

WHAT IS ARTWASHING?

“Artwashing” is a phenomenon where real estate developers collaborate with and utilize the art industry to plant art galleries that attract the “creative class” and wealthier residents for future real estate projects.

Art galleries and murals hide the ugly reality of displacement and increased police violence. The proliferation of art galleries and murals is a sign of displacement to come.

Cincinnati’s history is rife with racial segregation in the form of I-75 displacing residents of Kenyon Barr, and the gentrification of Over-the-Rhine. Gentrification is a constant process and **is NOT inevitable**. These events don’t happen in isolation. They are connected because of the commodification of housing and the history of racial profiling in the United States.

Artwashing in Over-the-Rhine is a good example of this phenomenon. Its gentrification was among the first projects of 3CDC, the entity that effectively privatized the city’s planning department. The promotion of the arts in Over-the-Rhine has acted as a facade that’s covered the ugly effects of gentrification. New galleries also raise property values and landlords begin raising rents for incoming artists who can afford it. Existing residents who can’t afford the higher rents and property values are gradually pushed out. Over-the-Rhine has some beautiful murals, and Blink is fun, but it all makes it much easier to forget about the unpleasant history that rests under the surface.

WHO WE ARE

CCAP (Cincinnati Community Aid and Praxis) is a grassroots socialist organization aspiring to organize among communities to fight against issues like poverty, homelessness, and the housing crisis. We work not only to get peoples’ basic needs met, but to create a community that can help bring lasting change. Cincinnati Community Aid and Praxis (CCAP) takes inspiration from two revolutionary groups: The Young Lords and The Black Panthers.



The Black Panther Party, founded in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, was a revolutionary organization built to fight against white supremacy and build power for the people. A key slogan was, and is: “All Power to the People.”.



Founded in 1968, The Young Lords of NYC didn’t just settle for voting for politicians, symbolic gestures or murals. They took power into their own hands; conducting tests for lead poisoning through door-to-door surveys and barricading the streets using litter the city had failed to clean up in their neighborhoods. In other words, the Young Lords forced the city to act.

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WHAT IS "ARTWASHING"?

**HOW GENTRIFICATION
HARMS NEIGHBORHOODS
AND ARTISTS AND HOW TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

ARTWASHING AND GENTRIFICATION

“As a state-sponsored strategy, gentrification relies on the ‘artist as pioneer’ to both enact and mask its violence, which takes on many forms (rising rents, lack of rent control, policies that favor landlord over renter, enhanced racial police profiling, developer-friendly rezoning, forced homelessness) ... Artwashing presents gentrification as beneficial to communities (variations on ‘improving the artistic life of a neighborhood’) while ignoring the material impacts and effacing the actual needs of the neighborhood (Boyle Heights, for one, needed job-providing factories, grocery stores, and laundromats more than it needed galleries). The state displaces low-income folx, immigrant families, and other vulnerable communities under the cover of ‘building arts districts,’ or ‘river revitalization’ efforts, together with public investment and tax subsidies, and the development of so-called affordable housing and luxury living. Like Boyle Heights, these neighborhoods were historically ignored, persecuted, redlined, and denied resources from the city and state until such a time when they became appealing to city and private developers.”

-From “Boyle Heights and the Fight Against Gentrification as State Violence”

WHY IS GENTRIFICATION BAD?

When a neighborhood is gentrified, it usually means that people who don't live in the neighborhood are seeking to transform or improve it for their own interests. However, the people who live in the neighborhood have the most stake and know best how their neighborhood could be improved. Despite this personal interest and insider knowledge, they tend to be left out of the conversation and are often pushed out of the neighborhood when they can't afford the higher price of living. We see this as **deeply unfair and undemocratic**.

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ARE YOU AN ARTIST? WANT TO STOP GENTRIFICATION?

- Don't accept money or grants from entities that gentrify. This creates a conflict of interest with your desire to avoid gentrification.
- Research galleries that want to show your art. Avoid galleries that are acting as an instrument of gentrification.
- Don't be insular. Engage with people who live in gentrifying neighborhoods. Are there artists there who could use a boost? Is there a way your art could be used against gentrification?

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION AND ORGANIZE!

