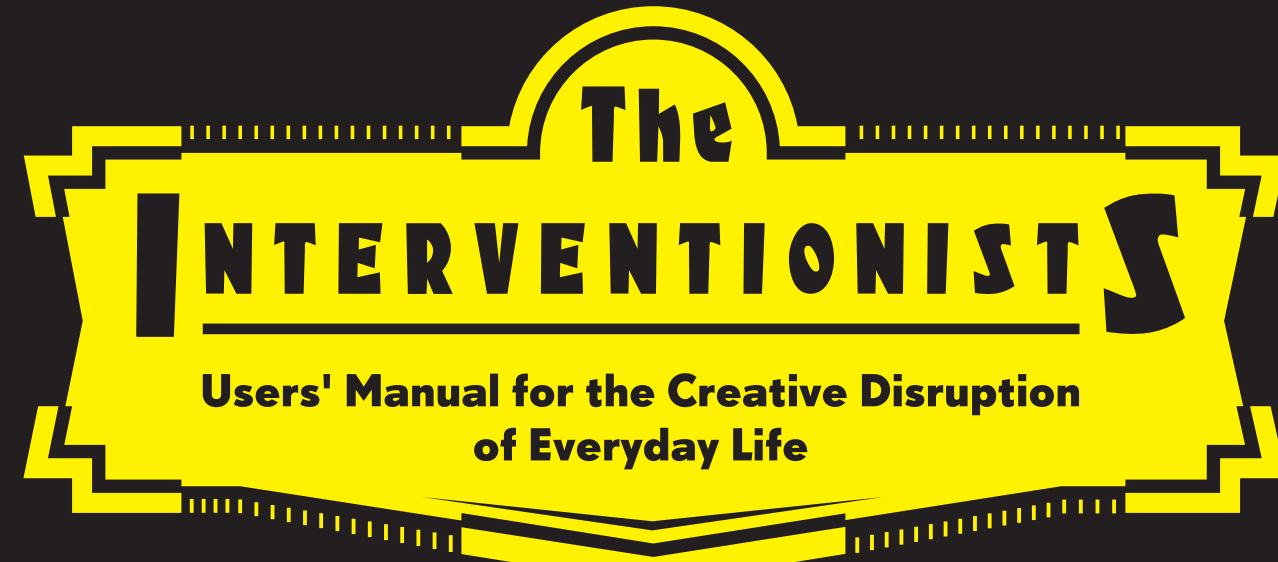


► **The INTERVENTIONISTS** ◀
User's Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday life

Thompson and Sholette, editors
Noordeman, designer



MASS MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts

With The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England



Nato Thompson and Gregory Sholette, editors
Arjen Noordeman, designer

With
Joseph Thompson
Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ondine C. Chavoya,



MASS MoCA Publications
North Adams, Massachusetts



Distributed by MIT Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts



The Interventionists: Art in the Social-Sphere is co-sponsored by
[XXXXXXXXXXXXXX]

Generous support has also been provided by
[XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX]

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by an electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publishers.

Book design by Arjen Noordeman
Printed by Palace Press International
[print information here]



MASS MoCA
1040 MASS MoCA Way
North Adams, Massachusetts 01247
PH 413-664-4481
FAX 413-663-8548

www.massmoca.org



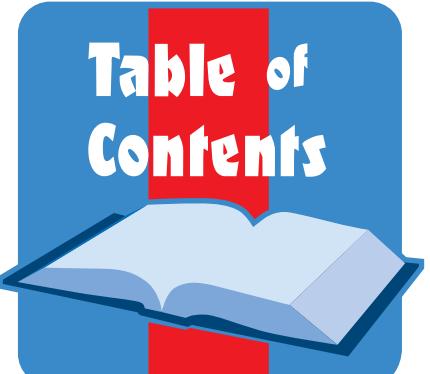
Acknowledgements



Nato to write – Karl Hinojosa, Rebeccah Uchill, Contemporary Artists Center, Jeff Barnum, Gilly Barnes, Sean (help on William Pope.L), Jessica Barthel, Al Bushevkin and the folks at Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, The Smith College professors and their classes, Kathy for the shack, Gene Carlson, the great folks at Creative Capital,

Nato to write – Karl Hinojosa, Rebeccah Uchill, Contemporary Artists Center, Jeff Barnum, Gilly Barnes, Sean (help on William Pope.L), Jessica Barthel, Al Bushevkin and the folks at Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, The Smith College professors and their classes, Kathy for the shack, Gene Carlson, the great folks at Creative Capital,

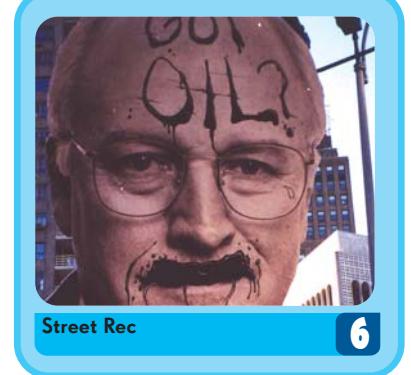




Nomads: Artists who produce work that encourages individual autonomy such as mobile housing. Artists include: N55, Kyrzstof Wodizko, Rubén Ortiz Torres, Michael Rakowitz, Dré Wapenaar.

Reclaim the Streets:

Artists who produce actions that occur within the public sphere (sidewalks, parks, streets, malls, etc.) Artists include: Peña, Biotic Baking Brigade, Surveillance Camera Players, Street Rec, Indy Media, the Yes Men.



The Experimental University

Artists who deploy aesthetic strategies to engage outside discourses including anthropology, biotechnology, urban geography. Artists include: The Atlas Group, subRosa, Critical Art Ensemble, J. Morgan Puett



Ready to Wear:

Artists who produce tools and clothing to augment the wearer's sense of personal autonomy. Artists include: Center for Tactical Media, Lucy Orta, Ha Ha, Yo Mango



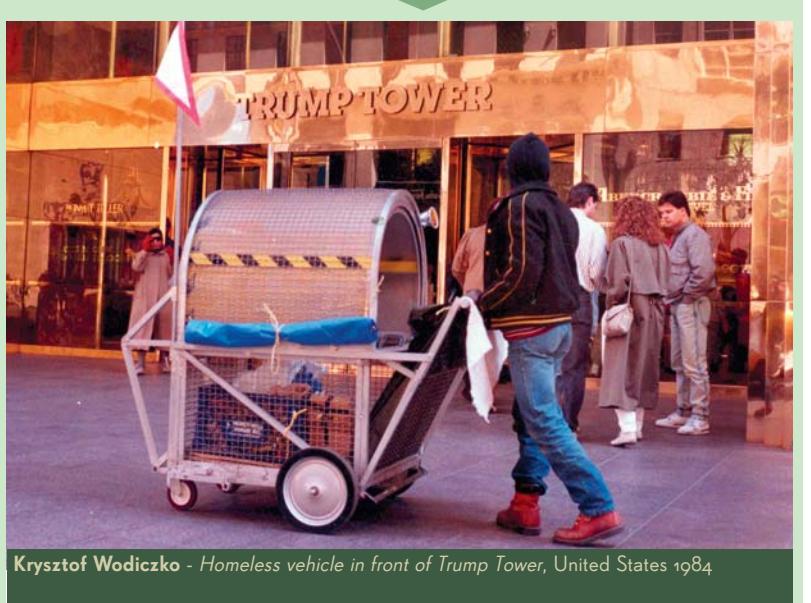


Krzysztof Wodiczko

Boston, USA
Born 1943

Biographical Info:

Krzysztof Wodiczko is internationally renowned for his large-scale slide and video projections on architectural facades and monuments. Since the late eighties, he has developed a series of nomadic instruments for both homeless and immigrant operators that function as implements for survival, communication, empowerment, and healing. Wodiczko has coined the term, "Interrogative Design" to describe his works which both address social issues as well as provide a band-aid to them. Like a band-aid, the works both temporarily help a wound as well as bring attention to it. Wodiczko earned his MFA in 1968 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland, with an emphasis on architecture, industrial design and the visual arts. He taught at several Universities around the world before coming to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1991 where he is the acting director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies.



Project Description: Together with a group of the New York homeless Krzysztof Wodiczko constructed the Homeless Vehicle (1987-8) as 'an instrument of survival for urban nomads'. The Homeless Vehicle embodies Wodiczko's practice of interrogative design by thoroughly combining the design needs for the immediate purposes of a homeless individual while additionally supplying a visual strategy for the overarching condition of homelessness in the United States. The Homeless Vehicle is a modified shopping cart which facilitates bottle and can collection as well as provide a temporary shelter. Wodiczko is not interested in producing surrogates for social service institutions. Instead, the project is meant to bring the issue of homelessness to public attention.

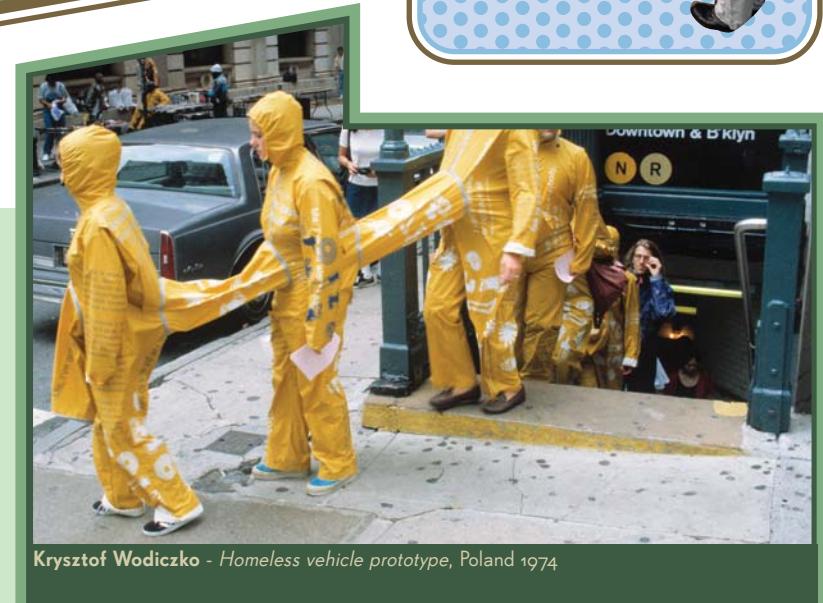
TITLE OF WORK:
1987-1988
Homeless Vehicle

Lucy Orta

Eindhoven, The Netherlands
Born 1966

Biographical Info:

Lucy Orta is trained as a fashion / textile designer but her works now range from sculpture to performances to actual dinners. Disillusioned with the consumerism of the fashion industry, in 1992 she installed her first "Refuge Wear" (1992-1998) series under the Louvre Pyramid during Paris Fashion Week. The clothes were designed as a response to the Gulf War and combines fashion with portable architecture. She designed Refuge Wear to highlight and assist those in need of refuge. During this period, Orta was working with a collective called Casa Moda whose goal was to investigate links between textile research and experimental design. Her "Collective Wear" sculptures in the form of tent domes with protruding appendages, exhibited in the Modern Art museum in Paris in 1994 were placed into urban contexts for a series of interventions in housing estates, subway stations... and later developed into a human chain, "Nexus Architecture" which has since become the emblem of her work and has been presented in site specific performances such as the Venice Biennale in 1995, Johannesburg Biennale 1997, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney 1998, Bolivia, Berlin, New York, Mexico City. She is currently the Rootstein Hopkins Chair at London College of Fashion at the London Institute.



Project Description: The Mobile Intervention Units (M.I.U) are built onto lightweight trailers as a set of aluminum parts. When pieced together they produce a temporary refuge for sleeping. It is practically a nomadic dormitory. Orta produced this series as a part of a larger work from 2001, where she produced two Red Cross ambulances adorned with the faces of cows (referencing mad cow disease) on one side and the plight of Rwandan refugees on the other. These Mobile Intervention Units were then placed in front of the civic buildings for the G8 Environment Summit in Trieste. These units both demonstrate as well as actualize Orta's ongoing interest in refuge and political intervention.

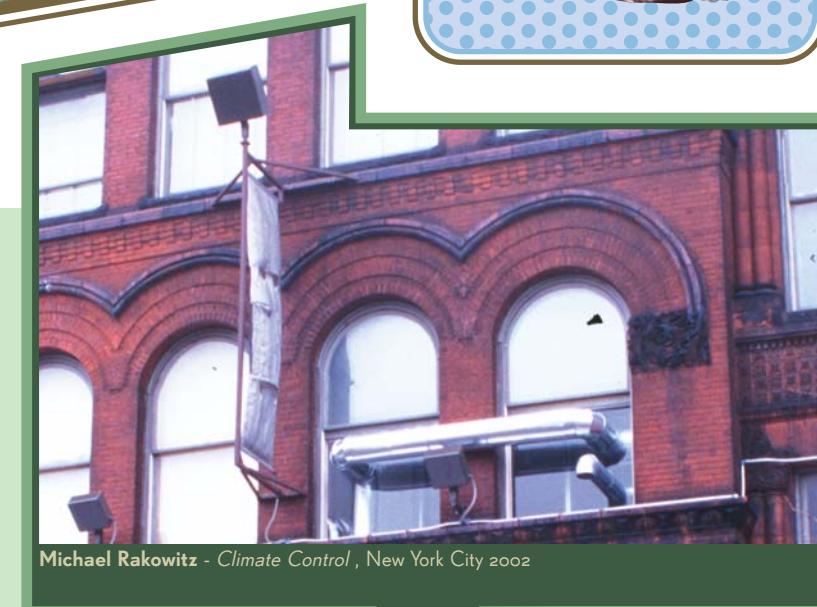
TITLE OF WORK:
M.I.U.VI
2003

Michael Rakowitz

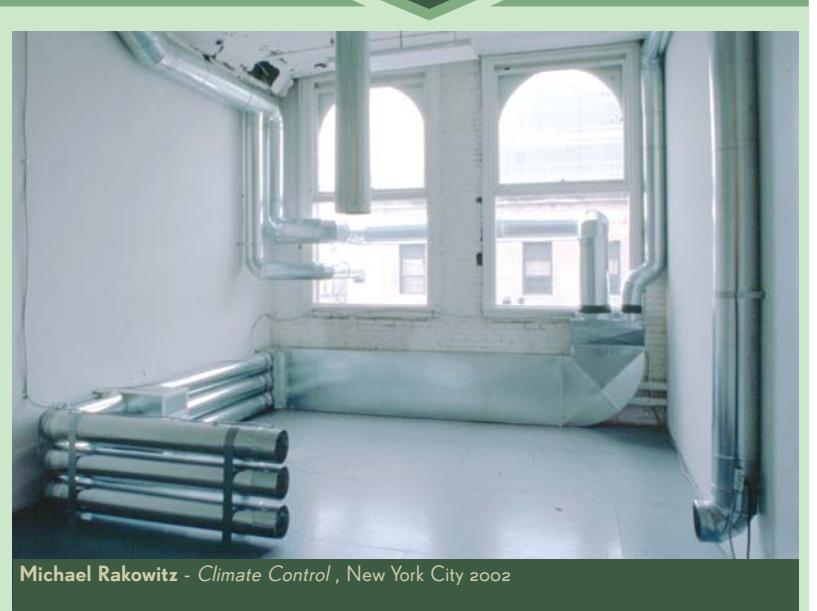
Boston, USA
Born 1973

Biographical Info:

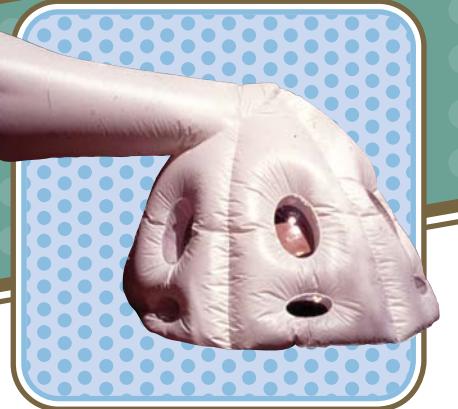
Michael Rakowitz is an artist based in New York who has produced numerous interventions in various media. In his 2000-2001 project Climate Control at P.S.1 in New York, Rakowitz tapped into the existing heating system of the building with an elaborate network of ducts and fans. The extraordinary arrangement of pipes filled the gallery space for the sole purpose of bringing the room temperature down to a climate control level in winter. His interest in duct work continued in his 2001 project, Rise, in which he extended a central oven duct of a Chinese bakery into a 9th floor gallery space. When one entered the gallery, the entire space smelled of fresh pastries. Rakowitz developed Rise as a reminder to visitors of the original neighborhood inhabitants and in addition, of the gentrifying desires which accompany art exhibitions in low-income areas. His work has appeared at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the Queens Museum of Art, the Storefront for Art and Architecture, the Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum, and the Fabric Workshop in Philadelphia. He is currently Professor of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore.



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

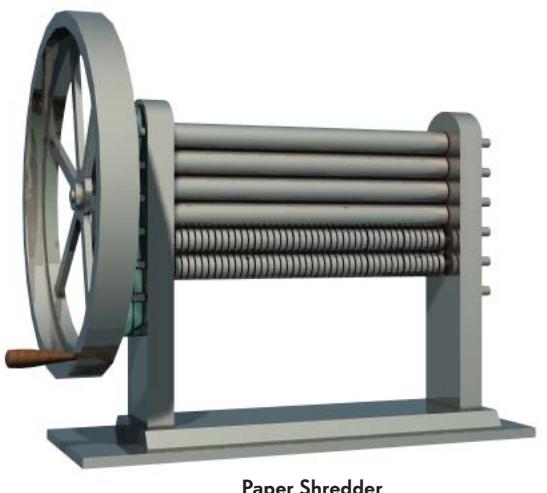


Project Description: Michael Rakowitz's project, paraSITE, is an inflatable shelter that attaches to the air vents outside buildings. The project literally feeds off the existing infrastructure of a city. Between February and April 1998, Rakowitz developed seven prototypes which he distributed to several homeless individuals in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he was a graduate student at MIT. With the feedback and assistance of the homeless individuals which included Bill Stone, George Livingston and Freddie Flynn, Rakowitz modified the designs to fit their needs. Produced from plastic bags and tape, these homeless shelters were easily portable and inflatable. As Rakowitz states, "The visibly parasitic relationship of these devices to the buildings, appropriating a readily available situation with readily available materials elicited immediate speculation as to the future of the city: would these things completely take over, given the enormous number of homeless in our society? Could we wake up one morning to find these encampments engulfing buildings like ivy?"

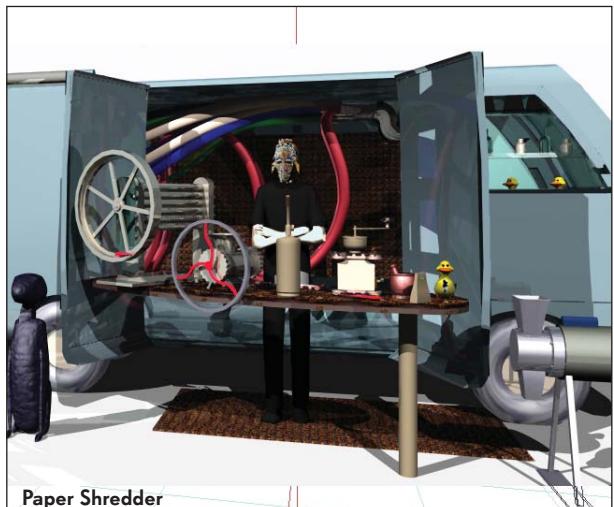
TITLE OF WORK:
paraSITE
1998

Biographical Info:

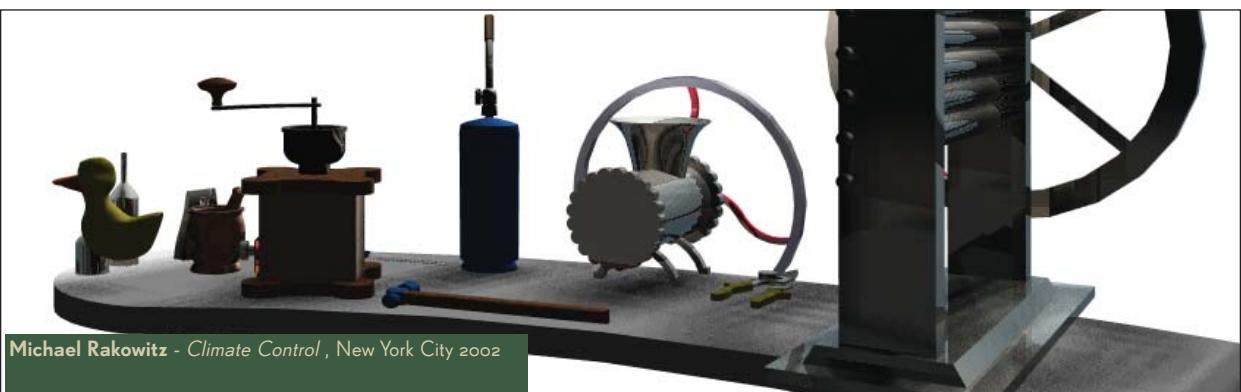
William Pope.L was born in Newark in June 28, 1955. William Pope.L is his birth name (the L stands for Lancaster, abbreviated by his mother and according to Pope L. hated by his father.) He has been a member of the department of Theatre and Rhetoric at Bates College for 13 years. He attended Mason Gross School at Rutgers University for graduate work working with painter, Leon Golub and Fluxus artist Geoff Hendricks and Bob Watts. He also studied with Ruth Maleczech and Lee Breuer of Mabou Mines at Re. Cher. Chez Studio in New York City. Pope.L's work addresses contemporary issues such as class, RACE and consumerism. His work migrates easily between studio work and outdoor activities. His performance work includes his famous "crawl" pieces in which Pope L. literally crawls across a city. His art installations use unconventional materials such as peanut butter, mayonnaise, and Pop arts to provoke a closer examination of the "stuff" of everyday life and to raise questions about art as a commodity and community.



Paper Shredder



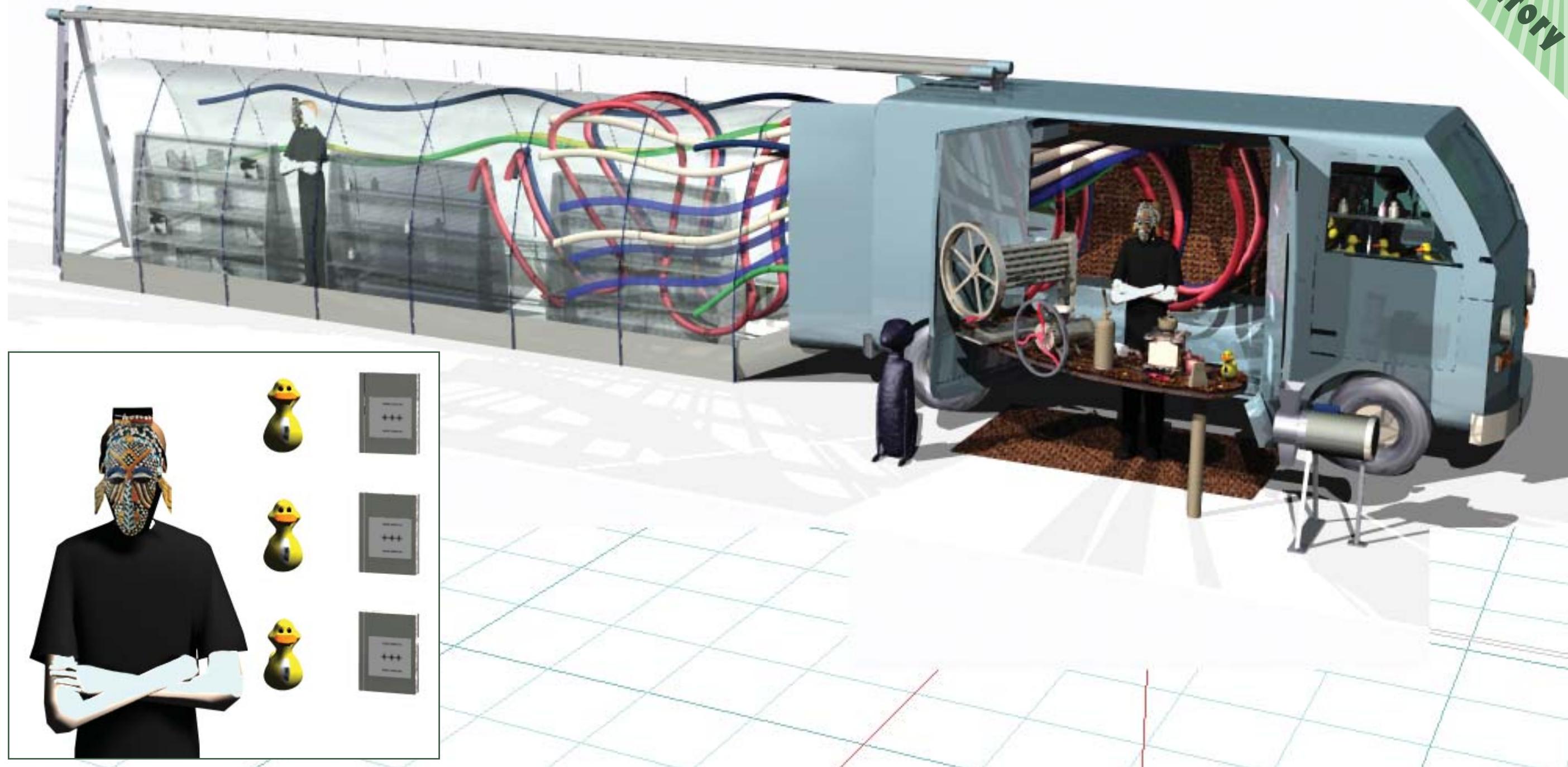
Paper Shredder



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

Project Description: The Black Factory is a performance/installation project that takes the form of a touring large panel truck. According to Pope L, the Black Factory "Brings the contradictions of difference where it is needed most. A visit from the Black Factory provides more than thought-provoking entertainment and exploration, it presents opportunity." A large box truck, the Black Factory, is equipped with a pulverizing center and gift shop. From the rear of the Black Factory a giant inflatable igloo cascades up onto the second floor, through the window and into the gallery. Through the windows of igloo the visitors can see items of "blackness" which community members have brought in. Previous to its display at MASS MoCA, the Black Factory arrived at various cultural institutions including the Tang Teaching Museum and Bard College and presented a series of performances. In addition to watching and buying, visitors to the Black Factory had the option to take part in the Black Factory's "Check Days," a term which Pope. L says refers to both the idea of checking in with someone and "the day of celebration in working-class culture when the check arrives." Check Day participants are encouraged to bring three to ten objects that speak to them of blackness to the Black Factory site. Visitors can then participate in one of two ways: to have their items photographed and published in an archive on the World Wide Web, or be chosen to donate the objects outright. Some of the donated objects will continue to tour with the BF while others will be pulverized and turned into new products offered for sale in the Factory's gift shop.

**TITLE OF WORK:
Black Factory
2004**



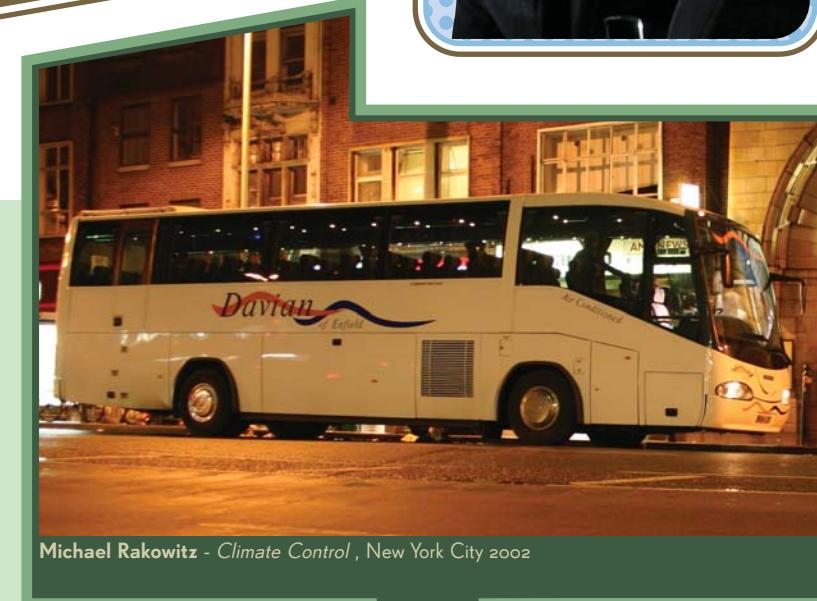
WILLIAM POPE L.
2004
Black Factory

e-Xplo
Est 2001

Berlin, Germany &
New York City, USA

Biographical Info:

Based in Berlin and New York City, the collective **e-Xplo** consists of the members Heimo Lattner, Rene Gabri and Erin McGonigle. As their name might suggest, the artistically explores cities across the globe. The tours are developed by conducting interviews, gathering field recordings, researching local libraries and then composing a site-specific score to accompany the ride. In December of 2000, e-Xplo developed their first bus tour for Williamsburg, Brooklyn. In May 2001 they produced 65 MPH which traversed the bridges and highways of New York City. More recently, e-Xplo has been working with an onboard computer and GPS system which can use the location, heading, and speed of the bus to determine which sounds can be triggered (based on a programmed score). Since developing their tours for New York City, they have produced projects for Torino, Italy, Berlin, Rotterdam and London.



Project Description: The bus tour designed by e-Xplo travels a languorous journey between the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute located in Williamstown and MASS MoCA, located in North Adams. This 25 minute auditory voyage introduces visitors to a unique exploration of the landscape as well as providing a sonic environment commenting (abstractly) on the changing environment.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
Roundabout -
Love at Leisure:
Help me Stranger

Ha*Ha
Est 2001

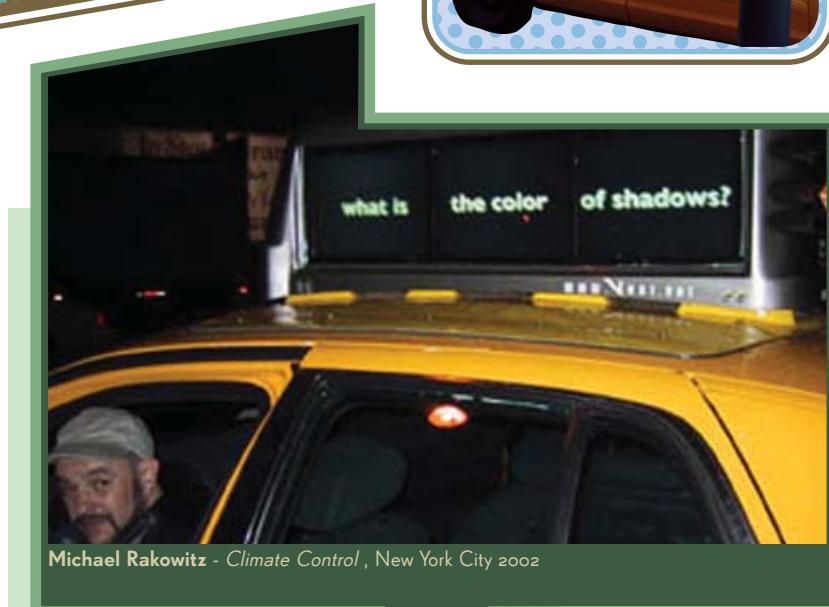
Berlin, Germany &
New York City, USA



Biographical Info:

Haha is a collaborative team that came together in 1988 out of an interest in addressing gaps between artists and audiences. In fourteen years Haha's members, Richard House, Wendy Jacob, Laurie Palmer and John Ploof have created twenty-four projects incorporating a wide range of media - video installation and broadcast, billboards, audio tours, community gardens, live performance and interactive installation. In 1988 Richard House moved to New Zealand for research and to learn bungee jumping, now the group is comprised of three members.

