

Social Housing–Housing the Social (draft title)

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Over the next decade the erosion of state support for social welfare in the West and the continued global fall out in the wake of 2008's sub-prime mortgage crisis in the US, will enact huge changes on both the *idea* and *fact* of social housing. Not only has the financial crisis been produced through the overt and irresponsible capitalization of the basic building block of social life - the house - but current political responses to the situation have served to undermine the concept of social housing - in other words, the idea that living together in equality, safety and security is a right to be afforded by all members of a society.

This book draws attention to ongoing transformations in social space assessed, defended or critiqued by sociologists, philosophers, geographers, and asks how these transformations are reflected in the aspirations and practices of artists and architects. The book builds on the symposium, Social Housing–Housing the Social, organized by SKOR/Foundation for Art and the Public Domain, held in Amsterdam in 2011, part of the ongoing research platform, Actors, Agents and Attendants.

For over half a century, artists, architects and curators have been contributing to the design and organization of forms of living together often with mixed results. Whilst many artists and designers have practiced and attempted to implement radical new forms of social housing, they have also ushered in the waves of gentrification and capitalization with catastrophic effects on urban infrastructures. This book examines such practices, mixing artistic and architectural contributions with those of sociologists, urban historians, philosophers and activists.

At a time when protestors in Tahrir Square, just as the global Occupy movement, recognize the right of people to fill public space in the name of political rather than ownership rights to the city, this book tests the reality of housing provision against the dreams and aspirations of artists. Such an epidemic situation wherein the politics of space and its distribution are radically reinvented in the name of economic stability, becoming customary on a global scale but with different historical roots and contemporary rhythms and effects, requires us not only to question very real procedures of rebuilding and rebranding but the idea of sociality itself and its reorganization in the name of 'necessary measures' of austerity in the West, and revolution in other parts of the world. Where is the house – the home – of the social now? Can forms of cultural production be reclaimed as tools with which to design and defend (accessible, equal) social space, or are the agents and engineers of such projects merely tools in the further decoration of reduced welfare rights?

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