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Playing with Garbage in Lima, Peru: Social Transformation through Participatory Public Art

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Laughing, squeals of excitement, the buzzing whirr of people: the vibrant scene of a once-neglected urban corridor springing to life at a community-built amusement park. According to many scholars, artistic experiences in public spaces invigorate communities, promote democratic discourse, and encourage collective reimagining.[1] This article explores the socially transformative potential of participatory public art, with a specific focus on the capacity of playful interaction to promote themes of freedom and autonomy within the context of a twenty-first century neoliberal society. To pursue this inquiry, I draw on the work of British social critic and author Colin Ward (1924-2010), whose valued and robust contribution to the contemporary anarchist canon explores the vital importance of freedom and autonomy in modern life. According to Ward, well-intended people need to exercise their freedom consciously and actively against systems of dominance in order to manifest a freer society. He maintained that effective resistance to systems of dominance could be executed through simple, everyday activities, and he considered playing in public spaces to be an example of this subtle protest strategy.[2] I situate these themes in part within the field of relational art, a contemporary art genre that necessitates viewer participation and emphasizes social interaction, through a case study of a temporary public playground installation in Peru, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público/ Self-made Public Amusement Park* (2010). This participatory art installation was a collaborative project between the Spanish artist collective Basurama [Trash] and local community members of the Surquillo neighbourhood in Lima, Peru. The play space, consisting of various climbing apparatuses made of recycled automobile tires erected on a controversial, partially constructed and abandoned elevated train line, invited community members of all ages to engage

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in unregulated playful activity.[3]

Although much research demonstrates that participatory public art improves social conditions and the physical health of participants, I am not appraising the utility of participatory art in this regard.[4] Instead, I am discussing the symbolic value of participatory playful art as a prefiguration to a more democratic society. In *Anarchism and Art: Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (2016), Mark Mattern, Professor of Political Science at Baldwin Wallace University, analyzes the prefigurative politics and transformative potential of popular art forms such as DIY punk music, poetry slams, graffiti, street art, and flash mobs.[5] Citing nineteenth-century anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *Du principe de l'art et de sa destination social* (1865), Mattern champions the prefigurative potential of art: that is, the ability of art to highlight themes that already exist in society while also prescribing a vision of the future.[6]

Analyzing *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* considering anarchist critical theory rather than quantitative social science is influenced by Claire Bishop, a contemporary theorist and critic of participatory art. In *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012) Bishop notes that disciplines in social science are often employed to analyze participatory art due to the genre's emphasis on sociological themes, but that this can repress the symbolic meaning of a work: "since participatory art is not only a social activity but also a symbolic one, both embedded in the world and at one removed from it, the positive social sciences are ultimately less useful … than the abstract reflections of political philosophy."[7] With this in mind, I am not focusing on the quantifiable impact of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* on individual participants or the specific community in Lima. The work was dismantled over ten years ago and I am not asserting irrefutable evidence of a lasting cause-and-effect relationship between the work and the community. Instead, I embrace what Bishop calls the "constitutively undefinitive reflections on quality that characterise the humanities," and present a theoretical discussion of the potential of participatory public art to evoke change by presenting immediate alternative social realities.[8]

Employing the work of Colin Ward and other scholars, this chapter investigates how *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* relates to strategies of prefigurative activism through non-hierarchical social organization, the assertion of autonomy, and the expression of freedom. I provide a short summary of the theoretical discourse on participatory public art and the social qualities of the genre, then introduce Colin Ward and the themes in his writing that are most relevant to *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*. By applying Ward's theories to the categories of social organization, freedom and autonomy, I illustrate how *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* confronted the social, economic, and political domination of the capitalist, neoliberal State. I proceed with the same analytical framework to discuss the significance of playful participation specifically. By employing Ward's advocation for unrestricted play in public spaces and engaging with contemporary play theorists, I explore how playing presents novel possibilities for social reorganization, resisting authority, and promoting freedom and self-governance.

Theorizing Art and Social Engagement

I'll begin by clarifying the terms collaborative art, participatory art, relational art, and dialogical art. Collaborative art refers to work produced by more than one individual artist. This practice has increasingly gained popularity over the last three decades. Swedish curator and educator Maria Lind posits that the "post-Fordist" work-place culture of interdisciplinary alliances and open source technologies promotes collaborative methodologies by rewarding innovation, creativity, and flexibility.[9] Lind references art critic and historian Christian Kravagna's four modes of collaborative art: working with others (artists that work with the public on collaborative projects); interactive activities ("push-button art" that permits involvement, but which does not alter the fundamental structure of the work); collective action (a group of people propelled by a shared goal); and participatory practices (art which transfers the final development of the work to the audience).[10]

Participatory art, therefore, refers to work that requires an interactive audience to produce a final outcome, or, in Bishop's formation,

art in which people constitute the medium of the work.[11] *Relational Aesthetics* (1998), by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, first defined relational art as a genre and presents an additional framework for the analysis of participatory art practices that emphasize the social experience of the viewer.[12] Performative art scholar Shannon Jackson describes relational art as "inter-relational, embodied, and durational,"[13] and art historian Tim Stott explains it as "a shift in understanding the work of art from a discrete and autonomous object to an integrated and dynamic complex of elements acting in relation to one another and in relation to an environment."[14] Like Lind, Bishop locates sociopolitical transformations within the last century that compelled artists to continually rethink "art's relationship to the social and of its political potential."[15] In her essay "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" (2010), she defines the "core political significance of relational aesthetics" as the search for "provisional solutions in the here and now."[16] *Appearing Rooms* (2004), by Danish artist Jeppe Hein, is an example of relational art: the outdoor interactive water installation consists of a network of waterspouts arranged across a concrete space that responds to human participation.[17] Line Marie Bruun Jespersen, a Danish scholar in Communication Psychology and Design at Aalborg University, analyzes the relational aesthetics of *Appearing Rooms* by describing it as "a 'situation' where the viewers become part of the work and where the social situation is the most important aspect of the work – the pavilion as an object is secondary."[18] Similarly, the climbing apparatuses of *RUS Lima Autoparque de Diversiones Público* foreground participatory interaction. Although the use of car tires as construction material addressed the critical issues of transportation and waste management in Lima, they remained secondary to the primary objective of inciting playful activity in public space. Basurama quotes Nicolas Bourriaud in their publication *RUS Libro del Proyecto 'Residuos Urbanos Sólidos'; Basura y Espacio Público en Latinoamérica* (2011), asserting that the emphasis of the playground installation was to create an "environment that could produce 'modes of heterogenous sociability'" ("espacios de intercambio social donde se producen 'modos de sociabilidad heterogéneos'").[19]

During the mid-1990s, art critic Grant Kester developed the genre of dialogical art: a relational art promoting multi-disciplinary work

that, existing outside of art galleries and museums, can reach broader audiences and address diverse social concerns. Kester asserts that the inclusive characteristics of dialogical art allow for "overlaps between art practice and activism, environmental science, participatory urban planning, social work, ethnology, and so on."[20] Pascal Gielen, Professor of Sociology of Art and Politics at the Antwerp Research Institute for the Arts, expresses a similar value judgment in his assertion that artists effectively engage with contemporary society when they strive to be "artistic and ecological and economic and political and social."[21] In summary, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* can be defined as collaborative, participatory, and relational; it was created by a non-hierarchical artist-collective in collaboration with local artists and community members and submersed participants into a socially-complex and relational play space. It is also an example of dialogical art in its emphasis on multi-disciplinary collaboration and communication, and its promotion of immediate action in the name of social, economic, and political agency.