Haha's work has focused on the exploration and articulation of social positions relative to particular sites. Each project is approached uniquely, through interaction and frequently collaboration with individuals and communities, as well as the constituent physical and historical properties of a locale.



Project Description: Originally tested in Chicago, Illinois, the Taxi project is a method for facilitating public speech. The mechanism behind this project is a GPS triggered digital sign on top of a car that allows community members to post messages. Originally designed to advertise for specific neighborhood markets, Haha is using the technology to visually broadcast messages with topical interest submitted by residents of a given city. Through the winter of 2004, the collective has spent time in North Adams gathering suggestions from various community groups from a senior's aerobics class to a YMCA after school program, in order to provide a broad range of thoughts on the town. Messages include "This is my second home" as the car drives by the Holiday Inn or, "Court appointed lawyers should be free" as the car drives by the local court house.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
North Adams
Taxi

Rubén Ortiz-Torres
Mexico City, Mexico
Born 1964

Biographical Info:

Rubén Ortiz-Torres works in a variety of media to explore cultural representations and collisions as they appear in everyday cultural life. While his work predominately focuses on the Chicano experience, his purview includes all forms of cultural connection and collision. He has produced numerous photographs, paintings, hats, trucks and even leaf blowers as media to investigate signature materials and images of this cultural experience. The son of Latin American folklore musicians, Ortiz-Torres was born in Mexico City. He was trained in architecture at Harvard Graduate School of Design and studied art at both the Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City, and at the California Institute of Arts in Valencia California.



TITLE OF WORK:

High/Low
2003

Project Description: Text for high/low goes here.

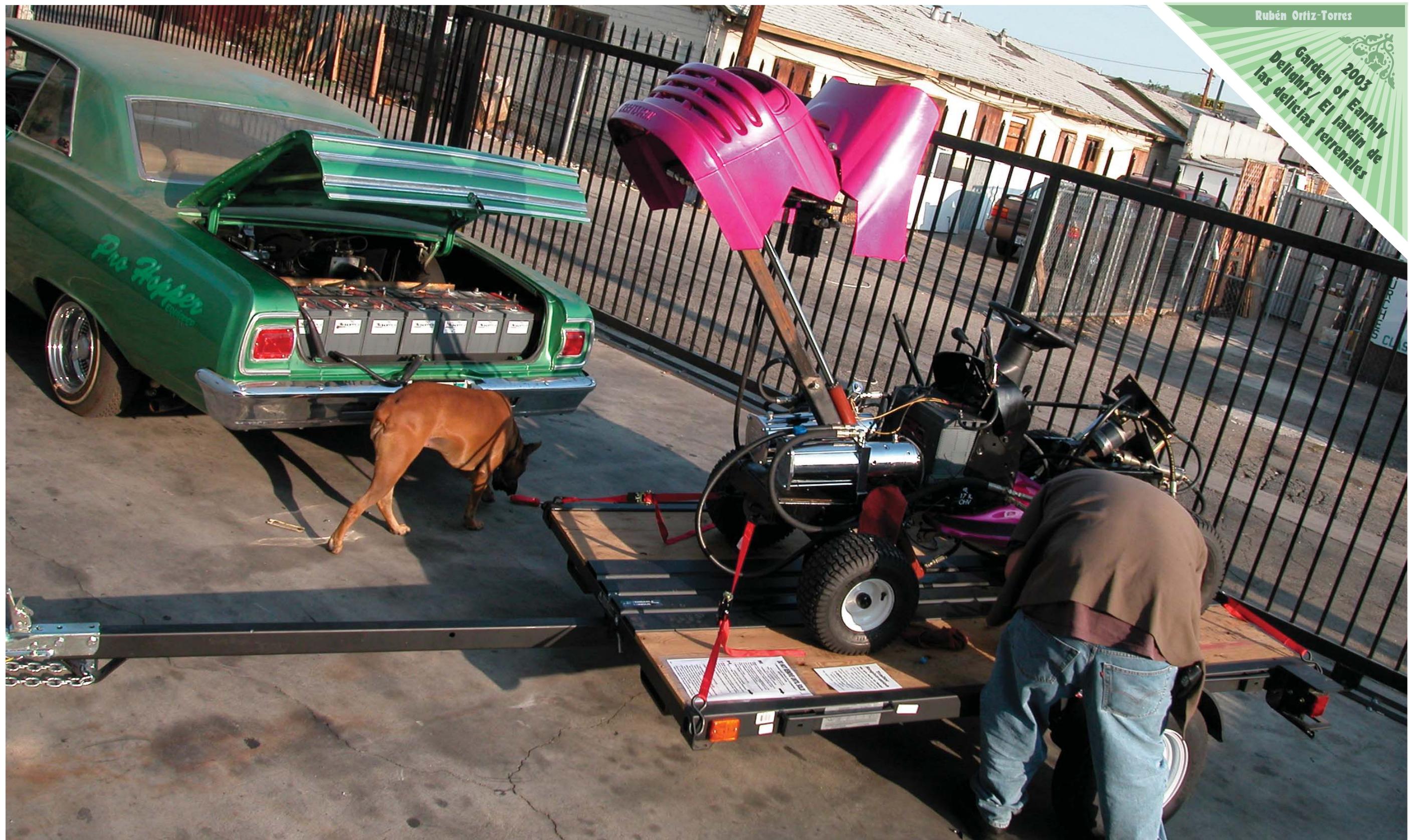


Project Description: For Rubén Ortiz-Torres, an artist based in Southern California, yard work is emblematic of the situation of Mexican immigrants in California. To be specific, it is a specific site of connection between cultures. A culturally recognized part of the informal economy in Southern California is the labor produced by Mexican immigrants who either blow leaves; mow lawns or clip hedges to make a living.

In Garden of Earthly Delights, Ortiz-Torres has reworked a piece of vernacular machinery, the lawnmower, by using Chicano low-rider aesthetics: hydraulics, flashy paint, and shining chrome. This small shift provides room to view this work in a very different, possibly resistant, manner.

TITLE OF WORK:
2003
Garden of Earthly Delights / El jardín de las delicias terrenales





Rubén Ortiz-Torres

2003
Garden of Earthly
Delights / El jardín de
las delicias terrenales

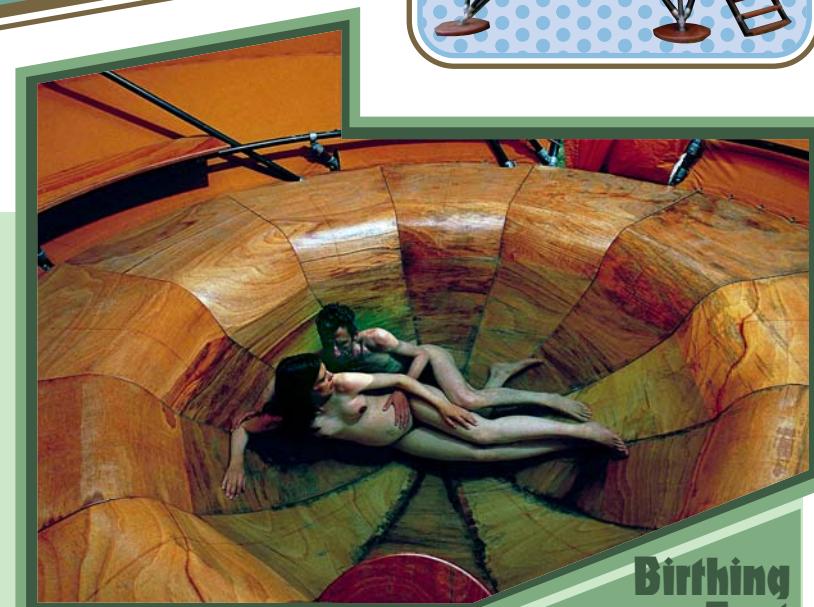
Dré Wapenaar

Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Born 1961

Biographical Info:

"I think tents are great meeting points for people. To work on directing the quality of meeting is something I couldn't do so much with sculpture. I use tents because tents speak a language, which is well known all over the world."

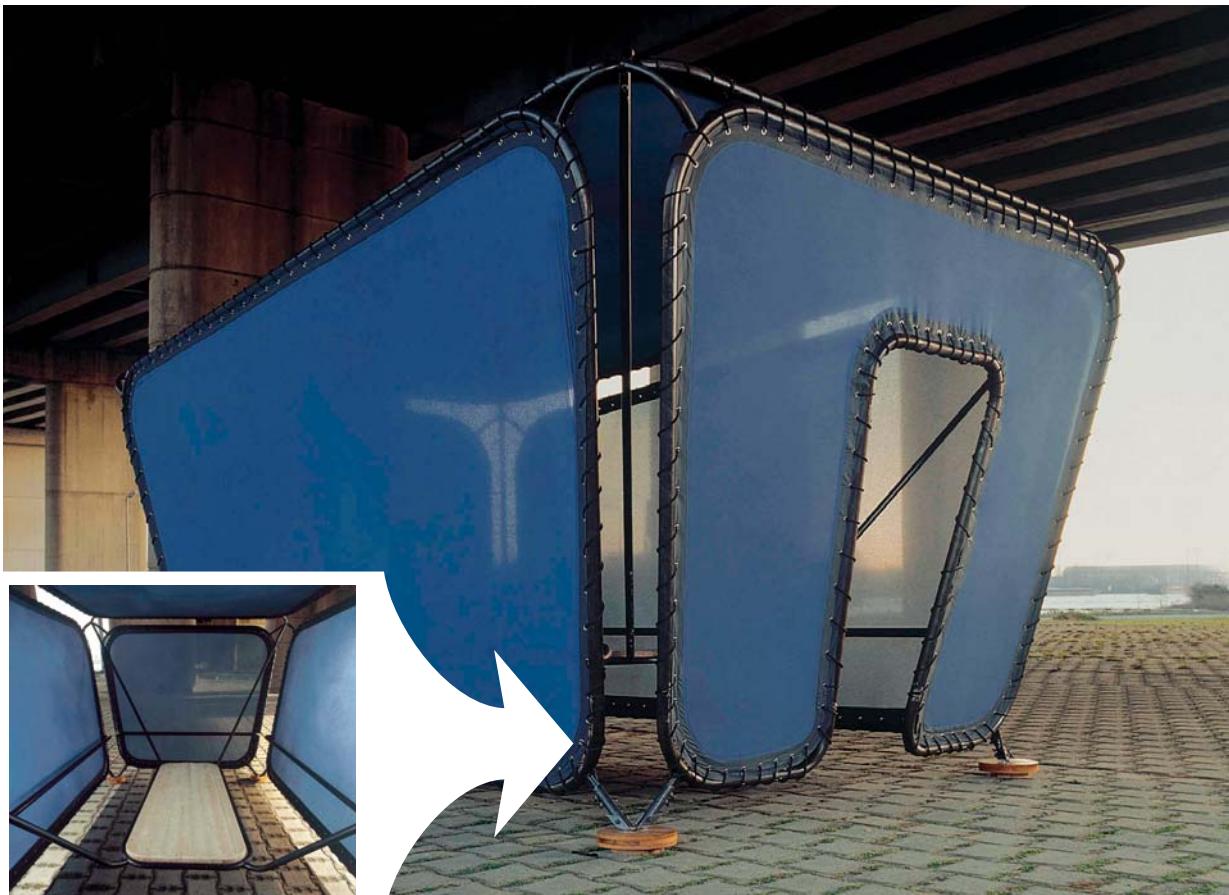
Based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, Dré Wapenaar is a designer and sculptor predominately known for his creation of tents. He says of his work that it is a public art meant to provoke a response. Wapenaar believes that a properly designed tent can alter human behavior by making people feel secure, calm and friendly. Throughout his career, Dré Wapenaar has produced numerous tents including those for selling flowers, playing piano, hanging on trees, and in the exhibition at MASS MoCA, giving birth and paying respects to the dead. His work has been exhibited in the Netherlands, Italy, England, Japan, France and the United States.



TITLE OF WORK:

Birthing Tent
1987-88

Project Description: The Birthing Tent is, at the title indicates, a large bol structure designed for giving birth and for the celebration of this intimate moment. A large opening in the ceiling provides a view to the stars and the tent is equipped with benches for husbands, family, friends and nurses to participate in the experience. Dré Wapenaar says of his work, "In my latest tents the theme of the loner versus the group, and or the other, comes into a phase in which the interaction, and the expectations that come with it, will be directed even more. This was already at stake in the works where I used a, so called, necessity which you could hardly deny. Here, things are dealing more with emotional issues, with intimacy and distance, with attraction and repulsion, with respect for respect and disrespect. Then again, this is also to blame to the lack of power, or independency, of the ordinary public."



Project Description: "In protestant Holland I experienced many death "ceremonies", taking only 1 1/2 hour of your time, with 1 cup of coffee and piece of cake at the end, and then you may go. The machines are left to cover the grave. No emotions, individually or shared. I see some changes, but only in individual cases. The public "death ceremony" is still left with the idea of a commercial activity."

The Dodenbivak is a tent for the memorializing of the dead. Dré Wapenaar incorporated the ethereal and mystical elements of death into the design by incorporating a sense of heaviness and lightness in the structure. Wapenaar says of both projects at MASS MoCA, "I see the "giving of birth" (but also the mourning of deceased beloved ones), as an activity that deals with the issues of privacy, but a privacy that can go over the borderlines of an individual person."

TITLE OF WORK:
Death Bivouac
2004

N55

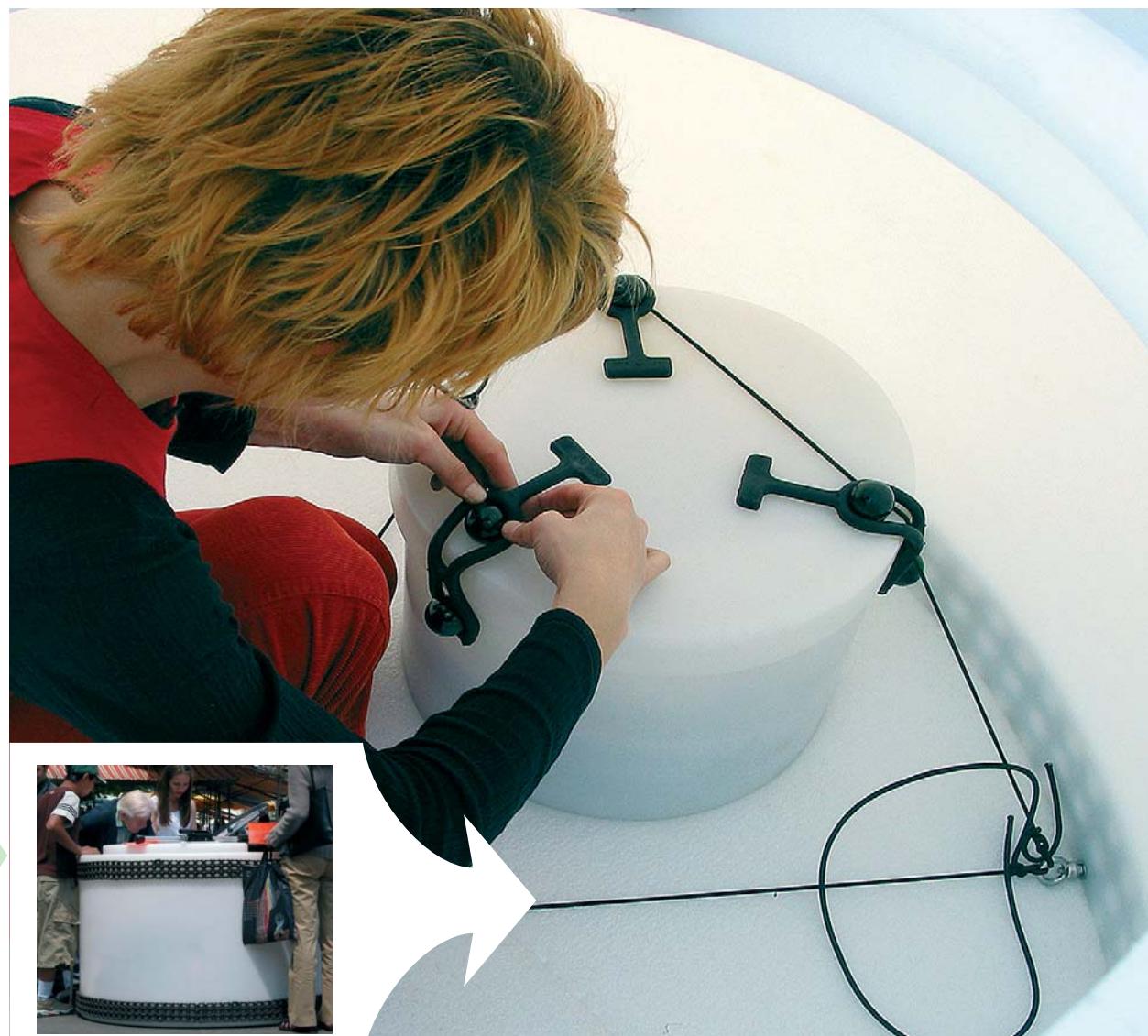
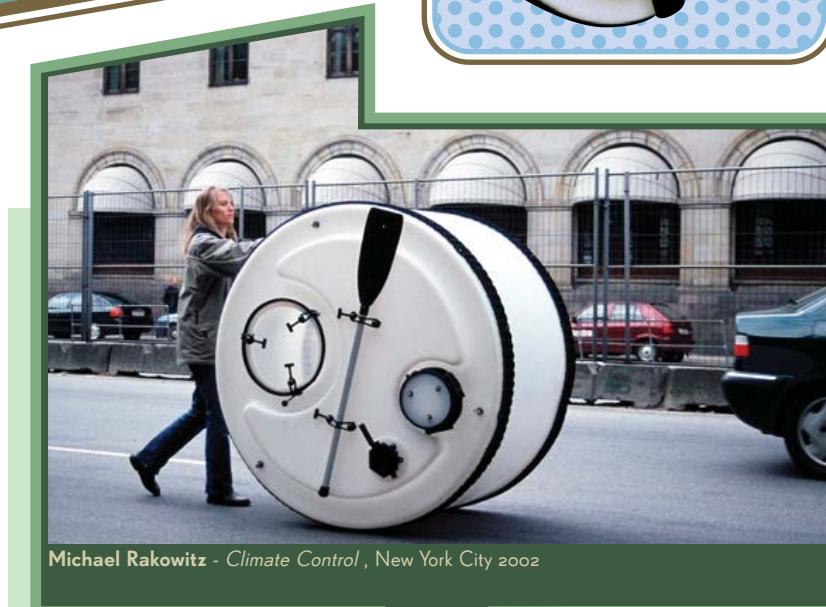
Est 1994

Kopenhagen,
Danmark



Biographical Info:

Based in Copenhagen, **N55** consists of four members. The name, N55, comes from the address of their first project space Nørre Farimagsgade 55. The collective integrates aesthetics and ethics into their various designs which include a Spaceframe (which they live in), a home hydroponic unit, chairs, compost machines and bizarre public address systems. Their projects are designed for use in the real world and in general, they live and work with the projects they produce.



Project Description: The Snail Shell System is a low cost mobile home. Shaped like a wheel, the Snail Shell System is covered with rubber caterpillar tracks to facilitate easy movement through the streets of a city. The system is designed for one person and works on both land and water (on water it can be rowed). The home comes equipped with air intake valves, an equipment box containing a kitchen pan, kettle, alcohol burner and plastic bags, a bilge pump and a toilet. N55 suggests the Snail Shell System can be used to transport items or used to provide protection for someone during demonstrations.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
Snail Shell System



Craig Baldwin's Billboard Outlaws

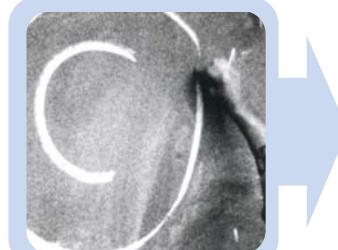
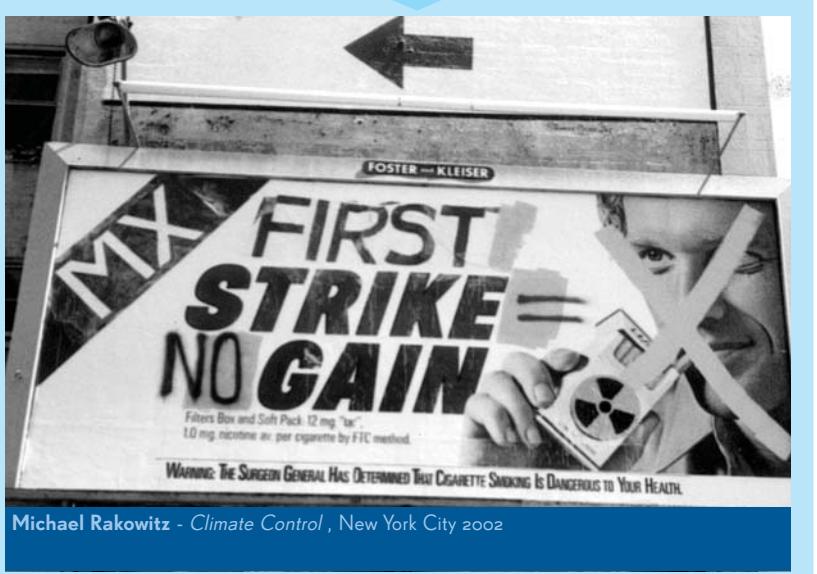
New York City, USA
Born 1955



Biographical Info:

In Temporary Occupations, Alex Villar makes visible the "uses" of public space. The video shows Villar ignoring the city's spatial codes and therefore resisting their effects upon the organization of everyday experience. He jumps fences, slides between railings and squeezes into the corners of buildings. While at first appearing somewhat Dada, the actions make visible the organization of space that is so critical to interventionist work.

In Temporary Occupations, Alex Villar makes visible the "uses" of public space. The video shows Villar ignoring the city's spatial codes and therefore resisting their effects upon the organization of everyday experience. He jumps fences, slides between railings and squeezes into the corners of buildings. While at first appearing somewhat Dada, the actions make visible the organization of space that is so critical to interventionist work.



Project Description: In Temporary Occupations, Alex Villar makes visible the "uses" of public space. The video shows Villar ignoring the city's spatial codes and therefore resisting their effects upon the organization of everyday experience. He jumps fences, slides between railings and squeezes into the corners of buildings. While at first appearing somewhat Dada, the actions make visible the organization of space that is so critical to interventionist work.

In Temporary Occupations, Alex Villar makes visible the "uses" of public space. The video shows Villar ignoring the city's spatial codes and therefore resisting their effects upon the organization of everyday experience. He jumps fences, slides between railings and squeezes into the corners of buildings. While at first appearing somewhat Dada, the actions make visible the organization of space that is so critical to interventionist work.

TITLE OF WORK:
Billboard Outlaws
2004

Alex Villar

New York City, USA
Born 1962

Biographical Info:

"Drawing from interdisciplinary theoretical sources and employing video-performance, installation and photography, I have developed a practice that concentrates on matters of social space. My interventions are done primarily in public spaces. They consist in positioning the body of the performer in situations where the codes that regulate everyday activity can be made explicit."

Born in Brazil in 1962, Villar later moved to New York where he received an MFA from Hunter College. He was a studio fellow at the Whitney Independent Studies Program. The focus of his photo and video work is the social use of space. He intervenes with his body in those areas of outdoor urban spaces that, while remaining visible, retain a marginal status. He is the recipient of the Community Arts Fund Grant by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Past US exhibitions include presentations at the Art Container, Highbridge Park and Vacancy Gallery in New York, Bona Fide Gallery in Chicago, the New Art Center in Boston and the Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art.



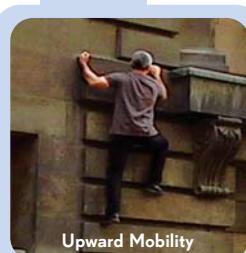
Michael Rakowitz - *Climate Control*, New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - *Climate Control*, New York City 2002



Upward Mobility



Michael Rakowitz - *Climate Control*, New York City 2002

Project Description: In Temporary Occupations, Alex Villar makes visible the "uses" of public space. The video shows Villar ignoring the city's spatial codes and therefore resisting their effects upon the organization of everyday experience. He jumps fences, slides between railings and squeezes into the corners of buildings. While at first appearing somewhat Dada, the actions make visible the organization of space that is so critical to interventionist work.

TITLE OF WORK:
Temporary Occupations
2004

The Biotic Baking BRIGADE

New York City USA
Founded 1988



Biographical Info:

The God Bless Graffiti Coalition, Inc.

Coalition, Inc. was founded in 2000 in Chicago in order to combat growing national and international anti-graffiti trends. We first published our "Give Graffiti the Thumbs Up" brochure to help educate the public about the Truth of graffiti. This brochure has been distributed on the streets by way of re-ordained newspaper boxes in Chicago, Columbus OH, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It has also been distributed by hand via an underground network of street artists. The success of our initial brochure has led us to expand our activities, including subway ads and our latest endeavor, graffiti bible tracts. We hope in the near future to make connections to pilgrims on similar roads in other parts of the world as well as bring our message to larger audiences on the radio and television via public service announcements. "For Graffiti so loved the world that it gave itself to the sole purpose of giving to earth everlasting beauty." Rusto 3:16.

For more information, go to:
www.counterproductiveindustries.com/gbdc



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control, New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control, New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control, New York City 2002

Project Description:

"The Biotic Baking Brigade (BBB) believes that under neoliberalism, we all can throw a pie in the face of economic fascism. They believe that pie-slinging is just one tool in a large toolbox of resistance to the dominant paradigm, and that pieing has broadened the scope of protest, instead of replacing other methods. They also claim, 'It's far better to pie on our feet than to live on our knees.'

The Pie is the Limit documents the work of the amorphous, international organization known as the Biotic Baking Brigade. Through the assistance of slap-stick comedies most enduring prop, the pie, the BBB have managed to embarrass most of the most powerful figures in the world. Targets of their pie throwing include: Microsoft founder Bill Gates, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, ex-president of the World Trade Organization Renaldo Ruggiero and Hilmar Kabas of Vienna's Freedom Party.

TITLE OF WORK:
Is The Limit
2004 Pie

God Bless Graffiti Coalition

Chicago, USA
Founded 2000



Biographical Info:

The God Bless Graffiti Coalition, Inc.

The God Bless Graffiti Coalition, Inc. was founded in 2000 in Chicago in order to combat growing national and international anti-graffiti trends. We first published our "Give Graffiti the Thumbs Up" brochure to help educate the public about the Truth of graffiti. This brochure has been distributed on the streets by way of re-ordained newspaper boxes in Chicago, Columbus OH, San Francisco and Los Angeles. It has also been distributed by hand via an underground network of street artists. The success of our initial brochure has led us to expand our activities, including subway ads and our latest endeavor, graffiti bible tracts. We hope in the near future to make connections to pilgrims on similar roads in other parts of the world as well as bring our message to larger audiences on the radio and television via public service announcements. "For Graffiti so loved the world that it gave itself to the sole purpose of giving to earth everlasting beauty." Rusto 3:16.

For more information, go to:
www.counterproductiveindustries.com/gbgc



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Project Description: The collective God Bless Graffiti Coalition, Inc. has curated and assembled a collection of over 200 wheatpaste posters from artists around the globe. These posters, which generally adorn the streets of major cities, present one of the most common and compelling forms of interventionist practices.

TITLE OF WORK:
On The Day
2004
8th



GBGC²⁰⁰⁴

Project Description:

In this ambitious site-sensitive project, J. Morgan Puett produced a participatory installation that references the textile history of the MASS MoCA campus when it was Arnold Print Works. As one enters the gallery, they are confronted with a massive shell of a factory. An abandoned chimney and crumbling two story brick exterior face the viewer. As one peeks around the crumbling façade, they notice a burnt out, abandoned shed. Entering the shed, they are quickly confronted with a real working business: That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, Ltd. Amongst a cornucopia of textile swatch books, papers referencing the old history of Arnold Print Works and a television playing Rod Serling's gripping play called The Suit, a tailor is measuring people for suits. The suit, it appears, is the site of investigation. Or is it management? Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).

