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'Art Barricades' and 'Poetic Legitimation' for squatted spaces: Metropoliz, Rome and Cavallerizza Reale, Turin

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"[T]he culture that is potentially powerful is not necessarily the culture that those in cultural power think will or should be powerful."
(Lippard, 1984: 4)

Abstract

Can art legitimise squatting? We examine this question through two case studies: Metropoliz in Rome – an old industrial building occupied by a multiethnic community – and Cavallerizza Reale in Turin – a historical complex occupied by active citizens. Both experiences use art, and the capital of attention and market value associated to it, as a tool to protect themselves from eviction. But art has become in the last decades both an economic good in which to invest capital and an instrument of neoliberal and post-fordist urban policies, linked to concepts such as Florida's "creative class". Now, members of precisely this class, who supposedly benefit from this model, engage, alongside others, in urban resistance. Is this use of art an intelligent way to exploit its market value to protect projects aiming at the right to the city? Or does it mean to succumb, at last, to the dominant creative city model? The paper aims to investigate this complex issue, debated also among the activists themselves.

L'arte può legittimare le occupazioni illegali? L'articolo affronta la questione attraverso due casi studio: Metropoliz a Roma – ex-edificio industriale occupato da una comunità multietnica – e la Cavallerizza Reale a Torino, complesso storico occupato da cittadini attivi. Entrambe le esperienze utilizzano l'arte e l'attenzione pubblica e il valore di mercato associati ad essa come strumento per proteggersi dal rischio di sgombero. L'arte però è diventata negli ultimi decenni anche un bene economico in cui investire e uno strumento di politiche urbane neoliberiste e post-fordiste, legate a concetti come quello di "creative class" di Florida. Ora proprio alcuni membri della classe creativa, che avrebbero dovuto beneficiare di questo modello, si impegnano in esperienze di attivismo urbano. Usare l'arte in questa forma può essere un modo per sfruttare il suo valore di mercato per tutelare progetti mirati al diritto alla città o significa piuttosto soccombere al modello dominante?

Parole Chiave: squatting; arte; diritto alla città; creative class; auto-organizzazione
Keywords: squatting; art; right to the city; creative class; self-organization

Introduction

Today many bottom-up and autonomous re-appropriation practices arise in reaction to the world economic and financial

crisis related to neoliberal and austerity policies. As Moulaert (2010: 4) points out «the mechanisms of crisis and recovery both provoke and accelerate social innovation». Indeed, the crisis has antithetical consequences: on the one hand, neoliberal urban policies result in the exclusion of parts of the society from the «right to the city» (Lefebvre, 1968). On the other hand, the increasing urban inequalities are the catalyst for the (re) emergence of new bottom-up and tailor-made urban practices, aiming at the re-appropriation of spaces and rights, that can be defined as «right-to-the-city-movements» (Harvey, 2012; Bialski et al., 2015). Among these practices, squatting actions play a pivotal role (Piazza and Martínez López, 2017).

The connection between art and squatting is certainly not new (Novy and Colomb, 2012; Prujit, 2013; Cossu, 2014; Moore and Smart, 2015). Squats, not being legitimised by law, need other means to legitimise their existence (Prujit, 2013). What we enquire here is legitimation through art. As many examples highlight (e.g. Uitermark, 2004 about Amsterdam), squats related to art and culture often have better possibilities to be broadly accepted than other typologies. This can be seen as related to the context of the hegemonic creative city paradigm – popularized by Richard Florida – in which art and culture have become mainstream instruments for urban development and competitiveness policies. Indeed, cities increasingly try to attract the 'creative class', but in a logic, that – as in the case of other types of neoliberal policies – chooses some creatives and excludes the rest (Harvie, 2013). This leads to the paradox that parts of the creative class frequently oppose creative city policies, operating for example in squats (Harvey, 2012; Novy and Colomb, 2012; Cossu, 2014), as in the cases of Metropoliz and Cavallerizza Reale that we will analyse here. At the same time, these illegal bottom-up practices may actually be appreciated by the creative city policies as augmenting the competitiveness of the respective city, leading to a complex dialectical interaction between radical opposition and potential co-optation (Uitermark, 2004).

