At Home, Behind Bars: The Prison de la Petite Roquette and Social Reproduction in French Feminist Art of the 1970s

Between 1974–75, artists Nil Yalter, Judy Blum, and their collective Groupe de Cinq produced two installations examining the inner world of the Prison de la Petite Roquette, a women's prison in Paris's eleventh arrondissement. These artworks, *Paris, ville lumière* (1974) and *La Roquette, prison de femmes* (1974–75) reveal the oversights of anti-carceral struggles that overlook women's experiences in prison. By tracing intersections between the women's liberation movement and prison activism in 1970s France, this talk reveals how the home emerges as a crucial disciplinary institution informing and informed by the logic of the prison. Through a collaborative process and a variety of media—including text, video, drawing, and photography—the artists explore how carceral power operates through reproductive labor, and suggest that this is a primary site where incarcerated women's resistance unfolds. Activating testimony and employing strategies of reenactment, these artworks situate the prison as a prism through which to evaluate the wider cultural, spatial, and infrastructural mechanisms enforcing gender-based oppression. At the same time, *Paris, ville lumière* and *La Roquette* also contest the valorization and moralization of care work by probing invisibilized sites where reproductive labor is abjected and exploited. In these two installations, the prison and the home emerge as interlinked sites where capitalism's reliance on devalued gendered labor is normalized and reproduced, but also refused.

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