

CFAR's *Papers on Power* is a series of commissioned essays for which artists, writers, activists, and cultural producers have been asked to respond to the question "What is power?" in whatever form best relates to their work and thinking.

# THE PLACE IN WHICH I FIT WILL NOT EXIST UNTIL I MAKE IT

JESSICA JACKSON HUTCHINS

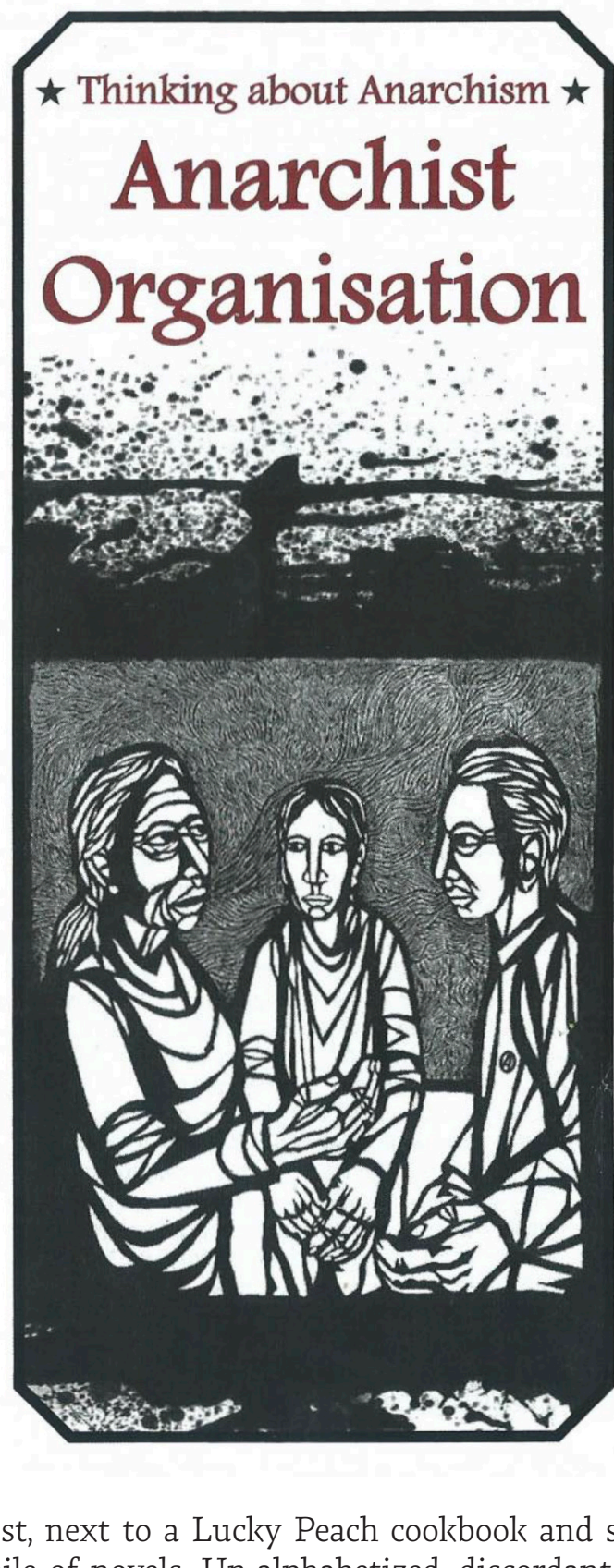


"Small fabric/Implies much/ presides yet." –Emily Dickenson

These zines were gathered at direct actions in Portland during the summer and fall of 2020. During this time, I participated in several direct actions a week, usually marching and confronting police and DHS at the Justice Center, various police stations, the police union building and the ICE building. We were fighting for racial justice and the abolition of the police. Typically, we gather in a park near the destination, where tents are set up for the distribution/trade of protective gear, food and water. Of course, no money ever exchanged hands. Affinity groups provide helmets, masks, shields, earplugs (for flash bangs), wipes to treat for chemical burns, and other first aid packs, body padding (shin guards, knee pads and the like) clean canisters for respirators, goggles (also to protect from the gas) and usually there were several tents with zines, stickers and other printed matter about black and indigenous power, working class solidarity, the abolition and de-fund the police movements, and anarchism. I've always loved printed matter and so I often would pick some up to take home and read. Sometimes, I'd copy and re-distribute them, or they just ended up in my collections of paraphernalia. From time to time, I also print and distribute zines - then I could get my kid (the one too young and anxious to attend direct actions) involved, folding and handing them out. I mostly focus on information on prison conditions and strikes, or basic principles of abolition.

