

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.

NEWSPAPER



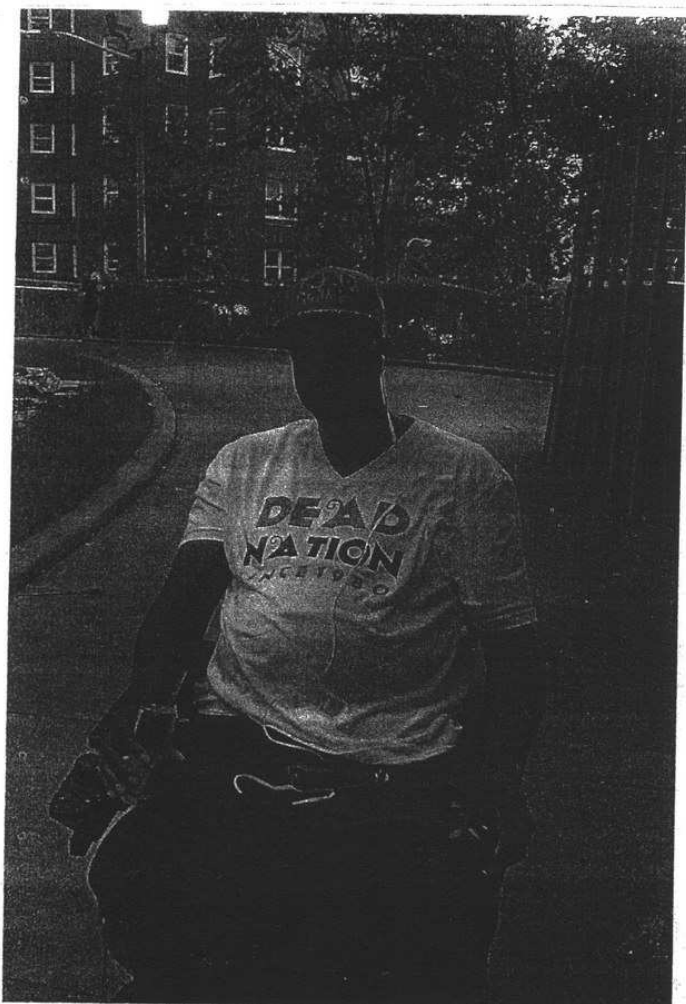
"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."
Antonio Gramsci
(Notebook 8)



July 1st, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY

The "Gramsci Monument" is an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses

ERIK'S NOTES



Dear readers meet Erik Farmer a Bronx native who's been raised in Forest houses since the age of one. Erik has seen everything from the good times in Forest houses to the bad, and plays a major part in his community. Bringing productivity to the children and citizen of Forest houses. Erik states that forest houses is different and is a typical urban area that can have great change as long as it has a strong community inside of it.

Erik feels that the Gramsci Monument is one of the great things that has taken place in Forest houses. He feels that the Monument brings a positive energy and gives the kids a look at art from a different view, another prospective, and of course because Erik knows the kids love fun lots of activity.

Erik gives a special thanks to the residents of forest houses for warmly welcoming the Gramsci Monument. He thanks Thomas Hirschhorn for believing in his own ideas and introducing the Gramsci Monument to him and the rest of his team. Last but not least he thanks the DIA foundation for funding this wonderful jam pack with events monument.

Erik's last remarks are " we have 77 days to teach the basic and fundamental of art to Forest houses because art is so much bigger than a painting, drawing, or portrait. It's our everyday life".

So much more to be said but such short notice stay tune for more notes and interviews in the Gramsci Monument in the next issues to come. Stay positive and remember God still loves you when nobody else don't.



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«FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP»

«FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP» is a quote of Joe Budda, resident of 'Forest Houses'. Answering my question about his way of deciding what to wear each morning – he wears very stylish and color conscious clothes – he said to me: I start from the bottom – the sneakers – to the top – the hood. Besides the fact that this is a way to start the day with a careful and conscious thinking, Joe Budda's «maxim» is also a beautiful metaphor of what we have done at 'Forest Houses' during the past seven weeks.

We built the «Gramsci Monument», we really built it from the Bottom to the Top! We built the structure in thirty-five working days, giving form to the «Gramsci Monument». The construction was made possible thanks to Erik Farmer and the Construction Team comprised of: Abayomi Ravenell, Bobby Wainwright, Christopher Roberts, Christopher Rome, Dannion Jordan, Derrick Martin, Ernest Thomas, Janet Bethea, Masai Neal, Quasim Sweet, Reginald Boone, Robert Mack, Tyrone Grant, Vincent Conyers, Walter Bryan and the help of the Dia Foundation Staff: Jim Schaeufele, John Sprague, Curtis Harvey, Kelly Kivland, Yasmiil Raymond, Kady Fonseca, Patrick Heilman, Max Tannone, Megan Witko.

