

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATIONS: BUILDING YOUR PROJECT'S ROAD MAP

Prepared by Natalia de Campos

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Mierle Landerman Ukeles
“Not Just Garbage”, 1974 leading up to
“The Sanitation Project” , an artist residency lasting 40 years





Mierle Laderman Ukeles, with two unidentified workers, in “Touch Sanitation Performance,” which took eleven months, beginning in July, 1979. Courtesy the artist / Ronald Feldman Fine Arts. Source: the New Yorker magazine.



Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Touch Sanitation Performance, 1979–80, citywide performance with 8,500 New York City sanitation workers. Queens Museum.

Common Elements: the Heart of El Museo, 2014

Natalia de Campos for El Museo del Barrio, New York
Interactive performance and soundscape, available to listen [HERE](#)

In a collaborative mini-residency, Natalia designed a performance-interaction with the museum El Museo del Barrio's operations staff, within a larger program designed by Nicolás Dumit Estevez, called OFFICE HOURS.

After some initial mapping and research, Natalia spent a day with the staff, following them around their routines to operate and maintain the museum. She recorded sounds of their routine, following them around, as well as mini-interviews about it. She went into the backstage as well as the exhibition areas. As a result, a sound piece was then edited and installed with photos of the process in the middle of the Museum's main lobby, where visitors and staff could listen on a continuous loop.



Common Elements: The Heart of El Museo, 2014 Artist: Natalia de Campos Photo: Keka Marzagão

<https://soundcloud.com/syncretic-pleasures/common-elements-1-the-heart-of-el-museo/s-WJlfH>



Natalia de Campos (b. 1973)
Common Elements: The Heart of El Museo, 2014
Stereo soundscape and images
5:52 minutes



Common Elements: The Heart of El Museo, 2014/2017 ©Natalia de Campos (Photos: Keka Marzagão)
Performance and interaction documentation Digital prints and wallpaper

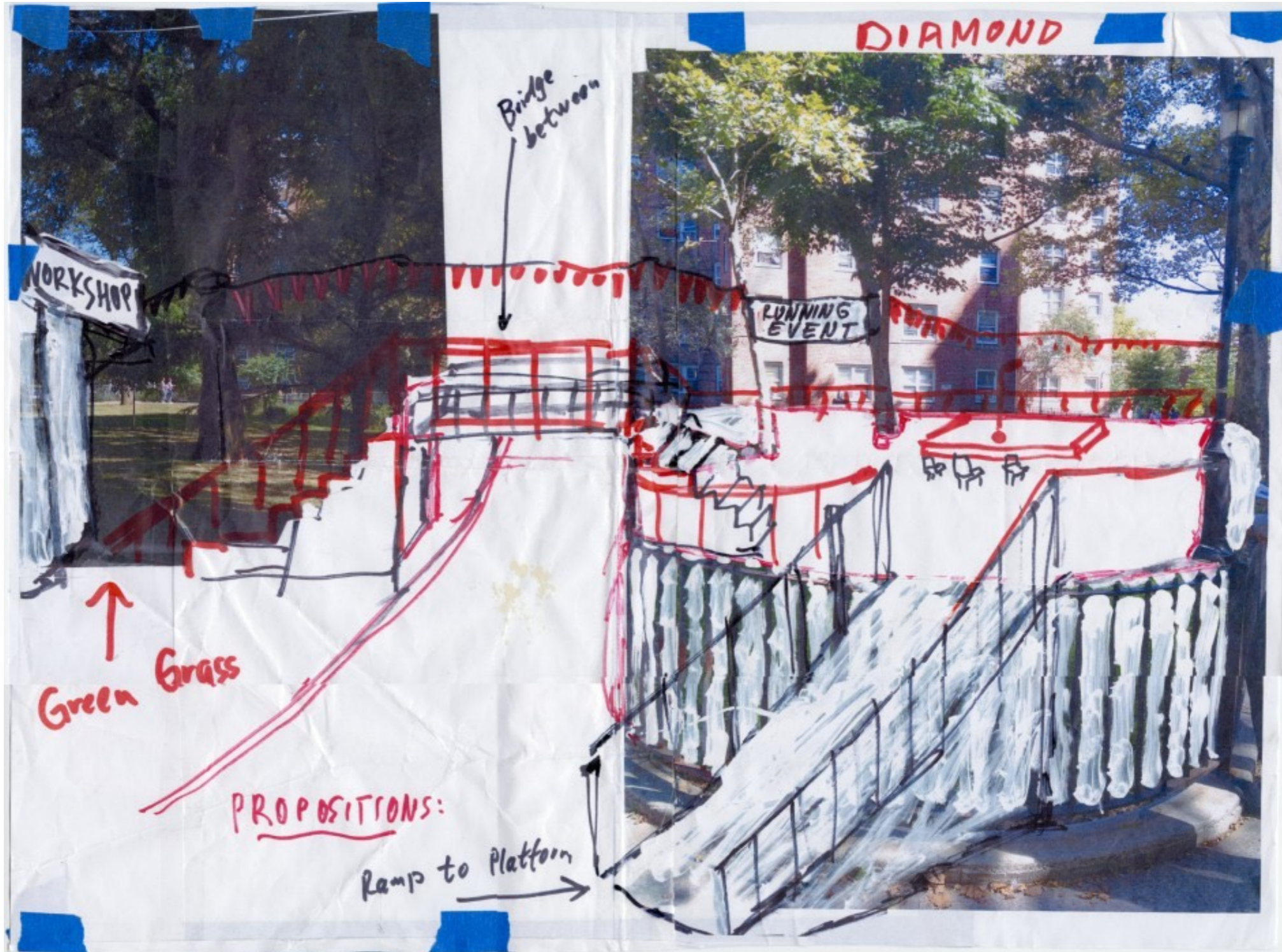
From the Museum's label:

Departing from her observations of the workspace and of El Museo's staff, Natalia de Campos spent time with members of the operations team, inviting them to listen closely to the elements of their own workday and to contribute their feelings for an audio piece. The work of this team is an integral part of El Museo's art viewing experience, yet rarely perceived by the public who visits the galleries.



themes & approaches

In 2013, Dia Art Foundation commissioned Thomas Hirschhorn to build *Gramsci Monument*, an overwhelming, complex, and excessive outdoor sculpture that measured 8,000 square feet and was located on the grounds of Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Bronx, New York. On display for 77 days, with daily and weekly events organized by the artist, *Gramsci Monument* concluded Hirschhorn's **series of “monuments” dedicated to philosophers**, which began in 1999. Grounded in the love of Antonio Gramsci's work and life, specifically his fundamental concept of the 'organic intellectual,' this publication takes the form of a manual that details the complexity of creating an art work in public space, bringing together contemporary scholarship alongside accounts from residents, participants, and visitors.



Thomas Hirschhorn, *Preparatory drawings, Gramsci Monument*, 2013 © Thomas Hirschhorn



Gramsci Monument, 2013 © Thomas Hirschhorn. Forest Houses, NYCHA, Bronx , New York.
Photo: Natalia de Campos

A Summer Place in the South Bronx



Gramsci Monument Thomas Hirschhorn built this participatory sculpture dedicated to the Italian philosopher at the Forest Houses. Ángel Franco/The New York Times

By Ken Johnson

July 25, 2013

On last Sunday's lovely, warm afternoon I visited Thomas Hirschhorn's "[Gramsci Monument](#)," a sprawling, participatory sculpture built on the grass outside a group of brick apartment buildings in the South Bronx. I left feeling irritable and depressed.

The New York Times review
by Ken Johnson
July 25, 2013

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/26/arts/design/a-visit-to-thomas-hirschhorns-gramsci-monument.html>

Video on art21 as opposing
review

COLLECTIVE BARGAIN is a mobile installation-performance-intervention created by ART&COM (Natalia de Campos & Thiago Szmrecsányi) and collaborators Tracy Collins and Toya Mileno, that displays information, media and ephemera related to collectivity, action, gathering, healing, and the power of union in today's social and political environment.

