

Pravo na grad - Right to the City

Against the misuse of public resources, for a right management of urban space



With the initiative Pravo na grad (Right to the City, Zagreb) an alliance of independent cultural actors, youth organizations and an environmental organization started to take action against a management of space that violates public interest and excludes citizens from the decision making process in the development of Zagreb. Amidst a period of criminal privatisation of public assets facilitated by public administration, and of the speculative investments in real-estate that are "unlocked" through this, Right to the City manages to mobilise ever-growing circle of activists and citizens in response, and forces the public actors involved to respect their (own!) rules and regulations in respect of the common. What began in the early 2000s from the simple necessity of these organizations to find space to work, produce and present their activities, made a significant turn into a public focus with the initiation of Right to the City in 2006. As a result, much of the current public engagement of, for instance, Zagreb's Multimedia Institute (MI2), is through its activities for the Right to the City initiative channelled into the fight for the proper management of urban space. An organization with a background in (digital) media culture enters with this remarkably physical dimension: addressing the very form our cities take today. The clever, performative and visually attractive public actions (at times supported by tens-of-thousands of Zagreb's citizens) often circumvent the ignorance of mainstream media and ensure visibility and recognition in the public arena. This has been one of the reasons to focus on highly symbolic cases of misuse of public resources, like the partial privatisation of the city's central Flower Square, as the very site for contention. Even if Right to the City faces stiff resistance from vested political, private and public actors in the city, it is actively transferring its expertise and capacity for collective action to related conflicts throughout Croatia.

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pravonagrad.org/