New York City, USA

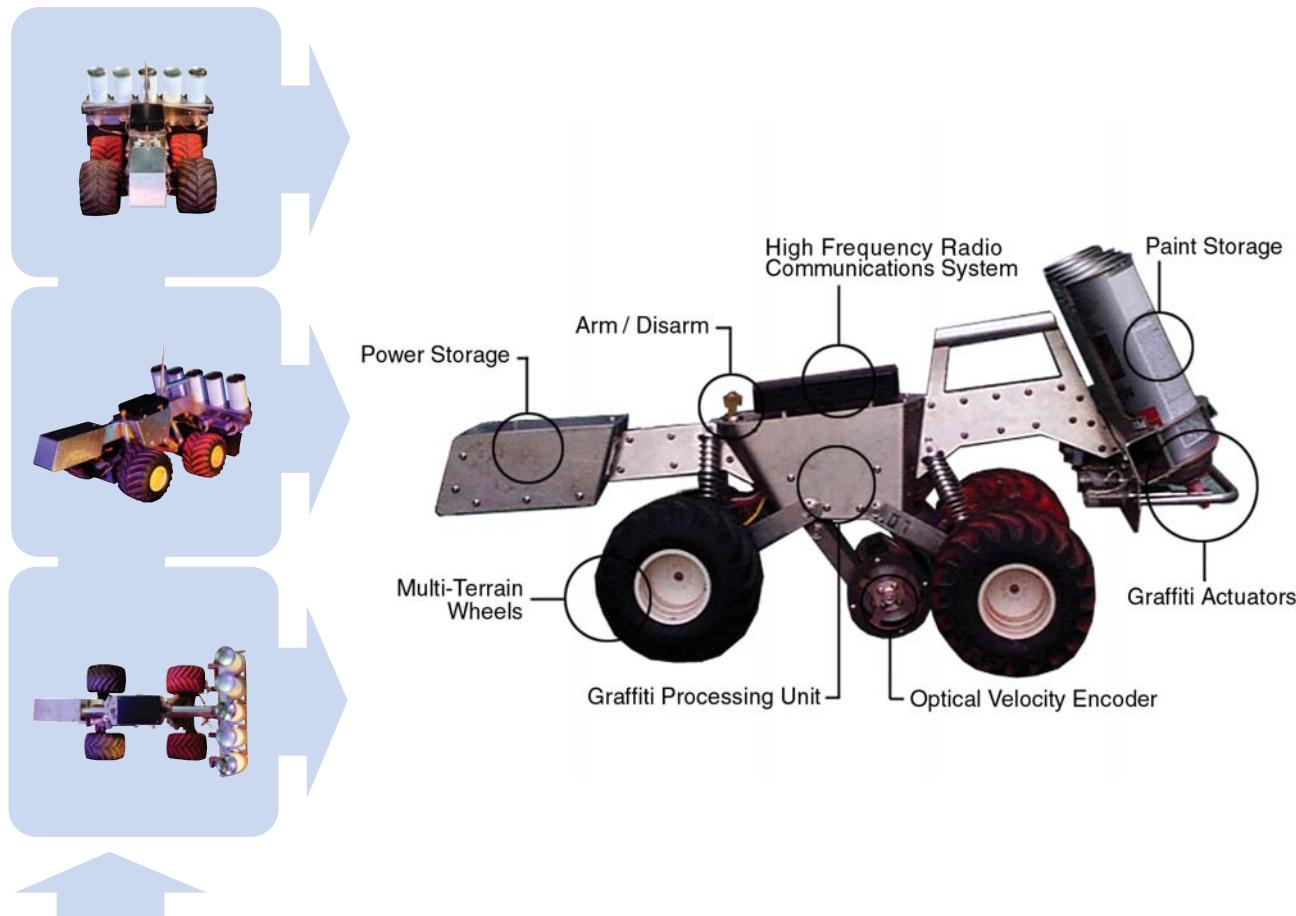
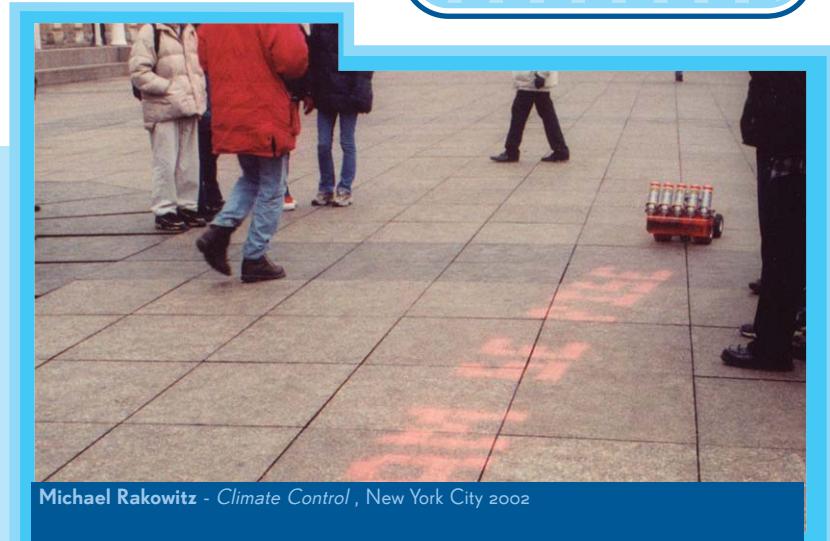
Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA)

Founded 1998

Biographical Info:

Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) was founded in 1998 as a technological research and development organization concerned with individual and collective self-determination.

Their mission is to study the forces and structures which effect self-determination; to create cultural artifacts which address these forces; and to develop technologies which serve social and human needs. The Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) is an anonymous collective of critically-engaged artists, engineers, and researchers. The IAA has exhibited and lectured widely since its founding in 1998 at such diverse venues as the Zentrum fur Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM), Hackers on Planet Earth (HOPE), and the IEEE International Conference of Robotics and Automation.



Project Description:

Their video documents three projects of Contestational Robotics and one project from their Inverse Surveillance Program. Little Brother, GraffitiWriter, and StreetWriter are examples of Contestational Robotics, an IAA research initiative to develop technologies that meet the needs of street protesters. Contestational robots, or Robotic Objectors, are intended to support or replace human activists in a legislative and cultural environment that is increasingly hostile to acts of public dissent. For example, StreetWriter, is a graffiti-writing robot disguised as a 1986 Ford Extended-Body Cargo Van, capable of writing text messages that are hundreds of yards in length.

iSee was developed under the IAA's Inverse Surveillance program, which enables citizens to monitor state and corporate surveillance networks and agents. The iSee software tools for mapping and avoiding CCTV cameras run in web-browsers and on PDAs, and were developed with the support of the ZKM, Rhizome.org, and Eyebeam Atelier. It debuted in the fall of 2001, and was optimized for use during the 2002 World Economic Forum meeting in New York. iSee has also been deployed in Amsterdam and Ljubljana, Slovenia.

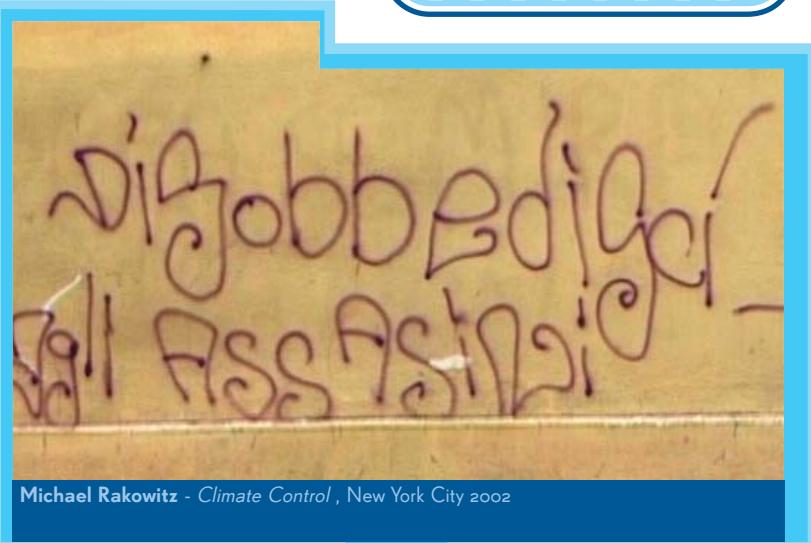
TITLE OF WORK:
1998
The Institute for
Applied Autonomy

Oliver Ressler Dario Azzellini

Milan, Italy
Born 1955, 1956



Biographical Info:



Project Description: The video "Disobbedienti" thematizes the Disobbedienti's origins, political bases, and forms of direct action on the basis of conversations with seven members of the movement. The Disobbedienti emerged from the Tute Bianche during the demonstrations against the G8 summit in Genoa in July 2001. The "Tute Bianche" were the white-clad Italian activists who used their bodies - protected by foam rubber, tires, helmets, gas masks, and homemade shields - in direct acts and demonstrations as weapons of civil disobedience. The Tute Bianche first appeared in Italy in 1994 in the midst of a social setting in which the "mass laborer," who had played a central role in the 1970s in production and in labor struggles, was gradually replaced in the transition to precarious post-Fordist means of production. At the G8 summit in Genoa the Tute Bianche decided to take off their trademark white overalls that had given them their name and instead blend in the multitude of 300,000 demonstration participants. The transition from the Tute Bianche to the Disobbedienti, the disobedients, also marked a development from "civil disobedience" to "social disobedience." The repressive actions and massacre by the police force in Genoa brought the practice of social disobedience in from the streets to the most diverse social realms. In the video, the Disobbedienti spokesperson Luca Casarini describes the Tute Bianche as a subjective experience and a small army, whereas Disobbedienti is a multitude and a movement.

TITLE OF WORK:
Disobbedienti
2001

Street Rec

New York City, USA
Founded 2003

Biographical Info:

The Real Terrorists in the Middle East
SHARON BUSH SHARON BUSH SHARON BUSH SHARON BUSH

Now try a Double Cheeseburger

Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control, New York City 2002

Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control, New York City 2002



Project Description: Street Rec was a radical arts collective that existed for about 9 months (January 2003-Fall 2003). They were born out of the protests against the World Economic Forum (WEF) in New York City, and were more generally an outgrowth of the cultural organizing spawned from the Department of Space and Land Reclamation event held in Chicago in April 2001. Retooling Dissent documents some of the tactical projects produced during the World Economic Forum protests in New York City in February 2002. The video documents a project by Street Rec where they produced satirized large-scale heads of political figures like Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. It also documents projects by the Institute for Applied Autonomy, Las Agencias, and Affecttech.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
Retooling
Dissent

The Surveillance Camera Players

New York City USA
Founded 1996

Biographical Info:



Project Description: The Surveillance Camera Players is a group formed in New York City in November 1996. They protest the use of surveillance cameras in public places because they believe these cameras violate a constitutionally protected right to privacy. The SCP manifests this opposition by performing specially adapted plays directly in front of these cameras. They use their visibility – through public appearances, interviews with the media, and the website – to explode the myth that only those who are “guilty of something” are opposed to being surveilled by unknown eyes. Bill Brown from the SCP conducts walking tours of heavily surveilled neighborhoods for free in New York City and other areas.

TITLE OF WORK:
Surveillance Camera Players
1996

New York City, USA
The Reverend Billy
 Born 1955

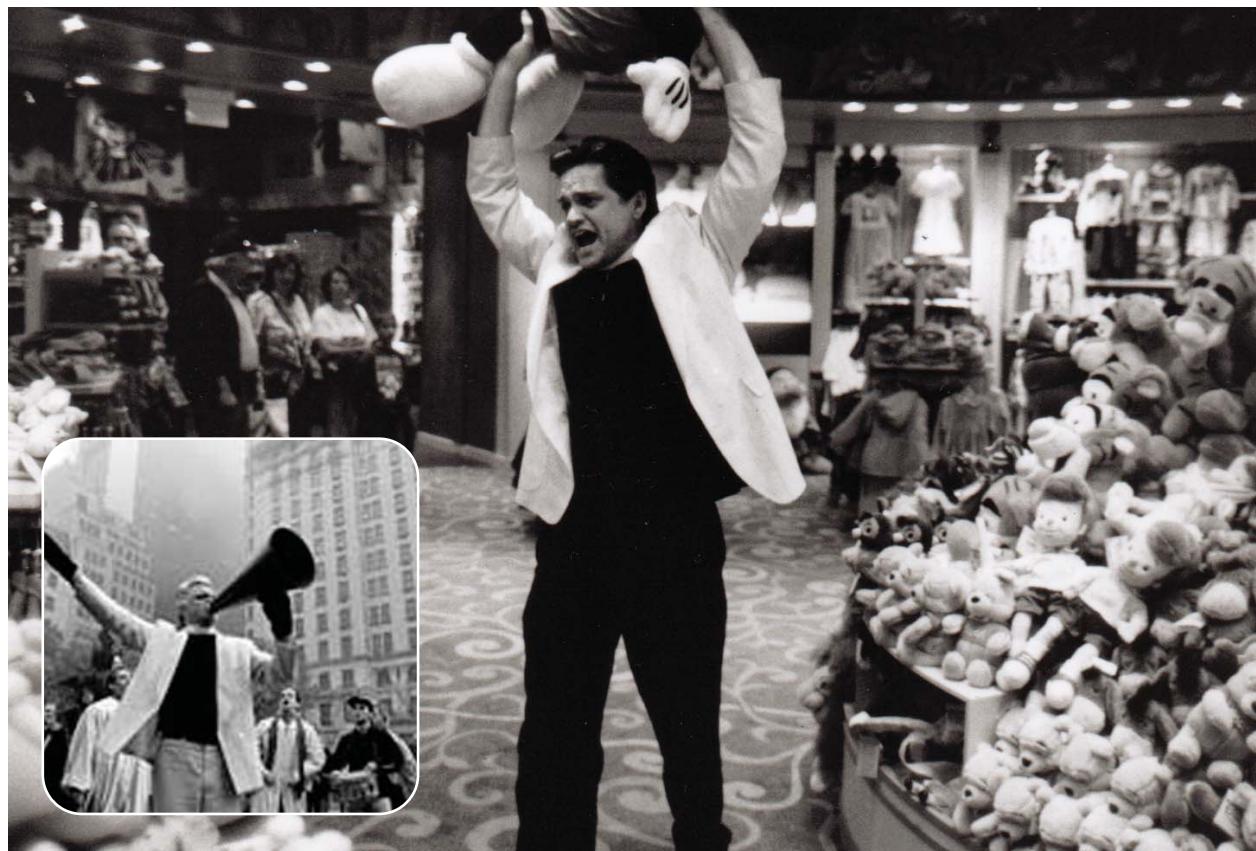
Biographical Info:



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Project Description: The Reverend Billy is a revivalist preacher who leads the Church of Stop Shopping, an anti-consumerist communion devoted to putting the odd into God. Created by the actor Bill Talen, the Reverend first appeared alongside the sidewalk preachers in Times Square during the Giuliani years, bringing his new post-religious theology to eager crowds. In these pages we go inside the Disney Store on 42nd Street ("the high church of retail") to witness staged dramas against consumerism that employ 800 neurotic Disney characters with their "reeling eyeballs and sky-cracking grins" as the mise en scène. We encounter the icon-twisting logic of credit card exorcism performed in front of astonished tourists, and listen to a gospel choir made up of "recovering preachers' kids" singing anti-Starbucks anthems at the cash register of the \$5 latte. We watch as the defense of a community garden is turned into an Off-Broadway hit and join with the Reverend as he preaches love and peace to the crowds that gathered spontaneously in Union Square after the attacks of September 11. Bill Talen is an actor and an activist who, as the Reverend Billy, has appeared regularly on National Public Radio and has been featured in The New York Times and The Observer. He lives and preaches in New York City.

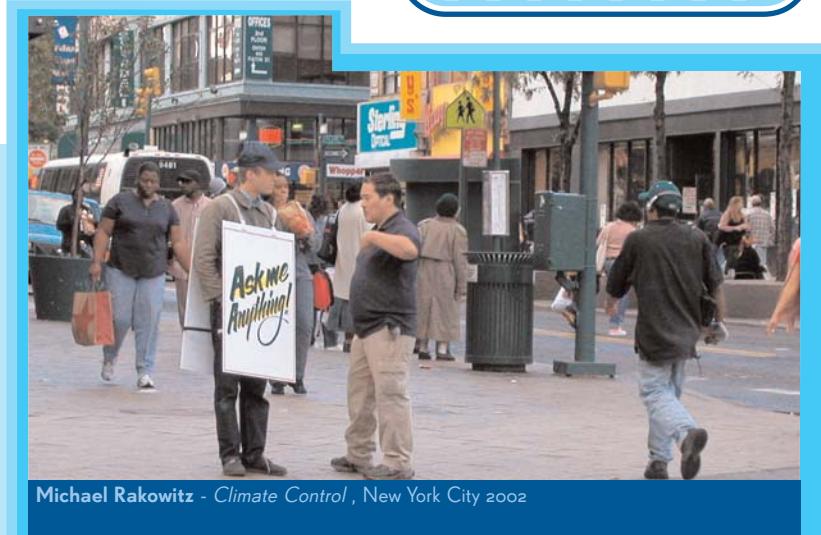
TITLE OF WORK:
 2004
 The
 Reverend Billy

Valerie Tevere

New York City, USA
Born 1955

Biographical Info:

Valerie Tevere is a multidisciplinary artist working in New York City. In different forms – video, performance, collaboration, activism, micro-radio broadcasting – Tevere's practice has looked to the public sphere as a condition and framework for inquiry and discourse. Her work is driven by discursive practices and constructions of representation, site and the public sphere. Current projects permeate the urban environment as temporal public works and performances that rely upon structured yet spontaneous encounters with city inhabitants. Valerie Tevere was an Artist-in-Residence at Smart Project Space in Amsterdam (2001), recipient of a Mellon Humanities fellowship at the CUNY Graduate Center (2002/2003), and an Artist-in-Residence with the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC, 2002).



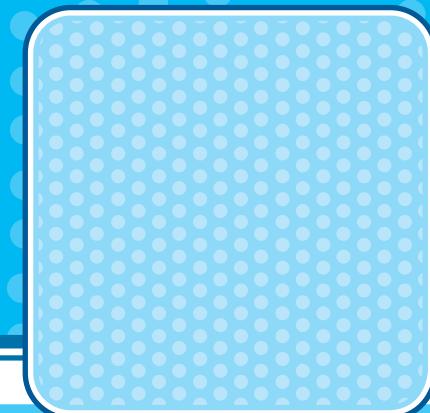
Project Description:

A Preliminary guide to Public and Private Space in Amsterdam, 2001
Project Description: Valerie Tevere's interactive DVD project, A Preliminary Guide to Public and Private Space in Amsterdam, is an idiosyncratic mapping of Amsterdam based on citizens' perceptions of private and public space. Through interviews with residents, Tevere creates a map determined by (seemingly) arbitrarily chosen public and private spots, delimiting various alternative routes through the city based on the practices of individual walkers. Like Piper, Tevere explores the interpenetration of public and private spheres, emphasizing as well chance encounters and the creative appropriation of space by its users. For the work's audience, navigating the interactive format of Tevere's DVD project mirrors the actual walking in the city.

TITLE OF WORK:

2004
*A Preliminary
 guide to Public
 and Private Space in
 Amsterdam, 2001*

New York City
USA
WILLIAM POPE L.
Born 1955



For Biographical Info see page 45



Project Description

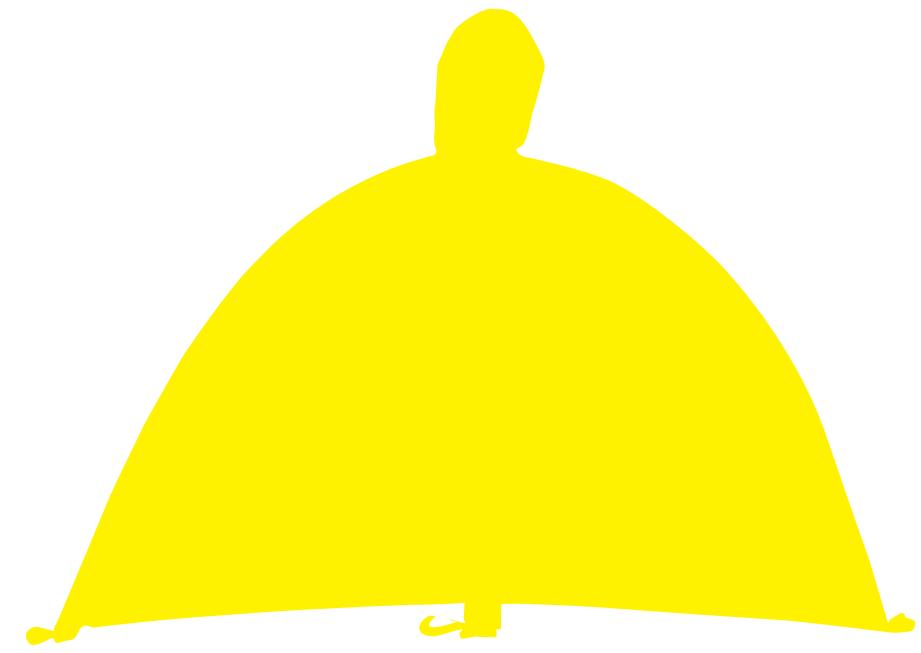
TITLE OF WORK:

2004
Shiong Journey



READY TO WEAR

Chapter 3



Lucy Orta

Born 1966

Eindhoven, The Netherlands

For biographical info see page 45

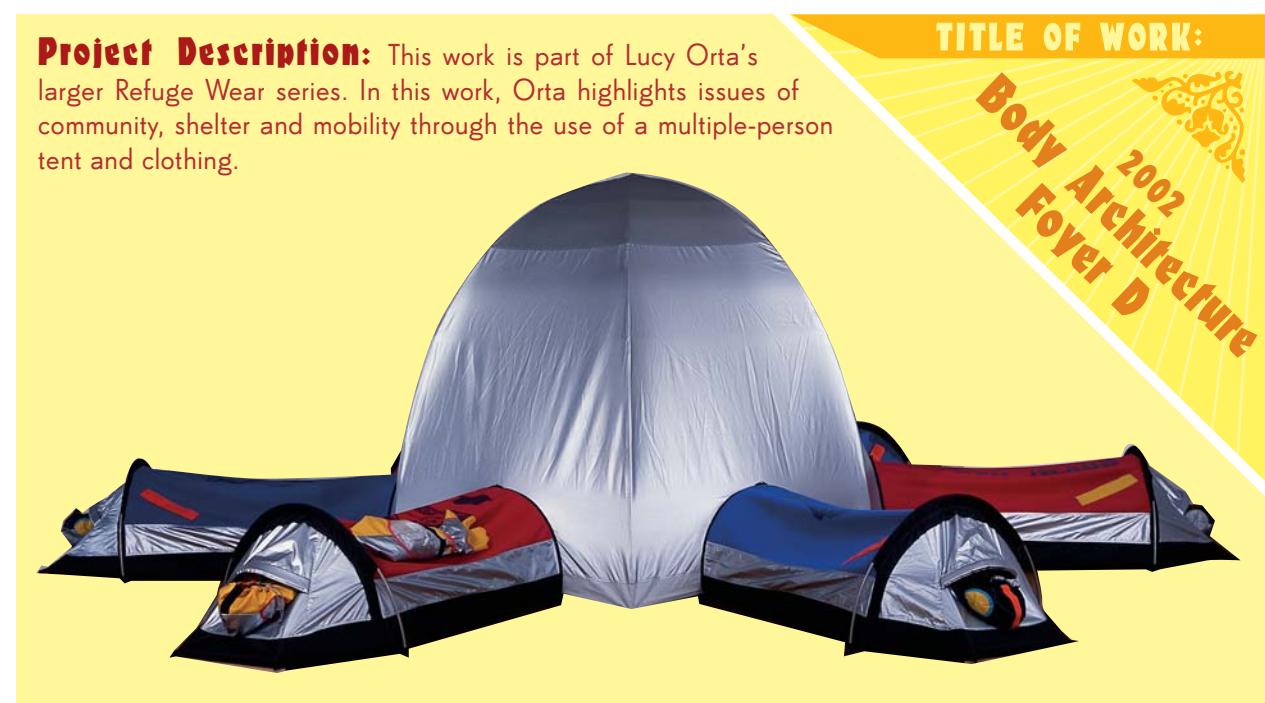


Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

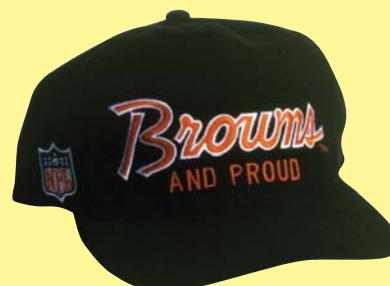


Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

Project Description: This work is part of Lucy Orta's larger Refuge Wear series. In this work, Orta highlights issues of community, shelter and mobility through the use of a multiple-person tent and clothing.



Rubén Ortiz-Torres
Mexico City, Mexico
Born 1964



TITLE OF WORK:

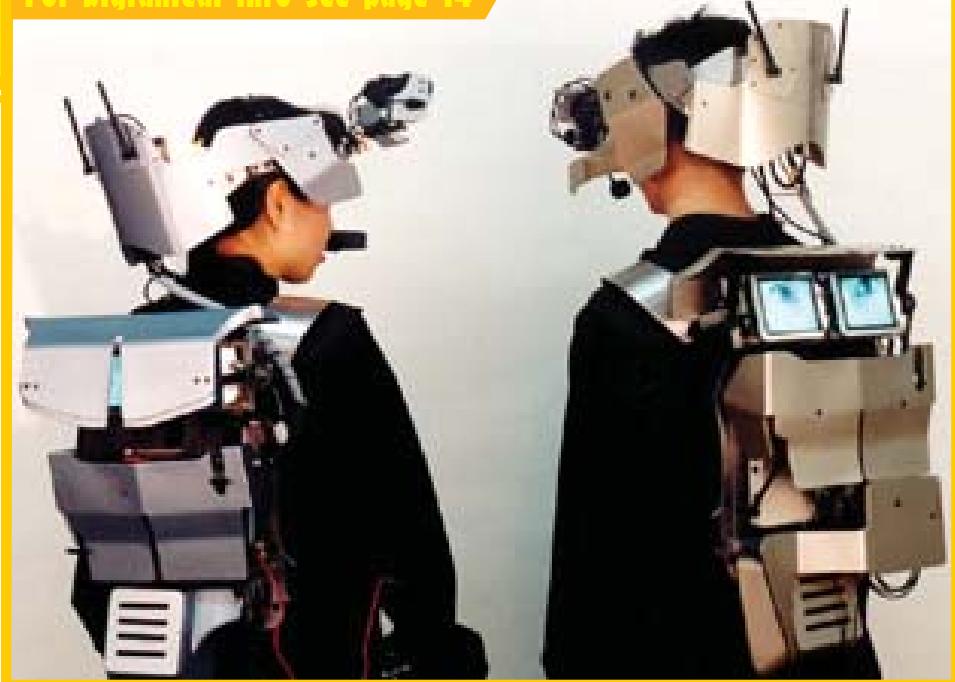
2004 HATS



Project Description: Rubén Ortiz-Torres has produced a series of baseball hats that, through the re-arrangement of their insignias, produce new, culturally charged meanings.

Krzysztof Wodiczko
Boston, USA
Born 1968

For biographical info see page 14



TITLE OF WORK:

2004 DIS-ARMOR

Project Description: Originally created for the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Dis-Armor is a technological prosthetic designed to assist in communication for those who feel alienated, traumatized, and silenced. The project consists of a series of LCD screens, worn on the back, which display the eyes of the wearer to the person viewing. The voice of the wearer emits through a speaker in the back as well. In addition, the wearer can see and hear the person they are communicating with through a series of video cameras and microphones. In essence, Dis-Armor allows the wearer to face those whom they ordinarily could not and thus acts as a catalyst for social dialogue.

In the manifestation for MASS MoCA, Dis-Armor has been used to assist Arab Americans discuss their experiences since September 11th. By allowing a wearer to face a viewer while still retaining a sense of personal safety and anonymity, Dis-Armor assists in discussing painful experiences.

The Yes Men

Seattle, USA
Founded 1999

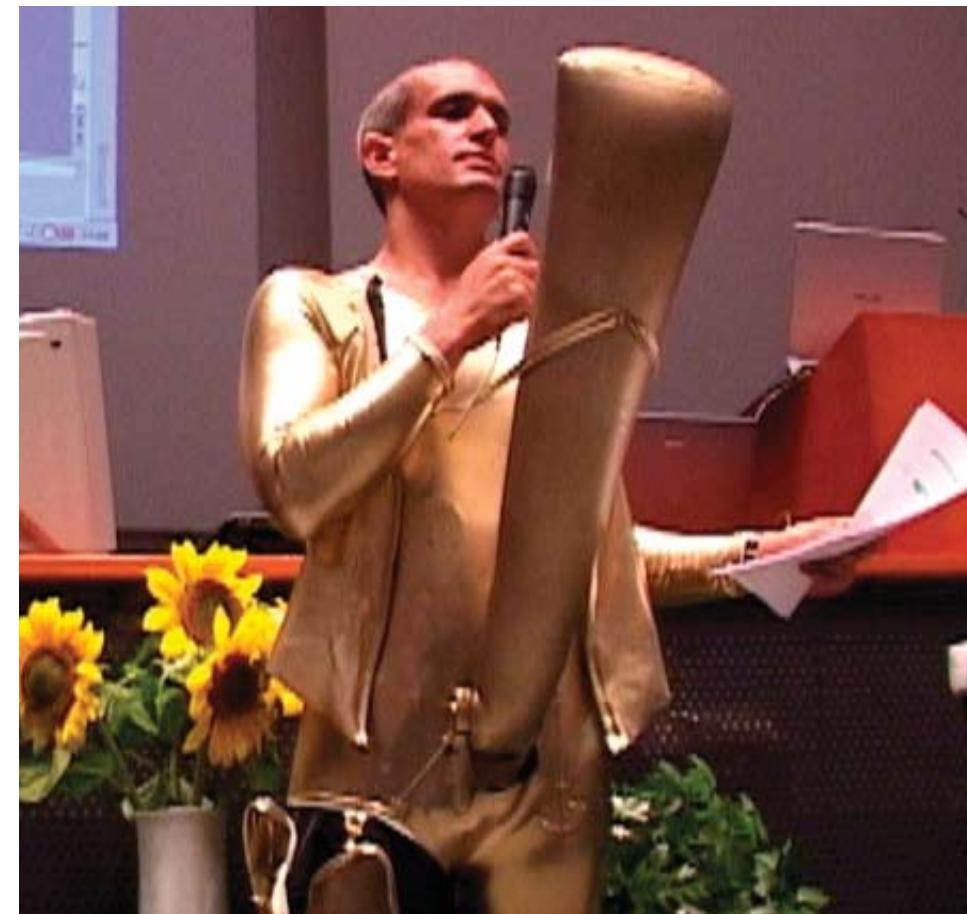
Biographical Info:

The Yes Men are an ambiguous collective consisting of a number of individuals they are reluctant to reveal. Currently their two most visible members are Mike Bonanno and Andy Bichlbaum. Mike and Andy previously worked on the website RTMark and in 1999 were approached by Zack Exley who had registered the domain www.gobush.com. Reaching back into your memory, you might recall a scandal during the 1999 elections regarding the website that caused George W. Bush to say, "There ought to be limits to freedom." This scandal was developed under the tactical tutelage of the Yes Men whose project was to simply use the web site to satirize the positions of the future president.



TITLE OF WORK:

Project Description: In 1999, as an interventionist contribution to the upcoming anti-WTO protests in Seattle, the Yes Men developed a web site titled www.gatt.org which many web surfers confused as the official site for the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. The confusion was exactly what the Yes Men wanted and they continued to satirize the World Trade Organization through the content of the site. What they did not count on, however, was that visitors would soon be inviting the Yes Men to present on behalf of the World Trade Organization. Since then, they have appeared in numerous classrooms and business conventions on behalf of the WTO. Through the use of absurd power point presentations and costumes, they have managed to baffle and astound their audiences around the world. They have recently produced a series of playing cards as a reaction to the "Most Wanted" playing cards made popular during the 2002 Iraq War. A film by American Movie director Dan Olman, Sarah Price, and Chris Smith on the Yes Men is due out in theaters in 2005.



Project Description:

The Management Leisure Suit and Breakaway Business Suit is a distinctive remnant from one of the Yes Men's most memorable lectures in Tampere, Finland. Once again, invited to speak on behalf of the World Trade Organization at a "Textile of the Future" conference, Andy Bichlbaum posing as Hank Hardy Unruh gave a stunning lecture on the dangers of equating freedom with the free market. The most astounding claim Mr. Unruh gave was that the U.S. Civil War (in which slavery became illegal) was a useless waste of time and resources, because slavery (imported labor) would have eventually been replaced by the much cheaper system of remote labor—like we have in sweatshops today.

To conclude his talk, Hank Hardy Unruh's business suit was ripped off to reveal a golden leotard with a three-foot phallus. The purpose of the "Management Leisure Suit", Hank explained, was to allow managers, no matter where they were, to control their remote workforces in the developing world. Using a video interface at the end of the phallus, the manager can see the workers and give them electric shocks when they don't work fast enough.