Rus Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público **in Context**

Basurama was founded in 2001 by a group of students at the Madrid School of Architecture (ETSAM).[22] The artist-collective uses garbage as the primary medium of their work, which often centres on themes of community engagement within the contested use of public space. In the past two decades, the group has collaborated with over one hundred communities on four continents to creatively repurpose garbage in projects ranging from fashion shows to neighbourhood parties.[23] As their name and choice of medium suggest, their work also draws attention to the environmental degradation and human suffering that result from excessive consumerism and poor waste management worldwide. Their mandate: "Our aim is to study those phenomena inherent in the massive production of real and virtual trash in the consumer society, providing different points of view on the subject that might generate new thoughts and attitudes. We find gaps in these processes of production and consumption that not only raise questions about the way we manage our resources but also about the way we think, we work, we perceive reality."[24]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público was part of a larger transnational project that was spearheaded by Basurama called *Residuos Urbanos Sólidos* (Solid Urban Waste—RUS). The RUS projects, funded by the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID), involved local community members throughout multiple cities in Latin America between 2008-2010 and adhered to the necessity of low-cost construction.[25] The "on-site, ad-hoc" projects varied, depending on what each community wished to create, but maintained a similar basic structure whereby Basurama connected with local organizations, community groups, shop owners, and governments to address specific concerns via interventions, campaigns, and public art exhibitions.[26] RUS projects are listed as follows: Miami, United States (*Miami Trash Machine*, a mobile music cart made of garbage that initiated spontaneous musical parties in parking lots and gas stations); Mexico City, Mexico (*Haga Su Propio Carrito*, a community project that encouraged trash collectors, pepenadores, to construct their carts in creative ways out of the garbage they collect); Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (*Tsunami de Basura*, a decorative curtain of empty plastic containers was hung on the city's waterfront to invigorate the deserted space and invite community use); Buenos Aires, Argentina (*Todos Somos Cartoneros*, a project that initiated playful public activities using cardboard to narrow the social divide between people who discard cardboard and those who collect it for recycling fees, the *cartoneros*); Montevideo, Uruguay (*Colabore Con Su Clasificador Local*, an installation exhibiting photographs of garbage from houses to landfills that highlights the hidden beauty, rather than unsightly decay, of the urban garbage experience); Córdoba, Argentina (*Tejedoras Urbanas*, a community project displaying creative repurposing of garbage by local artisans); Asunción, Paraguay (*Con las Cosas Serias No se Juega*, an installation of benches and swings, constructed out of wood pallets and plastic, that reinvigorated a degraded public park in a central area of the city); and San Juan, Puerto Rico (*Esperando a la Guagua*, a project that adorned bus stops in the city with books, playful objects and apparatuses constructed out of garbage to increase community interactions).[27]

Their playground installation in Peru, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was open from January 30 to February 28, 2010 and

an exhibition was held at the Spanish Cultural Centre in Lima during the month of February to showcase the project. With funding from the AECID, Basurama produced a catalogue for the exhibition, *RUS LIMA; Residuos Urbanos Sólidos, Import/Export toda clase de basura*, which elaborates on their work in Lima as well as the other RUS Projects.[28] The installation enlivened neglected urban space with activity while casting a critical light on Lima's ever-expanding and over-polluting automobile culture and the government's unfulfilled promise of adequate public transportation for the millions of residents within the sprawling metropolis.[29] The participatory art installation, constructed largely of discarded and donated automobile tires, consisted of swings, various climbing apparatuses and a zip line.[30] It spanned the length of fourteen cement pylons that were in a perpetual state of suspended construction; some pylons reinforced a cement platform intended for the trainline while others supported nothing but thin air (Fig. 1). An online photo gallery of the installation on the Basruama

Figure 1: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*
Self-made Public Amusement Park (2010)

website provides a collaged panoramic image that captures the entire installation and includes the names of the various play apparatuses.[31] The Basurama members involved in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* were Yago Bouzada Biurrun, Benjamín Castro Terán, Alberto Nanclares da Veiga, Juan López-Aranguren Blázquez, Rubén Lorenzo Montero, Manuel Polanco Pérez-Llantada, Pablo Rey Mazón and Miguel Rodríguez Cruz.[32] They collaborated with the following local artists and artist-collectives: Camila Bustamante (graphic artist), Christians Luna (performance artist), Sandra Nakamura (visual artist), C.H.O.L.O. (local social artists), El Cartón (an architecture students collective), Playstationvagon (graffiti collective), El Codo (graffiti collective), Motivando Corazones (artist collective) and Recurseo (group of designers that produce "objects with purpose" (objetos con objeto).[33] Basurama also engaged with the greater community of Surquillo from their temporary home base in Lima at the Casa de la Juventud (Youth Centre), where they experimented with various designs for the play structures before installing them on the nearby train line.[34] As well as contributing to the design stages, a group of young environmental activists, Fuerza Juvenil (Youth Force), provided vital manpower for the installation's ten-day construction.[35] Although Basurama initiated the project and sourced external funding of 1,500 Euros, the Peruvian collaborators had more than a "supporting role" in the design and construction of the project.[36] They were fully engaged with its creation, in accord with the participatory ideal.[37]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público was highly visible, located in a grassy corridor between busy streets near a large intersection and a cancer hospital. Although the patients' families and visitors were known to congregate here, before *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* the space was not celebrated as a public space of leisure: it was essentially neglected and forgotten.[38] Allison Young, Professor of Contemporary Art History at Louisiana State University, calls small pockets of urban spaces overlooked by regulating forces "parafunctional" sites: urban spaces that are "unused, unwanted sites of disrepair and decline."[39] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* invited the community of Surquillo, and visitors to the area, to re-territorialize and breathe life into the space.

