

REFUGIA

MANIFESTO FOR BECOMING AUTONOMOUS ZONES (BAZ)

REFUGIA: A place of relatively unaltered climate that is inhabited by plants and animals during a period of continental climate change (as a glaciation) and remains as a center of relict forms from which a new dispersion and speciation may take place after climatic readjustment. (WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, 1976)

REFUGIA: Sections of agricultural fields planted with non-transgenic crops, alternating with transgenic crops. This is thought to slow the rate of resistance mutation caused in susceptible insect and weed species by gene transfer from GM (Genetically Modified) mono-culture crops.

REFUGIA: A Becoming Autonomous Zone (BAZ) of desirous mixings and recombinations; splicing female sexual liberation and autonomy with cyberfeminist skills, theory, embodiment, and political activism.

REFUGIA: A critical space of liberated social becoming and intellectual life; a space liberated from capitalist Taylorized production; a space of unregulated, unmanaged time for creative exchange and play; experimental action and learning; desiring production, cooking, eating, and skill sharing.

REFUGIA: A reproducible concept that can be adapted to various climates, economies, and geographical regions worldwide. Any useless space can be claimed as a refugium: Suburban lawns, vacant urban



lots, rooftops, the edges of agricultural lands, clear-cut zones in forests, appropriated sections of monoculture fields, fallow land, weed lots, transitional land, battlefields, office buildings, squats, etc. Also currently existing Refugia such as multi-cultivar rice paddies, companion planted fields, organic farms, home vegetable gardens, etc.



REFUGIA: A postmodern commons; a resistant biotech victory garden; a space of convivial tinkering; a commonwealth in which common law rules. Not a retreat, but a space resistant to monoculture in all its social, environmental, libidinal, political, and genetic forms.

REFUGIA: A habitat for new AMOs (Autonomously Modified Organism) and agit-crops; for example, “ProActiva,” an herb that is a grafting of witch-root, mandrake, and all-heal.

REFUGIA: A place of asylum for the recuperation, regeneration and re-engineering of essential crops that have been corrupted by capitalist viruses and agribusiness greed.

REFUGIA: A space of imaginative inertia that slows down the engines of corporate agro/biotech and allows time to assess its risks and benefits through long-term testing.

REFUGIA: Neither a utopia nor a dystopia, but a haunted space for reverse engineering, monstrous graftings, spontaneous generation, recombination, difference, poly-versity hybridization, wildlings, mutations, mongrelizing, crop circles, anomalies, useless beauty, coalitions, agit-crops, and unseemly sproutings. Biotech and transgenic work in Refugia will be based on desire, consensual public risk assessment, informed amateur experimentation, contestational politics, nourishment and taste value, non-proprietary expertise, convivial delight, and healing.

REFUGIA: subRosa’s on-going cyberfeminist hothouse of strategies and tactical actions.