In Italy, neoliberal urban austerity policies have been widely applied, especially consequent to the ongoing financial and sovereign debt crisis (Annunziata and Lees, 2016). One of the outcomes is a considerable mismatch between housing supply and demand, leading to a 'housing emergency' strongly felt in the cities of Turin (Caruso, 2016) and Rome (Galdini, 2017) where

our case studies are located. On the other hand, as elsewhere, a response to the urban economic crisis has been attempted with creative city policies. In Turin, a strong discourse is present that originated in the crisis of Fordism beginning in the 80's (Vanolo, 2015); a stable urban regime has been established, in which art and cultural policies play a central role (Belligni and Ravazzi, 2013). In Rome, this is perhaps less explicit, but there is of course a millennial tradition of art-related policies. In both cases these policies tend to be top-down and focused on big events and museums.

Both in Rome (Mudu and Rossini, 2018; Olsen et al., 2018) and in Turin (Berzano and Gallini, 2000), as in most of Italy, there is a considerable squatting tradition linked to the social centres that emerged in the 70's and 80's (Fucolti, 2015). Today, two typologies seem to emerge:

(1) Illegal housing occupations as an answer to the housing crisis – corresponding to Prujit's (2013) deprivation-based configuration – as is the case of Metropoliz.

(2) Culturally focused occupations related to the concept of 'urban commons' (Bailey and Mattei, 2013): e.g. Teatro Valle in Rome, MACAO in Milan, exAsilo Filangeri in Naples and Cavallerizza Reale in Turin.

The specific cases we chose to study, Metropoliz and Cavallerizza, are united by the fact that art constitutes a central factor of legitimation as much as for the possibility of free artistic experimentation and political expression free from market constraints, be it for housing or the commons.

In this paper we will shortly discuss the history of the two squats in order to define the context, but without the aim to disentangle their complex internal developments. Rather, the focus will be on how their use of art influences their external perception and public acceptance.

Metropoliz: an art barricade[1]

The building that once was the Florucci slaughterhouse, on Via Prenestina 913 at the eastern edge of Rome, now houses Metropoliz. The squat represents, simultaneously, an expression and a possible (autonomous) solution to some of the major

1 Sources of this paragraph are: an interview to Giorgio de Finis (art director of the MAAM) on 6/11/2017, scientific and newspaper articles and visits to the place. Photos are by the author.

issues of contemporary cities: the reclamation of brownfield sites, the right to the city and housing, and the need to define an inter-cultural and inclusive society. Indeed, since the days of the occupation initiated by BPM[2] activists on March 2nd, 2009, Metropoliz has been made up of families of highly heterogeneous origins (from Italy, Morocco, Eritrea, Tunisia, Peru, Ukraine, Haiti and Sudan). After eviction from a nearby occupation, some Roma families joined Metropoliz, making it the first squat that includes a Roma community. Nevertheless, this is not the only distinction of 'this city within a city' which today houses around 200 people. As the BPM activist Paolo Di Vetta (2015) highlights: Metropoliz's experience is original because of its location in a former factory. Right-to-housing activists usually look for buildings or spaces such as schools or offices as they are more easily converted into apartments. Instead, the idea of occupying such a large space as the Fiorucci Factory, is a more complex and innovative action to start 'creative mechanisms' that other kind of spaces do not allow. In fact, since the very beginning of the occupation, the BPM activists felt strongly about the idea of creating a «Pidgin City» (Città Meticcia) (Careri, Goñi Mazzitelli, 2012), a microcosm capable of representing not only a housing solution for the many families who live there, but also the beginning of a new multi-cultural experience.