Publicly shared space (the "commons") can be a place of collective reimagining and many scholars agree that artistic experience in the urban commons invigorates communities and promotes democratic discourse.[40] As culture and sustainability scholar Nancy Duxbury asserts, public art is "an essential element of social cohesion in society" that can stimulate "chance meetings" while creating "new necessary relationships."[41] This is certainly evident in the case of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*. Basurama noted that during the design and construction process the project became a whirlwind of debates, workshops, presentations, visitors, collaborators and creators they could not have anticipated ["se ha convertido en un torbellino en el que caben debates, talleres, presentaciones, visitas, acompañamientos, creadores que aún no conocíamos"].[42] Diagrams produced from the design process can be found on the Basurama website, and visually articulate the priorities and necessities of the project. One diagram exhibits the expressed interests of the community: "eating with friends," "playing with grandchildren," and "an amusement park!" Above the image, which consists of a diverse group of silhouetted community members contributing to the same "thought bubble," the central intention is made clear: "A project for and with the people" (Fig. 2). Although *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was

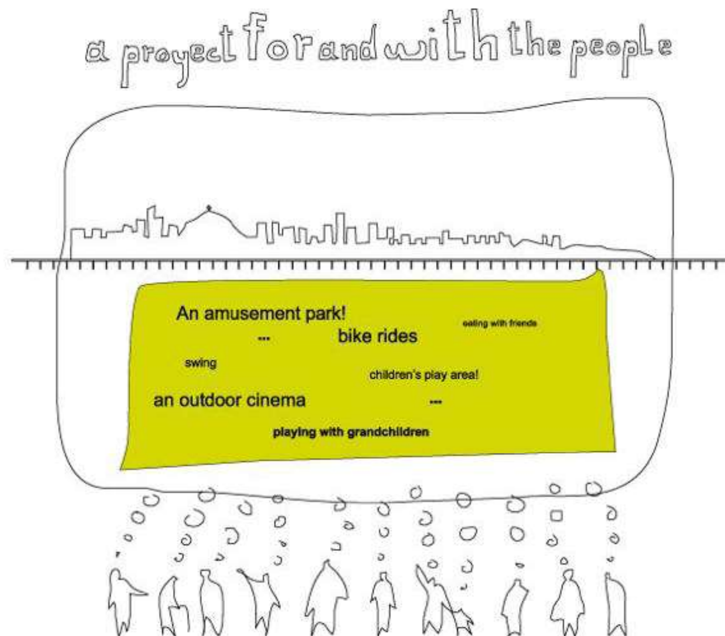

Figure 2: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - design illustration: "a project for and with the people"

short-lived, Basurama's methodology of horizontal management and cooperative alliances produced a practical and flexible framework, "an action tool" (una herramienta de actuación) that could be used by others in other contexts.[43] This became a reality when similar projects were established soon after in and around the city; the social artist-collective C.H.O.L.O. and visual artist Christians Luna, both of whom had participated in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*, created two additional playgrounds from recycled material in the outlying neighbourhoods of Pachacutec-Ventanilla and Cantagallo-Rimac.[44]

In addition to the various interactive apparatuses, Basurama's installation was adorned in the colours of the "Chicha graphic art" aesthetic. Chicha graphic art is a product of the rich cultural history of Lima. In the 1960s and 70s, an influx of rural Peruvians migrated to the city. As a result of this increasingly diverse urban population, a new musical genre evolved mixing Colombian Cumbia (rock music) and traditional Andes Huayno folkloric music. Peruvian Cumbia, renamed Chicha in 1965 after the pop hit "La Chichera" by Aurora Andina, has grown exponentially more popular over the years.[45] Musical groups have to compete for audiences and vigorously advertise their shows through eye-catching posters and flyers, maintaining a demand for local graphic artists and print shops.[46] Some of these Chicha graphic artists and print makers, such as Elliot Tupac, Samuel Gutiérrez and Moises Sants, are now internationally recognized.[47]

The visual iconography of Chicha graphic art is distinct: florescent hues of pink, orange, green, blue, and yellow with bold signature lettering in high contrast black and white. Some contend that these colours hail from the colourful pallet of the Indigenous textiles of the Huancayo region; others have noted that neon ink was widely available and affordable in the early 1980s (the time of the Chicha "boom"), and that budget constraints may have determined the Chicha colours.[48] Hailing from the lower economic demographic of rural workers migrating into urban centres, the Chicha moniker originally referred to "lower class" citizens. Now a mainstream style, the mix of modern pop and rural Indigenous cultures reflects the collective history of urban Peruvians and has become a celebration of their rich

cultural heritage.[49] The use of the Chicha colour palette in *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was a decision made by local community members in the design process, and the vibrant neon colours adorning the cement pylons clearly evoked a local, homegrown fiesta (Fig. 3).[50]

Figure 3: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - Chicha coloured pylons

There were a variety of other visual components in the installation: a mock map of the proposed train line by graphic artist Camila Bustamante; a pink neon sign that read "*Deseo*" (Desire/Wish) by local visual artist Sandra Nakamura; a Chicha-coloured tent constructed in the shape of a train engine perched on the platform that had never held a real train; a poster that portrayed amusement park tickets for access to the pretend train line; and a spray-painted pillar depicting a ticket booth (Fig. 4).

The environmentalist spirit of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* and its criticism of the train line's incompletion reveal its political undertones. Massive cement pylons reaching nine metres into the air with nothing atop and deserted land beneath had speckled the urban landscape of the Peruvian capital for decades. President Alan García first announced the proposal for the train line in 1986, yet only managed to complete ten kilometres before leaving office in

Figure 4: Spray-painted pylon,
"*Subo al tren fantasma* (Board the Ghost Train); *Boleteria* (Ticket Booth)"

1990.[51] The public transportation initiative was never completely abandoned by subsequent administrations but had still not materialized by the time President García returned to office in 2006. Upon his return to power, which lasted until 2011, García aimed to improve the poor reputation he garnered during his first presidency, which was wrought with human rights violations, political corruption, and near national bankruptcy.[52] The train line was not exempt from scandal either: García was accused of making a dubious construction deal related to the project with the corrupt Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi during his first term.[53] In 2010, despite obtaining tacit permission for its continued existence from the municipality, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was not officially supported and was destined to be dissembled with the explanation that construction on the train line was going to commence shortly thereafter.[54] In fact, due partly to the publicity of the installation and partly to the imminent retirement of García, who wanted to complete the train initiative before the end of his political career, the original infrastructure was completely demolished and a new train line, Lima Metro, was constructed and opened in July, 2011.[55]

Anarchy, Colin Ward, and *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público*