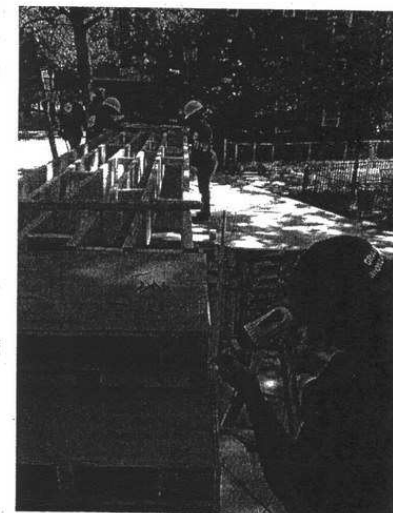
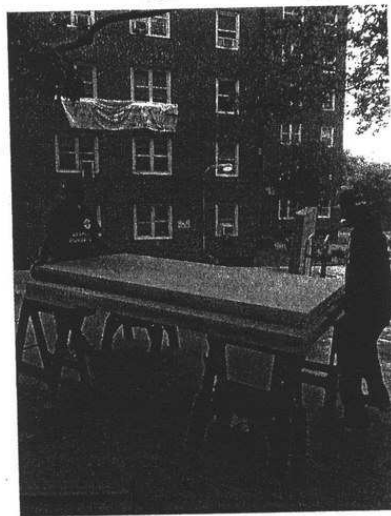
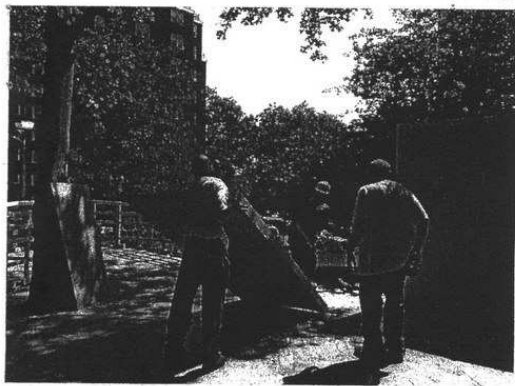
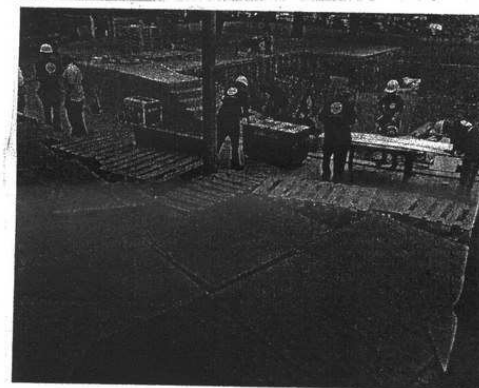
The fifteen residents constituting the construction team – which I meet every morning for a briefing and every evening for a debriefing – are the only ones to know and measure how difficult, complicated, complex, beautiful and how fun these thirty-five days of construction were. Only the construction team knows how fragile, uncertain and precarious the construction phase was. We know it, but we also know what a precious, rich and important moment it was, something I will share – for ever – with them and with them only. Therefore, Janet, Tyrone, Dan, Chris, Chris, Rob, Vincent, Yomi, Quasim, Reggie, Walter, Derrick, Masai, Boo and Bobby are the ones I want to thank first. Working with them was for me an incredible experience and an incommensurable challenge. I thank them for the time we spent working together, struggling, giving energy without counting, doubting, thus encouraging myself everyday to have taken decisions which had to be taken, resisting the 'easier way' and fighting the temptation to 'not do it'. I thank all of them deeply for their help! As I always claimed – help is necessary, help is essential, because without help – their help, the help of Erik Farmer, the help of the residents, the help of everyone – I just couldn't do it! And the «Gramsci Monument» could not celebrate its opening.

Nothing was easy and there are for sure thousands of 'better ways' to construct the «Gramsci Monument». Instead of 'better', it was made the 'good' and 'unique' way. Once again, I can say that the achievement of the construction of the «Gramsci Monument» is a proof of this magnificent saying: «'better' is always 'less good'!» We made it 'good', we didn't make it 'better', because the important thing was to do it! I have a thought for the words in Jay-Z's song «Already home»: «Everybody can tell you how to do it – they never did it.» But we actually did it ourselves!

I am proud of the competence of the construction team, proud of the work accomplished and proud of our capacity to stay together as a team, against everything. Because in our team everyone is important, nobody is less important, nobody's work or even presence is not necessary, nobody is not needed. I need everybody, we need everybody. Art can try to give this a form: Everybody is equally necessary and everybody's work is equally important – against the common social, economical or cultural habits. The construction together with residents is a crucial phase because no event, activity or production can take place without construction, the «Gramsci Monument» couldn't stand as a new kind of Monument and we couldn't have experienced these moments together.