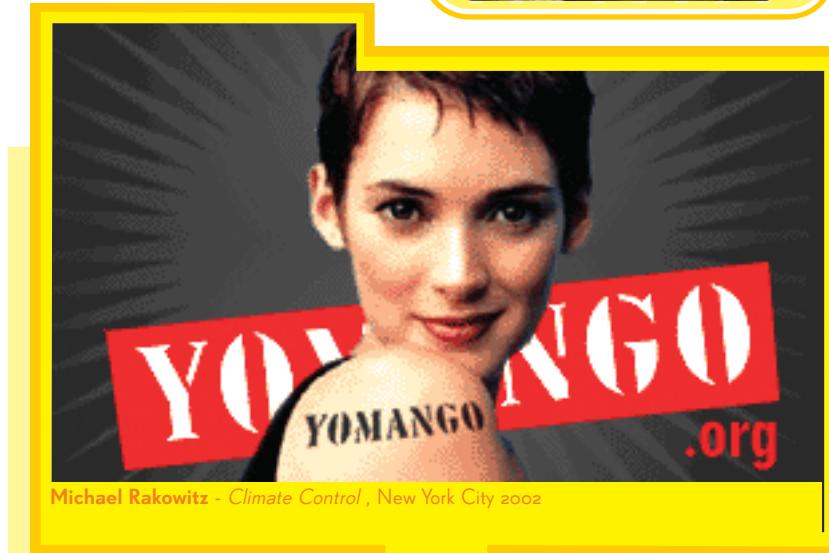
TITLE OF WORK:

Management Leisure Suit and Breakaway Business Suit

Founded 2001
Barcelona, Spain
yomango

Biographical Info:

The name **YOMANGO** is the combination of two distinctly Spanish terms. Mango is a popular Spanish clothing chain currently expanding across Europe. YOMANGO, in Spanish slang means 'I steal'. For this Spanish anarchist collective, who has a rotating cast of members, their name YOMANGO is a brand name as well. "Like all other major brand names is not so much about selling concrete stuff, but more about promoting a lifestyle. In this case, the YOMANGO lifestyle consists of shoplifting as a form of social disobedience and direct action against multinational corporations." As a particular part of their struggle, YOMANGO promotes the tactics of illegality and in particular, stealing.



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

Project Description: "This magic bag makes objects disappear. It's ergonomically designed to be the ultimate shoplifting utensil. It is simple to make and is based on the same principals as the devices used by magicians and other tricksters. YOMANGO converts going to the mall into a magical experience."

YOMANGO has produced a shopping bag for shoplifting. In line with their ongoing interest in illegality, they have produced a series of clothing patterns where visitors can make their own bag. YOMANGO likes to think of this work as "clothing for civil disobedience."



TITLE OF WORK:
Yomango Bag
2004

Center for Tactical Magic

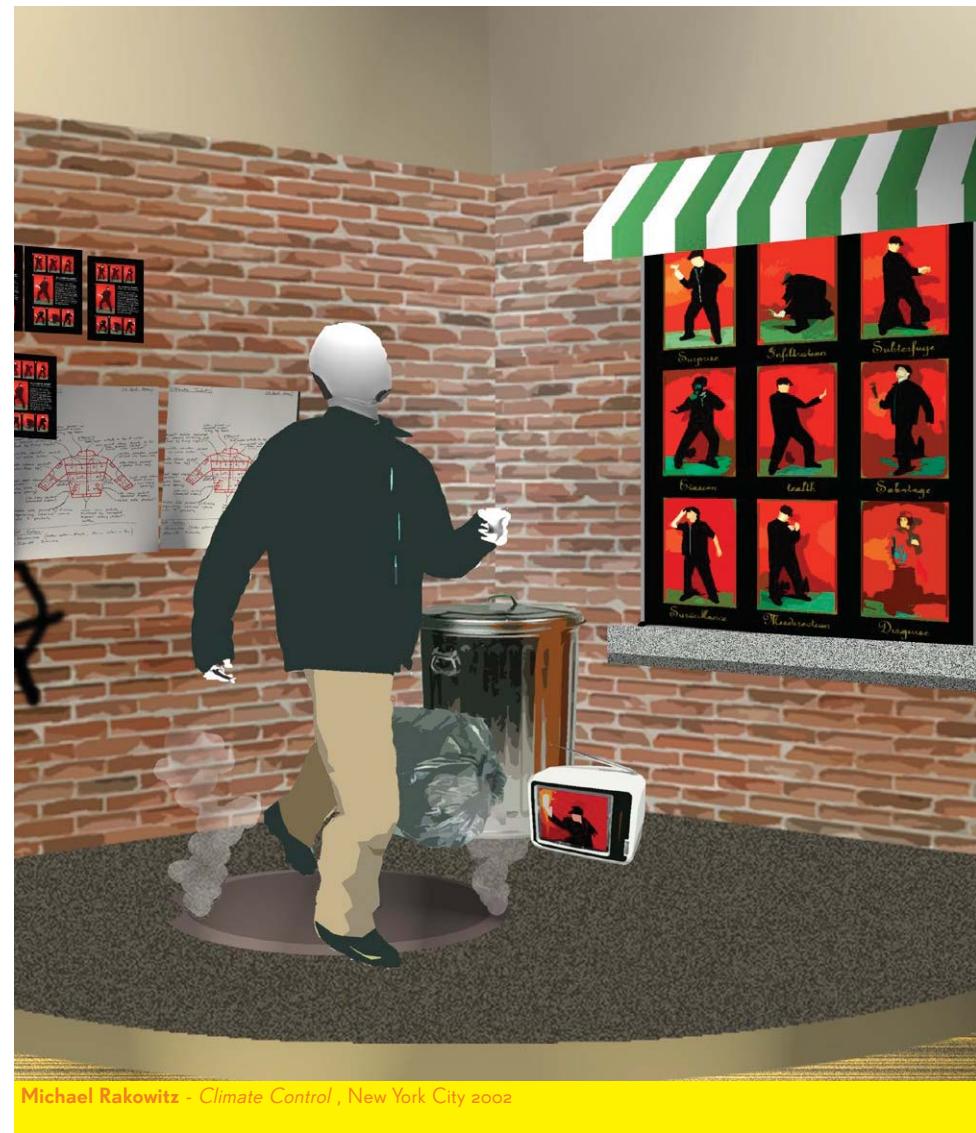
New York City, USA
Founded 2003

Biographical Info:

What is the **Center for Tactical Magic (CTM)**? The CTM defines "tactical magic" as: A fusion force derived from seemingly disparate "art" paradigms and invoked for the purpose of activating the social imaginary with notions of responsible citizenship through creative action. They appropriate the behaviors of the magician, the ninja, the artist, and the private investigator to make connections amidst an illusion of order, control, and restriction. In this way "magical thinking" drops its cloak of transcendental escapism and materializes as a social, political, and cultural counter perception - an alternative worldview that summons the creative and prophetic power of the multitude.



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

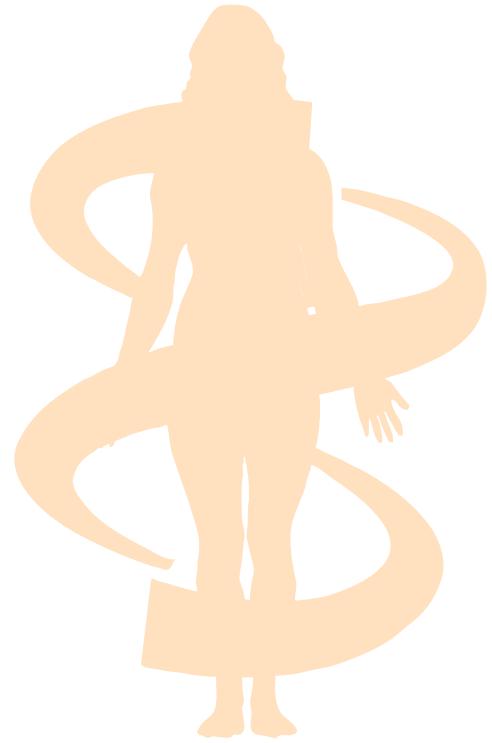


Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



TITLE OF WORK:
The Ultimate Jacket
2004

Project Description: The Ultimate Jacket embodies many of the tactics that the Center for Tactical Magic (CTM) advocates: surprise, infiltration, subterfuge, disguise, misdirection, sabotage, stealth, evasion, and surveillance. This garment facilitates a range of actions for its wearer and, embodies the strange, diverse sensibilities that encompass the CTM. "At the earliest stages of research, it became apparent to us that private investigators, magicians, and ninjas all used secret pockets in their day-to-day activities. This discovery led the Center for Tactical Magic to develop the Ultimate Jacket, an inconspicuous, yet stylish, garment concealing no less than fifty secret pockets. Designed to hold a vast array of useful items for every day interdiction, the Ultimate Jacket is made from an abrasive-resistant, non-reflective, breathable, waterproof material."



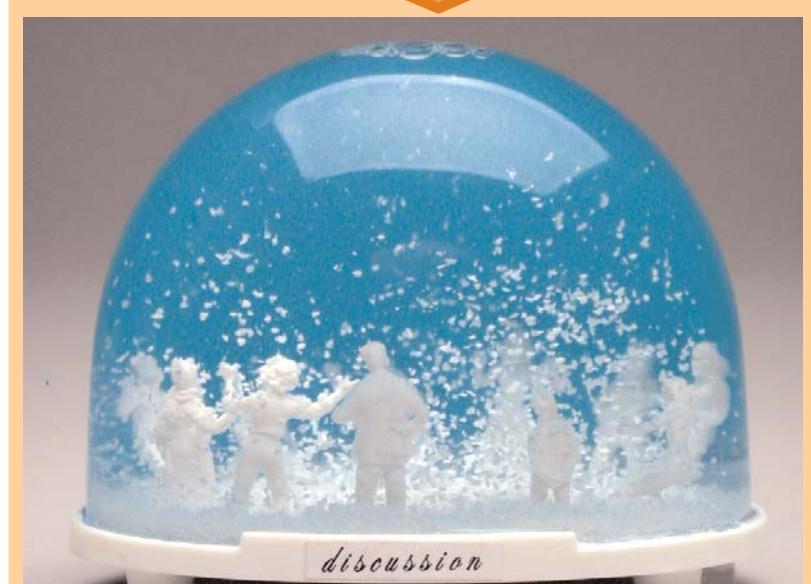
16 Beaver St.

Founded 2003

Biographical Info:

16Beaver is a network of artists, curators, writers, thinkers and activists who converge on a regular basis at a space in Lower Manhattan to discuss issues, exchange ideas, and raise questions. Some people are "regulars" and involved on a day to day basis, and others come in and out at their liking. The arrangement remains open to anyone who is interested. Some collaborative projects are born out of discussions; in other cases people take the discussions as a starting point for their individual pursuits. In addition to artist presentations, political discussions, organized happenings, lunches, walks, parties, screenings and the like, participants regularly share and discuss readings with one another, opening the space for what Joseph Beuys referred to as an "ongoing conference."

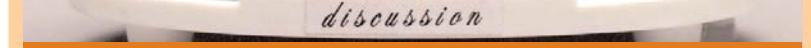
An ongoing conference that combines the most pressing social, political, artistic, and philosophical questions within the framework of the everyday, the routine, the quotidian.



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

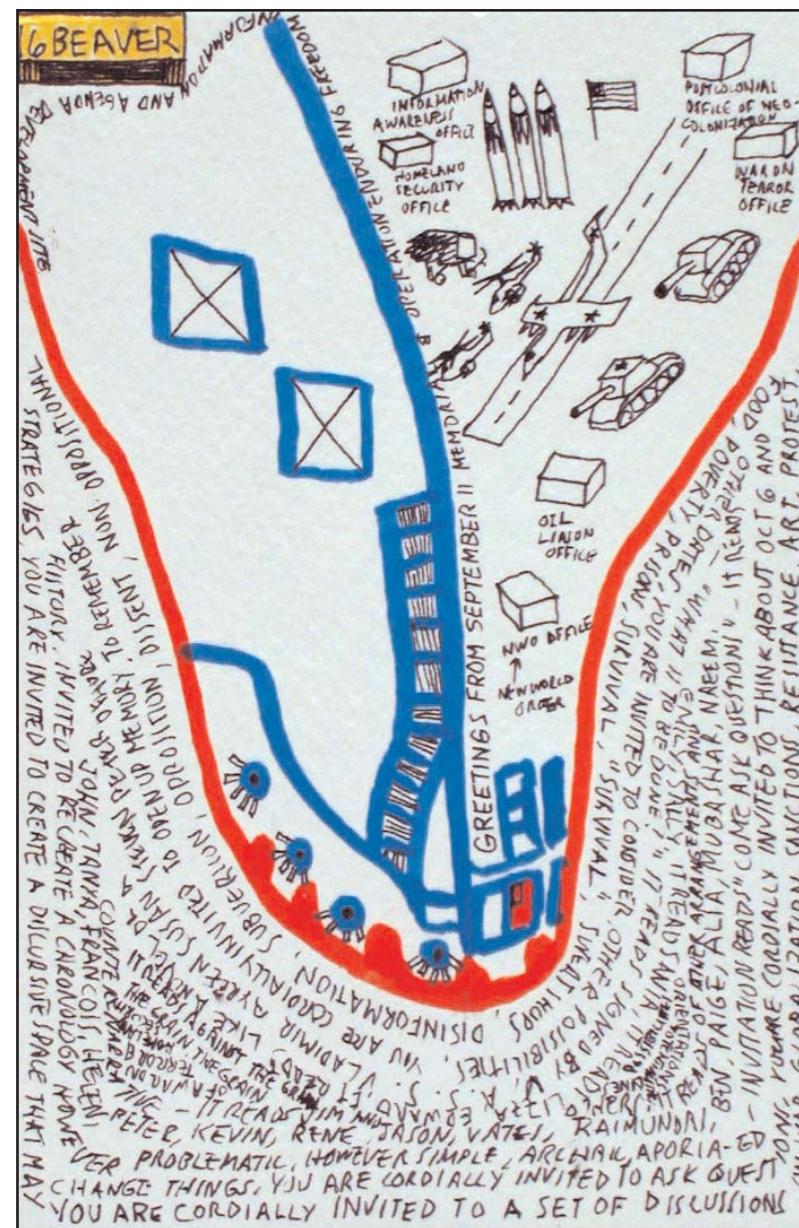


Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



16Beavergroup* **1** Strength or continuity derived from an initial effort. **2** A directing influence or guidance, spec. (esp. in the Society of Friends) a spiritual indication of the proper course of action in any case. **3a** Strong predilection, liking, or fondness for, or devotion to something. **b** An instance of affection (now rare). Formerly also, an act of kindness. **4** The fitting moment; the momentary conjunction of circumstances, esp. as affording an opportunity. **5** 'many, much', 'having, involving, containing, etc., many' (many variously connoting 'two or more', 'three or more', 'several', or 'a large number' in different contexts) **6** The state of having time at one's own disposal. Opportunity afforded by freedom from occupations. time remaining, sufficient time. **7** The course taken by something in relation to the point towards which it is moving; the line towards anything in its relation to a given line; a point to or from which a person moves, turns, etc. the course of development of thought, effort, or action; a distinct tendency or trend; consistent progress. **8** Differing from itself in different circumstances, at different times, or in different parts; changeful; varied. **9** A deep resonant sound. **10** An index of the average level of share prices on the New York Stock Exchange at any time, based on the daily price of a selection of representative stocks. **11** He or him himself, I or me myself, it itself, she or her herself, we or us ourselves, you yourself, you yourselves, they or them themselves. **12** An engine or motor vehicle with sixteen cylinders. **13a** Move, set in motion. **b** Utter, cause (a voice or sound) to be heard. Also, make (a gesture). **c** Move (a thing) from the normal place or position; shift, displace. **14** A collection of saints' lives or similar stories. **15a** Steady or uniform in action, procedure, or occurrence; esp. recurring or repeated at fixed times, recurring at short uniform intervals. **b** Pursuing a definite course or observing a uniform principle of action or conduct. Now esp. observing fixed times for or never failing in the performance of certain actions or duties. **16** A state of supreme happiness.

*OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY - THE USEFUL EDITION
EDITED BY AYREEN ANASTAS



Project Description: In the context of this exhibition, 16 Beaver Group acts as a conversational New York Satellite to MASS MoCA. A series of talks will be held which revolve around questions of interventionism, but also, the broader socio-political climate today. Thinkers, artists and activists will be invited to present ideas.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
16beaver -
Mass MoCA Series -
The Ongoing Conference,

The Atlas Group

Founded 2003

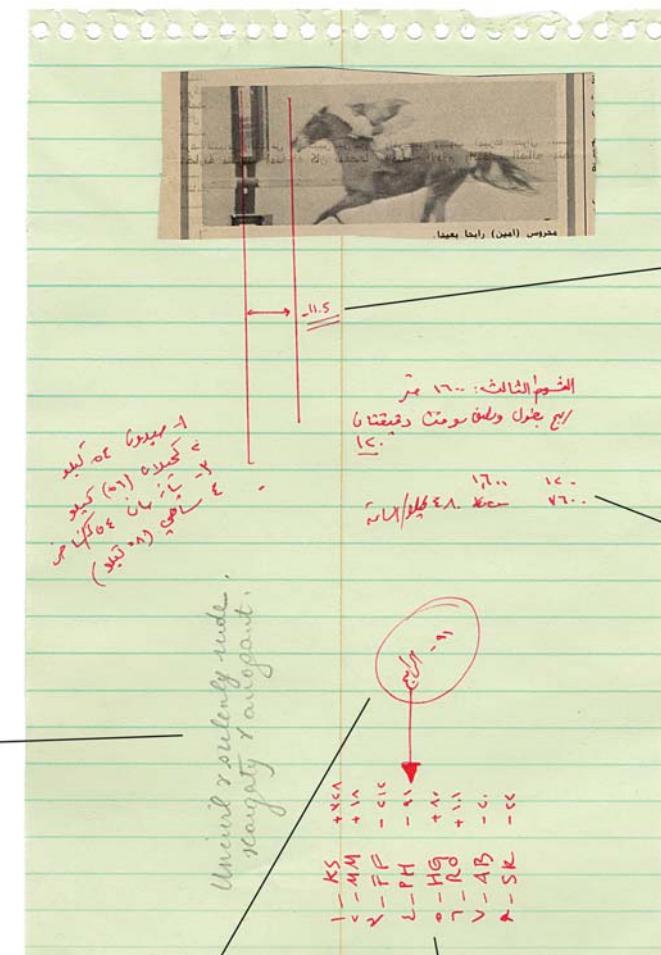
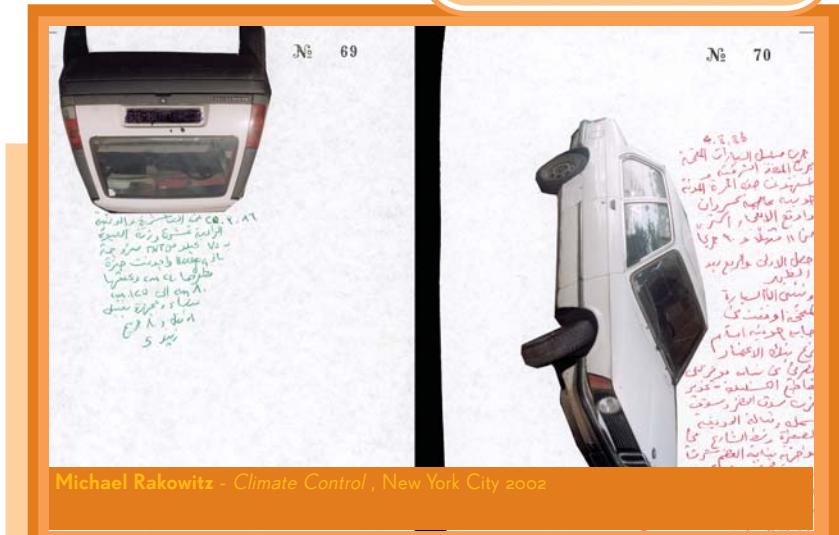
Beirut
Lebanon



Biographical Info:

The Atlas Group is an imaginary, non-profit research foundation, founded by Walid Ra'ad in 1999 in Beirut to explore the contemporary history of Lebanon and, in particular, some of the unexamined dimensions of the Lebanese wars (1975-1991)."

Walid Ra'ad is a media artist and Assistant Professor at the Cooper Union in New York City. The Atlas Group focuses specifically on the Lebanese Civil War with particular emphasis on the visual aspects of this war. Their archival material is predominately "imaginary" which is to say, they make it up. The conception of imaginary research may at beguile a viewer, until the images themselves and their captivating visual iconography actually manage to provide insights into the visual history of the Lebanese Civil War. Walid Ra'ad's work has been included in the 2002 Whitney Biennial, New York, and Documenta XI, Kassel, 2002. His critical essays have been published in Third Text, and he is a member of The Arab Image Foundation, Beirut/New York.



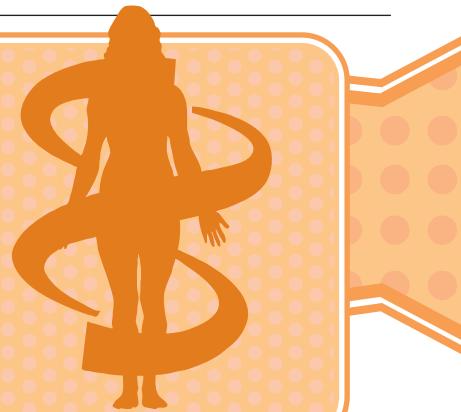
Project Description: This exhibition displays the Fakhouri documents at The Atlas Group Archive. It is not intended to give audiences a sense of The Atlas Group's mission and documents in general. Rather, it concentrates on a particular file from the archive, that of Dr. Fadl Fakhouri. The displayed documents consist of all the documents attributed to the historian, namely 2 notebooks, 2 film/videotapes, and photographs.

TITLE OF WORK:
The Truth Will be Known when the Last Witness is Dead
2003

Critical Art Ensemble with Beatriz de Costa

Founded 1987

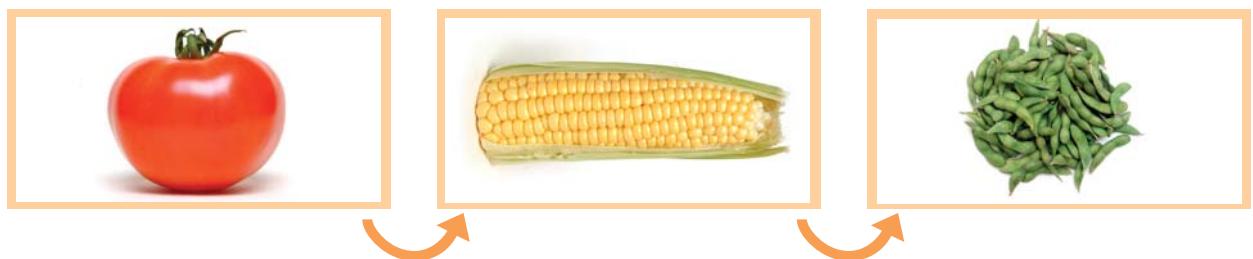
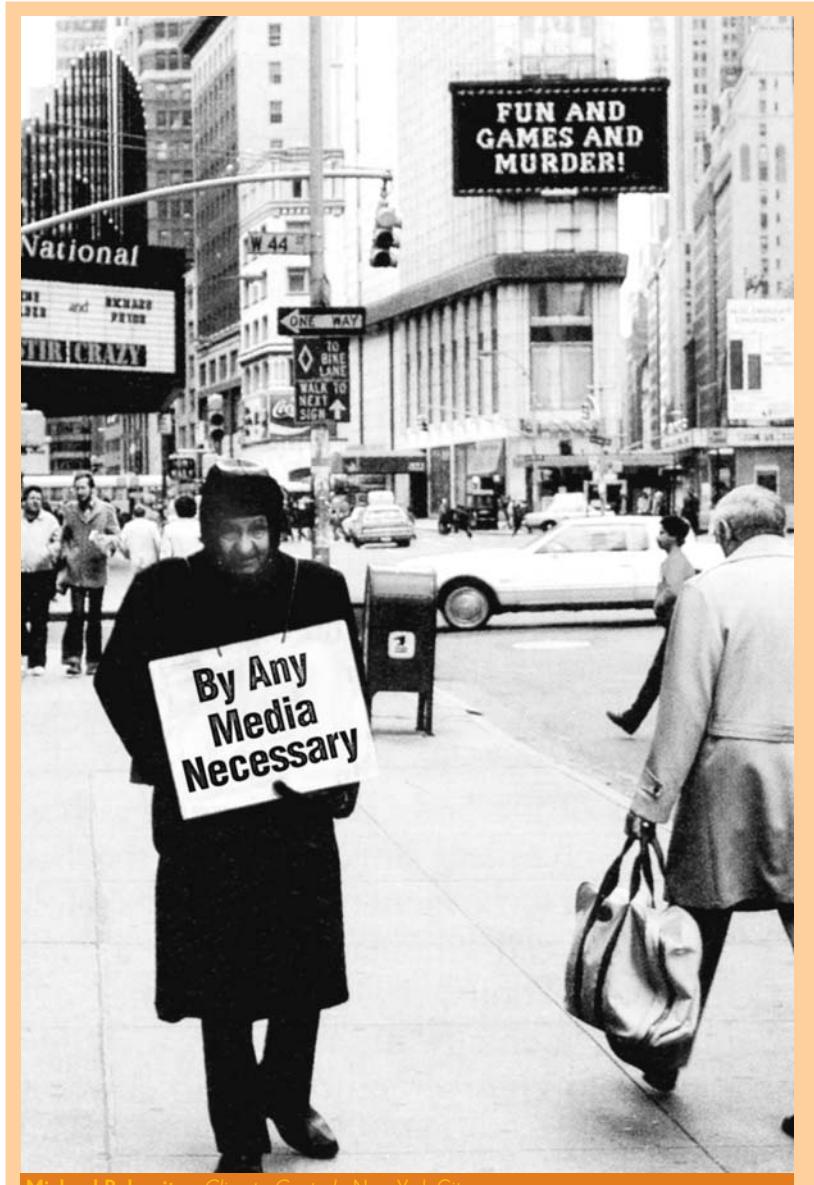
Irvine
USA



Biographical Info:

Tactical Media is situational, ephemeral and self-terminating. It encourages the use of any media that will engage a particular socio-political context in order to create molecular interventions and semiotic shocks that contribute to the negation of the rising intensity of authoritarian culture."

Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), founded in 1987, is a collective of five tactical media artists of various specialization including wetware, computer graphics and web art, film/video, photography, text art, book art, and performance. CAE's focus has been on the exploration of the relations and intersections between art, critical theory, technology, and political activism. Their influential 1994 book, *The Electronic Disturbance*, along with their other books and cultural actions, has made the collective synonymous with the term "Tactical Media." The collective continues to write and produce projects, and over the past eight years has focused on the social and political implications of biotechnology. Since the summer of 2000, CAE collaborates with artist/researcher Beatriz da Costa. De Costa is a Machine Artist and Tactical Media Practitioner who is currently Assistant Professor of Studio Art, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at U.C. Irvine.



Project Description: "In executing projects such as this one, we hope to contribute to an idea of public science by focusing on issues (such as food production) that are of direct interest to people, and so contribute to making the meaning of scientific initiatives immediate and concrete, as opposed to the vague abstractions they tend to be."

Free Range Grain was initially installed and performed at the Schim Kunsthalle in Frankfurt in reaction to the EU concept of "Fortress Europe." Through the use of an on-site laboratory, CAE is able to test foods for Genetically Modified Organisms. With this laboratory on site, CAE tested foods brought in by visitors to refute claims by the EU that their borders against GMOs could be maintained. In short, they were interested in mapping the extent by which these mass produced genetic organisms have permeated the existing food supply. This project has been adapted for North Adams where the subject of research has shifted to the often questionable label, "organic". How organic are organic foods?

TITLE OF WORK:
Free Range Grain
2004

SPURSE

Founded 2002

New York City
USA



Biographical Info:

"In a certain sense, our works are all, to one degree or another, centered on the question of, as Deleuze calls it – the production of a people still to come – and in this manner the production of publics and public space."

Spurse is an international hybrid architectural collective composed of individuals with expertise in a wide variety of fields – statistics, urbanism, dance, architecture, metal-smithing, computer programming, biology, geography, philosophy, BMX, cultural practices, etc. The motley grouping of so many various talents reflects their unusual research methodology as well. The collective is dedicated to deliberately avoiding hierarchies and thus their research moves fluidly between categories and materials. They use interviews, picked up ephemera and a form of wandering to capture the "urban" aspects of a city.



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Project Description: Found sound of North Adams based on random wanderings through the community. The sounds will be played on small tape recorders juxtaposed to archival material researched on the history of North Adams as well as recorded interviews with citizens of the town.



TITLE OF WORK:
Untitled
2004

subRosa
Founded 2002

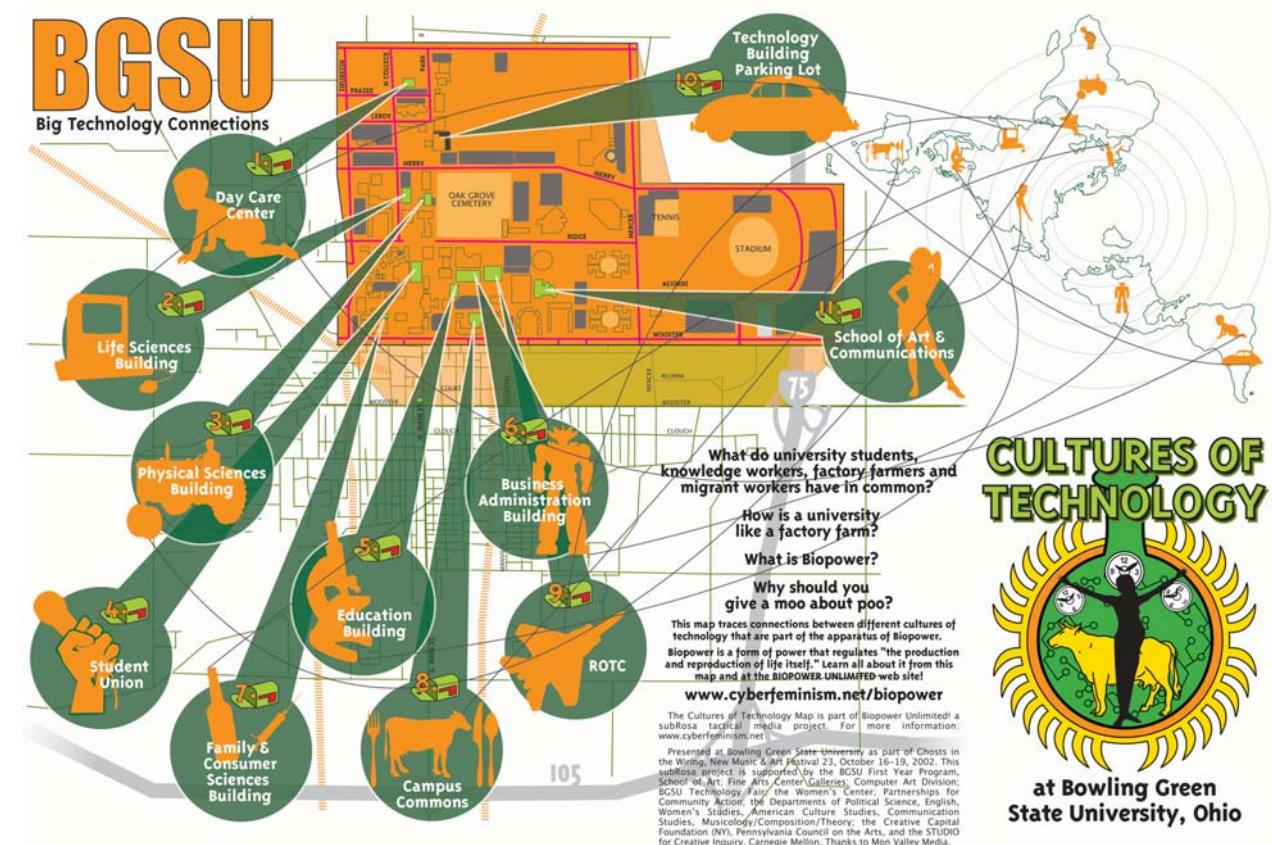
New York City USA

Biographical Info:

"subRosa practices a situational embodied feminist politics nourished by conviviality, self-determination, and the desire for affirmative alliances and coalitions." The cyberfeminist art collective subRosa, consists of five members: Faith Wilding, Hyla Willis, Lucia Sommer, Laleh Mehran, and Steffi Domike. The name subRosa honors other politically charged Rosas of history, including Rosa Luxemburg, Rosalind Franklin, Rosa Parks, and Rosie the Riveter. subRosa's performative and discursive work focuses primarily on the uses and implications of biotechnology as it applies to sexual difference, race, and transnational labor conditions and power. Their research /production takes many forms including performance, video, publishing, web projects and teach-ins. This broad range of tactics allows subRosa to explore complex questions of reproductive and bio- technologies in a dynamic interactive manner that in many regards confounds classic definitions of art. In 2002, subRosa produced a project at Bowling Green State University titled "US Grade AAA Premium Eggs." Under the guise of a recruiting campaign set up in the Student Union, subRosa performed an educational demo about sex and gender in the Biotech Century, and then asked students to estimate the dollar value of their eggs, sperm, and organs. Students employed a computer program that calculated the 'flesh-worth' of their genetic material on the basis of factors of race, illness, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and "abnormalities." subRosa's first book project, Domain Errors! Cyberfeminist Practices (Autonomedia) was published in 2003.

Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002

Michael Rakowitz - Climate Control , New York City 2002



Project Description: Previous to its operation as a contemporary art museum, the MASS MoCA site was home to the electronic capacitor manufacturer Sprague Electric. The company, which closed in 1987, employed approximately 5000 people and was the primary employer in North Adams. In their "Can You See US Now?" (2004) project at MASS MoCA, the cyberfeminist collective subRosa has mapped some connections between North Adams (the previous home to Sprague) and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, the current home of Sprague. The project focuses on social and political issues of refuge for women employed in both localities, and on demonstrating the (often invisible) connections that globalization of production creates between these two geographically separated communities.

TITLE OF WORK:
Can You See Us Now? 2004

Tana Hargest

Born 1960

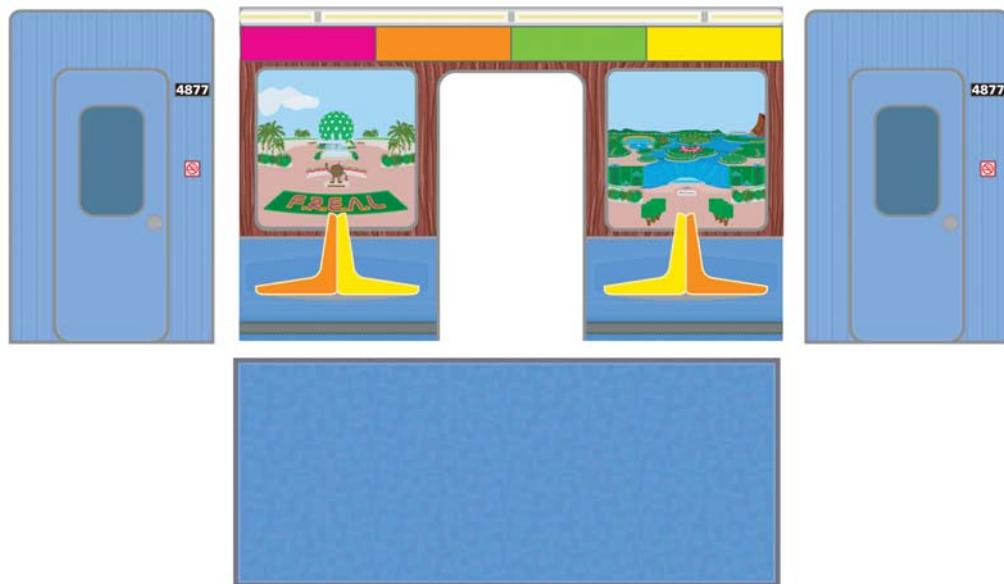
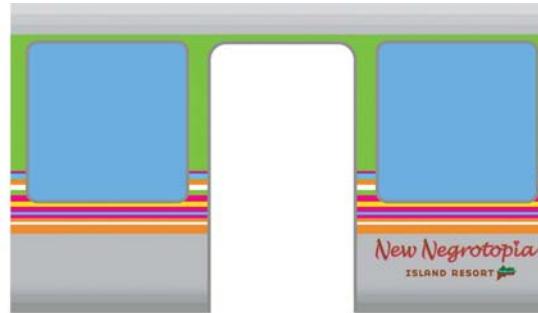
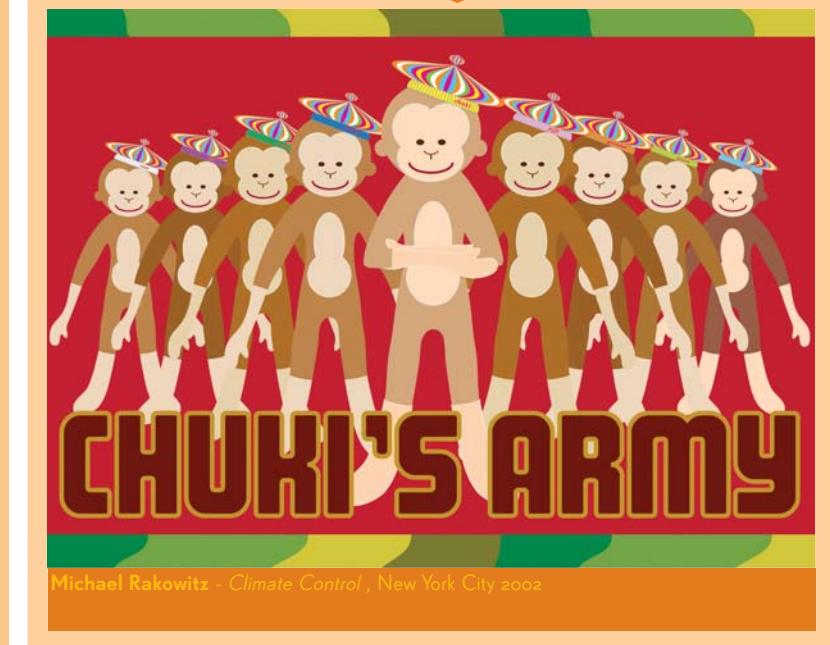
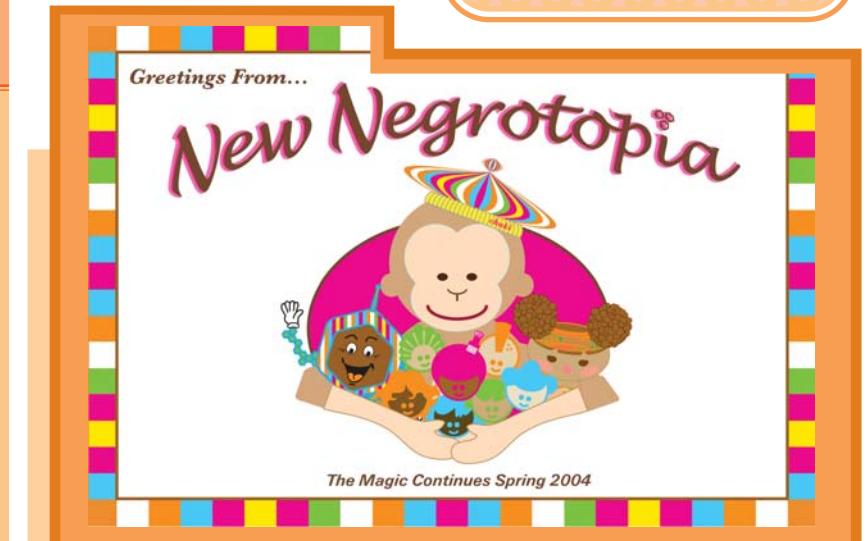
New York City
USA



Biographical Info:

"The main reason for using these techniques is that they put people at ease. Rather than telling people exactly what I think, the art experience becomes a platform for a dialogue, even if it's solely an internal dialogue."

Tana Hargest is a computer-based artist whose work flagrantly confronts questions of race. As a tactic for blurring her identity (or more appropriately confounding it), she has created a fictitious corporation called Bitter Nigger Inc. (BNI) of which she is CEO. Reading through BNI's literature and letter from the CEO, one finds that the ongoing selling point for BNI is a race-free future. Emulating the promises that permeated the 1990s regarding a race free internet, BNI appears to be capitalizing on it. One of their products includes the drug



Project Description:

Tana Hargest produces her projects under the fictitious corporation "Bitter Nigger Inc.". In previous projects, she has created a line of pharmaceuticals and products to assuage race anxiety. In this project, Bitter Nigger Inc. has proposed a theme park beyond racial tension titled New Negrotopia. Bitter Nigger Inc. travels New Negrotopia to trade shows hoping to tactically catch the eye of investors. Consisting of a promotional video for investors, a website, and actual trade show booths, New Negrotopia is presented as a virtual island resort and amusement park in which the participant becomes a tourist travelling through his or her own racial history and assumptions. New Negrotopia consists of several interactive environments, including: Atlantic Adventure, a 3-D interactive experience of the Middle Passage; the Cotton Bales on the Mississippi water ride; and The Institute of Thinking, a mock-academic think tank located in paradise.

TITLE OF WORK:
2004
New Negrotopia

J. Morgan Puett

Born 1960

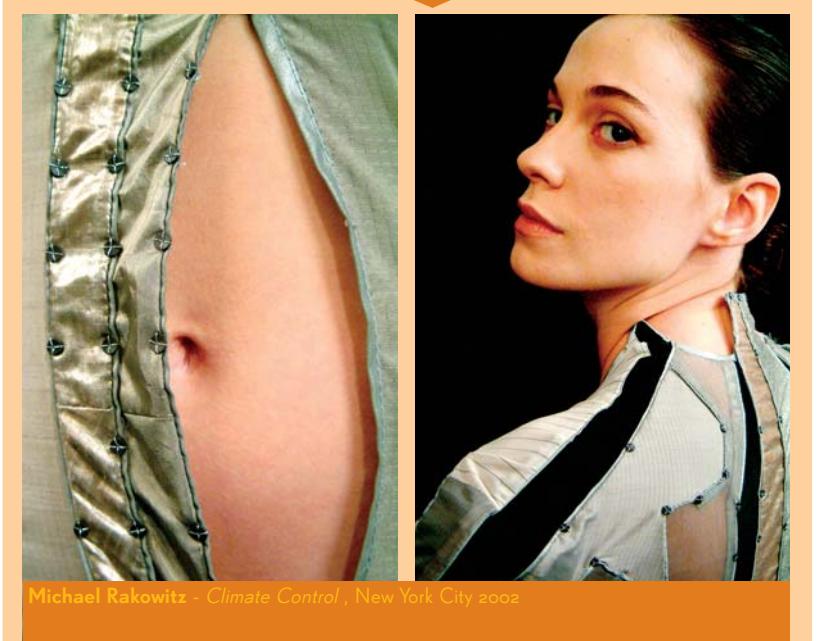
New York City
USA



Biographical Info:

J. Morgan Puett grew up in rural South Georgia. Her father was a third generation beekeeper and her mother was a painter. In 1988 after receiving her MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago, she moved to New York City. After graduate school, Puett developed a series of boutiques in Manhattan that "focused on the designing of clothing collections, and in the recreation of environments reminiscent of southern rural contexts." Her dynamic combinations of business, fashion and installation art have since been concrete staples in her work.

She continues to develop elaborate constellations in her work which move through, past and around stories of fashion, industry and above all, poetry.



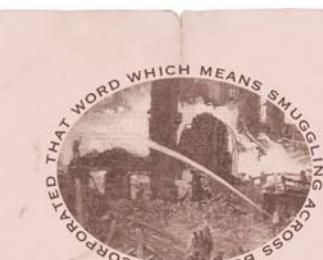
c/o MASS MOCA • 1040 MASS MOCA WAY
NORTH ADAMS, MASS. 01247
TEL: 413-664-4481 • FAX: 413-663-8548



J. MORGAN PUETT – IAIN KERR
CORPORATE PARTNERS:
INVOLVEMENTS WITH

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS OF MASS
MOCA, THE AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY
MUSEUM, ABBEY LUTZ, MARY LARRIMORE,
JASON SIMON, SPURSE, THE LATE LOUIS
KANELOS, THE LATE DAN FAZEKASE, AND
OTHERS.

c/o MASS MOCA – 1040 MASS MOCA WAY – NORTH ADAMS, MASS. 01247
TEL: 413-664-4481 FAX: 413-663-8548
WWW.THATWORDWHICHMEANSMUGGLINGACROSSBORDERSINCORPORATED.COM
WWW.MASSMOCA.ORG
A CALL IS RESPECTFULLY SOLICITED



THE MULTIPLIED SUIT FOR THE DISCERNING
MAN, WOMAN, OR OTHER.
UNRIValed IN PERFECT FITTING, EASE OF
HANDLING, QUICK ADJUSTMENT, GREAT
COMPLEXITY, AND GENERAL CONVENIENCE.
WE KINDLY SOLICIT YOU TO COME TO BE
TOUCHED AND FITTED.
AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.

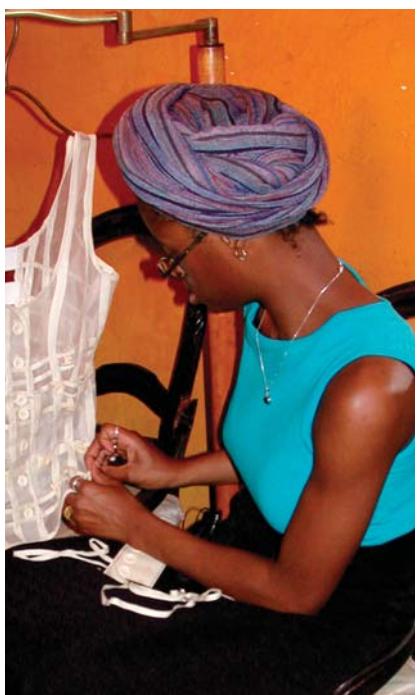
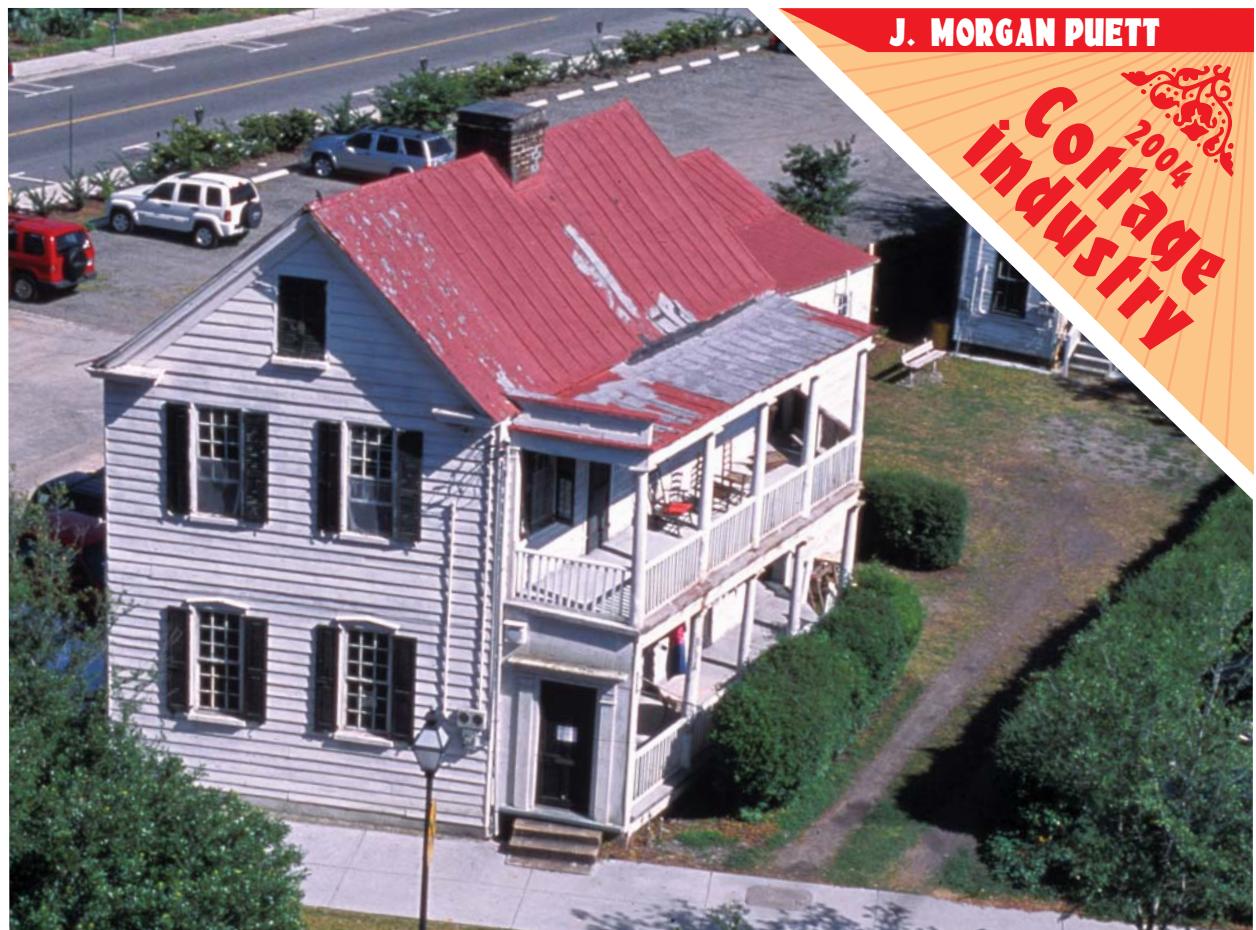
Project Description: In this ambitious site-sensitive project, J. Morgan Puett produced a participatory installation that references the textile history of the MASS MoCA campus when it was Arnold Print Works. As one enters the gallery, they are confronted with a massive shell of a factory. An abandoned chimney and crumbling two story brick exterior face the viewer. As one peeks around the crumbling façade, they notice a burnt out, abandoned shed. Entering the shed, they are quickly confronted with a real working business: That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, Ltd. Amongst a cornucopia of textile swatch books, papers referencing the old history of Arnold Print Works and a television playing Rod Serling's gripping play called The Suit, a tailor is measuring people for suits. The suit, it appears, is the site of investigation. Or is it management? Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).

TITLE OF WORK:
That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders
2004

Project Description:

In this ambitious site-sensitive project, J. Morgan Puett produced a participatory installation that references the textile history of the MASS MoCA campus when it was Arnold Print Works. As one enters the gallery, they are confronted with a massive shell of a factory. An abandoned chimney and crumbling two story brick exterior face the viewer. As one peeks around the crumbling façade, they notice a burnt out, abandoned shed. Entering the shed, they are quickly confronted with a real working business: That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, Ltd. Amongst a cornucopia of textile swatch books, papers referencing the old history of Arnold Print Works and a television playing Rod Serling's gripping play called The Suit, a tailor is measuring people for suits. The suit, it appears, is the site of investigation. Or is it management? Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).

That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, Ltd. Amongst a cornucopia of textile swatch books, papers referencing the old history of Arnold Print Works and a television playing Rod Serling's gripping play called The Suit, a tailor is measuring people for suits. The suit, it appears, is the site of investigation. Or is it management? Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).



J. MORGAN PUETT
Corrige
Industry
2004

THE BIOTERRORISM NURSE (ca. 2015) Immediately following the commencement of the Great Middle Eastern Resource Wars, in the early 21st century, the nurse's uniform was subject to a series of new adaptive measures. The tragic episodes in Dallas, Houston, and Salt Lake City made it painfully clear that medical professionals would first have to protect themselves if they were to successfully administer aid to others. The biohazard protective response suit (BPR suit) became a fixture of many urban trauma centers.



This uniform provided the nurse with protection not only from biological warfare products, such as anthrax and ebola, but from a wide range of chemical agents including lewisite, mustard, soman, nerve, sarin and tabun. The example on exhibit is typical of the period of 2015 and features a 40-mil PVC, 5-mil Teflon, FEP, and a splash-resistant face shield, which provided superior strength and durability while improving visibility. By the early 20s, the viability of bioterrorism strategies had run their course. Given this lack of necessity and the suit's cumbersome bulk, the total-encapsulating vapor protection nurse's uniform was slowly phased out.

dion-kern-puett laboratories -- producers of fine medico-engineering educational products

J. MORGAN PUETT

2004
Bio-Terrorism

Project Description:

In this ambitious site-sensitive project, J. Morgan Puett produced a participatory installation that references the textile history of the MASS MoCA campus when it was Arnold Print Works. As one enters the gallery, they are confronted with a massive shell of a factory. An abandoned chimney and crumbling two story brick exterior face the viewer. As one peeks around the crumbling façade, they notice a burnt out, abandoned shed. Entering the shed, they are quickly confronted with a real working business: That Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, Ltd. Amongst a cornucopia of textile swatch books, papers referencing the old history of Arnold Print Works and a television playing Rod Serling's gripping play called The Suit, a tailor is measuring people for suits. The suit, it appears, is the site of investigation. Or is it management? Or is it the destruction of manufacturing in general? The tailor is open for business and visitors are welcome to have a suit mailed to them at the cost of its production (which isn't cheap).

Trespassing Toward Relevance

By Nato Thompson

You had heard about its arrival but never expected it to operate like this. Earlier in the month, flyers had been circulated asking you to, "Get the black out. Bring three to ten items that you associate with blackness to the Black Factory on this appointed day." Now you stand there watching a white box truck pull up to the local YMCA and wonder what on earth this truck wants with your coffee grounds, dominos and Missy Elliot CDs. As you watch the crew get out of the truck, you see them unload a large table adorned with blenders, scissors and pulverizes onto the sidewalk. Then suddenly, a white parachute begins to inflate from the back of the truck. To your freakish surprise, the balloon inflates into a massive KuKluxKlan hood where you can faintly see the workers setting up display booths inside. Instead of the Black Panther Willie Wonka you expected, the artist, William Pope L, begins to talk and laugh with people as they begin to bring their items of "blackness" for pulverization or documentation. You nervously approach and hear Mr. Pope L say, "Well, the Black Factory is here to provide opportunity."

Quite possibly, the Black Factory is the central work in the exhibition, *Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere*. The Black Factory is a truck that goes on tour, "Bringing the politics of difference where it is needed most." At each stop, the Black Factory engages a local community with a set of tools for disrupting their expectations. People wait in line with their items of blackness only to have them transformed into some of the most unlikely, and unexpected objects: rubber duckies, prayer rugs, drinking water. The experience is as far away from didactic as possible, yet one can not help but think that in that ambiguous experience, they received the one thing Pope L promises the Black Factory will provide: opportunity.

The Interventionists: Art in the Social Sphere is both an exhibition and a limited survey of tactical practices in contemporary visual culture beginning in the late 1980s. The timing of this exhibition is not without a sense of urgency as the entire world feels 'unsettled' (to use a term of globalism theorist Saskia Sassen)¹ with no small part due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In such turbulent political times, artists operate as both a social conscience for the politics of today and a harbinger of the politics for tomorrow.

If one were to survey the surface of what represents American art over the last ten years for traces of this urgency, one would not be too encouraged. It would appear as though "political art" has fallen out of fashion since artists like Barbara Kruger, Hans Haacke, Leon Golub and Jenny Holzer took center stage in the early 1980s.² Fashionable or not, however, political art has continued, albeit off the art world screen, throughout the 1990s. The most telling point of departure for this "off the radar" political art would be the increasing emphasis on the tactics of intervention. Instead of representing politics, many political artists of the 1990s employ the techniques of art to engage real life situations.

The term "tactics" is important when thinking about interventionist practices and this essay will go into this term in more depth. However, for now, let us think of the term tactic as a maneuver within a game and for the interventionist, the game is the real world. Their projects are made to operate within various systems of power in the real world and they use the techniques of art to

maneuver within it. Driving around the United States with a factory for carving up expectations about race is just one tactic among many.

In an era shaped by the phenomenon known as globalism, the switch toward tactics has been more warmly received outside the U.S. than in it. The lack of visibility, and funding, in the United States obviously contributes to the categorical myopia of interventionist practices in U.S. museums. However, the dialogue regarding tactics, assisted in large part through the use of the internet and global exhibitions and conventions, has provided a fluid exchange across oceans and nations. Thus, this exhibition does not limit its survey to the American national landscape, but instead follows several tendencies that highlight this switch to tactics.

Tactics can be thought of as a set of tools. Like a hammer, a glue gun, or a screwdriver, they are means for building and deconstructing a given situation. Interventionist tactics are informed both by art and (more importantly) by a broad range of lived visual, spatial and cultural experiences.³ They are a motley assemblage of methods for bringing political issues to an audience existing outside the art world's insular doors. In order to do so, they appeal to a viewer who is confronted by an increasingly privatized and controlled visual world. Humor, sleight of hand and high design are used to interrupt this confrontation and bring socially imperative issues to the very feet of their audiences. In short, these artists are interventionists.

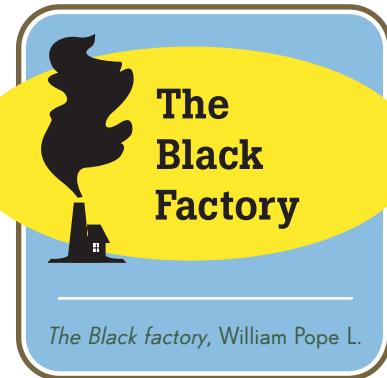
If one had to make a generalization about the point of departure for the "political" art of the 1990s, it would be the unanimous refusal to use representation as a tactic. The images of violence and exploitation that so often, rightfully, move people to political action are conspicuously absent. Instead, laboratory experiments, perplexing archives, mobile homes and bags designed for shoplifting fill MASS MoCA's gallery spaces. That these things "present" as opposed to "represent" is not an accident. When the words "political art" are spoken, most people imagine a unilateral institutional critique, depressing refugee photographs, or possibly graphic statements somehow attacking the viewer for ignorant complicity. The lack of these methods does not imply that such issues are less important now, but rather that the methods for communicating these issues have changed. The symbolically charged image, as a tactic, no longer feels adequate as a communicative device.

In understanding why this is the case, it is instructive to look at the increasing growth of visual culture over the last twenty years. Could it be that the commercial flooding of the visual landscape has inadvertently led to the visual exhaustion of its viewers? Such pivotal factors as the rise of the culture industry, the demise of the Soviet Union, and the increasing privatization of public visual and social space have dramatically transformed the cultural landscape of the 1990s.

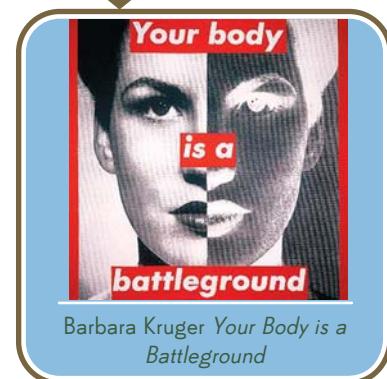
The 90s: A Taco Revolution

"A taco revolution, I am there." – Taco Bell Chihuahua dog.

"The various analyses of "new social movements" have done a great service in insisting on the political importance of cultural movements against narrowly economic perspectives that minimize their significance. These analyses, however, are extremely limited themselves because, just like the perspectives they oppose, they perpetuate narrow understandings of the economic and the cultural. Most importantly, they fail to recognize the profound economic power of the cultural movements, or really the increasing indistinguishability of economic and cultural phenomena." -Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, Empire.



The Black factory, William Pope L.



Barbara Kruger Your Body is a Battleground



Taco Bell Chihuahua dog

Continue

The INTERVENTIONISTS

"The sixties are more than merely the homeland of hip, they are a commercial template for our times, a historical prototype for the construction of cultural machines that transform alienation and despair into consent." – Thomas Frank, *Conquest of Cool*.

In 1992, Bill Clinton assumed the U.S. presidency to the rock and roll sounds of Fleetwood Mac. The baby boomers had gained ascendancy, and Clinton raised the horn of victory with a saxophone in his hands. The moment was prescient. Just three years earlier, the Berlin Wall fell and the "end of history," as Francis Fukuyama had so famously described it, was upon the world. The 1990s were a complex decade known for the rise of the dot-coms, the generational switch in power to the baby boomers, the end of the Cold War, and the end of revolutions. Yet, revolutions were occurring. They were marketing revolutions, as the most popular marketing campaign of the 1990s, the Che Guevarian clad Taco Bell Chihuahua so glamorously made known. The United States officially shifted toward an "information economy" with the often contested but frequently used term 'globalism' as its dancing partner.

Globalism and the culture industry combine to form a fertile ground for the growth of interventionist practices. The fact that "culture" became the primary industry of global capitalism was not lost on many of the artists across the globe. Theodore Adorno, the genuinely cynical member of the German Frankfurt School, saw this shift early on when he castigated the consumer-oriented turn in music in his *19XX essay*, "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression in Listening." He dubbed the commercialization of culture "the culture industry," a catchall term for everything from film to television to music to advertising to fashion to, of course, art. In short, the culture industry comprises most of the service industry markets we encounter everyday. Through the 1990s, the branding of culture took an especially strong step forward. As Naomi Klein writes in her insightful book, *No Logo*, "The effect, if not always the original intent, of advanced branding is to nudge the hosting culture into the background and make the brand the star. It is not to sponsor culture but to be the culture."⁴

The fact that the visual and cultural apparatuses of the globe were honing in on the once rarified niche of artistic practice could only have dramatic affects on the terms in which artists saw themselves. **According to bla bla, spending on advertising between the periods of bla and bla grew bla. [get a good quote here nato]**

A signature element of this growth of the culture industry is the emphatic co-opting of all forms of America's counter culture. The major powers in the US economy were now standing side by side with the likes of the beatniks, the ravers, the punks, the gangsters and the revolutionaries. The culture industry found resonance in promoting the likes of Jack Kerouac and Mahatma Ghandi for the Gap and Apple Computer respectively. Thus, when Stevie Nicks began singing, "Don't Stop" to a captivated audience with Hillary and Bill clapping in the background, we saw a clue as to the tenor of the next decade. We were entering a period of rebels. The heroic alternative culture of the 60s (the easy rider, the beatnik, the lonestar, the

hippy, the dragqueen, the revolutionary) were to become the poster children of the 90s.

