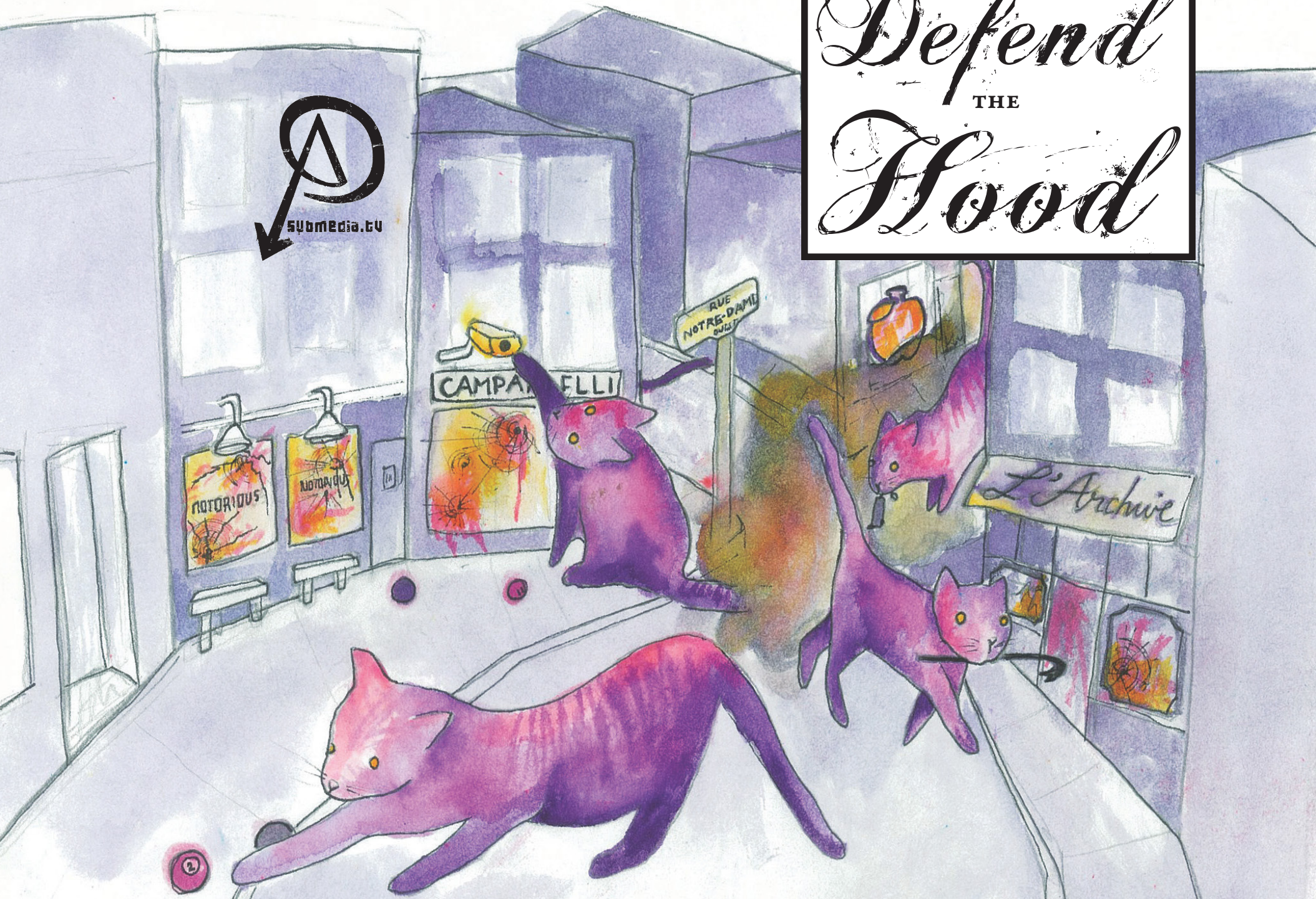


Defend THE Hood



Some Attacks

May 1st, 2015: The employment center of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve was sprayed with paint and windows broken.

May 22nd, 2015: A new juice bar in Saint-Henri is smoke-bombed, and the owner is pepper-sprayed.

May 23rd, 2015: Four businesses in Saint-Henri have their windows broken.

June 2nd, 2015: Ten days before opening, a new restaurant in Hochelaga receives a broken window, while posters targeting the restaurant are wheatpasted in the area.

December 2nd, 2015: The tires of a private security patrol car are slashed in Saint-Henri.

December 22nd, 2015: A clothing boutique in Saint-Henri has its windows broken and the interior is sprayed with paint.

February 25th, 2016: Three businesses in Hochelaga have their windows broken and are sprayed with paint. Flyers explaining the action are distributed in the following days.

April 14th, 2016: Around thirty people take to the streets for a neighborhood demo in Hochelaga. When police arrive, they are attacked with molotov cocktails and fireworks.

