

CHOOSE GALLERY: [ISSUE](#) [MEDIUM](#) [REGION](#)[LOG IN/REGISTER](#)

Art Against Broken Windows OPEN CALL

Actipedia is an open-access, community-generated wiki to document, share, and inspire Creative Activism. Join us!

[About & How To](#)[Submit a New Project](#)[Create a Gallery](#)**Follow Us On**

Submitted by jana leo on October 20, 2015 - 3:16pm

An idea for a show proposed by Jana Leo after witnessing the handcuffing and arrest of a art gallery visitor for drinking a beer on the street during an opening. A short time ago I had barely heard of the broken window policy. Even after reading the article "Fixing Broken Windows" by Ken Auletta recently published in the New Yorker (Sept. 7, 2015), I was unsure about the implications of the policy. I learned that William Branton, New York City's police commissioner, who initiated the policy under the then mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, and the current mayor, Bill de Blasio continue to champion the policy, but I still didn't have a clear picture of how The Broken Window policy affects my life. Recently, after witnessing a police confrontation, I have a greater understanding of the sort of authoritative behavior the policy allows, and I definitely against it. US to CAN (Using a Sledgehammer to Crack a Nut) or Broken Windows Policing On Friday, September 11th at 8pm at an art gallery opening at XX XXXXXXX St, New York, NY 10002, a middle-aged, white haired man is drinking a beer and speaking with friends just outside the gallery. Two policemen appear and asked for his ID. "I am sorry. Lets me go inside," the man says and turns toward the door. The police grab him and in seconds he is in handcuffs and is being pushed against the side of a car. Moore police arrive. The people inside the gallery come outside. Due to the crow and the confusion I end up further from the gallery entrance and, for a while, I lose sight of what is happening. After a few minutes, I am on the other side of the street. I begin taking pictures. The man with white hair, handcuffed, is on the ground in the middle of the street surrounded by policeman. Two policemen grab him under the arms and drag him toward the police car. He is asking, "Why I am I being arrested?" He says, "I am fifty-one years old and I am in handcuffs for no reason". He looks at the people at the curve and begs them, "Please don't let them take me." They ask the police to please tell him why he is being arrested. The police offer no response; for a moment, the two policeman stop, restrain the handcuffed man in what looks like an awkward, painful hold, while he continues to beg the spectators, "Please record this. They are taking me with no reason. Please don't let them take me." The two policeman are now trying to make him to get him into the car, at this point he cries out, "You are hurting me." The people on the sidewalk begin calling 311 to make complaints against the police, but at that time, the police have pushed them away in such a way that is impossible to see their identification. One officer says they are from the 5th Precinct on Elizabeth Street. I approach one officer and ask him why this is happening. He looks at me but doesn't reply. Another officer says, "The man is intoxicated and is acting crazy so he is in police custody for his own well being." He adds that an ambulance is coming. I reply that he is not crazy; he is just asking why he is getting arrested. What's crazy about that? The officer says, "Mind your own business" and tells me to go home. An ambulance arrives. In a few minutes, the man is placed on a gurney and is taken into the ambulance. He continues to plead with the crowd, "Please don't let them take me." The back doors of the ambulance close. We spectators, are silenced by the shock of what we have seen. There was no valid reason for calling an ambulance; the man was neither intoxicated nor crazy. It seems apparent that the police, realizing they are arresting somebody inappropriately and confronted with a crowd of onlookers, refuse to back off and declare the man is insane and drunk to justify their actions. After the ambulance leaves, people are still milling around trying to understand what happened. Where was the man was taken? And why? People are gathered around two young black men who, with their bouncer builds and sporty clothes (in contrast with the gallery goers) stand out as under cover policeman. "The man was escaping" says the more muscular and more aggressive plainclothes officer who wears a baseball hat, a red, white and blue sports jersey shirt and blue jeans. He wasn't cooperating and we had to jump on him and handcuff him". When the man drinking a beer in the street was asked by the police for this ID and he replied "Sorry, Let me go inside," I assumed he wanted to get his ID or he wanted to go inside because he understood that he shouldn't be drinking outside, but he is not escaping. It makes no sense to escape inside an art gallery. Drinking alcohol on the street is a misdemeanor. It may warrant a ticket or more appropriately, given the circumstance of a patron wandering outside an art opening with a beer, a warning. Yet this middle-aged man was arrested. He was accused of being mentally unstable though the question he asked repeatedly, "Why am I being arrested?" made perfect sense. Now, after witnessing this event, I know that any of us might be handcuffed and arrested at the whim of the police. We seem to have arrived at the absurd point where New York is not safe because of the police. We, the spectators, witnessed the police targeting a man because he asked a question. It was as if asking a question of the police is automatically understood as questioning authority. This was police paternalism -treating adults as children. The Fixing Broken Windows policy, which claims to be based on "decency and obedience," is paternalist. It permits and helps to enforce authoritarian and not rational behavior by the police. I left the gallery alarmed and fearful. Today the man with white hair was taken away from a gallery opening in handcuffs, but tomorrow it could be me. I, too, could leave my home and lose my right to return due to the unlimited power of the police supported by the policies in effect. In an earlier time in New York, you left the house with the not inconceivable thought of being assaulted. The danger now is that you might be arrested. That night, I was unable to sleep. I went to my computer and typed out a complaint at the Civilian Complaint Review Board: "A man old, white hair, he said he is 51, is pushed to a car and hand cuffs for drinking a beer in the street. There are around 16 policemen, the man is on the floor He got hand cuffs, he is asking why he is with hands cuffs there is no response from the police. He is put in ambulance, the ambulance is New York AM 7XXX7 NYCO" It is frightening to me that a man can be declared insane and put in an ambulance by the police for drinking a beer in the street. And that a person can be held in custody to "prevent him from damaging himself and others." I feel threatened by the authoritarian rhetoric in which a person is accused of what is actually done to him or her: this man is harming no one and he is not crazy, it was the police who are harming him and who acted crazy. The next morning when I woke up I continued writing, "In any police action, there is a moment when the police officers have all the power and can do what ever they wish; they have guns and authority. There is a huge cost for every New York resident, both personal and economic, when policemen don't use their authority with wisdom. In the case of lawsuits the city may have to pay, which means we all have to pay. New Yorkers may be mistreated by the police in day-to-day life and, in addition,