As their mandate reveals, Basurama contests systems of socio-political authority in order to generate "new thoughts and attitudes… about the way we think, we work, we perceive reality."[56] The artist-collective lends itself well to an anarchist critical analysis as anarchism is a political philosophy that rejects social and political frameworks based on domination and submission to authority in favour of alternative models to human organization based on social freedom and agency. In considering the anarchistic qualities of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* I draw on the ideas of British social critic Colin Ward, who championed social networks founded on mutual aid and modes of behaviour that could defy and challenge oppressive power structures. Ward was particularly interested in the inherently anarchist tendencies of children at play, alternative and progressive educational pedagogies, housing policies that respond to occupants, worker's control, and the positive impact of non-hierarchical social organization founded on freedom and autonomy.[57] Well-known for his contributions to urban planning through his role as Education Officer for the Town and Country Planning Association and his position as Centennial Professor of Housing and Social Policy at the London School of Economics, Ward was also a contributor to and editor of the anarchist journals *Freedom* and *Anarchy* for over two decades (1947-1970).[58] Fusing individual freedom with social cohesion, Ward asserted that diverse systems of social organization enhance freedom and autonomy, rather than impede it, and dedicated his life to sharing practical solutions that would empower people to manifest a freer society through immediate actions based on cooperative social interactions.[59] In the essay "Making Anarchy Respectable: The Social Philosophy of Colin Ward" (2007), Stuart White categorizes Ward as a *normative anarchist* for judging a society's merits according to how little or how much it allows for freedom and autonomy. White identifies two defining features of Ward's anarchism: a strong emphasis on relationships of cooperation and mutual aid, and the right of individuals to "take charge of their environment and lives."[60]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público fosters an anarchist environment in accord with Ward's belief that "anarchy is a matter of creating anarchistic spaces, albeit provisional, within existing society and enjoying them while they last."[61] Known for his pragmatism, Ward postulated that a wholly anarchist society may never be achievable, but that a more anarchistic society certainly was, since it is latent in many everyday social interactions: "[F]ar from being a speculative vision of a future society, [anarchism] is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society."[62] Applying anarchist theories to contemporary issues, Ward argued that, "instead of being a romantic historical by-way," anarchism is "an attitude to human organisation which is more relevant today than it ever seemed in the past."[63] He observed that evidence of the "enduring resilience" of anarchism throughout the centuries has been overshadowed by "the cartoonist's stereotype of the anarchist as the cloaked and bearded carrier of a spherical bomb with a smoking fuse."[64] His approach resembles the pacifist methods of German anarchist Gustave Landauer (1870-1919). Landauer contended that, more than an institution, the State is a mode of behaviour, a social relationship based on dominance and submission created and perpetuated by individuals' actions: people must act differently in order to dismantle it.[65] Landauer's influence is evident in Ward's advocation of prefigurative activism: individuals combining "immediate aims with ultimate ends."[66] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* manifested many of the anarchist principles Ward championed by bypassing the status quo in a bid to assert non-hierarchical social organization, self-governance and the right to occupy public space.

Claire Bishop questions the presumption inherent in many relational art practices that "democratic community" equates to "harmony."[67] She argues that democracy exists within a perpetual state of conflict, and the absence of conflict does not depict a utopic society but instead one that represses dissident voices.[68] With this rationale, she criticizes relational artists who focus on producing social harmony in their work, and instead encourages artists to draw attention to the oppressive forces that create a false sense of harmony.[69]

Ward would surely agree with Bishop that a homogenous system of uncontested beliefs is not indicative of a true democracy: however, Bishop's distrust of social harmony overlooks the anarchist conviction that a social order can foster harmonious anarchic relationships coexistent with and as a counter to the oppressive forces of authority. Peter Kropotkin's entry on "Anarchism" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1905) posits harmony in an anarchist society is "obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements… for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilised being."[70] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* strives for both "democratic community" and "harmony": the installation directly engaged with the local community, criticizing urban land use and the absence of public transportation while simultaneously inciting the joyous manifestation of community amusement in an unregulated public space.

Social Organization, Freedom, and Autonomy

Ward considered anarchy to be a principle of social organization, one aimed toward living as freely as possible within imposed top-down constraints.[71] Based on Peter Kropotkin's central argument in *Mutual Aid* (1902), that social cohesion is fundamental to our basic survival and thus a naturally occurring tendency in human organization. Ward asserted that voluntary cooperation is "just as strong a tendency in human life as aggression and the urge to dominate."[72] The idea that cooperation is an intrinsic human behaviour is accepted by many scholars. American economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis assert that cooperative behaviour has significantly influenced human evolution to this day due to its "prosocial" attributes: it enhances communities by positively reinforcing social behaviours that benefit both the individual and the group.[73] Tom. R. Tyler, Professor of Psychology and Law at Yale Law School, applies a group engagement model to organizations to investigate why people "willingly cooperate," and finds that groups become naturally cohesive when members are afforded "discretionary authority to do what is appropriate or reasonable."[74] These scholars support Ward's assertion that individual freedom is integral to social cohesion due to the fundamental human tendency toward mutually beneficial behaviours.

Cooperative behaviour has also been found to increase organizational stability. American psychologists Brandon A. Sullivan, Mark Snyder and John L. Sullivan find that "(g)roups built upon a foundation of cooperation are uniquely capable of solving difficult social, political, and economic problems, generating creative, high-quality outcomes, and prove viable and robust in the face of setback and over time."[75] Ward asserted that social order occurs naturally without external control based on voluntary mutual aid. He called this the theory of spontaneous order: "given a common need, a collection of people will, by trial and error, by improvisation and experiment, evolve order out of the situation."[76] He cited examples of complex organizing systems found in natural and social science to critique the concept of a centralized and homogenous conception of government. Contending that human organization is best achieved through a multifarious web of non-linear interactions that are in constant flux -- "harmony results not from unity but from complexity" -- Ward argued that the more flexible a social framework is to variables, the more "durable" it is compared to "any kind of externally imposed order."[77] This aligns with the work of American biologist Edward Owen Wilson and Canadian anthropologist Wade Davis, who both elucidate that diversity correlates directly with resiliency: from animal and plant kingdoms to human systems, the more variants within the structures the more likely they are to adapt and survive.[78] In the place of a centralized administration, Ward championed voluntary alliances between small co-operative bodies to address manners of "production, distribution, and exchange, without dependence on the state."[79] In *Anarchy in Action* (1973) he declared, "it is not anarchy but government which is a crude simplification of social organization:"[80]

> How crude the governmental model seems by comparison, whether in social administration, industry, education or economic planning. No wonder it is so unresponsive to actual needs. No wonder, as it attempts to solve its problems by fusion, amalgamation, rationalisation and co-ordination, they only become worse because of the clogging of the lines of communication. The anarchist alternative is that of fragmentation, fission rather than fusion, diversity rather than

unity, a mass of societies rather than a mass society.[81]

Ward observed that unregulated public spaces are conducive to social reorganization because they foster unencumbered social interactions.[82] Political Scientist Carissa Honeywell observes that Ward's anarchism adheres to "a particular political philosophy of immediacy, or directness, in temporal and spatial terms," and she links DIY ("do it yourself") methods to the anarchist appeal for decentralization and direct participation in the political, social, and economic spheres.[83] Insisting that the city is "the common property of its inhabitants" and "self-evidently belongs" to the people, Ward declared that "the likeliest lever for change in the organised system will come, not from criticism or examples from outside, but from pressure from below."[84] Interestingly, a 2013-14 research project that investigated the back alleys of Vancouver, Canada found that, once occupied by people, neglected urban sites became "spaces of creative engagement."[85] According to the Canadian researchers and anthropologists Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier and Nick Wees, because these sites are less regulated and controlled by "centralized urban interests" they "allow inhabitants to conceptualize and use them in their own terms to a greater extent," thereby presenting "differing possible interpretations and potentials for social interaction."[86] Their research reinforces Ward's advocacy of the freedom to create new modes of social organization on the part of the people themselves. In 1973, Ward co-authored *Streetwork, The Exploding School* with Deputy Education Officer to the Town and Country Planning Association, Anthony Fyson. The work is a summary of pedagogical insights based on research conducted by the association between 1971 and 1973. They discuss the challenges and strengths of progressive educational programs, wherein lessons were taught in public community spaces rather than classrooms.[87] Reflecting on the programs, Ward emphasized that direct participation is paramount for social transformation: "There is no substitute for experiencing an environment at first hand."[88]

Ward argued increased regulation of urban spaces was diminishing the capacity of these spaces to serve the needs of the public in all of its complexity and variety, and contended that, "in a society where urban land and its development are in the hands of speculative entre-

preneurs and where the powers of urban initiative are in the hands of local and national government," it becomes inevitable that decisions are made "by bureaucracies and speculators or by an alliance between the two."[89] According to Mark Mattern, the economic power allotted to multi-national conglomerates and property owners by liberal democratic governments produce and reinforce economic inequality that "quickly translates into dependence and subjection."[90] State rules and regulations subjugate citizens to commercial interests and economic, political, and social domination.