May 28th, 2016: Around thirty people vandalize and loot a boutique grocery store in Saint-Henri.

August 16th, 2016: During a power outage, three stores have their windows broken, two luxury cars have their tires slashed, and many more businesses are covered in graffiti across Hochelaga.

October 31st, 2016: Around seventy-five people take to the streets of Hochelaga for a Halloween demo against gentrification. Graffiti is painted along the route and candy is handed out to children. When police arrive, they are attacked with rocks.

November 29th, 2016: Five businesses in Hochelaga have their windows broken and the interiors are sprayed with paint.

December 1st, 2016: Around twenty security cameras have been destroyed over previous months around Hochelaga.

More at mtlcounter-info.org

Defend The Hood

*In 2016, numerous attacks were launched at diverse symbols of gentrification in the Montreal neighbourhoods of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Saint-Henri. We wanted to give space to the people involved so that they can explain a point of view, that corporate media consistently ignore or misrepresent. **sub-Media** has obtained an exclusive interview with two anarchists involved in the actions.*

What does it mean for you to fight against gentrification?

A: Before anything else, that we're just talking for the two of us, [not] for anyone else who participated in the action. We don't want to represent anything.

B: I don't want to limit myself to fighting against gentrification, which I see as an intensification of the misery of capitalism. And I'm against capitalism in all its forms. I struggle against gentrification because it effects my life and the lives of many people, but also because it's a context that allows the exchange of ideas and practices, to nourish a larger perspective of anarchist struggle.

I've been inspired by anarchists in other cities who have anchored their struggles in where they live. They've managed to make certain neighborhoods dangerous for the authorities and not very welcoming for capitalist businesses. I would like for the police to be afraid of being attacked when they patrol Hochelaga, for small yuppie businesses to hesitate before setting up shop here because their insurance premiums will be super expensive, for people to think about how if they park their luxury cars in the neighbourhood overnight, they're risking waking up to them being trashed, that as soon as graffiti or posters are cleaned, they're back up.

A: And if we want these people to be afraid, it's because we want the space to experiment with other ways of living, and cohabitation with them isn't possible. Their world will always want the destruction of other worlds, those of freedom, of sharing and gifting, of relations outside of work and leisure, of the joy outside of consumption...

B: I think it's worth being explicit about how the struggle against gentrification is inevitably a struggle against the police. The main tool that the city has to move forward with its project of social cleansing is the police and the pacification of residents. This reality is at the heart of the reflections that orient our actions.

The pacification takes different forms: it's the installation of cameras, the management of parks and streets, but also it's the imaginary created by bullshit narratives like *social mixité*. The public consultations, the studies and projects of affordable housing are all just a facade: during this time, the social cleansing advances and more and more people are evicted. If these means of pacification don't work, the city has recourse to repression, that's to say, the police. It's the police who evict tenants, prevent the existence of squats, etc. Every form of offensive organization that refuses the mediation attempts of the municipal authority will one day be faced with the police. So it's also important to develop our capacity to defend initiatives against repression.

Without necessarily throwing aside community organizing, many anarchists prefer the method of direct action. Why?

A: We don't have demands. We didn't do this action to put pressure on power, so that they grant us certain things. For sure people should have access to housing, but I don't think that we should wait for the State to respond to the demands for social housing that have existed since the 80s, in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification. I'm more interested in seeing what it would look like for people to take space and defend it, without asking. I'm not interested in dialoguing with power.

B: Dialogue with the municipal authorities is, along with the threat of police repression, the principal method of

pacification. To keep us in inaction, imprisoned in an imaginary where we can't take anything or stop anything from happening.

A: What's special about direct action is that you finally do away with the ultimate mediator, the State, by acting directly on the situation. Rather than giving agency to the city, in demanding something of it, we want to act for ourselves against the forces that gentrify the neighbourhood. The State is afraid of people refusing its role as the mediator.

Why choose a strategy of direct action outside of a context like those created during social movements?

B: Because we don't want to wait for the 'right context'. We think that it's through intervening in fucked up situations in this world that we live in that we create contexts. The fact that this world is horrible is in itself a 'good context'. Revolt is always worthwhile, every day.

A: I think that's important to emphasize, I don't believe in waiting for social movements to act. Acts of revolt have many impacts, even if they're not inscribed in a social movement. And also, when the next moment of widespread revolt comes, we'll be better prepared to participate.

Lastly, what do you say to those who say that gentrification is an inevitable process?

A: Gentrification is a process of capitalism and colonialism, among others. It makes itself seem inevitable, and maybe it is, but it's nonetheless worthwhile to struggle against it and to not let ourselves be passive. In a world as unlivable as the one we're in, I have the feeling that my life can only find meaning if I fight back.

B: At best, the process of gentrification will move elsewhere, if a neighborhood resists. And yet, struggling against capitalism and the State opens up possibilities that otherwise wouldn't have existed.