A particularly telling point occurred in December 1991 when underground band Nirvana reached number one on the pop charts. Alternative music had officially become mainstream. Black culture, feminist culture, and queer culture were quick to follow. For the first time in music history, in October 2003, none of the artists on the top ten singles charts were white.⁵ The music industry embraced all points of view and happily represented the cornucopia of American difference.

It may appear that we are off course and we have strayed too long in the realm of the music, television and advertising industry. But there are reasons for this. This switch in the role of cultural production radically affected the way in which cultural producers, including visual artists, saw their "content." "In 1915, a person could go entire weeks without observing an ad. The average adult today sees some three thousand a day."⁶ The dramatic increase in popular visual inundation coupled with the growing use of symbols of political action (like Che Guevara or Bob Dylan) for commercial purposes, meant that artists needed to reconfigure their tactics to make themselves heard. How could any artist compete with visual machines like Nike, Gap, Starbucks, McDonalds, MTV, etc? Terms like "content provider" became common as anything resistant and edgy was used to sell an underlying not-so-hip consumerist agenda. If Che Guevara could be turned into a marketing-Chihuahua for Taco Bell, no left leaning political artist was safe. Counter culture was running out of steam.

At the same time, globalism became a household word. While arguably interconnectedness between nations had been increasing over the past century, the 1990s saw a rapid acceleration of these processes. The Treaty on European Union signed in Maastricht (1992), the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (1994), and the introduction of the Euro (1999) are just a few notable examples. Accompanying these processes was the now familiar movement of factories to nations with cheaper labor pools, the increased hybridization and displacement of cultures and the unexpected boom of the global cities like New York City, Buenos Aires, Tokyo, Berlin, London to name a few.⁷ The sudden conclusion of the cold war elicited from leaders in the West a "full steam ahead" approach to neo-liberal economic models across the globe. And, in the art world specifically, the rise of biennials created the sense that art was being de-centered and this de-centered quality was big business.

Activists across the globe had to dramatically switch gears to react to the changing political climate. The effects of globalism were not without its oppositional political responses as the Seattle protests in November 1999 against the World Trade Organization made clear. The Seattle protests marked a socially critical moment in progressive political history as the rallying cry was not against a specific government, but against the intangible and relatively abstract international finance organizations that so perfectly represented the shift

User's Manual to the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life

toward an unchecked international power. Since that pivotal event in 1999, the global justice movement has tracked the movement of international finance: the International Monetary Fund meeting in Washington DC (2000), World Bank/IMF meeting, Prague (2000), G20 meeting in Quebec (2000), World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland (2001), FTAA Summit of the Americas, Quebec City (2001), EU Summit, Gothenburg, Sweden (2001), G8 Summit, Genoa, Italy (2001), World Economic Forum, New York City (2002), EU Summit, Barcelona (2002), WTO, Cancun, Mexico (2003) to name a few. Power and resistance have obviously gone global.

While cultural content was increasingly being co-opted by the cultural industry, physical urban space underwent a parallel co-opting. In the major American cities of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, as well as internationally, artists began to feel the effects of globalism in their neighborhoods. Gentrification became a buzzword to describe the efforts by many cities to remake their downtowns into inviting hot spots for global capital. Artists found their own housing habits as complicit with renewal strategies for evicting lower income families in larger metropolitan areas. Rosalyn Deutsche writes in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, "When galleries and artists, assuming the role of the proverbial 'shock troops' of gentrification, moved into an inexpensive storefronts and apartments, they aided the mechanism by driving up rents and displacing residents."⁸ While housing increasingly felt the brunt of expanded privatization, so to did the arts (see Gregory Sholette's essay). The space for non-commercially driven art, generally the haven for supporting and legitimating political art practice, rapidly decreased. As Brian Wallis, Chief Curator at the International Center for Photography in New York writes, "In recent years, the gradual withdrawal and relocation of NEA funds have created a sort of Darwinian ethos in the world of alternative spaces. Many of the smaller and more fragile spaces have ceased to operate or have become 'virtual spaces.' Those that have survived have become larger and more like those institutions they once challenged."⁹ While political representation was being depoliticized, space, it seemed, was becoming radically politicized. This twist is the critical turn.¹⁰

The 60s malcontents speak

This is not to say that these conditions – the increasing banality of revolutionary images coupled with the increasing politicization of urban space – arose out of the 1990s, but rather that they became all the more acute during this period. It is instructive to look at the writings of the Situationists (1957-1972), an avant-garde collective inspired by, if not past member of, Dada, CoBRA (acronym meaning: Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam) and the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus who anticipated these very shifts. The Situationists included the Danish painter Asger Jorn (1914-1973), the Dutch urban designer Constant Nieuwenhuys (1920 -), theorist Raoul Vaneigem (1934 -), and worked with a slew of others including the eminent philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1901 – 1991) whom the group eventually disbanded with (as it eventually did with Constant and Asger Jorn). In his highly informative work, *Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord, the most outspoken member of the

Situationists, warned of the spectacle nature of late capitalist society. By spectacle (a key term for the Situationists) Debord meant the overtly visual and alienating aspect of late capital. While more orthodox Marxists of the period were haggling over the alienation caused by the rise of consumerism, the Situationists asserted that culture itself was fast becoming the ultimate commodity. Clothing, music, film, television and even walking were all forms of commodification. Their hysteria finds validity in the increasing privatization of culture, in the form of intellectual copyright and in the shrinkage, policing, and control of public space. If culture was turning into a commodity, then the Situationists were determined to develop methods to confront and reverse this trend.

Their aspirations resulted in the development of two key tactics that can be seen in much of the work in this exhibition. The first is the *detourné* which basically is the re-arranging of popular sign-systems in order to produce new meanings. For the Situationists, this took the form of re-inserting their own language into the thoughts bubbles of popular comic strips. In the comic strip here, the gentlemen is saying, "'The very development from class society to the spectacular organization of non-life leads the revolutionary project to become visibly what it already was essentially.' This form found new relevance in the 1990s when 'culture jammers' and later magazines like AdBusters began rampantly re-articulating popular advertising to produce an underlying message such as the McDeath logo here.

The second tactic was the *derivé*; a short meandering walk determined by one's desires. The *derivé* was designed to resist the work and control oriented design of Paris which had been put in place by Baron Haussmann in the 19th century. The *derivé* would reveal hints of what the Situationists called psychogeography, "The study of the precise effects of geographical setting, consciously managed or not, acting directly on the mood and behavior of the individual."¹¹ While at first such meanderings may seem fairly leisurely and not the least bit political, they propose the radical idea that ways of being in physical space (particularly in the cities) are political acts. The confluence of the *detourné* and the *derivé* manage to territorialize the visual. The spectacle is a territory. The city is a spectacle. Both tactics, *derivé* and *detourné*, take as a given their trespassing nature. They must cross into the territory of others, whether these are the advertisements of Nike or the orderly streets of Paris, to produce new meanings. This sensibility becomes visually apparent in the video performances of Alex Villar. In his 2001, project *Temporary Occupations*, Villar performs movements that resist the intended structuring of public space. He clammers up, hops over, crawls into and slides past fences and walls designed to prevent one from entering particular spaces in the city. These actions bring to light the manipulative nature of the built environment and how strongly it is developed around notions of public and private.

As we know, the political upheavals of the adolescent Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) were not simply occurring in the streets of Paris, but across the globe. In the United States, foremost "culture jammers" were

Continue 

The INTERVENTIONISTS

the extraordinary yippies, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, whose pranksterish antics foreground much of the interventionist work of the 1960s. One of their most enduring actions took place on August 24, 1967 when Hoffman led a group to the New York Stock Exchange and dropped dollar bills down to the traders below. The sudden appearance of money fluttering down from the sky caused eager traders to pile on top of each other as they all instinctually chased the money. As planned, the small event spread and grew across the mediated globe. As Jerry Rubin states, "You can't be a revolutionary today without a television set – it's as important as a gun! Every guerilla must know how to use the terrain of culture that he is trying to destroy!"¹² The Yippies understood the connection between the spectacle and political action and the influence of his tactics can be seen in much of the work in the exhibition.

Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin understood (probably more so than the Situationists who didn't have much of a sense of humor) the importance of mixing humor with drama in their actions. Their politics, while just as heartfelt and real as the Students for a Democratic Society, were tempered by an understanding of how they would be interpreted on a national media front. Humor was a tactic. Humor was a tool. Their actions were a manipulation of visual codes in a specific time and in a specific place which produced a critical result. In a sense artistic techniques were a resource for manipulating the situation of everyday life. The codes are re-designed whether they are in the streets, on a billboard, on one's body, or in a classroom.

Games, Tactics and Strategies

Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman thought of life as a game and they played that game well. As stated earlier, their "tactics" gained meaning from how they were positioned with the game. How clever, witty and flagrantly media friendly were important factors in their success. Key to the interventionist sensibility, is the understanding of tactics and how they gain meaning by operating within a game.

When the linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) stated, "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."¹³ he indicated that language is not about meaning, but about 'use'. A word's use came from how it was positioned in a "language game." The idea that language operated as a game was important to him as he understood that words operated as maneuvers within a system of meaning. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) expanded this notion to interpret social systems (ranging from knitting clubs to art to Bedouin tribes) as games and knowledge itself as maneuvers within it. To investigate this claim further, he radically turned sociology onto the field of sociology itself. That is, he was interested in discovering how sociology operated as a system of maneuvers designed to enhance the participants' power. Unsurprisingly, he discovered that academic papers, meetings, and books were more often than not used to expand the professor's position of power more than to actually expand the uses of sociological knowledge. This logic becomes apparent when we think of politicians that use rhetoric and spin to gain public approval.

To bring this into an interventionist understanding, let us think of the

real world as the game Monopoly. In this case, the interventionist plays on a board generally owned and operated by someone else. The 'tactics' are the methods used to dismantle and communicate across these power regimes.

For the purposes of clarity, it is helpful to look at the writings of Michel de Certeau. De Certeau, in his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, made a useful distinction between "strategies" and "tactics." "I call strategy", he writes, "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated." That is to say, a strategy is a plan made by those who have the power to predict and change the lived landscape. To go back to Monopoly, the player who owns Park Place tends to be able to control the flow of the game. On the other hand, a tactic "operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of 'opportunities' and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings build up its own position, and plan raids." "In short, the tactic is the art of the weak."¹⁴ Interventionists could have the wonderful opportunity to have as their tag line, "the art of the weak" as their projects do in fact come from a 'trespassing' into the territory of a dominant system.

As an example, let us take a project from the exhibition: Critical Art Ensemble with Beatriz de Costa's *Free Range Grain*. In *Free Range Grain*, the collective has transported a GMO (genetically modified organism) testing lab into the gallery space. With the research facility on-hand, they will test "organic" foods bought from stores for GMOs. They anticipate that many of the foods labeled "organic" are in fact chalk-full of GMOs. This revelation is not meant as an exposé on inaccurate packaging of "organic" foods so much as an amateur science experiment that makes visible the extent to which industry has inserted itself into something as basic as the food chain.

For a number of years, Critical Art Ensemble has made the field of biotechnology their focus. Let us think of biotechnology as a game. It is a system of knowledge that has particular rules and advantages for those who have control over it. Critical Art Ensemble as amateur researchers are operating in a game owned by someone else. They are "intervening" in the game of biotechnology. In doing so, they are taking the given expectations of how this protected field should work and are rearranging them. They are trespassing into this field and as a tactic, reworking the premises of what the science should research. This is the point where the reworking of that language (whether visually, linguistically or spatially) becomes quite political. When Critical Art Ensemble, present their own amateur research into the field of genetically modified foods, they do so in order to challenge the role of those individuals and systems determining the game of biotechnology. Their project provides a series of tools for rearranging this system. However, as Gregory Sholette states, "One should be cautious about how far reaching/how available these tools are and to what extent an art-based practice, and it still is in terms of venue by and large, can 're-arrange the system' no matter how much it may wish to."¹⁵

User's Manual to the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life

An interventionist's tools/tactics are utilized in order to unhinge, rework, rectify, or reclaim various social systems. Just as the Situationists reworked the given language of a comic strip to critique the "bourgeois Marxists" and right-wing stalwarts of May '68 Paris, so too does an interventionist dismantle a dominant language during the current period.

This exhibition moves between various tactics of intervention in order to illustrate a broad field of approaches. These approaches are categorized into four sections: Reclaim the Streets, Nomads, Ready to Wear, and the Experimental University. As a caveat, almost every project in the exhibition could fit in more than one category. Generally, the combination of a series of tactics is used to produce a result. This categorization is only used as a means to ease a visitor's entry into a different form of art making and viewing.

In fact, this is why the catalogue is designed like a user's manual. This decision harkens back to the Russian Constructivist Vladimir Mayakovsky's (1893-1930) book of poems designed by El Lissitzky (1890-1941) that had tabs allowing the "user/reader" to flip to each poem. It also incorporates the underlying emphasis of interventionist practice into the media of its presentation.

Reclaim the Streets

"Today, street action groups such as the Tute Biance, use spectacular forms of conflict and theatrical actions designed for filming, such as climbing up a huge crane and risking one's own life to hang a banner." –Enrico Ludovici, from the film *Disobedienti* by Oliver Ressler and Dario Azzellini, 2002.

The streets have long represented the public sphere: a space where all citizens can participate democratically and freely. Most political artists operate with the desire to expand, test and operate in the public and so, the streets are in a sense, a second home. The section "Reclaim the Streets" (RTS) is named after the radical form of protest begun in London in 1991. RTS originally was just an ordinary logging protest that re-arranged the rules of dissent by introducing djs, dancing, wild costumes and pleasure to radical politics in the streets. Influenced in large part by the incredible boom of rave culture in England, the combination of pageantry and civil disobedience has since become a signature characteristic of political participation in the 1990s. Art and radical politics appeared to merge under the famous anarchist Emma Goldman's refrain, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution."¹⁶

This pageantry takes on a remarkable performative quality in the sermons of the Reverend Billy. A disillusioned performance artist turned street activist, Bill Talen donned the disguise of a white haired, fanatical priest to preach his anti-consumerist gospel in the heart of capitalism: Disney Stores and Starbucks. Much like the Brazilian Augusto Boal's *invisible theater*, the Reverend Billy uses daily life, whether it is a corporate chain or public sidewalk, as his stage. He delivers diabolical sermons against the globalization, consumerism and the privatization of daily life. To quote Reverend Billy at length

(because he is so funny), "I am preaching here in the Disney Store today because I am a tourist myself. Like all New Yorkers I am allowing this apocalypse to take place. I know that Manhattan in fourteen months will be entirely within the hellishly expanded Disney Store. This is Manhattan as Suburban mall. This is a fatal disease known as Involuntary Entertainment."¹⁷ Since the year 2000, the Reverend Billy's spontaneous arrival at various global corporations has rapidly gained media attention and a cult following. His sermons at Starbucks have been so successful that the company developed a document for its employees letting them know the proper protocol to deal with any spontaneous Reverend Billy appearances in their store.

The urban environment has also been home to a variety of tactics of representation such as graffiti, wheatpaste posters, stickers, and stencils. This Do It Yourself (DIY) aesthetics is often relegated to an "outsider" art of the art world since it depends on its physical and legal position. Or to speak plainly, these projects shine they are illegally placed on the walls of downtown areas. Their dependence on illegality makes the results of visual exhaustion evident since they only become visible when placed in unsanctioned areas. It is as though we can see their position in the game. These tactics thrive on the antagonisms of public space and retain an allegiance to a more traditional form of resistant aesthetics that goes back to broadsheets, manifestos, political posters and leaflets. The God Bless Graffiti Coalition has assembled over 200 of these projects that range from the more didactic work of Claude Moller to the simply beautiful work of Swoon.

The streets can be a forum for discussion or, in the case of the collective e-Xplo, a subject in itself. E-Xplo uses the bus tour, a more down to earth version of the Situationist *derivé*, to transform preconceived notion of the collective environment. As Rene Gabi says of their project, "We try to take familiar sites and open them up to new readings and possibilities. These sites range from the physical sites we explore to the discursive sites we inhabit, even the 'tour' itself becomes something to interrogate and question. Rather than an end point, the tour is really a tool for introducing questions, a familiar departing point for a set of overlapping journeys."

In their project, "xxx" for the exhibition, e-Xplo's tour bus travels a laconic journey between MASS MoCA and the Clark Art Institute. The passengers listen to a GPS-triggered sound track that abstractly narrates the sidestreets between the two cultural institutions. As one travels between these areas, the soundtrack encourages a contemplative form of viewing an abandoned factory, dormant cemetery and/or family's front yard. Geography becomes contested and interpretable. For a brief period, the means/ends commuter inspired form of travel is sidestepped for a reworking of the living landscape. The subject of the work is the world around us and its interpretation is up for grabs.

At times, cultivating public participation becomes an interventionist

Continue 



Taxi Project, HaHa

project in and of itself as in the work of HaHa and their *Taxi Project, North Adams* (2004) produced with the help of MASS MoCA. HaHa collected submissions from North Adams residents and community groups relating to specific sites in their neighborhoods. The taxi then provided free rides for community members as well as displaying, with the assistance of flash animation on lcd screens atop the taxi, site-specific statements. HaHa encouraged North Adams to talk to itself.

Nomads

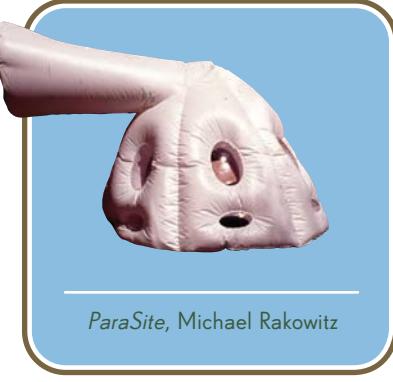
The Situationists may have walked the streets of Paris allowing their desire to reveal new hidden treasures buried in the urban environment, but today, many artists prefer to use a set of wheels. These interventionists are nomads and they travel through space to discover and provide dissonant forms of existence in the urban landscape. As described earlier, William Pope L.'s extraordinary *Black Factory* (2004) must serve as one of the most elaborate forms of the Situationist's *derivé* existing today. This tradition of deployed vehicles and technologies must pay homage to one if its most important artists, Krzysztof Wodiczko.

For over thirty years, Polish born Krzysztof Wodiczko has expanded the Russian Constructivist's notion of utility and technology for the public good. As Wodiczko acknowledges himself, his work is a mix of Situationism and Constructivism with design. "Designers must work *in* the world rather than 'about' or upon it."¹⁸ His preferred term is "Interrogative design" which he has incorporated into his ongoing teaching at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT. (His essay from 1994 is included in this catalogue). With a shift away from representation and an emphasis on "use" in the social sphere, it should be no surprise that Krzysztof Wodiczko is one of the interventionist's seminal figures. By emphasizing use over representation, Wodiczko's projects reveal his inherent suspicions of capital and control. The projects tend to augment individual autonomy and make visible social oppression. As a émigré from Poland, his political affinities are tempered with a suspicion of communism as well as capitalism.

Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle Project*, 1988-89 is a critical point of departure for much interventionist political art of the 1990s. The design of the vehicle was inspired by the 1987 mandate by New York Mayor Ed Koch declaring that all homeless people in New York must undergo psychiatric evaluations and if they failed, must be hospitalized. Wodiczko decided to focus on the issue of homelessness and used the shopping cart as a media. In conversations with homeless people, Wodiczko designed this project for multiple purposes. The *Homeless Vehicle* not only provided a user-friendly place for sleeping and can collection, but also provided visibility for the issue of homelessness. Wodiczko is under no illusions that he is incapable of acting as a social service agency. He sincerely believes this is the job of a properly functioning government. However, this project brings a dynamic visibility to the issue.¹⁹ The oldest and most common reference to this kind of design is the bandage. A bandage covers and treats a wound while at the same time exposing its presence, signifying both the experience of pain and the hope of recovery.²⁰



Homeless Vehicle Project,
Krzysztof Wodiczko



ParaSite, Michael Rakowitz

Since Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle*, many "mobile" projects have built upon and departed from Wodiczko's work. Michael Rakowitz, a student of Wodiczko's at CAVS, is the author of one such project called *Parasite*. *Parasite*, as the name implies, literally feeds off the urban environment. Using the existing HVAC air exhausts of buildings, the homeless shelter inflates. Rakowitz produced many *Parasite* projects in consultation with homeless individuals and unlike Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle*, *Parasite* could be wrapped up into a small bundle and placed in one's pocket.

It is not far fetched to state that many of these "mobile" projects find affinities in displaced populations. The mobile nature of the work points, in function, to a nomadic populace who are, to some degree, parasites of the urban environment. Displacement is an increasingly common politicized position. Tools for mobility find increasing prescience in a world continually forced to stay on the move.

Looking through the lens of displacement and trans-nationality (or non-nationality), the abundance of tents in the exhibition comes into focus. The tent is mobile architecture that folds up and is easy for one person to carry. It as though life is an ongoing camping trip. The tent provides a home for those trespassing or camping out in public space. It facilitates autonomy, and like a bandage, points to the need for autonomy for displaced populations. Perhaps no one, except Buckminster Fuller, has explored the possibilities of tents more than Dutch artist/designer Dré Wapenaar. Wapenaar has produced tents for reading newspapers, playing pianos, hanging off trees and this exhibition, a tent for giving birth and for memorializing the dead. Tents have surely come a long way.

Ready to Wear

Trained as a fashion designer, Lucy Orta develops conceptual and functional projects that extend and perpetuate her socially concerned aesthetic. She produces nomadic architecture as well as nomadic clothing. In Orta's oeuvre, clothes become tools, and the body becomes activated. Among many of her radical fashion creations, she has developed architectural clothing lines that almost literalize tendencies hinted at in Wodiczko's *Homeless Vehicle*. Her *Refuge Wear* series (1992-1998), which she produced in response to the Gulf War, drew Orta her first international attention. The work is at its most distilled in the early piece *Habitent* (1992-93): a high design tent/jacket with whistle, lantern and transport bag. Here we see yet another example, of clothing making visible and moderately assisting the situation of global refugees. Her clothes are literally spaces of refuge.²⁰ It is a fashion of resistance and survival.

Clothing is not only a space of autonomy and refuge, but an industry as well. In particular, in the age of globalization clothing has been more often than not correlated with its industrial practices in the form of sweatshops. This connects directly with the work of J. Morgan Puett who has produced a site-sensitive²¹ installation exploring MASS MoCA's previous identity as Arnold Print Works (1861-1942). Puett also comes out of the fashion industry as a previous owner of four stores in New York City called J. Morgan Puett and her project at MASS MoCA, *The Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders*, 2004 references this history. Amidst a burn out ruin of bricks and wood, a loan industry survives. Bustling away inside a small cottage, a tailor assists patrons in producing suits made from the insurance plans of the old Arnold Print Works site. The work is poetic, participatory, and strangely enough, functional. The business survives as Puett has formed a cottage industry in the very galleries of MASS MoCA.

Fashion also acts as camouflage. As the Center for Tactical Magic writes, "Disguise is the power to conceal, to hide away in the shadows of another's misperception. The appropriation of signifiers in the minds of onlookers, keyed in to their signal decoders along hacked bandwidths."²² Going "under cover" is not so much an entertaining game (although fun does play a part), it is a necessary tactic when trespassing onto the territory of other's. Disguise is needed to blend into a different game. The Center for Tactical Magic has produced *The Ultimate Jacket* (2003). As a center strongly influenced by various schools of concealment and espionage (private detective, magician, ninja), they have produced a jacket as a means to augment one's ability to act in various situations. The jackets contains over 50 secret pockets and allows the interventionist to slip from the identity of a worker to the identity of a ninja.

"Although their name contains the word 'Men,' it doesn't describe who they are, it describes what they do: they use any means necessary to agree their way into the fortified compounds of commerce, ask questions, and then smuggle out the stories of their undercover escapades to provide a public glimpse at the behind-the-scenes world of business." – From the Yes Men website, www.gatt.org

The art of being undercover finds its greatest example in the incredible work of the collective, the Yes Men. Their project stems from the strange opportunities made available when the group



Body Architecture, Lucy Orta



The Word That Means Smuggling Across Borders, J. Morgan Puett

Continue

The INTERVENTIONISTS

took control of the website www.gatt.org. The site copied the official site for the General Agreement of Trades and Tariffs with a few critical modifications. The collective has a history of producing these sites such as their previous web creation www.gobush.org. Using these domains as public terrain, the collective produced their version of the positions of these various political entities. While they expected some people to confuse their site with the official one, they did not expect the visitors to actually invite them to different speaking opportunities as representatives of these organizations. Yet, this is what happened.

In October 2000, the Yes Men found themselves in the confounding situation of agreeing to speak in Salzburg, Austria on behalf of the WTO at a conference of international trade lawyers. The group wrote that unfortunately the General Director of the WTO, Michael Moore, would be unable to attend but they would happily send a representative, Dr. Andreas Bichlebauer. Dr. Bichlebauer arrived with a security guard and cameraman and proceeded to give an audacious Powerpoint presentation on the need to streamline voting in the United States by selling votes on-line, and the need to ban siestas as an inefficient holiday. After the talk, the cameraman claimed Dr. Bichlebauer had received a pie in the face by an angry anti-WTO protester. Since their first foray into speaking, the Yes Men have given several talks with increasing absurdity as representatives of the WTO. The gold leotard with a three-foot phallus on display here is the result of one of the Yes Men's most bizarre forays in Tampere, Finland. The group, represented this time by Hank Hardy Unruh, presented a lecture to a group of Finnish college students on the inefficiency of the Civil War. Slavery, Unruh argued, would have inevitably been replaced by the much cheaper economic solution of sweatshops. At the end of his lecture, Mr. Unruh's assistant ripped off the lecturer's clothes. Underneath his suit, Mr. Unruh wore a golden "Management Leisure Suit" which came equipped a large, inflating phallus. At the head of the phallus, Mr. Unruh explained to the astonished class, a satellite-fed monitor allowed the manager to control and punish workers across the globe while retaining the pleasing comfort needed for the managerial class.

The Experimental University

The range of interventionist tactics may at first appear to take a slide detour when it comes to the "research" projects in the Experimental University. Although the Experimental University is a dramatic departure from the more literal forms of intervention as tool it also points to a critical departure in thinking about what art is and how art can be used. In the Experimental University (Nicholas Mirzoeff's essay goes into this in detail), the artists have decided to intervene into a discursive space. That is to say, they are interrupting a particular field of study (whether this is urban studies, biotechnology, anthropology or ethnography) in order to present different critical perspectives. We can recognize these practices as "art-inspired" because they skillfully manipulate visual and spatial codes in order to produce criticality. As previously described, the work of Critical Art Ensemble with Beatriz de Costa makes this evident.

In their *Can You See Us Now?* (2004) project at MASS MoCA, the cyber-feminist collective subRosa produced research on our local

setting of North Adams on spaces of refuge for women. This study took a number of forms including assistance from both an engineering and feminist studies class at Smith College. The collective set out to "Uncover and map the intersections of women's material and affective labor in cultures of production in North Adams and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico." Their interest in Ciudad relates to the fact that Sprague Electric, the capacitor manufacturing company that previously existed at the MASS MoCA site for 50 years and closed in 1986, moved its production there. Their installation includes a series of trap doors that reveal associations between the maps of North Adams and Ciudad as well as a series of kiosks placed at local places of refuge for women, including women's shelters, coffee shops and knitting clubs. This interweaving web moves between theoretical abstractions of globalization and distinct sites of production in the local community. Through utilizing techniques of art, the collective produces a dynamic pedagogical experience on the effects of globalization on women.

While subRosa might produce factual correlations, the Atlas Group present imaginary findings. In their archival display titled *The Truth Will Be Known When The Last Witness Is Dead: Documents from the Fakhouri File at the Atlas Group Archive*, the experimental archivist organization Atlas Group presents imaginary research. The Atlas Group investigates the contemporary landscape of Lebanon with particular focus on the history of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991) through the development of an *imaginary* archive. If the term *imaginary* research doesn't immediately make sense there is a good reason for this. The "*imaginary*" part of the Atlas Group research is that it is culled from their collective imaginations. That is to say, the facts are not necessarily "*true*", but then again, as the project implicitly asks whose perspective is? This project, like many projects in the Experimental University, problematizes truth claims. Like the title says, *the truth will be known when the last witness is dead*. So what then, does research look like if it doesn't particularly trust assertions of truth? The research is open-ended and lets the viewer make up their own mind. In particular, when investigating the imagery and history of the Middle-East, the Atlas Group is careful to not repeat the use of neocolonial techniques. They do not assert. They do not define. Yet, this technique does not slip into the postmodern relativism that many rigorous scientists accuse cultural studies of. The research is grounded in the history of the Lebanese Civil War.

The research conducted in the Experimental University possesses an urgency that aligns it with more traditional activism than hobbyist research. Their seductive visual displays highlight a dramatically changing political landscape whether this is the lives of women, the technologies of race, the biotechnology of agrobusiness, or the politics of Arab visual representation. These interventionists manipulate the visual field to create a learning environment in which we, as viewers, participate. To use the correct term, it is a form of pedagogy. It is in this regard that many museums could see the supposed line between art and science blur productively together.

Conclusion

"I came to the conclusion that I would have to be active in two camps: both 'inside', in the museum and art centres – vitrines where

User's Manual to the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life

I could confront and debate ideas – and 'outside', on the street. In this way I could engage with 'real life' situations and question the relationship between research and practice without making theoretical assumptions beforehand." -Lucy Orta in conversation with Nicholas Bourriaud, 2001.

"But these experiments can only take a transformative power in the open, evolving context of a social movement, outside the cliques and clienteles of the artistic game." – Brian Holmes, Liars Poker²³

Yet, while tactics are a useful place to begin, they are not necessarily the best place to end. While it is true that many of these projects gain their resonance through a dance within the dominant systems, some of these projects prefer to think more strategically about changing these systems as well. As De Certeau defines it, tactics depend on a dominant system. For De Certeau tactics constituted small subversions such as lazy work ethics and meandering walks through the city. He was not particularly interested in whether or not these tactics added up to anything actually revolutionary.

However, political artists are constantly concerned with, to use De Certeau's term, strategies. They want socially beneficial results. Frustrated with political irrelevance, many interventionists have catered their projects to fit in numerous spheres and to resonate across a wide-range of audiences. They operate in many different social games from the "art world" to the "activist" world to the "biotechnology" world. They understand their work means different things to different people. With this in mind we can sidestep the argument that these practices, in and of themselves, are not politically effective. Their connection to a robust array of audiences and methods, such as activists, publishers, or everyday people allows their specific project to come into light. The false dichotomy between activist (ambiguous) and artist (utilitarian) need not be such a devastating issue if we shift terms toward interventionists operating within a network of resistance. We can see in the documentary *Disobedienti* (2002) by Oliver Ressler and Dario Azzellini that the tactics used by interventionists are popularly used in the growing global justice movement today. To say there is a connection between experimental interventionist practices and the collective protest actions today would be putting it lightly. Interventionist practices do not work in isolation and, in fact, are part of a greater struggle for freedom.