CHOOSE GALLERY: ISSUE MEDIUM REGIONLOG IN/REGISTER

2014 after the killing of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson; hand written in blood reads: Our Taxes Pay the Police; We Are responsible For the Actions of Our Employees I was surprised to see that those protesting after Ferguson were mostly black. Do the whites think that is not their problem because the police are killing just blacks? Being European born living in the U.S. for over twenty years didn't convince that "this is the way things are in America" was enough. If police kills someone with no reason it is institutional power abuse, so it is against any person that believe that institutions in a democracy have to represent the individual I thought on a sentence to encourage white to protest for black killings. Also want to associate the killings with money, because the targeted victims were those who often don't have it. I know that the text is ironic because though we employ the police we are powerless over their misconduct, we have no agency to oversight. What the sentence is trying to say is that the rich buy the police to molest the poor, who happen to be black. Encouraging white to protest in New York wasn't necessary _there were a multitude of white protesting against the police, as part as the "I can't breath" movement (Eric Gardner scream "I can't breath" to his death during a Police arrest in State Island)- however the call for responsibility over the police actions was more necessary than ever. Eric Garner was a case of Broken Windows (broken lives) policing: disproportionate police force that killed him for a minor offense, selling loose cigarettes. I'd actually thought the piece might be obsolete, that things were better in New York, that in the last year the police department learned a lot and reformed itself but yesterday night after witnessing what the Broken window policy implies I sadly recognize that things are not better, but quite the opposite. They have escalated to include us all. As I write, I have been told that the middle-aged man with the white hair is still being held. Now anybody, white or black, young or old, anywhere in New York (not only in Staten Island, in Harlem or in the Bronx), at any time, can be arrested for a minor offense. I don't support the unduly prominent arrest of minorities, nor do I support a carte blanche approach to arrest as the antidote. From what I witnessed, I conclude that the police target anybody who is non-submissive. But being not non-submissive (asking why you've been arrested) has nothing to do with being a criminal. Broken windows policing is repression. The police don't seem to understand that they are government employees, not a military dictatorship and that to display power in order to contribute to an atmosphere of fear is not part of their job. For the police officers to get the message the theories in effect have to be aligned and not against. Broken Windows policing celebrates policy overreaction. At one time, the supporting argument for repression was decency, now it is quality of life. Minor offenses that lead to a Criminal Court Appearance or Ticketed offenses include urinating, spitting in the street, drinking in public and has been extended to include such things as eating on the subway or putting your briefcase in an empty sit. The Broken Windows policy is also called "quality of life policing." Quality of life for whom? For those who can afford to eat in restaurants and don't have long commutes? Those who can pay for a drink to use the bathroom in a lounge? The sidewalks are full of expensive restaurants but there are no public bathrooms and few places to sit to eat in the street without paying. The poor have no access to New York. What constitutes a ticket-able offense (by law) and who (by practice) is issued the ticket are two interrelated questions. Most minor offenses (urinating in the street, eating in a subway car, staying in a park after dusk...) are actions a person may have to take (for instance if she lives in the street) because she has no choice. By putting a list of infractions that many advantaged people will have no problem following targets the disadvantaged. The goal of the Broken Windows policy is to repress society rather than to cut crime; to have docile and obedient citizens who never react, nor reply but only submit. Specifically, the Broken Windows policy is designed to repress the poor. Laws must be made for all, including the poor. A democracy is no place for policies used in dictatorship; Repression promoting submission through fear, excessive regulations, may end up cutting minor offenses, but the price includes the loss of freedom. The repression is disproportionate to the crime: the Broken Windows policy is like using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. September 12 2015 Jana Leo Edited by Keith McDermott ART AGAINST BROKEN WINDOW POLICING-Open Call Your art can be about anything related to this theory, here are some suggestions: • Make a new point or bring attention one aspect of the Broken Windows policy that may have passed unnoticed. • Tell a story that happened to you, that you witnessed, that someone told you or that you saw in the media. • Show how the police invent a story to back up unjustifiable actions. • Align to statement that New York is less safe because of the police. • Your way to say that we all pay for Police Misconduct (suffering it and with our taxes) • Make evident that the Broken Windows policy do not cut crime; its goal is to repress. • Quality of living for whom? The broken windows policy is designed to repress the poor If you are interested on the subject as artist or art space, please contact me: janopter@yahoo.com or 347 406 1913 In collaboration with Prop, <http://www.policereformorganizingproject.org/> not for profit working against police abuse.

Gallery Projects

This gallery doesn't have any projects yet.