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Collectivities:
Protest, Counter-Culture and Political Postmodernism in New York City Artists Organizations 1969-1985

by
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a dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract:

Collectivities: Protest, Counter-Culture and Political Postmodernism in New York City Artists' Organizations, 1969-1985

by Alan Moore

adviser: Professor Sally Webster

A succession of New York City artists' organizations had political agendas and avant-garde intentions. They idealized collective action, and were linked by overlapping memberships. This dissertation asserts that collectivity is a key method in postmodern artistic practice.

The Artworkers Coalition (AWC) and the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) mark the beginnings of the political critique of institutions in the United States. GAAG's work was journalistic conceptual art. Artists at the Soho alternative space 112 Greene Street embodied an informal version of collectivity. Artists Meeting for Cultural Change took up the politics of the AWC. AMCC included members of the British conceptual art group Art & Language, who had made collectivity itself a principal object of study. AMCC produced *An Anti-Catalog*, an American art history revised to include women and artists of color.

Collaborative Projects (*aka* Colab) formed in reaction to the Soho alternative spaces, working in film, media and punk music. The South Bronx art space Fashion Moda, which exhibited graffiti as art, led Colab to produce the Times Square Show, a large exhibition in a vacant building. Political artists responded to Colab, forming the collectives Group Material and Political Art Documentation/ Distribution. Group Material opened a gallery in the East Village, and exhibited art mixed with popular culture artifacts, a method they called ``dialectical." PAD/D arose as a ``left-to-socialist artists' resource and networking organization," maintained an archive, produced a journal, and coordinated Artists Call against U.S. intervention in Central America, and Not For Sale, against gentrification in the East Village.

Group Material was key in the elaboration of a political post-modern art by theorists opposed to neo-expressionism during the early 1980s. The group used the

vocabulary of a neo-pop and commodity-based art to critique both popular culture and high art.

The legacy of these artists' groups is felt today in new practices of public art and museum exhibition, the number and variety of groups practicing ``activist art,'' and in the historical reconsideration of conceptual art.

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This dissertation is indebted to the teaching and example of the faculty of the Graduate Center, City University of New York, especially my advisor Sally Webster. Her wide-ranging conversation, generosity and prompt responses have been continuous throughout the phases of conception, proposition, writing and review, and will always stand to me as a model of academic behavior. Rose-Carol Washton Long's assistance through the proposal process was invaluable. Her continuous encouragement and careful guidance made an arduous passage navigable.

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Introduction

Collectivities:

New York City Artists' Organizations 1976-1985

This dissertation concerns aspects of the history of a number of New York City artists' organizations active between 1969 and 1985. The Artworkers Coalition (AWC) and its affiliate the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG); Art & Language and Artists Meeting for Cultural Change (AMCC); Collaborative Projects (*aka* Colab); Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PADD), and the collective Group Material are the main subjects considered. These artists organizations, among the most prominent of many formed and dissolved during the 1970s and '80s, comprise a kind of historical trajectory. They are linked by overlapping memberships and conscious emulation. Most avowed a political purpose, an oppositional or avant-garde intention. They idealized collective action, and often used art to advocate social change.

By examining these artists' organizations, I am trying to lay a groundwork for histories of recent art which can circumvent normative monographic practice. At the least, this dissertation will serve as a rough supplement to that practice which is the reflexive resort of art historians. At best, this thesis will be yet another starting point for historical recoveries that move past the market-supported, institutionally-ratified valorization of a limited set of privileged producers.

My interest in artists' organizations began through my participation as a fellow artist in one of them, Collaborative Projects. The historical excavation involved in this

dissertation then, has unearthed artifacts already familiar to me, as well as many stories I had not heard at the moment of their telling. The impulse to historicize this period has moved others who worked in groups and artists' collectives at the turn of the 1970s into the 1980s to write, among them Julie Ault of Group Material and Greg Sholette of PAD/D. The trajectory of organizations that this thesis follows was first advanced in Ault's 1996 exhibition ``Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC."[1] Like most of Group Material's later work, Ault's curation involved artworks, books, videotapes and photographs. The exhibition was like a text which suggested a reading. This dissertation, although it draws primarily upon period sources, reads the same `text.'

In this dissertation, facts are selected and assembled, a narrative is constructed, and collectivity in the New York artworld[2] is related to background circumstances. This appears to be the first general history of recent artists' collectives. Consequently, a rude mode of construction and direct adaptation to function marks its architecture. The consideration of elements in this history is not as subtle as I would have it.

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[1] See Julie Ault, ed., *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC* (Drawing Center & Real Life Magazine, 1996). What I call Ault's lineage of organizations was marked out by Lucy Lippard, in her essay ``Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power," in Brian Wallis, ed., *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New Museum, NY, 1984), and filled in in subsequent essays. Lippard was a member of many of the artists' organizations considered in this thesis. Greg Sholette responded to Ault in 1998 with ``Urban Encounters," an exhibition in the New Museum wherein he asked several contemporary artists' collectives to reflect on their pasts.

[2] An early formulation of the art world was advanced by philosopher Arthur Danto, who used certain works of Pop art (particularly Andy Warhol's Brillo boxes) to discuss the definition of a work of art (Danto, ``The Artworld," *Journal of Philosophy* 61, 1964). George Dickie worked out an institutional theory of art based on the concept of the art world in Dickie, *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis* (Cornell University, 1975). Writers like curator Jack Burnham, and the art critic Lawrence Alloway tried to explain the New York art system as it became enlarged during the 1960s and '70s with market successes and a flood of art school graduates (Alloway, *Network: Art and the Complex Present*, UMI, 1984). One of the most influential later formulations was sociologist Howard Becker's *Art Worlds* (University of California, 1982), especially his chapter 5, ``Aesthetics, Aestheticians and Critics."

I am using the term in this introduction and the first chapter as a loose abstraction, to refer to the relatively small primary audience for contemporary art in the modernist tradition: producers, critics, collectors, and exhibitors. This art is formally innovative and rooted in historical movements wedded to socially progressive ideologies. In truth, to say ``art world" is to beg of the reader a license to generalize, the kind of pretext needed to write a history without faces, or an art history without names.

Rather than being guided by method, I have been guided primarily by the chronology Ault proposed. This work seems often a raw telling, larded with accounts of exhibitions as points of congealment, moments of display at which the ideas and positions of the artists' groups gather, as it were, in their Sunday suits.

This dissertation proceeds under the assumption that there is an idea or a congerie of ideas about productive collectivity that lies behind the organizations here considered. Different adaptations of collective ideas spin off of programs, generate institutions, and works of art. I had intended to ground this history in an analysis of collectivity as a form in recent art.[3] This work remains undone; instead I have used the idea that a form of social organization might be considered part of art's repertoire of forms as a kind of negative methodological principle. This is not a political history, not an institutional history, not a sketched background to monographic stories, nor is it a sociological treatise. Instead, this dissertation borrows magpie-like from all of these. My broad conceptions were first informed by Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of a field of cultural production.[4] This dissertation relies continuously upon political reportage and polemic as sources together with journalism in the national art magazines, and texts construed as art in themselves. I consider some individual artists whose work was bound up with the collectivities they both served and exploited as material for their art. My considerations of the early 1980s are colored by insights from the field of cultural studies, particularly the conception of resistant subcultures advanced by the sociologist Dick Hebdige.[5] In the end, what makes more sense than to consider collectivity as one of the forms of

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[3] The social organization of artistic production is generally considered extraneous to the forms of art. Indeed, the analysis of each has concerned polarized scholarly camps, with formal criticism at one end, and a sociology of art at the other. One book attempts a kind of synthetic understanding of the politics of the May 1968 Paris rebellion through a look at art *movements*, that is, Alfred Willener, *The Action-Image of Society: On Cultural Politicization* (Tavistock, London, 1970; from *Image Action de la Societe*).

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, ``The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1993).

[5] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Metheun, London, 1979), a book which lies at the beginning of ``punk studies." Histories of rock music and independent filmmaking have also been useful.

art operating within an expanded field of modes of production is to consider art-making itself as a practice, its products (artworks) as artifacts of that practice, and collectivity as a method whereby certain objectives become practicable which individual practitioners cannot achieve.[6]

In the first chapter I consider the Artworkers Coalition, a group formed in resistance to the Museum of Modern Art during its landmark 1969 exhibition, ``The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age." The AWC embodies the political beginnings of institutional critique in the United States, a motive which has subsequently guided many conceptual artists.[7] The group's mission, as critic and AWC member Lucy Lippard understood it, was to exert pressure on the museums in order to expose their conservative positions. The demands of the AWC, grounded in the civil rights struggle, were for equal exhibition opportunities for women and artists of color and expanded legal rights for all artists. Of the groups that comprised the coalition, the Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) pressed this agenda most actively through an artistic practice initially rooted in guerrilla theater, a staple form of counter-cultural political display and an organizational tool. GAAG's members came out of the destruction art movement,[8] and their actions were conceived in emulation of the oppositional spirit of Berlin Dada. These actions began as garish street theater pieces, and GAAG's proclamations read like communiques from a revolutionary government. GAAG explicitly understood what they were doing as

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[6] Tim Rollins of Group Material spelled this out in ``Group Material Interviewed by Peter Hall," *Real Life Magazine*, no. 11-12, 1983/84. More recently, Critical Art Ensemble discussed collectivity in ``Observations on Collective Action," *Art Journal*, vol. 57, no. 2 Summer 1998 (a version of the paper is at their website, http://www.critical-art.net/ as of October 1999).

[7] The term ``institutional critique" was advanced by Benjamin Buchloh in his essay ``Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55, Winter 1990 (first published in *L'art conceptuel*, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989). In James Meyer, ``What Happened to the Institutional Critique?" (catalogue essay for exhibition at American Fine Arts, September 11-October 2, 1993), Buchloh's formulation is discussed and extended to recent art.

[8] For an overview of this movement, see Kristine Stiles, *Rafael Montañez Ortiz* (El Museo del Barrio, 1988). This book's annotated bibliography is a virtual history of the Destruction art movement in New York.

art—perhaps a kind of journalistic conceptualism—and, through provocation and transgression, they positioned their practice within the realm of the legal.

The second chapter examines the rise of exhibition spaces for new art, called ``alternative spaces," as the principal community achievement of Soho, the artists' neighborhood in downtown Manhattan. One of the most influential of these, 112 Greene Street Workshop, impressed both federal and state funding agencies as a model alternative space, and artists were encouraged by government funding to band together to make the new exhibitionary infrastructure required by advanced forms of art. The late sculptor Gordon Matta-Clark, closely associated with 112, referenced multiple modes of collectivity and used them in his work. Matta-Clark was closely supported by the Institute for Art and Urban Resources which opened P.S. 1 in Queens, the largest of the alternative spaces, in 1975.

By the later 1970s, as the practices of the paradigmatic Soho alternative spaces became institutionalized, some of the political concerns expressed through the AWC were taken up again by the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change. The AMCC was strongly influenced by members of the English group Art & Language. A&L at this time was a group of primarily conceptual artists whose work consisted of producing texts, and they have been extensively historicized by group member Charles Harrison. During the mid-1970s, members of A&L met in New York at conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's loft, moving from a rather hermetic philosophical version of conceptual art towards an increasingly politicized analysis and engagement with the commercial and institutional systems of contemporary art which were understood as inherently ideological. Collectivity itself was a principal object of this study. The New York-based A&L group's militant polemical and theoretical texts were promulgated through the short-lived journal *The Fox* (1975-76). The AMCC chose to picket the Whitney Museum when the museum exhibited a Rockefeller collection of historical American art as part of its Bicentennial program. A group within the AMCC produced *An Anti-Catalog*, an argument for the essentially ideological nature of art and its history, and a polemic for a revisionist view of American art

history that would include the artists—women and people of color—whom the Whitney's Rockefeller show left out. The *Anti-Catalog* marked the emergence of a social historical tendency in American art history based in Marxist theory. While political dissension splintered the A&L and with it the AMCC, both groups promulgated powerful examples of the means and modes of collectivity in art.

The third chapter considers Collaborative Projects (*aka* Colab), an artists' group that evaded the often prescriptive discourse of the art left. Colab was formed in 1977 in reaction to the newly institutionalized alternative art spaces. Liberal state and federal arts funding during these years encouraged artists to form groups. Filmmaking was the principal activity of early Colab, augmented by *Avalanche* magazine editor Liza Bear's work with telecommunications. Many members played in rock bands which, like film crews, are a vernacular mode of collective cultural production. Colab's first forays into visual arts exhibition were their several raucous theme shows held in artists' lofts in 1978 and 1979. After these exhibitions, several of the key founding artists left Colab and joined private gallery stables. Many among the new group which took control of Colab's agenda had worked at Fashion Moda, an art space in the urban ghetto of the South Bronx. Here the hip hop culture of rap music and graffiti was burgeoning in its pre-commercial form. Fashion Moda's director Stefan Eins proclaimed his non-political intentions, insisting that the art space sought to be entrepreneurial. Following the seizure of an abandoned city-owned building for an exhibition on real estate, artists from Colab started ABC No Rio on the Lower East Side, inspired by Fashion Moda. Colab members' new emphases on public art in poor communities culminated in the 1980 ``Times Square Show," a massive collaborative exhibition mounted in an abandoned building near Times Square, the classic New York locus of pop culture and pornography.

Chapter four considers the responses of politically engaged artists to Colab's sensational ``Times Square Show," specifically through the formation of Group Material and Political Art Documentation/Distribution. Group Material opened a gallery in the East Village, and mounted carefully designed exhibitions on political

themes. These shows embodied the group's understanding of the exhibition as a dialectical form, containing works that contradicted each other mixed with artifacts from popular culture, and providing situations where dialogue between viewers about political and social issues might arise. With the close involvement of Lucy Lippard, PAD/D arose as a ``left-to-socialist artists' resource and networking organization,"[9] maintaining an archive and producing a journal. PAD/D also made art for for a general audience to be exhibited on the street (what they called ``streetworks"). This production, done in collaboration with activists, proceeded from historical understandings of artwork made in support of political street demonstrations, and was informed by interest in the contemporary New York graffiti subculture. Working together, artists in Group Material and PAD/D produced Artists Call, a massive art event opposing U.S. intervention in Central America. PAD/D's most developed streetworks project was ``Not For Sale," which consisted of diverse actions and street installations opposing the gentrification of the East Village and critiquing the East Village gallery boom of the 1980s. Group Material also worked with public display, but adapted the modes of conventional advertising. The group also produced exhibitions in alternative spaces for an art audience, institutional work that culminated in their 1985 room for the Whitney Biennial, an installation called ``Americana." Group Material used the vocabulary of a neo-pop and commodity-based art to critique both popular culture and the high art establishment. The group's work was important to theorists like Craig Owens and Hal Foster in their formulation of a politicized post-modern art. Group Material, which dissolved in 1997, also served as an important example to other artists who formed groups during the 1980s and '90s to work on specific issues using artistic means.

These artists' organizations have had a significant effect on the history of recent art. The artists' groups considered in this thesis, through consistent often histrionic

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[9] From the superscription on *1st Issue*, May-June 1981, no. 2.p. 1; this description was carried in every subsequent issue of the successor publication *Upfront*.

pressure on museums and exhibiting institutions, and later by the power of example, changed the rhetoric and conventions of museum practice in this country. The role of collective practice in conceptual art, and the instrumental nature of that mode of art-making is still being assessed. Specific actions undertaken, conditions established and ideas raised by artists' groups have directly inspired, and continue to inspire, individual works of art. Finally, the artists' organizations of the 1970s and '80s represent simply the more recent chapters in a continuous story of collectivity in American art which has been largely overlooked in the standard tellings of the story of 20th century art.

1.

Taking it Out of the Modern

In histories of late 20th century New York City's artists' organizations, the short-lived Art Workers Coalition (1969-1970) must occupy a kind of mythical status as progenitor. The AWC seemed to include representatives of every school of art-making, and a large number of avant-garde and politically progressive artists. In an artworld built on consensus[1] the group commanded serious public attention. The group's politics—the issues it engaged, and the constituencies it sought to serve—remained important in the decades that followed, and most of these issues remain relevant today. Deliberately informal and anti-bureaucratic, the AWC was a raw political grouping, inchoate and ultimately unstable. No passing account of it—and this is necessarily cursory—can be satisfying. Still, as a background to this study of artists' groups, I will begin to build a picture of how different art making practices related to the AWC's formation, tactics and aims.

The AWC came into being following an aggressive public assertion of an individual artist's rights, a prototypical political performance action. At four o'clock on January 3, 1969, the Greek technology artist Takis Vassilakis and a small group of compatriots entered the Museum of Modern Art (henceforth MoMA) to remove Takis' work *Tele-Sculpture* (1960) from "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age" exhibition (fig. 1). ``Before guards could intervene," *The New York Times* reported, ``the group lifted the fixed part of the work off its pedestal, pulled down the two overhead revolving forms and carried the parts to the museum's outdoor garden." John Perrault of the *Village Voice*, who had been invited to the

[1] I am drawing on the picture Irving Sandler paints of the consensus that lay behind American art during the 1960s, in his *American Art of the 1960s* (Harper and Row, NY, 1988), particularly the chapter entitled ``The Avant-Garde Art World."

action by Takis, wrote that it ``was very well rehearsed and on the surface looked more like a movie jewel robbery than the anarchist's ballet that it really was."[2]

In recruiting the young curator Willoughby Sharp to accompany him to the museum, Takis said, ``They have shown my work against my will." Pontus Hulten, guest curator at the museum, had promised Takis that some of his larger new works would be exhibited in this important show. Instead, Hulten only exhibited a small piece which the MoMA already owned (a 1962 gift from John de Menil). Takis told the *New York Times* that he removed his work ``as a symbolic act to stimulate a more meaningful dialogue between museum directors, artist and the public." The artist and his supporters met that day for an hour with museum director Bates Lowry, who told the *Times* the incident had raised some interesting points on the problems ``between any institution, the artist and the public."[3]

Takis' act—the dramatic public withdrawal by an artist of a work from an exhibition—catalyzed the formation of the Art Workers Coalition. ``In the days following Takis' action," a collective statement released by the AWC reads, ``artists began to realize that their initial complaints were merely symptoms of a conflict between the museum on the one hand and artists and the community on the other."[4] The first meetings of the nascent Art Workers Coalition in early 1969 were held at a studio on 20th Street where Willoughby Sharp and Liza Bear were preparing *Avalanche,* their magazine of new art. Hans Haacke and Tom Lloyd, both artists

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[2] John Perreault, ``Whose Art?," *Village Voice*, January 9, 1969, pp. 16-17. (Perrault joined the AWC very soon after.) Most of this account of the action comes from my interview with Willoughby Sharp, then a young curator of kinetic art, who was present at the action. Sharp said Van Schley filmed the event in 16mm black and white (interview with Willoughby Sharp, August 13, 1998).

The most complete account of the AWC's formation and first year is to be found in Therese Schwartz's series of articles, ``The Politicalization of the Avant-Garde," *Art in America*, ``I," vol. 59, no. 5, Sept./Oct. 1971; ``II," vol. 60, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 1972; ``III," vol. 61, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 1973; and ``IV," vol. 62, no. 1, Jan./Feb. 1974.

[3] ``Sculptor Takes Work Out of Modern Museum Show," *New York Times*, Saturday, January 4, 1969, p. 24.

[4] This early AWC document was read to me by Willoughby Sharp (interview, *op. cit.*).

working with technology, as well as critic Lucy Lippard were among those present when the group drafted a statement of principles and demands, the ``13 Points."[5]

The group proposed open hearings at the MoMA, but museum director Bates Lowry rejected the idea, suggesting instead a series of hearings before a committee chosen by the museum. On April 14, what the *New York Times* called the ``loose-knit group whose camp-Marxist name reflects a thumpingly anarchist non-structure" held an evening of ``Open Hearings" at the School of Visual Arts instead. Over four hours, an audience of some 250 heard 50 speakers. Their remarks were collected, printed and distributed as the pamphlet *Open Hearings*.[6] Artists of color, and a group of ``students and artists united," demanded a Martin Luther King, Jr. wing in the MoMA to permanently display the work of black and Puerto Rican artists. Tom Lloyd, working with the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition,[7] criticized the museum's admission fee as one ``black people cannot afford to pay." (Free admission to the museum was to become an important issue for the AWC.) Others demanded that the museum form an artists committee to arrange shows at MoMA. Much of the evening was given over to rhetoric, and utopian proposals. The idea of

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[5] Willoughby Sharp, interview, *op. cit.*. The 13 Points evolved over a period of months, and many different versions exist. The most widely disseminated version is the 11 points printed in Lucy Lippard, ``Art Workers Coalition, Not a History," *Studio International*, no. 180, November 1970, pp. 171-74. (For the evolution of the points, see Schwartz, *op. cit.*, ``II," vol. 60, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 1972, pp. 78-79.)

[6] Grace Glueck, "Art Notes: `J'accuse, Baby!' She Cried," *New York Times*, Sunday, April 20, 1969. Glueck reported that the Coalition ``taped all the speakers' remarks, and plans to publish a transcript of them." This appeared as *Open Hearing* (Art Workers Coalition, 1969). The book, however, appears to be made up partly of transcripts and partly of manuscripts.

[7] Within a week of Takis' removal of his work, black artists picketed the Metropolitan, then set up the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition. Benny Andrews saw the roots of the BECC in black artists' displeasure with the June, 1968 ``Harlem on My Mind" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Benny Andrews, ``The BECC: Black Emergency Cultural Coalition," *Arts*, Summer 1970, vol. 44, no. 8, pp. 18-20). The BECC and the AWC were cooperating organizations. The BECC conducted a lengthy and relatively effective campaign for increased cultural opportunity for artists of color, particularly at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and for cultural services to ghetto communities. This is a separate story, although the BECC and other activist groups of artists of color were deeply intertwined with the AWC. For a participant's memoir, see Faith Ringgold, *We Flew Over the Bridge* (Little Brown, Boston, 1995), esp. pp. 165-172. For a succinct survey of African-American artists' organizations, many political in nature, see the book by the former Studio Museum in Harlem director, Sharon F. Patton, *African-American Art* (Oxford, NY, 1998).

selling art, like music, on the basis of a royalty system was suggested so that fees would be paid when it was exhibited. (Some of these ideas would eventually culminate in the reserve rights sales agreement, authored by AWC members and affiliated lawyers.[8]) Lucy Lippard proposed that the MoMA shift its exhibition function "to a series of smaller museums resembling branch libraries...that would provide space for experimental projects in all media," a suggestion that anticipated the alternative space movement of the 1970s. Sol Lewitt stated that the MoMA should not collect works older than 25 years. In a succinct left-wing analysis, critic Gregory Battcock identified the powerful businessmen who were trustees of the MoMA as the same people who were waging the war in Vietnam (fig. 2).[9]

"Before it was over," Grace Glueck wrote in the *New York Times*, ``anyone could see that MOMA was simply a metaphor for all that participants felt was wrong with the art world structure. There seemed also this possibility: that some of the changes advocated might come about not through artists' direct action, but by shifts in the nature of art itself—increasingly less devoted to objects than to `process,' more concerned with effects (however ephemeral) than with collectibility."[10]

The Art Workers Coalition was at first a cosmopolitan group, and its formation was consonant with both the traditions of European cultural activism and those of social protest in the United States. Activism in Europe was spurred by the influential

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[8] The Artists Reserve Rights Sales Agreement, also called the Siegelaub-Proshansky Agreeement after its principal authors, was an important document in the struggle for artists' rights. The contract specifies that the seller artist will receive a percentage of any subsequent resale. It is infrequently implemented. Alexander Alberro discusses the agreement in terms of conceptual art in Alberro, ``Deprivileging Art: Seth Siegelaub and the Politics of Conceptualism," PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1996.

[9] Grace Glueck, "Dissidents Stir Art World," *New York Times*, April 12, 1969, p 4. Specific artists' and critics' comments cited from *Open Hearing* (Art Workers Coalition, 1969). Dan Graham's statement is included in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (MIT Press, 1999).

[10] Grace Glueck, *New York Times,* Sunday, April 20, 1969, *op. cit.* Only six months later, MoMA's new director John Hightower, formerly the chairman of the New York State Council on the Arts and not a museum professional, was to echo this idea in J. Hightower, ``From Class Art to Mass Art," *Art in America*, September-October 1970, vol. 58, no. 5, p. 25.

``events of May"[11] 1968 in Paris, a revolt during which students and workers brought France practically to a halt with a general strike. The mass revolt in Paris was followed by many smaller actions by European artists and students.[12] The AWC was also an outgrowth of 1960s movements for civil rights and social justice in the United States, and the group became caught up in the broad front movement of the new left which swelled at the end of the decade with protests against the Vietnam War. An anti-hierarchical, democratically open organization of artists, the AWC drew up a list of ``points" which comprised an agenda to transform the artworld.

While the Art Workers Coalition formed after a protest by an artist involved with technology against a museum he felt had ignored his wishes in exhibiting his art, it quickly grew to include a very diverse membership of artists and critics concerned with a range of issues. Because of some of its more prominent members, such as Carl Andre, Hans Haacke and Lucy Lippard, the AWC was generally identified with the avant-garde, and artists who advanced anti-commodity modes of art-making such as conceptual and performance art.

A group within the AWC that combined both of these modes of art-making in an aggressive pursuit of the coalition's agenda was the Guerrilla Art Action Group. This small group of artists performed actions and released communiques that stridently criticized museum policies and provoked museum officials. By the end of 1970, the original AWC was largely swallowed up by Art Strike, the broad organization which sought to close museums as part of a national moratorium against the Vietnam War. While a unionist faction lived on as the Art Workers

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[11] This useful phrase equivocates between describing the Paris disturbances as *riot, uprising, or* revolution, thereby holding this moment suspended in historical regard as somehow unique.

[12] Grace Glueck wrote in *The New York Times* that the actions ``a small group of artists and critics" were planning in New York were similar to "measures taken against Establishment art institutions in Europe last year: the disruption of two big international art shows—the Venice Biennale and Documenta, at Kassel, West Germany—by student and artist groups, and student sit-ins and debates last summer protesting the `obsolescence' of art education at two English schools, the Hornsey and the Guildford Colleges of Art" (Grace Glueck, "Artists Threaten Sit-in at the Modern," *New York Times,* Friday, March 7, 1969, p 26).

Community, the AWC proper faded after the Art Strike. Yet many of the individuals who had been active within the AWC continued to advance the coalition's agenda with its critique of mainstream modernist institutions in their art, their actions, and their public positions, and some joined later artists' groups, particularly the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change in 1976, and groups that formed around particular political issues.

The Art Workers Coalition was a highly diverse organization, with members from many sectors of the art world and many stylistic camps. It was started by technology artists. It included highly visible critics like Perrault, Lippard, and Battcock. ``Destruction artists," committed to performance and interested in street theater, were active in it from the beginning. One prominent artist who identified closely with the group, Carl Andre, was and is a minimalist sculptor. The AWC was important in the development and dissemination of conceptual art.[13] And the activism that the coalition embodied was also translated into painting and sculpture by its committed participants.[14] To look at some groups of artists—groups defined by common aims in art—that were active in the AWC's formation, participated closely, and took significant lessons from the AWC is a way to begin to engage certain questions, such as how political experience affected artistic production, and how artistic concerns played into the practical and political considerations that the Coalition addressed.

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[13] The claim for the AWC's importance to conceptual art is consistently advanced by Lucy Lippard, most forcibly in ``Escape Attempts," her essay in Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer eds., *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965-1975* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and MIT Press, 1995).

[14] Political action by artists had a broad impact on painting and sculpture during the 1960s and 1970s in work like that of AWC members Rudolph Baranik, Leon Golub, Faith Ringgold, and Nancy Spero. Much work from this period is included in the catalogue by Deborah Wye, *Committed to Print* (Museum of Modern Art, 1988). This exhibition continued the traditional understanding of political art in terms of a graphic tradition of illustration in radical magazines and street posters (e.g., Ralph E. Shikes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the Fifteenth Century to Picasso*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969).

Takis, whose action precipitated the formation of the Art Workers Coalition, was at the time artist-in-residence at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT. He was joined early on in the AWC by Wen-Ying Tsai, Hans Haacke, Len Lye, and Tom Lloyd, all artists working with technology. Takis, Tsai and Haacke were represented by the Howard Wise Gallery, the leading private venue for this kind of work.[15] Why were these relatively privileged technology artists so interested in instigating this protest? Worldwide there was a high level of interest in a form of art identified with progress in science and technology, and these artists comprised an elite international group. As they moved around the world participating in exhibitions, they encountered extreme political situations, particularly in Latin America. In Mexico, for the 1968 Olympics, Willoughby Sharp curated an exhibition in the Museum of Art and Science on the campus of the University of Mexico which included Takis, Haacke, and Lye among others. This was marred by the horrific massacre by the army of hundreds of demonstrating university students just before the games opened.[16] The artists' encounter with dramatic political events continued when, in July of 1969, an art and technology themed Sao Paulo Bienal was disrupted as organizer Pierre Restany resigned in protest over the hundreds of arrests of artists and others by the Brazilian military regime. Takis, Haacke, Lloyd and others withdrew their work.[17]

These well-supported artists were only the most visible among many doing work with technology during this period. Many other technology artists were organized into groups, some of them outright communes. Groups like USCO (for ``Us

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[15] Grace Glueck, ``Artists Threaten Sit-in at the Modern," *New York Times,* Friday March 7, 1969, p. 26. Glueck reports that Gyorgy Kepes, director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, also supported most of the AWC proposals.

[16] Interview with Willoughby Sharp, *op. cit.* For an account of the events in Mexico compiled from contemporary interviews, see Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico* (University of Missouri, 1975).

[17] Grace Glueck, "No Rush for Reservations," *New York Times*, Sunday July 6, 1969.

Company")[18] and Pulsa[19] (fig. 3) created kinetic environments, and considered their work as an outgrowth of their mode of living. Pulsa exhibited an environment at "Some More Beginnings," the Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT) show at the Brooklyn Museum in late 1968,[20] as did Drop City, a commune from Colorado whose members lived in geodesic domes made from cut-off car tops.[21] The kinds of social organization that formed around this new kind of artistic production, then, was a kind of dialectical counterpart to—or a burlesque of—the hierarchical social organization of the corporate world.[22] What relation did privileged individual artists such as Takis, working within a premiere academic science institution, have to these collectives? And what relation did such artists have to the corporations that developed and applied the technology the artists used to make art?[23]

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[18] An interview with USCO at their commune in upstate New York is in Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theatre of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and other Mixed-Means Performances* (RK Editions, New York, 1968), pp. 243-71.

