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Make Use in Syracuse

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Nolan Ediger
“Make Use in Syracuse”

Introduction:

All cities throughout the world have what is called “gutterspace”, which are tiny, overgrown, inaccessible, unusable plots of land that exist within the urban environment; in essence they are the remnants of the built environment oftentimes caused by errors. The term is oftentimes used to make reference to Gordon Matta-Clark’s 1970s project entitled Fake Estates. Matta-Clark discovered that in New York City these types of properties are oftentimes auctioned off, sometimes for as low as $25. Overtime Matta-Clark bought 15 of these properties, 14 located in Queens and 1 in Staten Island. His intention was to install art on these properties himself or give the parcels to other artists, this idea was abandoned due to his death and impracticalities. After his death the documents of his purchases surfaced and included collages, deeds, photographs, and maps.

Syracuse like other cities has these spaces as well. I have set out to discover my own set of 15 “gutterspaces” throughout the downtown and adjacent areas of Syracuse. I do not intend to buy any land, instead the goal of this project is to produce a surrogate version of my properties in the guise of Matta-Clark. While that is an endeavor in and of itself, a projection into the future use of these sites as individuals as well as a collective will also be included in the package of documents produced. Many of these sites have become overgrown with weeds and debris including trash has secured itself in the space; their neglect is evident, it is due time they receive some concern.
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The potential for these 15 sites as a connected exterior space for the inhabitants of Syracuse stems from the original insights of Gordon Matta-Clark for his own Fake Estates project: exterior art spaces. A series of walkable hubs of outdoor seating, entertainment, art display, and urban farming spaces promises activation of previously abandoned sites. Apart these small abandoned sites afford little influence on the urban context, together they will make a immense impact. Imagine yourself walking throughout urban Syracuse and bumping into these lively weird spaces on accident. As the idea gains notoriety, going to them no longer becomes an accident.

"MAKE USE

IN SYRACUSE"