

library was made available for viewing when visiting the apartment and re-presented during the exhibition period, asking visitors to loan and suggest their own GDR library references.

#### *Why does the project continue?*

In place of a direct answer, we would like to share the following words from activist and philosopher Silvia Federici who is one of the founding members of the Wages for Housework movement in the 1970s. Her thoughts and practices is deeply inspirational for our work.

*“We have seen even before the Occupy movement – but the Occupy movement has made it visible – the need and desire for a kind of politics that recalls something of a feminist politics: the refusal to separate the political and the personal, the affective and the political. We used to discuss in New York particularly with people of the younger generation of activists the idea of creating a self-reproducing movement. We conceptualize this as a movement that would not continuously surge and collapse, but would actually have continuity through all its transformations. This continuity would be precisely the ability to also place the needs of people and the relationship of people at the center of the organizing. This is also what you are referring to by affectivity as a sharing of space, the sharing of reproductivity, like the preparing of food, the conversations in the nights or the sleeping together under the tents, of making a sign together, of bringing together this creativity as being an extremely important aspect of this movement.”*

—Silvia Federici “Debt, Affect and Self-Reproducing Movements: Interview with Christian Marazzi, George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici on the latest events in Québec”

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The Grand Domestic Revolution has been developed by Casco –Office for Art, Design and Theory. Casco is an Utrecht-based public institution for art and design research with a cross-disciplinary, collaborative, and process-driven approach. Casco’s activities include exhibitions, workshops, forums, publishing, screenings, performances, and education. The initial concept for GDR was developed by Casco’s director Binna Choi and realized and materialized through numerous contributions by, in particular, co-curator Maiko Tanaka, project coordinator Yolande van der Heide, and designer Åbäke.

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Project website: [www.cascopejects.org/gdr](http://www.cascopejects.org/gdr)

This booklet is published for The Grand Domestic Revolution GOES ON – Tensta at Tensta konsthall in the context of its project *Tensta Museum* (18 January – 18 May 2014).

The Grand Domestic Revolution GOES ON to Tensta konsthall with its library! The library is a growing collection of over 200 books, documents, and films considered to be “revolutionary” tools concerning domestic labor, organizing, artistic and architectural methods of participation and cooperation, feminism, alternative economies, philosophical inquiries into community, and feminist utopian science fiction. A selection presented here is hosted in a setting of decorated objects by Stockholm-based artist duo Åsa Norberg and Jennie Sundén. The artists’ arrangement is a continuation of their earlier project, *Years of thinking in common*, which took as its starting point the social and political attitudes, lifestyles, and aesthetic ideals of the Bloomsbury Group, the art and design enterprise Omega Workshops, and the house Charleston where many of the group’s members spent a lot of time together. The artists are interested in merging professional and private life as well as domestic and work spaces, creating arts and crafts in view of a larger endeavor to live collectively.

## A short Grand Domestic Revolution Guide

### *What is the Grand Domestic Revolution? (GDR in a nutshell)*

*The Grand Domestic Revolution* (GDR) is an ongoing “living research” project initiated by Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht, the Netherlands as a multi-faceted exploration of the domestic sphere to imagine new forms of living and working in common. It was set up through an apartment residency in Utrecht from October 2009 to October 2011, and manifest in a multi-venue exhibition from 2011 through 2012. Since then it continues on through the Casco’s program and the international tour GDR GOES ON, which has so far traveled to The Showroom, London, Center for Contemporary Arts Derry, Derry, and the City of Women Festival, Ljubljana, forming new alliances with different local communities along the way.

GDR involves artists, designers, domestic workers, architects, gardeners, activists, and others to investigate and expand the status of the home outside the narrow lens of private concerns. The project has accommodated desires for different designs, different inhabitations, and the formation of collective subjectivities of and from the domestic sphere. In this endeavor we have shared in a spirit of shared concern with the many social and political shifts ongoing locally and internationally including: the cleaner and domestic workers’ strike at Utrecht Central Train Station, the ban on squatting in the Netherlands which had been a legal mode of accommodation over last 30 years, and the Occupy movement. Though outside the timeframe that inspired these uprisings across the world in the aftermath of the 2008 credit crisis, what particularly motivated GDR were the late nineteenth-century material feminist movements in the United States that experimented with communal solutions to isolated domestic life and work.

### *What were the main themes?*

Through the two-year “living research” process, four main themes emerged as key lines of thought for engaging with the large scope of GDR research and action:

- Domestic space (housing the commons and living together)
- Domestic properties (struggles between ownership and usership)
- Domestic work (invisible labor and working at home)
- Domestic relations (extended family, neighborhoods, and networks)

The works produced, gathered, and referenced for the GDR exhibition confront and actualize these threads. Key artist projects include: (1) new cooperative productions and proposals such as the sitcom *Our Autonomous Life?* and Katerina Šedá’s *Turn-Key Home/Two In One*, (2) contemporary parallels shown through Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz’s *Charming for the Revolution* (3) historical paradigms invoked by works such as *Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969!* and (4) situated research manifested through projects like Paul Elliman’s private/public information panels *We Were Here*. Some works do this through invoking paradoxical commentary, while others mobilize. Yet they all work together to conceive an exhibition of elements and positions that not only suggest why and how we might realize a domestic revolution, but also ask what position the visitor might take from and beyond their own home base.