Despite the always-present possibility of manipulation and exploitation by the State, Ward believed that people should manifest the future they envision through direct actions. He championed "temporary autonomous zones," which he describes as "fleeting pockets of anarchy that occur in daily life."[91] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* is one such zone: it was a temporary lived experience, a deregulated environment founded on the free association and collective agency of the people involved.

The Spanish artist-collective and their co-collaborators in Peru drew attention to Lima's prolific car culture, exacerbated by a lack of adequate public transportation, and the spread of giant consumerist shopping malls, which contributed to urban sprawl and the homogenization of urban culture through the eradication of smaller pockets of social and economic activity.[92] They observed that the urban spaces where people once congregated have been abandoned due to the car culture and shopping malls.[93] Ward would agree, proclaiming in 1989 that the "motor vehicle" is "tearing out the heart of our cities and towns."[94] Basurama noted that although public space serves a unique function in the social and political life of urban dwellers, the city street unfortunately no longer functions as a hub of community interaction.[95] They attribute the increasingly homogeneous urban environment to the growing government regulatory and corporate-driven appeal for safe and unsullied public spaces, "clean," but actually, sterile.[96] According to Basurama, the emptying of public space due to stricter regulations converts urban space into a mere residue of community life: "Un gran residuo. *Un Residuo Urbano Sólido* (RUS)."[97] To counter corporate and state control over the public sphere and

attendant neoliberal capitalist values, the installation encouraged community members of Surquillo to disregard the consumerist ethos of the shopping mall and congregate and fraternize in a public space over which they took ownership.

In contrast to Claire Bishop's promotion of social criticism over social harmony in relational art, performative art scholar Shannon Jackson asserts that "when a political art discourse too often celebrates social disruption at the expense of social coordination, we lose a more complex sense of how art practices contribute to inter-dependent social imagining."[98] According to Basurama, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was intended to realize the struggle for autonomous self-development and the fulfilment of the public's desires. They hoped it would fuel the imaginative potential of alternative uses for this abandoned urban space beyond their temporary art installation, such as creating a permanent playground or a raised sidewalk or an urban green space.[99] The pink neon sign by local visual artist Sandra Nakamura that read "*Deseo*" (Desire/Wish) was meant to encourage participants to consider alternative possibilities for this reclaimed public space (Fig. 5). Visitors to the installation are documented inquiring: "Who is paying for this?" "Why are these rides free?' "How can this be happening?" "Why can't we have playgrounds as special as this everywhere?"[100] Rather than offering didactic answers, *RUS*

Figure 5: *Deseo* (2010) - Sandra Nakamura

Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público presented more questions and encouraged participants to question the self-imposed constraints they perpetuated through presumptions that discouraged alternative possibilities. This reflection illustrates Landauer and Ward's conviction that subjugation to authority is founded on tacit, sometimes unwitting, agreements made between citizen and State.[101]

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público also encouraged participants to reflect on the relationship between public infrastructures and access to use. Despite having occupied this public space for three decades, the train line in Surquillo had no access points and had never been a viable option for public transportation.[102] In order to stimulate critical reflection on this state-imposed dysfunctionality, copies of *Lima 2427*, by graphic artist Camila Bustamante, were distributed to visitors on the opening day of the installation.[103] *Lima 2427* is a mock pamphlet that resembles an official municipal map of the projected-but-never-completed train line (Fig. 6). Basing her time-line calculations on the degree to which the project had yet to materialize, Bustamante concluded the train line would finally be finished in the year 2427.[104] The pamphlet was part of a larger artistic

Figure 6: Agency of Unrealized Projects.com/Participants reading *Lima 2427*

campaign Bustamante started in September 2009 involving the distribution of stickers and posters that read: "2427: Better late than never, the train is coming!"[105] The campaign was meant to generate community awareness of the government's lack of accountability in providing public transportation. Bustamante notes, "Transportation

is a very good layer to view how a country deals with democracy, human rights, and the equality of people."[106] Directly critiquing the train line's non-production was a bold move, especially with President García back in power. In her 2011 interview with British curator and writer Rory Hyde, Bustamante acknowledges that her *Lima 2427* project was, "quite provocative and critical of the government and the corruption surrounding the contracts for the metro. I remember when I was sticking a poster up somewhere, one guy said, 'Watch out what you are doing.'"[107]

Ward describes how freedom is repressed not only by overt rules and laws, but also by the unequal distribution of political and economic power: "ours is a society in which, in every field, one group of people makes decisions, exercises control, limits choices, while the great majority have to accept these decisions, submit to this control and act within the limits of these externally imposed choices."[108] A proponent of the right to self-governance, he argued that social order developed not from forced submission to authorities and the delineated parameters of bureaucratic red tape, but through "an extended network of individuals and groups, making their own decisions, controlling their own destiny."[109] In Ward's contribution to the May 1957 issue of the anarchist journal *Freedom*, he argues that the acceptance of government control by the masses has to do with a disenfranchised perspective: "the most obvious and near-at-hand explanation is the hypnotic effect of authority in modern society, which has destroyed our faith in our power as individuals: we don't believe in our power, and we have in consequence become powerless."[110] As a response, Ward asserted that people should "create their own solutions," and experience "that sense of liberation that comes from taking your own decisions and assuming your own responsibilities."[111] He urged his readers to resist oppressive systems in order to actively improve their own lives and communities: he promoted architecture constructed by the people themselves (among other measures) as an attainable means to do so.[112]

John C. Turner, a well-known advocate of the urban squatting movement, contends that DIY house construction promotes "self-discovery and growth."[113] Ward similarly argues self-building "gen-

erates immense pride and self-confidence among people who have housed themselves that way."[114] In *Anarchy in Action* (1973), Ward cites Turner and William P. Mangin to argue against the conception promoted by government officials and international agencies that self-made settlements lead to crime and violence.[115] Writing in 1969, Turner and Mangin found that in Peruvian barriadas: "Employment rates, wages, literacy, and educational levels are all higher … than the national average. Crime, juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and gambling are rare, except for petty thievery, incidence of which is seemingly smaller than in other parts of the city."[116] Such well-being is also discussed in *Vandalism* (1973, ed. Ward.), where a study of playgrounds in the UK found that vandalism decreased significantly in playgrounds that were built by the community compared to those built by the government.[117]

