







### **Barricades are needed!**

We, the mob, must begin work immediately. We will pile up, wedge in place, stack, compact, and fill them with holes. Our barricades will clot the city. They will be massive, tall, silent, tense and intimidating. They will be as great and as trivial as the barricade of which Hugo wrote, "One seemed to behold riot turned to rubble. One seemed to hear, buzzing over that barricade as though it were their hive, the gigantic dark-bodied bees of violent progress...It was a pile of garbage and it was Sinai."

**Liberate precast slabs from construction sites! Gather beams and planks from wherever you can! Borrow bricks! Tear up your carpets! Upturn your vehicles! Fill gaps with shopping trolleys! Steal a crane!**

We have been insulted with pocket parks and public amenities: places for meagre lunch-breaks and brief rests so we have the energy to keep shopping. They are tradeoffs for Gross Floor Area. They are certainly no gifts. Likewise, artworks and entertainments are shiny things to distract the children, instigations of public debt, opportunities for artists and patrons to pay themselves in self-recognition.

[The one who gives] must not see or know it either; otherwise he begins, at the threshold, as soon as he intends to give, to pay himself with a symbolic recognition, to praise himself, to approve of himself, to gratify himself, to congratulate himself, to give back to himself symbolically the value of what he thinks he has given or what he is preparing to give."

**This is why we must build together, anonymous and prolific.**

Our barricades are not demands to be met. There is no payment, concession or appeasement that is enough to satisfy us and make our barricades redundant. If they are of no value, no use, if they signify only imprecisely, then they cannot enter into exchange. They will refuse to be digested by an economy, the rules of someone else's house.

Because of this, our barricades might be able to be gifts.

Do not think the embarrassment of such an old-fashioned response is not evident to us. As we sit around this table and write this document, we are finding it hard to look each other in the eye. Are we Marxists, we who have never read Marx? Are we petty rioters with baseball caps and scarves over our faces, spitting on bankers and going home to watch ourselves on television? No: one of us is a draughtsman, another a writer, another a box-maker. Do you think we are not serious? Are you laughing at us? Well then, this too we must put up with.

**The city is not a given.**

The Barricades Commission  
June 27, 2006

#### References:

- Derrida, (1992), *Given Time I. Counterfeit Money*, p14
- Hugo, (1982) *Les Misérables*, p989
- The Barricades Commission of the Paris Commune, 1871