Fig 1.The entrance of Metropoliz

2 The Blocchi Precari Metropolitani is an non-institutional and political organization that actively works in Rome to respond to the problem of housing emergency



Fig 2. An example of self-organization:Piazza Perù

Unlike most residential occupations that often retain the name of the abandoned building, a key act was giving the space a new name. The name, chosen by the inhabitants and BPM activists, was inspired by both the Fritz Lang film and the urban dimension that the space suggested. This act of re-signification from the «former Fiorucci Factory» to «Metropoliz» was extremely important in the communication process of Metropoliz to the rest of the city to show that the space was no longer an urban void, but a container of a new and self-organised form of living.
The driving idea of the activists was to redefine a space previously perceived to be impregnable from the outside, proving it to be accessible and relevant for the entire city and not just those occupying it.
Art, in this sense, plays a crucial role in building bridges between the inside and the outside through mutual knowledge and a shared re-appropriation of the space.
The relationship between Metropoliz and art started in 2011, when anthropologist and film-maker Giorgio De Finis and film-maker Fabrizio Boni proposed to the inhabitansts a project entitled 'Space Metropoliz', consisting in: a short film and docu-film, an experiment of requalification and participatory urban design, an artistic installation, a cycle of shared creative workshops, an anthropological research, a temporary space

for art.
'Space Metropoliz' brought a large number of artists, scholars, musicians, researchers to Metropoliz and, at the same time, catalysed the media's attention. In 2014 the resulting docu-film *Space Metropoliz* aired on the TV channel Sky Arte. Looking for 'Space Metropoliz' on Google, the media effect of the project is clear: before the release of the documentary there were only a couple of results about the occupation of Metropoliz, now there are about 58,000.
After the success of 'Space Metropoliz', Giorgio De Finis was asked to stay and become the artistic producer of Metropoliz. His next project was the 'Museo Dell'Altro e dell'Altrove' (MAAM, 'Museum of the Other and the Elsewhere of Metropoliz'), a museum of contemporary art in the spaces of the factory open to the public; this was unusual as spaces occupied for housing are usually closed to outsiders. The name, MAAM, was conceived as a mockery of contemporary museum acronyms, and more specifically the Roman ones such as MAXXI, MACRO; indeed, according to De Finis, the idea was to demonstrate that a museum could be created without any kind of public or private funding (all MAAM works are loans or gifts). The creation of MAAM intended to spur, from the outskirts of the city, the progressive emergence of a neoliberal paradigm dominant in art (Harvie, 2013), often represented by the institutional museums. Since its opening 5 years ago, more than 300 more or less famous artists have been involved with MAAM, donating and loaning their works (currently around 500).
Among the main goals that MAAM has defined from the very beginning of its creation are: (1) create a barricade of art to defend the occupation and its inhabitants: the works attached to the walls and structures of the factory represent rows of shields lined up; (2) avoid or reduce the 'enclave effect' of Metropoliz because of its need to protect itself behind a closed gate: the attractive power of the MAAM collection, open to the public every Saturday, creates an uninterrupted flow of visitors, resulting in a dialogue with the rest of the city and a 'media support' for the occupation; (3) propose and experiment another model of what a museum can be: an 'inhabited museum' cross-pollinated by life; (4) produce a choral work, praising the value of (bio)diversity in all its forms.



Fig 3. Stefania Fabrizi, I guerrieri della luce, 2013 – MAAM, Roma

Thanks to the works and its original way of 'doing art', MAAM has today achieved strong national and international media attention. The keyword 'MAAM Roma' brings up 136,000 results on Google. Newspapers such as *The Guardian*, and specialized magazines such as *Artribune* and *InsideArt* have featured articles on Metropoliz and its museum. In addition to the 'media legitimation' of MAAM and Metropoliz, an implicit 'institutional legitimation' has also been established by some institutional museums such as the Pistoletto Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rivoli, who also donated and loaned some artworks to MAAM. Another crucial stepping stone in the process of legitimation of Metropoliz through art was the visit of Luca Bergamo, the current Councillor for Culture and Deputy Mayor of the city of Rome; he defined MAAM «as a model to preserve»[3]. More recently, De Finis was called upon to rethink and direct MACRO, the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome. According to De Finis, this is potentially a big victory for Metropoliz, the MAAM and the legitimation of both, but «it will also be a big challenge to get two pirate ships to sail together».
The MAAM and its art collection has proved to be both a cultural

3 La Repubblica.it 10/12/2016.

and a political tool in order to gain legitimation and claim the «right to the city and a right to rights» (Holston, 2009: 245) for the inhabitants of Metropoliz.

