



Take The Square

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A 3-channel video installation

89 min. (combined), HD, AT 2012

The emergence of the movements of the squares and the Occupy movement in 2011 can be seen as a reaction by people who opposed and began to fight the massive increase in social inequality and the dismantling of democracy in times of global financial and economic crisis. The movements of the squares are non-hierarchical and reject representation; direct democracy shapes their activities. The occupation of public places serves as a catalyst to develop demonstrations, general strikes, meetings and working groups on different focal points. Successful site occupancies in one place often inspire occupations in other cities, without a linear relationship.



"Take The Square". Installation view: "Resistance", Manif d'art 7 – The Québec City biennial, Québec, 2014

The 3-channel video installation "Take The Square" is based on discussions conducted with activists from 15M in Madrid, the Syntagma Square movement in Athens and Occupy Wall Street in New York. Re-enacting the format of the working groups of the protest movements, four to six activists discuss with each other as a group in front of a camera. The discussions cover issues of organization, horizontal decision-making processes, the importance and function of occupying public spaces and how social change can occur. The films were shot in the spring of 2012 in those places used by the movements of the squares for meetings and working



groups: the Plaza de Pontejos, a quiet square in the immediate vicinity of the central Puerta del Sol in Madrid; at Plaza de la Corrala, a meeting place for the neighborhood assemblies of Lavapiés in Madrid; in Syntagma Square, the central assembly and demonstration point in front of the Parliament in Athens; and in Central Park in New York, where Occupy Wall Street held the “Spring Awakening 2012”.



"Take The Square". Installation view: "Hors Pistes – Une autre mouvement des images: L'art de la révolte", Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2016



"Take The Square" - Athens, still

The 88-minute video installation brings together activists from three cities central to the movement. “I consider inclusiveness and respect used as a means to build horizontality and recover our power without the need to have somebody representing us very powerful,” says Ayelén from the Collective Thinking Work Group in Madrid. This rejection of representation also generally includes the parliaments; people should be politicized and invited to take their fate into their own hands. Babis

Magoulas of the square movement in Athens says: "It's the political process, the one that creates the man who is concerned with the commons, who participates and doesn't allow the political to be taken over by the 'experts' whether they are syndicates or political parties. That's why I'm saying it's big. And direct democracy was not imposed; it was applied as the only way to convene. If it wasn't horizontal, it would have had no meaning." For Jen Waller of Occupy Wall Street, this has created, "the first people's movement in this country that has called out the ruling class as the enemy."

"Take The Square" is trying to contribute to spreading the organizational knowledge of the movements and translate the processes between these places in transition.



"Take The Square". Installation view: "Playgrounds", Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2014

### Film version of "Take the Square":



"Take The Square" – Madrid, still



"Take The Square" – New York, still

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Executive producer: Rudolf Gottsberger | studioROT

Camera: Thomas Parb, Rudolf Gottsberger

Film editor: Oliver Ressler

Sound design, mix and color correction: Rudolf Gottsberger

Participants of the Popular Assembly of Lavapiés in Madrid: Adolfo Estalella, Lucía Gutiérrez, Ernesto García López, Héctor Pojomovsky, Martha Viniegra

Participants of the Collective Thinking Work Group in Madrid: Amador, Álvaro, Ayelén, David, Kiara, Rodrigo

Participants of the discussion group at Syntagma Square in Athens: Christos Giovanopoulos, Leonidas Kaportsis, Stasa Kotara, Babis Magoulas, Spyros Niakas, Reggina Zervou

Participants of the discussion group in Central Park in New York: Nicole Carty, Austin Guest, George Machado, Jen Waller

Participants in the workshop in New York: Nicole Carty, Austin Guest, Zak Solomon, Danny Valdes

Translations for English subtitles: Cora Sueldo, Héctor Pojomovsky, Martha Viniegra, Giannis Papadimitriou, Alexandros Papageorgiou

Production assistance: Katarzyna Winiacka and Rafael Sánchez Mateos (Madrid), Giannis Papadimitriou (Athens), Maren Richter (New York)

"Take The Square" was commissioned by REGIONALE12.

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