop a community of people around The Field that can work together on common projects and take responsibility in sharing the work involved to maintain the space.



POSITIONALITIES

In this section, we've gathered fragments of conversations we've had throughout the years to give a sense of the different and contradictory positions that have come to be part of the process.

...this experiment we are doing has a certain shape, principles, ethics... So it should be a kind of provision that activates people, it activates the receivers as well and at the same time it is also for ourselves, it has an impact on our lives and our experiment

^

COLLECTIVISATION, EDUCATION, INTERDEPENDENCE, NETWORKS, COMMUNICATION, LIFE, HOUSING, FOOD, ECONOMY, NEEDS DESIRES, DREAMS, COLLECTIVISATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE, HEALTHY, COMMONS, EXPERIMENTING WITH THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE COMMONS, TRANSFORMATION - OF OURSELVES, OF THE AREA,

^

We need to construct a machine that would enable people / us to do things

^

When we started there was barely a roof, only half a floor, no plumbing or electricity, and a garden that resembled a landfill site. We have been motivated by a desire to create new public spaces and resources at a time when so many are being closed, reduced or threatened.

^

Desire I) a force that transforms how things are

^

We have a massive amount of practical work to do and practical decisions to make in the next few months, as the building is not yet habitable and Winter Is Coming.

^

A mode of travelling that is not simply the arrival at and departure from static points\

^

I think it would be good to keep it as a resource and build a project (with a bit of utopia!) through some simple steps, which can be readable to everyone and allows an long term inclusive process.

^

Problems -

Transversality: danger of the group to become homogeneous

Commoning: danger that or reproduction remains largely individual and we still need to rely heavily on jobs

Empowerment (starhawk): danger to burn out instead of empower ourselves and make happily use of the building and space as a resource.

^

There is a need to create better structures for people to feed their desires for the project into things that genuinely contribute to The Field and the inquiry that is taking place from it, but also in ways that people get genuine reward from.

^

Not a Venue - We want this resource that we have for the next 5 years, to be as useful and effective as possibly can be. As such, we want as many people to use it as possible, but we do not want to create a relationship to it that implies managers and users - instead we want a community of people to develop around the space, that can work together on a common project, to take responsibility in sharing the work involved to maintain the resource.

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For the NXC to keep a focus on a feminist understanding of the commons, placing reproduction as its core. To keep this focus might also make it easier to take decisions like that on the screening for the NXD film festival. And it might allow for us to keep some consistency, e.g. with the reservoir we could ask the

question of how a collective care could shape the campaign. Reproduction and the commons would not be a topic but more a way of operating: through a collectivisation of reproduction and care in what we do, as commoners and fielders and people engaging with new cross, at least at the level of some kind of injection of mutual attention and care, which seems it has been lacking lately amongst ourselves as well!

^

To operate not simply as yet another group user of The Field but as an “agent of transversality” trying to look for opportunities to engage with other groups and activities at The Field. I’d say that reproduction is usually not a glorious and highly visible kind of work. How can the nxc contribute to the reproductive life of The Field?

^

Another crucial aspect with the nxc has been, at least again at the level of aspiration, that “non-homogeneity” of a commoning community that De Angelis talks about. This might clash to some extent with the possibility of a political alignment across commoners,

but it would allow for that openness and responsiveness to the context that in the meeting was described as a strength of the nxc.

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Gustavo Esteva “Commoning in the new society”
28.11.15 http://cdj.oxfordjournals.org/content/49/suppl_1/i144.full.pdf

We read this text to reflect on commoning at The Field and to think the notion of resource in relation to the commons: is The Field a common resource? How to avoid reducing The Field to a venue that many people use whilst the task of caring for its reproduction – as a building and as a social centre - is left to only a few people.

What does it mean to rethink The Field not as a resource but as a tool? If The Field is a tool how to use it and what for? (for the revolution)

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The Field: art as commons + ludoteca + job de-center + healing centre + queering the nxc (faeries?) + addressing heavy issues (gentrification)

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I get super excited if I think what we could do with militant investigation in new cross, the ideas that came out from the meeting on monday would probably horrify italian autonomist experts in co-research, and activists at large, but I think they are great and I hope we'll put them into practice, and the discussion as a whole was great. I write some notes below, and after I put the questions I prepared. On monday we used only the first question and we said it would be good to have more meetings and use the other questions as well. Please add things on the notes! There was much more to write but I stopped taking notes when the conversation got excited...

^

I feel as though I've ended up placed in the middle of a series of processes that I have little or no control over and yet dominate my ability to act at The Field. At the times when I have been there regularly, or daily, I have spent hours trying to put certain things right—cleaning up the garden, washing pots of rotten food that have been left for days, sweeping, organising, bookkeeping, cleaning up after events the night be-

fore—only to find on my next visit that the work has been undone or there are just new tasks to take on and no one doing them.

^

I think this is what The Field is lacking the most, a space where we can talk to each other about how we feel in relationship to The Field and to each other. Field's meetings don't have that function at all. It's something else than going to the pub (which is also important and great) what I talk about. It was easier to check on each other and support each other when the group was smaller and more difficult now that there are many people and groups using The Field. I read the other day a very old document, wrote before opening The Field, where River (Ilma) was talking about the importance of having moments in a group where people talk to each other and check on each other "with open heart", or something like that. This might sound hippie, but this is what also non hippie groups do. This doesn't need to be a space of "love", it can be a space where conflicts arise in such way that the group can deal with them. I think something like this is needed especially with a culture and in a city where it's difficult to check on each other and to talk

about each other and with each other about how we feel and how we are. This is what good positive gossip can do for example, but since there's no culture for that here I think we should institute an alternative.

DOCUMENTS

Here, we've collected texts that give an idea of the unfolding of the process of thinking and rethinking about New Cross Commoners and The Field.

Mapping at The Field 23.11.15

[we organised this meeting in a moment of tension to try to get together by sharing motivations for being part of The Field]

A) Yoga laughter (standing up, stretching a bow, walking and hugging)

B) How to do the revolution?

1 - Collectivisation: (commoning)

(against the hierarchies of the state and the individualistic competition of the market) (against enclosures)

2 - Transversality: (close encounters with the other)
(against fascism, racism, homophobia, ageism, ableism)

3 - Resistance: (e.g. with direct action / casework)
(against all kind of injustice and oppression, not only on a microscale but also to impact gentrification, institutions, structural precarity)

4 - Learning: solidarity, mutual aid, dealing with conflicts

Is there something people disagree with, is there something you'd like to add?

C) is there something missing from the maps of The Field and New Cross?

D) What are the new ideas we have and how can they situate itself into this picture?

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[We try to institute a system through which we could take care of the trajectory of people joining and leaving The Field]

“Hi commoners, good to see some of you yesterday at Orsalia’s screening. Alice, Lawrence, Rosie and myself had a chat yesterday with Valeria about the first project AAA did <http://www.urbantactics.org/> (Atelier d’Architecture Autogeree – we invited Doina to talk about AAA to the commoners some time ago). Similarly to The Field, AAA got to permission to use a small plot of land, owned by the council, for a few years: they built a garden together with people living in the neighbourhood, and the place hosted many other activities organized by people living there, e.g. African women were cooking and selling food to make some money for themselves. When the council claimed the land back there were enough people deeply involved in the project to organize a massive protest in front of the council, which provided another space. Valeria was saying that this happened also because the space was clearly communicated as precarious to everybody getting involved, and for example the garden was grown in portable boxes so that they could be moved to another location if necessary: everybody was aware from the beginning that they were using a precarious space and this was part of a process of politicization. Something amazing AAA did was to document the journeys of people engaging with the project, registering their entry points

(e.g. growing tomatoes), their paths (e.g. from growing tomatoes to taking part in the radical pedagogy group) and their disappearance (e.g. the husband gets sacked and she has to work double shifts and she cannot come anymore). This documentation has not a box-ticking function of control, often a requirement of cultural institutions and events, it is a documentation of the precarious conditions of people, it is giving value to their engagement, paths, contributions, learning, and also it is a form of taking care, it fosters mutual care. Instead of counting people as numbers as usually institutions do, you acknowledge people, their difficulties and their contributions. I found this inspiring and I thought of sharing it with you, xpaolo”

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[This text was written after a New Cross Commons reading on Exodus and Marsh Farm as the site of The Field was getting cleared: this is an early vision of how The Field might function]

The Field before The Field (spring 2014?)

We need to construct a machine that would enable people / us to do things. What some people call an Institution of the Commons.