The legitimation of Metropoliz through art production

What distinguishes Metropoliz from other 'art squats' is that art in this case has been used as an instrument to protect demands that were primarily social and political: the fight against social exclusion, the right to housing and to the city. Metropoliz is not an 'art squat', it is a housing occupation in which «art has been an instrument of political communication» (Ravazzini, Saraceno, 2012: 160). As clearly explained by De Finis in a recent interview:[4]

> «If you throw 200 people, including 80 minors, to sleep out in the streets, it will not be seen as a big problem and you will get two lines in the newspapers saying 'beautification of the neighbourhood has started', but if the owners of the place destroy 500 works of art with a significant commercial value, they will be portrayed like ISIS or Talibans who are destroying Buddhas in Afghanistan».

This is a clear result of the role that art has assumed today and its huge market value, which in this case is used as a tool to protect Metropoliz's occupation. The pivotal role of art in protecting the space and in creating consensus around it, is absolutely distinct from its history. Not surprisingly, it is the most enduring housing occupation in Rome existing today (Grazioli, 2017); moreover, since the factory has become a museum, there have been no attempts of eviction. Thus, art has contributed to create a positive image of Metropoliz.

However, as mentioned in the introduction, it should be stressed that, according to the taxonomy of the forms of urban squatting as proposed by Hans Prujit (2013), Metropoliz can be considered deprivation-based squatting, characterized by a clear distinction between activists and occupants. As a matter of fact, the activists of the BPMs, who made the occupation possible, and De Finis' art-related projects, which have substantially contributed to the survival of Metropoliz, come from outside. The success of Metropoliz is therefore the result of a mix of endogenous resources, but also a series of dynamics that have led to a concentration of considerable exogenous resources.

4 Atlas Obscura. «An Abandoned Roman Salami Factory Becomes an Illegal, Inhabited Museum». 24/10/2017 (accessed 19/11/ 2017).

De Finis' direction of MACRO, as he himself recognises, is opening up new, potentially contradictory, scenarios for Metropoliz. In the immediate future, MAAM will certainly gain visibility and approval, but in the long run it risks becoming meaningless as it will no longer be the only museum in Rome to offer unconventional artistic proposal. Located in the city centre of Rome with better equipped space, MACRO clearly has more visibility than MAAM, thus the goal and the challenge for De Finis is to create a strong synergy between the two structures so that both MAAM and Metropoliz can take advantage of this achievement.

Cavallerizza Reale[5]

Cavallerizza Reale is a building complex located in the city centre of Turin. Its construction started in the Baroque Age as a part of the Savoia's Zona di Comando and is as such part of the UNESCO world heritage site 'Residenze Sabaude'.



Fig 4. «Cavallerizza is for everybody» at the squat's entrance

During the 20th century, the buildings were badly maintained and physical degradation proceeded.

5 Sources of this paragraph are: an interview to a group of four occupants (Marco Rezoagli, Fiorella, Luisa Valente, Luciano) on 13/11/2017; the auhor's experience as part of the project in the first one and a half years and newspaper articles. Photos are from Cavallerizza's Facebook: www.facebook.com/cavallerizzairreale.

