Abstract

Positions, Situations, Short-circuits: La Eskalera Karakola, a deliberate space.

Maria Serrano, La Eskalera Karakola, Madrid; Silvia Lopez, La Eskalera Karakola, Madrid.

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“We occupy. We occupy and we talk about territories. We situate ourselves as a node crossed by thousands of circuits. Circuits and accelerated currents. We are in the very mouth of the monster. We move, we decide, we talk politics. We situate ourselves and unmask our own bodies, our own lives, our own inhabiting of this city, this neighborhood, this social center”

La Eskalera Karakola, Positions, Situations, Battles

La Eskalera Karakola is a women’s occupied house in a multiethnic working class neighborhood in the center of Madrid. For six years, la Karakola has served as a convergence point and a point of departure for feminist thought and political action both in the neighborhood and in the far-flung feminist networks in which we participate. An open and changing collective of women --mostly young, some not so young, of various sexualities, nationalities, class and educational backgrounds-- maintain the house as a public space for women, and from this space we generate projects which extend beyond the house itself.

The Karakola has housed projects investigating the working conditions and urban experience of migrant women, debates about the transformations of the LGBT movement, lesbian marriage and the ‘pink market’, discussions about the feminist grounding for antimilitarist interventions. We have introduced the workshop ‘Tools against Racism’ into local social movements, encouraging ourselves to constantly investigate our own discourses. We have initiated an ongoing campaign against violence against women which insists upon looking at the many and complex ways in which ‘violence’ and ‘security’ are constructed. We participate in a neighborhood network proposing socially inclusive urbanistic alternatives to the ‘rehabilitation’ currently under way. We have participated actively and critically in the lock-ins of ‘sin papeles’ in Madrid. These and hundreds of other investigations, mobilizations, discussions and publications have arisen from the crucible that is the Karakola. We insist that all these apparently diverse concerns are intimately related, and we attempt to trace the lines of their relationship, articulating them within the feminist and the global resistance movements, refusing to separate the academic from the activist, the local struggle from the global context.