[19] The group of seven "researchers in programmed environments" working at Yale University later exhibited at MoMA together with Michael Asher, Dan Flavin, Robert Morris and others (Jennifer Licht, *Spaces*, MoMA, December 30, 1969-March 1, 1970, n.p.). As if recognizing the special nature of this group, Mary Ann Staniszewski chose to illustrate not the group's installation environment of heat and light, but the glass-enclosed office in the museum's sculpture garden from which Pulsa members ran the computers that controlled the piece (see fig. 3; from Staniszewski, *Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art*, MIT Press, MA, 1999, p. 283). Pulsa is profiled in David L. Shirey, "Pulsa: Sound, Light and Seven Young Artists," *New York Times*, Thursday December 24, 1970, p. 10.

[20] The EAT show "Some More Beginnings" was at the Brooklyn Museum November 25-December 25, 1968. Dore Ashton, reviewing the Brooklyn exhibit for *Arts* together with the Machine as Seen show at the MoMA, criticized environmental work without naming artists or groups. These works "set up great, diffuse sensorial situations, and in some cases rouse pre-logical responses, but they fail to sustain meditative attention" and hence are not art (D. Ashton, "The End of the Beginning of an Age," *Arts*, December/January 1969, vol. 43, no. 3).

[21] Lil Picard, "On Art," *East Village Other*, December 13, 1968, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 13. This southwestern commune's drug-loving renegade life and times is described in Peter Rabbit, *Drop City* (Olympia Press, 1971).

[22] "Perhaps no greater dichotomy can be drawn than an attempt to relate an IBM complex with a hippie commune," writes Jud Yalkut, "The Hippie and the Computer," *East Village Other*, August 20, 1969, vol. 4, no. 37, p. 6. This "dichotomy" was to some extent resolved in the evolution of new corporate cultures during the transition to an information economy. The reconciliation of cultural innovation and commerce, a process often called "co-option," is discussed by Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (University of Chicago, 1997).

New York Times critic Hilton Kramer engaged this question when he suggested that a more ``radical program" than that of the Art Workers Coalition was being carried out by a museum in Los Angeles. Curator Maurice Tuchman was pairing off artists and corporations for the Art and Technology exhibition at the L.A. County Museum of Art. What, Kramer wondered, would be ``the moral price of this enterprise," the ``first major collaboration of advanced art and the West Coast military-industrial establishment"? Compared to the ``dependency" upon industry that Tuchman was brokering, ``the artist's relation to the museum is relatively innocent and autonomous.... almost pastoral in its old-fashioned freedoms."[24]

The new forms of art that tech artists were evolving, like collaborative environments and interactive installations, challenged the limits of conventional art institutions and were not supported by the Museum of Modern Art. These modes of art-making did not usually result in commodities like painting, sculpture and designed objects, which fit easily into the economic system of markets and patronage that undergirds the institution of the museum. In order for new modes of art-making to gain a foothold within the prestigious MoMA, the commodity-based system needed to be perturbed. Indeed, the handbill that Takis distributed during the removal of his artwork suggested that his action would ``be just the first in a series of acts against the stagnant policies of art museums all over the world. Let us unite, artists with scientists, students with workers, to change this anachronistic situation into information centers for all artistic activities."[25]

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[23] Answers to these questions will likely come from new work on EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology), a well-funded collaboration between artists and engineers headed by Bell Labs engineer Billy Klüver. When I asked him what he thought of Pulsa and USCO, the Swedish-born Klüver told me that the EAT artists disdained the groups as ``too much like Europe" (personal conversation June, 1999).

[24] Hilton Kramer, "Artists and the Problem of 'Relevance'," *New York Times*, Sunday, May 4, 1969, p. D23. The critical reception of the Los Angeles exhibition was largely negative.

[25] Takis' handbill is quoted in John Perreault, ``Whose Art?", *Village Voice, op. cit.*.

The polemical writing of Alex Gross in the alternative newsweekly *The East Village Other* reveals more of the kind of thinking that guided technology artists into political involvement. Gross and his newspaper reported on and supported the Art Workers Coalition from its beginnings in strongly partisan terms. Gross became directly involved with the group, leading a faction of it to form the Art Workers Community.[26] Gross was also a so-called ``tech artist" working with light, and he described himself as part of a revolution in consciousness expansion, ``a slow-motion underground explosion of nuclear proportions" taking place in the art world. Gross went on to applaud the exhibition ``Some New Beginnings" produced by EAT at the Brooklyn Museum in late 1968 as ``likely to take art out of the hands of a small circle of esthetes." Museums of the future will leave behind the ``grim, grey, `serious-art' concept of the thirties" as embodied in the MoMA's Machine exhibition and become ``domed-in pleasure gardens" dedicated to the ``four dimensions of psychic states."[27] Gross understood technology art as embodying a cultural struggle against those who viewed art as a realm separated from mass production. "Basically the goal of a mixed-media environment is to make the spectator (who is preferably also a participant) go more deeply into himself or further out towards other people. This is a genuinely revolutionary function, aimed at recreating the bases on which people react to things, each other, and their own minds, unlike much of the reactionary posturing which now passes for revolutionary."[28]

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[26] This variously named descendant of the AWC, which dates its formation from the distribution of a broadside at the January 1971 College Art Association conference in Detroit, became the Foundation for the Community of Artists in the early 1970s. Its organ, *Artworkers News* (1970-1984) became *Art and Artists* (1984-1988). (For a brief account, see Jacqueline Skiles, ``The National Art Workers' Community: Still Struggling," *Art Journal*, vol. 34, no. 4, Summer 1975, pp. 320-322.) The NAWC/FCA's principal historian, Laurin Raiken, dates the ``somnolence" of the first AWC to a demonstration at the MoMA demanding Nelson Rockefeller's resignation after the governor ordered the violent suppression of the Attica prison rebellion in 1971. As the AWC faded away, the new group coalesced with artists' tenant groups, women's caucuses, and other organizations to form a kind of politicized artists' union (L. Raiken, ``The Rise of Artist Unity: The Social Organization of the Art World," *Art Workers News*, February 1979, p. 8).

[27] Alex Gross, "Technology in Art," *East Village Other*, December 13, 1968, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 15.

[28] Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

In his earliest comment on the removal of the Takis piece from MoMA, on January 24 Gross published a predecessor variation of what would become the 13 points of the as yet unformed Art Workers Coalition. Among these were two which subsequently disappeared: ``8) Artists should be encouraged to create Tech Art pieces which can be manufactured for the masses, and the Museum should undertake to lessen the mystique surrounding the original work of art. 9) Rooms should be continually available at the Modern for the mounting of environments, and there should be at least one environment continually on view."[29] In March, Gross again voiced his discontent with the Machine Show, which, while ``ebullient and alive," was the work of an ``outsider" to the technology art movement (curator Pontus Hulten), and ``nowhere near as well-planned and hung as other shows of this genre. This is one reason why many of the artists who helped start the protest were in fact tech artists whose work is hanging in that very show."[30] By late April, Gross wrote that the AWC-sponsored Open Hearings held at the School of Visual Arts where many artists had criticized MoMA had ``discredited" the museum. The museum was hobbled by its curatorial departments in dealing with tech art which relied on ``breaking down and merging of fields and categories." As a result, MoMA ``has never sponsored a single environment."[31]

As a tech artist, Gross stood more with those who had organized themselves communally, like USCO and Pulsa, and with artists who produced light shows for rock concerts and were then trying to organize a guild.[32] His kind of aggressively partisan writing is absent from mainstream accounts of technology-based art. It fit

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[29] These points were ``put forward by Takis and Farman," a Persian poet involved in the group early on (Alex Gross, untitled, or title illegible; text begins: ``Demonstrations at the Modern Museum...," *East Village Other*, January 24, 1969, vol. 4, no. 7, p. 9).

[30] Alex Gross, ``New Volcano Found Under Modern Museum,' *East Village Other*, vol. 4, no. 15, March 14, 1969, p. 13, 22; p. 22. Gross suggested the Otto Piene show then at the Howard Wise Gallery as a model exhibition. Piene was a member of the Zero group, which included Hans Haacke.

[31] Alex Gross, ``Modern Museum Flattened by Trinity," *East Village Other*, April 23, 1969, vol. 4, no. 21, p. 8.

[32] Jud Yalkut, ``United Light," *East Village Other*, September 17, 1969, vol. 4, no. 41, p. 9. The artists planned a museum and a newsletter.

well in the *East Village Other,* an overtly polemical organ of the counterculture and part of the underground press. The writing in that newsweekly sprang from the romantic left: it was predominantly picaresque and personal, a journalism of outraged impressions. To attend to Gross' remarks on the relation of art, technology and society is to get some sense of how complex arguments and cultural critiques could become marching orders. As populist left-wing media, the *Other* and the progressive radio station WBAI had been instrumental in promoting an earlier demonstration against the Museum of Modern Art during an opening of the ``Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage" exhibition in 1968 (fig. 4). There several hundred people, among them a group called The Transformation, organized by art critic Gene Swenson and including some art historians,[33] pointed out that Dada and Surrealism were originally identified with revolutionary politics. (This aspect was not foregrounded in MoMA curator William Rubin's modernist recuperation of these movements.) Both Marcel Duchamp and Salvador Dali were present at the event, and they each told the press they approved of the demonstrations.[34]

The well-known technology artists present in the Art Workers Coalition in early 1969 such as Takis, Tsai and Lye, disappeared from it as the organization grew.[35]

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[33] Swenson, an early critic of Pop art, died in a car crash in 1969 at the age of 35. Jon Hendricks stressed the importance of Swenson and the group he convened as a forerunner of the AWC (interview with Jon Hendricks, March, 1999).

[34] Dali did not exactly affirm the demonstrators' political views. ``I'm very proud of the hippies," he told the *New York Times*. ``I approve of any kind of manifesto. But, unfortunately, many of the young people today have no information. Dada was a protest against the bourgeoisie, yes—but by the aristocracy, not by the man in the street" (Grace Glueck, ``Hippies Protest at Dada Preview," *New York Times*, Tuesday, March 26, 1968). It is unlikely that Dali was being ironic. Judith Malina recalls a similar dinnertime conversation with the artist wherein he said he liked only aristocrats and anarchists (John Tyteil, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile and Outrage*, Grove Press, 1995, p. 251; cited to Malina, *The Enormous Despair,* 1972, entry for January 1, 1969).

[35] While I can't say why without doing more work on the group, the technology artists may have dropped out because of heavy criticism. Therese Schwartz wrote that the artists in the AWC who were affiliated with the Howard Wise Gallery (the leading technology art gallery) were criticized, especially Takis, for reaping publicity benefits from the AWC's actions. An official at the MoMA wrote to Wise expressing fear that ``his artists" were going to damage the museum, an instance of how closely the AWC at first was identified with the technology artists (Schwartz, *op. cit.*, ``III," vol. 61, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 1973, pp. 68-69).

(The significant exception was Haacke, whose work changed under the impact of his political experience.) Indeed, working with technology soon fell out of fashion altogether in the New York art community. Work with machines which took science as its subject disappeared so completely from the mainstream of advanced art and its histories that today few art historians and artists are likely to know those well-known early supporters of the AWC.

The Art Workers Coalition was formed after an ``action,"[36] a politically purposive public performance by Takis,[37] and artists working with performance responded fully to its formation. Theater that combined the cultural and political was the metaphor of the moment during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The radical politics of the New Left[38] was theater, a spectacle of change, conceived and enacted in the loud, dynamic terms of conflict that the medium of television, a cousin of theater, required.

The political demonstration as a form of mass performance was carefully considered by leading radical politicians of the day. Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a leading figure in the 1968 ``events in May" in France, theorized the actions taken by the striking

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[36] The concept of the ``action" was most completely developed in Europe, where it had an anarchist political lineage in the idea of ``propaganda by deed." Wolf Vostell and Joseph Beuys, both affiliated with Fluxus during the 1960s, played key roles in refining the concept as an artform similar to the American Happening, and a performative aesthetic for political action. (See John A. Walker, *Glossary of Art, Architecture and Design since 1945*, entries for ``action" in three editions, 1973, 1977, and 1992).

[37] Schwartz related that before the action, Takis has been reading in Mao Tse-Tung's *Red Book* on contradiction, and that his friend the poet Farman had turned up ``Revolution" during his new year's throw of the *I Ching* (Schwartz, ``II," vol. 60, no. 2, Mar./Apr. 1972, p. 77).

[38] Question around the nature and conduct of the New Left, the young radical students who emerged during the 1960s Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War struggle, is a leitmotif of historical study of the period. (See Sohnya Sayres, ed., *The Sixties Without Apology*, University of Minnesota, 1984.) New Left tactics were very different, and frequently opposed, to those of the 'Old Left,' who privileged the example of the labor movement, and were often tied to the socialist bloc. In the realm of culture, New Left-inspired radicals clashed with liberals who had made their accommodation to the status quo and saw themselves as preservers of culture within an often hostile political and business climate. A secondary internal struggle emerged between New Left leaders intent upon building a mass movement along political lines (e.g. Tom Hayden), and those who sought to affect the culture directly (e.g. Abbie Hoffman).

students. ``Our `provocation' daily brought the latent authoritarianism of the bureaucracy into the open....everything hangs on the use of provocation in the crystallization of thought and latent emotion....It can only be used to arouse feelings that are already present, albeit submerged."[39] The theatrical modes evolved by visual artists during the late 1950s and early 1960s were taken up by political movements. For example, the model of the Happening, a mode of ``painters' theater" and performance evolved and theorized by Allan Kaprow during the 1960s, was assimilated into a kind of tactical aesthetic by the Dutch Provos. The group's name derived from the word ``provocation."[40]

Advanced theater art saw radical experiment during this period, much of it in the service of political movements. In New York, the Bread & Puppet Theater made solemn appearances at many demonstrations of the anti-war movement,[41] and the Living Theater advocated non-violent anarchist revolution in tours through Europe. Other influential groups, like the San Francisco Mime Troupe and El Teatro Campesino, drew on traditions of agit-prop theater to galvanize political events

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[39] Daniel Cohn-Bendit, *Obsolete Communism: The Left-Wing Alternative* (Deutsch, London, 1968), p. 55. Cohn-Bendit writes that the students of Nanterre were inspired by the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. During the 1968 events in Paris, the students used slogans and theories evolved by Situationist artists and architects.

[40] The ideas of the Provos are spelled out in the English-language Dutch cultural magazine *Delta*, Autumn 1967 (all citations below are from that issue). The Provo's intention was to bring ``points of political or social conflict to public attention by spectacular means (happenings and demonstrations)" (Lucas van der Land, ``Provo Is as Provo Does: A General Introduction," p. 5). They worked with what philosopher and Provo theorist Roel van Duyn called the ``provotariat," jobless gangs of youth, in preference to the traditional left emphasis on the proletariat. One faction of the group, the ``happeners," ``originated in the artistic happening—the purely aesthetic mass manifestation" (Bernhard de Vries, ``Provo Inside Out," p. 78). Amsterdam police reacted negatively to these events, held around the Lieverdje, a statue of a street urchin in the center of town, and ``the artistic happening acquired a political tinge and became the Provo happening" (de Vries, p. 79). The group was supported by former CoBRA artist Constant Neiuwenhuys, who wrote an influential manifesto ``New Urbanism." Constant asserted that Provo actions were ``aimed chiefly at the recovery of social space—the street—so that the contacts essential for play may be established" (``New Urbanism," p. 61).

[41] Stefan Brecht, *Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre* (Routledge, NY, 1988), 2 vols. This monumental work includes an interesting description of the Lower East Side milieu of the early 1960s.

through their performances.[42] The Diggers of San Francisco, a determinedly anonymous group of ``life actors" whose motto was ``create the situation you describe," directly influenced Abbie Hoffman.[43]

A leader of the Yippies (Youth International Party) in New York, Abbie Hoffman considered himself an artist. His book, *Revolution for the Hell of It*, appeared late in 1968 under the pen-name of Free. Nat Hentoff criticized the book from a New Left point of view. A veteran of the Civil Rights struggles, Hentoff wrote, ``Abbie now prefers theater to politics." The Yippies believe in ``street theater, satire, confrontations, put-ons, and the general freakishness he calls `monkey warfare.' Its purpose is to get on television to communicate an alternative life-style to the global village of the young." This is hedonistic, a ``politics of ecstasy," a middle- class self-indulgence inconsonant with liberal values. ``At bottom, I think the Yippies badly confuse cultural and political values."[44] Years later, Hoffman rejoined, ``Guerrilla theater is probably the oldest form of political commentary.... Lenin once wrote that art was counter-revolutionary because it showed beauty in the *present*, while revolution promised beauty in the future.... Yet creativity is needed to reach people snowed under by ruling-class images, and only artists can manage the breakthrough.... In organizing a movement around art we not only allowed people

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[42] A member summed up the attitude of the S.F. Mime Troupe in 1968: ``To rejoin history art must become didactic, moralistic, propagandistic" (Joan Holden, ``Comedy and Revolution," *Arts & Society*, Fall/Winter 1968, vol. 6, no. 3, p. 417). R. G. Davis of the Mime Troupe and Luis Valdez of El Teatro have both written extensively on their work. Formally inventive political theater in the United States and in Europe has been obscured by the resurgent naturalism of `proletarian' theater, much as socialist realism in the visual arts overshadowed constructivism. (See the comparison between the 1930s and 1960s in Douglas McDermott, ``The Workers' Laboratory Theatre: Archetype and Example," in Bruce McConachie and Daniel Friedman, eds., *Theatre for the Working Class Audiences in the United States, 1830-1980* Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1985, pp. 121-142.)

[43] The claim of influence on Hoffman is made in both Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall* (1998), and Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio* (1975; 1992 edition contains ``corrective" preface by Coyote). Both Diggers first worked with the S.F. Mime Troupe. Historian Michael William Doyle is writing ``The Haight-Ashbury Diggers and the Cultural Politics of Utopia, 1965-1968" as a dissertation at Cornell. A Digger website is maintained by Eric Noble at http://diggers.org (as of 8/00).

[44] Nat Hentoff, ``Revolution for the Hell of It," *New York Times*, December 29, 1968, sec. 7, p. 3+. Hentoff maintains the separation of art and politics from the political point of view.

to participate without a sense of guilt, but also a sense of enjoyment. The use of fun in struggle was a new notion."[45]

Before the Art Workers Coalition formed, artists identified with the Destruction art movement[46] had staged performance actions and protests at museums.[47] One-time curator of visual arts at Judson Church,[48] the poet Jon Hendricks collaborated with the Belgian artist Jean Toche to produce events under the name Guerrilla Art Action Group as an affiliate of the Art Workers Coalition.

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[45] Abbie Hoffman, ``Museum of the Streets," in Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier, editors, *Cultures in Contention* (Real Comet Press, Seattle, WA, 1985), pp. 135-36. The piece is reprinted from Hoffman's book *Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture* (Putnam, 1980).

Willoughby Sharp said that before his early brief involvement with the AWC, he was the ``cultural commissar" of the Youth International Party. Inspired by Hans Haacke's work in the Air Art show which he had curated (*Air Art* catalogue cite), Sharp arranged for white balloons to be used in a 1967 Yippie Happening in Central Park. (Interview with Willoughby Sharp, *op. cit.*; white was the color used in demonstrations by Amsterdam's Provos, see *Delta* Autumn, 1967 and note 39.) Abbie Hoffman was also involved with the court case following the 1970 Judson Church People's Flag Show when artists Jon Hendricks, Jean Toche, and Faith Ringgold were arrested for desecrating the American flag (see note 55).

[46] Destruction art was an international movement. See Kristine Stiles, *Rafael Montañez Ortiz* (El Museo del Barrio, 1988). This book's annotated bibliography is a virtual history of the Destruction art movement in New York. Rafael Ortiz (aka Ralph), who became the first director of El Museo del Barrio, was a close associate of Toche and Hendricks. See also *GAAG The Guerrilla Art Action Group* (Printed Matter, NY 1978); Stiles, ``The Destruction in Art Symposium: The Radical Cultural Project of Event-Structured Live Art," PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1987; Stiles, ``Sticks and Stones: The Destruction in Art Symposium," *Arts*, January 1989, vol. 63, no. 5, pp. 54-64 on the London group.

[47] During an opening of the above-mentioned 1968 Dada and Surrealism exhibition at the MoMA, Jon Hendricks and Ralph Ortiz, carrying live chickens under their long coats, waited in a room with Jean Arp sculptures for the arrival of Marcel Duchamp. Meanwhile, another artist placed decorated eggs on Arp's works where they remained for some days. Hendricks and Ortiz could not hold the chickens, which escaped and were captured by guards before Duchamp arrived (interview with Jon Hendricks, March, 1999).

[48] Judson Church published many of the Destructionists' documents, including a *Manifesto* signed by Al Hansen, Jon Hendricks, Ralph Ortiz, Lil Picard, and Jean Toche (December 1967), and *Manipulations* (1968), listing Ortiz, Hendricks, Toche, Hansen and Picard as ``founding artists." Hendricks wrote then that the `` destructionists are an opposition; they are a romantic movement. They are messy and aren't very polite" (``Some Notes, December 11, 1967," *GAAG, op. cit.* n.p.; all citations from that article). For a general discussion of the Judson Church's work with the arts in the late 1950s and into the 1960s under the activist Rev. Howard Moody, see Robert E. Haywood, ``Heretical Alliance: Claes Oldenburg and the Judson Memorial Church in the 1960s," *Art History*, vol. 18, no. 2, June 1995. See also Sally Banes, *Greenwich Village 1963* (Duke University Press, 1993).

``I am subversive, I am a saboteur," Jean Toche wrote in a May, 1968 manifesto. It was essential to avoid passivity, indifference and the ``corruption of art" while all over the world students were revolting. Toche announced his desire to ``become something more complete than just an `artist'," and to play an active role in the cultural revolution shaking the ``decadent western white empire."[49] In the book of documents the GAAG produced in 1978, a photo (fig. 5) shows Toche in sunglasses seated on a white-painted box next to an enlargement of a text based on this manifesto. Beside it is a hand-lettered sign:

``Where a change is needed:
Yesterday: WATTS
Today, COLUMBIA
Tomorrow: MUSEUMS?"[50]

This text accompanied a ``light sit-in," a variation of which was staged at the EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) exhibition in Brooklyn in 1968.[51] During a Soho festival in May of 1969, Toche produced another environment/performance at 66 Grand Street in Soho, an event that took a radical political turn. In the account of German critic Lil Picard, Toche's comrade in Destruction art writing in the *East Village Other*, the viewer was invited in, charged 50 cents, then saw ``Toche's new statement of protest art" consisting of documents from his ``Republic of Federated Socialist States of Belgium, Government in Exile," and from an action committee for sexual liberation. The audience then mounted a stairway to the third floor and

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[49] Jean Toche, ``I Accuse," May 10, 1968, in *GAAG, op. cit.*, n.p. The manifesto was dedicated to Marcel Broodthaers, a Belgian artist, active in the 1968 revolt in Europe, whose work questioned and redefined the museum. A later GAAG action defended the Viennese Actionists.

[50] *Ibid*, n.p.

[51] Toche's piece at the Brooklyn EAT show is illustrated as number 276, *Electric Sign*, 1969, in Boris Lurie and Seymour Krim, *No! Art: Pin-Ups, Excrement, Protest, Jew-Art* (Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Köln, 1988) illustrations n.p.. Lil Picard described this work: ``one is blinded by the ultra-aggressive message by Jean Toche (Belgian Artist) who shouts out in anguish facing the life and times he lives in, with many thousands of Volts electrical, dangerously blindingly destroying The Message: `I AM A HUMAN BEING—DO NOT DESTROY.'" Lil Picard, ``Some More Beginnings," *East Village Other*, December 13, 1968, vol. 4, no. 4, p. 13. In the same issue, Alex Gross notes that the piece is ``blindingly effective" (Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 16).

``met nothing but a blank wall. Nobody got admitted to the studio. Nothing happened at all. The people went up...faced the wall, went down."[52]

Poppy Johnson, then living with Jon Hendricks, described the beginning of the Guerrilla Art Action Group. She went to AWC meetings, and talked with many people about how to protest effectively. Hendricks was involved in anti-war activity, excited by the art of the Russian Revolution, Tristan Tzara and Dada, happenings, and dance. Finally, Toche, Hendricks and she decided that a small number of people would be more effective than a ``large aimless mass" in attracting attention and raising consciousness. ``We would use our understanding of art to create such events, and the understanding of crowd-audience-police we had garnered in years of demonstrations." Young (20 years old) and female, Johnson had to argue strenuously to heard in GAAG deliberations.[53]

The Guerrilla Art Action Group (GAAG) was the most dramatic and best-remembered ``splinter" of the Art Workers Coalition. This fierce-sounding appellation denoted the program of two artists, Jean Toche and Jon Hendricks, with

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[52] Lil Picard, ``On Art," *East Village Other*, May 14, 1969, vol. 4 no. 24, p. 17. Picard links Toche to the conceptual art promoted by gallery director Seth Siegelaub. She then adds a kind of garbled synthetic statement: "In times of war, fear, revolution, aggression and violence, the action-events of artists who `care,' using `Understatements of Minimal' (which are revolutionary acts or with accusing, maximal aggressive force), interest me and turn me on. Every time has its specific expression in Art. Today I think Poet-Revolt, Theater-Art-Revolt, Artist Coalition-Revolt, the revolt with Words, with Sound, with bodies in action (DIONYSOS in 69) [an Open Theater work] are the most relevant Art forms at the end of the sixties." (Picard, *op. cit.*, p. 17).

The English poet Adrian Henri, in *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance* (Thames and Hudson, 1974), groups GAAG together with New York artists like Sam Goodman and Boris Lurie of the No! Art movement in the late 1950s and early '60s who made assemblage environments with political content (see Lurie and Krim, *No! Art, op. cit.*), the poet-led Black Mask (which became Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers, a political action group in the East Village), and black proto-rap artists the Last Poets. See also Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture* (MacGibbon & Kee, London, 1968; Paladin, 1970), another highly personal account of groups and events driven by the overarching sense of a social, cultural and political revolution underway.

[53] ``Statement of Poppy Johnson, June 16, 1976," in *GAAG*, *op. cit.*, n.p. Although Hendricks and Toche modified their position fairly quickly, Johnson's experience with sexism was typical of the many women artists who went on to form separate organizations to advance their interests. Johnson did not work long with GAAG, but she went on to lead the Art Strike of 1970, together with Robert Morris (whom she later married). Others active with the GAAG included Silvianna (Goldsmith), Virginia Toche, and the photographer Jan van Raay who documented their actions.

occasional participation by others. The GAAG invoked the Leninist revolutionary formation of government and army, with the AWC as ``government" and the GAAG as ``army."[54] The GAAG's communiques, sent to targeted institutions, the press, and various people in the art community, were written in the kind of prose understood at the time as `Marxist-Leninist,' thick with the jargon of the radical left. Their texts were inflammatory, insulting, and occasionally threatening.

GAAG's posture and actions were at once confrontational, rhetorical and theatrical. This was art—but an art that invited arrest. While a fragile tissue of public circumstances and official forebearance usually forestalled arrest, at moments away from the public eye, Toche was singled out for roughing up by museum guards, received visits from the FBI, and underwent a court-ordered insanity hearing. This deep positioning of an artistic practice within the realm of the legal flowed directly from the duo's concern with artists' rights, another top item on the AWC agenda. GAAG, however, broadened the question beyond measures like the reserve rights sales contract drafted by the AWC, which sought to assure artists an improved position in the market. GAAG fought censorship, most notably during the court battle following the closing of the 1970 People's Flag Show at Judson Church. (Hendricks and Toche were arrested, together with Faith Ringgold.)[55]

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[54] In a related flight of socialist fantasy, Toche often styled himself the leader of a ``Government in Exile of Socialist States of Belgium." An anti-Vietnam War coalition that grew out of AWC during the 1970 Art Strike (see text below) was called the Emergency Cultural Government, a group including Robert Morris and critic Max Kozloff which coordinated the withdrawal of artists from the U.S. pavilion in the Venice Biennale and announced that ``it would take over U.S. participation in international art events" (Grace Glueck, ``Strike Front Keeps Its Cool," *New York Times*, Sunday, July 5, 1970).

[55] The People's Flag Show, a battle between freedom from censorship and the sanctity of national symbols, was an important early event in the American culture wars. Abbie Hoffman, who had been charged with wearing the flag as a shirt, joined in the court case. (See *GAAG, op. cit.*, document no. 12, ``summary of events"; and Ringgold, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-86. Discussions of the 1966 case of art dealer Stephen Radich who showed Marc Morrel's flag constructions, which went to the Supreme Court, are in Carl Baldwin, ``Art and the Law: The Flag in Court Again," *Art in America*, May-June, 1974, and Laurie Adams, *Art and the Law: From Whistler to Rothko*, Walker & Co., NY, 1976, pp. 141-68.)

Documentation of this work by GAAG was included as part of the ``manipulation of illegality as a discourse in art" in the ``Illegal America" exhibition curated by Jeanette Ingberman at Franklin Furnace in 1982 (*Illegal America*, Exit Art, 1982). The exhibition was repeated at Exit Art in 1990.

The Art Workers Coalition was a political organization, not an artists' project. But the GAAG *was* an artists' project, and ``doing politics" was their primary purpose. Every action they took was purposive, and every paper they issued was explicit. It is impossible to understand GAAG apart from the welter of events and discourses within which they made their statements and took their actions, a context that remains as yet largely unhistoricized. The GAAG followed the AWC's agenda of institutional criticism and pressure for change. In addition to their better-known performance actions, the GAAG spoke, or presented stridently worded papers at numerous institutionally convened forums for considering change that took place during this period.[56] They also carried out important internal representations within the politicized artworld, principally connected with artists of color, artists whose struggle was more militant than that of the white artists' movement.[57]

Toche and Hendricks staged two actions inside the galleries of the Museum of Modern Art.[58] In the first, on October 31, the two artists executed a ``removal" of

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[56] Most notable among these are Toche and Hendrick's separate statements supporting decentralization of cultural resources to benefit poor communities of color which the two artists made at a three-day seminar for museum directors on the Planning and Operation of Neighborhood Museums at MUSE, The Bedford Lincoln Neighborhood Museum operated by the Brooklyn Childrens Museum, November 20-22, 1969, a conference sponsored by New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (Jon Hendricks archives; part of this is in *GAAG, op. cit.*, as document number 8). These statements were referenced in the manifesto GAAG pinned on the wall during the Malevich removal action at MoMA (see text above). GAAG also appended to the manifesto a copy of Grace Glueck's article on the conference, ``The Future Is Not What It Used to Be," *New York Times*, Sunday, November 30, 1969.