Furthermore, the construction phase is crucial because it's the (first) contact with reality on the field, it's a confrontation with the other, it's the «infight» with everyday life – here and now – at 'Forest Houses' with its residents. I want to insist on this, because 'constructing' doesn't only mean building something to be used for something else, 'constructing' also means 'belief': belief in art, belief in co-operation, belief in confronting a vision, belief in a dream, belief in ones own capacities and competence, belief in making a work, belief in making a work of art. I want to give a form to the love of working, to the love of the work done – this is something I have at heart. I love to produce, to construct, to build, to do it – from the bottom to the top. I can see now, it was not impossible - we did it!

Thomas Hirschhorn July 1, 2013





AMBASSADOR
YASMIL
RAYMOND
NOTES

Ambassador's Note By Yasmil Raymond

Coming from an island, the title of ambassador carries immediate associations with far-off places overseas, an “elsewhere” that is foreign and mysterious, exotic and outlandish. An ambassador, a form of visitor that unlike an anonymous tourist is publicly identified with a duty to represent a sovereign “place” of origin, to engage in dialogue with the hosting community and be aware of the politics of being a guest. Not merely a messenger, an ambassador is ultimately a converser, a kind of public speaker available to connect through first-person encounters to the universal. In my role of ambassador at “Gramsci Monument” I will welcome inquiries and questions concerning art and keep myself informed on the interests and concerns of the residents of Forest Houses.



A DAILY LECTURE
BY MARCUS
STEINWEG

6

What is philosophy?

Marcus Steinweg

Let us define philosophy by two aspects: profection and critique. The profection is philosophy as a headlong dynamic aimed at the inconsistency value of its certainties. Thinking involves precipitancy and breathlessness. One could describe the self-defusing of philosophy in academia as a deceleration ritual dedicated to ensuring the development of something that one believes rightfully exists. However, explication and exegesis are only *one* aspect of philosophical practice.¹ Genuine thinking begins with the subject choosing to extend itself to the inconsistency of self-explanatory facts, which implies questioning the idea of legitimacy. Thinking means leaving the territory of good reasons to risk, in suspending a scientifically legitimated factual romanticism together with its correlative logic of avoiding mistakes, the experience of moments of inconsistency. Thinking involves a progressive aspect. Since in thinking, the subject rushes towards the unknown, Badiou can claim that "making *decisions of thought* without turning back"² is a key element in philosophical practice. The faintheartedness of all academicisms neutralised in a despondent belief in facts is characterised by weighing up consequences, the fearful look to the side, and a self-assurance based on the historical. However, philosophy marks the break with a dependence on facts.³ It is clear that this break is realised as a critique of established reality. Philosophy's move to critique reality implies a turning away from reality. Turning away from and towards cooperate. Philosophy is neither realistic nor idealistic where it unmasks realism as factual obscurantism and idealism as a love of consistency (what is more durable, more eternal than ideas?). Philosophy as critique is directed against the temptation of choosing to confine thought in ('critical') pseudo-consistencies. It opens up the space of a universal inconsistency which indicates the contingency of the structure of being. For this reason, the critique of the existent involves affirming its contingency and transformability. This is the affirmationism inherent in philosophical critiques: not affirming the world as it is, but acknowledging that it is – as it is: ontologically inconsistent.

1 On thinking as 'creating' in contrast to 'reading' and 'interpretation', see Cornelius Castoriadis, *Durchs Labyrinth. Seele, Vernunft, Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt a. M. 1981, pp. 18-19.

2 Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, (trans. S. Corcoran), Continuum Press, London and New York, 2008, p. 5.

3 See Alain Badiou, *Ist Politik denkbar? [Peut-on penser la politique]*, Berlin 2010, pp. 111-2.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