Exodus Collective: to address needs of people living in New Cross / to address desires (desires - needs) – in the case of exodus there are examples of housing for homeless people / raves (for young people). For exodus this was a winning formula: they got respected even by politicians and the police because of their social provision (needs) whilst they were also doing less “acceptable” entertainment provision (raves). And what they were doing was different from Big Society, it becomes big society when it is a kind of volunteering that is “facilitated” and controlled by the government instead of being self-organized. There is nothing bad in itself with providing a service, it depends how you do it: if you volunteer for public or private institutions your good intentions and desire to help others get exploited (Big Society); if you do it for others where this produces a separation between you and them, and dynamics of dependency and domination, that’s assistentialism. But if you do it in a self-organized way, giving the possibility for people to move from provided to providing, and doing something that benefits in the same way both those who provide and those who are provided, that’s great, and for this to happen change has to happen, so that those who are provided can become allies, it’s a way of inviting them through needs to join the living experiment

we are doing. And this experiment we are doing has a certain shape, principles, ethics... So it should be a kind of provision that activates people, it activates the receivers as well, and at the same time it is also for ourselves, it has an impact on our lives and our experiment. The Black Panthers as well were offering a provision with their free breakfast program, and at the same time they were building and reinforcing a movement. It is not about imposing an ideology by making use of people's needs, it is, at least in our case, creating a terrain for an encounter with people who otherwise will not engage in this experiment. Maybe we should also recognize that we have been thinking and experimenting collectively for quite some time, and most of the people living in New Cross haven't, and we should value this experience we have. It's not a matter of "teaching them" but getting other people on board in this process of collectivization, commoning, becoming activist etc.

With The Field we are going to do some kind of service provision anyway, so it's important to think how should we do it. There has to be some kind of service provision at The Field, otherwise we'll end up being a group of friends who do things for themselves, and unless you don't become our friend you cannot do

things with us. In such a way we would produce a kind of enclosure.

What are the things people need in New Cross? There are basic answers to a question about basic needs. Those are the needs community centres, youth centres, churches and other public and private organization already address. For us it would be a matter of addressing them differently. We could think of all sorts of service provision offered in New Cross and how to make it ourselves but differently. Like this...

Example of needs in New Cross:

A) Learning: school work for kids [Nelly]; language [Rosie]; homeschooling (from school to homeschooling) [Bridget] ... from state / privatized education to anarchist and libertarian education.

B) Food: from food banks to people's kitchen (cooking enough for people to take away); from buying to skipping, growing, harvesting; from supermarkets to food co-ops [Carlos]

C) Jobs: from job centres to "centro di scolocamento": a database promoting an informal economy, from

employment to something else, by putting people in contact with each other. We could write a questionnaire to makes us think of what each of us can do in terms of skills and what each of us would like to do and learn, not just for The Field but in general, in New Cross. The questionnaire could be used to gather information about people's skills that could be shared. This would be also: from virtual time banks to people actually meeting and knowing each other. From jobs to other ways of sustaining our lives.

D) Housing: from expensive rents to... housing co-ops, but is this something we could organize through The Field? This is such a huge problem, but there might be something we could do through The Field, maybe we could just make some knowledge available. [Mara] [Jacob, James] This problem of housing is very much related to gentrification, there might be something small we could organize here, something like a database of complaints, to be use as a basis for possible future actions [housing action southwark]. To have meetings inspired by the readings on militant investigation, where people share stories about housing, the relationship with landlords, the council, etc, to share not just complaints but also knowledge that could be useful to build action.

E) Legal Aid: do we know any sympathetic lawyer (the landlord!!!)?

F) Care, Health: poetry workshop and similar workshops (collage?) where people can come together and also talk about what they live through a different register [Sharon, Rosie]; yoga, agopuncture, hair cutting as they do it at the Common House; from shops to exchanging stuff and jumbo sales; from pharmacies and chemical medicines to growing medical plants in the garden and learn how to use them. Healing after Starhawk (with rituals, workshops, games, discussions...).

Examples of desires in New Cross:

A) Fun and Sociability: from clubs to free parties; from restaurants to people's kitchen; from expensive beer to cheap beer.

B) Love: from dating sites and speed dating to a free dating agency: e.g. how to break up without hating each other?

C) Psyche [healing]: from counsellors and self-help groups to the new cross poetry workshop.

D) Playing, Moving, Bodies: from gyms to nanopolitics [Nelly, Goia] ludoteca

E) Art as Commons: from galleries and museums to making use of art – to organize a programme of studies to make use of art to produce social transformation in new cross (how to make and use art everyday and everywhere, how to be artists collectively without having to have art as a product) [Paolo and anyone else interested: we could get funding through goldsmiths for this and we could cover part of the loan with it]

F) Spirituality: from religion to earth based spirituality. Basically, it would be a matter of asking ourselves how to experiment with and (artistically) reorganize all the aspects of our lives. And get other people on board. And confront ourselves with other institutions and organizations.

Another important aspect of Exodus is that they were open towards other people not just through provisions, but also because they were having troubles (struggling, resisting): with the police / the council / the government. They had to learn how to deal with policemen, councillors, politicians. When you read

their story you understand to what extent they were engaging with public institutions, using the modalities of the protest, reclaim, resistance. Where is all this with The Field? Protest, reclaim, resistance in the form of a direct confrontation with public authorities? It is not here, yet, but maybe we should not try to avoid it, because it is an important political kind of engagement. It might not make much sense for us to organize something like an anti-gentrification protest in front of the construction site in Batavia (it's an example), we could just wait for them to come to us, as Exodus did.

The Field – basic conditions (elements that are established and cannot be changed for the moment): 1 a loan (how much it is and when does it have to be paid back?) 2 a legal status (Community Interest Company – what does this involve?) 3 a contract signed on behalf of the Field (or by Lawrence, Dan, Alice or one of them?) for a 5 years rent free lease? Anything else?

The Field – principles: I would get down to few strong principles, also to be used as basic conditions. People need to get a general sense of them (key term), but then they can be also be explained more in details (other terms). Something like this: 1 collective: no

individualism, no segregation, no enclosures; 2 anti-greed: no accumulation, no consumerism, no gentrification; 3 transversal: no hierarchies, no fascism, no racism, no sexism, no homophobia, no ageism, no ableism.

The Field – general structure: different working groups (this is quite an ugly name maybe we could come up with something else): garden, building, economy, events, organization + general meetings.

The Field – is there a target group? The Field is open to everybody, but maybe we could say that the target group is not people who already hang out at places like 178 café, telegraph hill café, assembly, grow wild (basically middle class white families and similar). This does not mean they will be excluded or not welcomed! But a “target group” is something else.

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New Cross Commoners and The Field

- gentrification, following from the last NXC reading: to get to know more about housing action in southwark; to carry on with a walk in nx about gentrification [Tatiana] ECONOMY GROUP

- workshops on our working conditions (more meetings using the questions which are also on the website) [Lawrence] ECONOMY GROUP

- to have a session on cultural and social capital and talk about our possibilities of getting funding from arts council and goldsmiths to redistribute them, e.g. for The Field. [Paolo] ECONOMY GROUP

- from the reading on Exodus: carry on with NEF Plugging the Leaks with case study on Marsh Farm [James / Jacob] ECONOMY GROUP

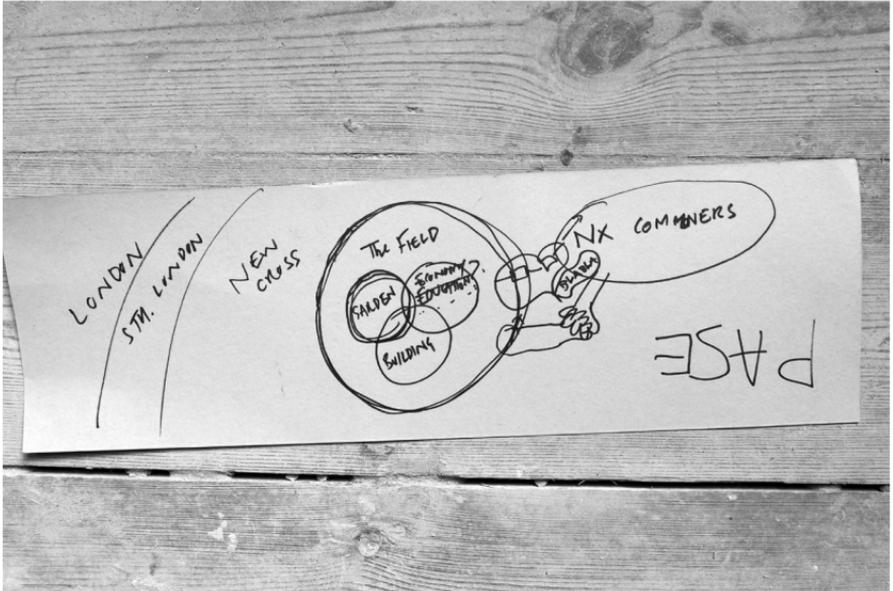
- people's kitchen EVENTS GROUP

- to do more with militant investigation: tables in the street + activities like collage making [Rosie and Sharon] ORGANIZATION GROUP (outreach)

To do more walks after Rene and Ayreen, to learn how to talk to people in the streets, to learn charisma (Walser + Debord) ORGANIZATION GROUP (outreach)

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[This is one of the several versions of a mission statement written for “art as commons”: the idea with it was to get funding from the Arts Council but we never got to write the application.]