The concept of self-building directly relates to the English translation of *Autoparque* (Self-Made Park), which is a reference to *autoconstrucción*: self-building. Anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jimeñez defines *autoconstrucción* as "a source of vitality and improvisation; of skill, craft, and tacit knowledge; of political acuity and community values; of autonomy and resistance; of resilience and resourcefulness; of perseverance, defiance, and irreducibility."[118] Similarly, British artist and curator Benjamin Parry, who discusses the art of Abraham Cruzvillegas in his essay "Beyond aesthetics: Poetics of Autoconstrucción in Mexico City," notes that *autoconstrucción* embodies "adaptability, dialogue, collaboration, recycling and experimentation."[119] Cruzvillegas grew up on the outskirts of Mexico City on the "squatted lands" of Ajusco, where self-organized communities in the 1960s and 1970s established necessary services and infrastructures such as housing, electricity, and plumbing.[120] Cruzvillegas focuses on the process of creative experimentation with one's immediate environment through adaptation and modification.[121] His ongoing installation series *Autoconstruccción* consists of sculptural objects that are constructed entirely out of objects that he finds in and around his studio and reflects on the creative flexibility of working with found materials and the process of perpetual experimentation.[122] Basurama has similarly organized many "self-made" ever renewable projects, from Brazil to Mozambique, in the form of *autoparques* and *autobarrios* (self-made

neighbourhoods).[123] The DIY process endorsed by Basurama and their co-collaborators also extends beyond this or that individual project; for example, after *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was dissembled by the state authorities, two playgrounds constructed in Lima by local artist-collectives were named *Parques Autoarmables* (Self-Assembled Parks).[124]

Ward criticized the State for using community-based projects to obscure state-sanctioned policies that perpetuate poverty and the disenfranchisement of poor communities.[125] While he was a strong proponent of self-help and mutual aid, he criticized neoliberal governments for placing the onus of responsibility on the individual, rather than the State, to rectify systemic inequality and oppression. This ideology inhibits genuine self-help through mutual aid among communities and increases the public's "reliance on the bureaucratic organization."[126] With this in mind, some might question the anarchist qualities of an art project that was funded by a government institution, the Spanish International Development Agency (AECID).[127] On the other hand, I argue that Basurama carved out an anarchistic social project with the means they had. In *Anarchism and Art: Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (2016) Mattern distinguishes between anarchists that endorse the destruction of the State and anarchists who see the possibility of establishing anarchist ways of being alongside the State. He defines the latter as adopting an interstitial strategy: the tactic of identifying "existing cracks and fissures" in the state apparatus and working within those cracks to expand them until they "threaten major institutions of domination."[128] Here he is indebted to Ward, who wrote in *Anarchy in Action* (1973) that "anarchist alternatives are already there, in the interstices of the dominant power structure. If you want to build a free society, the parts are all at hand."[129] I propose that Basurama located just such a 'crack' in the dominant institution of Spain's AECID, an organization informed by theories of neoliberalism that works with government and non-governmental agencies in developing nations to help them advance economically within the global capitalist system.[130] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* took AECID funding, but rejected the tenets of capitalism and neo-liberal governance by criticizing the lack of adequate public transportation options for marginalized communities, the

degradation of a common public space at the hands of civic authorities, and the capitalist status-quo's ideology of progress, consumerism, and urban development in Lima.[131] Using a Spanish government agency to financially support their project was an interstitial strategy for change. In his 1966 essay "Anarchism as a Theory of Organization," Ward wrote, "I think we have discovered what these new forms of organization should be. We have now to make the opportunities for putting them into practice."[132] *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* is an example of the sort of practice Ward speaks of. Basurama and the local collaborators in Lima located interstices in the political discourse on environmental protection, urban land use and unequal access to public transportation, and carved out a physical demonstration of freedom and autonomy in public space.

The Anarchist Playground: An Exercise in Prefiguration

I now shift focus from the design and construction of *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* to the prefigurative potential of the relational, playful environment it created. Ward's position on the democratic function of public space, the natural tendency of voluntary cooperation, and the importance of self-realization are all tangibly manifested through the playground. An advocate of the "adventure playground"—play spaces with as little structural interventions from authority figures as possible—Ward recognized the anarchist characteristics inherent in spontaneous, ungoverned play. The unregulated play space was an example of "living anarchy: a space that is valuable both in itself and as an experimental verification in microcosm of anarchism's whole social approach."[133] The socially cohesive environment of an unregulated play space prefigured qualities of an anarchist society: "The adventure playground is a kind of parable of anarchy, a free society in miniature, with the same tensions and ever-changing harmonies, the same diversity and spontaneity, and the same unforced growth of cooperation and release of individual qualities and communal sense, which lie dormant in a society whose dominant values are competition and acquisitiveness."[134] Combining Ward's conception of play with contemporary play theorists, I discuss how unregulated play in public space creates possibilities for social reimagining that prefigure alternatives in real time. Linking the

anarchist qualities of unregulated play with the social dimensions of relational art, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* created an anarchist space that fostered voluntary cooperation, freedom, and autonomy.

Although the definition of play can be ambiguous, varying from traditional folk festivities to highly organized sports, the type of play that a public playground evokes is fundamentally spontaneous, voluntary, and ungoverned.[135] Many theorists and educators evaluate play according to the function it performs in socially and physically conditioning a child for adult life. German sociologist and historian Henning Eichberg observes that this framework may help justify the right to play and access to recreational activities, but also asserts the symbolic value of play expounded by "classic" theorists Karl Groos, Roger Caillois, Johan Huizinga, and Brian Sutton-Smith has value.[136] In *Questioning Play: What Play Can Tell Us About Social Life* (2016), Eichberg notes that the "narrow… industrial functionalist mythology" of play perpetuates the "industrial capitalist culture and its patterns of growth, productivity, development of achievement, and forward mobility."[137]

This issue is discussed by Chris Wilbert and Damian F. White in their "Introduction" to *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility: The Colin Ward Reader* (2011) where they draw attention to Ward's interest in the "morality and politics" of play.[138] Using the example of the "recreation movements" of nineteenth-century England, Ward revealed how play and leisure programs have been used in the past to reinforce the apparatus of the State: totted for improving the strength and health of the poor, the recreation programs were actually implemented to produce robust factory workers and soldiers out of the working class.[139] Functionalist approaches to play are clearly not a useful framework for exploring the prefigurative potential of play to contest authority and subvert social norms. On the other hand, referencing Sutton-Smith's categories of the rhetoric of play in *Ambiguity of Play* (1997), Eichberg asserts that freedom-engendering play contests the "rhetoric of progress," and "questions all, especially the well-established order of normality."[140] Becky Beal, Professor of Kinesiology at California State University, throws further light on this issue in "Symbolic Inver-

sion in the Subculture of Skateboarding" (1998), where she lists the vital ingredients of unfettered play as: a lack of rules and authority figures; the freedom to start and stop at any point; intrinsic motivation; and a lack of competition.[141] In her study of forty-one skateboarders over a two year period, she observed that unorganized play disrupts mainstream social operations and that the general disdain of skateboarders is specifically linked to their rejection of "dominant norms associated with mainstream sport and corporate bureaucratic relations."[142] Thus, the *kind* of play is significant; spontaneous ungoverned play rejects established social normalities and cultivates individual agency and co-operative social experimentation.