Zines have been ways of immediately and cheaply distributing information and opinion, whether about your friend's band or your ideological position. These zines collected here are mostly political education and propaganda. Whether it's a collection of your friends' poetry and drawings, or notes on counterinsurgency techniques; guerrilla publishing tactics, alternatives to the institutions and structures that control the dissemination of information, are powerful community building tools. In the context of this uprising, printed matter fosters solidarity in a big way, and purpose. They help to focus and inspire the actions of the participants, help them find the language to articulate why they are there, both to themselves and others. The intensions of direct actions are to create notable disruptions and foster rebellion in the interest of tearing down an injustice society and building a better one. They articulate alternative visions of society and the future.

Zines are also just artifacts, often funny, charming, punk documents. My house and studio are littered with ephemera - liner notes and art exhibition announcement cards and press releases, and kids' projects and old notes; little pieces of paper are minor miracles. I keep things, but I don't archive them. I like to stumble upon them: a kid's drawing next to a Lucy McKenzie checklist, next to a Lucky Peach cookbook and some old Pavement tour schedule on top of a pile of novels. Un-alphabetized, discordant, but creating its own paragraph of ideas. Ways of creating unexpected connections, or maybe just my rationalization for clutter. And then I sometimes throw them away.

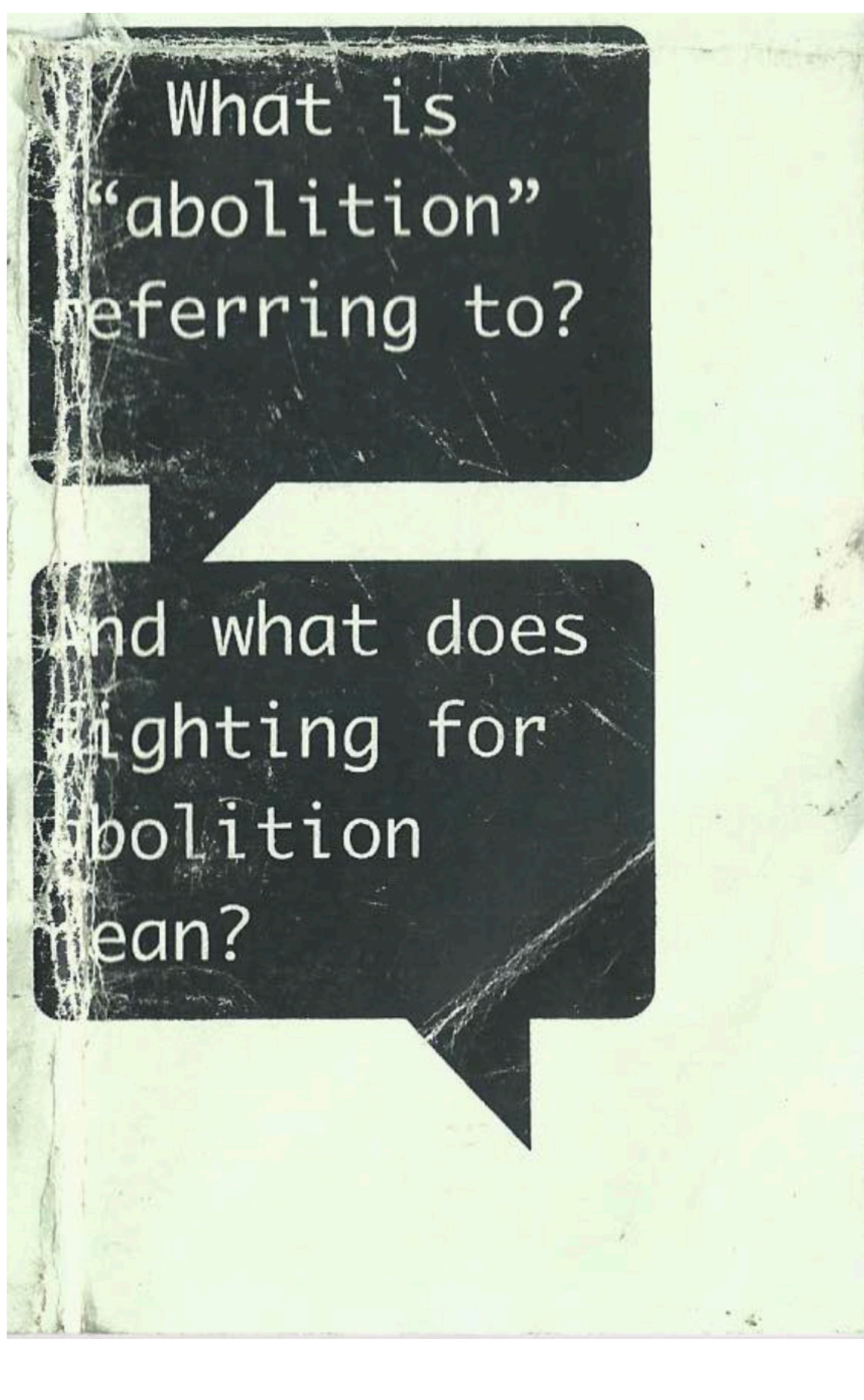


Digital platforms have all the problems of corrupt ownership, complicity with state powers, (not to mention they are unsafe due to state data collection). Then there is the status chasing and virtue signaling, the addictive ways people use them and how so much thought and ideas become codified. Yuck! You reach people, let them know about an action, gather support for mutual aid projects, educate on the issues- so they are useful. But they lack the anonymity, joy, and real connection of a zine. And of course, if I'm distributing a zine, it's to a different population, an immediate, local one of neighborhood friends and strangers. This aligns nicely with theories of direct action- that we are literally, directly, taking care of the people and issues on our street in our neighborhoods. That the most powerful, pure political actions are immediate and physical, and are free from any state or corporate dependency.

All revolutionary movements have graphics and pageantry. These are to delight one another, inspire and inform. It's how we make ourselves known to ourselves and each other. The movement last summer had light shows, and sculptural interventions (the new 'Portland Nightmare Elk' in Chapman Square, the sculpture of the guillotine brought out to various sites, etc.) just like there are soundtracks - music people brought and played night after night at various points in the evening. The Frontline Drumline remains a powerful force at demonstrations. A participant brought a mobile PA system every night that played poignant or funny or aggressive soundtracks to add commentary to the night's actions. The Whitney Houston rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner, for instance, played when the police launched especially violent actions and bullrushes. You could really see the