Art as Commons (2014-2015)

Art as Commons is a project initiated by the New Cross Commoners, a collective based in New Cross that since the autumn of 2012 has been exploring and engaging with forms of bottom-up organization in the neighbourhood.

As New Cross Commoners we have learned to make use of theory to understand the different forms of organization and production of the commons in the neighbourhood, and to rethink and reshape those practised by our own collective: we have experimented with people's kitchens and we have accompanied the creation of The Field, and experimental social / community centre in New Cross.

In the autumn of 2014 we initiated the Art as Commons: the intent was to bring together the transformative function of art as understood by Guattari and Foucault, with practices of commoning as described (and practised) by Federici, Caffentzis, De Angelis and Linebaugh. For the New Cross Commoners this was a way of shifting from theory to art and art making, as the starting point to reflect and reshape the activities organized at The Field. [explain that the intent is to use art not only in the macropolitical context of campaigns and struggles but also in that of reproduction, everyday life, micropolitcs: this is where Federeci and Guattari meet]

After the achievements of those initial experiences we decided to turn the Art as Commons into a structured and funded project that could enable us to in-

involve more participants, to remunerate its organizing labour, to sustain The Field as a hosting institution, to compensate guest / mentors experienced in using art to trigger social transformation, and to engage on a more formal basis with other groups and organizations in New Cross.

To conceive of “Art” as “Commons” is to understand that art can become a common resource, against public and private enclosures, it can become something to be used not just for aesthetic pleasure but also to organize our lives differently and to experiment with new forms of commoning and collective production and reproduction.

The aim of the Art as Commons is to empower its participants to become agents of socio-political transformation through the use of art and collective art making. The course will be based in New Cross: the participants will engage with organizations and collectives based in the neighbourhood. We aim to attract a diverse group of participants, from different ages, genders, classes, races, abilities, also through the engagement of The Field as an experimental community centre. The participants will not need to be practising artists or have previous knowledge of the

arts. The New Cross Commoners will act as both organizers and participants of the course. At the end of the journey the participants would have learned how to engage in complex situations of urban and social transformation, making use of art as a tool to rethink them and to open up otherwise unforeseeable possibilities of change. The Art as Commons will foster the opportunity for the participants to continue working together after the end of the course, also by developing a toolbox of useful materials to be used in different situations and by sharing knowledge about grants, funding and scholarships.

The technical aspects of the Art as Commons (contacts with the mentors and with local organizations) will be organized by the New Cross Commoners, but regarding its contents and development, and following methods of radical pedagogies (e.g. Freire and Boal), the course will be self-organized, in as much the starting point will always be the knowledge and skills that could be shared and activated in specific situations.

The role of the mentors is to accompany the participants in the process of engagement with urgent and complex issues taking place in the neighbourhood

and thorough the activities of different groups and organizations. Examples of these urgent issues could be the work of the Friends of the Old Tidemill Garden, which is currently trying to save the garden from its destruction as a consequence of gentrification in Deptford; the activities of the collective of the New Cross Cutting, a forest near Goldsmiths that currently sees its rich biodiversity at risk because of a lack of funding to maintain it; Deptford Action, a group of local people working at a neighbourhood plan to limit the effects of gentrification on people and the environment. Other local groups and organizations to be involved with could be: Assembly, Grow Wild, Common Growth, Ceramic Studios co-op, Rainbow Food co-op, New Cross Learning, New Cross Poetry Workshop, Harts Lane Studios, Barnes Wallis Community Centre, Sutton Community Farm, Woodpecker Youth Centre, Millwall Community Association, Deptford Cinema, Sanford housing co-op, Save Southwark Woods.

The following are some of the groups, organizations and institutions that could provide mentors for the Art as Commons: Southwark Notes, Seeds for Change, People's Political Economy, 56a infoshop, Nanopolitics Group, Plan C, London Roots collective,

Ultra-red, Radical Education Forum, House of Brag, Brave New Alps, Radical Theory Group, Free University of Liverpool, Mayday Rooms, Common House, no.w.here, Precarious Workers Brigade, Shake! and Platform.

These are some of the art practices we could look at: Psychogeographical practice of Debord and the Situationists, Patrick Keiller's The Robinson Institute, William Morris, Courbet, Kirchner and Die Brücke, Mexican Muralism, Fluxus and Beuys, Lizzie Borden and Born in Flames, Jean Rouch, the Artist Placement Group, Wodiczko's Critical Vehicles, Mierle Laderman Ukele, Martha Rosler, Park Fiction, and and and, Radio Alice.

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Undoing Fear and Anxiety

[This was a series of meetings initiated by Ilma to deal, together, with fear and anxiety. At the first meeting we read together a Plan C text titled "We are all very anxious" which helped us thinking how to shape the meetings. The Plan C text is available at: <http://www.weareplanc.org/blog/we-are-all-very-anxious/>]

Openness: It will have a presence on The Field website, just to say that exists, if people are interested and want to get involved they can ask and we'll explain.

We agree on a number of topics related to our experience of fear and anxiety: topics we feel comfortable to deal with together.

We'll dedicate at least 2 sessions of 2 hours each per topic.

We'll bring together different modes of dealing with these topics: texts and discussions, exercises, rituals and games (e.g. theatre of the oppressed inspired), actions that can take place also outside The Field and can involve other people, readings about methods that counter fear and anxiety collectively (e.g. theatre of the oppressed...), creation of support structures...

Throughout the journey we'll keep as a goal practical outcomes to counter fear and anxiety collectively and concretely (e.g. following someone's working day as in precarias a la deriva and take it from there).

Let's use this pirate-pad to prepare a plan together by adding texts, exercises, ideas, etc. This plan will be discussed, tried out and validated at the next session on thursday the 30th of october 7pm.

MONEY

material on money from Rene and Aireen course last march (e.g. text on love and money by michael hardt, text by taussig, ect)

something on alternative and local economies? tati's co-op?

WORK [it could be divided into sub-topics]

workshop on our working conditions (theatre of the oppressed inspired) - Paolo and Manu

text on autonomist militant investigation by marta malo de molina

desire / blockages exercise + text on schizoanalysis

something from precarious workers brigade? tatiana?
something from precarity pilot (Bianca)

Bue's text on de-proletarianization (nanopolitics handbook) / course on needs and desires at la electrodomestica.

URBAN SPACE AND ARCHITECTURE

walks + exercises in the street + nelly's text on theatre of the oppressed + exercise (nanopolitics)

intro to nanopolitics handbook

EMOTIONAL CONTAGION - GROUPS AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Exercises and texts from Starhawk's Empowerment Manual

HOUSING

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

EXERCISING

CHARISMA

Starhawk exercises on developing a share leadership and individual / collective empowerment + text

HEALTH and CARE

Manuela's text and exercise on a politics of network-families (nanopolitics handbook)

Text by Silvia Federici ++

BODY IMAGE / BEAUTY

DEATH

FOOD (as in intoxicating yourself with chemical and modified food, but there could be more to it.)

exercises / texts from Starhawk book on permaculture.

LOVE RELATIONSHIPS (the ethical slut?)

+++Claudia on co-counselling

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[These are the notes for a workshop organised by the New Cross Commoners for a conference, From Co-Production to Alternative Futures, in London]

Royal Geographical Society

From co-production to alternative futures: social movements, common(s) and 'other values'

FRIDAY, 29 AUGUST - 14.40-16.20 - IMPERIAL COLLEGE, SKEMPTION BUILDING, ROOM 165

Notes:

- with our intervention we want to challenge us and the people attending
- give tiles to people attending and ask to clean them
- weave a narrative around the tiles and the activity of cleaning them

NEW CROSS COMMONERS/The Field: PRODUCTIVE TENSIONS

WHILE THE OTHER SPEAKERS ARE ON

- one of us sits on the panel, the rest is distributed in the audience

INTRO

- we hand out tiles and tools
- we tell the story of the commoners/The Field -> how it started, how it developed, where it is at now
- in the background, a slideshow with images is running

MEANING OF TILES/GENTRIFICATION

tiles – we found them in the building / it was an Antiques shop until the late 80's / they are tiles from the area, collected from the houses surrounding, an area that was built up almost entirely in the late 1800's / the tiles are from the floors of the large middle class victorian family homes, houses that were built on farmland – the area has only existed as a part of the city since then

/ houses being middle class family homes, then being split into apartments, shared by many people, being left empty or squatted, now being re-inhabited by single middle class families as living in the city becomes desirable again – a kind of return to victorian urban life that can be seen in advertising for new developments, e.g. Nunhead Village.