In 2007 the Municipality bought it from the state to transform it into a big museum (the project failed). Due to its high debt, in 2010 the Municipality sold Cavallerizza Reale to CCT s.r.l., a company owned by the Municipality itself, with the goal to alienate municipal real estate. Until now Cavallerizza has not found a buyer (see Coscia and Pano, 2012 for more details).
In 2013 the municipal theatre "Teatro Stabile Torino", that used a part of the space, announced to move out. This decision led to a wider debate on Cavallerizza's future, which favoured the emergence of a citizens' movement, opposed to the Municipality's intention to sell the buildings to private investors. On May 23, 2014 a public assembly decided to occupy.
The movement's main goal has always been to build a 'Cavallerizza for everybody', a public and open common. As a way to reach this objective 'here and now' all kinds of events have been organized: political meetings (not only related to the Cavallerizza itself), parties, public debates, workshops, courses, guided tours, calls to clean up the space, but also artistic events, such as concerts, performances, exhibitions. Artists have been present from the very beginning of the occupation in the highly heterogeneous group of squatters.



Fig 5. An assembly.

One of the biggest events of Cavallerizza is 'Here', organized yearly since 2016: a one week festival, mainly consisting in an exhibition

that involves hundreds of artists. The double scope of 'Here' is the provide free spaces for art production as well as making accessible the upper floors, initially full of garbage, indeed, every artist has to clean the room assigned to exhibit his/her work. The press echo of 'Here' has been widespread and very positive, but mainly focused on the high number of artists involved and the cleaning of the upper floors in the first year. The Municipality – under its new administration, elected in 2016 – even asked to extend the event to other parts of the city. An interesting aspect of 'Here' is that the presence of famous artists, e.g. Michelangelo Pistoletto and Piero Gilardi, has not been particularly stressed, neither by the occupants, nor by the press.

In Cavallerizza as in Metropoliz art plays a central role, however some crucial differences can be identified. Beyond being situated in the city centre and in a building of recognized architectural and historical value, the occupation of Cavallerizza can be considered, following Prujit (2013), 'conservational', but also 'entrepreneurial squatting', as a project that offers a wide array of cultural, but also social services to the public. Metropoliz, on the other hand, can be described in Prujit's terms as 'deprivation-based squatting'. While in Metropoliz 'artivists' (Sandoval and Latorre, 2007) and inhabitants are well-distinct, in the case of Cavallerizza no separation can be found between occupants and activists - 'squatting' in Cavallerizza means using the space in many ways: only a few people live there, mainly as 'guardians'. The internal organisation is based on a system of assemblies and working groups; several of the latter are oriented at different artistic disciplines.

In our interview with a group of Cavallerizza's artivists, Marco Rezoagli stressed that the absence of bureaucracy plays a fundamental role for Cavallerizza, stimulating artistic production in a non-commercial environment, where free experimentation is possible. Luisa Valente adds that it gives space to young artists, who usually in Turin have no places to work. In Cavallerizza artists have the possibility to contribute to their income – living there, saving on rent, and with visitors' contributions.

For Cavallerizza it has been possible to attempt a quantification of the effectiveness of the approach of legitimation through art. We analysed the articles referring to Cavallerizza (56 in total) that appeared on the newspapers *La Repubblica* and *La Stampa* from the beginning of the occupation until the end of October 2017,

dividing them into four categories. We then assigned a value to the tone of the title and the text body (-2 to +2). Obviously, this evaluation is very subjective and might potentially be biased by our initial hypothesis. Still we preferred this simple approach, because it allowed us to use our context knowledge about the press and codes of language in Turin and give a straightforward answer to our research question. Both authors conducted the evaluation independently from each other and encouragingly the comparison of results showed very little differences (the numbers presented here are averages of our two evaluations).
The most numerous category is that of articles about the official plans for Cavallerizza, which is not surprising, considering the size and central location of the complex. The second most numerous category refers to the occupation in general terms, their political requests, etc. Articles about artistic events organized by the occupants are also frequent, and several of them are placed in the parts of the newspapers speaking about cultural events in Turin, showing that Cavallerizza insofar is generally 'accepted' as a cultural venue and actor. Finally, there are very few articles that refer to Cavallerizza as a venue for the organization of political events (although this happens quite frequently) and they are essentially about the protests against a G7 in summit in Turin in 2017, organized in Cavallerizza by an external group.