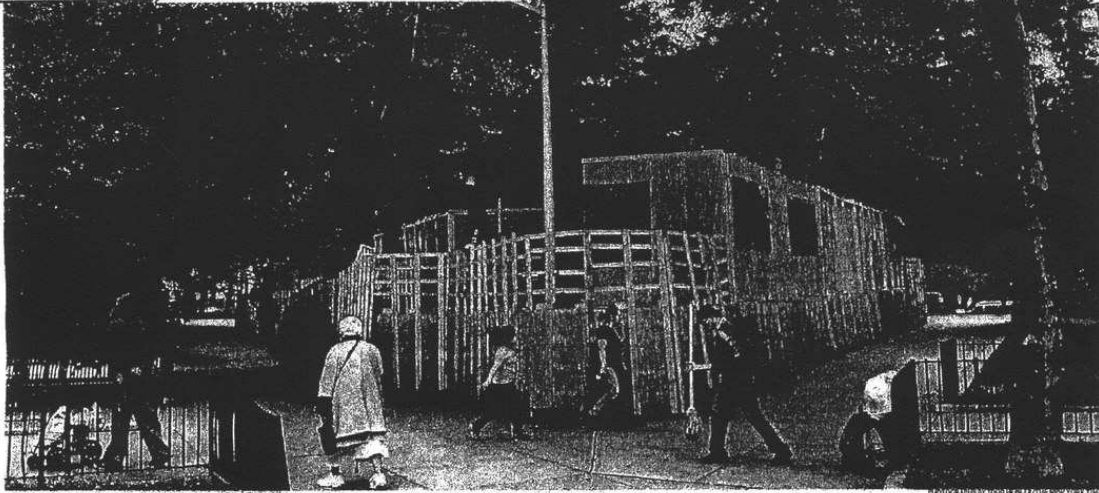
FEED BACK

THEATER | MUSIC | FILM | DANCE
TELEVISION | ART

Arts & Leisure
The New York Times

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2013

Art



Bringing Art and Change To Bronx

An unlikely monument finds a home in a housing project.

By RANDY KENNEDY

Last year a tall man in a dark suit with thick black-frame glasses — something like a combination of Morrissey and Samuel Beckett — began showing up at housing projects all over New York City. He attended residents' meetings and spoke rapturously in a heavy Germanic accent about an improbable dream: finding people to help him build a monument to the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, who died in Rome in 1937.

"Believe it or not, people have come to us with stranger ideas before," said Erik Farmer, the president of the residents' association at Forest Houses project in the South Bronx.

Neither Mr. Farmer nor many of the people who attended these meetings had ever heard of the man, Thomas Hirschhorn, a 59-year-old Swiss artist with a huge international following. But Mr. Hirschhorn wasn't interested in trading on his reputation.

"Some people think I am a priest or an occultic rich man, and some people just think I'm a loser," he said last year in an interview, as he was making his visit.



Thomas Hirschhorn, at the Forest Houses construction site.

"But that is O.K. as long as they understand that I am serious."

For the last two decades, few contemporary artists have been serious in quite the same way as Mr. Hirschhorn. His deeply political work — usually made with cheap materials assembled to look like totems of a postapocalyptic garbage cult — has long forced art lovers to face some very uncomfortable issues: oppression, poverty, abuse of power, the atrocities of war, and a culture of easy pleasure that makes it easy to ignore all those things.

On Monday, with the help of the Dia Art Foundation and Mr. Farmer, Mr. Hirschhorn will realize his vision of honoring Gramsci, unveiling a monument on the grounds of Forest Houses. It will exist in a parallel universe from the rest of the city's big-money summer exhibitions, daring viewers to veer far off the beaten museum-and-gallery path and question their ideas about the value and purpose of art.

Handmade from plywood, plexiglass and miles of beige packing tape — one of Mr. Hirschhorn's signature art supplies — the Gramsci Monument bears no resemblance whatsoever to the cenotaphs and governing statues that dot the rest of New

Bringing Art and Change to Bronx

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

York. And it doesn't look much like an artwork, either. It looks more, in fact, like an adult trebuchet or a makeshift beach cabana or a chunk of set hijacked from the Kevin Costner film "Waterworld."

Through it might serve to memorialize Mr. Hirschhorn's tenacity as much, if not more, than the philosopher it is named for, the monument epitomizes the broadly humanistic worldview of Gramsci, who spent most of his adult life in prison under Mussolini and envisioned a working-class revolution that would begin as much in culture as in political power.

Throughout the summer, the monument will function as a kind of village festival, or inner-city intellectual Woodstock, with lectures, concerts, readings and art programs on the stages and pavilions that Mr. Hirschhorn and a paid crew of workers chosen from the Forest Houses have built over the last several weeks.

The project is the first that Mr. Hirschhorn has built in the United States and will be the fourth and final such work in a series he began many years ago dedicated to his favorite philosophers, following a monument dedicated to Spinoza in Amsterdam in 1999, one to Gilles Deleuze in Avignon, France, in 2000 and a third to Georges Bataille in Kassel, Germany, in 2002. From the beginning, the monuments have been planned and constructed housing projects occupied mostly by the poor and working class, with their agreement and help. Mr. Hirschhorn's motivations in choosing the sites, however, are never straightforwardly benevolent.

"I tell them, 'This is not to serve your community per se, but it is to serve art, and my reasons for wanting to do these things are purely personal artistic reasons,'" Mr. Hirschhorn said. "My goal or my dream is not so much about changing the situation of the people who help me, but about showing the power of art to make people think about issues they otherwise wouldn't have thought about."

These days, as the commercial art world feels increasingly like a branch of high finance, Mr. Hirschhorn is the rare artist who seems to move in and out of it with a nondescript, unassuming quality. He is represented by the prestigious Gladstone Gallery, and his work regularly shows up at important international art fairs, where it sometimes functions as the obvious party guest. But he has long spoken about the importance of seeking a "nonexclusive audience" for art. Such an audience includes those who go to museums and galleries, he says, though they are only a small part of the potential public for art.