The building: architects office – professional, respectable place – then an insurance office – respectable, stable, middle class place – then antiques shop – gradually more informal – people’s memories from the area are of a very informal business where the owners lived as well as worked. More recently – for the last 20 years the place has been squatted, informal, a place for drugs, full of needles, rotten roof and floor, leaking, no toilet, like a landfill site – but also some kind of haven? Lots of people have told us stories about the place, there was an informal community with rules and respect for each other around the place for many years – it housed people for free... Now us... we are interested in using the place as somewhere that we can experiment with ‘creating other values’ – but we have painted the front, planted a garden, put up trellis, replaced the original sash windows stripped of decades of paint, covered the graffiti. Stories of how people used to behave around the place, vs. how they do now.

Most of those organising this project came to New Cross via the university – what does it mean for us to have taken over this place, to be acting on the area, the methods and tools we use to find out about the area, it’s history, the people who live here now and

have lived here – mostly we ask questions, or try to stimulate conversations with maps or surveys, but it seems inadequate. There is a tension about having the ‘right’ to act in the area, and about how to use our privileges...

A tension we feel with this relationship with history – how processes of gentrification so often appropriate the history of a place and people in order package and sell it to outsiders, to commercially valorise a place. How do we do it differently? How can we have a different relationship with the history of the place? Can our activities be informed by that history and concerned with the future? Can our activities be antagonistic to the processes of gentrification, capital, privatisation... or not?

WORK

- Trying to involve everyone at The Field but most people work during the day. A few can work part time but then take on disproportionate amounts of work in the project. Precarity.
- Many of those involved in the project are also state-funded. Sense of guilt we get when unemployed

and when getting benefits. On the other side ability to get more things done.

- Salaried labour and commoning of care? As something to look into in the future?

- Desire to escape salaried labour resulting in doing free labour - self-exploitation? But does it just feel like this because we end up doing a lot of manual labour that in a 'career' we would do our best to escape?

- Precarious labour and spreading disaffection towards our jobs.

- Voluntary work and Big society: this is not a project practising in production of "social value", or social service. How to break away from state jargon under which unpaid labour is recruited?

- What do we do with the boring/dirty work nobody wants to do?

- A wish to get funding so people can be paid, but will this create dynamics where we are no longer in control of what we do with our time?

- One of the worst everyday symptoms of work in the normal economy is stress. But do we escape stress by getting involved in a project like The Field? What is it that causes stress in this management-free environment?

Maybe it is problematic to think of ourselves as exploiting ourselves if there is no direct relationship between the time and effort we expend and money.

We are trying, with this project, to think about how we can organise our lives around different values, different ways of understanding what our time and effort are for, outside the logic of labour / capital.

TALKING ISSUE

- we all went through academia -> talking has become the most important method to resolve things/issues

- the way we talk is excluding people - although we started with the NXC to learn from and with the neighbourhood and a lot of what we do is also based around reading texts in non-academic ways (this includes combining reading with an activity)

- can we talk less and do more? It's also about being less afraid of getting it wrong
- we are moving slowly and need to get used to it

CLOSING

- tiles for The Field - a place in NX where we try to align our desires and materialise them, a place where values become materialised in value-practices
- we experiment with ourselves to see if we can live differently
- often don't know where the boundaries are with creating other value practices -> painful, disorienting but also energising and empowering

WHAT WE NEED TO BRING ALONG

- bucket full of tiles
- little pieces of sanding paper
- little pieces of cloth for polishing
- newspaper to catch powder
- New X Commoners publication

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NXC Summer Camp 2014

[These are some reflections some of us wrote after an intense summer camp we co-organised in Italy.]

Hi people, I add here my contribution to the brilliant documents written by Ilma, Lawrence, Alice + everybody in Italy, hopefully more people will share suggestions for the near future of The Field.

I think Ilma's proposals and suggestions should be shared with everybody on the core group Field list. And here a question: who is part of The Field's core group? It seems there are people missing in the last emails that were sent around. Maybe you could discuss this at the next meeting, or at least, to avoid the usual messing up that sometimes happens with the commoners as well, we should have a mailing list for the core group that we could all use with all the addresses, for example as part of The Field gmail account, that's super easy to set up once we know who should be part of it.

To these recent communications coming out from the week in Italy I add here also Lucia and Richard, since they were part of the meetings and they also contrib-

uted to documents like the monster Field.

As Ilma suggests the second part of her email should be edited cause is of a personal nature. Her contribution which I think adds wonderful and important things to the monster document and that on The Field's militant research written by Lawrence and Alice.

ON ILMA'S DOCUMENT:

To start a practice of co-counselling as The Field's core group: that's brilliant, which kind of counselling would we like to learn and practice?

We could get in contact with this, does anyone know them? <http://www.counsellingforsocialchange.org.uk/> and Adrian Harris / pcsr.org.uk psychotherapist and counsellor for social responsibility. This might be a classical kind of counselling for a classical kind of activism, there might be other ways we could shape our co-counselling. I mentioned schizoanalysis before, this practice comes from Guattari, it might be useful to look more into this, maybe with the help of friends and practitioners: Toret (he lives in Spain), Valeria and Cris (wonderful people same gang as Mara and Nelly). It might be useful to look into schizoanal-

ysis also because we already have some Guattari in the principles (transversality), we talked about institutional analysis as a form of militant investigation (see below in relationship with The Field as an institution), and we'll read on Guattari and aesthetics for the Art as Commons. I would like to organize something on schizoanalysis as therapy when I come back.

Also we could look more into Starhawk to develop a practice of co-counselling. The rituals we did at grow heathrow had a strong element of collective healing, and she writes on this in her books also with practical suggestions.

On counselling and healing: I would suggest to practice this counselling not just as a way of healing traumas but also to empower ourselves and the collective, in the sense Starhawk talks about empowerment (in Guattari's terms it would be something like a liberation of collective expression). This co-counselling would be a matter not just to take care of the dynamics of the group but also to learn to help each other with the shit we carry on ourselves (some kind of commoning around care) + help each other becoming happy and powerful in order to change things for the better (empowering).

Who would be up for taking care and organize something about counselling? I would be happy to start doing something in October, and then we can rotate after some time.

Rota to organize non working activities for the group like trips in the wood: we need 2 people in charge of organising these activities for the first months. I can do this from october. Drawing, singing, collage, playing, moving, mushrooms, grounding, eating, rituals etc, it's important to have moments together when we just do these things as we did towards the end of the camp in Italy, that is, to have a good time together. These practices can be functional to the process of organizing The Field but should be also for us to be well together.

Talk with other people who had experiences similar to those of The Field. For ex as Anna (London Roots) suggested, we could meet with Grow Heathrow's people and learn from their experience. Is anyone in contact with some of them? Or we could ask Anna to put us into contact. We could organize a trip there to pay a visit to them, they also might need help against the eviction, they resisted the first one but I'm not sure what's going on at the moment.

ON MONSTER DOCUMENT:

Great document, I would put it online together with the principles, apart from the bit on the “members” because as it is it sounds a bit second-class people who do not have access to the core group. But if we rework this I think this document should also go public. I would be good to make something public / online also about the following proposal on militant research, once it will be discussed.

ON ALICE AND LAWRENCE / The Field MILITANT RESEARCH:

This proposal is great as well, also because it will make things happen through The Field whilst allowing us to take more time before opening the space to others’ initiatives and before making the building ready – it will take some pressure out. It’s a proposal that goes very well together with Ilma’s ideas.

To develop a practice of walking: we had already an example of that with the walk with Rene and Ayreen, for me the most amazing moment was when we ended up in the courtyard of the self-built houses in Telegraph Hill and we had a conversation with a guy living

there. Rene and Ayreen are great at talking with people in the streets, they also made long term projects based on that, travelling around the States. For me the question there was: is charisma something that we can learn? For sure we can learn to talk to people in the streets and we can learn to walk in a different way, together, and together with other people, and occupy the space by moving and talking about stuff that matters in ways that matter. We could read on Situationist derive and try to practice it, and there is also an amazing tale on walking by Robert Walser, I would like to scan it and send it around.

We could also ask Susan Kelly to lead a walk in New Cross, as an artist she developed a practice of walking in London inspired by the zapatistas and she wrote part of her phd on this.

The document mentions mapping as a tool for militant research: if we have a budget we could invite amazing collectives like the spanish hackitectura, see e.g. their “mapping the commons” <http://mappingthecommons.wordpress.com/>

Desires and needs: I was thinking about an amazing activity we organized in Bolzano as part of Summer

Drafts (ci mancherebbe altro), some of the people who organized it were part of precarious workers brigade, nanopolitics, etc. and now they are in Barcelona, I mentioned them already, soon they will organize a course that brings together Federici and Guattari (as the Art as Commons proposal does), needs and desires, productions and reproduction, it's great stuff, and there are a lot of resources here we might use in the future:

<http://laelectrodomestica.wordpress.com/2014/07/21/engcast-reproduction-between-desire-and-need/>

The next time they come to London it would be great to think of inviting them to The Field.

The document talks of “triggering conversations with people about the job centre, rent, food prices, schools etc.” When discussing militant investigation we thought about a way of asking those questions in the street whilst making collage or some activities of that kind (see also the takeaway philosophers). It would be great to make this happening, and this is also related with learning how to talk with people about certain issues and in a certain way.