During AiOP 2017, it moved along 14th Street in Manhattan to places of historical significance for collective action in a 3-day schedule of activities (see schedule). It also founded UAAU (pronounced “wow”), the United Artists & Activists Union.

In September 2018, COLLECTIVE BARGAIN appeared at the (c)art Festival, organized by the South East Queens Artists Alliance, at King Manor Museum in Queens (see News) with “Free Time in the Collective Bargain”

Collective Bargain, 2017 UAAU United Artists & Activists Union





Collective Bargain, 2017

ART&COM (Natalia de Campos & Thiago Szmrecsányi) in collaboration with Tracy Collins and Toya Mileno
with guest artists and organizers

Presented at the Art in Odd Places Festival: SENSE 2017 over 3 days in various locations of 14th Street, NYC



time & space

Altar to Raymond Carver, 2000 Thomas Hirschhorn



Moore College of Art&Design
Thomas Hirschhorn: Altar to
Raymond Carver

Altar to Raymond
Carver, installation
for Goldie Paley
Gallery, Philadelphia,
March 2000

"ALTARS"

An altar is a personal, artistic commitment. I want to fix my heroes. The altars want to offer a memory of someone who is dead and who was loved by somebody else. It is important to testify one's love, one's attachment. The heroes can't change, but the altars' location can change. The altars could be made in other cities or countries. The altars could be done in different locations: on a street, in an alley, in a corner. These very local sites of memory become very universal sites of memory by virtue of their location. That is what interests me. I choose locations that are not in the center or in a strategic point of a city, just any place. In the same way as people can die anywhere. Most people don't die in the middle of a square or on a beautiful boulevard; their deaths rarely happen in a strategic location; even famous people don't die in the city center. There is no hierarchy of location between anonymous and famous people. There are unexpected locations. The location is important not in relation to the layout of the city, but in relation to the people who died. This gives me the plan for locating the altars. These altars question the status of the monument today by their form, by their location, and by their duration. Thus, the choice of location is decisive for my statement on work in public space and my critique of monuments.

The form of these four altars comes from spontaneous altars that one sees here or there, made by those who wish to create a precarious homage to someone who died at that spot, by accident, suicide, murder, or heart attack (e.g., Gianni Versace, J. F. Kennedy Jr., Olaf Palme). The forms of these homages are alike, whether made for celebrities or made for the unknown: candles, flowers, often wrapped in transparent paper, teddy bears and stuffed animals, written messages on scraps of paper with hearts and other love symbols. With this wild mixture of forms, the messages of love and attachment to the deceased person are expressed without any aesthetic concern; it is this personal commitment that interests me. It comes from the heart. It is pure energy. One is preoccupied not with the formal quality of the elements, but only with the message that is to be conveyed. I have chosen artists I love for their work and

for their lives: no cynicism, only commitment. The forms of these altars, which are profane and not religious, convey a visual form based on weakness. The forms and locations of the altars show the precarious aspect of the work. It is because of necessity and urgency that they are there. The cruelty and the non-spectacularity of these monuments make them untouchable by people walking by—proprietors, street-cleaners, dog-walkers, policemen. Everyone could be affected. Everyone is concerned. These altars will disappear sooner or later. The average duration of the altars is two weeks. The disappearance of the altar is as important as its presence. The memory of what is important doesn't need a monument.

I have made four altars for four artists and writers: Piet Mondrian, Otto Freundlich, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Raymond Carver. The *Piet Mondrian Altar* was shown in Geneva in 1997; the *Otto Freundlich Altar* was shown in 1998 in Basel and Berlin; the *Ingeborg Bachmann Altar* was shown in 1998 in Zurich and in Halle Tyrol in 1999 and in the Berlin subway in 2006 (U2-Alexanderplatz, curator: NGBK); and the *Raymond Carver Altar* was shown in 1998 in Fribourg, in Philadelphia (curator: The Galleries at Moore), and Glasgow (the "Vivre sa vie" show) in 2000, and near the South Public Library in Miami in 2002.