And so when he began flying to New York from his home in Paris last year to plan the Gramsci monument, he came carrying an unusual, very unusual New York City Housing Authority map: he eventually visited 46 of the 334 projects on that map, trying to find residents who would embrace his idea.

"I decided — O.K., almost for political reasons — that I wasn't going to do it in Manhattan," he said. "It has to be outside the center."

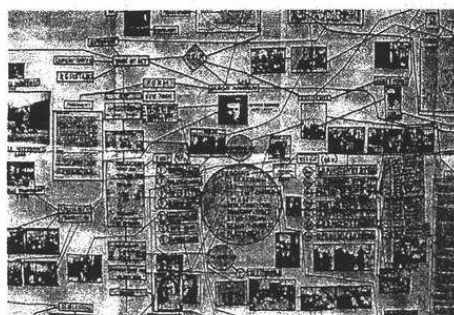
After narrowing down the possibilities to seven projects in the Bronx, he chose Forest Houses — a cluster of high-rise buildings completed in 1956, housing 3,378 people — largely because of the enthusiasm of Mr. Farmer, 43, who has lived there almost his entire life and functions as the nerve center for the development. In constant motion around its grounds in a motorized wheelchair (he lost the use of his legs in a car accident when he was in college), Mr. Farmer seems to know everyone who lives in its buildings and to command, if not authority, at least respect.

He was one of the only people to ask Mr. Hirschhorn for Gramsci's writings while considering the monument proposal. And when he and Clyde Thompson, the complex's director of community affairs, embraced the idea, Mr. Hirschhorn said, he felt that he had found partners — in the cosmology of his art work, he calls them "key figures" — who would be able to help him see the monument through.

Mr. Farmer said he decided to make a persuasive case for Forest Houses not only because the monument would provide



Top, the temporary Gramsci Monument, under construction at the Forest Houses development, far right, in the South Bronx. Some of the Forest Houses residents, above, are helping Thomas Hirschhorn, center, to build the artwork, including Erik Farmer, bottom right, designed to explain to visitors the genesis of the project. Below, Mr. Hirschhorn, the primary artist, at work with beige packing tape.



Collaborators: a Swiss artist, Dia foundation and a Bronx housing project.

ONLINE SLIDE SHOW
More images of Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument.
nytimes.com/design

temporary construction and security jobs for residents, but because he hoped that it could mean more for the development.

"There's nothing cultural here at all," he said one afternoon in early June as he watched Mr. Hirschhorn and several residents hard at work on the monument's plywood foundation. "It's like we're in a box here, in this neighborhood. We need to get out and find out some things about the world. This is kind of like the world coming to us for a little while."

(At the project's end, the monument will not be packed up and reconstituted as an artwork to sell or show elsewhere; the materials will be given to Forest Houses residents in a lottery.)

Over the last two months, I spent several days watching Mr. Hirschhorn as he plotted out the monument in consultation with Mr. Farmer, whose job among others, was to hire residents as temporary employees of the Dia Art Foundation, which is

financing the project. (Those helping to build and staff the monument are being paid \$12 an hour; the state's minimum wage is currently \$12.50 an hour.)

It was not the first time I had visited the project. As a city reporter for The New York Times, I spent several days at Forest Houses in 1993 when it was roiled by violence in the aftermath of the city's crack epidemic, and I accompanied a team of police officers on what was called a "vertical patrol" of several buildings. The officers, walking with their guns drawn, would ride the elevators to buildings' roofs, then walk down the stairs, fanning out on every floor in a show of force.

Forest Houses is a different place today, with a dramatically lower crime rate, but violence is still a fact of life. One day as Mr. Hirschhorn and the workers took a break during the heat of the afternoon, a young man sprinted by, followed by others shouting that he had robbed a man in one of the project's buildings. Two of the men chasing the accused thief caught him near a plywood walkway for the monument, tackled him and punched and kicked him for several minutes until his face was bloodied. He staggered away, to shouted threats.

Mr. Hirschhorn looked on in grim silence, and as soon as the incident was over he grabbed a sheet of plywood and immediately went back to work. Mr. Farmer, watching from his wheelchair, shrugged.

"I'm sorry you had to see that, but it's self-policing, and that's how that should work," he said. "That guy doesn't live here. He's not going to come back here and try to rob anybody anymore."

Once the monument begins its programming on Monday, it will be open free to the public seven days a week through Sept. 15, with lectures from scholars like the philosophers Simon Critchley and Marcus Steinweg; a daily newspaper published by resi-

dents; a radio station; and food provided by residents chosen by Mr. Farmer.

