

Community Realism

v0.25

At the BORDER of World as it is and World as it should be.

Community Realism is a set of editorial programming guidelines for cultural, creative and community media. It is designed for media organisations to present the world as a place rife with potential for community, for action, for personal interaction and for solidarity. This outlook is not simply a way to report good deeds within our communities, but to offer the view of a potential society that holds community as its bonding factor.

1. Why *Community Realism* is needed

Society is becoming fragmented at an alarming rate. We are more digitally connected than ever, yet find ourselves experiencing a profound social disconnect - many of the very things we were told would improve our lives are driving us further from each other. The ruling class enforces this pervasive sense of increasing isolation, and promotes it for their enrichment, working ceaselessly to cause divide,

dissonance and turmoil. We are engulfed by systems designed to keep us apart - *desocialise us* - while simultaneously convincing us that this is normal and that antagonism and division are unremarkable and unavoidable products of 'consumer freedom', rather than an insidious strategy forced upon us.

Community Realism is designed to prove that division is not the natural way of things, and to demonstrate that our cultural ecosystem is stronger with unity and cohesion. It is designed to break division and to reveal our potential for collaboration, connection and interaction.

2. What is **Community Realism**?

Media, music, art and culture remain touchpoints in society. They bring colour, belonging, diversion and entertainment, and give us a sense of norms and trends. **Community Realism celebrates our love of cultural expression and combines it with our innate desire for community. This approach uses the media time typically afforded to reporting on division and so-called 'national interest news' to instead amplifying, embodying, and promoting communities and community work.**

Community Realist organisations will be required to liaise with *organisers* and other stakeholders within individual communities in order to report on their progress and broadcast their needs to their audiences. *Community Organiser* partnerships will be fundamental to a healthy system of broadcasting Communities' achievements and needs.

A toolkit for safe and ethical information gathering is in early development.

While *Community Organising* strives to bolster and galvanise a community through activism and political awareness, **Community Realism** works to infuse the effect of *Community Organising* throughout *Media, music, art and culture*. That is to say, use a media organisation's chosen medium to communicate the constant, positive impact communities are working towards. Communities such as;

- *Activist communities,*
- *Community infrastructure projects,*
- *Creative projects,*
- *Socially progressive movements,*
- *Marginalised groups' struggles,*
- *Secular and Religious groups,*
- *Social impact projects,*
- *Local sports associations and supporters,*

- *Parental support groups*
- *Housing co-ops,*
- *Workers' groups,*
- *International solidarity movements*

As many varied communities as exist should be reported on, discussed, and their access promoted as the **reality of everyday life**, presented through the lens of *Media, music, art and culture*.

Community Realism provides greater context for local communities, demonstrating their benefit, as well as their links with other communities. It provides networking opportunities, and makes their struggles relevant to all.

As the ideas of **Community Realism** become default, so too will people's ideas of their own potential for support, growth and change.

Communities Build Community.

Community Realism aims to ground public discourse in a sense of community outside of your immediate space, online and offline. It provides access and belonging and draws a clear link between

local issues and 'national importance', giving us a greater sense of place and a connection to our communities.

By utilising established roles of media to portray community cohesion and solidarity, **Community Realism** holds the concept of community strength and mutual help as a *default* aspect of everyday life. That is to say, rather than reporting on divisive and useless news, or discussing economic concepts designed to maintain the status quo, *our* media portrays a fresh outlook, one that asserts the truth of people's common struggles, goals, achievements, shared joy and expertise.

There are plenty of news outlets for headlines, breaking news, sensationalism and rolling 24hr reporting. This journalism does not empower its audience as much as satiate at best, and even dampen, people's need for cohesion. So much journalism presents powerlessness in action.

Community Realism does not suggest that the counterbalance to such a lack of cohesion is the creation of a mirrored-image of news or headlines that instead empower, or even news agencies that report more fairly. These are important approaches and have a critical place in providing an alternative

media, but can fall into the same trap of isolating, dividing and enforcing a politics-as-spectacle outlook.

Community Realism's alternative is this: utilise culture as it is meant to be used! Keep the entertainment, the diversion, the fashion, the fads, the creativity and mutual interest, but scrub the commercial and the normalising of division. Instead create an atmosphere within these arts and sports and cultural institutions of Community, of Mutual Aid - stories of co-ops coming together, appeals for specialists to help with a legal case, workers against the odds securing a fairer wage system. *People Needed Here!* Not just stories of success but mobilising and educating. Report not for the sake of reporting but to find an audience who can identify with and apply the learning points to their own struggle. All told and heard by those affected.

3. Example of Community Realism

Cloudbuster Radio is a national 'alternative music and culture' radio station. Music and culture programming occurs throughout the day, interspersed with segments called Action Reports (replacing typical radio News Bulletins). The Action Reports share news of successful community actions,

picket-lines and demonstrations, and calls for help by sending aid, expertise or personnel. These 'local' issues are reported nationally; they are intrinsically linked to local issues wherever the listener is from, either directly or indirectly. By linking others' struggles with the greater community we see our own potential reflected, and see the route of access for us to aid, or begin, community action.

The programming on Cloudbuster Radio is diverse and variable, but the station itself operates on **Community Realism** principles. These principles directly influence the reporting as discussed above, but also broadly infuse community discourse with the station's output, and may include Music Programs with a community theme, discussion about alternative music from a particular community, a special program featuring undiscovered artists. Anything that incorporates both **Community Realism** and the spirit of the station. This convergence of direct and indirect **Community Realism** is discussed with more detail in the Cloudbuster Mission Statement. From the Mission Statement: "This ethos of practical solidarity permeates all programming, from the music we play to the discussions we host, demonstrating that culture and community action are part of the same fabric."

In essence, Cloudbuster Radio is an alternative music radio station which embodies the values of **Community Realism**.

As more media associations use the **Community Realism** framework, the broad atmosphere of social awareness will grow in new ways, maintaining freedom of expression while allowing for greater political education.

Creating a Pan-Local Community

4. Conclusion

Cloudbuster Radio aims to be the first in a growing network of Community Realist Media. From radio to television, from print journalism to zine culture, from legacy to new media, the focus of **Community Realism** is to create a media landscape. One that bears the fruit of *media, music, art and culture*, within an editorial framework which asserts that the struggles and the fights that everyday people have are not only common, but are what make life real. By

hearing authentic voices, audiences will necessarily understand the reality of this outlook and, *eventually by default*, will be more ready to move towards the required actions to empower us all to live more fairly.