[57] The GAAG often chided their artworld comrades in severe terms. The late 1972 controversy over their inclusion in a British compendium exhibition and catalogue (*Fluxshoe*, Beau Geste Press, UK, 1972) reveals tensions between artists of the period over political/aesthetic issues. The GAAG protested that they had been misrepresented through ``aesthetic" editing. They contended that the *Fluxshoe* presentation of GAAG's documentation of an event GAAG did in support of black and Puerto Rican artists (number 10 in *GAAG, op. cit.*) put the concerns of artists of color ``in the mouth of a white" (*Fluxshoe* addendum, December 19, 1972). While they demanded and received a corrective addendum in the catalogue, GAAG was rebuked by Carolee Schneeman (mildly) and Felipe Ehrenberg (tartly), a Mexican refugee from the massacre of 1968, both of whom were living with the Beau Geste Press collective in Britain. (All correspondence from Jon Hendricks' archives; see also *Fluxshoe* catalogue with addenda, wherein much of this is reproduced.)

[58] The several actions staged at New York museums for which GAAG is best known were done during the early `guerrilla theater' phase of their work. The removal action discussed above is formally recalled, albeit with very different intentions, by Christopher D'Arcangelo when he removed

Kasimir Malevich's white-on-white painting *Suprematist Composition* (1919) from the wall, placed it on the floor, and replaced it with a manifesto. This document called for raising $1 million to give to the poor, decentralizing the museum collections, and closing the museum in a ``cultural blackout" until the end of the Vietnam War. In her account of the action, Lil Picard comments on the significance of Malevich's work, painted 50 years earlier. ``It made revolutionary history then and made revolutionary Art-history now again." Museum officials quickly rehung it, ``but it will never be the same anymore. It's now touched by LIFE and REVOLUTION."[59]

As Richard Nixon's new government escalated the war in Vietnam, the mobilization of cultural resources against the war increasingly took priority over the institutional reform agenda.[60] GAAG's action on January 3, 1970, marked this change in focus exactly one year after Takis' removal of his work had precipitated the formation of the Art Workers Coalition. Takis' action had been an assertion of an artist's rights. The January 3rd action (fig. 9) which GAAG members led was a Vietnam War protest that took place in front of Pablo Picasso's mural-scaled *Guernica* (1937), a work commemorating the Fascist bombing of a town in Spain. GAAG members and others held up copies of a poster in front of Picasso's painting while a service for the dead was read. The poster (fig. 8) consisted of large graphic typescript from the Congressional hearings into the massacres in the Song My region superimposed over Ronald Haeberle's news photograph of a gruesome pile of murdered

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a painting during a 1976 action in the Louvre (see Thomas Crow, ``Unwritten Histories of Conceptual Art," in Crow, et al., *Oehlen Williams 95*, Wexner Center for the Arts, OH, 1995).

[59] ``I think their political event is not only a protest-work and a political action for the Art Workers Coalition," Picard wrote, ``but also it is a NEW ART FORM" which she linked to Dada. She notes the presence at the action of numerous AWC members, including Tom Lloyd, also with the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, and gallery owner Howard Wise (Lil Picard, ``On Art," *East Village Other*, November 12[?], 1969, vol. 4, no. 5, p. 19-20). The action is also described in the *GAAG* book, n.p., document no. 2..

[60] Of course the Vietnam War played a major role in generating and accelerating political activism in the arts in the United States. See Lucy Lippard, ``In `The World,'" in James Liljenwall and Miriam Roberts, eds., *A Different War: Vietnam in Art* (Real Comet Press, Seattle, WA, 1990), pp. 12-60; also Therese Schwartz's articles, ``The Politicalization of the Avant-Garde," *Art in America, op. cit.*.

Vietnamese. An activist Catholic priest read a service he had prepared for the dead babies which juxtaposed biblical quotations with excerpts from a *Life* magazine article describing the killing of small children by American troops in Vietnam.[61]

American artists protesting the war had already sought to persuade Picasso to withdraw *Guernica* from the Museum of Modern Art. The poster GAAG displayed in front of the painting was produced by a committee of the Art Workers Coalition led by Irving Petlin. The MoMA had initially agreed to cooperate on its production, but the trustees ordered the museum's name withdrawn from the project before it was completed. Frances Frascina analyzes the controversy over the production of this poster about an American atrocity in Vietnam in terms of the schism in relations between ``New Left" activist artists and MoMA and its defenders on the ``Old Left," prominent among them Meyer Schapiro. Critics and curators who had lived through the 1930s and World War II felt that the gains made for culture in the face of an often hostile American government needed to be protected from those who would use institutions of culture to advance political purposes.[62]

Four years later, GAAG would defend Tony Shafrazi, an Iranian artist who in 1974 spray-painted *Guernica* with the cryptic slogan ``KILL LIES ALL." GAAG wrote, ``Tony Shafrazi has now joined Picasso in a collaborative work called GUERNICA/MYLAI." Assailing museums as institutions controlled by `` murderers and oppressors" which, "in the name of property...arrest art and artists," the letter called for the kidnapping of the museum's trustees, benefactors, directors, and curators to be held as war hostages for a people's court. At this point, the

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[61] The ``script" for this action and a description are included in Henri's *Total Art, op. cit.*; also *GAAG, op. cit.*, document no. 6.

[62] Frances Frascina, ``Meyer Schapiro's Choice: My Lai, *Guernica*, MoMA and the Art Left, 1969-70," *Journal of Contemporary History*, in two parts: part 1, vol. 30, 1995, pp. 481-511; part 2, vol. 30, 1995, pp. 705-728 (also in Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent*, Manchester University, UK, 2000). See also Donald Drew Egbert, *Socialism and American Art* (Princeton University Press, 1967) for discussion of the conservative attack on art institutions during the 1950s.

patience of museum officials with this type of provocation was exhausted, and Toche was arrested for sending a kidnap threat through the mails.[63]

The work of AWC in general and the GAAG in particular frightened many in the institutional artworld. What worried MoMA museum officials was the prospect of damage to their collections by people who identified themselves to the press as ``Destruction Artists." According to the GAAG account, Wilder Green, director of exhibitions, appeared during the removal of the Malevich, and said to the artists, ``Thank you for not damaging the painting."[64] In a memorandum to the staff and trustees of the MoMA, GAAG took pains to point out that they were ``a pacifist group," executing protest actions ``on an art level, not on a level of political militancy or real violence." They add, however, ``It is our understanding that there are militant groups, with whom we have no contact and over whom we have no control, that are thinking in terms of violently destroying the museums if no changes occur."[65] The actions of GAAG, and the suggestions of threat to their collections by shadowy persons unknown must have struck museum officials as highly coercive.[66]

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[63] February 28, 1974 letter to Richard Oldenburg of MoMA (Toche was subsequently ordered to undergo a psychiatric examination; number 40 in *GAAG, op. cit.*, n.p). In a letter of March 12, 1974 to GAAG, attorney Jerald Ordover complained that any GAAG actions could have an ``adverse impact" on Shafrazi's case. Hendricks and Toche replied on March 14 they they didn't want to hurt Shafrazi's case. On March 15 Ordover asked them not to ``initiate any art actions at or involving museums during the time" Shafrazi's case and his possible deportation to Iran were being decided (Jon Hendricks' archives). Shafrazi went on to run a successful gallery during the 1980s.

[64] ``Press Communique," dated October 31, 1969, Jon Hendricks' archives.

[65] ``Memo for the Staff and Trustees of the M.O.M.A.," December 1, 1969, concerning the three demands presented at the Malevich removal (underlines in original). The memo refers extensively to meetings underway and committee reports on the question of decentralization (Jon Hendricks' archives). Emphases are in the original. Many of GAAG's communiques were in all capital letters, which I have transposed.

[66] Museum officials were also worried about copy-cat attacks on their collections. Whitney Museum director John I.H. Baur blamed the example of the Art Workers Coalition pickets and a GAAG anti-war performance at the Whitney Museum (*GAAG, op. cit.*, document no. 4; Baur ascribes this action to the AWC) for the actions of a man who ``hitch-hiked from California" to paint on the walls of the museum (interview by Paul Cummings with John I.H. Baur at the Whitney Museum, January 22, 1970, Archives of American Art), p. 104.

Although GAAG frequently stated that they were committed to non-violence, GAAG's work evoked iconoclasm, an impulse with a long lineage in the history of art. GAAG's political objective, like that of the AWC, was to move the museum by hectoring it more towards explicit engagement with current events, that is, into the public realm. In threatening destruction, GAAG constructed the museum as an ideological object, a treasure house of esthetic objects which whitewashed oppressive corporate interests and was not serving the public. Through GAAG's critique, the museum took on a symbolic value that could be productively destroyed. This harsh logic is, as Dario Gamboni has recently pointed out, the rationale of iconoclasm.[67] Closer to the moment, Linda Nochlin traced the history of the French avant-garde's relation to the museum, and the vacillation of radicals between the opposing calls to disseminate or destroy the museum's holdings. The question, as the French writer Raymonde Moulin put it, is ``Do we want everyone to have access to culture or must culture be destroyed?" because it promotes bourgeois values.[68]

The Guerrilla Art Action Group wanted their collective work to be understood as conceptual art (fig. 10). They were explicit about this in a March 1970 statement: ``Our Art Actions are a concept.... anyone can use the concept of GAAG, and its content as they please."[69] Although they included ``action" in their name, and executed performances in their first year, GAAG worked principally with language. The GAAG's self-construction as a military-sounding entity (and Toche's self-construction as a Belgian government-in-exile) relate to other fictional bureaus,

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[67] Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (Yale University Press, 1997).

[68] Linda Nochlin, ``Museums and Radicals: A History of Emergencies," pp. 7-42 in Brian O'Doherty, ed., *Museums in Crisis* (George Braziller, New York, 1972); articles reprinted from a special museum issue of *Art in America*, July-August, 1971. On p. 21, Nochlin quotes Raymonde Moulin, ``Living Without Selling,' in Jean Cassou, ed., *Art and Confrontation: The Arts in an Age of Change* (NY Graphic Society, CT, 1970; translated from French edition, 1968). Nochlin's historicization of the 19th French avant-garde struggles against official culture, like those of European art historians, were formulated during a period of contemporary artistic radicalism.

[69] This March 4, 1970 statement, and a March 18 addendum are in *GAAG Book, op. cit.*, n.p., front section. This open policy is directly related to policies of the AWC. The GAAG was part of the AWC's ``Action Committee," a relationship that needs further investigation.

offices, museums and enterprises begun under the banner of conceptual art.[70] Still, as with many denominations of art historical movements, the category ``conceptual art" is contested. The term was applied to many unusual art practices, and the notion of an ``idea art" (the title of Gregory Battcock's 1972 anthology which contained Lippard's essay on the AWC) was widespread in the later 1960s and early 1970s. In New York 1970 was a key year for conceptual art, as three major museum exhibitions devoted to this work were mounted from spring until fall.[71] The GAAG does not fit well within the lineage of language-based conceptual art as descended from Joseph Kosuth's anti-formalist position-takings, in alliance with Minimal sculpture.[72] When considered as a neo-avant garde,[73] GAAG is rooted in Dada, not

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[70] These include the Vancouver N.E. Thing Co. and Les Levine's Museum of Mott Art. See A.A. Bronson and Peggy Gale eds., *Museums by Artists,* Art Metropole, Toronto, Canada, 1983; Bronson was a member of the Canadian group General Idea, a conceptual art-inspired group which formed in the mid-1970s.

[71] The New York Cultural Center produced ``Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects" from April 10-August 25 which put the term into play. The organizer was Donald Karshan, and the show included the English group Art & Language. ``Information," curated by Kynaston McShine, was at the MoMA from July 2 to September 20, and Jack Burnham curated ``Software" at the Jewish Museum between September 16 and November 8.

[72] Joseph Kosuth, writing initially in the British journal *Art-Language*, defined the conceptual mode as art in opposition to Greenbergian formalism (see Kosuth, ``Art After Philosophy," in *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings 1966-1990* (MIT, 1991). Lucy Lippard, a curator of conceptual art exhibitions, held that conceptual art included much that was political in her *Six Years, the Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Praeger, 1973). Benjamin Buchloh, one-time editor of *Interfunktionen*, has argued that conceptual art's most important work is language based (see Buchloh, ``Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55, Winter 1990). Although Buchloh agrees in this respect with Kosuth, the artist and Seth Siegelaub, an important early exhibitor and dealer of conceptual art, complained that Buchloh had excluded the political from his consideration (see Kosuth and Siegelaub replies to Buchloh, *October* 55; Buchloh rejoins in *October* 57, Summer 1991). This controversy and the differing historical interpretations of conceptual art are carefully discussed in Simon Faulkner, ``Nostalgia in Black, White and Gray," *Art History*, vol. 20, June 1997, pp. 324-31, which is a review of the catalogue *Reconsidering* cited below.

As the origins of conceptual art recede in time, a wider historicization has set in. See the survey exhibition catalogues *Reconsidering the Object of Art 1965-1975* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA, 1995), and Philomena Mariani, ed., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (Queens Museum of Art, 1999). The survey by Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (Phaidon, 1998) takes a broadly social and political view on the subject.

[73] The idea that post-modern art movements recapitulate the modernist avant-garde, that they are ``neo avant-gardes," was advanced by the German Marxist literary critic Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (University of Manchester/Univ. Minnesota, 1984), who disparages the latter. Bürger's book was reviewed by Benjamin Buchloh (``Theorizing the Avant-Garde," *Art in America*, November 1984, vol. 72; also in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and the Culture Industry*, MIT, 1999), who complicated the thesis for the visual arts.

the French and New York Dada of Marcel Duchamp but, as Lil Picard pointed out, in the highly politicized milieu of post-World War I Berlin Dada (figs. 11, 12).[74] Although I have not seen the group mentioned in this connection, GAAG would seem to answer to the (non)strictures of an ``anti-art" as marked out by Gregory Battcock using Herbert Marcuse's 1969 *Essay on Liberation*, and historicized through Dada by Ursula Meyer.[75]

The GAAG were political artists whose work was issue-oriented and instrumental. Thought and action were not abstracted from the world, or from denotative content. In the politicized New York artworld of the early 1970s, Toche and Hendricks brought conceptual and performance art into the public realm, often marking out the extreme edge of a position many artists have subsequently inhabited: that is, direct confrontational engagement with authorities and institutions. GAAG made representations. Theirs was a journalistic conceptual art, based on the premise that artists play a political role within their society. In in this GAAG had many partners among the underground press and media (figs. 13, 14).[76] In this respect, the GAAG

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[74] Lil Picard, *East Village Other*, November 12, 1969, *op. cit.*. Picard had had first-hand experience of the Berlin art scene of the 1920s as a girl. A promotional flyer for *GAAG, op. cit.* published by Printed Matter reproduced Raoul Hausmann's quizzical typographic manifesto, ``Was ist Dada?," in *Der Dada*, No. 2, December 1919 (see Timothy O. Benson, *Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada*, UMI 1987, p. 170).

[75] Battcock, ``Marcuse and Anti-Art," *Arts*, vol. 43, no. 8, Summer 1969. Meyer, ``The Eruption of Anti-Art," in Battcock, ed., *Idea Art* (E.P. Dutton, 1973).

[76] GAAG fits easily within the expanding journalistic context during the 1960s, as a press and cinema described as ``alternative" and ``underground" strived to build a counterculture. Newspapers, journals and filmmaking groups often functioned as collectives, and numerous small political parties had propaganda departments. In November of 1969, Museum, a Project for Living Artists exhibited many of these media groups in a show called ``Aims of the Revolutionary Movement." Among the groups exhibited: Newsreel, Liberation News Service (LNS), *New York Element, East Village Other* and *Village Voice* (see Schwartz, *op. cit.*, March/April 1972, for a chronicle of Museum, and photographs of the ARM exhibition). A 1996 exhibition of archival materials at Exit Art in New York ``Counter-culture: Alternative Information from the Underground Press to the Internet" curated by Brian Wallis in a sense reprised the ARM show (see Eleanor Heartney, ``Alternative America," *Art in America*, June 1996, vol. 84, no. 6, pp. 35-37).

Another explicitly 'journalistic' enterprise took the name ``guerrilla" to describe itself, and that is a strain of video documentary produced, in large part, by artists. Michael Shamberg's *Guerrilla Television* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, NY, 1971) was a primer for the use of the newly available medium to cover political events. See Deirdre Boyle, *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (Oxford University Press, NY, 1997).

related more to certain international developments in conceptual art, especially in countries with authoritarian governments, than to most U.S.-based conceptual art initiatives.[77]

In its grosser forms, the normative lineage of artistic movements and understandings of historical successions serve to label goods in the art marketplace and encapsulate art histories for consumption by the public. Although Conceptual and other artists often sought with their work to evade commodity status, the GAAG almost entirely refused to commodify their project. It may seem more germane to their antecedents to see the GAAG as a culmination of long-standing currents of anti-formal (i.e., anti-conventional) political art in New York City. A moment of great social change and the momentum of a large organization gave their project notoriety, and the Guerrilla Art Action Group became briefly an avant-garde in something like the original martial sense of the term. GAAG's historical position is bound up with the question of the instrumentality of conceptual art.[78] To understand conceptual art as principally abstract, structural, and formal is to exclude the GAAG as part of its lineage. Yet the long-term vitality of conceptual art strategies may be seen as a function of the social utility of this mode of art-making.

As described by Lippard, the Art Workers Coalition was founded in ``a terrific atmosphere of aesthetic and economic mistrust." It was hard for artists to accept that a group would presume to speak for them. ``The artist is a person who has chosen a life of `independence' from the conventional structures. He is by nature unequipped for group thinking or action." The artist has made sacrifices for freedom, but prefers

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[77] See Mariani, ed., *Global Conceptualism*, *op. cit.*, for accounts of conceptual art in authoritarian countries.

[78] An art-making practice that concerns itself principally with documents was adaptable to their forgery. Joseph Kosuth, an active member of the AWC, inspired the forging of passes for the MoMA (fig. 15; although the forgery was obvious, since the passes were stamped ``Art Worker"). This was described as a mode of protest derived from conceptual art by T. Schwartz, in ``Politicalization...III," Mar./Apr. 1973, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69. GAAG later forged a letter from Documenta curator Harold Szeeman denigrating women artists. In 1973 Jay Lee Jaroslav was arrested by the FBI when he exhibited ``Extended Credentials" at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts school where he was an instructor (``Rumbles," *Avalanche*, Winter 1973, no. 7, p. 4).

to complain about the gallery, museums, and critics rather than to do anything about it, Lippard charged. ``The illusion of freedom is of the utmost importance to a person for whom society does nothing else." Lippard also criticized the ``notorious sightseers" among well-known artists—including Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra and *Artforum* editor Philip Leider—who spoke ill of the Coalition ``in a bar," but would not do so publicly. This hanging back of the luminaries doubtless influenced other artists.[79]

Lee Lozano, a former Minimal painter turned conceptual performance artist, responded to the formation of the Art Workers Coalition by turning away from it, an intention she announced in the form of a journal entry proposal for one of what she called her ``relational" pieces. In her *General Strike Piece* (fig. 16),[80] Lozano withdrew from all involvement with ``the 'art world' in order to pursue investigation of *total personal and public revolution*" as she had set forth in a statement at the Open Hearings in April of 1969. Lozano's withdrawal, which included declining participation in exhibitions, and foregoing visits to galleries and museums, extended to the AWC and other groups in which ``further participation" was ``declined."

Not all well-known artists sat apart from the Art Workers Coalition. As a collective response to limiting institutional conditions and a war-waging society, the AWC certainly inflected many artists' practice. Probably the greatest general impact of the Art Workers Coalition on art practice was through the work of those major artists it affected, like Carl Andre, Hans Haacke and Robert Morris whose relations to politics during this period are relatively well known. Both Haacke and Andre continued to be actively involved with political artists organizations in later years.

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[79] Because of their refusal to critically engage the AWC, she wrote, these artists ``will be the bane and to some extent the downfall of the Coalition" (Lucy Lippard, ``Not a History," *op. cit.*).

[80] Lozano's work is reproduced in Alberro and Stimson, *Conceptual Art, op. cit.*, p. 120. Lippard calls Lozano among the most significant female conceptual artists, in ``Escape Attempts," *Reconsidering, op. cit.*.

In a 1970 interview with Carl Andre by Jeanne Siegel in *Studio International*, the Art Workers Coalition becomes a kind of backdrop of activism for the sculptor's art as Andre alone among major New York figures ties his abstract art practice explicitly to his political positions. Andre says that his sculpture, his non-crafted material objects, embody a pure labor value. ``Matter as matter rather than matter as symbol is a conscious political position I think, essentially Marxist." He extended this analysis to collectors of his work, selling some pieces by the square foot based on a percentage of the purchaser's income. Andre's understanding of his art, and of himself as working class, led him to support AWC as a potential labor union.[81]

After cancelling his retrospective at the Whitney Museum in 1970 shortly after in opened, Robert Morris took a leadership role in the Art Strike to oppose the Vietnam War.[82] As leader of this group, together with Poppy Johnson, Morris was briefly prominent in the activist artworld, but he did not involve himself further in the AWC. (His leadership was criticized in street posters as careerist.) Morris' influential theoretical writings do not directly concern issues raised by the AWC.[83]

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[81] ``Carl Andre: Artworker in an Interview with Jeanne Siegel," *Studio International*, no. 180, November 1970, pp. 175-179 (also in Siegel, *Artwords: Discourse on the '60s and '70s*, UMI, 1985). Andre's work of this period is the subject of numerous attempts to ascribe political significance to his abstract form. Siegel cites Barbara Rose (``Problems of Criticism V: The Politics of Art, Part II," *Artforum*, January 1959, p. 45).

[82] The full name of this large ad hoc organization, which subsumed the AWC, was Art Strike Against War, Racism and Repression. See Sean Elwood, ``New York Art Strike of 1970" (Hunter College MA Thesis, 1982). See also Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism and the 1960s* (Harper & Row, NY, 1989); and Berger, ``The Politics of Experience: Robert Morris, Minimalism and the 1960s," PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 1986.

[83] The influence of artworld activism on the theoretical ideas put forward by Morris, Dan Graham, Robert Smithson with his idea of ``cultural confinement," and other artists needs further scrutiny.

Elwood argues (bravely, if unconvincingly) that for Morris political protest was an ``unperceived new structure" for making art, and that, like his ``friend" Joseph Beuys, Morris was a ``social sculptor" in his work with the Art Strike (Elwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-46). Morris' comment that art ``is an activity of change, of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability, of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perceptual modes" (in Karshan, ed., *Conceptual Art, Conceptual Aspects*, N.Y. Cultural Center, 1970), is taken by Irving Sandler as a sign of the artist's political commitment (Sandler, *American Art of the 1960s*, Harper & Row, NY, 1988, p. 301, note 11).

Another well-known founding member of the Art Workers Coalition was Hans Haacke, originally a member of the European Zero group of technology artists. In his work after 1970, Haacke turned from the exploration of natural systems to the exposure of social systems (fig. 17).[84] In a sense, he undertook to answer questions first posed by the AWC, and throughout his subsequent career he has investigated the systems of museum governance and patronage, documenting and revealing the political entanglements of would-be neutral art institutions. In 1971, Haacke's planned retrospective exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim museum was cancelled and the curator, Edward Fry, dismissed because the show contained a work, *Shapolsky et al Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971,* which documented the extensive (albeit obscurely titled), slum area real estate holdings of a museum trustee. This was an important moment since the incident revealed the hard fist of institutional limits on artistic statements.[85] Haacke played a role in artists' political organizations throughout the 1970s and '80s, and his work became well-known internationally as exemplary of an engaged, politically based conceptual art practice.

While the Art Workers Coalition remains ill-defined as a historical entity,[86] the best known account of the group is Lucy Lippard's,[87] which appeared in 1970 together

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[84] The exploration of ``systems" to which Haacke was committed, together with the popularity of system theory, links much technology art to conceptualism. Jack Burnham, an influential thinker and curator during this period, describes an ``Art and Systems" course he devised in 1965 in which the students were asked to make ``art systems" rather than art objects. One among those they were to consider was ``protection and conservation systems in the museum" (Burnham, ``Systems and Art," *Arts & Society* 1968, *op. cit.*, p. 196, 198.

[85] See Brian Wallis, ed., *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business* (New Museum, NY, 1986) for a consideration of *Shapolsky* and Haacke's further work on the museum ``system."

[86] A political history of the AWC is badly needed. Such a history would take into account the discussions within the AWC at their weekly meetings; the positions they formulated in committee papers; an inside view of the actions; and the public and private reactions to AWC initiatives. Within the museums that the AWC targeted, reactions were varied on the part of staff (which was attempting to unionize during this period), management and trustees.

The Art Workers Coalition held meetings and rented a small office at Museum, a Project for Living Artists. This proto-alternative space was a cooperative started by politically minded artists at 729 Broadway. Numerous exhibitions were held there: these included the ARM media exhibition (see note 76), ``X-12," an early all-woman group show (see *A Documentary Herstory of Women Artists in Revolution*, WAR, NYC, 1971; rev. ed. 1973), and the show of artists who had withdrawn their work from the Venice Biennale in 1970 (for Museum, see Schwartz, *op. cit.*; for events around

with the Carl Andre interview cited above. As her title announced—``Art Workers Coalition: Not a History"—hers was a living agenda, an active ongoing struggle, with resistances described and abandonments lamented. Lippard went on to enact in her own career certain visions and understandings first broached by the AWC. Her mature political vision was formed through her deep engagement with feminism, at first through the Womens' Action Committee, a faction of AWC, which later became Women Artists in Revolution, and then with the *Heresies* magazine collective (1977-1993).[88] Through her prolific criticism and the curation of many projects and exhibitions, Lippard became a consistent champion of politically engaged work, which she called ``activist art."

As it came into prominence in 1969 and '70, the Art Workers Coalition came to stand for a growing political consciousness—and to many an unwelcome agitation—within the art community in general. Hilton Kramer commented on the events that Grace Glueck, his colleague at the *New York Times,* reported. Kramer initially sympathized with the AWC, writing that they had stood up for issues, including moral ones, that other professional arts organizations had ignored.[89] But he fell out decisively with the AWC on the question of divestiture, the idea that older art works should be culled from the MoMA collection and sent to other

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the Venice withdrawal, see Elwood, *op. cit.*, Ringgold, *op. cit.*, and the instructive polemic by her daughter Michele Wallace, also a participant: ``Reading 1968 and the Great American Whitewash," in Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani, eds., *Remaking History* (Dia Art Foundation, 1989).

[87] Lippard's essay was reprinted in Gregory Battcock, *Idea Art, op. cit.*, and in Lippard, *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (E.P. Dutton, NY, 1984). Laurin Raiken also wrote analyses of the AWC for the *Art Workers News, op. cit.*, and ``A Case Study: Building an Artists Organization," *Art & Artists*, October 1983.

[88] John Kaufman, ``Lucy Lippard: Becoming Feminist," PhD dissertation, City University of New York, Graduate Center, 1997. Kaufman's principal contention is that ``politicized identity in art evolved out of feminism" (p. 23). For WAR, see *Herstory, op. cit.*. One version of the history of the feminist art movement is told in Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s,* (Abrams, 1994). As part of its 25th anniversary, AIR gallery held a panel discussion of reminiscence on *Heresies*, which was videotaped.

[89] Kramer noted his ``vivid impression of a moral issue" emerging at the Open Hearings (Kramer, *New York Times,* May 4, 1969, *op. cit.*).

museums in order to make room for new art.[90] The critic blamed the group for trying to force the museum to deal with political issues, and claimed that they denied the ``value of museums in principle." Those who believe in museums, he wrote, needed to ``say loud and clear that we will not stand for the politicalization of art."[91] A response to Kramer written for the AWC by Haacke, Lippard and Frazer Dougherty, stated that ``what radical critics are opposed to is the present conservative politicization of the Museum." The writers also explicitly stated that the AWC did not stand for political art, which was ``the concern of individual artists."[92]

In his 1988 history of American art of the 1960s, Irving Sandler explains what for Hilton Kramer is fundamental—there must be a wall of separation between politics and art. ``Political radicalism and artistic radicalism were kept separate.... [Artists] could demand relevance...both in social and in aesthetic matters, but they did not connect the two spheres." Political art, Sandler averred, citing Arshile Gorky, was ``poor art for poor people." Considered retrograde and aesthetically inferior, political art had been ``spurned by vanguard artists since the Depression thirties." Sandler clearly concurred, citing exhibitions after 1967 full of ``banal...art that tried to shock by incorporating smashed dolls or ripped and mangled American flags smeared with red paint, like ketchup in a Hollywood Western." [93]

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[90] H. Kramer, ``Do You Believe in the Principle of Museums," *New York Times*, Sunday, January 18, 1970, p. D25. The idea of periodic divestiture of historical modern art had been part of the museum's initial conception, and was embedded in some bequests from Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.

[91] *Ibid.* From this point on, Kramer became ever more conservative, and founded the magazine *New Criterion*, which became a springboard for attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts.

[92] ``Art Mailbag: Why MOMA Is Their Target," *New York Times*, Sunday, February 8, 1970, pp. D23, 24. This closely reasoned letter built on Haacke's presentation at the Open Hearing. The writers pointed to a ``deadlock between new art and museological tradition," contending that the museum could not afford to both maintain its permanent collection and exhibit new art. They called *And Babies*, the poster protesting the Song My massacre, a political poster and not art ``high or low."

[93] Irving Sandler, in a chapter entitled ``The Artist as Political Activist" in *American Art of the 1960s, op. cit.*, p. 293. Sandler leaves aside *formal* radicalism by political artists, which was struggling with Stalin's favored Socialist Realism to emerge in the 1930s.