Whether summer tourists and other art patrons will drive up or walk the few blocks from the Prospect Avenue subway stop (on the Nos. 2 and 5 lines) is very much an open question. "We all hope that many people find their way there," said Philippe Vergne, the director of the Dia Art Foundation, which took on the project as its first public-art commission in more than 15 years. "Thomas proceeds from the belief that art really can change something, and not just a living room."

At Forest Houses, Mr. Hirschhorn pursues that belief with a messianic fervor; his wiry, energetic frame seems to be everywhere at once — working, sweating, recruiting, philosophizing. And you get the distinct feeling that visitors are less important to him than the participation and acceptance of Forest Houses residents, many of whom have progressed from sus-

picious bemusement to grudging recognition to near-wholesale emotional ownership of the project, even older residents who initially complained that it looked like a shanty rising in their yard.

"You work on something like this, and after a while it's not like a job," said Dannon Jordan, 43, who is helping build the monument. "You start thinking it's your thing, too. I mean, I'm no artist, but I'm making a work of art here."

As in any ambitious creative endeavor, tensions have sometimes flared. One day Mr. Hirschhorn pushed the workers to keep at it in a steady rain, and they balked. "And somebody said to Thomas, 'You just care about your work; you don't love us,'" said Yasmin Raymond, Dia's curator, who will spend the summer at the monument, as will Mr. Hirschhorn, who is living in a nearby apartment with his wife and toddler son.

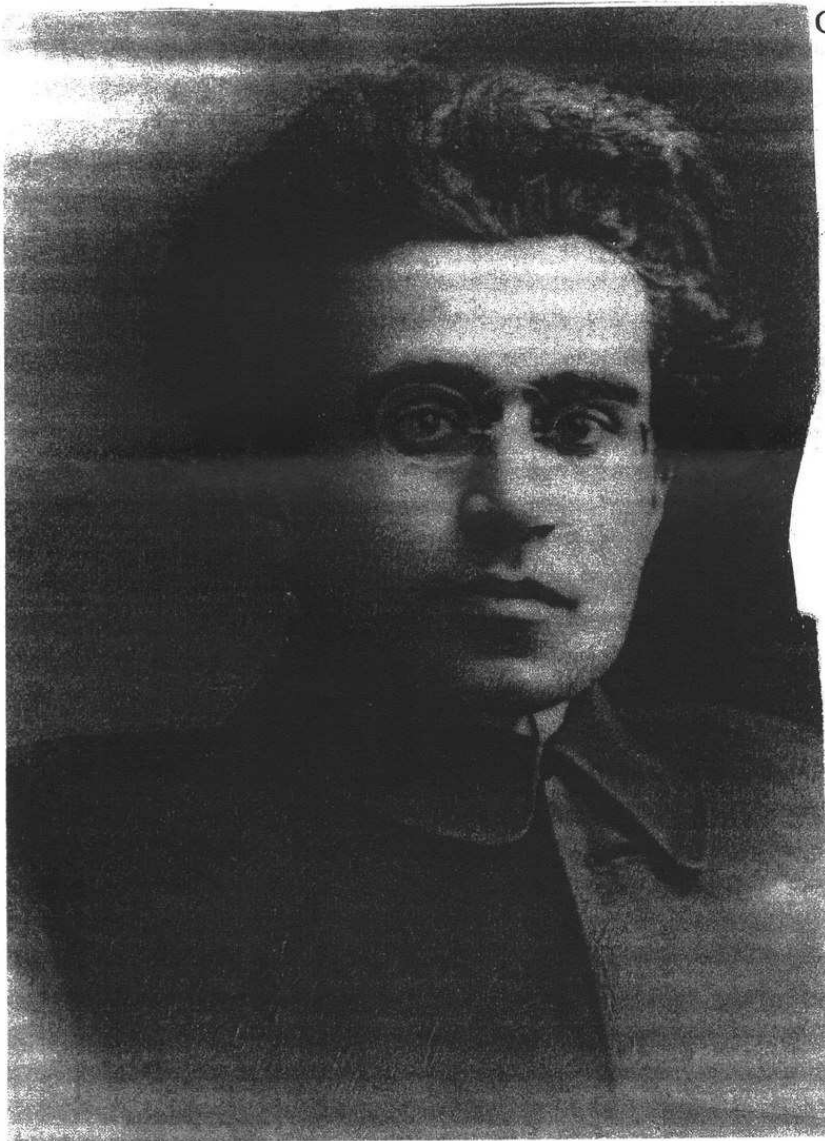
"Thomas said: 'It's true. I do care very much about my work, but I care about you, too. I am not the boss, and you are not my employees. I am the artist, and you are helping me.'" Ms. Raymond recalled. "Things kind of galloped after that."

Mr. Farmer said a reason the tide turned was that Mr. Hirschhorn "works harder than anyone else out here."

"For him that is a work of art," he added. "For me, it's a man-made community center. And if it changes something here, even slightly, well, you know, that's going in the right direction."

