

This is not a play.

I write plays set in bars without windows, lesbian bedrooms, and barrio rooftops.

I write plays about rape and sexual assault and dykes who enjoy fucking.

I write plays about queers that break down and fall out sometimes.

I write plays about state violence and mis-education.

I write plays about prison rebellions and armed revolution.

But this is not one of those plays.

This is a Manifesto.

Towards A Politic of Collective Self-Defense
Instead of Individualized Self-Care.

Exercise 1: Reaching



I am a working artist that lives in New York City. I first moved to New York with two suitcases, \$300, and nowhere to go. I kept following the work from San Antonio to Austin, back to San Antonio, to Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Chicago, back to LA, now New York. My first spot in the city was a 5th floor walk-up in the East Village. The bathtub was in the kitchen, under the cabinets, next to the sink. My friend Rafa let me sleep on his couch. At first, everything in a new city is an adventure, including getting lost. At first, at least.

I learned quick, you can't get on the train just because the door is open.

It might be taking you in the wrong direction!

New York is one of the most expensive cities in the nation. The average cost of rent is 50% higher than most cities in the United States. I pay \$2200 to live in a three bedroom, fourth-floor walk-up in the Bronx. A can of coffee costs \$6.14, a dozen eggs \$2.89, and, in the winter, avocados are \$2.79... EACH.

Growing up, my mother used to say:
Es que miija only rich people are artists.

They are the ones that can afford such leisure.
The implication being obvious:
YOU are not rich.

And my father repeatedly talks about how he disapproves of my lifestyle choice. “Lifestyle choice” to him does not mean sexuality. He doesn’t seem to have a problem with that. In fact, he told me I was queer before I ever expressed my desire publicly for women. (I did mention I like dark bars without windows.) What he disapproves of is me being an artist. He can’t even say the word:

Artist.

Instead he shakes his head and mumbles:

I don't understand.

Why would you choose that lifestyle?