Sandler writes that the initial ``achievable'' points proposed by Takis and the Art Workers Coalition were ``escalated'' to 13, which would have ``altered radically the structure and function'' of the Museum of Modern Art. While the artworld at first was sympathetic to the AWC's initiatives, there soon developed ``a widespread suspicion'' that the technology artists and black artists were self-serving. The museum feared violent action against its collections. Sandler alludes to the Guerrilla Art Action Group as he names the Destruction artists who contributed to the Winter, 1968-69 ``Manipulations'' issue of *Aspen* magazine, but he does not discuss GAAG. He concludes by asserting a periodization: ``Both the *Information* show and the rapid decline of the Art Workers Coalition after Cambodia and Kent State in 1970 may be considered the end of the sixties.'' The ``last great protests against the war, and the establishment of Conceptual art were the symbols of the end of one era and the beginning of another.''[94]

As the decade of the 1960s closed, the Art Workers Coalition had accomplished an important job simply by coming into existence. The group put politics on the table in the New York artworld, and set a pattern of democratic, anti-hierarchical organization for the groups that would come after them. As the 1970s unfolded this first collective step would foreshadow structural institutional change and inspire further artists' organizations. The long term goals defined by the AWC, including increased opportunities for women artists and artists of color, set a course from which artworld activists have never deviated. The AWC undertook a comprehensive interrogation of the role of the museum, which anticipated, provoked and then paralleled a significant process of self-examination carried out within the museums themselves. Art history in the United States took a more social-historical direction. Today many of the questions raised by the Art Workers Coalition and the initiatives they pursued have a dramatically predictive nature. At the least, the AWC signals the annealing of certain understandings within a group of artists, critics and curators,

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[94] *Ibid.*

an unofficial community consensus that exerts considerable influence at the end of the century.

2.

Soho Spring

Even as the Art Workers Coalition and the Art Strike raised political activism to a new pitch in New York, the growing artists' community of Soho was becoming the context for new groups more directly concerned with the production and exhibition of art. A New York City avant-garde artworld that proceeded by consensus[1] was developing its own neighborhood. At the center of this process were many new exhibition spaces dedicated to new art produced and exhibited in accord with the way artists lived and worked. By the middle of the 1970s, the artists' community in Soho saw another effort by an organization to leverage change in the markets and institutions of art, Artists Meeting for Cultural Change.

The growth of a network of new non-commercial exhibition spaces in Soho, what came to be called ``alternative spaces,"[2] was the major community achievement of the New York artworld in the 1970s. Indeed this growth was called a ``movement," and understood as the central component in the ``myth" of the Soho community.[3]

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[1] Irving Sandler describes the way ``the best and most significant in current art" was determined by the cooperation and combined individual judgements of art professionals (in ``The Art-World Consensus," *American Art of the 1960s, op. cit.*).

[2] The word ``alternative" (or underground) was used to describe the extensive network of newspapers in the United States. Brian O'Doherty, head of the National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Program during the early 1970s, has been credited with calling the new exhibition spaces in New York ``alternative spaces" (John Albert Walker, *Glossary of Art, Architecture and Design Since 1945*, third edition, 1992, n.p.). O'Doherty wrote, ``The artist-generated institution for making or showing new work may be the single most important development of the seventies. Significantly, it is a social rather than an esthetic one" (Brian O'Doherty, ``National Endowment for the Arts: The Visual Arts Program," *American Art Review*, July-August 1976, p. 68; from clipping in NEA Library.) The Artworkers Coalition had its own ``Committee on Alternatives," but I have not been able to determine what type of alternatives they considered.

[3] The word ``movement" figures in the titles of two useful theses: Edward L. Jones, "Perspectives: The Emergence of the Artists' Space Movement" (M.A. thesis in art history, City College, CUNY, 1984), and Stephen Kahn, ``Communities of Faith, Communities of Interest: The Alternative Space/Artists' Organizations Movement, 1969-1986" (H.H. Hyman Outstanding Thesis, for B.A. in sociology, Wesleyan University, CT, 1986). ``Our myths," sculptor Richard Nonas told Jones, ``were

These alternatives were modeled on—and against—the cooperative galleries of the 1950s and '60s, so they were not entirely new organizational formations.[4] But the times were different, the artworld was bigger,[5] and the resources of the new art-exhibiting spaces were crucially augmented, and ultimately molded, by state and federal grant support. The forms that the alternative spaces took were also more various than the cooperatives of the 1970s, and they served broader constituencies than simply the painters and sculptors whose work traditionally constituted the category of the visual arts.[6] The alternative spaces were set up to accommodate the rapidly expanding practices exhibited as visual art, especially process or anti-form sculpture, conceptual and performance art. At the time Robert Pincus-Witten called these expanded understandings of art ``Post-Minimalism."[7] These diverse art ideas were regularly expressed in novel exhibition practices, so that several of Soho's new art spaces came to embody a kind of inchoate, anti-formal way of being at odds with

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urban pioneering and big spaces—as well as art dreams—using city spaces" (E. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. IV-4). Nonas had trained as an anthropologist (personal conversation, 1975).

[4] New Zealander Billy Apple opposes alternative spaces such as his own Apple to the cooperative gallery: ``They weren't halfway houses like a cooperative such as 55 Mercer [also founded in the 1970s] where you'd get into a straight gig. None of us wanted a straight gig. Ours were alternatives—not the feeling as in some of the co-ops where the feeling was `Some day I'll leave you bastards and get into the regular scene,' or `I'll use this place to hoist myself out.'" (in E. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. III-3-2.)

The relation between the alternatives of the 1970s and the cooperatives that both preceded and paralleled them is a complicated question, and one that any institutional history should address. A 1980 report to the NEA states categorically, ``The artists space as we know it today has its roots in the cooperative gallery" (Claire Copley, *Research Report on the Field of Artists Spaces*, compiled for the National Endowment of the Arts, 1980, p. 35). Many if not most cooperatives were market-oriented, providing artists with a means of showing and selling their work outside commercial galleries. The butt of Apple's scorn, 55 Mercer was started by members of the Art Workers Coalition (Jerilea Zempel, ed., *55 Mercer: 12 Years*, 1982; for general discussion of cooperatives see also Lawrence Alloway, *Network: Art and the Complex Present*, UMI 1984,.)

[5] The baby boom flooded New York City with people seeking careers as artists, critics, dealers, and curators. Sociologist Diana Crane emphasizes the significance of demographics during this period (Crane, *Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World 1940-85*, University of Chicago, 1987).

[6] ``Visual arts" was in fact a funding category of the National Endowment of the Arts.

[7] Robert Pincus-Witten, *Postminimalism* (Out of London Press, NY, 1977). An art historian, Pincus-Witten was writing as a critic for *Artforum* magazine. The broad stylistic term he proposed, while it affirms the hegemony of New York school abstract art, is consonant with the general denomination of the 1960s era of art and cultural production as ``post-modern."

the normative institutional exhibition spaces of classical modernism, the ``white cubes."[8].

The new alternative art spaces, including 112 Greene Street, Artists Space, and AIR Gallery, were established and sustained by a kind of rich sociality, a collective feeling of purpose and adventure. In common remembrance this gives the Soho of the early 1970s a nimbus of nostalgia. This moment was sustained by very special conditions. Soho was a neighborhood of mid-19th century cast-iron buildings with floors—called lofts—used for light manufacturing. After World War II, the use of commercial real estate for industry was increasingly viewed as archaic in Manhattan, and the district was slated for ``urban renewal," or demolition. Since the late 1950s artists had been moving into these lofts illegally, and organizing to protect themselves from eviction. After 1964, artists were legally able to move into Soho and reconfigure the ``raw" industrial spaces to their purposes. The area was landmarked for its architectural interest in 1973, and the city government moved to encourage investment in 1975. Since the later 1970s, many of the artists have been replaced by more well-to-do loft dwellers.[9]

A group of Soho's spaces for new art were written into a kind of canon with the 1981 exhibition ``Alternatives in Retrospect" at the New Museum. Curator Jacki Apple's catalogue remains the most-cited source on the `movement.'[10] The spaces described in this exhibition are Apple (1969-1973), 98 Greene Street (1970), 112

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[8] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Lapis Press, Santa Monica, CA, 1986; orig. 1976), originally a series of articles in *Artforum*.

[9] For a concise account of the development of Soho (from the point of view of architects and urban planners) see Robert Stern, et al., *New York 1960: Architecture and Urbanism Between the Second World War and the Bicentennial* (Monacelli Press, NY, 1995), pp. 264-277. The account of this period I found most useful is Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Rutgers University Press, 1982; 1989). See also Charles R. Simpson, *SoHo: The Artist in the City* (University of Chicago Press, 1981); James Stratton, *Pioneering in the Urban Wilderness: All About Lofts* (Urizen Books, NY, 1977). Stratton wrote a column on loft living, chiefly concerned with legal issues, for the *Soho Weekly News*, a newspaper extant from 1973-1982.

[10] Jackie Apple, *Alternatives in Retrospect: An Historical Overview 1969-1975* (New Museum, New York, 1981). A videotape was also produced during the exhibition by Jaime Davidovich's Soho Television called ``Consider the Alternatives," which included numerous artist interviews.

Greene Street (1970-present), 10 Bleecker Street (1972), among the earliest ventures of the Institute for Art and Urban Resources), and 3 Mercer (1972-1977). All but 98 Greene Street were run by artists for artists in spaces they controlled, and the intention was not to sell art but to show and share it with other artists. A key feature of this 'movement' was the group of artists that formed around each space. Arriving in the city in 1970, conceptual artist Roger Welch observed, ``each space had its group." Although new artists needed to know somebody to be accepted, ``it was much more open than any gallery at that time or since."[11] Billy Apple described his space (on West 23rd Street, not in Soho) as salon-like, a place where artists shared work with each other. ``Sometimes there would be no physical works. There would be just people leaning up against the wall having a talk....it wasn't actually that visual, our place. It was more of a forum. There were thoughts of naming the place 'Art and Life.'"[12] Apple was sustained by a ``backbone" of people, a ``nucleus." The artwork was often of an indeterminate nature: ``you had to ask, 'Is that a work or isn't it a work?'"[13] 98 Greene Street, funded by collectors Horace and Holly Solomon, was oriented towards performance. ``We had a bunch of brooms, and if we liked you, we'd give you a broom—as a part of the cleaning up group after the performance...It was very warm. I tried very hard to make it gracious. 112 [Greene Street] was really where the studs hung out."[14]

The establishment of the alternative spaces is often referred to as a movement, and in speaking of their motives for supporting such a space, the Solomons referenced politics. ``The first years of Nixon were going to be years of retrogression and

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[11] Roger Welch, in Apple, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Welch's conceptual style work involving photographs and interviews was part of a group of artists denominated ``story art" in exhibitions at the John Gibson Gallery in the mid-1970s.

[12] E. Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. III-2, III-3.

[13] E. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. III-1.

[14] E. Jones, p. III-5, interview with Holly and Horace Solomon, August 10, 1984. This comment also hints at the gender valence of performance and sculptural practice during this moment. The Solomons started a commercial gallery after 98 Greene closed in 1973; the Holly Solomon Gallery is still in business (2000).

repression. The only thing I could do was to try my own little way of dropping out," Horace Solomon told the student Edward Jones. Opposed as he was to the Vietnam war, he felt there was nothing he could do about it.[15] Holly Solomon was more diffident about their motives in speaking to Jacki Apple: ``Starting the space for us was about maintaining a sense of one's own democracy, being responsible for one's own fear, and it was both a moral obligation and a pleasure."[16] The late Suzanne Harris, a sculptor and dancer who lived upstairs from the 112 Greene Street art space, said in a videotape made at the time of the 1981 exhibition: ``We didn't need the rest of the world. Rather than attacking a system that was already there, we chose to build a new world of our own."[17] What was under construction was a counter culture,[18] and for a brief moment the group around 112 projected a version of it loudly and publicly.

A diffidence about the role of politics in the alternative space movement points to a divide in artists' responses to the social and political climate of the time. The insistence that artists were unable to affect political processes maintained the wall of separation between art and politics which was a key feature of the critical and attitudinal edifice called ``formalism."[19] But younger artists also felt that what they

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[15] E. Jones, op. cit., interview with Solomons, p. III-6.

[16] Jacki Apple, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[17] E. Jones, op. cit., p. III-4, quoted from the videotape, ``Consider the Alternatives," *op. cit.*. Suzanne Harris' reference to the path not taken, i.e., ``attacking the system," implies the Art Workers Coalition and/or other militant political groups.

[18] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture* (Doubleday, NY, 1969) popularized this conception.

[19] A succinct account of artists' understanding of the complex of critical attitudes called ```orthodox modernism,' `formalism,' and `Greenbergian formalism'" as a set of *operational* constraints is contained in editor Judy Seigel's introduction to *Mutiny and the Mainstream: Talk that Changed Art, 1975-1990* (Midmarch Press, NY, 1992). The exclusion of political references in high art was one of those constraints.

The British Art & Language group were among many critics who attacked formalism as a hegemonic ideology, charging in one of many collectively-authored unsigned articles, ``Formalism's so-called `rigour' is achieved at the expense of specificity, of intensionality, of pragmatics..." (``Draft for an Anti-Textbook," *Art-Language,* vol. 2, no. 4, June 1974, p.68).

were doing for themselves was in itself political. In the same way that the word ``movement'' was used interchangeably to denote social, artistic and institutional programs of action, so the term ``revolutionary'' was employed to denote not only those who described themselves as oppositional political activists, but artists who understood themselves as avant-garde. A brief 1969 catalogue note on the late artist John Van Saun by Michael Findlay spells this out explicitly: ``Esthetic revolution may parallel social revolution. It cannot produce it. The revolution of the artist must be esthetic and therefore more meaningful, more enduring and more effective than his presence at the barricades.'' On the catalogue page opposite is a photograph of the artist sleeping (fig. 18). Like Horace Solomon, Van Saun is helpless before the realities of an inimical social and political order he opposes. Like the Surrealists to whom his sleeping state alludes, Van Saun speaks for a kind of beauty, fragile and romantic, in the face of despair: ``My position now is to select those things in reality that I think are beautiful and present them as best I can, to whatever audience there is. It is my hope that I can show that art is real—that it is not a personal possession but an understanding and love for everything around us.''[20]

112 Greene Street,[21] started by artist Jeffrey Lew in the storefront of a loft building he owned, was the prototypical alternative space. It was a prominent model for the National Endowment of the Arts Visual Arts Workshop grant category, set up by the department that Brian O'Doherty headed at the NEA in 1972. This program helped to spread the phenomenon of the alternative art exhibition space around the country during the 1970s.[22] Jeffrey Lew opened the space together with sculptor Alan

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[20] Exhibition catalogue, *John Van Saun* (Richard Feigen Gallery, September 1969); essay by Michael Findlay, p. 2; artist's statement, p. 14. This book was designed by the artist and *Avalanche*, the principal journal of new art based in Soho.

[21] 112 Greene Street was comprehensively historicized in Robyn Brentano with Mark Savitt, *112 Workshop/112 Greene Street: History, Artists and Artworks* (112 Workshop, NY, 1981). The successor to the space continues at this writing (2000) in the form of the non-commercial New York gallery White Columns, named in an allusion to the row of Corinthian iron columns that divided the space at its original location.

[22] Federal funding was delivered by the National Endowment for the Arts under the Workshop category of Visual Arts. As this category evolved at NEA during 1971, it was related to grants in the category of Services. Workshops would includes presentation of work and ``artists activities,''

Saret.[23] Lew cheerfully related how he was pushed around by the artists who showed at 112, averring that, although he was the director, he really didn't know what was going on.[24] Edward Jones, seeing these early art spaces as the opening terms in a series of evolving institutions, characterizes them as ``idealistic, self-generating, non-restrictive organizations." But they may also be understood as types of collective formations which passed away, and were succeeded by new modes of organization. The ``spirit gave it meaning," said sculptor Gene Highstein. ``Later, the grants killed the spirit, and they all became institutions. Nowadays [1984], everything is in a middle range. There are no failures, but also there is nothing extraordinary. The early spaces had a lot of extremes because of a lack of control or structure." [25]

The artist most closely identified with this exuberant and fertile moment was Gordon Matta-Clark, best known for his work cutting through and extracting sections of abandoned buildings. As with his mentor Robert Smithson, Matta-Clark's career was cut short by early death. Matta-Clark was a central figure within the 112 Greene Street circle, at first living in the basement and working there almost

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especially those who worked in ``'Process' art'" where activities shaded into other media and disciplines. ``Artists are showing more and more in their studios, or hiring exhibition space for limited periods, to preserve their independence from the galleries. Or running short lived cooperative galleries that disappear when they have served their purpose" (National Archives of the United States, records of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, National Council on the Arts Records of Meetings 1965-1992, 21st meeting, May 1971, ``VA 19"). Among the groups first recommended for this money were Museum of Conceptual Art, San Francisco; SITE, School of Visual Arts, New York; Museum: A Project for Living Artists; and the National Art Workers Community. Brian O'Doherty headed the NEA Visual Arts department, and exhibited at 112 Greene Street under the name Patrick Ireland in the spring of 1973, and 1975 (Brentano and Savitt, *op. cit.*, p. 47, 77).

The early phase of the `alternative spaces' in Soho ended with the advent of this funding, and the regular bureaucratic routines its receipt entailed. Thereafter some spaces became professionalized extensions of a revised and expanded exhibitionary system for contemporary art. Much of E. Jones' (*op. cit.*) and Kahn's (*op. cit.*) analysis is concerned with this transition.

[23] Saret had withdrawn from his commercial gallery; Lew had opened his loft to Steve Paxton to perform a dance with fifty nude performers which Paxton had been forbidden to perform at the NYU Loeb Student Center (``An Interview with Alan Saret and Jeffrey Lew," *Avalanche*, no. 2, Winter 1971, pp. 12-13; Brentano and Savitt, *op. cit.*, p. viii, xii).

[24] Interview with Jeffrey Lew, Brentano, *op. cit.*, p. 2 (reprinted in Apple, *op. cit.*, p. 34).

[25] E. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. III-7; Highstein quoted on p. III-5, from an interview done August 9, 1984.

continuously between 1970 and 1974. Said the sculptor Richard Nonas, "The alternative spaces were about urban art when the only other emotional movement was about earth works. We were doing urban earth works. Gordon was the key to it all. He summed up a lot of things for us—that dream of spaces in the city—a city of large empty lofts and cellars."[26]

Matta-Clark's work grew directly out of the social environment in which he found himself. More, collectivity was a recurrent theme in Matta-Clark's art, worked out in a variety of modes. His *Open House Dumpster* was exhibited on the street outside 112 Greene Street gallery in 1972 (fig. 19).[27] Two parallel walls, pieced together from old building materials, were set up inside a dumpster, a large truck-borne open steel container used to remove construction debris. The walls ran the length of the container, and a series of old doors set in the walls accessed narrow rooms. To see these rooms, adults had to squeeze themselves along, brushing up, even pushing up against the walls. This simple design was an engine for chance meetings, enforcing a close physical sociality, a genial play within a simple blind labyrinth. (The form of the work recalls Bruce Nauman's disturbing corridor pieces of 1970-71, but the materials, haptic experience, and uses of Matta-Clark's work are so utterly different it seems like a rejoinder to the California artist's work.) This work of public art, made from found materials, served as a stage set for performances by musicians and

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[26] E. Jones, op. cit., p. III-8, from an interview August 10, 1984. Matta-Clark made films of abandoned spaces in the city, many of them below ground.

[27] My description of this work is based on a visit to the 1998 recreation made (together with some other Matta-Clark projects) by Jane Crawford, Alanna Heiss, Jene Highstein, and Richard Nonas at the July, 1998 exhibition at P.S. 1, "Reorganizing Structure by Drawing Through It." (The exhibition catalogue is cited in note 42). *Open House* was also reconstructed for the 1981 "Alternatives in Retrospect" exhibition at the New Museum (see Apple, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 14). The original, or first presentation of the work was May 19-21, 1972, with performances by Barbara Dilley, Tina Girouard, Ted Greenwald, Richard Landry, Suzanne Harris, and Robert Prado (Brentano and Savitt, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

Open House Dumpster also literalized a notion of "living in a dumpster." Many artists depended for furniture and materials on the bounty of exotic antique waste in dumpsters as old factory lofts were emptied throughout Soho.

dancers.[28] The piece recognized the mix of disciplines at 112 Greene Street, where programs included dancers and performing artists. It also referred to the marathon street performances with which the Soho community announced its presence to the city.[29]

Matta-Clark cut perhaps his first section of building in 1971 during the interior demolition preceding the October opening of the restaurant called Food.[30] He was hired to renovate the space for this new venture, started as a cooperative by his domestic partner Carol Goodden, a dancer and photographer. The space had been a Spanish restaurant serving local factory workers, and its supercession as a restaurant for artists dramatized the changes underway in Soho. Conceived of as a kind of company cafeteria for the artists of Soho, Food served cheap, hearty, and largely vegetarian meals cafeteria-style and kept late hours. It was a genial communal environment, both serving and employing artists.[31] The restaurant hosted banquet performances with different artists cooking and presenting food, some of which Matta-Clark filmed. Other artists started restaurants during this period, like Daniel

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[28] *Open House Dumpster* was parked between 112 Greene Street and 98 Greene Street, the space run by Holly and Horace Solomon. The Solomons sponsored Matta-Clark's work. Collaborators included Barbara Dilley, dancer Tina Girouard, poet Ted Greenwald, musician Richard Landry, sculptor Suzanne Harris and Robert Prado (Catherine Morris, et al., *Food,* October 3, 1999-January 2, 2000, Westfällisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster, p. 39).

[29] See Lucy R. Lippard, "The Geography of Street Time: A Survey of Street Works Downtown," in René Block, ed., *New York-Downtown Manhattan: Soho* (Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1976), pp. 181-210.

[30] Food opened "unofficially" on September 25, 1971 (*Avalanche*, Fall 1971, no. 3, n.p., p. 7). Food is discussed in Pamela Margot Lee, "Object to Be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark," Ph.D. dissertation in fine arts, Harvard University, 1996, pp. 121-124, based on Lee's 1995 interview with Carol Goodden. Goodden sold the restaurant in 1973. "Food," an exhibition which originated at White Columns in 1997 curated by Catherine Morris, was organized around the history of the restaurant. The emphasis was on Food's place in the tiny counter-cultural circuit of Soho, comprised of 112 Greene Street, Food and *Avalanche* magazine. (See the exhibition catalogue by Morris, et al., *Food, op. cit.*)

[31] Food opened at the same moment as many other restaurants that served mostly vegetarian food made from locally grown ingredients in urban areas across the country. The best known veteran of this "food revolution" today is the chef Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley California. Food was also connected to Northeastern communes. A film by Gordon Matta-Clark made at Food records the arrival of a member of the Vermont commune Madbrook Farms to bake the next day's bread (Morris, et al., *Food, op. cit.*, p. 30; Brentano and Savitt, *op. cit.*, p. ix).

Spoerri and Les Levine, openly constructing the kind of meeting place essential for a cultural community.[32] Cooking and serving food, the central act in the art of living, became a type of performance art during this period. *Food* (fig. 20), described as a ``wall sandwich" by Goodden, is a waist-high, and arms-length wide section of wall that divided the kitchen from the serving area of the old workers' restaurant. For Pamela Margot Lee, *Food* is ``an architectural metonymy for the non-extant restaurant Food, evoking the now-absent site."[33] It denotes as well what had to be removed before the restaurant could be established, that is the former tenant, a Spanish café which served Soho laborers. The superimposition of the new over the old is made explicit in an advertisement in *Avalanche* for the opening of Food (fig. 21). The façade of the closed workers café is illustrated with the word ``FOOD" written in marker over the former ``Comidas Criollas,"[34] a veritable metaphor for the supercession of one population by another (fig. 22).

In 1973, Matta-Clark organized a gathering of artists affiliated with 112 Greene Street called Anarchitecture.[35] The group met for a few months (fig. 23), discussing architecture and non-architecture.[36] They were thinking about architecture as

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[32] Henri, *Total Art, op. cit.*, p. 41. Christo said that in 1970 Matta-Clark asked him about Spoerri's restaurant in Düsseldorf (Mary Jane Jacobs, ed., *Gordon Matta-Clark: A Retrospective*, (Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1985, p. 41).

[33] Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125 (Lee quotes Goodden). This piece looks like the work photographed on exhibit at 112 Greene Street in Morris, et. al., *Food, op. cit.*, p. 37 (photograph by Richard Landry). In addition to contracting the renovation of the space, Matta-Clark cooked food there himself, and also produced ``photo-fry" artworks.

[34] This advertisement appears in *Avalanche* no. 3, Fall 1971, p. 10.

[35] The term was not new with this group. Walker's entry for ``anarchitecture" (Walker, *op. cit.*, 1977) cited Robin Evan's opaque article, ``Towards Anarchitecture," *AAQ* (UK), January 1970 vol. 2, no. 1. Evans was concerned with the relationship between architecture and human freedom, and discussed how things resist and permit certain actions.

[36] Lee, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-162; Lee lists the artists in the group as Gordon Matta-Clark, Suzanne Harris, Tina Girouard, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaum, Laurie Anderson, Richard Landry and Richard Nonas. (These are the artists who exhibited at 112 Greene Street; see Brentano and Savitt, *op. cit.*, p. 61-62.) Morris lists those artists, and also George Trakas, Jeffrey Lew, and later Susan Weil, Jean Dupuy, Trisha Brown, Michael Goldberg, Robert Grosvenor, Neil Jenney, Joan Jonas, Ree Morton, Lucio Pozzi, Susan Rothenberg, Keith Sonnier, and Lynn Umlauf. Some were involved continuously, some occasionally in the group which met weekly at Food, 112 Greene Street, and people's lofts (Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20).

environment, Matta-Clark said, ``metaphoric voids, gaps, left-over spaces, places that were not developed."[37] Eight artists produced an exhibition at 112 Greene Street in March, 1974, consisting of anonymous photographs of a uniform size.[38] The group also produced two pages for the magazine *Flash Art* (fig. 24).[39] Although this group was only briefly active, this spectacle (if not reality) of a collective was presented in the form of an exhibition.

In producing his larger works of shapes cut from abandoned buildings (most of them executed in Europe), Matta-Clark worked with a crew of artists who made their living in light construction remodeling Soho lofts. These artist-construction workers metaphorically stepped into the shoes of the factory and warehouse workers who had worked in Soho before them.[40] This male-oriented mode of life and sociality valorized non-domestic labor and the production of art as labor. Mediating between art and architecture, Matta-Clark's work took existing urban architectural form as highly mutable material for building-scaled sculpture. His art is a sort of research mode of urban development, with de-constructive authority vested not in the architect, but in the artist as construction worker.

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[37] ``Gordon Matta-Clark...The Humphrey Street Building," interview with Liza Bear, *Avalanche* no. 10, December 1974. Matta-Clark gave as an example a place one might stop to tie one's shoe-laces, places that are ``perceptually significant because they make a reference to movement space" (Matta-Clark, *op. cit.*). This description is appropriate to a group that included dancers and performers. Tina Girouard spoke of the group in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Both Jacobs and Pincus-Witten viewed the concept of anarchitecture as key to Matta-Clark's work (Jacobs, *op. cit.*).

[38] The works exhibited by these eight artists are no longer extant (Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 20).

[39] ``Anarchitecture" appeared in *Flash Art*, June 1974, no. 46/47, pp. 70-71.

[40] Gerard Hovagimyan, who worked at 112 Greene Street, crewed for Matta-Clark and wrote a narrative of his experiences (he is interviewed in Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89; his narrative is also at http://www.artnetweb.com/gh/ as of October 1998.) Shortly after my arrival in New York City in 1974, I worked for Gerry the contractor as a casual laborer, and observed firsthand the intersection of art, specifically sculpture, and construction labor.

Stephen Koch, in ``Reflections on SoHo" (in Rene Block, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 105-142), insists that Soho was not a conventional bohemia in the romantic, Parisian aestheticist sense, but was built on an ideology of work.

In taking the urban environment as his subject matter, Matta-Clark also appropriated the production of other artworlds, in Howard Becker's usage.[41] In two series of hand-tinted black and white, vertical, photo-murals or wall paper he called *Petrogylphs*, he included images of urban graffiti painting in the New York City subways. Matta-Clark drove his truck to the South Bronx where it was spray-painted by people there. He then exhibited the marked-up vehicle during the Washington Square Art Fair, cutting up pieces and selling them on the spot.[42] What Matta-Clark both reinscribed and appropriated was an incipient urban art form which was only beginning to come into public awareness (fig. 25).[43] The graffiti writers of the outer boroughs were groups of working class youth called ``crews,'' vernacular collectivities understood by authorities as gangs dedicated to vandalism. In his direct work with the ``urban fabric,''[44] Matta-Clark appropriated New York

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[41] Howard Becker, in *Art Worlds, op. cit.*, describes various social formations around different modes of art-making (also conventionally understood as different markets). Matta-Clark's appropriation of vernacular art is also consistent with the modernist strategy of primitivism.

[42] The *Photoglyphs* were exhibited on the wall *behind* 112 Greene Street so that they could be seen through the back windows, evoking moving subway trains. The works are illustrated in color in *Reorganizing Structure by Drawing Through It: Zeichnung bei Gordon Matta-Clark* (Generali Foundation, Vienna, 1997), pp. 136, 137, numbers 213, 214, 215 in catalogue. Matta-Clark applied to exhibit his graffitied truck in the Greenwich Village art fair, a forum for commercial and amateur painters, but was rejected. He staged an ``Alternative to the Washington Square Art Fair'' on Mercer Street. A photograph of the truck, apparently being towed by another vehicle, and being painted by people as Matta-Clark looks on appears in *Ibid,* p. 138.

[43] In 1973, Hugo Martinez, a sociology student at City College, CUNY, organized an exhibition of young ``writers,'' as the graffitists called themselves, at the Razor Gallery in Soho (a catalogue included an essay by Peter Schjeldahl). Novelist Norman Mailer's essay for *The Faith of Graffiti* (Praeger, 1974) included Claes Oldenburg's oft-repeated comment that a train decorated with graffiti was ``like a big bouquet from Latin America'' entering the grim environment of a NYC subway station. (See Richard Goldstein, ``This Thing Has Gotten Completely Out of Hand,'' *New York,* March 26, 1973 on the reception of early subway graffiti; Craig Castleman, *Getting Up: Subway Graffiti in New York*, Cambridge, MA, 1982, describes the subculture itself.)

The reciprocal influences and relations between graffiti and modes of high art need study. For example, the ``energy form'' drawings that Matta-Clark was working on during this period, of baroque calligraphic plant forms and hedges, appear to relate to graffiti forms. The work of both Oldenburg (who is on record admiring graffiti) and Frank Stella share forms with styles of graffiti. During the early 1980s, as they began to show in galleries, graffiti artists referenced Andy Warhol, for one, in their work on subway trains.

