



Assemblea

Master Studio  
Exploring Urban Cultures  
Maig 14 Gent  
Sem 1 2023/2024

**'FIRST-TIME OBJECTS' & 'PRESENT-MOMENTNESS'**

Dag Boutsen

## ‘FIRST-TIME OBJECTS’ & ‘PRESENT-MOMENTNESS’

This Design Studio wants to bring the wild and free 80's in Amsterdam back to today. We will learn about highly professional squatters of the time, how they structured and shaped their surroundings, how they dealt with rules and freedom, and especially how they incorporated instant objects into their architecture and design.

From 1990 until 1997 and from 2006 until 2008 British artist [Dave Carr Smith](#) researched and documented four squatted industrial buildings in Amsterdam's city centre. The result of his extensive research is entitled *Improvised Architecture in Amsterdam: Industrial Squats and Collectives*, a visual document of the transformation of a former grain silo, a type foundry, a warehouse and a dockers' canteen.

The unique collection of photographs, descriptions, and drawings made by residents, give an insight in to the spatial transformation of the existing architecture and the changes made to the buildings' interior. Although the industrial spaces themselves are part of architectural history, the inventive use of space by the squatters has scarcely been documented and is therefore often invisible. Carr-Smiths' work provides a unique image of a city that offers space for an architecture of improvisation.

I worked with Lucien Kroll and the squatters in and on the Graansilo in 1992



THE ROAD ENTRY TO THE SILOS' PORTION OF THE DIJK (pic 8-10-93 /to NNE)  
Entry to the Silos' portion of Westerdokdijk - first past the 1950's 'New-Silo', then through the gate of the 1696 Silo, and on to the end of the narrow peninsula.



WEST FACADE FROM THE HOUTHAVENS' SOUTH-EAST CORNER (pic 9-95 /to N)  
Only from the Houthavens can the huge length of the old Silo be appreciated



ENTRY GATE ONTO THE OLD SILO'S DIJK (pic 6-94 /to NNE)  
The broad cobbled surface of the salvaged dijk fronts the old Silo



THE DIJK FROM NEAR THE OLD SILO'S ENTRY GATE (pic 9-94 /to N)  
The Dijk narrows into the distance flanked by inventions both frivolous and practical: a metal tree with mirror leaves, a flag, brace, enormous wooden table, a mobile 'tram', an improvised stair, a chicken hutch, a customized camper-van, Huib's lamps, little sitting places, the entry to the floppy cafe.



THE DIJK FACADE NEAR THE SILO'S CENTRE (pic 9-95 /to NE)  
Near the centre of the Dijk facade, before one walks under the 'Slurf', is the Silo's blue private entry door (always locked when not in immediate use). Steps are propped beneath the Slurf, up to the semi-public Art Gallery. The Slurf's top is fenced and planted by the resident of its facing apt. A huge tarp is spread on the cobbles.



THE DIJK MAIN ENTRY DOOR 51 (pic 3-10-93 /to EES)



### Improved Architecture by Dave Carr-Smith



This studio combines

- an analytical look at a specific period and context (Amsterdam, '80-ties),
- a personal investigation into the relevance of that movement
- and a contemporary design project that pays homage to these concepts.

*Starting from*

Architecture of Appropriation

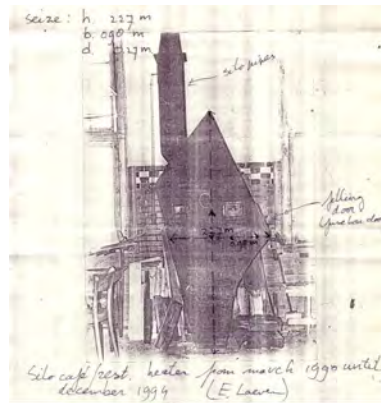
*"Improvised Architecture in Amsterdam:  
Industrial Squats and Collectives"*  
by Dave Carr-Smith



'80-ties

*Carefully looking into*

'FIRST-TIME OBJECTS' &  
'PRESENT-MOMENTNESS'



*Incorporating into*

An interpretation project

This studio combines

- an analytical look at a specific period and context (Amsterdam, '80-ties),
- discussions with London-based Dave Carr-Smith
- a personal investigation into the relevance of that movement
- and a contemporary design project that pays homage to these concepts.

The studio connects to the engagement *'Urban Cultures'* because it really seeks to develop and teach innovative design tools through creative processes that are totally **based on the understanding of a given condition from a social, historical and environmental perspective.**