



Building Dignified Worlds: Geographies of Collective Action (Diverse Economies and Livable Worlds)

Gerda Roelvink

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Building Dignified Worlds examines how contemporary collectives are designing alternative economies. Contemporary collectives differ markedly from previous groups associated with revolutionary politics. Instead of assembling large groups of workers around labor issues, these new collectives creatively arrange diverse peoples, animals, natural environments, and technologies around economic concerns. Like older forms of leftist organizing, these collectives seek to bring about change. However, rather than working to overthrow and replace an underlying capitalist system with an equally totalizing alternative like socialism, they experiment with new forms of economic life. This book explores how socially and politically concerned groups actually establish alternative economies.

Building Dignified Worlds investigates social movements that do not simply protest but actively forge functional alternatives. The market model described by many scholars and activists as the enemy of these recent social movements rarely exists in today's world. As Gerda Roelvink notes, current markets are better conceptualized as dynamic social networks open to intervention by innovative social movements. Radical scholars have theorized social transformation as a performative act. They have provided extensive analysis of how discourse shapes the world through language and is materialized in bodies and practices. Until now, though, little has been written about the geographical nature of collective associations "performing" new worlds.

Roelvink takes actor network and performativity theories of action as starting points for thinking about how contemporary collectives bring the new into being. This approach enables an understanding of how collectives initiate change and begins to map the forces through which they operate. Roelvink's work reveals, in particular, how the relational and geographical nature of performative action is central to the ways in which hybrid collectives strive to create alternative economies.

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