[44] Matta-Clark wrote, ``By urban fabric I mean social economic and moral conditions as much as the physical state of streets or structures throughout the city'' (in an October 1975 letter to his lawyer, cited by Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 181, n. 13, to *Gordon Matta-Clark*, IVAM Centre Julio Gonzaelz, Valencia, Spain, 1992, p. 383-84).

graffiti signs as if they were from a prehistoric culture. A more direct connection between the expanding downtown art world and the emerging hip-hop youth culture in the South Bronx, of which the graffiti writers were a part, would be made a few years later by the proprietor of another Soho alternative space of the early 1970s, Stefan Eins of 3 Mercer Street when he moved to the Bronx (see Chapter 3).

In summary, Gordon Matta-Clark referenced multiple modes of collectivity in his art. He designed a work using ``extractions'' from architecture as a stage set (*Open House Dumpster*) for performances by the dancers and musicians who shared 112 Greene Street with the visual artists. Perhaps his first cut from a building was *Food*, a ``sandwich'' cut from a wall in the cooperative restaurant started by and for artists. He was instrumental in the short-lived collective Anarchitecture, which pointed to the shared concern of a number of artists with the role of architecture in society as it might be interpreted by art. He appropriated the vernacular graphic production of urban crews of graffiti writers. More generally, Matta-Clark's work cutting patterns into abandoned buildings depended for its successful execution upon a crew of artist-construction workers, so it grew directly out of the wage and contract work artists often found themselves doing in Soho. His work also led him directly to engage questions surrounding real estate—property law, ownership, and historic preservation—issues of direct concern to the Soho community of artists.

Matta-Clark's engagements with the social form of the collective were largely circumstantial, opportunistic, and romantic.[45] In this he reflected well attitudes associated with the alternative spaces profiled in Jacki Apple's retrospective exhibition. Those were romantic collectivities, fragile, temporary, and contingent on common circumstances. Collectivities constituted under the sign of the political, by contrast, were explicitly structured and clearly instrumental. But romantic

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[45] Maud Lavin has argued that Matta-Clark's work, his ``assaults on buildings,'' is so ``paradigmatic of a modernist macho-individualism'' that it cannot be considered part of ``postmodern anti-authoritarianism.'' Lavin's assertion that Matta-Clark's was a sort of libertarian aesthetic may be true, but it obscures his reliance upon and engagement with ideals of the collective. Maud Lavin, ``Gordon Matta-Clark and Individualism,'' *Arts* magazine, January 1984, vol. 58, no. 5, pp. 138-141.

collectivities may be more generally appealing within the capitalist, individualist American culture. They naturalize the collective model in ways that the political, built upon Marxist models during a Cold War era, could not.

Matta-Clark's sculptural material was abandoned buildings, plentiful in New York City during the years of national recession, regional de-industrialization, and disinvestment in the city centers. Pamela Lee retails the history of the Soho district at length, ``to suggest the structural affinities that arise between the formation of SoHo and Matta-Clark's work" which ``confirm the literal internalization of property issues in his art."[46] It seems strange, since they lived together as illegal dwellers in lofts zoned for industry, that so few artists during a high tide of conceptual art worked with issues of real estate. Problems around real estate occasioned the most continuous political activism on the part of Soho artists. As with the citizens' groups that opposed planner Robert Moses' massive urban development projects that leveled whole neighborhoods in the boroughs, artists joined together in groups such as the Artists Tenants Association, which formed in 1960-61, and later organizations which worked to sway the city planning department away from recommending that Soho be razed for ``urban renewal." Artists also formed groups to buy real estate in Soho, most notably through the efforts of George Maciunas, the Lithuanian emigré artist who organized the Fluxus movement. Maciunas, inspired by the Russian revolutionary artists of the 1920s grouped under the name LEF,[47] started in 1966 to build a set of interlocking cooperatively owned buildings which he called Fluxhouses.[48]

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[46] Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 156. Lee discusses Matta-Clark's work in terms of ``the soul of property," the Hegelian idea that appropriation involves giving property the soul of the possessor. She suggests, with Les Levine, that Matta-Clark nurtured buildings that had lost their soul (pp. 156-158).

[47] For Maciunas' relation to LEF, see Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, (Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit, MI, and Abrams, NY, 1988), ``Collective," pp. 35-38.

[48] Emmett Williams, ed., *Mr. Fluxus: A Collective Portrait of George Maciunas, 1931-1978* (Thames and Hudson, NY, 1998). The timeline in Williams' book has Maciunas incorporating the Fluxhouse Cooperative Building Project in 1968 to buy and renovate loft buildings (p. 340). An exhibition, ``George Maciunas DBA/Fluxhouse Cooperative, Inc., or Soho: A New Utopia" at Susan Inglett Gallery, 20 May-2 July 1999 exhibited Jonas Mekas' photographs of Maciunas at work on his

In 1984, Willoughby Sharp pointed to real estate as the key factor determining both life and art in Soho during the 1970s. The former editor of *Avalanche* told Edward Jones that the ``alternative [space] movement started as a result of artists being smart enough to buy real estate.... They came out of the real estate of Soho and the way real estate was put together then... I don't think it had so much to do with the art itself. I think the space made the art conform to the space."[49] In his insistence that real economic opportunity determined the rise of the alternative space and even the art exhibited within it, Sharp, who is no Marxist, spoke within the parameters of a discourse in which the term ``space" described both real estate and aesthetic effects, shifting easily between the actual and the metaphorical.[50]

Matta-Clark's use of disused architecture as material for his sculpture was based upon its availability during a moment of broad-scale recession and economic change. His artistic practice at 112 Greene Street was paralleled by the managerial work of Alanna Heiss, whose organization, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, was able to secure abandoned or disused properties from the city and from private landlords for temporary use as artists' studios or exhibition sites. The Institute established permanent gallery/studio complexes at the Clocktower, in a municipal office building on Leonard Street below Canal in 1973, and in 1975 took over an enormous school building in Queens, P.S. 1.[51] Heiss' Institute arranged

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cooperative ventures. A brief essay for this exhibition by Roger Green states that he is working on a book about the Fluxhouses, using the Lila and Gilbert Silverman Fluxus archive.

General discussions of the role of artists' activism in the creation of Soho dominate Simpson's book (*op. cit.*), and play a leading role in Zukin's book (*op. cit.*). Simpson examines other artists' disaffection with Maciunas' idealistic schemes.

[49] E. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. III-8. From interview July 25, 1984. Sharp at this moment was himself involved in real estate transactions in Soho.

[50] Sharon Zukin (*op. cit.*) maintains that the commodification of the loft as middle class housing was the principle creative product of Soho. Artists crafted a lifestyle out of the spaces made available during the nation's de-industrialization that appealed to the middle class, initiating a trend that helped to revitalize central cities around the country.

[51] The Institute for Art and Urban Resources grew out of the Municipal Art Society where Alanna Heiss worked as program director. The IAUR began by securing studio space for artists, and by 1973 obtained the Clocktower, an aerie atop the beaux arts style municipal building on Chambers Street as

exhibition space for many of the artists who exhibited at 112 Greene Street, including Matta-Clark (fig. 26). The artist's opportunistic use of abandoned space, his nomadic sculptural practice, is neatly paralleled in the emerging profile of this carefully conceived, masterfully administered, alternative proto-institution. (At this writing in 2000, the P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Museum has affiliated with the Museum of Modern Art.)

If the Institute for Art and Urban Resources was a nomadic, opportunistic proto-institution run by a director inspired by the practices of artists she knew, another important proto-institutional alternative space that emerged during this period, grew directly out of the apparatus that delivered state funding. In a carefully conceived project of the Committee for the Visual Arts, an advisory body to the New York State Council on the Arts, Irving Sandler and Valerie Smith sought to determine artists' needs through a series of meetings with different groups of artists.[52] Opened in 1974, Artists Space functioned rather like a state-funded cooperative gallery, exhibiting unknown artists selected by well-known artists. With ample funding and prestigious ``selectors," the space was a success, and numerous careers were launched through initial shows in the rooms upstairs from the Paula Cooper Gallery on Wooster Street in Soho.[53] By the mid-1970s, the alternative spaces were well-established in the categories of state and federal arts funding and staffed by professional managers. They were to become permanent features of the institutional landscape of contemporary art, in effect, neo-institutions.

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a permanent exhibition space. Acquisition of the 50,000 square foot P.S. 1 in Long Island City, Queens, followed in 1975, assisted by historic preservationists and community activists (``Building Sale Reset to Give Art a Chance," by Thomas Collins, in *Daily News*, May 2, 1975, n.p., in P.S. 1 press book, P.S. 1 Archive). P.S. 1 opened as an exhibition space in June of 1976.

[52] Phil Patton, ``Other Voices, Other Rooms: The Rise of the Alternative Space," *Art in America*, July/August, 1977, vol. 65, pp. 80-89. See also Claudia Gould and Valerie Smith, eds., *5000 Artists Return to Artists Space: 25 Years* (Artists Space, NY, 1998).

[53] Trudie Grace, ``Artists Space," *Art Journal*, Summer 1975, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 323-326. The gallery's selections procedures were based upon the guiding precept of ``artists' choices in all situations." Most of the artists who showed there were interested in careers in commercial galleries. When she wrote this, Grace was director of the Committee for the Visual Arts; she worked for NYSCA from 1970-73.

Artists Space made space available to artists groups that wanted to use it for meetings, and in 1976 the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change convened there for about a year. This group's meetings and activities overlapped to a large extent with those of Art & Language, the conceptual art group based in England, some of whose members were in New York. The reciprocal activities of AMCC and New York A&L formed a crossroads for different groups and people interested in radical cultural alternatives and the theoretical intersections of art and politics. Central to the questions these meetings considered was how artists could work together in groups. Out of these meetings came journals and publications—*The Fox, Red Herring* and *An Anti-Catalog*—and the successor organization Political Art Documentation and Distribution.

The AMCC began in 1975 as a group meeting in the Wooster Street loft of painters May Stevens and Rudolf Baranik. Artists gathered to consider the revival of some form of political activity after the end of the movement against the Vietnam War. Many had been active in the Art Workers Coalition: Carl Andre, Benny Andrews, Hans Haacke, Lucy Lippard and Irving Petlin. The group's aim, said Baranik, was ``to affect society, or at least to analyze the artist's role in society." In evolving their procedure, it was suggested that the gatherings be run like a Quaker meeting, the religious group renowned for its pacifism wherein ``friends," or members of the congregation, speak when they are moved by the spirit. This led Carl Andre to propose the name Artists Meeting. Members of the English conceptual art group (which then included the late Australian artist Ian Burn and the Canadian Sarah Charlesworth) Art & Language insisted the group express a purpose in its name, so the phrase ``for Cultural Change" was added.[54]

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[54]The artist May Stevens lived with Baranik. Petlin, a painter, had been at the center of efforts in 1969 to persuade Picasso to withdraw *Guernica* from the MoMA in protest of the Vietnam war (cf. Francis Frascina, *op. cit.*).

The core of my account of AMCC is taken from Nancy Marmer, ``Art & Politics '77," *Art in America*, July/August, 1977, vol. 63, pp. 64-66 (she mentions also Vivian Browne). The type of cognate name given to AMCC occurred earlier in denominating the Art Strike, which was `enlarged' to be the Art Strike against War, Racism and Repression (see Sean Elwood, ``New York Art Strike

By the time AMCC moved to Artists Space in 1976, its Sunday night meetings were attracting about a hundred people. In an article of that year, Australian art historian Terry Smith described the meetings as made up of people ``with histories in the doctrinaire Old Left, the issues-oriented New Left, in organizations for the rights of artists, in community work. There is much unfocused discontent. And there is a new element of wildcat aggression yoked to a concern for revolutionary theory, coming from the Art and Language group whose current New York front is the magazine *The Fox*."[55] This journal first appeared in Spring of 1975. It had evolved during the Fall of 1974 out of conversations among New York members of Art & Language.

Art & Language had formed in England in the mid-1960s, stirred by dissatisfaction with English art education and responding to the spread into England of art from the United States. The group and their collaborators (including, early on, the U.S. conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth) published a densely thought and written journal, *Art-Language* (published on an occasional basis from 1969 to the present). The group used terms from formal logic, analytical philosophy, discourse analysis and, increasingly, Marxist analysis and polemics. Art & Language exhibited their first *Index*, or cross-referenced collection of texts published in and relating to their journal, at Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany in 1972.[56]

Charles Harrison, the principal historian of the A&L group, was editor of *Studio International* in the early 1970s, and he organized two exhibitions of British

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of 1970," Hunter College MA Thesis, 1982). See also Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (University of California, 1996), pp. 808-10.

[55] Terry Smith, ``Without Revolutionary Theory...," *Studio International*, March/April, 1976, vol. 191, no. 980, pp. 134-137, cited in Marmer, *op. cit.*, p. 64. Smith carefully examines various positions that emerged among artists in AMCC in light of the ``classic theory/practice gap: *here* is my `art', *there* is my `politics'."

[56] Most of this information comes from Charles Harrison and Fred Orton, *A Provisional History of Art & Language*, Editions E. Fabre, Paris, 1982, p. 32. Write Harrison and Orton, ``To Kosuth goes the credit for making the [Documenta] installation look more-or-less up-market."

conceptual art at the New York Cultural Center in 1971.[57] Some A&L members began to work in New York in 1972, showing *Index 002 Bxal* at the John Weber Gallery in December of 1973. Ian Burn and Mel Ramsden organized A&L work in New York, making "historical materialist" commentaries on *Artforum*—a critique "stuck to the text of the principal platform of Modernist art journalism" (Harrison and Orton, p. 38, cited in footnote 57 below). Burn and Ramsden were joined in this work by Terry Smith, and in 1972 by Andrew Menard and Preston Heller, then students at Pratt Institute. After the Documenta 5 exhibit, this group met, often at Joseph Kosuth's loft, to work on "The Annotations." By circulating texts within a group they hoped to "find a means somehow to characterise community in terms of a discourse and set of concerns" (Harrison and Orton, p. 39).

Even as Art & Language relied increasingly on Marxist cultural analysis, in their indexing and "going-on" (fig. 27), they were enacting, executing, and evolving a model of an academicized conceptual art intimately involved with the cellular organizational model of left political action.[58] Yet there were problems. "As the project attracted new recruits and hangers-on," write Harrison and Orton of New York A&L, "the material proliferated and the problems escalated. [They quote Mel Ramsden:] 'There were a lot of people. A huge amount of extremely silly material was produced... You had some curious student persons, careerist womanisers, art-ladies, hangers-on, etc. We made what we could under the circumstances of New York. There was raving strife.'"[59] The "opaque social ecology" that A&L found in New York's Soho community baffled them, and the England-based component of the group grew suspicious of the efforts taking place in New York. Over the

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[57] These exhibitions were "Art as Idea from England," and "The British Avant Garde." This account is taken from Harrison and Orton, *op. cit.* Harrison's resume is given on p. 82, fn 37.

[58] Charles Harrison, *Essays on Art & Language* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford UK, Cambridge MA, 1991), includes a further consideration of the New York A&L experience in "Conditions of the Problem," pp. 82-126. This later, richer text integrates the New York project with Harrison's other concerns, and with A&L's later work. Harrison writes that the A&L project reached its high tide of membership during the New York years, with perhaps 20 or 30 members.

[59] Harrison and Orton, p. 39; they cite an unpublished 1981 text by Mel Ramsden on his New York experiences.

summer of 1974, Burn, Ramsden and Smith produced a text they subtitled *Draft for an Anti-Textbook* (published in the group's journal, *Art-Language*, vol. 10, no. 4, September 1974). Kosuth's response to this group experience was published as ``The Artist as Anthropologist," in *The Fox*, April 1975 (fig. 29).

Kosuth's relative eminence, financial resources, and tactics were resented by others in A&L, and *The Fox* was to become the focus of relentless criticisms in the English journal of the parent A&L organization. A ``picturesque and laconic" 1977 article by Baldwin, Harrison and Ramsden retailed the September 1974 genesis of the magazine by Kosuth (``desperate to be seen in charge of something"), which is described as an alternative to *Artforum*.[60] The name of the magazine was derived from political philosopher Isaiah Berlin's well-known essay.[61] Amongst the group of about fifteen who planned to execute this project, wrote Harrison and Orton, ``Critical activity had almost ceased; discourse had been reduced to negotiation in and out of the various sub-groups and economic alliances that had been formed by then" (Harrison and Orton, p. 40).

Nancy Marmer did not discuss the dense group activity and shingling of texts which led up to *The Fox*'s first appearance in her concise 1977 account. Instead Marmer wrote that two of the founding editors, Joseph Kosuth and Sarah Charlesworth, attributed the magazine's genesis to ``the emptiness of the period of disillusion that followed upon the commercial success of Conceptual art." After what Charlesworth called a ``really stagnant, really dead" art season, the two began to plan the magazine during the summer of 1974. Kosuth's Marxian mode of analysis grew out of his studies of anthropology with Stanley Diamond and Bob Scholte at the New

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[60] Untitled text, *Art-Language*, vol. 4, no. 2, October 1977; also in *Art & Language* (Eindhoven, 1980) as ``Method 4.3."

[61] Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History* (1953). Berlin began with an ancient Greek poet's line: ``The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." The fox may be seen as an emblem of supple, adaptable, multi-strategied, political behavior.

School. Charlesworth was interested in the economic and social reasons for the ``impotency and insipidity of contemporary art," the isolation among artists, and their failure to deal with real world problems.[62]

In the fall of 1974, Marmer continued, Kosuth and Charlesworth ``discussed the idea for a new magazine with Mel Ramsden, Michael Corris, Preston Heller and Andrew Menard—all members of the New York Art and Language group." Advertisements heralded a ``revaluation of art practice," and in Spring of 1975 the first issue appeared, printed on newsprint and bound with gray boards. Ramsden pressed Kosuth to call the organization through which the magazine project received federal and state arts funding ``Art & Language Foundation," according to Harrison and Orton, since other names Kosuth had in mind ``would have served to conceal the antecedents of the editorial `community' in A&L and thus to realise a kind of takeover" (p. 41). In practice, they write, ``Kosuth was the publisher, Ramsden the editor, and Charlesworth, then living with Kosuth, the intended beneficiary." This comment about the only prominent woman in the group seems catty. For Harrison, that is the *ad hominem*,[63] a part of the process of ``going-on." Outside the A&L universe, printing these kinds of caustic personal comments was highly unusual, although not so uncommon in British literary practice. By making personal relationships material for comment, *The Fox* introduced a kind of serious-minded gossip into U.S. art critical discourse.

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[62] Marmer, *op. cit.*. See also S. Charlesworth, ``Memo for the Fox," *The Fox*, no. 2, 1975.

[63] *Art-Language* (in May 1977, vol. 4, no. 1) describes the *ad hominem* as ``biographical particles," adding, "Ad hominem can mean `bearing necessary historical detail'." A&L's use of ``biographical particles," however, was often joined to vitriolic attack; for example, the article (in *Art-Language*, October 1977, vol. 4, no. 2) entitled "Method 1: On the Material Necessity that the Editors of October, its Contributors, Supporters and Relatives, and Particularly, the Arch Fool, the Illiterate Liar Jeremy G. Rolfe, be Sought Out, Their Hands Smashed, Their Eyes Put Out, Their Offices, Ateliers Destroyed, Burned and Portions of the Bloodstained Ashes Sent to the Towering Wretches of French Structuralism." Ahoy, Bataille!

Marmer found the dispute between factions of A&L exemplary of the kind of disagreements that recurred continuously within New York artists' organizations.[64] Kosuth's position as a prominent artist empowered him, and predisposed the critical establishment to treat him and the projects in which he was involved respectfully. Still, like any artist, he is constrained by perceptions of his work and actions. For example, he is counted among the ``barracudas" by Carter Ratcliff, who holds up the type as admirable: aggressive, conquering American avant-garde artist-heroes surrounded by the ``busy beavers" who simply get by.[65] For the 1970s and '80s, this basic problem will remain: How can an effective collaborative group develop when there are so many inducements to the few to stand alone?

The extended contact between American artists working in conceptual and consciously avant-garde modes within an artworld of emerging proto-institutions, and a group from England working quite consciously as a collective whose art consisted of theorizing their art practice may be presumed to have deeply inflected advanced American art during the mid-1970s. Still, despite the American loss in Vietnam and the fall of President Richard Nixon for overseeing domestic spying on his political opponents, the United States was deeply committed to a bipolar Cold War position, that is, defining itself by its opposition to the socialist world. Individuality—and concomitant ``branding" of artists and their products—was the linchpin of the capitalist ethos. In a nation like England with a strong socialist tradition, collectivity was a more natural model, and its implications and formations could be closely, reasonably studied—without the ``opaque social ecology" A&L members discerned in the United States.

The Fox may have been received in England with ``derision and dismay" (Harrison and Orton, p. 42), but the journal was a tonic in New York. Writes Marmer, the

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[64] Marmer found the newly-formed feminist collective *Heresies* a sign of hope in a landscape of dispute. While feminist collectivity is not considered in this dissertation, it is important to note that by 1979 the group had produced a special issue, ``Women Working Together" (*Heresies* no. 7, 1979, vol. 2 no. 3).

[65] Carter Ratcliff, ``New York Fever," *Art in America*, July/August, 1977, vol. 63, pp. 46-49.

magazine offered ``a unique blend of fragmentary Marxist analysis, ponderous sociological jargon and bitchy *ad hominem* attacks." Fun to read, but not conducive to building a community. For Marmer, the vitality of *The Fox* stemmed from its ``aggressive iconoclasm aimed at the art power structure and at contemporary artists themselves" rather than its ``desultory delineation" of alternatives or its commitment to social change.

Many of the British A&L artists were teachers in art colleges in England. They were the practicing arm of an academic artworld that included the pre-eminent critic John Berger, who in 1972 produced *Ways of Seeing* as a BBC television program, and later as a dense, image-packed book.[66] Rising stars of the English art historical community included T.J. Clark (formerly affiliated with the French Situationist group),[67] whose perspectives on Courbet and Manet deeply affected French 19th century studies, and Griselda Pollock who extended a rigorous feminist critique into European art history. The British academy (including the Commonwealth nations), already allied with the members of the radical caucus (later the Marxist caucus) of the College Art Association, had a heightened impact in New York through the AMCC. As Marmer describes it, ``papers were read or study groups were held on such topics as new methodologies for art, collaborative work, imperialism, the role of museums, art and feminism, the culture industry, and the artist as intellectual. By spring 1976, the meetings had grown more specifically political and much attention was being given to the subject of socialism." At first, a broad spectrum of opinion was tolerated, from ``orthodox Marxism to all shades of leftish liberalism." But, as dissension began within the Art & Language Foundation which published *The Fox*, the heated arguments spilled over to AMCC. ``In winter of 1977," writes Marmer,

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[66] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Viking Press, NY, 1973). The book basically glamorizes the reading of ideology in art. *Art-Language* devoted its entire October 1978 issue to a critique that exceeded *Ways* in length (*Art-Language,* vol. 4, no. 3); Eunice Lipton reviewed *Ways* in *The Fox*, no. 2, 1975.

[67] Bill Brown, ``The Look We Look at: T.J. Clark's Walk Back to the Situtationist International," *Arts*, January 1989, vol. 63, no. 5, pp. 61-65, considers Clark's work on Impressionism in the context of his earlier involvement with the Situationist International.

"what had happened at *The Fox* was in effect repeated at AMCC with a larger cast." (p. 66). The Provisional Art & Language, which had split off from the foundation, insisted that AMCC vote its hardline Marxist "principles of unity." There was a walkout, the group split and soon faded out.[68]

Very simply stated, the differences between AMCC and A&L were the differences between liberals and radicals. The liberals sought to change the institutions of art, the radicals wanted to build socialist culture.[69] Harrison and Orton recognized that,

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[68] To condense this complicated history of struggle within The Fox and AMCC—complicated because their search for collectivity was so deeply undertaken—, I shall recap this account from Marmer, *op. cit*, with some glosses from Harrison and Orton, *op. cit.*. The third and last issue of *The Fox* appeared in late spring of 1976. In February, the Art & Language Foundation had been rocked by dissension. Transcripts of some of these "struggle sessions" were printed in *Fox 3* (as "The Lumpenheadache"). A majority of Foundation members voted to adopt orthodox Marxist-Leninist positions and "collectivize their group," making it "unacceptable for any member to continue to exhibit under his or her own name." Since most A&L people already did exhibit together, this move singled out Kosuth, forcing him and Charlesworth to withdraw. The remaining members renamed their group "Provisional Art & Language," and seven of them—Karl Beveridge, Jill Breakstone, Ian Burn, Carol Condé, Michael Corris, Preston Heller and Andrew Menard—began work on a journal called *Red Herring*.

This effort still did not win favor with London A&L. Write Harrison and Orton, "Among the publications and enterprises associated with attempts by former American A&L members to cobble-up or join 'alternative' communal activities and spend the remaining grants, were the abortive (lumpen-Maoist) journal *Red Herring*, the AMCC's *Anti-Catalog*, and 'International Local' (this group included Kosuth, Charlesworth, and Anthony McCall; see Annina Nosei Weber, ed., *Discussion*, Out of London Press, 1980). With the dissolution of the New York base a major, if historically necessary, source of distraction was finally removed from A&L. None of those left on their feet has since experienced a moment's regret" (pp. 49-50).

Marmer, as noted in text above, blamed the PA&L for splitting AMCC by calling for a vote on the same "principles of unity" that Kosuth and Charlesworth had rejected. *Red Herring,* she writes, is "a journal that can only appeal to already doctrinaire Marxist-Leninists with a strong stomach for 'scientific socialist' argot." Concerned with "organizing culture for the socialist revolution," *Red Herring* bit the hand that fed it (by stridently criticizing the NEA), and so lost their grant. Canadian artists Karl Beveridge and Carole Condé later returned to Ontario where they began to work with labor unions as a husband and wife team. Beveridge felt sure that *Red Herring* was more constructive than *The Fox* which he saw as a "liberal journal" whereas they sought "proletarian culture." (For their further work, see Dot Tuer, "Is It Still Privileged Art? The Politics of Class and Collaboration in the Art Practice of Carole Condé and Karl Beveridge," in Nina Felshin, ed., *But Is It Art?,* Bay Press, Seattle, WA, 1995, pp. 195-220.)

[69] Alan Wallach states this directly as the principal conditions of political action in the New York art world of the mid-1970s. Liberals had lost faith in government as an agent of change after Watergate and the Vietnam War. Radicals faced the dissolution of the New Left after the end of the war and the Civil Rights struggle. "Cut loose from their political moorings, art world liberals and radicals struck unlikely alliances" (Alan Wallach, "Rereading *an* anti-*catalog*: Radical Art History and the Decline of the Left," paper read February 26, 1998 in "From Aesthetics to Politics: New York ca. 1975" panel at the College Art Association, Toronto).

``those forms of organisation which A&L initiated or joined in New York...seemed largely determined by the need to confront the prevailing institutions and to take up positions in relation to them." In their view, this was ``not always distinguishable from career-mongering or opportunism" (Harrison and Orton, *op. cit.*, p. 43). For artists who saw themselves as true political radicals, many affiliated with revolutionary political parties, ``the art world was not our home. We were uneasy interlopers, having rejected the nexus of gallery/museum/art collector as inherently elitist." Mary Patten, of the Madame Binh Graphics Collective, said that her group was ``more concerned with building anti-racist activism and alternatives in society in general as opposed to targeting art world institutions."[70]

The ``targeting" of major New York City museums and their exhibitions formed the thread of connection between the Art Workers Coalition and the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change. The critique of the Museum of Modern Art, which began in earnest with the formation of the Art Workers Coalition, continued during 1970 with the Art Strike which sought to close all New York City museums after the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. Relations between AWC-affiliated artists and museums were aggravated by the Guggenheim's cancellation of a 1971 Hans Haacke exhibition after a work of his offended the board of trustees.[71] In addition to these overtly political encounters, the problem of the museum was being generally and critically considered within the art community.[72] What was (and remains) at issue was very broadly the question of a cultural institution's relations with and obligations to its sources of support, which include public monies, individual donors, and corporate funders. These questions were being grappled with during the recession-wracked

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[70] From a draft of a paper by Mary Patten, ``The Madame Binh Graphics Collective: Art During `Wartime'" (presented February 26, 1998 in ``From Aesthetics to Politics: New York ca. 1975" panel at the College Art Association, Toronto). This paper is an extraordinary look at the history of an American artists' group, many of whose members are in jail or underground as a result of their political activities.

[71] Wallis, ed., *Hans Haacke* (1986), *op. cit.*.

[72] This is evidenced by the articles in a special issue of *Art in America* edited by Brian O'Doherty, and released as the book *Museums in Crisis* (G. Braziller, NY, 1972).

1970s as the Metropolitan Museum of Art accepted the Lehman Collection under the stipulation that a special wing be built for it, the Smithsonian Institution accepted Joseph Hirschhorn's collection and a building under similar conditions, and the Pasadena Art Museum was sold, and changed into the Norton Simon Museum, all events noted in an AMCC letter.[73] The wind seemed to be with the AMCC as the organization moved to confront an institution working closely with a Rockfeller, a favorite enemy of the left.[74]

The institution that the AMCC chose to target was the Whitney Museum of American Art. Because of its special mission to exhibit modern and contemporary American art, the Whitney had been the focus of protest by groups of women artists and artists of color since the formation of the Art Workers Coalition. The artists criticized the museum for choosing principally white male artists for the Whitney Annual exhibitions year after year. The Black Emergency Cultural Coalition had mounted a vigorous protest over the selection of a white curator for the 1971 ``Contemporary Black American Art" exhibition. The 1976 AMCC protest of what was at first described as a general historical survey exhibition of American art—``American Art, an Exhibition from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III"—was the culmination of a continuous series of protest actions.

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[73] ``Letter to the editor" dated January 28, 1976, AMCC folder, PAD/D Archive, Museum of Modern Art Library. This is one of several statements released by AMCC; it isn't clear where or if that letter was published.