February 2003/February 2006

[Composed in English]

**"Altars" (Text 2003/2006) - In:
Critical Laboratory- The
writings of Thomas Hirschhorn;
Edited by Lisa Lee and Hal
Foster; MIT Press, 2013**



FLAG IT! is a public art project that temporarily landmarks some ‘institutions of public consciousness’ of the City of New York, many of which disappeared due to rapid changes in neighborhoods, but which marked the lives of many New Yorkers and visitors who used to frequent them. First created specifically for and presented in the Meatpacking District in 2015.

With the 2015 opening of the Whitney Museum’s newly designed building, following a series of architectural additions to the city, over and extending around the area of the High Line Park, a new phase is configured in this pre-industrial warehouse area of Manhattan. Since the late 1990s, a flock of new residents and businesses had been responsible for changing the landscape. A few of the pioneering new group, in the 1980s, remain. Many have left, after creating history and stories not always interesting to the majority in the current political, economic, and **moral** status of New York.

Thus, FLAG IT! becomes a subproject in a larger project called “Landmarks of New York” , promoted by the informal institution founded by Natalia, named “New York Artist Memory Preservation”.

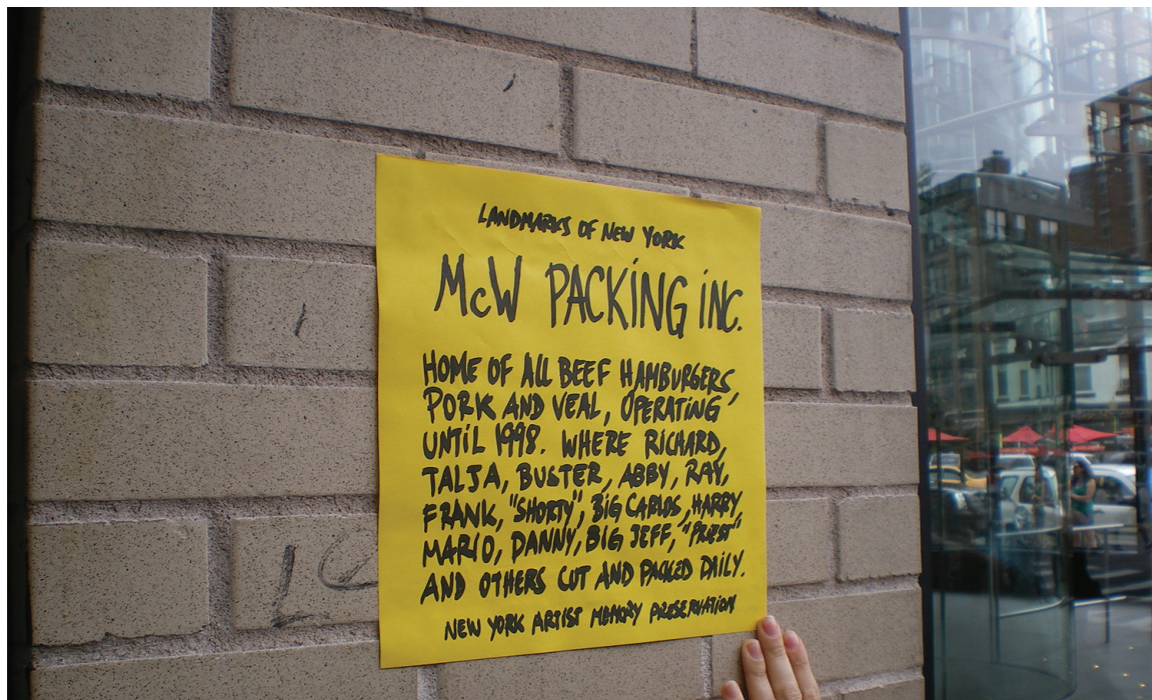
Several sites of recent historic importance are marked, juxtaposing them with the current built environment, and (often) clashing that importance with the local wish for maintaining the *status quo*.

