



Brooklyn

Homesteaders Union

Free housing for the masses!

Resources and Further Reading

Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space morusnyc.org

Survival Without Rent: How to Set Up Your Own Squat

(You can search for PDFs online, or buy a print version from Microcosm)

microcosmpublishing.com/catalog/zines/197/

Squatting as an Illegalist Anarchist – by Comrade Candle

mongoosedistro.com/2022/03/24/squatting-as-an-illegalist-anarchist-by-comrade-candle/

Living Without Permission anorcharchive.org/zines/living-without-permission

What is the Brooklyn Homesteaders Union?

The Brooklyn Homesteaders Union is a movement to occupy abandoned or undeveloped houses / apartment buildings. These buildings are being hoarded by real estate monopolies, or left to ruin by the state. In the midst of a housing crisis and rising rents with no end in sight, it is both an act of survival and protest to squat these buildings.

We can't count on the city, politicians, or even protesting to house people. We have to do it ourselves.

The BHU is a mission statement and manifesto for any affinity group, community, or collective that wishes to recruit others for the purpose of squatting a building. It is a network of people who will help each other establish and protect squats. There is no central union or leader, only solidarity between squats and affinity groups. Each union is autonomous, but all Homesteaders Unions support each other through mutual aid. The goal is to create a community of squatters across the borough who will support each other, and to get allies to support them.

How To Form an Affinity Group crimethinc.com/zines/how-to-form-an-affinity-group

Why Do This Via a Zine and Not Online?

There are many reasons, the most important being the need to build a community in person. To reach out to people you know and work together. Picking your roommates online can be a gamble. You can't risk this sort of thing with building a squat. Also the surveillance state makes all direct action risky, and even more so when it's announced on social media. Doing so online gives narcs the ability to infiltrate your group and sabotage it. Social media will bring unwanted attention that will make squatting much more difficult, and possibly even exploited by "influencers."

How to Squat

There are many resources for how to squat buildings - which will be included on the back - but the main principle is to find an abandoned building, enter it, begin rebuilding it, and occupy it. In NYC, there are a group of housing laws known as "squatters rights." The short of it is that if you've been collecting mail at a residency for 30 days, they can't forcibly evict you without a court order. If you've been making improvements and documenting it, then you have a better case. It's best to talk to past squatters with experience to get a better understanding of how to squat, rebuild, and occupy buildings. You'll need a group of people to help you in all steps along the way. Squatting is a communal activity.

Why Squatting Over Protesting?

Currently, protesting and voting have done nothing to alleviate the problem. It is clear only direct action can address the housing crisis. In the essay "Why We Don't Make Demands," the CrimeThinc collective make the following points;

1. Making demands puts you in a weaker bargaining position.
2. Limiting a movement to specific demands stifles diversity, setting it up for failure.
3. it undermines its longevity.
4. it can give the false impression that there are easy solutions to problems that are actually extremely complex.
5. it establishes some people as representatives of the movement, creating an internal hierarchy and giving them an incentive to control the other s ... etc. You can read the zine below

crimethinc.com/zines/why-we-dont-make-demands

A Very Brief History of Squatting in NYC

In the 70s and 80s, landlords torched or abandoned buildings they viewed as unprofitable. The state took control of these buildings, and they were left to rot. Artists, activists, and regular people began to clear them out and rebuild them. Communities came together to rebuild themselves. Squats like ABC No Rio, Bullet Space, and C Squat were dedicated to the arts and music. In the mid 90s, the city tried to crackdown on these squats but thankfully a few survived.