That is why New York-based art collective 16 Beaver has been included as both a signpost and metaphor for social connection. It would be difficult to consider what this constantly shifting collective does as "art", yet their importance to this type of interventionist practice can not be emphasized enough. 16 Beaver is simply a reading group that has met every Monday since 1999. Over the course of five years, they have produced projects reacting to the war and have connected various intellectuals, artists and activists through their humble space with regular meeting times. This connectivity, and there are countless other examples of this, is crucial in blurring the distinctions between those that just pro-

duce art and those that produce politics.

To end on a sobering tone, it is important to emphasize the complete lack of consensus among interventionists. Practices among interventionists vary greatly and these tensions should not be ironed out just because they are under one roof. Nor should this exhibition be misinterpreted as a "greatest hits" of interventionism. This assortment of artists/activists/reading groups/designers presented here point to new forms of resistance in the age of an increasingly privatized and visualized cultural sphere. They are methods for resistance integrally connected to larger social movements sweeping the planet. While it may be true that there are extraordinary differences of opinion regarding how social change can be brought about, most artists will agree that the current political climate is more dangerous than ever. Tactics for broadening social justice and public dialogue are not simply an artistic challenge, but one placed on everyone interested in democratic participation. The artists in the show are not telling us what to do, but are providing tools for us to engage these questions. In short, the interventionists provide, as William Pope L.'s Black Factory explicitly advertises: "opportunity".

Nato Thompson

Assistant Curator MASS MoCA

Continue 

- ¹ From a lecture given Nov. 6, 2003 at the Rethinking Marxism's 5th International Gala Conference, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- ² In 1994, the Boston ICA produced the exhibition, "Public Interventions" curated by Eleanor Heartney and then ICA director, Milena Kalovska.
- ³ See Nicolas Mirzoeff's *The Visual Culture Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1998)
- ⁴ Naomi Klein, *No Logo*, (New York, Picador, 1999), p. 30.
- ⁵ Elizabeth Jackson, *The World Today*, Tuesday, 7 October, 2003.
- ⁶ James B Twitchell, "Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz," *Signs of Life*, eds. Sonia Maasik and Jack Solomon. (3rd. eds Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins, 2000) p. 202-221.
- ⁷ Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, (New York: New Press, 1999)
- ⁸ Rosalyne Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1998), p. 151.
- ⁹ Brian Wallis, "Public Funding and Alternative Spaces" *Alternative Art in New York, 1965-1985*, ed. Julie Ault. (Minneapolis – London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002) p. 178.
- ¹⁰ For more information see the burgeoning field of critical geography spearheaded by the writings of David Harvey, Mike Davis, Edward Soja, Neil Smith and from the art writings Rosalyne Deutsche and Miwon Kwon.
- ¹¹ Definition found at www.angelfire.com/ar/corei/SI/SIsecc.htm
- ¹² Jerry Rubin, *Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1970), p. 108.
- ¹³ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 48
- ¹⁴ Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California and London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1988), p. 37.
- ¹⁵ Gregory Sholette, Personal Interview, 11 Nov. 2003.
- ¹⁶ According to Alix Kates Shulman in "Dances with Feminists" *Women's Review of Books*, Vol. IX, no. 3, December 1991, Emma Goldman never actually said the above quote. This popular quote paraphrased a much longer quote from Emma Goldman's book *Living My Life*.
- ¹⁷ Bill Tally quoted in Jason Grote's, "The God that people who do not believe in God believe in: taking a bust with Reverend Billy", in *Cultural Resistance Reader*, ed. Stephen Duncombe (London: Verso, 2002), p. 366.
- ¹⁸ Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Interrogative Design", Critical Vehicles, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), p. 17.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ subRosa's project, Refugia, investigates sites of refuge for women. The prominence in the exhibition of the term "refuge" correlates directly to larger social conditions such as the shrinkage of social services and the increasing displacement of global populations.
- ²¹ Puett prefers this term to site-specific.
- ²² From the website, www.tacticalmagic.org
- ²³ Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker: Representation of Politics: Politics of Representation", Springerin (Vienna, Austria: January, 2003: <http://www.springerin.at/en/>



Continue →

Interventionism and the historical uncanny

Or: can there be revolutionary art without the revolution?

By Gregory Sholette

Fig 1.

Garden of earthly delights,
Rubén Ortiz Torres

"Art into Life!" ... "Art into Production!" ... "Liquidate Art!..." proclaimed the slogans of the Soviet avant-garde. They likened themselves to engineers standing "before the gates of the vacant future,"¹ as several hundred years of Russian monarchy collapsed in a matter of days. Men and women of diverse artistic temperament including, El Lissitzky, Klucis, Stepanova, Popova Tatlin, Rodchenko, Gabo, Pevsner and the Stenberg brothers described themselves variously as Constructivists, Objectivists, Engineerists, and Productivists. Their goal was nothing less than a "universal human culture" founded on reason, collective production, and technological utility.² Some expressed loathing for conventional artists describing them as the "corrupters of the human race."³ Others abandoned their studios and sought to enter factories, extolling standardized production processes modeled on Henry Ford's assembly line. They developed designs for workers clubs, portable propaganda apparatuses, and art laboratories where experimentation with new Constructivist principles ideally preceded real world implantation. The artist Tatlin, who is credited with coining the slogan Art Into Life, even designed a flying bicycle that would grant every Soviet citizen aeronautical mobility.

More than eighty years after Mayakovsky proclaimed "the streets shall be our brushes - the squares our palettes," a discordant collection of interests once again seeks the liquidation of artistic detachment by staging a fresh assault upon the tenuous boundary between art and life.⁴ These forces include not only artists and intellectuals, but also philanthropic foundations, government agencies and above all global corporations; the contemporary locus of hegemonic power, a point I return to below. For the moment it is enough to note that within this constellation of interests a particular subset of individuals understand this conflict as a site for critical, artistic engagement within the public sphere. Those gathered here under the rubric of Interventionists represent compelling examples of this tendency. And because the subsidiary theme of the exhibition is artist as tool provider, comparison to Constructivist and Productivist, post-revolutionary Russian art is unavoidable. Needless to say, this essay steers directly into this potentially turbulent correlation. It asserts that despite far more modest ambitions and radically different circumstances, the contemporary, so-called interventionist reveals a definite congruence with the historic avant-garde program, enough to make qualified comparisons worth pursuing.⁵ At the same time there is significant variance raised by the comparison and this complicates the thesis in ways hopefully generative of future research.

The Soviet avant-garde artists of the 1920s and early 1930s sought to intervene directly into life by developing an art that would be useful for the advancement of an unprecedented revolutionary society. If the magnitude of this task did not lessen artistic arguments and mutual denunciations, it nevertheless inspired a surprising degree of harmony regarding one objective: art would never again be treated as mere décor or serve as a luxury item for the wealthy. It would instead be integrated directly into the lives and labor of the masses as a useful activity, an organizational tool, and a universal "mathematical consciousness of things."⁶

Flying Bicycle,
Tatlin. ca. 1930

Predictably, the definition of utility varied from artist to artist, and from manifesto to manifesto. Yet, around one point this complex movement converged. A new conception of pragmatic art would cast aside conventional notions of industrial design and applied art. It would aim instead at something far more sweeping in scope. As Lyubov' Popova, asserted, under the fast changing circumstances of the 1920s, "organization was the principle of all creative activity, including artistic composition," and the "artistic organization of the object" would inevitably become "the principle guiding the creation of even the most practical, everyday things."⁷ Rodchenko carries this logic to extraordinary lengths claiming that, "Contemporary art is a conscious and organized life that is able to see and build. Any person who has organized his life, his work, and himself is a genuine artist."⁸ Or as El Lissitzky states, "The private property aspect of creativity must be destroyed all are creators and there is no reason of any sort for this division into artists and nonartists."⁹

Such sentiments argue for a diffusion of creative work throughout a singularly transfigured society rather than the lock-step discipline of an avant-garde elite leading the cowed masses. They also echo the remarks of the young Karl Marx and Frederick Engles who argued that:

"The exclusive concentration of artistic talent in particular individuals, and its suppression in the broad mass which is bound up with this, is a consequence of division of labour. ... In a communist society there are no painters but only people who engage in painting among other activities."¹⁰

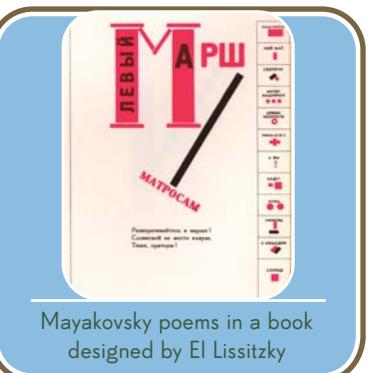
Therefore, if socially useful art is ultimately determined by the society it serves, the artist, as toolmaker must, by necessity, look to the public sphere, and not to the realm of art, for the logic of her work. It also means that the success of any fully, radically expanded idea of art is ultimately measured by its very disappearance into the daily life of the masses. Obviously, in a revolutionary moment, such an objective introduces extraordinary possibilities. It also presents risks, not only for artists, but citizens and even for the state as vanguard aesthetics appears to appropriate the very dynamic of the revolution itself. No doubt this same, extraordinary ambition made these artists, along with other, semi-autonomous movements in post-revolutionary Russia, troublesome to the increasingly centralized and aesthetically traditional Communist Party. As is well known, by the mid 1930s, most of the radical artistic practices I refer to had either been absorbed into orthodox forms of industrial design or sidelined by the official Stalinist aesthetic of socialist realism. Yet while Constructivist ideals of disseminating amongst the masses gave way to the outright displacement of the avant-garde itself, the desire to drag art into life remained central to most 20th Century avant-garde movements including the Surrealists, the Situationists and Fluxus. Never again, however, did it foment the astonishing range of prototypes, theories and artistic programs aimed at not merely subverting existing norms, but at reinventing human existence in toto. Nor was art spared retrogression back into its familiar, rarified, commodity form as art historian Benjamin H. D. Buchloh has asserted.¹¹

Nevertheless, the radical legacy of early 20th Century art remains broadly detectable today, much in the same way background traces of radiation evince a distant, primeval universe. Take the test yourself. Visit any survey of recent art and try to locate a single participant who is not compelled to make some reference to the world beyond art, be it political, personal or through appropriation of popular media or youth culture. At the same time however, if all one can argue is that a trace of social engagement lingers on today, as an artistic theme or curious academic problem, then certainly the grouping of past revolutionary art alongside its tepid, contemporary progeny offers a questionable family portrait. Fortunately, there is a wrinkle in this picture. Within its folds is a different interpretation of, as well as an alternative genealogy for, contemporary art itself.

Fig 3.

Agit prop Machine,
Klucis

Fig 4.

Mayakovsky poems in a book
designed by El Lissitzky

Continue

Fig 10.



Yomango

Nigger Inc. There is even a "factory" that simulates industrial processes and public service workers who monitor potentially hazardous forms of production such as genetically modified food. Meanwhile, the Critical Art Ensemble describes itself as a "cellular collective construction" exercising "solidarity through difference."¹⁴ Yet, contrary to early 20th Century art movements, contemporary art groups, as if reflecting the plasticity of identity formations in the post-industrial world, might be said to perform or enact collectivist modes and organizational forms rather than embody them. Incongruity, pluralism and informality have come to supplant notions of unanimity and revolutionary discipline. Tactical conditions not grand, unifying principles compel their formation, which explains perhaps why so many engage in self-mockery and irreverent play.

Logically, discrepancies also emerge in terms of the audience for this art. While the Constructivists, following Lenin, believed rapid industrialization held the key to radical, social transformation, and therefore understandably looked towards factory workers as the ideal audience/participant for their program, by contrast, no contemporary artist volunteers to enter the work place any more than they anticipate mass-producing utilitarian artworks.¹⁵ Gone is the positive expectation that modernization once inspired and with it the privileged role of the laboring class. Michael Rakowitz and his cohorts Bill Stone, George Livingston and Freddie Flynn for example focus on the urban indigent rather the industrial proletariat by creating polyethylene shelters for homeless people that are inflated by heat exhaust from city buildings and subways. Similarly, the Danish group N55 offers individuated sanctuary with their Snail Shell System. It rolls as well as floats and can tap into the city's electrical grid through the base of street lamps like some municipal parasite, but the occupant it is aimed at is not the worker but an alienated nomad. Yomango's line of shoplifting positive apparel and accessories allows the plebeian consumer to perform everyday acts of sabotage against the homogenizing effects of trans-national corporations. In each case, the intended audience for this work is less working class than simply the masses. But equally significant is the way this new wave of useful artistry functions as an ideal model for acts of civil disobedience rather than a practical strategy for defeating global capitalism.

If, for the Constructivists, experimenting with the mundane routines of labor promised something far grander than well-designed teapots, then redemption of utilitarian art was unconditionally linked with the immanent rebirth of humankind: living and working collectively, creatively and rationally thanks in large part to avant-garde art itself. By contrast, the ostensibly practical solutions for civic negligence offered by contemporary interventionist art are a symbolic and at times farcical comment about specific social problems. In other words: to the degree this work is pragmatic, it is also ironic, and to the degree it is aimed at public intervention, it cedes no transformative powers to any one group or class. Not that this represents a deficiency so much as the logical response to current political and economic conditions. Still, it is a departure from the earnest teleology of classical avant-gardism as well as from much of the art activism of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.

PAD/D: demonstration art circa 1985, Washington DC, first PAD/D newsletter 1981, Not For Sale anti-gentrification street project on New York's Lower East Side, 1984; Group Material Education Part One, Dia Art Foundation NYC, 1988; Group Material Da Za Boas, 1982, REPOhistory's Civil Disturbances in the New York Post, (Marina Gutierrez artist), August, 1998.

The Art Workers Coalition, Red Herring, Artists Meeting for Social Change, The Los Angeles Women's Building, Heresies Magazine Collective, Guerrilla Art Action Group, Paper Tiger, S.P.A.R.C. (Social and Public Art Resource Center), General Idea, PAD/D (Political Art Documentation and Distribution), Border Arts Workshop, Group Material, Gran Fury, Godzilla, the Guerrilla Girls and later REPOhistory to name only some of the artists' groups founded between 1969 and 1989 certainly had no unified program or aesthetic.¹⁶ They did generally share however, an analytical approach to cultural criticism and a desire to use art as an instru-

Fig 11.

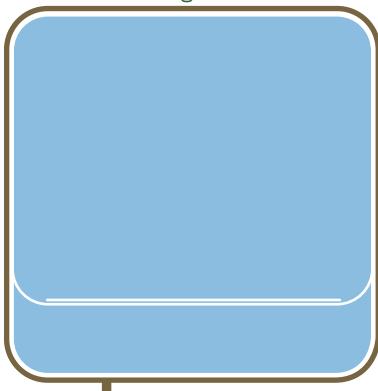


Fig 12.



IBM New York Times
Advertisement 1/1991

ment for revealing to a broad, non-art public concealed institutional, political, and historical power. By staging sustained public demonstrations against the Museum of Modern Art in the late 1960s, The Art Workers Coalition for example is credited with forcing this and other New York museums to offer a free admission day. Group Material's 1983 subway car, intervention Subculture encouraged riders used to advertisements for hemorrhoid cream to reflect on working conditions and increasing U.S. military involvement in Central America. Gran Fury and Act Up rewrote the rulebook regarding activist iconography in the mid-1980s by appropriating sophisticated media strategies for enlightening the public about the politics behind the AIDS crisis. In the early 1990s REPOhistory installed temporary street signage on city streets with images and texts that offered passersby a site-specific window into historical events and people misrepresented or ignored by dominant culture including workers, women, children and minorities. And the Guerrilla Girls, who along with Paper Tiger and S.P.A.R.C. are the only organizations above that remain active today, have since 1985 used public poster campaigns to reveal the numerical absence of women and minorities within the mainstream cultural establishment.

Along with this strong pedagogical and analytical inclination, these groups also shared a spotty kinship with Conceptual Art, especially in terms of the latter's emphasis on text, versus image, and its de-emphasis on the sanctity of the art object. But perhaps most significantly these diverse organizations also converged around the cultural politics of the New Left: a polyglot amalgam of feminists, progressive labor, minority and community activists that, despite increasing fragmentation, appeared, until recently, to be capable of coalescing into something resembling a single movement. PAD/D went so far as to propose an entire alternative arts network linking a variety of venues, including university art galleries, community centers, union halls, even churches into a sort of shadow art world that in turn would connect with non-art oriented activists.¹⁷ Very much not avant-garde in approach, PAD/D sought to transform preaching to the converted into a bona-fide, counter-cultural community that anticipated some of the rhetoric surrounding the World Wide Web.

Not that this history is lost on the new wave of activist artists.¹⁸ Still, as curator Nato Thompson writes, the interventionists, "do not preach. They do not advocate. As opposed to providing a literal political message, these artists provide tools for the viewer/participant to develop their own politics. In this sense, the political content is found in a project's use. They supply possibilities as opposed to solutions."¹⁹

Perhaps the softer political tone of most of this work reflects a healthy disillusionment with expert culture as well as an acknowledgement that even when preaching social awareness artists remain a privileged class. And if some interventionists openly align themselves with the mass activism witnessed in Seattle, Genoa, Quebec, and so forth, their politics are, generally speaking, as informal and fragmentary as the wildly heterogeneous counter-globalization movement itself. They signal a rejection of

traditional Left wing institutions. At the same time it is equally preposterous to imagine any of these artists openly embracing their own, national government in the way Constructivists and Productivists intended their art to help build communism in the USSR. This holds true despite the receipt of modest to strong federal funding amongst the artists. Instead of grander political goals, analyses, and strategies therefore we find a call for self-determined cultural, and social autonomy. However, there is a legislative model that contemporary interventionists somewhat resemble. It is the Non-Governmental Organization or NGO. Independent, unaffiliated, and ecumenical, groups such as GreenPeace, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières, and Amnesty International stress pragmatic and tactical action over ideology. Nevertheless the question must be raised; can there be radical art without a revolution?

Ironically, or inevitably, it is not interventionist artists who lead the charge to collapse the allegedly transcendent into the merely secular, that is to say art into life. Instead this pressure comes primarily from the legitimating demands of the modern, managerial class who make up what historian Chin-tau Wu calls enterprise culture: the unfettered privatization of all public life and services. Enterprise culture is a force that has come to dominate both the US and UK and is linked with the conservative governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. According to Wu, it has also produced significant effects within the cultural realm. She writes,

"Contemporary art, especially in its avant-garde manifestations, is generally assumed to be in rebellion against the system, [but] it actually acquires a seductive commercial appeal within it."²⁰

The codependency between the captains of enterprise culture and contemporary art is plainly articulated by John Murphy, former Executive Vice-President of Philip Morris Corporation when he states:

"There is a key element in this 'new art' which has its counterpart in the business world. That element is innovation -- without which it would be impossible for progress to be made in any segment of society."²¹

Perhaps Tatlin's revolutionary slogan should now be rephrased as "art into business," assuming that the latter has already incorporated most aspects of autonomous, daily life into itself. And clearly everything today can be market-branded from the war in Iraq to coolness itself as social critic Thomas Frank argues.²² At the same time the language and logic of commerce has deeply permeated the art world. In art schools, students express concerns about how to market themselves. Once graduated, the emerging artist is keen to focus on product placement

Continue

The INTERVENTIONISTS

within prominent museums, journals and biennials. But why should this surprise us when the leading lights of the art world, from Matthew Barney to the managers of the Tate Modern, present high art as a spectacle of abundance, even of excess, in which success is measured by how many fabricators one commands and who throws the swankiest openings? And all of this shock and awe appears to be thanks to the marriage of high culture and corporate largess. In terms of artist as tool provider, therefore, the boasting of Thomas Hoving, former director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art sums it up decisively:

"Art is sexy! Art is money-sexy! Art is money-sexy -social-climbing-fantastic!" (Wu, 127).

Figure 13 Krzysztof Wodiczko's drawing for a vehicle in which the rider must walk back and forth on a see-saw platform to power it to go forward from 197?

The call for art to merge into life returns today under the most improbable of circumstances. Not only has the decrepit Soviet Union completely vanished, but, as if history were a glove pulled inside out, so has the once widespread aspiration that society be grounded in equanimity, fraternity and reason rather than profitability, competition, and market speculation. Socialism, the driving force of the Russian avant-garde, has become, in the words of Jacques Derrida, a specter. It haunts the totality that is, at the start of the 21st Century, global capitalism. What is so very odd, therefore, is the degree to which current historical circumstances are exactly opposite those surrounding the Soviet Avant-Garde, and yet simultaneously analogous.

The current wave of artistic utilitarianism does indeed produce useful, tool-like art. And, these acts of resistance practiced within everyday life are witty and at times inspiring. Nevertheless, they remain disconnected from comprehensive visions of radical, social transformation. Their politics vague or at best subdued.¹²³ It is worth noting by way of an admittedly oblique answer to the question raised about radical art and revolutionary politics that some of the most ambitious projects in the USSR in the 1920s, including Tatlin's Monument to the Third International and Rodchenko's Workers Club, never left the prototype stage. Perhaps foremost among these unrealized social interventions was the "people's air bicycle," or Letatlin, a peculiar combination of the pragmatic and the fantastic that Tatlin fabricated in the seclusion of the Novodevichi Monastery in the early 1930s. The personal flying machine at once signaled the possibility that every Soviet citizen could be mobile, travel freely, even temporarily withdraw from the collective. But more than that, one can read into Letatlin a sly, critical stance towards the increasingly bureaucratic and centralized Soviet state.²⁴ In other words, is it possibly Tatlin's merging of autonomy and critique, rather than his call of art into life that most clearly prefigures today's interventionists? At the same

time, can one not afford to attempt the radical transformation of present art and society, with or without a revolution immanent?

The author wishes to thank Nina Gourianova for her generosity and valuable comments on the essay.

Gregory Sholette is an artist, writer, art organizer and founding member of Political Art Documentation and Distribution and the REPOhistory. This essay was written in the Spring of 2004 at which time he was the Distinguished Batza Family Chair of Art and Art History at Colgate University in Hamilton New York.

User's Manual to the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life

- 1 From the "Realistic Manifesto," N. Pevsner and N. Gabo, Second State Printing House, August 1920, in *Art Into Life: Russian Constructivism 1914-1932* (Seattle/New York: Henry Art Gallery & Rizzoli: 1990), p 61.
- 2 K. Medunetskii, V. Stenberg & G. Stenberg, "The Constructivists Address the World," January 1922, in *Art Into Life*, p 81.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Mayakovsky from his poem "Order to the Army of Art," in Camilla Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863-1922* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1962), p 224.
- 5 Note that both my caution and enthusiasm regarding this historical comparison is indebted to the important research and writings of Benjamin Buchloh, Hal Foster and Christine Lodder on the revolutionary avant-garde.
- 6 V. Stenberg from *Art Into Life*, p 68.
- 7 Popova, "Commentary on Drawings," December 1921, in *Art Into Life*, p 69.
- 8 Rodchenko, "Slogans," February 22, 1921, in *Art Into Life*, p 71.
- 9 El Lissitzky, "Suprematism in World Reconstruction," 1920, in El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1967), p 333.
- 10 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, 1845-46, (New York, International Publishers edition, 1970), p 109.
- 11 See especially B. Buchloh, "Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression," reprinted in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, edited by Brian Wallis, (New York, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), pp 107-136.
- 12 *Art Into Life*, p 38.
- 13 Nina Gourianova, "The Supremus Laboratory-House: Reconstructing the Journal," in Drutt, Mathew, ed. Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism, Guggenheim Museum Publications: New York, 2003, p 44-59
- 14 Observations on Collective Cultural Action
The Critical Art Ensemble, From
<http://www.criticalart.net/lectures/collective.html>
- 15 At least this is true in the US today. However, some notable exceptions from an earlier generation of artists include:
Mierle Laderman Ukeles who has worked with the New York City Department of Sanitation as their artist-in-residence for more than twenty years as well as such artists as Fred Lonidier, Mike Alewitz, Alan Sekula, Marty Pottenger and Toronto, Canada: Carol Conde and Karl Beveridge.
- 16 For more about these groups see: *Get The Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change*, Lucy R. Lippard (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984); *But Is It Art: The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin, (Seattle: Bay Press, Inc. 1994); *Alternative Art New York: 1965-1985*, ed. Julie Ault, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Grant Kester's *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, forthcoming from University of California and *Collectivism After Modernism*, eds Stimson & Sholette, forthcoming from University of Minnesota Press.
- 17 I take up the notion of a shadow or dark matter art world in several recent essays including "Some Call It Art From Imaginary Autonomy to Autonomous Collectivity," available on-line at: European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies: http://www.eipcp.net/diskurs/do/7/text/sholette_en.html
- 18 Alan Moore suggests for example that PAD/D's tactical anti-gentrification work "was important schooling in forms and tactics for artists who played roles in the next, and explicitly politicized, phase of "East Village art..." see Ault, p 345.
- 19 ???NEED REFERENCE FOR THIS NATO
- 20 Chin-tao Wu, *Privatising Culture: Corporate Art Intervention since the 1980s*, (London/New York, Verso, 2002), p 161.
- 21 Ibid, p 125.
- 22 Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997).
Regarding Iraq see Noel C. Paul, "Selling War: Marketers Weigh in on How Well Bush Is Branding the Battle with Iraq," *The Science Monitor*, March 26, 2003.
- 23 The type of political explicitness I am focusing on is a tendency, but not an explicit rule. There are significant differences between say SubRosa or the Critical Art Ensemble and E-Xplo or N55 that not surprisingly tend to fall along generational lines.
- 24 Perhaps it is not coincidental that the shrewd, humorous reflexivity of contemporary interventionist art also resembles art made during the cold war in what was termed the "Eastern Bloc"? For example Krzysztof Wodiczko's ironic, conceptual art projects made before he immigrated to Canada from Poland.

Anarchy in the experimental university: ruins

dreaming the experimental university

By Nicholas Mirzoeff

Imagine for a moment that you do not know what a university is—or more exactly what it might have been. Imagine that you set aside all the reams of boilerplate and platitudes produced by today's universities in search of a purpose for themselves to ask yourself what a university will have been by the time this exhibition is over. The future perfect—the 'will have been'—is the tense of the ghost, which will have returned. The ghost in this case is precisely the imagined university that haunts the ruins of the university as it is today.ⁱ The late Edward Said used to declare that the university was the last utopia in Western society. The slightest glance at any report by a senior university official will quickly make it apparent that no hint of utopia remains, with its language of incentivizing the faculty, naming students as customers and claiming the benefit of the institution to be its function as an economic multiplier. Did that utopia simply evaporate to join the long list of unfulfilled millenarian dreams? The new 'realism' among university administrators would say so, but this exhibition suggests otherwise. For as the ghost of the university continues to return, it demands that we consider that the university is in fact yet to come. The utopian university is not the ghost in the machine but rather, as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, it is a machine. This machine produces knowledge, not information, and there is a difference. This university-machine did not die but has become dispersed into the expanded field: beyond the museum, beyond the lecture hall and into everyday life. Experience the intervention of the experimental university and realize that the dream was not necessarily about those places with the name university on the door. The existence and emergence of utopian spaces to eat, live, dream and imagine takes place in-between the ruins of the museum and those of the university. It is not a revolution. It is a moment of clarity.

Instead of thinking of the university as a locus of national policy by which the elite recruits new members, perhaps it might be a place in which people encounter each other. This sideways encounter is inspired by the German writer and critic Walter Benjamin's vision of the Arcades, the nineteenth-century covered iron-and-glass arena for shopping, strolling and perhaps above all observation. Benjamin took this social and architectural innovation and transformed into what he called a dream-image. The dream-image expressed his sense that the Arcades were an especially important site in which people were trying to dream the future into being. Taking Said's sense of the university as a utopia seriously would make it the 20th

century equivalent of this dream, trying to create tools, images and ideas for the 21st century. Of course, this kind of rhetoric is close to that used by universities themselves with their insistent claims to prepare people for the future and improve the world we live in. Said's view was far more expansive than the narrow socio-economic amelioration now offered to students and their parents in exchange for their ever rising tuition fees. This university might be a place of emancipation, rather than instruction, formed by critique rather than the transfer of information. The emancipated university was not accomplished in the past but dreamed by it. Like the Arcades, it was a vision of the refiguring of social space or, more exactly, the rendering of space such that its social nature becomes apparent. That is to say, there is no such thing as empty space because all space, or the sensation of space, is socially produced.

Unlike the Arcades, the university is a space of production rather than consumption, in short a machine. Here is the connection with contemporary art, which Sarat Maharaj has called a form of knowledge production. In this view, the distinction between the university (each with its own museum) and the museum (each with its own education department) is getting productively blurred. In this interface of artwork, museum and university, knowledge is produced as a dream of an emancipation that is yet to come. The emancipated university in the expanded field is, then, a dream machine.

There is much work to be done in developing this idea. Let's begin with the question of emancipation. Emancipation is the legal or biological process by which a minor attains status as a subject. To be emancipated, one might come of age; or be set free from bondage in slavery or indentured servitude; or have the legal burdens of civil disability set aside, such as those prescribed against Jews and other minorities in European nations prior to the French Revolution. In short, emancipation is an act of what French philosopher Michel Foucault called "biopower," the intersection of life with power. Biopower sets the age at which one attains subject status at 30, 21 or 18; figures the "age of consent" to sexual relations; renders certain forms of sexual practice not just illegal or immoral but as a separate species, such as the "homosexual"; permits children to be tried "as adults"; determines what forms of embodiment are "disabled" and which are not, and so on. In the European Enlightenment, the philosopher Immanuel Kant answered the question posed by a German newspaper "What is Enlightenment?" as emancipation, or "Man's quitting the nonage occasioned by himself." Nonage was

the legal state of minority which required emancipation. In Kant's instance "Man"—by which he normally means the white, male, European, free, able-bodied Gentle—is able to emancipate himself by the public use of Reason. The difficulty inherent in this concept of emancipation is that Reason has also been used to create the barriers to its enactment for those people who did not fall into the category of "Man."

To make an assertion that will perhaps seem too quick, the experimental university would be a space for a collective and interactive deployment of criticism and other modes of inquiry that is not circumscribed by this limited definition of the human. In discussing Kant's essay on Enlightenment, Foucault argued that criticism was now to be framed as "a historical investigation of the events that have led us to constitute ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying....But if we are not to settle for the affirmation or the empty dream of freedom, it seems to me that this historicocritical attitude must also be an experimental one."ⁱⁱ By this, Foucault meant that such projects must be local and specific rather than seek to create the "new man that the worst political systems have repeated throughout the twentieth century." The empty affirmation of freedom is all around us at present even as its local and specific forms seem to be under consistent and widespread erasure. In the context of art and visual culture, there is a notable omission from Foucault's definition of the activities of the subject: seeing. His work built on the theory of the "interpellation" of the subject, developed by his colleague Louis Althusser in 1960s Paris. Althusser described interpellation, or hailing, as something "which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing 'Hey, you there!'"ⁱⁱⁱ When we respond to that call by looking round or asking "do you mean me?" we recognize our interpellation. This recognition is the means by which an individual locates itself in time and space. Inherent in that little moment is also a visual surveillance that leads to a moment of detection or recognition. The actions of the subject are suspicious but their actions clearly exist. Rather than an exchange between individuals on foot, as presumed in Althusser's theory of interpellation, his former colleague Jacques Rancière has recently argued that the modern anti-spectacle now dictates that there is nothing to see and that instead one must keep moving, keep circulating and keep consuming: "The police are above all a certitude about what is there, or rather, about what is not there: 'Move along, there's nothing to see.'" One of the new camps for migrants or refugees concealed in a remote area of the countryside is a good example of this object of visuality which is there and not there at once. The police are not just the uniformed officers of the police force but what Foucault called "an administration heading the state, together with the judiciary, the army and the exchequer." Contrasting this generalized sense of the police with the practice of politics, Rancière continues: "the police say there is nothing to see, nothing happening, nothing to be done, but to keep moving, circulating; they say that the space of circulation is nothing but the space of circulation. Politics consists in transforming that space of circulation into the space of the manifestation of a subject: be it the people, workers, citizens. It consists in reconfiguring that space,

what there is to do there, what there is to see or name. It is a dispute about the division of what is perceptible to the senses."^{iv} Insofar as that dispute concerns the visual, necessarily interfaced with the other senses, this politics of bringing the subject into presence in space is visual culture. For when the police say there is nothing to see, they are not telling the truth nor are we supposed to infer that they are. Rather they mean, "while there is something to see, you have no authority or need to look at it." By being simply a citizen, one does not necessarily attain the full authority of the visual subject, the person who is allowed and required to look in all circumstances.