fury this provoked in the police. More than once, they maced this person and confiscated his sound system, and every time, within 24 hours, funds were collected to procure a new one. They recorded a rebuke to the LRAD (Long Range Acoustic Device) that we heard incessantly every night, telling us to disperse, that our actions were unlawful or declared a riot, and played that back at them listing our own demands - that they quit their jobs, that this citizenry were done paying for the oppression and violence they inflict. During one particularly long standoff, they played a whole lecture about Oregon's racist history, from the Lash Law to the Red Lining. All of these help to define the movement's purpose and power and aesthetic and act as further calls to action. They are ways to articulate what we want, and how we plan to get it.

Americans are the most propagandized people in the world. We have to re-educate ourselves and others; unlearn all the racist colonial myths we have been inundated with since birth. We have to create alternative narratives to the conventional oppressive ones based on fears, white supremacy, and a neurotic need for safety and security at the cost of liberation and equality. One way of contributing to this, is through pieces of paper passed between people on the street. Please feel free to print out and copy these zines, fold or staple and distribute to you friends and neighbors.

"The people can only take over their cultural heritage by an act of expropriation...With the people struggle and changing reality before our eyes, we must not cling to 'tried' rules of narrative, venerable literary models, eternal aesthetic laws...But we shall use every means, old and new, tried and untried, derived from art and derived from other sources, to render reality to men in a form the can master." –Bertolt Brecht



Zines for Download and Distribution:

[Anarchist Organisation](#)  
[Counterinsurgency](#)  
[Enhanced Service District](#)  
[How It Might Should Be Done](#)  
[Overcoming the Psychology of High School](#)  
[To Change Everything Start Anywhere](#)  
[We Who Will Destroy the Future](#)  
[What is Abolition Referring To](#)

Biography:

Jessica Jackson Hutchins (b. 1971) is an artist living in Portland, Oregon. Hutchins's expressive and intuitive studio practice produces dynamic sculptural installations, collages, paintings, and large-scale ceramics, all hybrid juxtapositions of the handmade. As evidence of the artist's dialogue with items in her studio, these works are a means by which the artist explores the intimacy of the mutual existence between art and life. Her transformations of everyday household objects, from furniture to clothing, are infused with human emotion and rawness, and also show a playfulness of material and language that is both subtle and ambitious. Based upon a willingly unmediated discourse between artist and viewer, Hutchins's works ultimately serve to refigure an intimate engagement with materiality and form. She has exhibited widely nationally and internationally at institutions and events like The Whitney and Venice Biennale (2010, 2013), the ICA Boston and the ICA Philadelphia, The Highline, New York City, The Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art, Centre Pasqu Art, Kunsthhaus/Centre d'Art, Biel-Bienne, Switzerland, The Hepworth Wakefield museum, Wakefield, UK. She is represented by Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York, and Adams and Ollman gallery, Portland, OR.