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FIELD MANUAL AT FORTY-NINE

22 September – 13 October 2024



On a Sunday in May, I found myself at an art book fair. There were tables arranged like coded signals, pockets of paperbacks, zines, prints, and the hushed murmur of people flipping through pages as if listening for something hidden. On my way out, there was an improvised stand on the pavement, like David Hammons' snowball stand—only this wasn't snow. This was a blanket, spread flat, weighed down with what looked like DIY books, hand-stitched manifestos, xeroxed dreams. On the right side, I saw it—GUERRILLA HANDBOOK. Not the original print, but a bootleg, folded A3, copied on plain white paper. Xeroxed, faded, fragile, like something smuggled through time. The selling price was two euros. This couldn't even cover the printing costs, I thought. There was something desperate about it, but also intentional, like it wasn't supposed to be about profit. I gave the young seller a five euro note. In return, he handed me an extra small publication, something of his own—a gesture of connection, like trading codes across enemy lines. His publishing house, he said, was called 'toch voor even', Just for now.

Later that day, I was sitting in the park, one of those urban spaces designed to make you feel like you're part of some ongoing civic experiment in leisure and nature, though really, it's just a place to sit and confront your own thoughts, which have a way of feeling bigger out in the open. I opened the book. The introduction came at me without warning, no slow build-up, no polite buffer: *This book is brutal, sensual, rough, and cruel.* The sentence felt engineered, precise, like it was meant to bypass the usual mental filters and lodge itself somewhere deeper. Then, with startling efficiency, it moved into the granular — *revolutionary practices* — as though revolution could be reduced to steps, systems, formulas. What stuck was the strange twist: a recommendation to avoid hurting innocent people. It wasn't an appeal to morality, more like an operational guideline, almost bureaucratic: if you're going to use this book, it says, try to focus on institutions, material damage only. Don't get distracted by human collateral, the living bodies caught up in the larger machine.

I started flipping through the pages, each one packed with methods, espionage techniques, even recipes for making bombs. No editorializing, just instruction. It was all laid out with the clarity of a manual, something meant to be used, not understood. There was no thrill here, no narrative arc of heroism or redemption. It was pragmatic, procedural. The cold logic of disruption. The unnerving part wasn't the violence itself but the way it was presented — as inevitable, almost mathematical. You could feel the presence of systems, invisible but heavy, running through it all.

Back in my studio, I went online to search for the books listed in the bibliography. There were 19 titles, and to my surprise, all of them were available on Amazon and eBay. What once seemed like obscure texts, barely accessible, were now part of the digital marketplace, easy to find and easier to buy. As I scrolled through, I could sense the shift. These books had moved from underground secrecy into a kind of casual familiarity. The platforms had stripped them of whatever edge they once had, reduced them to just another set of products among millions. The act of buying them had become routine, transactional, like adding toothpaste or batteries to your cart.

The installation, *Field Manual at Forty-Nine*, reflects this strange meeting point. It presents itself as a fragmented 1:1 model of the façade and desk of my studio, a space broken into pieces and reassembled like memory. A full-scale copy made from chipboard, it stands in direct confrontation with the 19 printed titles, which trace back to the bibliography of the *Guerrilla Handbook*, that elusive document first published by De Nieuwe Illegalen in 1972 in Ghent. The studio and the books, these two elements, meet here in a kind of unresolved tension. It's a dialogue between the personal and the political, the physical and the digital. In this space, everything remains open—unfinished, waiting to be read, handled, or left behind.