Freire's code: some of us are already familiar with People's Political Economy use of Freire's method. We could ask PPE to come down, not to teach us but to put the method straight away in practice with us with people in New Cross.

Foundation course on the commons: another brilliant idea, also with the prospect of having the Art as Commons course later on. We could also make use of the new cross commoners sessions to read some stuff in preparation for the Art as Commons whilst we find out about funding for the Art as Commons and work on that. It would be important to do something with this Art as Commons before waiting too much time / for the funding to come.

Shall we get funding for this militant research initial phase of The Field? Would it make sense to use the Edge fund? Shall we ask them directly with a phone call?

OTHER STUFF:

It would be good to have more saturday sessions like the painting the front, that was a good one, we worked together and we had a good time making

things together. My problem with manual labour is primarily that I feel useless when doing it. It would help a lot not only having tasks assigned but also a discussion on why things are done in a certain way, e.g. why painting the front white, why is it important, can we decide this together, and so on.

It would be important to carry on with the decision making process – Jacob and others will take care of that as a group.

Working conditions workshop: me and Manuel prepared this some time ago, we would like to do it at some point, I think it's important to share more about our working conditions. I still have in my head this idea of setting up a job de-centre, but before having something like this I think there is much more we could do amongst ourselves to de-center ourselves from work. This applies with everything else and not just working conditions: it would be important to find ways to sustaining each other before opening this up to other people in New Cross. It's a matter of developing a certain degree of interdependency and a different economy based on learning how to sustain each other: let's start from ourselves, we do this already to some extent but we could do this much more, and as a

collective rather than simply on the bases of existing friendships and relationships within the collective.

In Italy we talked about the impression of doing too much academic thinking and not enough action. I think it's important to make a distinction between paralyzing academic thinking Goldsmiths style and a practical use of theory and philosophy which is what we have been trying to do since the beginning of the New Cross Commoners. This is not something easy to do also because so many of us come from the Goldsmiths experience and our thinking and way of talking has been shaped by that. But we should also recognize that we have been doing great stuff whilst reading (e.g. people's kitchen) and there is more we should do. Academic talking no, theoretical / practical thinking yes.

Roles for The Field as an institution. Jacob's dictatorial meeting started a discussion about these roles and it was a first attempt to redistribute them and open up the LAD triangle, I think there is more to do in this respect, Ilma's document addresses this issue as well, roles, tasks, recognition of labour. Guattari at La Borde clinic had a system called the grid where all the roles were down on paper and they would rotate

periodically. The whole thing was more complex than this and it was related to institutional analysis and the production of transversality. It might be good to define all the roles and tasks The Field needs and come up with a rotating system: even if right now we won't be able to fill all the roles and fill them equally, it would be good to know and understand how tasks are distributed with the aim of distributing them more equally and with rotation when possible.

Roles in meetings. In Italy we discussed how difficult it is to be facilitators and part of a collective at the same time. Part of the difficulty is the tendency to separate ourselves from the facilitators forgetting that we are actually part of the same experiment. To develop a more collective form of facilitation we could activate more figures beside that of the facilitator. There is an amazing book called *Micropolitica del Deseo* written by Belgian activists, in spanish and french, that can be very useful.

<http://micropolitiques.collectifs.net/IMG/pdf/micropolitica52a.pdf>

<http://micropolitiques.collectifs.net/>

I would be up for translating the sections of meetings

and roles and the two appendixes, great if someone could help me. They use Starhawk's animals-roles as we did, they expand her questions and they add other roles and moments to structure meetings and the life of a group, like: "guardian of the ambient", "sniffer", "meteorological point", "step beside" etc etc.

This book could be good also to put together something like a manual of practical stuff and exercises we could use to deal with moments of conflict, tension, crisis, to learn how to deal with difficulties - this is also something we talked about in Italy. I'd love to find the time of putting together such manual or at least starting this, and it would be great to do this with others, and people will add to this and the manual will grow and be updated.

I would like to think also if there is anything useful / doable we could get from nanopolitics in terms of exercises.

More about moments of tension and conflict: what was amazing for me in Italy was that even if sometimes I got upset with people in meetings this would not last for long and then I was happy with everybody again. This might sound cheesy, but I want to make

a point here, in Italy it was easier not to personalize conflicts, it might be more difficult in London if we don't manage to share beautiful time together as Ilma recommends. This is something I have experienced also the second day at the Starhawk workshop, this sense of being in love with everybody, of something that is beyond a being such and such. I think it's important to create moments where this kind of being together can happen. This is something else than entertainment or going to a pub or have dinner together. I also think it is important to say things that we find problematic in each other, things that hurt as, again, Ilma suggests. Tatiana has mentioned non-violent communication a few times, it might be good to look into that. And this matter is also related to co-counselling and healing: to take Ilma's example of self-analysis, I might talk too much because I am insecure and I have a desire of proving that I am capable of thinking and talking and contributing to the discussion, but this might be detrimental to others and to the discussion, and it would be great to deal with this desire collectively.

- xp

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[This is an email that to give sense of The New Cross Commoners and The Field]

Hi Tatiana and all, I reply to this because not everybody will come to the meeting today, and I will try here not so much to defend myself but to make use of your response to talk more about the issue of leadership / collectivity which to me seems to be at stake here, and it's such a difficult issue. This email is long again as you can see (another couple of pages!), because it's not just about the art as commons but the new cross commoners as well and more.

I wrote the notes I sent you yesterday on sunday afternoon, saturday I was all day at The Field, where I had a chat with lawrence about this art as commons and from that conversation came out the idea of writing something for the commoners not in a proposal format for people to think differently about this art as commons. Personally I don't think the problem with the proposal is the short notice (we don't need to take final decisions on this today) or the academic language, since as commoners we have been reading together academic texts for quite some time, everybody went or is at uni, etc etc.

The problem with the proposal is, as I said in the first

email above, that I have done all the writing myself kind on behalf of the new cross commoners. A much better way of doing this would have been to have an official meeting to talk about the idea and then to write something together. Instead of doing this I spent several days writing this proposal over a period of months starting last autumn, I sent drafts to other commoners (Bianca and Manuel), I talked about this with other commoners (mainly Lawrence and Alice), and I think a big part of what is in the proposal comes out of the learning process with the new cross commoners rather than simply from my academic brain. The fact that I spent already so much time thinking and writing about this is certainly a problem because it puts me already in a specific position measurable in terms of authorship and power.

This is related with how the new cross commoners function, I spend a lot of time thinking and writing about the new cross commoners, before January I was doing this together with my flatmate Bianca, but now is always a thinking that goes together with The Field, the neighbourhood plan, etc. Now a bit about myself: I guess I have a kind of obsessive character in the sense that I tend to focus on few things and spend a lot of time and energy on them, and what I have

been spending most time and energy for in the last couple of years has been the new cross commoners. I don't think this kind of obsession is bad in itself if it does not close down in itself, and I think it's better to commit to few things focusing on them rather than dispersing energy trying to engage with 1000 different things. Also with writing I have a kind of crazy relationship, I start with the intention of writing a couple of sentences and I end up writing for a whole day (this is the case with this email as well!!). With this also I don't think there is anything bad in itself, it depend how this is used. I write all this about myself not to justify myself but because this is very much connected with how Starhawk understands multiple leadership, as something that can emerge from the disposition of an individual character collectively cultivated.

In the case of the commoners there is a problem with a kind of implicit leadership: I don't want to lead the new cross commoners, but in a way I end up doing this, even if the nxc sessions have been often facilitated by other people. I am aware of that, but at the same time I don't think the solution would be for me to write less or think less about the new cross commoners, also because it's not that other people would

automatically do that instead of me and everything will be equally distributed in a magical way. This is what Starhawk's talks about: collective empowerment, people empowered for the group to be empowered, people trying out the kind of "leader" they could be as part of a leaderless collective, and she suggests also exercises to take care of that as a collective. I think it would be a matter of making use as part of the group what we feel we can contribute in terms of passion, skills, etc (even obsessions!), and for the group itself to help people doing that, this is what I read in Starhawk's chapter on leadership and it would be amazing to put this more strongly in motion: what do we contribute to this / what can we contribute / what do we feel like contributing / what would we like to learn from this... So it would be great to turn this email I write myself into an exercise we could do together.

lawrence, alice and dan are leading the process of The Field, james h is spending most of his time and energy with the neighbourhood plan, sharon has been informally facilitating the poetry workshop for years, etc etc etc, and we are all trying to bring together and intersect these different initiatives, to support each other and so on. And some of these initiatives face

a similar problem of leadership / collective, there is some kind of leadership and at the same time a desire for openness and transversality. I think this art as commons could become an occasion to work more closely on this issue. And I think there are no perfect models to follow here, also because of the nature of these initiatives: what we are doing is very different from a traditional kind of activism, from a save the lewisham hospital campaign, but also from the precarious workers brigade, because in that case as well there is a common enemy everyone is fighting against (precarity), and this is already a strong ground to create a collective where there is no structural leadership and yet leadership is not a problem. But the activism we are doing with The Field and nxc, if we can call it as such, it's of a different kind, what we have in common is not fighting against something, but trying to experiment with a different way of living our lives (something that does not exclude fighting, but excludes a target / enemy in common).