In the experimental university, new forms of looking are being enacted that would allow for the formation of visual subjects in the new spaces of globalization, with or without the permission of the police. With the Atlas Group, we look into the archive of the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1990 that seems to be a precursor to much of the current dramas of terrorism. The Atlas Group is described by Walid Ra'ad as "an aesthetic and cultural laboratory." The archive offered presents film, photography, documents and commentary but Ra'ad adds: "It is important to note that some of the documents, stories, and individuals I present with this project are real in the sense that they exist in the historical world, and others are imaginary in the sense that I imagined and produced them." All pertain to making the situation in Lebanon visible and imaginable. But the interweaving of creative and documentary material places the viewer in a far more active position than that of a simple witness or consumer. In making this "division of what is perceptible to the senses", the viewer becomes a visual subject. But whereas the ordinary university accomplishes these tasks based on a comfortable guarantee that the information offered is true in common sense terms, the Atlas Group Archive makes us question how and why archives come into being. Knowledge is here as much a problem as an answer.

Clearly this work is political but it is not politics as we have become accustomed to it in American art of recent years. Interestingly some very different critics like TJ Clark and Sarat Maharaj have recently called for a reconsideration of anarchism, the space between the artist and Duchamp's "anartist."^v Clark has gone so far as to say that socialism's epistemic crisis began with the break with anarchism in the 1890s, for which he has been soundly critiqued by scandalized Marxists in wealthy private universities. To look at 1890s anarchist concerns with race and racism, ecology and the politics of food, prison reform, and a decentered political system^{vi} is to get a shock of Walter Benjamin's *Jetzeit* (the time of the now). Anarchy also recalls the fashion, music and politics of 1970s punk that are again visible in suburban streets.^{vii} So to think of anarchism is not to disavow mass political action because that is the exception to everyday life, as in the recent anti-war demonstrations that were mobilized from people's houses via the internet. That action was anarchist, in the sense of a political action committed out of the sight of the police. It is closer to the anarchist trend within modern criticism that runs from Oscar Wilde and Camille Pissarro in

Continue

the 1890s to the "theocratic anarchism" of the young Walter Benjamin in Weimar Germany, the Situationists of the 1950s and 60s and many contemporary strands of theoretical practice, perhaps especially those connected with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. This is not to suggest that the artists here should simply be thought of as anarchists because many of them would disagree. At the same time, it is not to adhere to the violence committed as "anarchism." The point is to bring that strand of concern with the politics and practice of everyday life that was addressed by anarchism, and often overlooked by other forms of the political, back into the practice of the experimental university.

The possibility of an experimental university has emerged in considerable part thanks to the emergence of digital culture. Computer technology blurs the distinction between amateurs and professionals and threatens to make information available as simply as photography did for the image. It is intriguing in this context to recall that Eric Raymond's famous essay "The Cathedral and the Bazaar," one of the classic texts of digital culture, concludes with a passage from Peter Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*. Raymond's essay highlights the creative possibilities of "open-source" programming using the Linux operating system with the top-down, all-controlling in-house system (implicitly that of Microsoft). After hailing the "bazaar" of open source as superior to the "cathedral" of in-house (and without addressing his own Orientalism), he turns to Kropotkin. Kropotkin had turned away from a career as a government reformer to that of a radical and revolutionary in Tsarist Russia of the 1860s. He had witnessed what he considered the failure of government-led reform in Siberia, while gaining a devotion to the peasants and ordinary people that was to shape his subsequent career. The passage cited by Raymond turns on Kropotkin's reflecting on his life within a serf-owning family—a serf being a person "owned" by a landowner as the labor for that land—only to then experience emancipation in 1863. Having lived through this emancipation, Kropotkin came to "appreciate the difference between acting on the principle of command and discipline and acting on the principle of common understanding. The former works admirably in a military parade but is worth nothing where real life is concerned, and the aim can be achieved only through the severe effort of many converging wills."^{viii} That effort of many converging wills was what sustained the anarchy of the internet before it was reined in by Microsoft and AOL. Seen more broadly, it is perhaps the first theory of everyday life as a form of resistance and as an alternative to centralized power, for all its nineteenth-century baggage of "civilization" theory. More widely still, this is the ethos of the experimental university. Indeed, Kropotkin used museums and libraries as examples of the principle of "to every person according to their needs."^{ix}

Yet needs can be met in a variety of ways. Discussing the growth of public kitchens in the 1890s, Kropotkin shuddered that "to make a duty of taking home our food ready cooked, that would be as repugnant to our modern minds as the ideas of the convent or the barrack."^x By connecting mass-produced food to the disciplinary institutions of church and state, Kropotkin linked everyday life to power through the basic means of subsistence. It has recently been estimated that 10 corporations supply over half of all the food and drink consumed in the United States. The number of people now working

as farmers is less than one per cent of the working-age population, for all the endless evocation of the needs of farmers by the governing class. When they say "farmers," hear "agri-business." Now that nearly all but the most dedicated of us take home our bread ready cooked, Critical Art Ensemble with Beatriz de Costa plan to make us reexamine that connection by testing loaves for the presence of genetically modified grains. We are told that these are safe. Exactly what knowledge will be produced by this experiment is unclear. This is the difference between an artistic experiment and a scientific one that is created to demonstrate a theorem. It challenges the cosiness of the "museum visit" with its promise of quiet viewing, rewarded by a visit to the gift shop and café. In the experimental university that has taken its place, it remains to be seen what happens next. The point at which this will start to get interesting will be when the artist-educator loses the edge of surprise over the experimental student. Learning curves are very short these days.

The cybernetic hope of anarchic freedom implied in Raymond's citation of Kropotkin had already been imagined as a cityscape by the Situationist architect Constant in the 1960s. He called it "New Babylon." A Dutch painter who had come to abandon art in favor of the new practice of urbanism, Constant has a good claim to have invented the strategy of the situation. Inspired by his vision of a mass culture freed from the routine of subsistence labor by cybernetics, Constant imagined that automation would generate huge amounts of "so called free time." Rather than think of this time as "leisure," Constant and the other Situationists were inspired by the Dutch historian Johann Huizinga to think of it as play and to consider play as freedom.^{xi} In elaborating his theory of New Babylon, Constant quoted the cybernetic theorist Norbert Weiner who "compares the electronic machine to the imported slaves of antiquity." This new emancipation from the necessity to work would be for all, rather than the minority supported by slavery. It will generate "unprecedented freedom, an undreamt-of opportunity for the free disposal of time, for the free realization of life....The freedom won as a result of the disappearance of routine work is a freedom to act," which he called the "lived work of art." In this society, traditional forms of art would be revealed as a "surrogate" for this kind of freedom.^{xii} New Babylon was to be the site of "the real practice of freedom—of a 'freedom' that for us is not the choice between many alternatives but the optimum development of the creative faculties of every human being."^{xiii} Freedom was not to be seen either as an absence of constraint or as the self-enabling choice among variables which is presented by American apologists today but as the possibility to play.

Constant envisaged New Babylon as a world without frontiers, that he called "a camp for nomads on a planetary scale." Rather than an exclusionary camp that seeks to detain and deport the nomad, like the new detention camps for migrants and refugees created in the European Union, Australia and the US borderlands, New Babylon opened a space for them to play as they chose without having to become settled to do so. This new cityspace was inspired by the old Babylon of the ghetto and marginal space: "these areas of the historical cities, where the outcasts of the utilitarian society stick together, these poor quarters where racial minorities, artists, students, prostitutes, and intellectuals are living together."^{xiv} The subRosa group creates maps of cities from alternative points of view

in the hope of forming a refugia, an actually existing New Babylon. In this case, they will have traced the spaces in North Adams that connect gender and production, looking at the ways in which MoCA itself is housed in a former factory. It is going to be controversial because gender is always troubling. Their project is exemplary of the experimental university that is yet to come. It has clear links to art and politics of the past but tries to create a new future. But that new future is not a calm utopia but a place where ideas, identities and knowledges are troubled, rather than reinforced. The risk is that knowledge production simply becomes knowledge commodification. It is in that space between the museum and the everyday that the experimental university tries to establish itself. Both museums and universities have sought to evade the charge of elitism by organizing themselves to appeal to ever larger numbers of people. The blockbuster show is in this sense of a piece with on-line courses, part-time degrees and the promotion of life-long learning. If there is to be a cultural and political significance to this expansion beyond the simple pursuit of numbers, then the challenge of anarchism, experimentation and utopia presented by this show will have to be faced.¹⁷

Nicholas Mirzoeff

Professor, Art History and Comparative Literature

- i See Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*, although it should be noted that while I concur with Readings' critique of the contemporary university in general, I do not agree with some of his specifics, notably in regard to cultural studies.
- ii Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (eds.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984, 46).
- iii Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984), 48.
- iv Jacques Rancière, from *Aux bords de la politique*, 2nd revised edition (Paris, 1998) 17; quoted and translated by Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 22-23.
- v See T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 103; and Sarat Maharaj, "Xeno-Epistemics: Makeshift Kit for Sounding Visual Art as Knowledge Production and the Retinal Regimes," in *Documents 11_Platform 5: The Exhibition* (Ostfildern-Ruit [Germany]: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002), 71-84.
- vi See Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, Ed. Marshall S. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover Publications, 1969); Kropotkin, *In Russian and French Prisons*
- vii These connections evoke the wonderful book by Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A secret history of the twentieth century* (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- viii Peter Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 216. Cited without reference by Eric S. Raymond, "The Cathedral and the Bazaar," at http://firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_3/raymond/ accessed on 10/13/03.
- ix Peter Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread and other writings*, ed. Marshall S. Shatz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1892] 1995), 33-34.
- x Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*, 65.
- xi J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London: Routledge, Kegan, Paul, [1940] 1980), 8.
- xii Constant, "Unitary Urbanism" (1960), rpr. Mark Wigley, Constant's *New Babylon: The Hyperarchitecture of Desire* (Rotterdam: Witte de With/010 Publishers, 1998), 133.
- xiii Constant, "New Babylon: Outline of a Culture," written 1960-65, rpr. in Wigley, Constant's *New Babylon*, 160.
- xiv Constant, unpublished lecture of 1964, quoted in Wigley,

Encyclopedic Entries

Collectives

Gregory Sholette and Blake Stimson

The desire to speak in a collective voice has long fueled the social imagination of artists. Futurism, Constructivism and Surrealism shared this aim early in the 20th century as did collectives such as CoBrA, the Situationist International, Gutai and the Lettristes after World War II, Fluxus, the Art Workers Coalition, Art & Language, and others in the 1960s, Group Material, S.P.A.R.C. , PAD/D, and Gran Fury among many in the 1970s and 80s and organizations such as The Guerrilla Girls, RTMark, Critical Art Ensemble, Temporary Services and Las Agencias more recently. At any given moment, the particular form of collectivism has varied depending on specific historical conditions. For example, if the earlier ambition was, as Mondrian once put it, to struggle "against everything individual in man," or to become, as Malevich termed it, "world-man," then the aspiration of collectivism after the Second World War has been imagined differently. The governing artistic posture or identification of this collectivism after modernism, as it might be called, has rarely

claimed to find its unity as the singularly correct avant-garde representative of social progress but instead has gathered itself into a coherent program around decentered and fluctuating identities that utilize the inevitably heterogeneous character of any group formation rather than fighting against it. In keeping with Theodor Adorno's critical judgment that modern collectivism and modern individualism "complete one another in falsity," artistic collectivism in the last 50 years has found its purpose in skirting both untruths. This aim to rework social imagination has become all the more pressing and all the more prescient in light of the various social, economic and political pressures that have been lumped together under the label "globalization."





Laughnilingus

William Pope.L

Despite (and probably because of its) enormous and enduring popularity, comedy has never enjoyed the critical prestige of, say, the so-called serious forms such as drama or the documentary or the novel...

Comedy can be both anti-authoritarian and socially transformative. However, just because a person is against authority does not mean he or she is pro-society. And even if so, which society? Maybe the only society worth being for is that which one is willing to stand against.

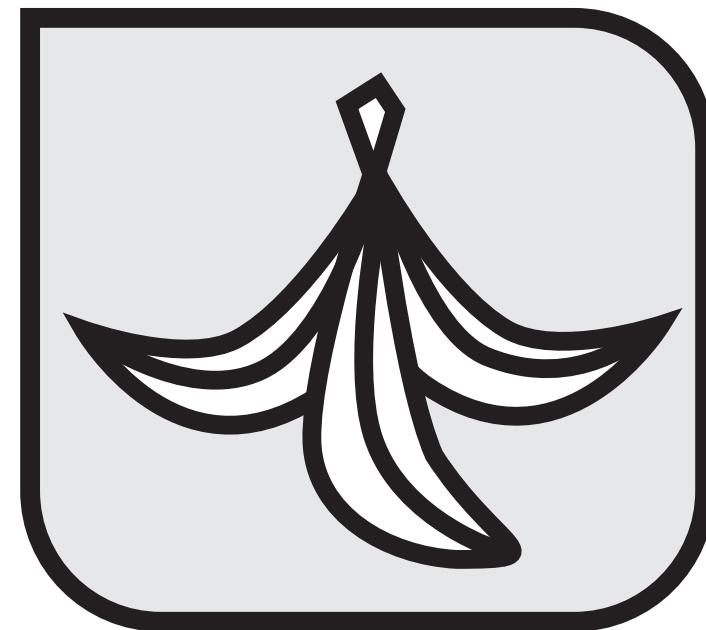
When comedy shifts from its proper focus, that is, against convention, the law, the uppity and the socially powerful, and turns its attack on the weaker and the oppressed, it keeps things the same and assists in maintaining the status quo.

Comedy then becomes a strategy to keep people in line, their desires in their panty and their pleasure routine.

Some feminist historians consider comedy a feminine form: 'ancient, tribal, [and] used to celebrate' the wank of a thing; always moving dramatically toward conclusions in which people are united through divorce and lots of parties; made hole through dissipation and so on and so on...

Benedict Anderson's notion of nations as 'imagined communities' comes in handy when thinking about comedy. Why? Because when a nation has its mouth open, anything can happen...

Adapted from: Comedy, Melodrama and Gender: Theorizing the Genres of Laughter, Kathleen Rowe in Classical Hollywood Comedy, ed. K. B. Karnick and H. Jenkins, 1995.





Notes on the Archive:

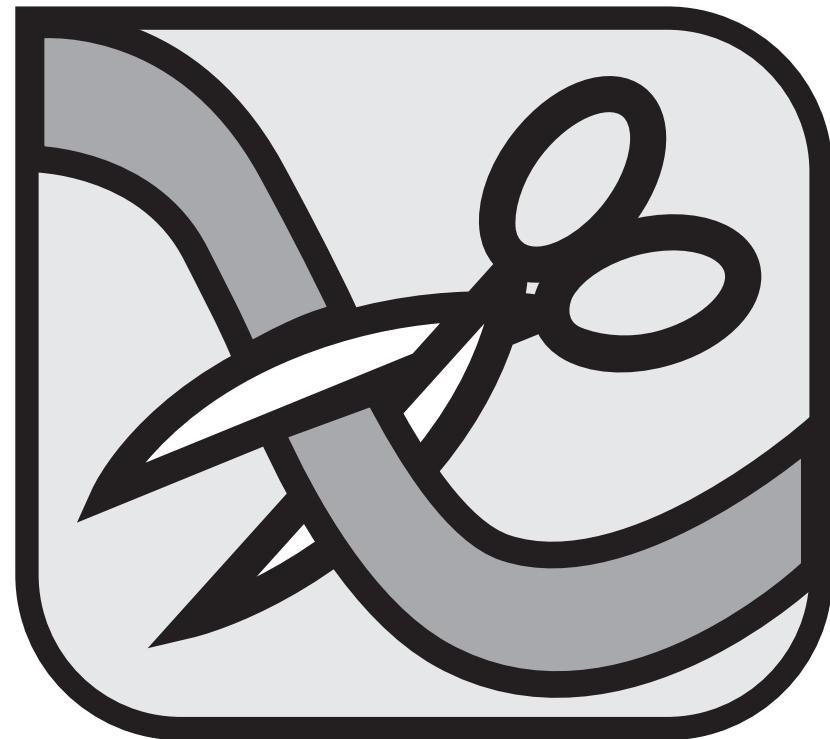
spurse

The archive is often seen to be tied to the documentation of a past event – an event that has receded far into the past so as to be only accessible through documentation housed in the archive. The archive becomes thus situated as a space for the complex and contested production of histories. In Foucault's alternative sense the archive is the site of the spacing out of a history so as to turn history upon itself and uncover the discursive and non-discursive regimes of what is sayable or visible at a given moment. The Foucaultian archive becomes a site of ontological – or perhaps heterological investigation/production and experimentation. Critical to this form of the archive is that there is a nascent cartographic function to the archive – where it begins to trace out weaknesses, aporias, new paradoxes, and new modes of becoming latent in the mass of housed materials (always in relation to questions of the present). This is what Foucault himself saw as the shift into genealogical modes of inquiry (and what Deleuze termed the cartographic). Perhaps then it is not all that much of a morphogenetic shift to see the archive as an open experiment in the production of what is in common – where this conceptualization of the “commons” is being posed as a zone of problematization.

Here in the development of a temporary parallel space or event of inquiry one finds interesting resonances following the archaic root of the word archive — “Archeia” — the town hall – a public gathering – the space of civic engagement. “Archive” then as a space for the production of a public. The archive becomes a strategic zone of stopping mid stream to allow the unformmedness of ideas, things, events, places, identities, individuations of any scale and forces to fold in upon each other as an experimental problematization of the given – a pause – a slowing down of acting to allow the givenness of a new situation to reshape ones mode of acting and doing.

Given the global context of action and vastly distributed nature of agency there is a need for this form of situated condensation and slowing down of agents, forces, spaces, and events. A strategic temporary parallel institution — the archive is at once the a collection, a system of collecting, a series of relations (to peoples, groups, regions, terrains, events, things and other beings etc.) and an unfolding collective space in which to experiment with these (now collective). The archive becomes a way of investigating and experimenting with the present through the collective development of a system of problematization.

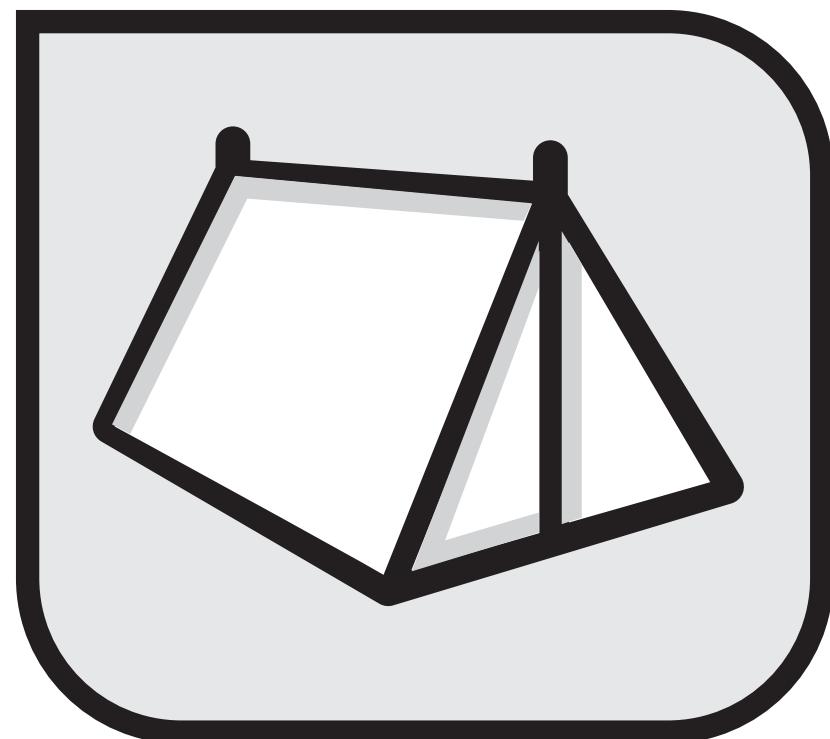
A system is needed to move from the space of problematization towards the production of an archive. Here one needs to develop a methodology of tracing out immanent forces at the point of emergence. A score that directly engage outside of the structural subjectivities of scientific, aesthetic and others produces an archive that can move outside of itself, making possible that the archive becomes an active force in its own reshaping. The generation of archival objects through the scores creates an open set, in which any object, image, sound, smell or agent can become an element of the set if collected from the environment using the specified methodology. Thus permitting the discovery of unanticipated elements and associations. The archive demands an engaged participation that over time must respond to the changing problematic that the archive itself calls forward. The spatio-temporal contingency of the archive and archival process is fundamental and thereby as a process sustains a dynamic continuity, remaining open to intervention, aberration and inflection. So, the etymology of the word archive as an interaction of forces maps onto the praxis of the archive as a collection. It is a repository of motion and speeds; a collection of open agencies, sensible and prone — the production of a people(s) and a space/spaces still to come.



The Amateur

Critical Art Ensemble

The word "amateur" is very rarely used in a positive sense. It is a disciplinary term used to discourage hybridity and maintain profitable professional and social separations. For the most part amateurs are second-class citizens in the area of knowledge production. However, in the context of political and cultural intervention, amateurs have a significant and vital role to play. They can have the ability to spot contradictions and rhetorical cover-ups within the dominant paradigms, are freer to recombine elements of paradigms thought dead or unrelated, and can apply everyday life experience to their deliberations with greater ease than can specialists. In this manner amateurs can reconfigure the terms of action within the terrain of a given discipline. Most importantly, however, amateurs are not invested in institutionalized systems of knowledge production and policy construction, and hence do not have irresistible forces guiding the outcome of their efforts, such as maintaining a place in the funding hierarchy or maintaining prestige-capital. This is not to say that amateurism should be promoted for amateurism's sake. The amateur's relationship to the expert is a necessary one in many ways. For the sake of efficiency, to limit mistakes, to teach fundamental processes and protocols, and to reinforce good ideas, dialogues with experts remain a key part of the amateur's process.



The Bus Tour

e-Xplo

Preface:

It is a difficult assignment, to trace how one arrives at a particular strategy or medium, and the task is made more difficult because of the collaborative nature of our work.

Touring is more than just a metaphor for the "society of the spectacle" or for the increasing industrialization and mobilization of culture for economic purposes.

The tour conjures more than tourism, it implicates, and puts into play numerous forms of movement, across and between borders, not just of people, but of images, of sounds, of resources, of capital, of labor, of culture.

It is more than a pointed critique or a reflexive method of involving/implicating ourselves within the physical and discursive terrain of frames such as public art, site specificity, sound art, mobility, land art, sculpture, architecture, film, music or the performance of music.

It is more than a tactical response to the increased policing of "public" space, in which walking or wandering as trespassing or loitering.

The tour is also more than a homage to previous politically motivated artists who have taken to the streets, such as the Surrealist André Breton with his strategy of objective chance or the Situationist Guy Debord, who proposed *dérive* ('a technique of transient passage through varied ambiences') as a both method for studying terrain and emotionally disorienting oneself as well as an intermediate step toward the realization of a larger field of study of psychogeography, fostering among other things the creation of maps in which specific regions of the city would be noted for arousing particular affective or aesthetic responses..

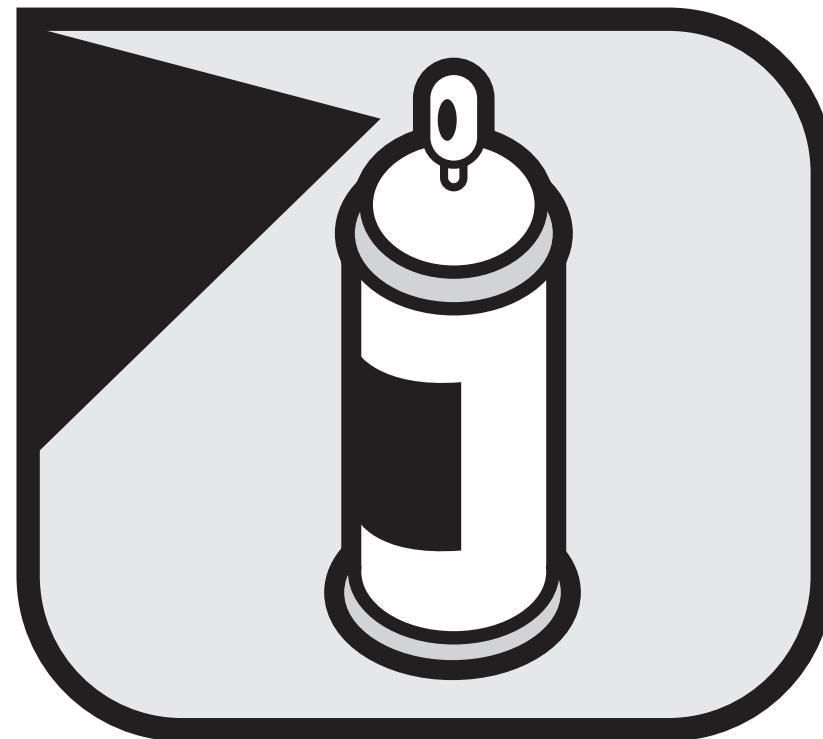
It is more than a system for addressing critical and timely questions raised by Paul Virilio, Elizabeth Grosz and other thinkers we are engaged with.

Touring is also more than an proposal for a way of exploring cities, tourist sights & off-sights or for that matter the site of tourism.

Touring may not even be touring, at times it can be more akin to Barthesian cruising: not swaddled in the stereotypes of monuments, the cruiser is more aware of the world around her/him or at the very least more aware of the very process or act of moving.

Postscript:

To quote Guy Debord quoting Karl Marx, "Men can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive."

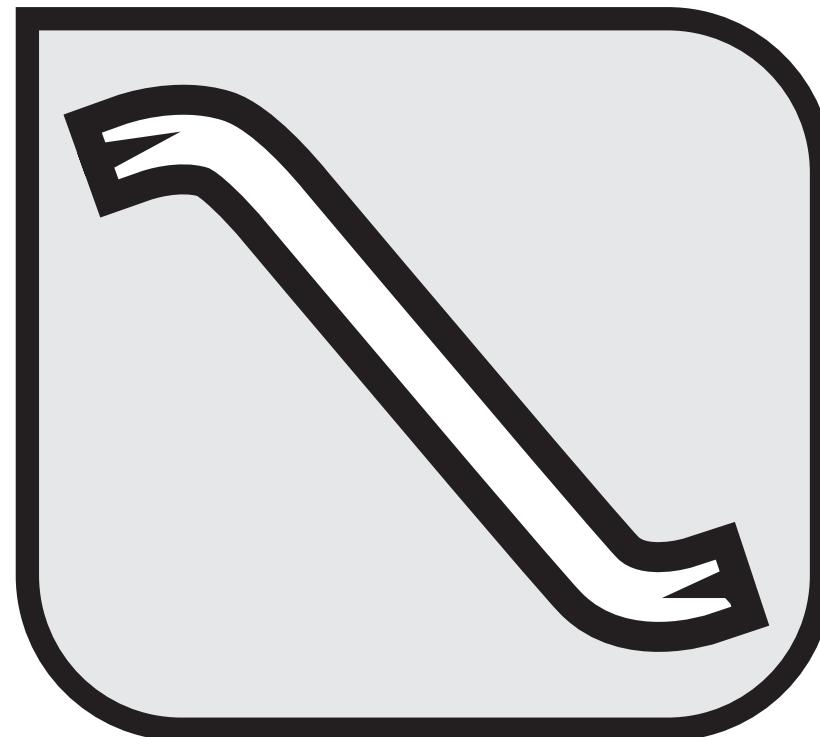


Thoughts on illegality

YOMANGO (Spanish for "I Steal")

You must realize that YOMANGO is not a collective formed by individuals who dedicate their time to shoplifting. First, it is not a collective. Second, there are no 'YOMANGO individuals'. YOMANGO is everywhere, but it is hard to grasp. So how can 'the followers of YOMANGO' get arrested? You don't 'follow' YOMANGO. YOMANGO happens. Nonetheless it is true, that when YOMANGO occurs, certain physical entities, such as security personnel or store workers, do what they possibly can to avoid it, thus making visible the person who is enjoying a YOMANGO moment. This person, at that very moment, could be perceived as a thief. But nothing is farther than the truth.

YOMANGO is a gesture which provides you with everything advertising promises, but the reality of capitalism prevents you from having: the prospect of adventure, self fulfillment, creativity, sharing, community...YOMANGO is a transformative act of magic. It does not recognize the laws of physics nor does it acknowledge definitions such as legal or illegal. It does not recognize borders or security arcs. YOMANGO liberates objects and liberates your desire. It liberates your desire which is trapped within objects which are trapped inside large shopping mall, the same place where you yourself are trapped. YOMANGO is a pact between coprisoners.



Détournement

Nato Thompson

"Since opposition to the bourgeois notion of art and artistic genius has become pretty much old hat, Duchamp's drawing of a mustache on the Mona Lisa is no more interesting than the original version of that painting." -Guy Debord and Gil J. Wolman, "A User's Guide to Détournement"

Originally conceived by the Situationists in the 1950s, détournement can currently be conceived as a form of existence. That is to say, existing and making meaning in the landscape of a dominant system is a popular form of life. Détournement can take the form of a billboard manipulation where one modifies an advertisement to say what they like or to propose a radical alternative to its original intent. Yet, it can also point toward any relationship that derives its meaning by trespassing and modifying the rules of engagement. The radical implication of détournement is that meaning is connected to a relationship with power. We find contemporary corollaries in "culture jamming" where popular media (billboard advertisements, commercials, television shows, popular music) is modified guerilla-style to produce critical re-interpretations. The popular Canadian magazine AdBusters has found a radial marketing niche for this very type of subversion.

However, as the above quote indicates, dancing on top of the visuality of a dominant system may only be the beginning of a successful détournement. Taking jabs at power may only serve to concretize that relationship. The trick is to reveal the underlying power relationships behind an image and then channel it into a productive, potentially ambiguous, sphere.



Chameleon



Dye Cut Template,
To be removed from
final file

READY
TO WEAR

READY
TO WEAR

RECLAIM
THE STREETS

NOMADS