Although the anarchistic tendencies of children have been discussed at length by philosophers, educators and social scientists alike, Ward stands out for the depth in which he explored this topic. He was a firm believer that the behaviour of children could be instrumental in understanding broader social possibilities, and his works *Streetwork: The Exploding School*, ed. (1973), *Vandalism,* ed. (1973), *The Child in the City* (1978), and *The Child in the Country* (1988) defend the rights of young people and their use of public space while criticizing the diminishing opportunities for children to explore and play without direct adult supervision.[143] In "Playful Voices in Participatory Design," Rosie Parnell and Maria Patsarika, scholars of children's spaces and design, note that "Ward's depiction of children's everyday lives is a radical manifesto that focuses on the need to pay more attention to the hidden messages that children's playful voices communicate."[144] Like Eichberg, Ward contested the over-simplified conception of play as a developmental aspect of child-rearing and believed adults equally benefit from the social experimentation that play spaces afford, asking: "Isn't there a place for the adventure playground or its equivalent in the adult world?"[145] Photos taken of participants engaging with *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* reveal that people of all ages interacted with and congregated around the installation: this was an interactive play experience for people of all ages (Fig. 7).

Tim Stott, Lecturer in Art History and Theory at Dublin Institute of Technology, analyzes playful and participatory art in *Play and Participation in Contemporary Arts Practices* (2015).[146] Applying cybernetic

Figure 7: *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* - Play for all ages

theory to relational art installations that encourage playful behaviour, Stott concludes that play "functions as a means of social organisation," and that "novel or unprecedented organisation … develops from local, nonlinear interactions within the system."[147] The relational characteristics of play spaces are also discussed by play theorist Stuart Lester in his contribution to *Education, Childhood and Anarchism: Talking Colin Ward* (2014) entitled "Play as protest: Clandestine moments of disturbance and hope." Lester elucidates that "such spaces are not simply neutral physical containers for activity but rather are relational achievements brought about by immediate encounters and movements between bodies, materials, symbols and so on, each with their own trajectory and force to affect and be affected."[148] The extensive extra-personal and interpersonal exchanges within play spaces produce social alliances that remain in a perpetual state of flux. Indeed, they depend on flexibility and adaptability. This is the social dynamism that Ward refers to when he asserts that play spaces inherently demand creative solutions on the part of participants and thus allow for novel social experimentation.[149] Stott articulates the paradoxical dynamic of the playground environment, describing it as "a space both of constraint and possibility."[150] For Ward, unregulated playgrounds are examples of anarchist social organization because they reveal this symbiotic relationship between the seemingly contradictory qualities of unbridled freedom and social cohesion.[151] Art in-

stallations that create play spaces, therefore, produce complex social situations wherein participants freely deconstruct, experiment with, and recreate their identities in relation to a specific spatial and temporal environment. Their ability to simultaneously produce friction and cohesion demonstrates the capacity of playful participatory art to combine social discord and harmony: the antithesis of Claire Bishop's "false utopia" paradigm.[152]

One of the play apparatuses at *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* stands out for prompting this dynamic, socially interactive experience of playing in public spaces. *¡Rambo!* was a climbing web constructed out of car tires bolted together and strung from the edge of the cement train line platform. Because of its large size and the countless ways in which someone could interact with it, the climbing web invited multiple players to simultaneously participate and voluntarily cooperate for the mutual benefit of the play experience. A photo of children playing on *¡Rambo!* depicts three children interacting with the apparatus in different ways: one child hangs from his hands, looking down at the ground below; another casually dangles his legs and rests his upper body in a comfortable position of leisure; and a younger child clambers up the rubber apparatus with obvious determination and little interest in the older two (Fig. 8). The appar-

Figure 8: *¡Rambo!* - voluntary cooperation for mutual benefit

ent social cohesion in the photo was not created through instruction and enforcement of play behaviour, but through, in Ward's words, "the natural and spontaneous tendency of humans to associate together for their mutual benefit."[153]

Basurama has constructed many self-built play spaces (autoparques) since 2010. The artist-collective worked with four communities in Africa between 2011 and 2016: *Autoparque Niamey: Hagámoslo Juntos!* (2011) in Niger; *Autoparque en Addis Abeba. La Casa de los Niños Perdidos* (2012) in Ethiopia; *Autoparque en Maputo* (2013) in Mozambique; and *Autoparque en Ben Guerir* (2016) in Morocco. In Equatorial Guinea they created *Autoparque en Malabo* (2014), which involved the construction of a float for a November 15th Eco Carnival. In Brazil, Basurama collaborated in the construction of two public play spaces, one in Rio de Janeiro, *Playground Gatos en Rio de Janeiro* (2015) and the other in São Paulo, *City for Children Under 99 Years Old* (2016), which Basruama describes as "a playground designed for unlimited ways of using."[154] They also work locally and build playgrounds in Spain such as *Autocole Ideo/#imagineyard #buildyard* (2015) and *Autocole Ideo 2 #imaginarhuerto #construirpatio* (2016), two pedagogical projects at the private school Escuela Ideo in Madrid where students participated in the design and construction of a play space with recycled material.[155] Another Spanish playground project, *Parque Cecilia* (2017), was part of a larger project called *Neumáticos que dejan huella* (Tires that leave a mark) created with an organization that works with vulnerable children and youth on creative projects, Creática ONG.[156] The installation was constructed out of recycled material at the Colegio Maestro Rodrigo in Madrid, and the play objects were successfully designed to generate electricity.

British historian David Crouch notes in "Lived Spaces and Planning Anarchy: Theory and Practice of Colin Ward" (2017) that Ward's focus on an individual's ability to directly influence their environment demonstrates his enthusiasm for freedom over resistance.[157] Ward considered unconstrained playing to be an exercise in countering repressive social forces: "That there should be anything novel in simply providing facilities for the spontaneous, unorganized activities of childhood is an indication of how deeply rooted in our social behav-

iour is the urge to control, direct and limit the flow of life."[158] Mattern discusses the complexities of the notion of freedom and elucidates that having the freedom to do what you want does not directly equate to being free of external control or coercion: "simply being left alone, however, may not guarantee that individuals are able to do what they want."[159] According to Mattern, anarchist concepts of freedom and autonomy require the ability to exercise total control over one's life and the opportunity to develop the means to do so.[160] Play theorist Thomas S. Hendricks, who investigates the most intrinsic influences of play on the human experience in *Play and the Human Condition* (2015), describes how play affords individual agency. Through "planning, coordinating, executing, and revising of action strategies," play cultivates "self-realization, meaning-making and cultural reproduction," and presents participants opportunities to "learn who they are, how they are situated, and what they can do."[161] In this context, unregulated play not only endorses free choice but also facilitates autonomy through a process of self-realization and echoes the philosophy of *autoconstrucción*.