There is one more thing about the Art as Commons, it is not just about passion and expertise, and skills that I might have and share with others, it is also about privileges and how to collectivize them. I have a contract at Goldsmiths and because of that I can get

funding through Goldsmiths, for me it's important to make use of this, to get funding and use them for The Field / commoners / for us, to redistribute this resource and feed a local economy with it. This position again implies a power imbalance, and again it is something we'll have to deal with together. But I think to embark in something more structured, more "official" like a project funded, would put us in a position of having to deal with issues of leadership, responsibility, roles, skills, etc. We've done that to some extent with the new cross commoners publication but still very informally.

I hope this makes sense and I hope it might be helpful to address the issue of leadership / collective.

And I'll try not to write such long emails never ever again!!! xp

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[This is a document I wrote after a meeting we had on games and the use of games at The Field]

Games and The Field / NXC listing games according to their purpose:

1 - games / meetings, to make meetings more playful, e.g. Starhawk's roles; different huts...

2 - preliminary games that can be useful to move onto another activity, e.g. the folding mat before working together at the building

3- situated games that interact with New Cross, that engage with a specific area and the people living in it, e.g. anti-gentrification games, situationist derive...

4 - value games: by playing you deal with certain values through thinking + embodiment, e.g. Theatre of the Oppressed, e.g. undoing discriminations (this aspect should be active in every game since there are always values we consider important – see also the last chapter of Flanagan's book on designing games).

5 - abstract games that deal with a specific issue or question: instead of dealing with the issue only by

talking around a table you design a game and play it, e.g. instead of using the questionnaire on our working condition to have a discussion we design a game starting from those questions. How to turn everything into a game: a text, an artwork, a question... Here Guattari and his ideas on mapping and cartography could be useful.

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Theatre of the Oppressed at The Field

[These are some notes written after a theatre of the oppressed session facilitated by Nelly and Mara to reflect about The Field and the relationship between the people and the place]

About the question of whether we are going to address intrapersonal relationship issues as a group or trying to regard it as a private matter. And if we do address it, to what extent? How we will be able to draw the boundary? If not, how do we deal with gossip and things like that? We did not spend time to actually think about channels to deal with human relationships within the group (can be friendship, love, sexual relationship, broken, cracked or whole).

Personally, it made me think that maybe we also need to start to slowly work on creating channels where emerging intrapersonal conflicts can resurface rather than waiting for them to burst out. Most of the collective project I worked in always postponed those meetings which actually addressed emotions, group dynamics and power-relations. Also I found that the strive to address the intrapersonal conflicts tend to become gendered, leaving one sub-group bearing most of the emotional labour. And that's not cool or healthy.

In many long lasting project (mostly live-in communities) I found a structure where so-called 'emotional meetings' were always part of the agenda. At some places it was one meeting every month, at some other places it was three whole days every two months. I see how our group is just in the process of forming and it could easily feel like that we have no stuff or conflict to address just yet. At the moment I really don't think talking would do any good. I would be really in favor of slowly starting a monthly workshop where firstly through more embodied exercises and practices we could create channels and a safe space for potential discussion. From the last exercise at the workshop I also saw the importance of trying to build a safe space

for intrapersonal conflicts not through ignoring them or gossiping about them. I think its important to feel confident and also responsible for these issues to able to bring it up for the group. However, meanwhile doing this, it is also very important to set lines where the personal and community boundaries are.

^

[These are some ideas for activities to be organised at The Field]

It seems there is a general desire for action rather than just talking, and now that the weather is not so bad we should see what of the following points and trajectories we could turn into action.

- gentrification, following from the last nxc reading (to read on PAH - see Marc's suggestion) (to get to know more about housing action in southwark) (to carry on with a walk in nx about gentrification?)

- workshops on our working conditions (more meetings using the questions which are also on the website)

- to have a session on cultural and social capital and talk about our possibilities of getting funding from art council and goldsmiths to redistribute them, e.g. for The Field.
- let's also see what comes out from the next reading on Exodus

- engagement with the our new cross forum / neighbourhood plan with tables on the streets + discussions + activities - this could be also another channel to make use of what we have learned about militant investigation (but from the last plan meeting the impression is that this might be premature)

- people's kitchen

- The Field, especially with its newly established learning group, we could read as nxc on issues that would be useful for The Field, for example on local economy, permaculture, etc. This might be also a way to bring more people to The Field, and to move from reading to practical activities.

- to do more with militant investigation: tables in the street + activities like collage making: this could be done not just in conjunction with the neighbourhood plan, but also with The Filed - to be discussed.

- to activate the new cross commoning map <http://nxc.smappamenti.org/>

- To do more walks – see below

MINDMAPS

1 - The Field Monster: The result of a group of us asking: what is The Field? A building? A project? A Machine? A Organism? Or... A monster? (See photo on pgs. 155)

2 - The Field: Some of the things a few of us think The Field is, or wants to be, or doesn't want to be, or can't be. "Getting to know each other personally", "not separating art and politics", "everyone participates"... (See photo on pgs. 156 - 157)

3 - The Activist Institution: (the activist institutions. jpg)

What would an activist institution be? And is that what The Field should become?

eg. "The Field is defined by its engagement with the area + by its actions" (See photo on pgs. 169)

4 - Leadership: A brainstorm on leadership and what it means, and the problems of being leaders...

Eg. "Hard to make decisions that have a large conse-

quence.... Shouldn't be on the shoulders of one person." (See photo on pgs. 158 - 159)

5 - The Core Group: The case for having a 'core group' before it was abandoned (See photo on pgs. 168)

6 - Decision Making: Trying to make a decision about how to make a decision about how to make decisions... (See photo on pgs. 160 - 161)

7 - Plants | Animals | Structures | Events: from a workshop on permaculture principles (See photo on pgs. 162)

8 - What is New Cross?: From a table at our weekly People's Kitchen event some time in 2015 (See photo on pgs. 163)

9 - Some Things on Brown Paper: From a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop with Nelly and Mara. (See photo on pgs. 164 - 165)

10) Some Other Things on Brown Paper: From a Theatre of the Oppressed workshop with Nelly and Mara. (See photo on pgs. 166 - 167)

THE FIELD MONSTER

13.8.2014

- BEING ELASTIC BETWEEN DIFFERENT EDUCATION ORGANISATIONAL AND ECONOMIC MODELS
- TAKING THE FREEDOM TO MAKE MISTAKES AND TO LEARN FROM THEM
- RECOGNISING OUR PRIVILEGES AND COLLECTIVISING THEM
- A CORE GROUP WITH A TRANSPARENT STRUCTURE FOR NEW PEOPLE TO JOIN
- TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE TO NEW PEOPLE
- ALLOW FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT
- THE MONSTER IS NOT GETTING BLOCKED ^{IN THE PRESENT} BY FUTURE OBSTACLES
- KNOW WHAT WE DON'T WANT AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY NO
- UNDERSTANDING OUR LIMITS
- COLLECTIVISATION, EDUCATION, INTERDEPENDENCE NETWORKS, COMMUNICATION, LIFE, HOUSING, FOOD, ECONOMY, NEEDS, DESIRES, DREAMS, COLLECTIVISATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE, HEALTHY COMMONS, EXPERIMENTING WITH THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE COMMONS, TRANSFORMATION - OF OUR SELVES, OF THE AREA,

Typical leadership styles
more easily visible.

RELUCTANT LEADERSHIP?

