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House Magic: an Incomplete Timeline


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agitation against the Criminal Justice Act which disfranchised republicans was just the tip of the iceberg. Numerous cultural projects began in this milieu, including the Exploding Cinema, a 'hybrid fusion of projection, performance and social space,' and CoolTan C7 Arts centre, funded partly with the grants donated by a group of people mainly made up of artists and radicals. A key organiser, Shane Coyle, later entered political life, running as a Green Party candidate. He said of the CoolTan era, "All of us worked our butts off, not for ourselves, but for the benefit of all. A bunch of often quite different people on the dole came together and we did it. A totally independent community arts squat at its centre.

A 2007 video documentary shows the development and end of this influential social center ("Laboratorio 3, ocupando el vacío"; subtitled in English, "L3, filled the vacuum", on DVD and Torrent downloads). The documentary presents the history and activities of the OSC in its third space, concentrating on experiences of participants and cultural activities. While vague on specifics (and the OSC website's are long gone), the video shows the spirited tactics and media-friendly displays of Spanish direct action squatters. Managed by assembly, Laboratorio was concerned to establish a space of social relations in the neighborhood of Lavapies, and to serve youth needing housing in a period of brutal housing speculation in Spain. They sought also to create cultural life and neighborhood participation that was not impotent institutions. Many from the Laboratorio occupa-tions are active today in the state-approved Tabacalera social center in Madrid.

A strongly socialista 'freedom movement' in Ponta sought to have their own squat in minutes. Their squat was a vacant warehouse in an industrial area. At first the squat was residential, a common to Barracas, a cultural but not social community. But nearly every resident was somehow active in social activity. Music has always been important at Roburat, and concerts were organized very early at Roburat ('95 with Q Pollo of Scotland), although the program began to change when the space was dangerous. As the building was improved, the character of the place started to change and it became an independent culture centre. The collective widened from a closed group of artists to a wider audience. In 1997 the Anarchist Federation began working at Roburat. " Liberation Feasts" are forum meetings to decide on issues at the occupied social center (OSC). The "Lame Mule" (Kulawy Mul) is a space adapted for rentals, poetry evenings, discussions and lectures, and has moved since recently served as an art gallery. In 2005, a new cafe bar next to the Gallery was created, it is a cool and trendy zone. Roburat continues as a centre of independent culture in Ponta – without subsidy or sponsor, "outside the system…for ourselves."