

**MA Defence: “Communicating Communes:
A Case Study of Urban Communing Movement in South Korea”
By Didi (Kyoung-ae) Han**

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Our dear colleague, Didi (Kyoung-ae) Han, will defend her MA Thesis on Monday, September 8th, 2015 at Harbour Centre, Room 2250 (10 am -12 noon). Here is the abstract of her thesis “Communicating Communes: A Case Study of Urban Communing Movement in South Korea”:

Abstract

Bin-Zib [in Korean, *empty/guests' house*] is an urban housing movement in Seoul, South Korea. In a society where, like many others, home ownership has increasingly become a matter of financial speculation rather than residency, the founders of Bin-Zib attempted to overturn the idea of private property associated with housing by turning housing from a form of property to what this thesis theorizes as *the common*. Starting out with one rented apartment in 2008, Bin-Zib members have expanded the scope of their communing experiment to include a network of homes, a café, and a cooperative bank, by inventing an array of strategies founded on the primacy of radical politics in everyday life. Based on an extended period of participant observation, analysis of online and print texts, and in-depth interviews with 32 residents, this thesis explores how Bin-Zib's residents have struggled to create different practices of housing in a thoroughly neoliberalized urban setting. The community's emphasis on heterogeneity, egalitarianism and openness has both departed from traditional left politics and propelled them to create an experimental and highly successful commune within and against capitalism. Drawing on Jacques Rancière's theory of subjectivation, this thesis investigates the politics of everyday life and expanding communism.

Keywords: Bin-Zib; social movements; Seoul; housing; the common; commons; communism; communication; urban communing; subjectivity; subjectivation; neoliberalism