Impatience

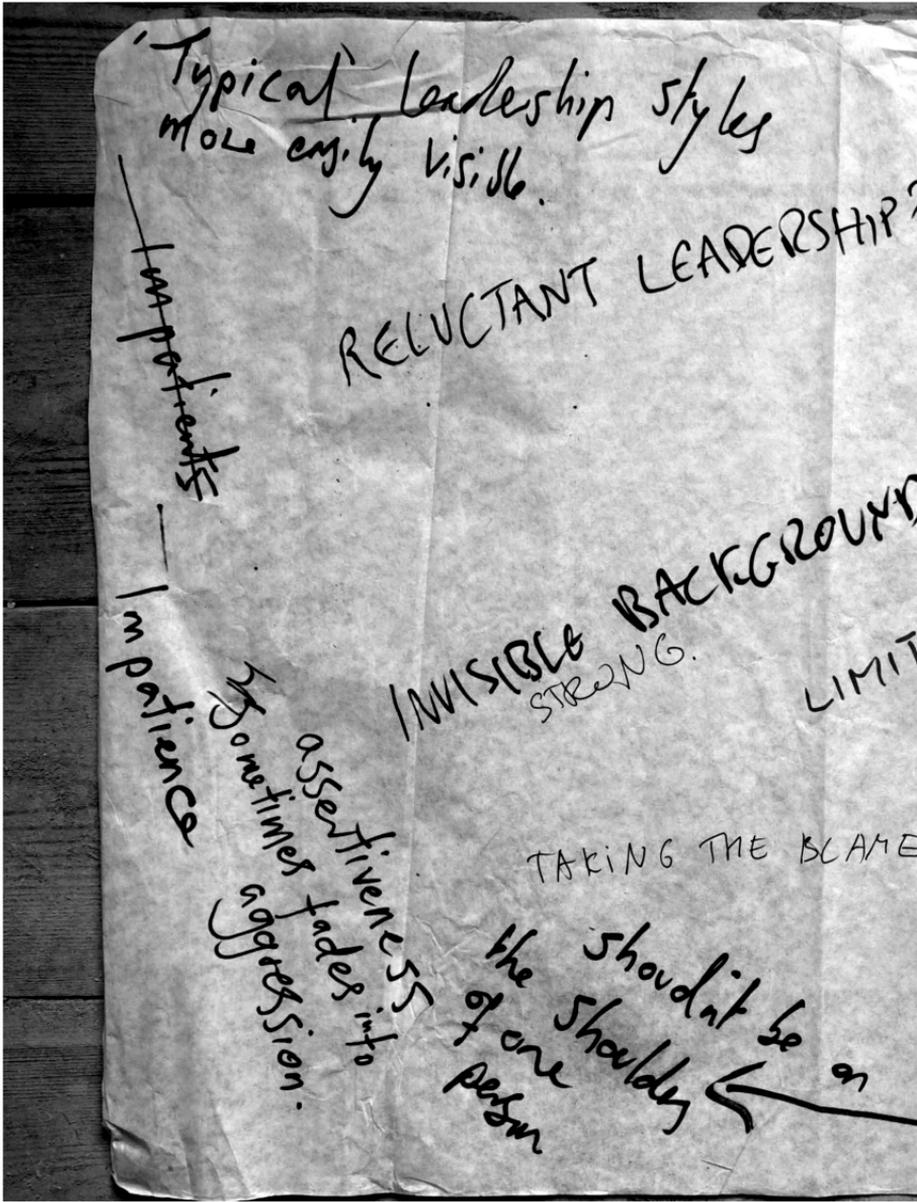
Impatience

Sometimes fades into
aggression.

INVISIBLE BACKGROUND
STRENGTH. LIMIT

TAKING THE BLAME

It shouldn't be on
the shoulder
of one person



CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE

~~CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE~~

TO BUILD UP — CONVERSATIONS
 — RELATIONSHIPS
 — WORK RELATED — PROJECTS STUFF

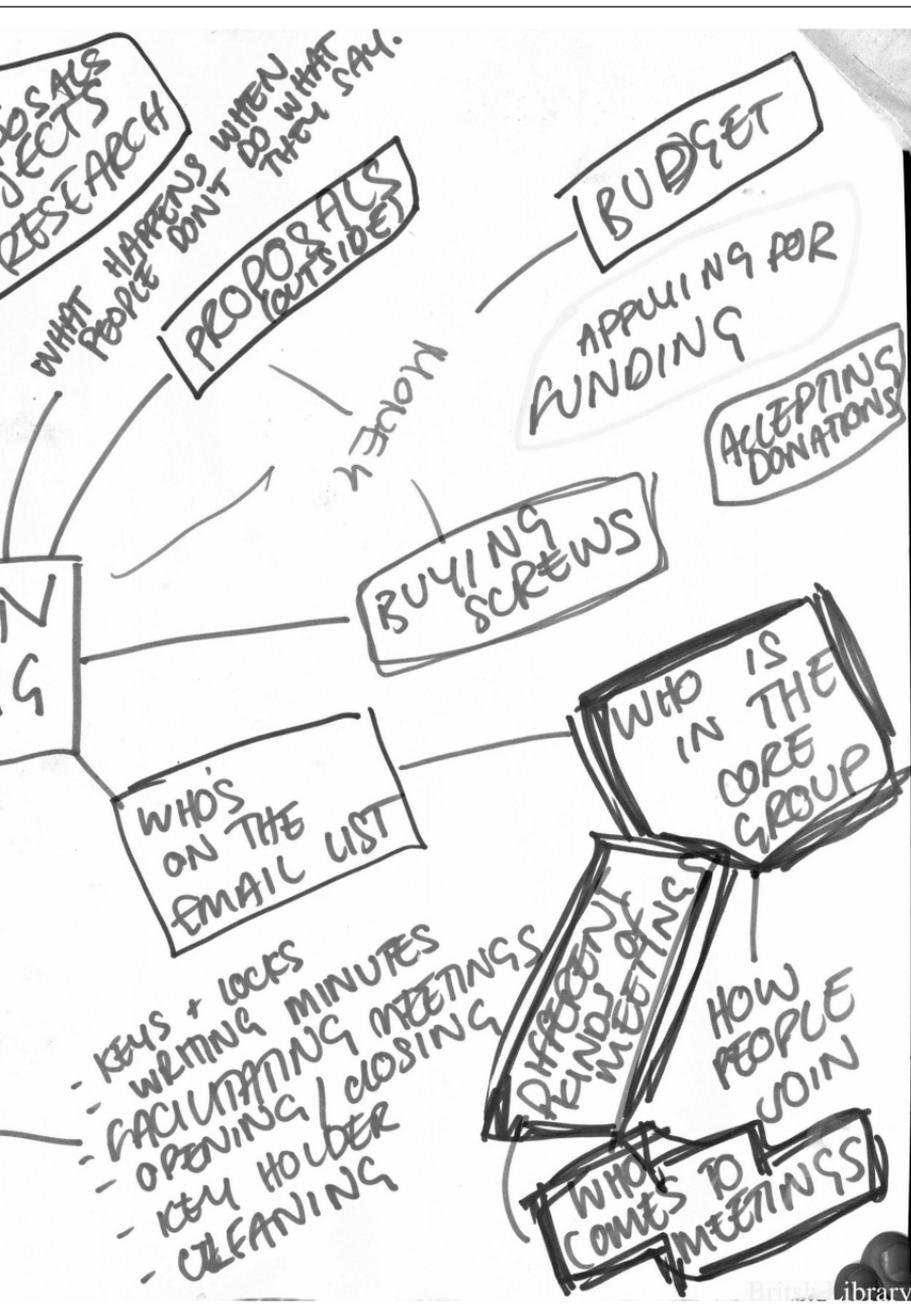
TAKING FORWARD
 THE MESSAGE

DESIRE TO LEARN MORE SKILLS
 TO MORE FULLY EMBRACE
 YOUR ROLE

DESIRE TO SWITCH MORE
 FLUIDLY BETWEEN ROLES

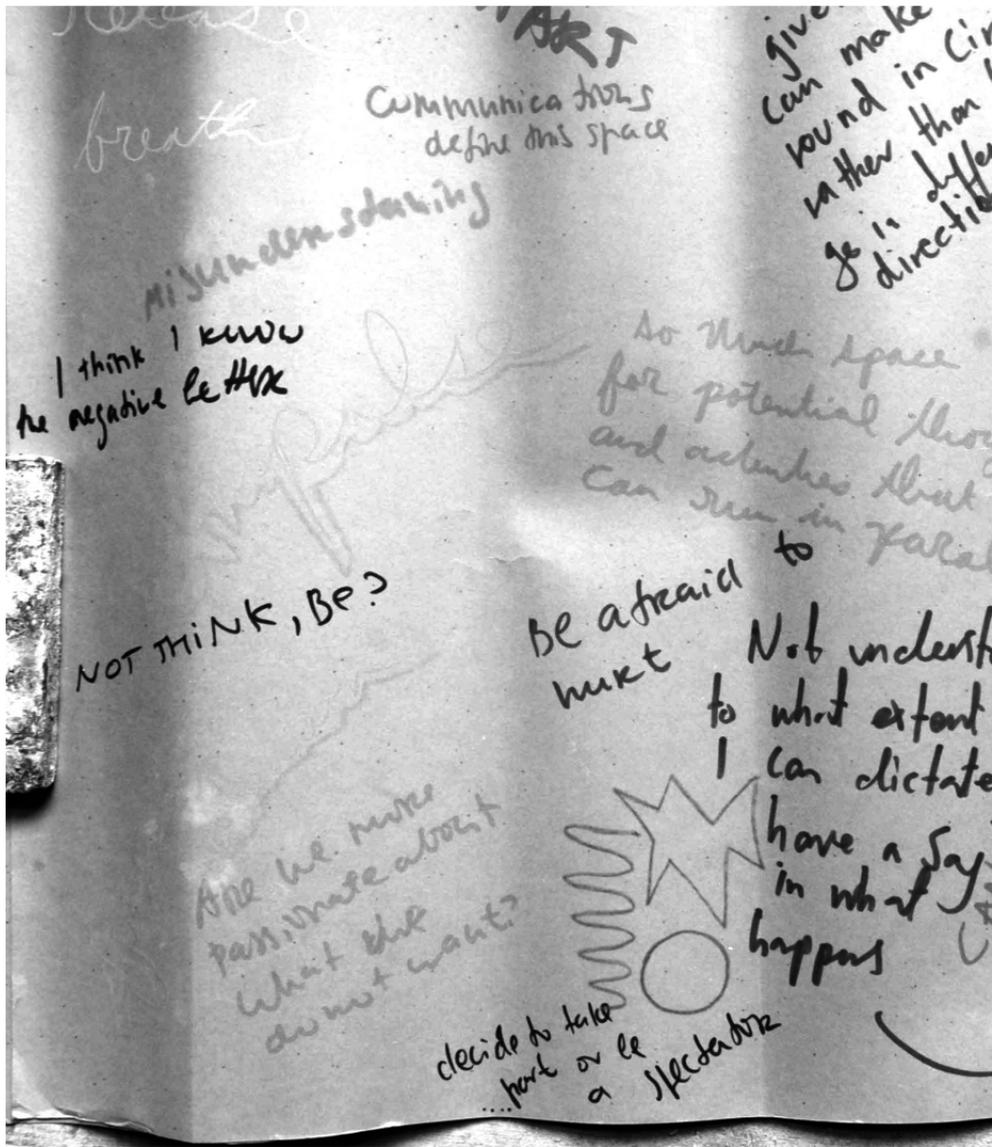
HARD TO
 MAKE DECISIONS
 THAT HAVE A LARGE
 CONSEQUENCE.