### *What do you mean by “living research”?*

In the first year we acquired and established a residency apartment in the Casco's neighborhood as a common and functional base for inviting artists, designers, theorists, neighbors, and local activists to cultivate an evolving process of living research. There were two main seeds that lead to this initiative: first, the initiation of the GDR library, where urban historian Dolores Hayden's *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes (1982)* which inspired the project was the inaugural acquisition in the personal library of the curators; and second, the overly abundant furnishing of the apartment with the color-coded spatial system, *Many Furniture*, by architects ifau and Jesko Fezer.

From these beginnings, various call and response-style contributions by artists followed, including Graziela Kunsch's small intervention *More Furniture: red bookshelf and yellow stool* into the collective library, Mirjam Thomann's *Two-Part Door*, a spatial device dividing the apartment into two zones leaving an unpainted area for other color-imaginings, and Travis Meinolf who, upon acting on his impulse to make the hard furniture surfaces of the flat softer, set-up his action-weaving home production project, *Cottage Industry (Making Accommodations)* and also retooled the GDR library shelves into a spooling rack. Travis's aim to develop a home production economy through weaving necessitated conversations with neighbors, an approach also taken up by educator Sepake Angiama and architect Sam Causer for their project *Centre for Cooperative Living*. Upon surveying and interviewing local restaurateurs, beekeepers, and Chinese medicine practitioners, artist Wietske Maas initiated the *Experimental Kitchen Pharmacy*, transforming ingredients collected from the streets of Utrecht and brewing treatments for common illnesses. In some cases the lack of response from our neighbors or refusal to participate enabled artists to elucidate key pieces of knowledge about the locality of our situation, in both productive and critical respects: Doris Denekamp and Arend Groosman's *Meal Machine* and Graziela Kunsch and Vincent Wittenberg's *Bemuurde Weerd* or *18B Ladder* are exemplary projects in this vein, as they generated new knowledge and proposals from these perceived “failures” in neighborly participation.

In its second phase, GDR extended its cross-disciplinarity and moved further into the realm of social and political activism in the city of Utrecht and beyond, to connect to different actors who shared an investment in the transformation of the domestic sphere to learn from each other and build a collective response. From this, a new GDR Wiki to document processes was created to facilitate these actions and the associated research. The formation of the GDR Town Meeting series also took place at this time, gathering local groups practicing social/political activism to exchange, contest, and align with actors in the contemporary cultural field on questions around domestic labor, cooperative gardening, and even noisy neighbors.

With this exploratory but rigorous approach, we also started honing our working methods in terms of alliance building and negotiating difference in conflictive processes. We are currently reflecting upon and recording the changes in our processes and methods, to be published as an elaborative timeline in the forthcoming *Grand Domestic Revolution Handbook*.

In the exhibition project itself, these process-based, locally embedded, and alliance/method/collective making approaches are also referenced through various works. This includes the action research and representational strategies used by artist collective *kleines postfordistisches Drama* to produce *Kamera Lauft!* Such practices are also manifest through new “cooperative” productions mentioned in the next section.

### *What were the main working methods or strategies?*

#### Cooperative production and affinity building

Among the locally produced projects, key works and new productions focused on housing struggles, that is housing struggles and themes of collective inhabitation which continue to evolve and propel themselves in different forms. Common to all these are cooperative productions and affinity building.

Concretely, this stimuli took form in GDR as a cooperative sitcom (*Our Autonomous Life?*), collectively investigating the decline of the Dutch social housing sector after the recent ban on squatting; an alliance of domestic workers and cultural workers (*Ask!, Matthijs de Bruijne & Domestic Workers Netherlands*), convening and performing actions to support the former while experimenting and problematizing theory and material representations of this invisible labor; and a nomadic reading group (*Read-in*), making research into the physicality and situatedness of the act of reading by occupying tenuous borders between public and private spaces and reading aloud together.

As these “cooperative” projects continue to grow, they require more developed forms of mutual support and platforms for further discussion and to make connections to other collective projects in affinity with one another.

#### Space & Conditions

As we have learned from hosting projects such as the above, the design, organization, and sharing of exhibition spaces are of crucial importance for cultivating conditions that create possibilities to resist the urge to “individualize” and take a chance on sustaining new forms of communal living within a generous structure that is open and non-teleological.

In Utrecht this effort was taken up by artist Ruth Buchanan and architect Andreas Müller who created a spatial design for the exhibition that reflected on institutional structures but at the same time attempted to transform personal and political subjectivities within them. We also did this through asking to share physical space with our neighbors De Rooie Rat and the Volksbuurtmuseum.

#### Library

The GDR library constitutes the open source backbone of our living research and thus necessarily grows over time. The library offers points of engagement with the project and consists of over 300 pieces including books, articles, images, and DVDs based on an ongoing development of thematics which were arranged and rearranged over time by users, interns, residents, and curators. The