# Slide 1: map autonomousfabric.org

In our initial research, we mapped more than 100 artist-run, self-organized spaces and initiatives in Rotterdam. Next to our 4 main partners, 12 of these initiatives have collaborated in this research proposal.

# Slide 2: map with photos

What we observe is a new type of artists’ self-organization: They are are no longer easily recognizable as art spaces, but appear - among others - as public libraries, copy shops, radio stations and queer spaces. Running them becomes the art practice of their collectives. This is why we call this phenomenon “self-organization-as-contemporary-art”. Unlike 1990s relational aesthetics, they break with the white cube paradigm.

Our first and foremost research question therefore the concept of artists’ autonomy in these practices which no longer seems to fit concepts of autonomy centered on artworks and individual artists.

# Slide 3: old vs. new artist-run spaces

A change becomes visible when comparing today’s artist-run spaces with those of the past. Rotterdam is our case study, because it has been the factual center of contemporary art *production* in this country since the 1990s, see the list on the left. Most of those artists were part of 1990s self-organized spaces. These were rarely open or even known to the public, and facilitated art that would find its public in galleries and museums.

This changed in the 2010s. Newer artist-run spaces and initiatives focus on public participation around subjects such as queerness, technology, mothership, and migration.

Established art and culture institutions have difficulties accommodating these practices, as they can not easily be exhibited. Art schools and funding bodies are set up to deal with individual artists with visual work portfolios. This is another issue we would like to research.

# Slide 4 & 5: International context

What we observe is an international development. It had precursors in the 1970s, yet we observe two structural differences: Major impulses now come from Non-Western regions, or from cities that have been peripheral in the contemporary art system. They also involve artist groups that are no longer predominantly white middle class. At the same time, their projects do not always find the diverse public they are trying to reach. Therefore, the intersectionality of self-organization-as-contemporary-art is another major research question for this project.

Rotterdam became a laboratory for *self-organization-as-contemporary-art* because of inexpensively available space in times where other cities such as Amsterdam, New York and now also Berlin became too expensive.

As a working-class, now predominantly immigrant city that has begun to gentrify only recently, Rotterdam exemplifies autonomy, intersectionality and gentrification as interlinked questions.

# Slide 6: ruangrupa

An outstanding international example of *self-organization-as-contemporary-art* is the Indonesian ruangrupa collective, on which a member of our research team wrote the first and still only book. Ruangrupa were appointed curators of the next Documenta after we had submitted this proposal. Ruangrupa’s work seamlessly blends art, research and everyday life, in hospitable and informal way as can be seen on the picture. Since it was taken more than a decade ago, we can see how ruangrupa was a forerunner of younger self-organizations in the West.

We will investigate gentrification and intersectionality as university postdoc research at Erasmus University. The question of shifting autonomy will be investigated through artistic research. Here, we want to learn from ruangrupa and use artist-researcher residencies as our format.