Through editing, and some limiting circumstances, the sites featured in the June 2015 interventions were:

McW Packing, The Vault (its first home at the Triangle Building), Sweet Corner Café, Lee's Mardi Gras shop, Dizzy Izzy Bagel Shop, The Cooler, The Vault's second and final place, The Mineshaft, Hector's place, Florent, and The Hellfire Club.

Natalia embodies a meatpacker at the start, and a sadomasochist club worker at the end, asking, with a whip and a leather outfit to the now 'Tourists' of the yesterday": "Any questions?". Her tone is firm and her whip points at the plaque of The Hellfire Club, as if to punish any inquirers who do not read the self-explanatory flags. A gradual transformation of her looks is in itself another *flag* of portraying the inner/outer life of the once-upon-a-time common worker of the neighborhood.

The group meanders through the cobblestones, the backlash of 10th avenue, the fancy hotel plazas and on-going construction sites, sidewalk expensive cafés while watching the metamorphosis of this tour guide that embodies some of the main characters to be landmarked through unusual plaque language, temporary yellow *Post-It*TM giant and unauthorized notes on buildings, sites, from the *Apple*TM Store to the next-to-be expensive ticketed restaurant.



Flag It!, 2015 Natalia de Campos
Post-it notes, Markers, tape, costume, interaction, temporary installation & guided tour of the Meatpacking District, New York City



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Flag It!, 2015 Natalia de Campos
Post-it notes, Markers, tape, costume, interaction, temporary installation & guided tour of the Meatpacking District, New York City

By reflecting directly upon gentrification, without a value judgement, Natalia wonders- “does it need to be aggressive to the point of erasing history? What makes into history? Who writes it?”

Not a nostalgic piece, she affirms, but a historic tribute to the places that can still live, perhaps in another form or place, in our collective memories, or another physical presence amongst hipsters, fashion-addicted visitors, tourists, artists, meatpackers, business owners, trendy elevated parks and post-modernist buildings and... why not, museums.*

*As of the creation of this project (2015), the (white) Whitney Museum’s Flags celebrated its own opening and flew around all neighborhood posts with the following message: “Now at Home in the Meatpacking District”

activation & interaction

Acconci Studio & Steven Holl

Storefront for Art and Architecture renovation, 1993

Vito Acconci:

- Interdependency with the viewer
- Processes of Activation: Text > performance > use of space > actions > space interactions with the viewer <
- Self-erecting architecture: “spaces that were activated and/or created with the participation of the viewer”
- The works are incomplete without active participation

Collaboration:

- separate then together;
- sketches & models;
- conflict of ideas;
- dead ends; deadlines
- movable, transformable space; windows to doors;
- invite light to invite people, and so on;
- bring outside in, inside out; possibilities of change







ac·ti·vate | 'aktə,vāt |

verb

make (something) active or operative: *fumes from cooking **are enough to activate** the alarm.*

convert (a substance, molecule, etc.) into **a reactive form**: (as adjective **activated**) *activated chlorine.*

activate. [Thesaurus]

verb

Mark pressed the button which activated the machine:

operate, switch on, turn on, start, start off, start up,
set going, get going, trigger off, trigger, trip,
set in motion, actuate, initiate, initialize, energize,
animate.

ANTONYMS switch off

Defend Democracy in Brazil Committee
in the 2016 New York Brazilian Day Celebration,
days after the forcible ousting of democratic elected
President Dilma Rousseff

Activating **issues** through art in an unfriendly environment

The body activates > without the bodies in space with the viewers
the works were incomplete

The work starts in the gathering, becomes and lives in the studio,
transgresses to the subway, enters the public event on the street,
and then the virtual spaces

<https://youtu.be/0pnK-ekzsJI>



Defend Democracy in Brazil Committee, 2016

Photo: Marcelo Krasilcic

Created by Marcelo Krasilcic & Natalia de Campos with members of the DDB-NY collective



Defend Democracy in Brazil Committee,
In the 2016 New York Brazilian Day Celebration/ Street fair in Manhattan
Created by Marcelo Krasilcic & Natalia de Campos with members of the DDB-NY collective