Mr. Vergne added, "People ask what will remain after the monument comes down in three months, and I think what will remain will be a certain way to think of the world — if only an urban legend of a Swiss artist who came from Paris to tell New Yorkers about a dead Italian philosopher, and people came to hear, and maybe they learned something that matters."

WHO WAS ANTONIO GRAMSCI ?



Gramsci, Antonio (1891–1937) Born in Sardinia. As a child he was constantly ill, and his anguish was compounded by physical deformity. He won a scholarship to the University of Turin, and by 1913 he had become a socialist.

He was deeply influenced by the liberal idealism of Croce, and by 1915 he was writing regularly for the socialist *Cry of*

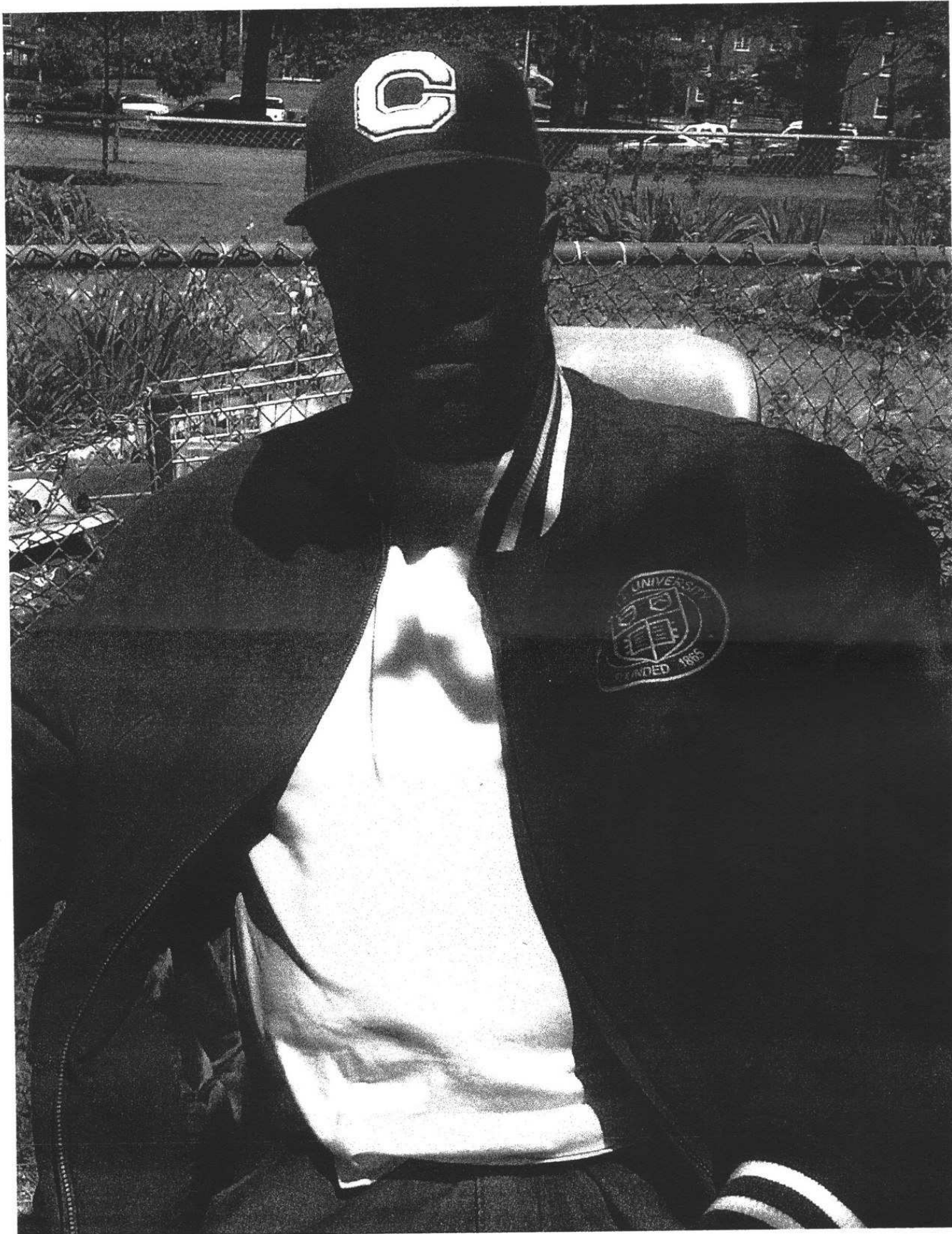
the People and Forward, and stressing the importance of preparing the workers culturally for revolution. Following a four-day insurrection in August 1917 he became a leader of the Turin workers movement, and welcomed the Russian Revolution in Crocean style as a 'Revolution Against *Das Kapital*'. He helped to found *The New Order*, a paper that saw the factory committees in Turin as the nuclei of a future socialist state. The paper was also critical of the passivity and reformism of the socialist party, and Gramsci became a member of the central committee of the newly formed Communist Party of Italy. He was his party's representative in Moscow on the Third International.