[74] Nelson Rockefeller, governor of New York, vice-president under Nixon, and significant patron of the MoMA, was a frequent target of activist groups, especially after he ordered the Attica prison rebellion put down with great loss of life in 1971. For Art & Language, interconnections between Rockefeller-controlled institutions were proof of the ideological nature of contemporary art (see ``34. The Unreality of this Culture," in *Art-Language*, September 1974, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 95, where the key article by muralist Eva Cockcroft, ``Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," *Artforum*, June 1974 is cited). Hans Haacke said that ``liberal funding of socially innocuous art" by the Rockefeller clan and the institutions they control has ``made us think that good art is apolitical....We all live in Rockefeller Centre and many have come to accept as natural that there is no place for Diego Rivera," the Mexican muralist whose 1933 work for that complex was destroyed (Haacke interviewed by Margaret Sheffield, *Studio International*, vol. 191, no. 980, March/April 1976, pp. 117-123).

The Rockefeller collection show opened at the Whitney Museum on September 16, 1976, as part of the Bicentennial celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the American Revolution. The show originated at the De Young Museum in San Francisco, and American art historian E.P. Richardson had written the catalogue. The AMCC protest began with a November 3, 1975 letter to Whitney director Thomas Armstrong which was made public. The signatories insisted that an exhibition of American art built around a private collection could not express the ``various facets of American art a Bicentennial celebration should encompass: art of dissent; art by minorities; an adequate representation of art by women." A ``fresher and truer art historical view" would better reflect ``our revolution."[75] Richardson was coordinating exhibitions of American art for the Bicentennial, so as an art historical target he was well-chosen.[76] These shows were occurring all over the country, and the AMCC called for artists throughout the United States to consider local actions against them.[77] Richardson's text formed the germ for *An Anti-Catalog*[78] (fig. 31), since the Catalog Committee of AMCC, over the course of a

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[75] This letter is reproduced in *An Anti-Catalog*, p. 68, and signed by Benny Andrews (of the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition), Lucy Lippard (of WEB and Women's Slide Registry), and Rudolf Baranik (of Artists and Writers Protest). These three areas of concern chart the dimensions of AMCC's constituency: African-American artists, women artists, and artists who had worked against the Vietnam War, and now resisted U.S. imperialism.

[76] Not only artists and radicals criticized Richardson's work. Art historian Alfred Frankenstein wrote, ``The Rockefeller collection, indeed, could just as well have been shown at the Centennial in 1876" (Frankenstein, ``Evaluating the Bicentennial Exhibitions," *Art in America*, May/June 1977, vol. 65, no. 3, p. 10; Frankenstein listed the exhibition catalogues of 1976 as the celebration's principal contribution).

[77] This call in the letter ``To the American Art Community..." (*Anti-Catalog*, p. 70) opens the question of local and national organizations that sprang up in response to AWC and AMCC, or joined with them in common cause. This political organization arose at the same time as governments began funding small arts organizations.

[78] The publication is entitled: *an* anti-*catalog*. For typographic convenience, I have regularized the spelling as follows: *An Anti-Catalog* (The Catalog Committee of the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, NY 1977). The 79-page book was ``written, designed, and produced" by Rudolf Baranik, Sarina Bromberg, Sarah Charlesworth, Susanne Cohn, Carol Duncan, Shawn Gargagliano, Eunice Golden, Janet Koenig, Joseph Kosuth, Anthony McCall, Paul Pechter, Elaine Bendock Pelosini, Aaron Roseman, Larry Rosing, Ann Marie Rousseau, Alan Wallach, and Walter Weissman.

The title alludes to the *Art-Language* ``Draft for an Anti-Textbook," published in September 1974 (vol. 3, no. 1) and based on A&L conversations held in New York in May-July of that year. It also recalls the series of ``Anti-Whitney" annual exhibitions held in Soho by Art Guerra, an artist and art supply dealer (conversation with painter Gary Morehead, June, 1999). These actions were

year, annotated his text extensively. Although, as art historian Alan Wallach recalls, one committee member ``argued for the `purity' of simply republishing Richardson's catalog with critical annotations,"[79] the annotations appeared as the essay ``Demystifying American Art."

An Anti-Catalog also included essays on Native American art, written by artist and former American Indian Movement (AIM) activist Jimmy Durham (``Mr. Catlin and Mr. Rockefeller Tame the Wilderness"), and one assisted by Gerald Horne on ``Black Art and Historical Omission." ``Looking for Women in the Rockefeller Collection" enunciated the feminist critique, since there was only one woman artist in the exhibition: Susan Hannah Macdowell, identified as ``Mrs. Eakins." The article pointed out that in the 1876 Centennial an entire Women's Pavilion had been mounted. Feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton did not support it then, since she felt ``framed copies of all the laws bearing unjustly upon women" should be exhibited to illustrate women's ``political slavery," an ironic suggestion that resonates with 1970s conceptual art (*An Anti-Catalog*, p. 52).

An Anti-Catalog was, Wallach writes, ``a product of collective work and an almost non-hierarchical editorial and design process." Its appearance, blending text, illustrations, and images-as-comment, emulated Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. The AMCC book is ``an admixture of reform and revolution, of deracinated liberalism and free-floating radical critique. Art historically, the *Anti-Catalog* was far ahead of its time," writes Wallach. Compared to Richardson's ``blandly ahistorical" account of American art, *An Anti-Catalog*'s ``preoccupation with issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity made it a prophetic document."[80]

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continued in the ``Whitney Counterweight" exhibitions in Soho opened in 1977 (see Judy Seigel, ed., *Mutiny and the Mainstream*, Midmarch Arts Press, NY, 1992, pp. 65-67, for a brief account).

[79]Alan Wallach, ``Rereading *An* Anti-*Catalog*," *op. cit.* from which much of this account is taken.

[80] *Ibid.*

The pronounced Marxist flavor of much AMCC rhetoric is illustrated by the bold-faced line in a handbill, ``The political control of culture is a class problem.'' This is not a slogan but a premise, from which the description of the exhibition as embodying ``art of the upper class'' proceeds.[81] Although this premise was by no means universally shared within AMCC, its promulgation made the group's critique harder for U.S. citizens of liberal views to swallow. Nancy Marmer described the book as ``a primer of semi-tough radical views on `official culture'.'' The group's premises, that art is never politically neutral, and that art forms and cultural institutions reflect the values of a power elite, are ``useful tools of analysis,'' but they are ``unevenly supported by the book's 11 mini-essays.'' The *Anti-Catalog*, Marmer writes, ``seems to value American art only insofar as it can be used as a document revealing class conflict in American history or as a vehicle for exposing our bleak record of racist and sexist injustice.'' She found the prose marked by ``in-group Marxist rhetoric'' and ``patronizing didacticism,'' an ``imperfect blending'' of the different voices of the editorial committee.[82]

In considering for whom the catalog was intended, Marmer's criticisms reflect the dividing ground between liberal and radical factions of the AMCC. Is the book intended for those ``politically converted but art-historically ignorant,'' she wonders or for those who know ```commodity-oriented art history'' but are politically naïve? She concludes that the book ``is addressed primarily to an audience whose beliefs in art-establishment ideologies have already been deconstructed, but for whom the veneer of social utility satisfies a moral taste perhaps indistinguishable from an

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[81] The line is from the handbill ``Boycott This Museum'' (in Whitney Museum of American Art archives, folder ``Rockefeller [Exhibition], Publicity/Artists Controversy''; notation in pencil, ``October 2, 1976''). The line is picked up in Annette Kuhn's ``Culture Shock'' column in the *Village Voice*, which is headlined: ``The Whitney is stroking a potential donor while the Artists Meeting protests `art of the upper class''' (*Village Voice*, February 7, 1976, n.p.; in Whitney Museum archives, *loc. cit.*).

The line points to the kind of work that some in A&L and AMCC were doing with revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Mao-Tse-Tung-Thought political parties, especially the Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union based in Newark, N.J. These involvements on the part of a few caused many artists to steer clear of the group.

[82] Marmer, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

esthetic one."[83] For my purposes, the actions and positions of the AMCC mark a turning point towards just such a viewpoint, that is, an aesthetic realignment in the New York artworld.

The *Anti-Catalog* was a vigorous polemic for a revisionist view of American art history, supporting its assertion with images and documents as well as critical text. It appeared during the bicentennial of the nation's revolution, at a moment when scholars of American art were already dissatisfied with the generally meager resources devoted to their field.[84] Like the AWC and AMCC protests against the museums, *An Anti-Catalog* represented the forward edge of a broad-based current of change in the New York artworld, forwarding the axiom that cultural institutions were inherently ideological. But, expressed as a meeting of study groups and a critical history, this change was decidedly academic and critical in nature. The implications of this broadening and sharpening of the institutional critique using the terms and methods of the academy had yet to be effectively realized within the mainstream of art and cultural practice.

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[83] *Ibid.*

[84] In San Francisco, for example, where the exhibition had originated, Alfred Frankenstein lamented the ``shamefully immense deficit of scholarship" on American art even as he deplored the ``violence and indecency" with which the New York criticisms were expressed. ``New York's criticism had to do with the fact that the exhibition contains no works by black people and only one by a woman...One would expect New York to complain that it contains only one work by a Jew—Ben Shahn—and nothing by an artist with a Spanish surname. Out here we could add complaints about the absence of Orientals and Native Americans" (clipping, A. Frankenstein, ``The Rockefeller Collection of American Art," *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, p. 30+, n.d., stamped Sunday, April 18, 1976, in WMAA folder ``Rockefeller [Exhibition] Publicity/Controversy."

3.

Punk Art

New York Art & Language and elements within the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change had undertaken the programmatic construction of a socialist culture within the world of contemporary art. Ideas about collectivity and models of organization were claimed by the left during the 1970s, through regular public actions, and intensive, even abstruse exercises in interpretation. Influenced by this climate, many young artists in New York sought to form groups. Yet, in a wholesale evasion of the prescriptive discourse of the art left, they did it through the practices of performance and media arts. They explored and identified with various subcultures, and played on the margins of the ever-dynamic entertainment business. Perhaps the most successful of these artists' groups in the late 1970s was Collaborative Projects, or Colab as it came to be called.

Colab formed and conducted its business through the regular open meetings of some forty artists at different artist's studios between 1978 and 1989.[1] During those years Colab produced exhibitions, film screenings and cable television series, magazines, concerts, and artists' stores using money first from the National Endowment of the Arts, and later from the New York State Council on the Arts. Principal Colab members were intimately involved with two artists' spaces, Fashion Moda, located

[1] The figure of forty members regularly recurs in grant applications and organizational self-descriptions. Colab had basically three phases of activity with substantially different memberships: the first, from its instigation in 1976 through 1979; the second from 1980 through 1983; and the third from 1983 through 1989. Monies raised from grants were allocated to projects during open meetings of the membership; elected officers signed checks and guided the group between meetings. For a brief account of Colab, see Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985). David Little of Duke University is writing a dissertation on Colab between 1977 and 1983.

in the South Bronx (1978-84), and ABC No Rio in Manhattan's Lower East Side (1980-present).

The formation of Colab was in many ways a next step in the construction of a new infrastructure for the exhibition of contemporary art in New York City. The group assumed a place that had been cleared for them by political organizations of visual and conceptual artists, and by a federal and state arts bureaucracy ready to fund organized arts activity. Run by younger artists, grounded in the needs of their practice, and unburdened by theory, Colab quickly impressed an artworld tired of the stasis of groups whose ``major `work'...seem[ed] to be self-reflexive analyses of the problems of art and politics."[2] Colab also responded directly to the increasing institutionalization of the downtown, putatively alternative spaces—especially the resurgent power of curators and art managers—by reclaiming for artists the initiative in organizing exhibitions.[3]

This new mode of collectivity was vernacular and opportunistic. Rather than embracing the rationalized, programmatic ``new society" ideas of the organized left, the Colab artists drew on popular forms of grouping, such as the film crew and the rock and roll band. Group work was intimately related to individual careers as ideas generated in group projects were continued and developed by individuals or partners. As with all modern artists' movements, the entity of the group also had publicity value: Colab made noise as a crowd, drawing attention that finally

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[2] Nancy Marmer, ``Art & Politics '77," *Art in America*, July/August, 1977, *op. cit.*, p. 66. This is Marmer's succinct account of the AMCC's *Anti-Catalog* and A&L's *Fox* projects (see Chapter Two). It remained to be seen, Marmer wrote, if anything more than magazines could be made by the collective process.

[3] The challenge presented by institutionalization is a continuous theme in early histories of the alternative space movement. Phil Patton (in ``Other Voices," *Art in America*, July/August, 1977, *op. cit.*) sketched out a kind of crisis or change in the second generation of new art spaces as they moved towards a more institutional model, and a complementary relation to modern museums. This concern is reiterated especially by Stephen Kahn (in Kahn, ``Communities of Faith," 1986, *op. cit.*), who sees Colab and artists' exhibiting organizations like it as the solution to the problems of institutionalization, and also by Edward L. Jones (in Jones, "Perspectives," 1984, *op. cit.*) who follows Patton.

focussed on a few.[4] With the art market resurgent in the 1980s, many of the artists of Colab would answer a renewed demand for work in traditional art media, some with great success.

Colab was born in large measure out of conversations initiated by the artist Robin Winters in his performance work. *Avalanche* magazine publisher Willoughby Sharp helped to facilitate its formation through a group exhibition he organized at 591 Broadway.[5] Liza Bear, Sharp's partner at *Avalanche* magazine, assisted in writing the first grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts, and shepherded it through the magazine's Center for New Art Activities.

Publicly a performance artist (and privately a painter), Robin Winters was a dramatic figure with an irascible nature. Winters' mid-1970s performance work with masks dramatized blue-collar situations like the factory and assembly line as literal preconditions for artistic creation and metaphors for the artist's condition. As Roberta Smith wrote, ``Art-making as task, as just another job, and the artist as an average joe, as a worker" were important themes and strategies in his art.[6] During the spring and summer of 1976, an anonymous invitation posted on the street in Soho invited couples and single people for small dinner parties in Winters' house. During the course of this work he called *Silent Food for Speechless Fools Follow Only Optimistic Desires* (fig. 32), Winters sought ``to have assignations, love relationship or political meetings. It didn't matter whether it was boys or girls—it was just three other people besides myself: a cell, a beginning of growth."[7] Later he

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[4] The best known of the artists who were Colab members or close adherents during the 1980s and '90s were Robin Winters, Jenny Holzer, Judy Rifka, John Ahearn, Tom Otterness, and Kiki Smith.

[5] Sharp and former 112 Greene Street artist Gerard Hovagimyan promoted the meetings that led to the formation of Colab during this exhibition, which included Hovagimyan, Michael McClard, Scott Billingsley (conversation with Gerard Hovagimyan, 1998).

[6] Roberta Smith, ``Robin Winters' Social Realism" in *Robin Winters Think Tank* (Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA, 1986), p. 34.

[7] Robin Winters in a March 1986 interview with David Ross, ``Talking Think Tank," *op. cit.*, pp. 64-66.

and fellow San Francisco artist Michael McClard made phone calls and set up larger meetings.

The son of radical San Francisco lawyers, Winters was a voluntary déclassé, a self-described high school dropout who had worked in factories and held memberships in trade unions. His very lack of academic credentials strengthened his political position.[8] Winters' idea of politics, however, was explicitly romantic, even mystical.[9] In a 1986 interview, David Ross asked Winters if there isn't a conflict between his understanding of himself as a committed political activist and an artist whose work has magical value. Winters heatedly replies, ``I think the real conflict is in dealing with bourgeois Marxists who don't believe in magic and who have forgotten the fact that magic is a valuable part of politics. It's what Stalinism did to the Russian Revolution. The spirit was taken away and all that was left was the order and the rules. In the sixties it was the same thing. A surge of very spiritual/activist energy was, for whatever reason, transformed by `rational' committees. The political became less interesting. I'm trying to keep alive something that is above ideology, something that is magical or even spiritual, and yet to retain my real politics."[10] This seems like a direct allusion to the activities of New York A&L and the AMCC.

Ross asked Winters if his activity with Colab is reflected in his painting. The artist replied that ``private work, private poetry, and personal iconography are not contradictory to public work, to union organization, or to artists' collectives. That's

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[8] There is some ambiguity on this, since Winters sought instruction from other artists as a youth, albeit outside of schools. Whatever his formal schooling may have been, Winters was an early fellow in the Whitney Independent Study Project during Fall 1972-Spring 1973. This program was an important training ground for New York artists. Numerous Colab artists participated in it, including Charles Ahearn (during Spring 1973), Colen Fitzgibbon (Spring 1974), Michael Glier (Spring 1977), Jenny Holzer (Spring 1977), Rebecca Howland (Spring-Fall 1975), Thomas Otterness (Fall 1973-Spring 1974), Walter Robinson (Spring 1973), and Terise Slotkin (Summer 1973).

[9] He says to Ross, ``If you think I'm oppositional, I think I'm romantic" (Winters and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 18).

[10] Winters and Ross, *op. cit.* pp. 18-20. Walter Robinson referred to the artists of AMCC as ``stalinists" (personal conversation, 1995).

how Stalinism destroyed artistic freedom. They said O.K., you can't have your personal art any more because everything is for the common good. But one of the things the common good needs is a purely personal identity. This is the central argument between free enterprise and collective living."[11] Winters' statements to Ross directly relate to the position taken by the Provisional Art & Language group when they split around the question of collective versus individual production to exclude Kosuth and Sarah Charlesworth in 1977 (see Chapter Two). In Winters' view, just to be an artist in American culture is automatically oppositional. All art is political since artists ``make choices about what kind of politics they have, and they want to reflect whose side they are on." But art can be ``psycho-emotionally political, not necessarily figurative illustratively political, revolutionary, didactically political." Of himself, he said, ``I'm an emotional politician."[12]

The central activity within Colab between 1977 and 1979 was filmmaking. By the mid-1970s, many artists were working in film, and numerous impromptu screenings were held in lofts. Much of this work, especially by academically trained artist-filmmakers, was in the mode of structural film, an abstract style allied with minimalism that emphasized the material nature of the filmic medium.[13] Structural film was a highly theorized mode of working, closely akin to minimal art and music. As sound Super-8 film and cameras became widely available on the consumer

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[11] Winters and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 68. He goes on to say he's also not interested in ``the cocaine/disco madness that implies free enterprise and the `big party' philosophy of life." Winters goes on to call his work in Colab ``group struggle," a term echoing the ``struggle sessions" partially transcribed in *The Fox*, no. 3, 1976, that presaged the breakup of New York A&L. A ```big party' philosophy" may allude to the writer Glenn O'Brien, who worked for Andy Warhol's magazine *Interview* and started a cable TV show in 1979 called *TV Party* that played off the homonym between the political party and the nightclub party.

[12] Winters and Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-58.

[13] Michael Snow, the Canadian filmmaker and photographer, was a leading practitioner of this school of filmmaking. Others were the English artist Anthony McCall (active with AMCC), and Americans Tony Conrad and Paul Sharits. Film practice and study was a locus of high theoretical discourse from writers like Annette Michelson, professor of film history at NYU and an editor of *October*, formed in 1976 and named after Eisenstein's film. (See Alan Leonard Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, BFI, London, 1999, for an account of the structural film movement.)

market, barriers of cost and technical skill posed by 16mm film and the synchronized sound system fell away and more artists began to experiment with the medium. Around the same time, 3/4" color video equipment (called ``industrial" video) also became accessible to artists.[14] Completed videotapes could be cablecast on the public access channels of the newly-established Manhattan Cable Television franchise. As artists moved to experiment with these newly accessible media, they made use of access facilities in different downtown neighborhoods which had been established by filmmakers.[15]

For the artists of Colab, filmmaking was an artistic activity engaged with the world as well as a model situation requiring collective work. Three modes of working gathered different Colab contingents, drawing together those within the nascent organization and at its fringes. These fall roughly within the parameters of film production, and can be described as documentary filmmaking (mobilized through the All Color News project), narrative fiction film (which resulted in the New Cinema screening room project), and critical comment, both through writing and work with imagery from films (the *X Motion Picture Magazine* project).

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[14] See J. Hoberman, *Home Made Movies: 20 Years of American 8mm & Super 8mm Films* (Anthology Film Archives, exhibition catalogue, 1981).

The hierarchy of television media ran from ``broadcast quality" (which in the 1970s meant one-inch video and 16mm film), to ``industrial quality" (3/4" and Super-8 film), and the newly emergent ``consumer grade" based on the 1/2" Betamax and VHS video camcorder.

[15] These included Young Filmmakers on the Lower East Side, the Collective for Living Cinema in Tribeca, and Millennium Film Workshop in the East Village. YF (established 1969, on Rivington Street near the Bowery) rented film equipment at low rates to independents. They also rented video cameras, editing services, and a television studio. (YF is now called Film Video Arts.) The Collective, on White Street, was largely a screening room, although they hosted numerous performances. (The files of the Collective are in the Anthology Film Archives library.) Millennium Film Workshop (1966-present) on East 4th Street in the East Village, held screenings, workshops, rented some film equipment, and published a journal (see *Millennium Film Journal*, anniversary issue, 1986-87, no. 16/17/18.) Anthology Film Archives, run on the Parisian model on Wooster Street in Soho, held screenings and preserved films. Today Anthology is on 2nd Avenue at 2nd Street.

The All Color News formed in 1977 to produce a feature news program for public access cable television.[16] But it was not to be conventional. ``Ordinary situations and events, by virtue of their commonness, tend to have greater social relevance than isolated, extraordinary occurrences." In a project description, the All Color News is described as a ``collective body of artists," wherein each has an equal say, and decisions are reached by vote.[17] In fact, teams within the group produced different short segments. Charlie Ahearn made a 16mm film about the death of an indigent under the Brooklyn Bridge. Charlie's twin brother John Ahearn produced a Super-8 film on the annual Golden Gloves amateur boxing competition fight working with Tom Otterness, a sculptor who had once competed in the fights. Sculptor Scott Billingsley and the artist Beth Horowitz produced a 3/4" video segment on the bombing of Fraunces Tavern by the armed Puerto Rican independence movement FALN.[18] Some of these short works marked the beginning of significant film and art projects which continued after All Color News.[19]

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[16] The All Color News produced at least five cablecasts between December 1977 and June of 1978. (Listed in ``A List of Projects and Activities Involving Members of Collaborative Projects, Inc. (1977-12/78)," 1978 activities, n.p., in an untitled Collaborative Projects, Inc., bound volume called the ``Black Book." A copy of this document, originally prepared for the National Endowment for the Arts, is in the Archives of American Art, uncatalogued as of Winter 1999.

[17] ``All Color News," an informational sheet contained in Colab ``Black Book," 1978 activities, *op. cit.* n.p.

[18] Other segments included one on the historical bombing of Wall Street by Virginia Piersol; another on NYC rodent exterminators by myself and Cara Brownell; and some live cablecast productions in the ETC Studio on 23rd Street produced by Michael McClard in which other All Color News artists participated. One of these concerned an omnibus crime bill deemed repressive by guest Representative Ted Weiss (D-Manhattan).

[19] Billingsley and Horowitz working under the name Scott and Beth B, produced a well-received serial fiction entitled *The Offenders* (1979). This film included a character based on an interview with the commander of the New York Police Department's Arson and Explosives squad the Bs did for the All Color News. *The Offenders* was screened weekly at the nightclub Max's Kansas City, and included in its cast numerous punk musicians as well as artists in Colab. In Jack Sargent, *Deathtripping: An Illustrated History of the Cinema of Transgression* (Creation Books, London, 1995), the chapter ``New Wave Cinema, B-Movies and Beyond: The World of Beth B," pp. 13-24, is a succinct account of the couple's production. After their divorce in the early 1980s, Beth B continued in New York alone. The B's work, deeply involved with politically-tinged sex and violence, is seen by Sargent as seminal to later underground New York filmmakers.

After his film about a marginal community of indigents—people who would later be called ``homeless"— Charlie Ahearn explored the world of amateur martial arts. *The Deadly Art of Survival* starring African-American karate master Nathan Ingram and a cast of downtown artists opened in an East Village theater in 1979. Charlie Ahearn went on to make *Wild Style* (1982; Rhino Video release,

After the All Color News project ended in the summer of 1978, some artists of Colab worked with *Avalanche* editor Liza Bear on ``slow-scan" video in the summer of 1978.[20] This project involved ``transnational and local video transmission via telephone" with the objective of creating ``an interactive slow scan network between artists' organizations with related interests and concerns in different parts of the world."[21] Bear also initiated a project with QWIP machines, an early AT&T telephone facsimile transmitter. She distributed some dozen of these machines to artists in Colab who sent pictures to one another in 1979 (fig. 33). Bear's work with transmission began with the satellite network projects she carried out in 1977.[22] More than straightforward documentary production, the All Color News project and Bear's work with varieties of transmission were part of an attempt to give artists a role within emerging new modes of telecommunications. These moves by artists into the field of ``telephonic art" presaged the digital arts of the 1990s. Bear and

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1998), a 16mm fiction film that saw wide theatrical release. *Wild Style* was a narrative fiction that grew out of the graffiti painting and hip hop music movement in the South Bronx, which finds a nexus in the film with the world of downtown nightclubs.

John Ahearn's work in film ended with his documentary subway films for All Color News, but the makeup experiments with model heads that he began during this period for a planned film production of Jean Genet's *The Maids* led him to his sculptural method of direct life casting in dental alginate material.

[20] These artists included: Bear, Diego Cortez, Coleen Fitzgibbon, Sandy Kaufman, Christof Kohlhoeffer, Thomas Otterness, Cara Perlman, Ulli Rimkus, Robin Winters. Locations outside New York included San Diego, San Francisco, Memphis, Victoria, Vancouver, and Toronto (announcement for ``Slow Scan Video," July 29-31, 1978, in Colab ``Black Book," 1978 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.).

One of these slow-scan events took place in March 1979 at Fashion Moda, the art space started by Stefan Eins in the South Bronx (see text below). A videotape of this session produced by Liza Bear's Center for New Art Activities is in the Fashion Moda papers labelled ``Slow scan teleconference NY/SF/LA/ Buffalo/Toronto/Victoria/Boulder" (Fashion Moda papers, Fales Library, E.H. Bobst Library, New York University series 3, subseries G: video, folder 28). Photographs of the session by Lisa Kahane show Mitch Corber(?), Stefan Eins, Diego Cortez (using the camera), Seth Tillet and Virginia Piersol together with others. Eins said Bear was also present.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] See *Send/Receive I & II* (50 min.; 1977; Video Data Bank distribution, Chicago; see: http://www.vdb.org as of January, 2000). Photos and text describe the project in ``Communications Link for Send/Receive Satellite Network," *X Motion Picture Magazine*, February 1978, no. 2/3.

those who worked with her on subsequent projects continued to be concerned with the politics of telecommunications.[23]

A group of filmmakers directly involved in producing narrative feature film had affiliated with Colab, and as Colab purchased 3/4" editing equipment for its members' use towards the end of 1978, this more conventional mode of filmmaking activity began to take precedence. Led by French filmmaker Eric Mitchell who had recently starred in Amos Poe's independent 16mm feature *The Foreigner* (1977), these artists founded the New Cinema[24] in 1979 in a storefront on the heavily trafficked St. Marks Place in the East Village near Cooper Union. There they exhibited Super-8 feature films transferred to 3/4" video on a video projector. The first film Mitchell showed was *Kidnapped* (1978; fig. 34), loosely based on Andy Warhol's film *Vinyl* (1965). The film, languidly plotted, purported to show scenes in the life of a group of terrorists. They mostly stand around chatting and bickering, the women in nightclub couture, the men in vintage suits or leather jackets. Finally they slay their kidnap victim, played by Steve Mass, in real life the owner of the Mudd Club, a popular downtown Manhattan nightspot. English sculptor James Nares showed *Rome '78* (1978), a pointedly anachronistic costume drama starring David McDermott as the emperor Caligula. (Then working as a performer, McDermott had

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[23] The term ``telephonic art" is used by Eduardo Kac who is writing a historical lineage for his own practice (personal communication, 1999). After her video transmission ventures, Liza Bear continued to produce cable television series, at first under the series name Communications Update. An early program in the series, ``Towards a New World Information Order" (60 min.; 1979; Video Data Bank), dealt with the United Nations' initiative. She and other Colab artists continued to produce for cable television into the 1980s (see Liza Bear, ``All Aboard! A Survey of Incentives and Impediments to Public Channel Usage by New York Artists and Fellow Travelers," *Independent* [NYC], March, 1983, pp. 11-15). Bear's early concerns around the politics of communication issues are continued in the work of groups like Deep Dish Satellite Television project and Paper Tiger Television.

[24] A find précis of this filmmaking activity is J. Hoberman, ``No Wavelength: The Para-Punk Underground," *Village Voice*, May 21, 1979. Matthew Yokobosky produced a brief essay and bibliography for an exhibition he curated at the Whitney Museum Museum of American Art in 1996, ``No Wave Cinema 1978-87" (see New American Film and Video Series, ``No Wave Cinema 1978-87," October 3, 1996-January 5, 1997, exhibition handout no. 79). I maintain an archive, the MWF Video Club (catalogue at http://www.brickhaus.com/amoore) that includes many Colab and New Cinema video and film productions.

recently organized and starred in the New Wave Vaudeville stage revue.[25]) All the New Cinema features were shot in Super-8mm. As an actor-director, Eric Mitchell had an unambiguous relationship to the movie industry. His relationship to Colab was simple: he wanted money to make his films. The artists who moved into narrative feature filmmaking also sought to establish relations in the mainstream movie world which was becoming more hospitable to independent producers through a wave of government-subsidized European productions.

Narrative filmmaking attentive to film industry models led straight into popular culture, and the burgeoning New York underground rock and fashion scene,[26] and the New Cinema artists were closely involved with punk rock and ``no wave''[27] art-band music groups. In the late 1970s punk rock, a marginal domestic genre in the shadow of disco music, had become a successful U.S. cultural export. It was returned to the United States almost immediately by the English band Sex Pistols and, in the early 1980s by the Clash. New York nightclubs featured punk bands in venues hospitable to artists, like Max's Kansas City,[28] and others not so, like the former motorcycle bar CBGB's.[29] Artists active early on with Colab and the New

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[25] See Steve Hager, *Art After Midnight: The East Village Scene* (St. Martins Press, NY, 1986).

[26] Hager, *Art After Midnight, op. cit.,* is a fine account by a cultural journalist of the rise of art and nightclub culture in New York during the 1970s and '80s. See also the book by *Village Voice* nightclub columnist Michael Musto, *Downtown* (1986), and Stephen Saban's nightclub reporting in *Details* magazine (started June 1982-ongoing) during this period.