blindness
 interviewer
 proposition
 teaching out
 aggression
 labour
 comfort 'oh mama'
 Talking care
 solitude
 coming together
 warm
 peace
 struggle
 complexity
 conservative
 resistant
 holding the
 projection
 chained
 proximity
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into someone
else's plan

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AND UTOPIA
AND WORK

GO TOGETHER?

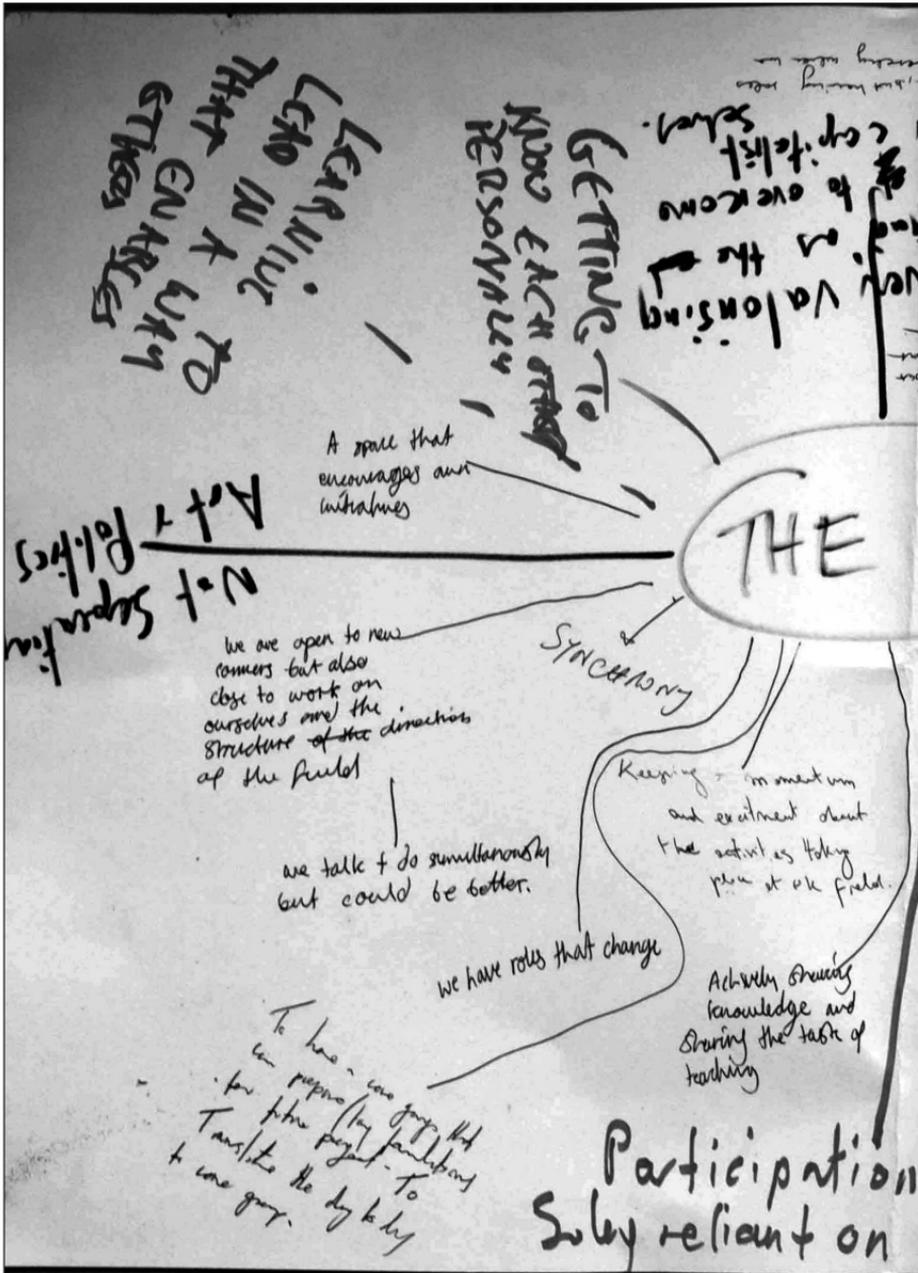
USING THE
SPACE NOT JUST
TALK
TO THINK AND
AND WORK!

holding some thing
together & not
falling together or
just trying to

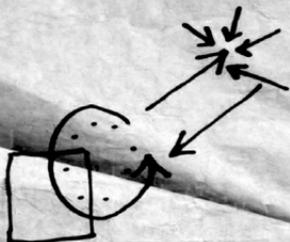
LOSING
OURSELVES

Feeling uneasy
with instruction / imposing my ideas

A desire to overcome
input and barriers / obstacles
to intimacy



5 THE ACTIVIST INSTITUTION



WHO WE ARE - core group
 - a collective with internal ~~of~~ process
 - the field is defined by its engagement with the area + by its actions

WHAT WE DO - ~~our~~ our focus now is beyond the building.
 - we still program events/projects, ~~with~~
 - the building is a base f.
 - we are active in ~~the area~~
 STE. eg. in a conversation about housing
 - we build a house
 - we visit pepys estate
 - we organise a ~~direct~~ action with other in ~~the~~

WHAT'S HAPPENING
 - internal
 - events at the ~~of~~ space, we also go out
 - practical
 - action
 - production of material - knowledge - web site

HOW WE'RE STRUCTURED

WHY HAVE A CORE GROUP?

- ACCOUNTABILITY
- EFFICIENT USE OF TIME - DECISION MAKING
- CONTINUITY
- STABILITY
- TRUST + RELATIONSHIPS
- SUSTAINABILITY
- BOUNDARIES
- HOW CAN WE MAKE BEST USE OF OUR RESOURCES
- LEARNING - DEVELOPMENT -

* PROBLEMS	WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU BEING A CORE GROUP MEMBER
WHAT YOU GET FROM BEING IN THE CORE GROUP	
DECISION MAKING + VOTING RIGHTS	- COMING TO A WEEKLY MEETING - MON EVE.
HAVING A CENTRAL ROLE IN DIRECTING THE PROJECT + USING THE RESOURCES - THE BUILDING, TOOLS,	- REPlying TO + MAKING DECISIONS OVER EMAIL
BEING PART OF A SUPPORTIVE GROUP	- BEING INVOLVED IN REAUSING PROJECTS + PROPOSALS - GIVING A MINIMUM COMMITMENT OF TIME TO RUNNING THE SPACE + FACILITATING EVENTS, ACTIVITIES
GETTING SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS YOU WANT TO INITIATE	

The Process of The Field in New Cross

Toby Austin Locke, Paolo Plotegher, Rosanna Thompson: Editor/contributors

Authors: members of the Field at New Cross

Publishing Editor: Marc Herbst

Editorial Support: Claudia Firth, Sam Gould

Design: Sam Gould

Series Editors: Sam Gould, Marc Herbst

About Canary Press:

Canary Press is a new imprint, a collaboration of the Minneapolis-based Beyond Repair Project and the Journal of Aesthetics & Protest. The goal of the imprint is to fertilise the resistant joy and creative depth of the radical freak-o-system.

<http://toolsincommon.org/series/canary-press>

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