In October 1922, Mussolini seized power: the head of the Communist Party was arrested and Gramsci found himself party leader. He was elected parliamentary deputy in 1924 but arrested two years later. He was sentenced to prison for twenty years, and although he started work on his famous *Prison Notebooks* in 1929, by the middle of 1932 his health was deteriorating rapidly and by 1935 he was too ill to work.

His notebooks were smuggled to Moscow and they are undoubtedly his masterpiece. They contain sharply perceptive analyses of Italian history, Marxist philosophy, political strategy, literature, linguistics and theatre. His emphasis upon the moral and intellectual element in politics offers a challenge not only to Marxists, but also to all seeking radical change in the world.

Text taken from a Glossary of Political Theory by John Hoffman

CITIZEN OF THE DAY



ERIK FARMER

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EVENTS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

FREE!

All are Welcome

Monday 1st of July : Opening-Day of «Gramsci Monument»

PROGRAM OF THE DAY:

- **10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm:** Children's Workshop run by Lex Brown, with Susie Farmer and Jennice Jenkins - **OPEN TO ALL KIDS AND TEENS WHO WANT TO MAKE ART !**
- **1pm-7pm:** Special Program with Baby Dee DJ
- **4pm:** «Gramsci Theater», a play written by Marcus Steinweg, directed by Thomas Hirschhorn. Actors: Desiree Albergottie, Alexis Cruz, Troy Owens, Idasia Santos, Albert Pimentel, Anabel Adjei, Eleanore Harris, Autumn Hannah, Taji Miller, Hector Sanchez, Jose Montero
- **5pm:** Philosophy Lecture by Marcus Steinweg: «What is Philosophy ?»
- **6pm:** Inauguration Speeches by Erik Farmer, Clyde Thompson, Yasmil Raymond and Thomas Hirschhorn
- **6pm-7pm:** Happy Hour

THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT WILL BE OPEN EVERY DAY FROM JULY 1 TO SEPTEMBER 15, 10am-7pm

EVERY DAY:

- Daily Philosophy Lecture by Marcus Steinweg
- Free Daily Newspaper
- Website updates
- Daily Radio Broadcast
- Children's Workshop run by Lex Brown with Susie Farmer and Jennice Jenkins
- Ambassador Yasmil Raymond
- Happy Hour

ONCE A WEEK:

- Gramsci Theater
- Running Event
- Poetry Session
- Fieldtrips
- Art School
- Gramsci Seminar
- Open Microphone

"The only justifiable enthusiasm is that which accompanies the intelligent will, intelligent activity, the inventive richness of concrete initiatives which change existing reality."
Antonio Gramsci
(Prison Notebook 9)

The construction of "Gramsci Monument" was made possible thanks to Erik Farmer and the Construction Team comprised of: Abayomi Ravenell, Bobby Wainwright, Christopher Roberts, Christopher Rome, Dannion Jordan, Derrick Martin, Ernest Thomas, Janet Bethea, Masai Neal, Quasim Sweet, Reginald Boone, Robert Mack, Tyrone Grant, Vincent Conyers, Walter Bryan and the help of the Dia Art Foundation Staff: Jim Schaeufele, John Sprague, Curtis Harvey, Kelly Kivland, Yasmil Raymond, Kady Fonseca, Patrick Heilman, Max Tannone, Megan Witko

Location:

975 Tinton Ave.
Forest Houses, Bronx, NY
Gramsci Monument is located on the grounds of Forest Houses, off Tinton Avenue between E 163rd and E 165th Streets.

Directions:

Subway: 2, 5 at Prospect Avenue
Head north on Prospect Avenue
Turn left onto 163rd Street
Pass Union Avenue
Turn right onto Tinton Avenue
Take first left onto pedestrian pathway leading into Forest Houses

Dia Art Foundation Board of Trustees: Nathalie de Gunzburg, Chairman, Christopher M. Bass, Mark Booth, Frances Bowes, Sandra J. Brant, Virginia Lebermann, Brice Marden, Howard Rachofsky, Robert Ryman, Marissa Sackler, Jimmy Traboulsi, Charles B. Wright, Jan Cowles, Emeritus, John c. Evans, Emeritus, Fariha Friedrich, Emeritus

«GRAMSCI MONUMENT» IS A WORK IN PUBLIC SPACE BY THOMAS HIRSCHHORN, PRODUCED BY DIA ART FOUNDATION NEW YORK. FOR MORE INFO AND FULL PROGRAM, VISIT: www.gramsci-monument.com



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE
GRAMSCI MONUMENT
CONSTRUCTION TEAM