[27] The name ``no wave'' parodies the French ``new wave.'' It had a brief currency after English musician Brian Eno produced the record album *No New York* (Antilles, 1977). Eno included bands which had played during a week of concerts organized at Artists Space in Tribeca by Michael Zwack (see Diego Cortez and Edit DeAk in Moore and Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Claudia Gould and Valerie Smith, *5000 Artists Return to Artists Space: 25 Years,* Artists Space, NY, 1998, p. 82).

[28] Run by the late Mickey Ruskin, Max's Kansas City on 5th Avenue just above Washington Square was an artists' bar during the 1960s. Starting in 1976, the bar hosted punk bands as a continuation of their involvement with the glitter-rock bands of the late 1960s. For more on Max's music scene and punk music in New York, see the compendium by Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain, *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk* (1997).

[29] CBGB's, the only extant 1970s-era punk music nightclub, is located on the Bowery at Bleecker. It saw the rise of the Ramones, Patti Smith, Talking Heads, and other important rock 'n' roll bands (Roman Kozak, *This Ain't No Disco: The Story of CBGB*, 1988). Today (winter, 1999) the nightclub has a gallery next door which shows principally photography, cartoons and illustration connected to the music business.

Cinema played a role in establishing the Mudd Club on White Street in Tribeca. Diego Cortez and the late Anya Phillips, a punk fashion plate and manager of bands, persuaded entrepreneur Steve Mass to found the club during the course of a trip to see Graceland in Memphis.[30] The Mudd Club began somewhat modestly, with art shows on its upper floor. But it quickly became a highly successful nightclub, attracting models and celebrities. Like the uptown disco palace Studio 54, the playground of the international jet set, the Mudd Club of an evening saw a large crowd outside awaiting permission from the doorman to enter. Inside the club, redecorated almost nightly, theme parties were held with costumed hosts and hostesses. The Mudd Club's entertainments and party stylings established patterns continued by nightclubs for the rest of the century.

The last area of film-related activity within Colab to be considered here is the collaboratively edited magazine *X Motion Picture Magazine* undertaken in 1978. The first number was brought out by Betsey Sussler in 1977,[31] working with Eric Mitchell, Michael McClard, and the late critic Duncan Smith. Colab expropriated this individually initiated project, and numbers 2 and 3/4 were brought out as collectively edited publications. The first of these was produced at Scott and Beth B's loft in Tribeca. The printing was largely financed by a concert of No Wave art-punk bands held in the hall upstairs from the Millennium Film Workshop (fig. 36).

The graphic magazine *Punk* (1976-1979), edited by John Holmstrom with Legs McNeil as "resident punk," was close to the CBGBs scene. These artists formed the nucleus of the group Marc Miller showed in his "Punk Art" exhibition at the Washington Project for the Arts in Washington, D.C. together with others, including some of the artists in All Color News and Colab (see Marc Miller and Bettie Ringma, eds., *Punk Art*, Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, D.C., April 1978).

[30] "The Night Time Is the Right Time," Diego Cortez and Edit deAk talk, 1980, in Alan Moore & Marc Miller, eds, *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985), p. 37. One of the first Mudd Club hostesses was Tina L'Hotsky, a writer and New Cinema filmmaker.

[31] After the demise of *X Motion Picture Magazine*, Betsey Sussler marshalled her resources and brought out *Bomb Magazine* (1981-ongoing), a magazine devoted to the intersections of motion pictures, literature and art. This project in its early stages received funding from Colab. (See Karyn Kay, "Menage: An Interview with Betsey Sussler," *Framework* [UK], no. 21, 1983, pp. 31-32, a special issue on New York independent filmmakers.)

The two issues of *X Motion Picture Magazine* produced by Colab are eclectic jumbles of images and texts, many concerned with movies and filmmaking. The final issue, number four, appeared in late 1978, and featured several articles and images referencing the activities and trials of European terrorist organizations, particularly the German Baader-Meinhof group. The cover featured an image of the captive Aldo Moro, released to news media by his kidnappers, the Italian Red Brigades. The image of the former president of Italy is almost completely obscured by the superimposed graphic of a brick wall, and a sideways strip of American talking heads inveighing against the terrorists. Inside, Diego Cortez and Anya Phillips made a report on some sessions of the trial in Germany which they had attended. Cortez also included altered advertisements for German corporations whose executives had been targeted by the Baader-Meinhof group. Eric Mitchell reprinted an article by Jean Genet about the group from the French magazine *Libération.*

The measures European states took against those armed groups which had targeted corporate executives, particularly in Germany, revealed a frightening face of democratic society. These armed groups were discussed by European intellectuals and referenced by artists—Joseph Beuys had publicly offered to conduct Baader and Meinhof on a tour of Documenta in his 1972 installation at that German art fair, and Alexander Kluge produced the multi-author film *Germany in Autumn* in 1977-78. In the United States, the violence of armed bands in contest with the state recalled the failed American revolutionary movements of the early 1970s.[32] Yvonne Rainer's film *Journeys from Berlin, 1971* (1980) reflects on the European eruption of violent revolutionary initiative through nuanced historical ruminations. For the younger artists of Colab, interest in the images and stories of European terrorists was largely inchoate and unexplained. For the filmmaker, it was a real-life media-directed

[32] A brief discussion of the German cultural response to the Baader-Meinhof Group is found in Benjamin Buchloh, "A Note on Gerhard Richter's *October 18, 1977*," *October* no. 48, Spring 1989, pp. 88-109.

spectacle orchestrated by those who had no hope of injecting their message into the mainstream media in any other way. In general, artists' interest in terrorists was a flag of interest in radical politics, and a straightforward romantic identification with armed insurrectionists. Diego Cortez used the term ``eso-terrorism" to describe his work[33] (fig. 37).

The production of *X Motion Picture Magazine* was marked by much uneasy collaboration and some outright acrimony. The project forced people together who normally would have had nothing to do with one another. Although this film magazine, and much other filmmaking activity was incubated by Colab monies, and artists made many important contacts through Colab, filmmaking is a very different business from the plastic arts. Filmmaking is inherently collaborative, and Hollywood, not Soho (or modernist Paris, for that matter), is the industry model. As their projects grew, filmmakers left the Colab organization, although they maintained social ties with some of its members.

In November of 1978, an exhibition entitled ``Exhibit A" at the 93 Grand Street storefront of the Center for New Art Activities signalled the beginning of a change in emphasis for Collaborative Projects. This selective show, of ``graphic works by artists who usually worked in film or video media," was to be followed by exhibits B, C and D in years to come, open to any artists.[34] In fact, this neutral progression of increasingly more open shows was not to occur. Wary of a seeming dependency on Liza Bear's Center for New Art Activities, Robin Winters and Colleen Fitzgibbon moved the 1979 exhibition activities to their own lofts which were within blocks of

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[33] In an exhibition catalogue Diego Cortez described the Esoterrorists as a ``street gang" including himself, punk fashion trendsetter Anya Phillips, and critic Duncan Smith (*Moving 1977*, Hal Bromm Gallery, NY, October-November 1977, p. 20). Of all the Colab artists, Cortez was most engaged with the subject of terrorism. His piece in *Moving* referenced the Puerto Rican group FALN; another work referenced the German RAF (fig. 37; in *Spanner*, Aloes Books, NYC [no. 1; ``green"], 1979; *Spanner* was produced with Colab monies by Dick Miller and Teri Slotkin).

[34] ``Exhibit A," November 1-11, 1978, included James Nares, Tina Lhotsky, Seth Tillet, Paul McMahon, Diego Cortez, John Lurie, Robin Winters, Liza Bear, Michael McClard, Colen Fitzgibbon (Colab ``Black Book," 1978 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.).

each other. The early activities had inscribed a definite hierarchy of artists within the organization, one which would be largely broken down—or changed—in the course of 1979.

Fitzgibbon and Winters worked together as ``X&Y" between 1976 and 1978, and produced shows under this name in Europe.[35] The Colab group exhibitions they arranged alternately at their studios appeared to fix on social themes or categories. In fact, the themes chosen were quite eclectic. The first was the ``Batman Show," ``arranged" in January of 1979 by Diego Cortez at Winters' loft at 591 Broadway. Cortez was inspired by a child's drawings of the super-hero Batman. February saw simultaneous exhibitions, the ``Doctors and Dentists Show" (at 591), and the ``Income and Wealth Show" at Fitzgibbon's storefront space at 5 Bleecker Street (which she called ``Enterprise"). These exhibitions were noted in the press, especially Doctors and Dentists, which featured a ``carefully reconstructed waiting room" with Danish modern furniture, wallpaper, and ``sailboat paintings."[36] The ``Dog Show" followed in March (at 591), the ``Manifesto Show" in May (at 5 Bleecker), and in June the ``Library" show (an exhibit of artists' books and journals, also at 5 Bleecker).

Together with a third space at 515 Broadway which saw one exhibition,[37] these artists' lofts were understood by the artists and by journalists to comprise an exhibition circuit. The purpose of these exhibitions was to provide for an ``exchange of information and contact for artists with artists," and ``to create a collective

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[35] Fitzgibbon and Winters worked together between 1976 and '78, making a Super-8 film in New York called *Rich-Poor*, and offering ``joint esthetic services" on a local TV talk show. At the De Appel artspace in Amsterdam, they robbed their audience in *Take the Money and Run*; the next day the two apologized and held a lottery for their services. Their last show in Groningen, Netherlands, was *X&Y Offer*, a ``third person fiction" dramatized in the form of an installation. The collaborations of the pair are described in a text by Fitzgibbon in *Thinktank, op. cit.*, p. 77-78. A long jointly authored text appears in *X Motion Picture Magazine* no. 2/3, 1978.

[36] ``You Won't Feel a Thing: Art for MD's and Moneymen," *Village Voice* listings section, February 5, 1979 (in Colab ``Black Book," 1979 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.).

[37] According to filmmaker Mark Kehoe, this show was curated by Jenny Holzer (conversation, July 1999).

atmosphere of artists producing and showing work together."[38] These shows were ``organized" rather than curated, that is, they were open to all comers (most of them invited) with minimal excision and rearrangement. To the artists, this was an important distinction, since it struck at the basis of curatorial privilege which had been significantly expanded by the professionalization of alternative spaces. The shows were jam-packed with works hung salon style on the walls from floor to ceiling. Critics saw signs of a burgeoning community of unseen younger artists, and a vitality lacking in the gallery world. With the Manifesto Show, an exhibition that purported to say something, the response revealed both interest and unease with this latest show ``put on by a floating collective of post-conceptual, para-punk artists whose aggressive leftist stance comes over at once as adolescent posturing and as the revival of the shit-kicking spirit that motivated the Dadaists in Berlin."[39] Another found it a ``loud and ragged show, perfect for its locale: CBGB [the punk music nightclub] is across the street."[40]

During the two years of Colab's activities, great tensions had built up within the young artists' organization. Despite the deep interest several of them had in collaborative, even collective work, many of the artists who had started Colab saw it as a loose association of people who would pursue their own projects. This understanding modelled Colab as more corporate than union, that is, more like a commercial consortium than a political organization. (The Green Corporation, the name initially proposed for the group, reflected this quasi-corporate identity.) Colab became a site of problems for the artists whose initiatives had brought the group into being. Reluctant to share their contacts and information with others in the large

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[38] Information sheet, ``Enterprise, 5 Bleeker [sic] St. Store" (in Colab ``Black Book," 1979 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.). The New York City street sign unaccountably changes East of Lafayette Street from ``Bleecker" to ``Bleeker."

[39] Peter Frank, ``Guerrilla Gallerizing," *Village Voice*, May 7, 1979 (in Colab ``Black Book," 1979 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.).

[40] William Zimmer, ``Center on the Edge," *Soho Weekly News*, April 1979 (in Colab ``Black Book," 1979 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.).

meetings where Colab business was conducted, artists factionalized within the group by the projects that they undertook, marking themselves off from the main body while at the same time seeking to preserve it for the advantages it brought to all. This problem was continuous throughout the life of the group. As Walter Robinson and I described it in 1982, ``the dialectic that was set up at the beginning [of Colab] was between collective cohesion and individual atomization.''[41]

The clash of strong personalities at open meetings became a sort of long-running performance of the tension between organizational continuance and dissolution. Robin Winters repeatedly attacked Liza Bear for sequestering information, especially offers to exhibit, and for acting in the name of Colab without consulting the membership.[42] Diego Cortez, a gay filmmaker and performance artist who had moved into the East Village world of punk rock and roll music,[43] became the first artist formally to resign from the group. Then, in early 1980, the office of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin, Prince and Winters opened in the Wall Street area of New York (fig. 38). The group echoed Winters and Fitzgibbon's X&Y project, describing itself as ``a consulting team of artists for practical services adaptable to

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[41] Walter Robinson and Alan Moore, from *The Colab Daily Purge*, May 1982, an internal newsletter edited by Robinson, in Moore and Miller, *ABC No Rio, op. cit*, p. 11. As I recall, Robinson wrote this with my suggestions.

[42] David Little said that the developing split pitted the filmmaking group (including Liza Bear, Michael McClard, and Diego Cortez) against the exhibitions-oriented group (Robin Winters; Colen Fitzgibbon [who neutered the spelling of her first name during this period] played a mediating role). A related question was whether everyone would be included in Colab projects or just some people (conversation, December 1999). In 1983, Betsey Sussler recalled that there were two initial ideas about Colab, both of them concerned with filmmaking. Some artists thought that it was ``a collective to aid its members in setting up funding for production..., and others thought of it as a collaborative organisation whose members would create productions together'' (Kay, *op. cit.*, p. 31).

[43] Diego Cortez edited the Fall, 1977 issue of the Canadian magazine *File* (vol. 3, no. 4), with the cover motto ``Punk 'Til You Puke.'' The issue consisted mainly of photographs of New York bands and underground personalities. *File* was a collective project of the Canadian artists' group General Idea (see General Idea and Jan Debbaut, eds., *General Idea, 1968-1984*, Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1984). Cortez's frequent assertions that he spoke for the real punk artists could be seen as an assertion of proprietary interest in a subcultural phenomenon that borrowed its name from gay argot, as well as an expression of his difference within the predominantly heterosexual Colab.

your needs and situation."[44] Although it was short-lived, the formation of this group, designated by proper names and sounding like a law firm, signalled the end of most of the founding members' direct involvement in Colab.

By late 1979, the principal founding members of Colab—Robin Winters, Michael McClard, Liza Bear, Diego Cortez and Colleen Fitzgibbon—had left the group, as had all the filmmakers who showed at the New Cinema. As the bickering and the spectacular theater of arguments that the performance artists and filmmakers had pursued dispelled, a new contingent of artists stabilized the group. The artists who took over leadership of Colab after the defections of 1979 were mostly visual artists, and largely more conservative in their formal means. Many had been attracted to the organization through the open shows organized at Winters' and Fitzgibbons' lofts. Some had met years earlier in Soho through exhibitions at Stefan Eins' 3 Mercer Store.

The Austrian-born sculptor Stefan Eins had opened the front of his Soho storefront on Mercer Street just above Canal to other artists to exhibit starting in 1972, and many who did so would later join Colab.[45] Eins produced multiple editions of his simple object sculptures, and worked with others on projects to sell art-like novelty items in commercial venues. The artist understood his art space as a store, where objects would ideally be sold to as many people as possible at the lowest possible prices.[46] Eins' conception continued the populist project to democratize art and

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[44] Advertisement in *Real Life Magazine*, March 1980, p. 22; the ad lists the firms "clients" and projects. Although it did not last long, the formation of this office set its members deliberately apart from Colab, and emphasized the professionalism of the artists in the "firm." It also prefigured the latter-day neo-conceptual "service" art of the 1990s (see Afterword).

[45] Among them were Charlie Ahearn, Tom Otterness, and Virginia Piersol, who had one-person shows, and in group shows myself, Robin Winters, Michael McClard, Judy Rifka, Diego Cortez and Mitch Corber. (Information courtesy of Stefan Eins.) See Apple, *Alternatives, op. cit.*

[46] Eins returned to the artists' store model in the Fashion Moda store he organized with Jenny Holzer at Documenta 7 in 1982. A Fashion Moda press release dated May 1982 describes this venture: "This effort relates to Claes Oldenburg's Store, the Fluxus, Stefan Eins' 3 Mercer, the stores organized by Collaborative Projects, including the one at the Times Square show" (courtesy Stefan Eins; Fashion Moda papers are at Fales Library, E.H. Bobst Library, New York University).

spread its collection throughout society which had begun in the 1960s with technology artists in Europe, and continued through the Fluxus movement.[47] Although couched in baldly practical terms, Eins' commercial intentions were naïve and utopian, and the 3 Mercer Store received grants to do exhibitions from NYSCA and NEA. The place functioned as a regular artists' salon. Those exhibiting there would often be found in the back room of Eins' storefront, chatting and drinking tea around the table he had covered with an oriental carpet.

In 1979 Eins felt that the Soho scene in which he had been involved for several years was played out, so he began casting around for another place to locate an art space. He settled on the South Bronx, on 138th Street, near "The Hub," or main shopping district. There in Autumn of 1979 Eins and artist Joe Lewis opened the large storefront they called Fashion Moda.[48] Eins and Lewis, the son of an African-American jazz musician, made a concerted effort to meet and exhibit artists and musicians from the South Bronx. They also invited the artists they knew from downtown Manhattan to do projects at Fashion Moda. Far from Manhattan, in a borough of the city which had suffered greatly from landlord abandonment and lack of investment, the South Bronx was a national byword for intractable inner-city problems. For the ambitious artists of New York's Manhattan to exhibit there was a radical signifier of the nature of their ambition, that is, to work in the realm of public art, making and showing art that appealed to a broad popular audience.

John Ahearn was a downtown artist who was to involve himself deeply in the Bronx. He brought the live casting technique he had developed during his brief

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[47] Artists involved with technology, like Victor Vasarely, began producing multiple objects with the intention of selling them in department stores during the 1950s. Multiple objects grew rapidly throughout the 1960s and '70s as an offshoot of fine art publishing. Stefan Eins denies any influence from the Fluxus movement on his conception of the 3 Mercer Store (in conversations, 1994-98), although he cannot have been unaware of it. George Maciunas' Fluxstore was located on Canal Street very near 3 Mercer in 1964, and Geoffrey Hendricks, an artist closely associated with the Fluxus movement, exhibited at 3 Mercer.

[48] Sally Webster, "Fashion Moda: A Bronx Experience," http://talkback.lehman.cuny.edu/tb/fmwebster.html, Lehman College Art Gallery, Bronx, New York, 1996, is a good recent overview.

foray into filmmaking to Fashion Moda. Using the space as a studio, Ahearn cast people who walked in off the street, painted the casts and put them directly on exhibition. Ahearn exhibited the neighbors of Fashion Moda to themselves and each other as works of art.[49] While working there, Ahearn met Rigoberto Torres whose uncle owned a factory that produced plaster sculptures for *botanicas*, stores that sold religious objects in Hispanic communities. Torres worked with Ahearn (fig. 40), and later established his own independent career as a sculptor.[50]

Eins insists today that no political motive lay behind the establishment of Fashion Moda or its exhibition programs. Rather, Eins' intention, informed by the entrepreneurial ethos of his 3 Mercer Store, was to discover and exhibit interesting art in an interesting venue. He described Fashion Moda as a museum of ``art, science, technology, invention and fantasy,"[51] and early activities centered around science and invention, issues central to Eins' own work. This fluid approach to programming an exhibition space went together with an ideology. Eins felt that the avant-garde was elitist, and that modern art had always been understood by very few people. Although artists wanted to be populist, they were restrained by the bourgeoisie who buy art.[52]

It was Fashion Moda's good fortune to establish itself during a moment when the African American and Latino youth of the South Bronx were building the grassroots

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[49] Marilyn Zeitlin, ed., *South Bronx Hall of Fame: Sculpture by John Ahearn and Rigoberto Torres* (Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX, 1991) concentrates on this work Ahearn did with portraiture in the South Bronx.

[50] Susan Hoeltzel, ed., *The Works of Rigoberto Torres* (Lehman College Art Gallery, New York, 1995).

[51] Photocopy of an entry in a *New York City Museums* guidebook (Fashion Moda Papers, Fales Library, series 3, subseries B, box 5, folder 1).

[52] ``Dialogue: Stefan Eins with Annette Barbasch," *Cover* (NY), vol. 2, no. 1, January 1980 (in Fashion Moda papers, *loc. cit.*, series 3, box 5, subseries B, folder 2). This early interview is more ``political" than Eins' subsequent statements.

culture called hip-hop.[53] Based loosely on the practice of Jamaican ``dub" deejays, record spinners who talked in rhyme over the songs they played, Bronx deejays and ``rappers" mounted huge parties in the vacant lots left by the demolition of scores of fire-ravaged apartment houses. During these parties, acrobatic youth called ``break dancers" twirled and spun on sheets of cardboard in routines they derived from the moves in Asian martial arts. The public face of hip-hop culture was the spray-painted graffiti which crews of ``writers" spread throughout the boroughs of New York by painting it onto the sides of subway trains.[54]

Fashion Moda began exhibiting graffiti painting informally almost from its inception. A large exhibition specifically devoted to the form was mounted in October of 1980 (fig. 42). A cultural merger was implied by the exhibition of examples of a principle component of hip-hop culture in an art space run by well-connected downtown Manhattan artists. This was seconded by a series of evenings

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[53] Marshall Berman's essay ``Views from the Burning Bridge," in *Urban Mythologies* (Bronx Museum of Art, 1999) is a good overview of the development of hip hop culture. See also Steve Hager, *Hip Hop* (St. Martin's Press, NY, 1984), and Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

[54] Graffiti art is first discussed in this dissertation in the context of Gordon Matta-Clark's work with the style during the early 1970s (see Chapter 2, note 43). As the graffiti writers who came of age at the end of the decade began to find acceptance in the New York artworld (and beyond it), the art form became intertwined in complex ways with neo-expressionist and post-modern art. A satisfactory account of this interaction has yet to appear. During the period, Suzi Gablik considered it in ``Report from New York: The Graffiti Question," *Art in America*, October 1982, vol. 70, no. 9; see also Richard Goldstein `` In Praise of Graffiti, the Fire Down Below," *Village Voice*, vol. 25, no. 52, December 24-30, 1980, pp. 1, 55-58; Steven Hager, ``Graffiti: Is the Art World Ready for It?," *Daily News*, March 30, 1981, pp. M1-2 (see also Hager, *Hip Hop, op. cit.*, 1984). The photographers Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant produced books and videos documenting the work of the graffiti writers of the 1980s on subway trains. There is an extensive bibliography in German and Italian on the form, e.g., Francesca Alinovi, et al., *Arte di Frontiera: New York Graffiti* (Palazzo de Ile Esposizioni, Rome, September 11-October 21, 1984) which includes a chronology of European exhibitions. Alinovi's book includes both artists who painted trains, and academically trained Soho artists who did work on the street under the rubric of graffiti like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. More recently, New Yorkers Stefan Eins, Yasmin Ramirez and Carlos McCormick wrote essays for the large exhibition catalogue the Dutch exhibition catalogue Froukje Hoekstra, ed., *Coming from the Subways: New York Graffiti Art* (Groninger Museum, Netherlands, October 1992-January 1993; in Dutch); *Style: Writing from the Underground: Revolutions of Aerosol Linguistics* (Stampa alternativa, Italy, 1996; Italian and English) was compiled by the editors of *IGT*, a graffiti magazine; see also Joe Austin, *Taking the Train* (Columbia University Press, forthcoming). Graffiti continues as an important international art form, as evidenced by numerous magazines, videos and websites.

featuring rappers and break dancers produced by *Art-Rite*[55] editor Edit DeAk at the Kitchen Center for Video and Music in November 1980.[56] Concurrently, hip-hop music, dance and graffiti began to spread to nightclubs downtown, and graffiti artists began to be exhibited in galleries. The reputation of Fashion Moda gained enormously from its early involvement in the exposure of an important mass cultural movement to a wider audience.

In downtown Manhattan, in the rapidly gentrifying industrial neighborhood of Tribeca (the "triangle below Canal Street"), artists met in late 1979 to plan an exhibition on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, in an abandoned city-owned building near the Williamsburg Bridge. On New Year's Eve they mounted the Real Estate Show, breaking the lock at 125 Delancey Street and putting up a politically oriented show on the announced theme (fig. 43). The illicit exhibition was not discovered by city property managers until January 2nd, 1980, whereupon they locked up the building, impounding the exhibition. The artists' street demonstrations attracted the attention first of the *New York Times*,[57] then of the *Soho Weekly News*,[58] which covered the visit to the demonstration of German artist Joseph Beuys. The city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development, which was responsible for managing the many properties, both occupied and abandoned, that the city had seized for unpaid taxes, offered the artists another building to establish

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[55] *Art-Rite* magazine (1973-1977), edited by DeAk and Walter Robinson, was distributed free in Soho. The magazine, which I wrote for, covered many of the artists who later formed Colab. After her production at the Kitchen DeAk herself joined enthusiastically in the nightclub scene during the late 1970s. Her writing in *Artforum* was important in promoting European neo-expressionist painting in New York during the early 1980s. Robinson also worked for *Art in America*, and has gone on to edit the webzine at Artnet.com.

[56] "Current," *Cover*, Winter 1980/81, p. 8. The stars of "Dubbed in Glamour" were the Funky Four + One More. The event was videotaped by the Kitchen.

[57] Josh Barbanel, "Artists Evicted in 'Occupation' of a Storefront," *New York Times*, January 9, 1980. The article appeared the day of our meeting with the officials of the city HPD office.

[58] Gerald Marzorati, "Artful Dodger," his column in the *Soho Weekly News*, January 10, 1980. The news was Beuys' appearance at the street demonstration.

a ``community center." After an initial ``relocation," the artists moved into 156 Rivington Street in February and, with Colab support, started ABC No Rio.[59]

ABC No Rio proceeded to mount a series of theme shows conceived and installed along the lines of those Colab had produced at Winters' and Fitzgibbon's lofts in 1978. The group that started the gallery—myself, sculptor Rebecca Howland, and video artist Bobby G (*aka* Robert Goldman)[60]—met weekly around a long table salvaged from an abandoned courthouse on 2nd Avenue.[61] Exhibitions and other uses of the space would be determined at these weekly open meetings. The artists applied to Colab (an organization to which some already belonged) at an open meeting and its members voted No Rio monies. ABC No Rio was more explicitly political in its founding and in its operation than previous Colab projects. German sculptor Peter Mönnig described it as an anarchist *Freiraum* (free space), and that is how we tried to run it.

With the establishment of Fashion Moda and ABC No Rio, Colab was closely associated with two exhibition venues and workshop project spaces without the necessity of administering any space of its own. Here artists were able to exhibit, meet and discuss, and try things out. In early 1980, John Ahearn and Tom Otterness arranged with a landlord on West 41st Street off Times Square to rent Colab a building to stage a massive exhibition to be called the Times Square Show (fig. 44). The exhibition opened in June of 1980,at a time when Times Square was still home to the city's sex industry. Forty-Second Street was lined with pornographic bookstores, live sex performances theaters, and a string of double-feature movie

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[59] The events of the Real Estate Show and the establishment of ABC No Rio are covered in detail in Moore and Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio* (1985), *op. cit.* See also the pamphlet by Okra P. Dingle, ed., ``Founders Era," published by ABC No Rio for the 1998 exhibition ``Urban Encounters" at the New Museum.

[60] This group included at first sculptors Anne Messner, Peter Mönnig, Christy Rupp and painter and critic Walter Robinson. The sculptor Robert Parker was also briefly involved when we were at the ``Real Estate Show Field Office" at 156 Delancey Street.

[61] This courthouse, it was said, had been home to the Bread and Puppet Theatre. Today it is Anthology Film Archives.

houses lodged in the cavernous precincts of theaters built early in the century for full stage productions. Times Square was also the intended site of large-scale urban redevelopment, most of which has subsequently occurred. As the four floors of the building on West 41st Street were being prepared, and nearly a hundred artists installed their works, a Colab press release announced that the show sought to bring the ``excitement, provocation and humor of avant-garde art to a broad public. And no broader public can be found than that which visits Times Square, the country's most notorious mix of high and low culture."[62]

The Times Square Show marked the apogee of Colab's influence in the New York artworld. The densely packed exhibition was popularly accessible, and had a strong effect on art critics. It was described as a ``vanguard carnival of mostly new wave-style art,"[63] within which ``the environment is overpowering and chaotic."[64] The exhibition was a culmination of Colab's work over the preceding two years, and succeeded in presenting a highly unified face to the public that saw it. The works were nearly all representational, often strident, and engaged, often sensationally, with social issues. Most also used traditional artistic media. Because of the overt anonymity of its installations, the Times Square Show made itself available as material for broad cultural comment. This anonymity gave the show a power derived from gathering together the work of so many artists, work conceived with some consciousness of the aims of the installation program within each room, and in large part, by artists aware of each others' work and aims.

Some observers read the exhibit as a sign of the times, as embodying post-modernism, or an alternative to post-minimalism. Kim Levin viewed the show

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[62] Times Square Show press release, Colab ``Black Book," 1980 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.

[63] William Zimmer, ``Underground in the Underworld," *The Soho News*, June 18, 1980, p. 30, in Colab ``Black Book," 1980 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.

[64] Richard Goldstein, ``The First Radical Art Show of the '80s," *Village Voice*, June 16, 1980, vol. 25, no. 24, p. 1+, in Colab ``Black Book," 1980 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.

almost completely on these terms: ``There was so much art you could hardly tell where one piece left off and another began," she wrote in *Arts*. ```Rather than one person's consciousness, it's directed toward a mass esthetic. If you isolate it, most of the work is pretty academic,' said Joe Lewis, one of the show's organizers, and he was right. It wasn't so much that the individual artworks were radically new, but that the whole was more than the sum of its parts. The context created a new sensibility, a collective statement." For Levin the Times Square Show embodied ``the newest realism." ``New Wave art exults not in progress but in its littered aftermath," relegating ``Modernist dreams of a utopian future to the past." The ``grim realities of the present—the entropic metropolis and the aftermath of progress—have been shown to contain the most vital signs of life, absorbed into the vocabulary of the most accessible, alienated, and artless new art as if to demonstrate that [after Joseph Beuys] everybody already is an artist." Maybe, she writes, the ``postmodern salvage art" we anticipate is here, ``making its debut in derelict guise."[65]

The headline for Richard Goldstein's *Village Voice* review called the Times Square Show ``the first radical art show of the '80s." This was ``not because of individual pieces but because the way they work together announces the emergence of a new aesthetic among young artists, what you might call a school." Goldstein wrote that this was often called Visual Punk, like the rock music style, ``three chord art anyone can play" (a phrase which the *Voice* made into a headline).

