

The Margines Cooperative

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- Founded 2013
- Radical collective of activists and artists
- Catering
- Bar: Lokal Vegan Bistro 2015
- Crowd funding
- Cooperative form and deep democracy as organizing principle
- 10 permanent full time members & employees

Work

- [The Coop] has been created by us and for us, to be able to work in conditions that are nowadays very difficult to find on the job market, for people with qualifications – that we might have – or not (Marek).

Work

- a kind of horizontal principle, where there is no hierarchical system. We are used to it, even though it is very difficult to work in this way. [...] And it is somehow a great realization of everything one believes in. In the sense that at a certain point it transfers itself to a very important area of your life, which is work. Which also at a certain point ceases to be “just” work and becomes something much more. [...] It’s a bit, like, it’s difficult to leave after work. A part of the workers have problems with that. It’s not quite about the duties but the atmosphere. We all treat this place as our home, here we meet good energy and we don’t feel like leaving. It’s connected to the group, no matter what the group dynamics is, what the relations are, for me it remains a good idea. (Marek)

Space

- [A] lot of people live somewhere in the margins of the [local] community, they are invisible, because they either sit at home or else they sneak around in the evening, collect empty cans. There are many people living like that. When you live in the Centre [of Warsaw], and I have been working in the centre for a long time, I often walk down Wilcza street and observe life. Shopwindows, omnipresent, showing how great it is in the city centre, expensive, only pretty and rich people live here, but when you walk in the street and look at the people passing by, then you realize that this is all unreal. It just looks that way but there are many people who only live here [...] they don't take part in the life of the place in any way. [...] They cannot afford it. (Marek)

Space

- ... where you could go to a square and sit, without paying, without having to buy anything [...]. There is less and less of that kind of space. (Marek)

Community

- [W]e are striving for our community to become more open, we would like to know [more] people, to meet each other and others, somewhere, [we wish] for a greater possibility to socialize. (Marek)

Aims

- We, the Coop, and other people and organizations that we cooperate with, often help each other, a kind of micro support that often is for us priceless, for us and for the others. Such an exchange of small services, it makes a huge difference. If not for [such mutual help] we would have to rely only on the logic of market and pay our way. Sure, there are things that are worth to pay for, but some, we do not feel that they are the right way to spend money. Things are there to be used, when someone needs them, [instead of buying] it's better to exchange them. (Marek)

Aims

- There was a time [...] when we didn't work for money, we weren't paid, and we see no direct translation between our work and money.
(Marek)

Motivation

- [A]gency, in the sense that you know that what is going on is the effect of your decisions, your work, and it also shows very clearly what kind of society [outside of the Coop] we live in, where everything is somebody else's and all we are left with is complaining [...]. The Coop is a kind of a kick in the ass: your responsibility, your fault. If something goes wrong, it is not the fault of some manager. (Marek)