Fig 6: Tone of press on the squatted Cavallerizza Reale

(articles from "La Repubblica" and "La Stampa" from the beginning of the occupation until october 30, 2017)

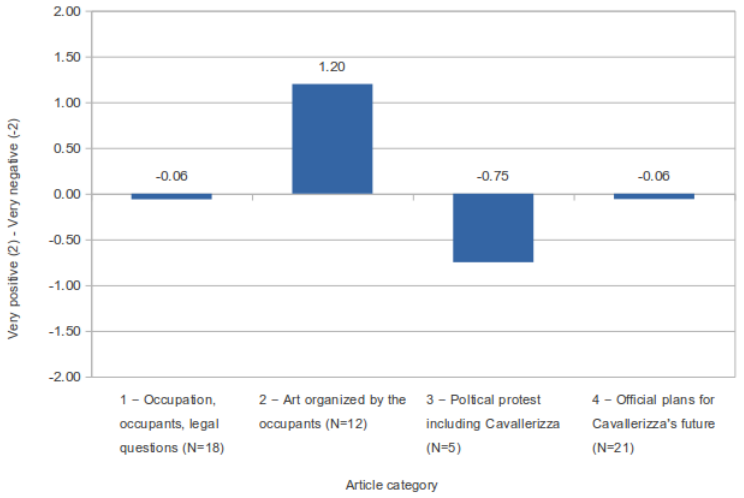


Fig 6. Tone of press on the squatted Cavallerizza Reale

Results show (see fig. 6) that indeed there is a clear tendency to speak positively about the occupation when it acts as a promoter of culture and arts, while general opinions about the occupation vary widely (leading to a neutral average) and are clearly negative when it acts as a stage for political opposition. Interestingly, in the articles about the official plans for Cavallerizza, the occupation is considered only marginally and 10 articles do not mention it at all. Where mentioned, it tends to be depicted simply as an obstacle to the Municipality's plans and as a certainly temporary presence. This changes with the new city government, since summer 2016, which has a rather positive view of the occupation that the newspapers reflect.

Interesting is the comparison of the perception of art and political activism: art appears to have a sort of 'sacred stance', considered uncritically as positive – rarely, if ever, in the articles considerations about the quality of the works appear. There is rather an enthusiasm about quantity. Intentions of the artworks, often very critical about our society, are usually not reported (this point is not seen as problematic by our interviewees, though). On the other hand, explicit political critique and activism is often not considered and if, in the case of G7 protests, represented negatively.

Cavallerizza, as well as Metropoliz, has been recognized in several cases by cultural institutions. It has been inserted in a world map of independent art spaces by MAXXI, there has been a collaboration with the *Pistoletto Foundation* and the festivals *Interplay* and *SeeYouSound* featured Cavallerizza as a venue. These festivals are financed by institutions, such as *Compagnia di San Paolo*, that also have financial interests in the case.

Our interviewees share the view that art is fundamental for Cavallerizza's legitimation; Marco Rezoagli: «total and fundamental. (...) without artistic and cultural activity, there would be no Cavallerizza, it wouldn't exist». And: «Poetic legitimation: when beauty is evident, other forms of legitimation, e.g. juridical, are unnecessary».

Asked if there is a risk of de-politicization focusing on art, he answered that from his point of view the production of art in a squatted space is a political act in itself – creating «a new aesthetic of protest» that does not need translation. Furthermore, while art and culture certainly cannot reach everybody, they may be more inclusive than traditional forms of expressing protest that only

speak to a small part of the population.



