October 2015: Enclosures: Reclaiming our bodies, imaginations and the commons

In this dialogue we will explore enclosures and how they manifest in our lives, our bodies and the cities we live in. We will consider many types of enclosures, including historical and present-day enclosures of physical land and common space, as well as mental and emotional enclosures of our creativity and collective imagination.

- Public space
  - Where different populations have the ability to exist
- Women’s bodies as a site
  - Is it public is it private
- Enclosed imagination
  - What are the ways we can fight that and re-claim the collective of the commons
- Private v. public
- Radical imagination
- Reclaiming the commons to fight gentrification
  - Enclosure of the commons individualizes our relationship to structural problems
  - Individualize our sense of harm
  - Historical commons- how problems and solutions were collective
- How the land and cities change as capitalism enters and how bodies transform
- How porous our bodies are between the environment, gendered burden
- 101 blurb
  - Commons – nobody owned the forests, common land – people could live off common land
  - Enclosures – land that nobody owned was enclosed through violent processes
  - Caliban & the Witch written by Federici – Feminist critique of Marxist look at dawn of capitalism, womens’ bodies became the commons as a way to exert state control over womens/workers resistance movements
  - Decolonizing Radical Imagination – 3rd enclosure of capitalism is the imagination, can no longer imagine a world without capitalism
- Framework of commons is liberating, but stuck in how to translate knowledge into action
- Commons also is a relationship, breed radical imagination together
- Understanding urban spaces as collectively created spaced appropriated from us
- What is the role of the state?
  - Public good vs commons – collectively owned vs governed/controlled
  - State profiting
So many current struggles are to get our public goods back – is that short-sided, intermediate step?

- When people are not viewing themselves as confined, is it useful to present that framework
  - Zombies! Post-apocolyptic! Super capitalistic dystopian future! Collective fear of the end of times, symptomatic, some deeply denied realization that there is a problem, outrage, hard to transition into visionary framework
  - Very individualistic, primitive responses to these narratives
  - Common threads that don’t push any norms – usual trope of white/individual savior, save the nuclear family..
  - Narratives say – oh, capitalism can work! Just needs to be tweaked...

- Read book that proposed that “Art is the only way to break out of enclosed imaginations” – how does art as activism contrast with art as fantasy

- Commons and community – mapping geographies – our idea of collective psyche has become so big, geographically, hard to be in physical space of community

- If organizations and advocacy agencies worked within super radical frameworks, would it be useful, if it didn’t reach as far

- It might not be possible to imagine a future in which capitalism doesn’t exist, but we can imagine a future in which we resist capitalism, and then maybe our next generation can imagine the world without capitalism

- We still have commons – don’t realize things are common goods until they are gone (from private into public into commons) – water, air, internet, cities, culture, labor – need to name and claim our commons

- Cities now being built without public gathering spaces

- What does it mean if its common but only some can access it? Pay to access internet, machines created out of exploitation; same with water – entire towns denied access while corporations get it for free; air – some companies get to buy credits to pollute it, some live in poorer communities without access to clean air

- Data as commons? Not something to be sold – entire tech companies would crumble. Producing new commons all the time.

- Dependent on perpetual growth model. Creating surplus value, then have to find new markets. Wage models – value inputs and outputs. Internet, invent of factory – we collectively produce value, and do not collective collect it.

- Wages for housework – reinvented into wages for facebook. Basically saying we are working to promote Facebook, free labor, Facebook profits. Interesting idea, but also reinforces the narrative of wages for work.

- Another option is universal wages. (The Problem with Work) – radical utopian vision, but cautions that we can only go as far as our horizon

- Challenge capitalism within spaces – work, outside of work (what would it look like to challenge capitalism in domestic spaces? – how we value life?)
Pre-capitalism there was a peasant economy – not about accumulation, it was about producing enough to sustain the household (family being chosen and biological)

- Imagining communing, defaulting into small, closed communities (maybe porous, but are regulated and voluntary) – accountable
- How we tackle issues if scale and global economies
- Corporations are eating up commons, corporations could compensate the public for it – larger scale common-ing

- Why? I don’t trust us to collectively regulate these spaces, given white supremacy, patriarchy, heteropatriarchy.
- Public space vs commons – regulation.
- Police as commons? Current movement to reclaim the police – it serves a function we don’t know how to do ourselves.
- Privatization
- Scale of time – the longer we wait, the harder it is to reclaim. Inter-generationalism. How is this playing out across time? How does this transmit across time? How are we creating narratives of commons?
- Models of participatory democracy – creating metrics of resources and needs
- Community Democracy Project – Oakland, Brooklyn
- Our movements are snowballs in positive way. Keeping up energy to sustain and feed generations.
- Looping back to local issues of land.
- One act isn't the end all, be all → buying a house, gentrification, impact.
- The ways we have been enclosed have individualized the ways we think about problems and solutions. Enclosure of imagination/movements/moral responsibility → blame/shame/fault narratives. How to push beyond never ending process of personal impacts and choices. How do we get clear of the ways we are collectively failing each other. Recognizing interdependence. Wanting to be the good one.
- One way I practice radical imagination – believe in things I cannot articulate how it can happen, against all odds. ie we’re gonna win. What if I was born just knowing capitalism was bullshit? What if I was raised knowing we’d win. Relieves scarcity mentality (not enough time, people, resources) – releases me from productivism. Believe in abundance. Multiple realities can exist.
- Radical practice of trusting that environment will keep me here if it needs me here.
- What you practice is who you become.
- Dueling utopian and dystopian futures. A binary that maybe doesn’t serve. What if even our perception of reality is colonized? Changing our perception of time.
- Moments/cracks where you can find utopia.
- How we value lives and the world. We don’t need anything that capitalism has touched.
• What if we weren’t even talking about production/materials. What if we spent this whole time reclaiming/recommoning relationships. Commons based in recognition of relationship between material/nonmaterial
• Discussing Octavia Butler, visions of future. A vision of the future is necessary.
• We need creative folks to imagine, to help us break out of enclosures of imagination
• If we win, who loses? What does winning look like? Does my vision include a battle, thinking about language differently. Winning can mean living in the world the way we want it to be.
• What if a world without capitalism is inevitable?
• Who is we? Uncomfortable. I don’t want to live in a world where only those exactly like me can live.
• Vision of future is being able to be in the discomfort differently.
• Close with sharing our demands/visions of the future.
  o Just get in any car and go
  o Kids, a new ideology, a child raised would have a deep sense of interdependence, not raised in individualism
  o Food, bodies, everyone has enough to eat, feels good about what they eat, not having to look a certain way
  o Everyone is really excited about everyone else’s ideas
  o Can do the work I want, and it’s valued, everyone can
  o Valuing relationships for the sake of relationships, not as transactions
  o The health of an individual was viewed as a component of the health of a community, nourish and medicate our bodies in decolonized, de-corporatized way. Everyone learns healthcare to support each other.
  o Dancing isn’t patriarchal, not about looking sexy, we just dance and it feels good
  o People express honest love for everyone they honestly love
  o Laughter is a part of every day