Unregulated play is an example of prefigurative activism because it offers tangible alternatives for social organization through lived experience and reflects current societal norms while manifesting hypothetical future realities in the present moment. Many play theorists agree that play can dismantle cultural hegemonies and subvert political authorities.[162] The prefigurative quality of play is described by Tim Stott as the "practical apprenticeship for the real political and social freedom to come," and by Henning Eichberg as having "revolutionary implications" due to a shift from a "one-sided focus on formal organization, rules, and decisions to bodily democracy."[163] Although not typically an overt form of activism, unregulated play in public spaces is what Ward refers to as a quiet revolution: a subtle act of everyday resistance.[164] In his chapter "Play as Protest and Exploration" in *The Child in the City* (1977), Ward references the folklorists and child theorists Iona and Peter Opie and the sociologist and oral historian Paul Thompson to argue that, due to the dominant position adults assume over children in society, children at play can be a "territorial conflict or resistance," and even an "outright war with adults."[165] The games of children intentionally disrupt the adult world, and the direct and im-

mediate agency of unregulated play empowers individuals to subvert relationships based on dominance and submission.

RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público evoked a "quiet revolution": not only did it contest the restricted use of urban public space and address the issues of trash accumulation and inadequate public transportation in Lima through the use of discarded car tires and the skeletal remains of the neglected trainline, it also presented the lived experience of freedom and autonomy that occurs through unencumbered play. The playground was designed as an imaginary train station that simultaneously confronted the government's empty promise of public transit. It was a playful tactic, emphasizing the joyous community activity first and foremost, but undoubtedly casting a critical light on the abandoned infrastructure and the unused space. For example, the Chicha-coloured tent constructed in the shape of a train engine faced the abyss where the cement platform gave way to deserted land below and toward the zip-line apparatus called *El Tren Volador* (The Flying Train). Furthermore, as a part of their campaign, and as a contribution to the exhibition at the Spanish Cultural Centre in Lima, a graphic design of two amusement park tickets, one blue and one yellow, poked fun at the train line that was never built. As Basurama states: "La invitación era clara: ¡Súbete al tren fantasma!" ("The invitation was clear: All aboard the ghost train!") (Fig. 6).[166]

Conclusion

Connecting the social dimensions of relational art with the transformative characteristics of unregulated play, this chapter explores the capacity of participatory playful art to challenge established norms and present novel social experiences. By locating intersections in the progressive political attitudes of Colin Ward and the artist collective Basurama, I explore how the installation prefigured a society that exhibits the anarchist principles of voluntary social cooperation, freedom, and autonomy. Colin Ward was critical of the excess political power of the capitalist neoliberal State and its negation of non-hierarchical alliances founded on the principles of freedom and autonomy. Basurama is also critical of the capitalist system, apparent in the connection they draw between consumerism, garbage pro-

duction, and the degradation of community space. Ward opposed authority and social relationships based on control and submission; similarly, Basurama rejects the primacy of the individual artist and instead embraces collaborative, non-hierarchical alliances within and outside of the collective. Both Ward and Basurama advocate for social transformation through participatory grassroots projects that promote freedom and autonomy and contest increasing regulations of urban public spaces: Ward, through his advocation for the right to occupy urban spaces for educational and recreational activities and the DIY self-building movement; Basurama through their collaborative art projects that invite communities to reclaim and repurpose their public spaces for community use, i.e., *autoconstrucción*. Lastly, and significantly, both Ward and Basurama emphasize the value of play spaces for their capacity to cultivate novel opportunities for social reorganization through spontaneous non-hierarchical social interactions founded on voluntary association and cooperative behaviour. Ward encouraged people of all ages to occupy public spaces and engage in spontaneous playful activity while Basurama's many playground installations endorse freedom-engendering play in unregulated public space.

From its design, construction and use, *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* was fundamentally inclusive, challenged the "order of normality," and contributed to self-realization and autonomy. Using car tires to create play objects that hung from the neglected infrastructure of a promised but never-materialized public train line, the project cast a critical light on the abandoned infrastructure and presented an alternative use for the space. The project confronted social, economic, and political domination of a capitalist neoliberal State. *RUS Lima, Autoparque de Diversiones Público* exemplifies the socially transformative potential of participatory public art to prefigure anarchic social possibilities in real time. The installation invited viewers to participate in an ordinary situation of life, one they had likely experienced before, here illuminated as an excellent example of "anarchy in action": free play.

Appendix 1

Details of the constructed apparatuses. This list is copied directly from Basurama, "Lima and the Ever-Postponed Electric Train," in *How to Grow a Playspace: Development and Design*, eds. Katherine Masiulanis and Elizabeth Cummins (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 269.

The Flying Chairs –20.6-metre-high swings, made with reused tyres and ropes, hanging from the slab, including swings for couples, lower and highe1r seats, etc.

The Ghost Train – an installation of a "favela style" train.

The Lookout – a scaffolding structure that provided a way for neighbours to visit the elevated promenade.

Rambo! – an installation using the rings of reused tyres that connected the ground with the platform slab, as kids love to explore and climb. It was built with the idea of "conquering" the slab, that far-from-us structure.

The Flying Train – a zip line to complete the trip of the train with your own body, jumping from the slab and landing some 60 metres away. There was also a smaller version for little kids.

The Crazy Bull – a manual version of the mechanical bull that had to be pulled by someone for the fun of the three people riding on top of it.

The Pirate Boat and The Viking Boat – two swinging sculptures made of tyres that allowed groups to ride together.

Notes

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[2] Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1973), 11.

[3] Terán et al., 139.

[4] Diana Brydon, "How emergent cultural imaginaries of autonomy and planetarity can reframe contemporary precarity debates," in *Precarious Spaces, The Arts, Social and Organizational Change*, eds. Katarzyna Kosmala and Miguel Imas (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 15-33; Claudia Carvalho, "Citizenship and the Artistic Practice: Artistic Practices and their Social Role," in *Artistic Citizenship; Artistry, Social Responsibility, and Ethical Praxis,* eds. David J. Elliot, Marissa Silverman, and Wayne D. Bowman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 293-315; Nancy Duxbury, "Introduction: From 'Art in the Street' to Building More Sustainable Communities" in *Animation of Public Space through the Arts; Toward More Sustainable Communities,* ed. Nancy Duxbury (Coimbra, Portugal: Almedina, 2013), 9-25; Tony Noice, Helga Noice and Arthur F. Kramer, "Participatory Arts for Older Adults: A Review of Benefits and Challenges," in *The Gerontologist* Vol. 54, No. 5, 741–755, accessed July 14, 2020, doi:10.1093/geront/gnt138; Clelia Clini, Linda J M Thomson, and Helen J Chatterjee, "Assessing the impact of artistic and cultural activities on the health and well-being of forcibly displaced people using participatory action research," in *BMJ Open* 2019, 1-9, accessed July 14, 2020, doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2018-025465

[5] Mark Mattern, *Anarchism and Art; Democracy in the Cracks and on the Margins* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2016), 18.

[6] Mattern, 11.

[7] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 7, 2020, accessed July 16, 2020, https://hdl-handle-net.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/2027/heb.32115.

[8] Bishop, Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship, 7.

[9] Maria Lind, "The Collaborative Turn," in *Taking the Matter into Common Hands: On Contemporary Art and Collaborative Practices*, eds. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 20 & 29.

[10] Lind, "The Collaborative Turn," 22-23.

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