Fig 7. A cinema night

On the other hand, he referred to the challenge of uniting 'in favour of' something, rather than 'against' something, which he considers much more difficult and therefore inevitably creates a 'filter', reducing in this sense the project's inclusiveness. In fact, there are many discussions among the squatters about the way in which Cavallerizza should engage in political action.
Currently, Cavallerizza is starting, in partial (and still uncertain) agreement with the Municipality a process to elaborate a 'civic use' regulation; a form of legalization developed in Naples

that should allow the place to maintain its informality. Our interviewees identified this as the main challenge: how to consolidate the experience without killing the process of creativity and experimentation in Cavallerizza by an excess of rules and bureaucracy.
It should be noted that Cavallerizza does not operate exclusively as an art space; there are other important projects, such as the creation of a 'Chamber of Precarious Work', aiming at giving a voice to a category of workers not being represented anywhere else. It appears to be a fundamental fact that art here does not just protect itself, but also a non-commercial place of free political debate and expression in the centre of Turin.

Conclusions

Two ways of how art can help squats to resist can be identified in the discourses of Metropoliz and Cavallerizza. Giorgio de Finis talks about art as a 'barricade' because of the sheer economic market value it has. Marco Rezoagli states that the idealistic and symbolic value of art can contribute to a 'poetic legitimation' – De Finis also refers to this when commenting that destroying a place like MAAM could be compared to the Taliban demolishing Afghanistan's Buddhas.
Moreover, these two visions are not independent from the type of art. For the 'barricade': visual art that is physically tied to the space, i.e. painted on its walls, is probably more effective. While MAAM is living and vibrant, it acts as a permanent museum. Cavallerizza, on the other hand, is a place of creation by artists who are also occupants, where the presence of artworks is more or less temporary, be it in the form of performances or exhibitions. This cannot be seen as independent from the physical and legal circumstances: Metropoliz is an abandoned factory with no recognized architectural value, Cavallerizza is a UNESCO world heritage site. Furthermore, Metropoliz is on private and Cavallerizza is on (semi-)public property, with – potentially – more opportunities for dialogue.
These two approaches of 'artivism' have in common to be amplified through both media and institutional legitimation. In both cases, artistic intervention leads to a positive media resonance and to a recognition by public cultural institutions – even where other, directly responsible public institutions do not accept the projects.

As much as the approach of legitimation through art seems to be fruitful, some critical aspects may be identified. It seems to be much easier to legitimate a place with art than with political requests going beyond the mainstream. Art's critical content, though, appears to be seldom considered by the wider public, which rather sees it as a form of decoration. Consequently, a potential risk of a strong focus on art – if this art does not manage to be perceived with its critical content – is to lack political 'edge'. In fact, in both cases initially there was a component of occupants and activists with a stronger focus on social and political conflict which, while it has not disappeared, certainly lost visibility. Uitermark points out another problem:

«What we see is the emergence of a movement meritocracy: the way in which the local polity delivers incentives follows an increasingly discriminatory pattern, allowing some movements [related to the arts] access to the governance structures while at the same time withholding others» (Uitermark, 2004: 697).

Also in our cases there is a potential issue of elitism, even though this is not a straightforward assertion. While certainly most activists of Cavallerizza are in some way 'intellectuals', it is also true that most of them live in economically precarious situations and their intellectual influence is very limited. Thus, even if they have received higher education and are in some way creative, can they be considered elite (see also Harvie, 2013)? Benefits to a wider community seem to be present, as the users and visitors of the space come from diversified social groups. How representative for the society they are would be a stimulating question for further research.

In the case of Metropoliz, on the contrary, there is a clearer distinction between activists and the marginal population that lives in the squat, but it seems quite clear that the artistic work the – in some way elitist – activists do, brings benefits to the inhabitants.

Beyond these inherent differences, a crucial issue for both these occupied spaces is to balance artistic production with political and social action. Indeed, one of the possible risks by gaining legitimacy through art in the context of a hegemonic creative city rhetoric is to be co-opted by this dominant paradigm (Uitermark, 2004). The challenge is to 'piratize' this rhetoric and use the legitimation gained through art for scopes other than capital accumulation.

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