Lucy Lippard's long consideration of the ``sleazy, artist-organized extravaganza" in *Artforum* was decidedly mixed.[66] The preeminent U.S. political art critic saw the

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[65] Kim Levin, ``The Times Square Show," *Arts*, September 1980, in Colab ``Black Book," 1980 activities, op. cit., n.p. (also in Levin, *Beyond Modernism: Essays on Art from the '70s and '80s*, Harper & Row, 1988). By the time of the ``Events" exhibition that followed in December at the New Museum (see text below), Joe Lewis and others from Fashion Moda were claiming explicitly that the work they presented embodied ``the end of modern art" (Steven Vincent, ``Fashion/Moda at the New Museum," *East Village Eye*, Xmas 1980, in Moore and Miller, eds., *op. cit.*, p. 16).

[66] Anne Ominous (Lucy Lippard), ``Sex and Death and Shock and Schlock: A Long Review of The Times Square Show," *Artforum*, October 1980, pp. 50-55, in Colab ``Black Book," 1980 activities, *op. cit.*, n.p.. An *Artforum* editor's note comments that the installation views ``seem in keeping with the sensibility of the exhibition"; the works in these photographs were not identified.

Times Square Show first as ``a weird kind of cultural colonization that worked because colonizers and colonized had something in common." She wrote later, ``In 1979-80, a lot of the Colab-type work...looked scary to me. Not because of its orgiastic iconoclasm and fuck-youism, but because it seemed so much part of the violence it depicted." The Times Square Show was ``about artists banding together as pseudo-terrorists and identifying with the denizens of this chosen locale—envying them and imitating them at the same time as colonizing them," and thus rebelling against clean artworld institutions. For Lippard, the question was to what degree was this valid political work or simply more of the "middle class TV terrorism which, with S&M, is the dominant subject matter for so much new-no-nuwave art?"[67]

For Goldstein, the threat of a politically regressive message was mitigated by the sheer bulk of work on offer. ``The artists have assured that every thesis will be accompanied by its antithesis" by ``the simple expedient of inviting everyone to show, and then piling the works upon each other in the indiscriminate splendor of a flea market." Goldstein noted that of nearly 100 artists in the show, 12 were Latin or black, ``a diversity unheard of outside specially sanctioned third world events."[68] The show, he contended, was also opened to art made by artists from the working class, traditionally non-privileged creators within the institutional artworld, including the alternative spaces. Lippard disputed this however, feeling that Fashion Moda had been exhibiting working class art more effectively for two years. The principal problem that Lippard had with the show was the large number of what she

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Lippard saw a historical lineage of unruly artistic behavior in the exhibition. She writes, the ``TTSS might have been concocted in the early '60s, along with Oldenburg's storefront on the Lower East Side, the grungy early Happenings, French `neo-Dada' (an unclean Pop or dirty old man), the March Gallery group's `Doom Show,' Sam Goodman's `Shit Show,' some Fluxus events and, more recently, the Guerrilla Art Action Group, the `Flag Show,' (which landed three artists under arrest), the feminists' tampaxes and eggs in the Whitney, the Artworkers' Coalition's break into the Metropolitan Museum's Trustee's Dinner and so forth" (*Ibid*).

[67] Lucy Lippard, ``Foreword," in *ABC No Rio* (1985), *op. cit.*, p. v.

[68] Goldstein, *op. cit.*

saw as unreflective works on sexuality, art repugnant to her feminism.[69] Lippard reflected that the most important aspect of the show might be its gift shop, in which the artists made a ``microcosmic strike for economic independence and control of their product." In a footnote, she added that a private reception at the exhibition had been scheduled. ``Another bad pun on the locale [Times Square] emerges from the fact that some of these artists are, quite naturally, on the make and take."[70] So far as the question of what was next for Colab, William Zimmer dryly noted, the ``signs point to professionalism."[71]

The most straightforward account of the show was written by a former curator, Jeffrey Deitch, an investment banker who had helped arrange funding for the exhibition.[72] Deitch's claims for the importance of the exhibition were made in the conventional terms of art history. He saw the Times Square Show as a signal of changing style, ``indicative of a major Pop revival," part of a ``wide-spread anti-modern revolution" in which artists ``are forsaking the international modern style and searching for indigenous imagery." He noted that ``racial interchange was the show's major breakthrough," as black artists present their work on their own terms. All told, the Times Square Show was the ``breakthrough of a truly post-modernist art." It signaled a fundamental change in intent—art now was to have a concrete rather than an abstract purpose. In conclusion, Deitch wrote, the show was ``a challenge to dealers and curators of advanced art." Since Colab had succeeded in ``breaking through the gridlock of the contemporary art marketplace" showing how important it is for artists to take presentation into their own hands. ``Art must come

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[69] On the question of feminism, work at the Times Square Show on the theme of rape by the team of Jane Sherry and Aline Mare signified an aggressive feminist presence. Engagement with these issues continued after the exhibition, as several Colab artists became involved in exhibits and events at Tin Pan Alley, a Times Square area bar run by anti-pornography activist Maggie O'Connell. Ulli Rimkus and Kiki Smith worked there.

[70] Lippard, *op. cit.*

[71] Zimmer, *op. cit.*

[72] Jeffrey Deitch, ``Report from Times Square," *Art in America*, September 1980, vol. 68, no. 7, pp. 59-63. Deitch was buying art and advising on art investments for Citibank. He now runs a Soho gallery, Deitch Art Projects, in New York City.

to be marketed with the kind of imagination displayed by this exhibition's organizers," not just to reach a general public, but to ``cut through the glut" and reach the art audience.[73]

In 1980, Joe Lewis travelled to New Orleans to spread the Fashion Moda franchise.[74] While he was there, Lewis and Marc Brasz spoke of the South Bronx art space as precursor to the Times Square Show.[75] In late 1980, Fashion Moda exhibited at the New Museum on 14th Street together with Taller Boricua, the Puerto Rican artists' group. Originally, Colab was to share the bill with Fashion Moda, but the group pulled out of the exhibition shortly before it opened.[76] In the manner of the Times Square Show, the Fashion Moda exhibition created ``its own context, where the installation dominated over the individual works."[77] Fashion Moda at the New Museum was well received, and taken as a harbinger of a new multi-cultural scene in contemporary art. By declining to participate, Colab lost an important opportunity to sharpen its focus.

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[73] Deitch, *op. cit.*

[74] In one of numerous trips, Lewis spoke at the conference of NAAO (National Alliance of Artists Organizations) in New Orleans. In that city he set up an exchange exhibition between New Orleans and Fashion Moda (interview with Joe Lewis, 1999).

[75] Lewis is quoted as saying, ``Fashion Moda was instrumental in the preconception of the Times Square Show" in Bunny Matthews, ``Fashion Moda is Coming to New Orleans," *Figaro,* October 20-26, 1980 (in Fashion Moda papers). The story goes that a man observing a street casting in front of Fashion Moda told John Ahearn, ``You should do this on Times Square" (Stefan Eins, conversation 1999).

[76] New Museum director Marcia Tucker wrote that this was because Colab realized the museum would reap more benefit from the show than the group (*Events, op. cit.*). Glueck wriote in the *New York Times* ``at the last minute CoLab cancelled its plans, on the grounds that it stood to gain less from the collaboration than its host" (Glueck, ``The New Collectives: In Search of a Wider Audience," *New York Times*, February 1, 1981, sec. 2, p. 24). Although I was not privy to the negotiations, I recall that the New Museum turned down Colab's rather self-consciously outlandish exhibition proposal to open a soup kitchen onto 14th Street.

[77] Lynn Gumpert, ``Observations on `Events'," in *Events, op. cit.*, p. 16. This essay, written after the exhibition, also discusses Diego Cortez's ``New York/New Wave" at P.S. 1 as part of this mode of installation.

With the Times Square Show, the goals enunciated by the early conveners of Colab seemed to have been in large part realized. There was to be little cohesion in the face of subsequent market pressures. Following a benefit exhibition at the Brooke Alexander Gallery in the fall, several artists, including John Ahearn and Tom Otterness, the principal organizers of the Times Square Show exhibition, almost immediately peeled off from Colab and took up the gallery careers that were offered them. While this was certainly the objective of many who participated, such a response to the success of the Times Square Show essentially capitalized on the collaborative work that had gone before. The group was hurt when several of its most energetic organizers and reliable producers left to work on their upcoming gallery exhibitions.

Colab would continue until 1983 with many of the artists who arranged the Times Square Show remaining involved. Thereafter, a new group took charge and ran Colab until 1989. In February 1981, former Colab member Diego Cortez produced the ``New York/New Wave" exhibition at P.S. 1,[78] in effect answering Deitch's call for a marketing of art as imaginative as the Times Square Show.

In a 1982 internal critique of Colab, written while he was its president, Walter Robinson recognized the group's decline when he enunciated what he called ``Rule C": ``Colab is distinguished only by the insistence on...collaborative, collective, cooperative, communal projects only. If we are to regain our radical position, it will be from articulation of the advantages—esthetic, social, economic—available to this form of artistic organization."[79] Numerous artists' organizations emulating Colab realized economic benefits from government grants, and social benefits from grokup cohesion. But the esthetic ``advantages" in ``C"-modes of artistic production were less clearly articulated. In a sense, Colab's success revealed the collective as a

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[78] Richard Flood, ``Skied and Grounded in Queens: New York/New Wave at P.S. 1," *Artforum*, June 1981, vol. 19, no. 10, includes quotations from other New York critics who were mostly skeptical. The exhibition installation can be seen in ``New York New Wave at P.S. 1," a videotape by Art/New York.

[79] Robinson and Moore, ``Colab Daily Purge," in Moore and Miller, *ABC No Rio, op. cit*, p. 11.

matter of styling. The questions of its role in producing public art would be left to other artists.

4.

Political Postmodernism

Clamorous, dense and well-received, the Times Square Show revealed a great appetite, both within the artworld and among the general public, for a comprehensible U.S. art that directly addressed problems of contemporary life. As the 1980s unfolded, the New York art market embraced European neo-expressionism and with it a return to a representational art made in traditional materials. At the same time in New York, small art galleries opened in the East Village, beginning a mini-boomlet hyped by the popular press that would see scores of art spaces emerge by mid-decade.[1] Artists on the left worked to rededicate the popular enthusiasm for a realist art into social analysis, criticism, protest and insistence on social change. In the forefront of these efforts were the artists' collective Group Material (1979-1994) and the organization PAD (later PAD/D, for Political Art Documentation and Distribution, 1981-1989). PAD/D provided a support system for activist art (see below) and cultural work during the conservative years of Ronald Reagan's presidency. While the artists of PADD regularly made work for the street, Group Material cleaved closer to the institutions of art, both mainstream and alternative, and inserted their perspective into mainstream discourse by engaging theoretical arguments over new art. The group influenced changing conceptions of public art and curation, and inspired several other artists' collectives.

Group Material was comprised of young artists who had met as students in Joseph Kosuth's class while at the School of Visual Arts.[2] They opened a storefront gallery

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[1] See Liza Kirwin, ``It's All True: Imagining New York's East Village Art Scene of the 1980s," PhD dissertation, University of Maryland at College Park, 1999.

[2] Conversation with David Little, August 1999. Little, who is writing a dissertation on Collaborative Projects at Duke University, said that members of Group Material met in a class given by Joseph Kosuth on art and anthropology at the New School for Social Research. Kosuth himself had a piece

in the East Village in 1980 and ran it for a season. The group then closed the gallery, shrank to several members, and moved to a small office in a midtown building housing other left organizations. Group Material's mode of collective political art was formally inventive, developing ``exhibition-making as a medium'' of art, as member Julie Ault put it.[3] Group Material's projects usually involved many artists outside the group. The forms they developed were, said Ault, ``salon-style designed thematic exhibitions, democracy walls, roundtable discussions, [and] advertising space as exhibition site.''[4] The themes Group Material chose to engage during their early years were important progressive issues or political-economic concepts, and their approaches were attuned to both English Marxist and French post-structuralist cultural theory. This gained the group key allies in academies and institutions, so that their work came to be seen by many as exemplary of a postmodern political art practice.

PAD/D was a heterogeneous group built around an archival intention. With Lucy Lippard, Jerry Kearns and other experienced artists in leadership roles, the group was the inheritor of a lineage of direct political activism. This conferred advantages, like links to labor unions, an international outlook, and alliance with the international socialist bloc, but carried with it the ideological and historical baggage of socialism. Many artists without backgrounds in the left were suspicious of ``stalinism,'' by which they meant direct political control over artistic production. Through its journal *UpFront*, PAD/D became an important node in an international left art and cultural network. The archive the group developed (transferred in 1989 to the Museum of Modern Art library) is an important resource for studying political art. Beginning by producing artwork for mass political demonstrations, working

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in Group Material's Alienation show in December of 1980, one of the first they mounted at East 13th Street.

[3] Julie Ault, talk at the symposium ``Public Strategies: Public Art and Public Space,'' New York University, June 4, 1998 (proceedings published by American Photography Institute).

[4] Julie Ault, ``The Double Edge of History,'' manuscript in the Parasite group document collection, exhibited at the Drawing Center, New York in the spring of 1998.

groups within PAD/D began to undertake collaborative exhibition projects such as ``Artists Call" and ``Not for Sale."

Like several other artists' organizations, Group Material was inspired by the successful examples of Colab, Fashion Moda and ABC No Rio.[5] After an initial period of meetings during 1979, Group Material rented and renovated a storefront on East 13th Street in the East Village, and mounted a series of theme shows like those being presented further east at ABC No Rio. In ``Enter the Anti-Space," Richard Goldstein of the *Village Voice* wrote about ABC No Rio and Group Material together, also discussing Fashion Moda and Colab. For Goldstein, the central drama then being played out was the commercial assimilation of Colab, as ``the artist who moved away from the epicenter of commerce finds that its boundaries have been extended." Many of Colab's members were gathering the first fruits of the group's public success—opportunities to exhibit in commercial galleries. The organization itself was planning an artists' store in Soho. Group Material, Goldstein wrote, ``measures itself" against the Times Square Show. Unlike Colab, whose artists were largely uninterested in theory, ``ideology equips these artists to control the presentation of their work, and the terms on which they court success."[6]

The work of the artists of Group Material,[7] Goldstein wrote, was informed by ``Marxism and sexual politics of a special sort." Two of the men were openly gay, and the women were interested in ``femininity as a social phenomenon." Goldstein

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[5] Richard Goldstein, ``Enter the Anti-Space," *Village Voice*, November 11, 1980. The exhibitions of ABC No Rio, Group Material and PAD/D were often related, even intertwined, as can be seen from a perusal of Moore & Miller, *op. cit.*. This article, as well as most others cited in this chapter, is included in the Group Material folders, PAD/D Archives, Museum of Modern Art Library.

[6] Goldstein, *op. cit.*.

[7] The thirteen artists of Group Material at their East Village storefront were: Hannah Alderfer, George Ault, Julie Ault, Patrick Brennan, Liliana Dones, Yolanda Hawkins, Beth Jaker, Mundy McLaughlin, Marybeth Nelson, Marek Pakulski, Tim Rollins, Peter Szypula, Michael Udvardy (Ault, ``Double Edge," *op. cit.*).

quoted Group Material member Tim Rollins disparaging ``New Wave art''[8] as ``reflective...a camp critique, the middle class making fun of itself. It's like the warning Walter Benjamin gave about the danger of aestheticizing politics. We're less interested in reflecting than in projecting out into the community.''[9]

In a flyer announcing their storefront, Group Material described themselves as ``artists and workers,''[10] and declared their intention to investigate and present social issues ``through artistic means. ``We want our work...to take a role in a broader cultural activism.... Our project is clear. We invite everyone to question the entire culture we have taken for granted." Since ``an independent art depends on its not being a business," Group Material would be open only in the evenings between 5 and 10 p.m in order to accommodate people (including the artists) who work. This brought the gallery into the time zone of the nightlife that played such an important role in building the East Village art scene.[11]

In discussing the installation of Group Material's first show, Goldstein noted that ``there is much *assemblage* of image and text, as if the artists were trying to coax you away from a purely visual interpretation. Rollins: `If anything has to do with

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[8] New wave music succeeded punk as a more commercially acceptable type of new rock. The February, 1981 exhibition ``New York/New Wave" at P.S. 1, curated by former Colab member Diego Cortez, applied the term to visual art (see Chapter 3). Like ``punk art," the ascription of this appellation to young visual artists suggests that music was widely perceived by journalists as leading culture at this moment. The difference between punk and new wave musicians, *Village Voice* nightclub columnist Michael Musto wrote, was that ``The new wavers took punk's rebellious anger and made it more aesthetically pleasant.... Unlike punks, new wavers were perfectly willing to restructure their neuroses into hit records" (Michael Musto, *Downtown*, Vintage, NY, 1986, p. 15). Steve Hager attributes the term to a Sire Records publicity campaign in 1977 (Hager, *Art After Midnight,* St. Martin's Press, NY, 1986, p. 17).

[9] Goldstein, *op. cit.*.

[10] They include ``5 graphic designers, 2 teachers, a waitress, a cartographer, two textile designers, a telephone operator, a dancer, a computer analyst and an electrician." (``WHO is Group Material?," in Museum of Modern Art library, PAD/D Archives, Group Material folder.)

[11] One of the Group Material's first season events was a ``wild dance party" featuring 30 years of hits that are ``overt and covert demonstrations of class, sexual and racial consciousness" (flyer, ``WHO," *loc. cit.*). For more on the art in the nightclubs, see Steve Hager, *op. cit.*; also Musto, *op. cit.*

Group Material, it's reinventing the dialectic through art'."[12] In a 1984 essay, Walter Robinson claimed the innovation of the ``milieu show" for Colab,[13] meaning the kind of dense hanging of works by many artists one above the other as in 19th century salons, with all the works usually created or selected with attention to a particular theme. In listing the forms of exhibition that Group Material developed. Julie Ault nods to Colab's priority by calling the first type ``salon-style *designed* thematic exhibitions" (my italics).[14]

The word ``designed" points to the key formal distinction between the exhibitions of the two groups. In organizing theme shows, Colab artists privileged inclusivity over coherence. During the earliest phase of Colab, as a core group of members sought to maintain close control over its projects, the open theme shows were seen as organizing tools which would draw new artists to the nascent organization. The theme show had a practical utility in building an instant constituency around a group or space at the same time as it announced a group's concerns. During ABC No Rio's first season, the theme of the show would be announced and circulated, and artists would either bring work that fit the theme or make it to fit. As the number of galleries in the East Village grew, theme shows became so common that by 1984,

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[12] Goldstein, ``Anti-Space," *op. cit.* Rollins' remark about the dialectic is repeated in a 1981 Group Material handout: in their storefront ``Group Material sought to reinvent a dialectical approach to reality through the means of art" (``Caution! Alternative Space!," in Museum of Modern Art library, PAD/D Archives, Group Material folder; also in Moore & Miller, eds. *op. cit.*, p. 23). Goldstein's reference to Bertolt Brecht at the end of his article alludes to the history of theory around a dialectical approach to art.

[13] Walter Robinson, ``Collaborative Projects, *Landslides & A.More Store, Colab In., N.Y.C.* (Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA, n.d., ca. 1984), n.p.

[14] Julie Ault, ``The Double Edge of History," unpublished, *loc. cit.*, quoted above. Tim Rollins explicitly contrasted Group Material's carefully designed exhibitions to Colab's, ``who go *wham*, and the art is all over the place" (``Group Material Interviewed by Peter Hall," in *Real Life Magazine*, no. 11-12, 1983/84). Another difference between the two groups' approaches was that Group Material meticulously renovated their gallery space, whereas most Colab shows took the space of exhibition more or less as given.

Greg Sholette discusses the ``coherence vs. inclusivity argument vis a vis Colab and Group Material" (in his article, ``News from Nowhere: Activist Art and After," *Third Text*, no. 45, Winter 1998-99, pp. 45-62), arguing that Group Material retained ``Colab-style `inclusivity' now 'performed' as a sign of democracy within GM's carefully curated projects" (letter from Greg Sholette to Liza Kirwin, n.d., 1999).

painter Rick Prol remarked, ``You could call a show `Shit in a Road' and the artists would do work for it."[15]

The challenge of this mode of exhibition was to make a crowded installation of many artists' works seem purposive. The density of works might confuse the viewer, reducing a themed hanging to a mere group show. Group Material privileged coherence over inclusivity. While they invited many artists to participate in their shows, the group maintained close control over the form of the display. From their beginning, Group Material signaled that their intentions were to be rigorous and academically styled. The group, they wrote, ``researches" work from ``anyone interested in presenting socially critical information in a communicative and informal context.... In our exhibitions, Group Material reveals the multiplicity of meanings that surround any vital social issue so that people are introduced to a subject, making evaluations and further investigations on their own."[16] Rather than making something ``directionless," the group's members wanted to reveal ``a set of possibilities." Their exhibitions were intended to be ``potentially discursive situations," where people could talk about what they saw.[17] ``Group Material brings together contradictory visual objects in order to investigate a theme."[18] This 1985 statement suggests the way in which the group's exhibitions were conceived of as ``dialectical."

Group Material's first season on East 13th Street included an opening survey of ``the new cultural militancy" in the U.S. and abroad, the ``Salon of Election 80," and shows on

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[15] Rick Prol, Sylvia Falcon, ``Letting Painting Be Stupid," *East Village Eye*, March 1984, pp. 41.

[16] Flyer, ``WHO," *op. cit.*

[17] Julie Ault, at ``Public Strategies" symposium, *op. cit.*

[18] ``Statement," pencilled below ``1985," in Museum of Modern Art library, PAD/D Archives, Group Material folder.

Alienation, Gender, the Aesthetics of Consumption, Facere/Fascis (on fashion), Political Art by Children, and Food and Culture. The most widely reviewed and, in the group's retrospective estimation, the most successful of these early exhibitions was ``The People's Choice" or ``Arroz con Mango," opened in early 1981 (fig. 49). The artists solicited works from their largely Hispanic[19] neighbors on East 13th Street, ``things that might not usually find their way into an art gallery...objects that have meaning for you, your family and your friends."[20] The things volunteered for the exhibition were highly diverse, including snapshots, children's art, collections, religious icons, crafts, and art reproductions, each captioned with an explanation of its significance—``a story about the object"—by its owner. The show, Thomas Lawson wrote in *Artforum*, ``turned into a narrative of everyday life, a folk tale in which intimacies were shared without shame.... The value of these artifacts lay precisely in their sentimentality," Lawson wrote, ``a quality that is absent from most artwork that strives to mean something to a general audience."[21]

The People's Choice was the direct outcome of Group Material's search for ``discourse." With it they realized an ambition of both ABC No Rio and Fashion Moda—to involve the community in which the art gallery found itself, and to use the gallery to display the community to itself. Years later, Doug Ashford called the People's Choice the most important show Group Material did, since it ``totally transformed the supposedly neutral gallery into an icon of the neighborhood."[22] Working on 13th Street, with kids running in and out of the place and people

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[19] I am using several terms to denote people from Spanish-speaking countries in Central and South America, and artists of varying Spanish-speaking heritages in the United States. This seems truer to the diversity of the cultural community of ``Spanish-surnamed" people (the term used by the U.S. Census).

[20] Letter distributed to Group Material's to neighbors dated December 22, 1980, in Museum of Modern Art library, PAD/D Archives, Group Material folder.

[21] Thomas Lawson, review, ``The People's Choice: Group Material," *Artforum*, April 1981, vol. 19, no. 8, p. 67. Lawson, a painter, also edited the artists' journal *Real Life Magazine*.

[22] ``Interview" by Steve Kurtz of Critical Art Ensemble with Doug Ashford (edited by Group Material and CAE), *Art Papers*, September/October 1988, pp. 24-29, p. 26 (in Museum of Modern Art library, PAD/D Archives, Group Material folder).

hanging out on the street, the artists found their ``most rewarding and warm and fun audience was the people on the block." This reception meant that Group Material's work ``always had a direct and energetic social meaning."[23] The Arroz con Mango exhibition also inaugurated the radical mix of different kinds of objects within the context of an art installation that would mark Group Material's work during the later 1980s. ``To tap and promote the lived aesthetic of a largely `non-art' public—this is our goal, our contradiction, our energy."[24]

During the first season, Group Material was seen as facing the same peril as Colab, that is, cooption by the art market. Lawson saw the group's formal strategies, the installations that ``downplay and at times repudiate the object in favor of the context," as strategies to forestall this cooption. At the end of his review of the People's Choice exhibition, he concludes that Group Material will ultimately be ``faced with a terrible, if familiar choice—between political or esthetic action."[25] For Lawson it seems, ``esthetic action" and marketability are linked. Valerie Smith, commenting on the Consumption show, spoke indirectly to Lawson's dichotomous position. ``Some believe a choice must be made between political or aesthetic purity. Group Material is not interested in absolutes or compromises. They do not see the contradiction as detrimental to their art, but as an integral tension that vitalizes the work."[26] In this ``dialectical" method, the group had found a position from which to be subtly rather than overtly didactic.

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[23] ``Caution! Alternative Space!," exhibition handout for ``Uptown/Downtown" at the City Gallery (formerly the New York Cultural Center), October 1981, organized by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, *loc. cit.*.

[24] Group Material, ``Caution!," *loc. cit.*

[25] Thomas Lawson, *op. cit.*.

[26] Valerie Smith, review, ``Group Material, Consumption: Metaphor, Pastime, Necessity," *Flash Art*, Summer 1981, no. 103, n.p., *loc. cit.* Valerie Smith was a founder of Artists' Space.

During the summer of 1981, Group Material lost their space on 13th Street and its membership shrank dramatically.[27] The diminished group, Tim Rollins, Julie Ault, and Mundy McLaughlin, now joined by Douglas Ashford, Hans Haacke's student from Cooper Union, moved to East 26th Street. The artists commented on their move in a handout at the 1981 ``Uptown/Downtown'' exhibition of several artists' groups at the City Gallery located in the former New York Cultural Center on 59th Street.[28] In order to be taken seriously, the group at first ``had to resemble a `real' gallery.'' Still, they disdained the identification with alternative spaces, the ``children of the dominant commercial galleries in New York.'' Practically, the strain of maintaining the storefront was acting as a ``ball-and-chain on the collective.'' For their second season, Group Material would work out of an office, planning exhibitions in public spaces. ``Group Material wants to occupy that most vital of alternative spaces,'' they wrote, ``that wall-less expanse that bars artists and their work from the crucial social concerns of the American working class.''[29]

As Group Material left their storefront and moved to an office uptown, a group called Political Art Documentation/Distribution (PAD/D) issued its first newsletter. *1st Issue,* later called *Upfront*, appeared in February of 1981 (fig. 50). The ``amorphous group of artworkers'' which produced it had been meeting monthly since February of 1980 at Printed Matter, the non-profit store for artists' books in Tribeca.[30] The group had its genesis in a June 1979 exhibition of art from the British

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[27] In an interview with Peter Hall (``Group Material,'' *Real Life Magazine*, nos. 11/12, Winter, 1983-84), they discussed this dissolution. Three factions made up the 13th Street group: feminists interested in educating the public, who left after the first three-quarters of the year; career-oriented artists, who left at the end of the first year, and Ault, Rollins, and McLaughlin. ``We always formed the center of the group anyway,'' said Rollins. Doug Ashford joined in early 1981.

[28] The City Gallery was run by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the organization that oversaw the disbursement of NYC cultural funds.

[29] Group Material, ``Caution!,'' *loc. cit.* This text is in all capital letters in the flyer. It was later modified in subsequent publications, to ``...social concerns of the American public'' (as in *Upfront*, December/January, 1981, no. 3, p. 11).

[30] Printed Matter was on Lispenard Street, just below Canal Street. Tribeca became an artists' neighborhood in the 1970s as an extension of Soho (the name was derived from the ``triangle below Canal'').

left at Artists Space, which included a call for an ``international political art archive." In late spring of 1980 the young PAD/D moved into El Bohio, 605 East 9th Street in the East Village, a former high school occupied by the Puerto Rican activist group CHARAS.[31] PAD/D had been sponsored into the space by Artists for Survival, an anti-nuclear group which also produced the first exhibition at ABC No Rio. PAD/D's core group of 15 to 20 people met three times a month.[32]

PAD/D was ``a left-to-socialist artists' resource and networking organization"[33] which maintained an archive of political art and information. The group's formative period coincided with Lucy Lippard's tenure as a critic at the *Village Voice* (1980-1985). In a 1981 statement authored by Lippard and Jerry Kearns, the group announced their intentions and invited all to their meetings. ``The development of an effective oppositional culture depends on communication," they declared in boldface type. The artists intended to build cultural coalitions during the period of conservative ascendancy which began with Ronald Reagan's election as president in 1980. PAD/D was working with Cityarts Workshop's resource center on the community mural movement, and Gallery 345, which maintained a collection of political art.[34] Among its broad and ambitious goals, writes Sholette, the group

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Sholette recalls that PAD was formed when he and Richard Meyer went to a ``First Sunday" meeting at Printed Matter. (Lippard announced she did not want to start another organization, ``But when we walked out of the meeting we had started another organization!," Lippard, in Claudia Gould and Valerie Smith, eds., *5000 Artists Return to Artists Space: 25 Years*, Artists Space, NY, 1998, p. 106.) Through their work with an anti-nuclear arts weekend, Sholette and Meyer had access to an office (see below), and Clive Philpot (then librarian at the Museum of Modern Art) ``tossed together the group's name" (letter from Greg Sholette, November 1999).

[31] Syeus Mottel, *Charas: The Improbable Dome Builders* (Drake, NY, 1973) describes the work that the politicized Puerto Rican gang did with Buckminster Fuller. In 1980 the building was administered by a coalition of community groups called Seven Loaves.

[32] This chronology is drawn from the first PAD/D newsletter, *1st Issue*, February 1981, ``PAD: Waking Up in NYC" and ``History So Far." *1st Issue* was continued under the name *Upfront*.

[33] From the superscription on *1st Issue*, May-June 1981, no. 2.

[34] This collection of political art was run by Karen de Gia of the A.J. Muste Foundation. The gallery was located in a storefront of the War Resisters League building at 345 Lafayette. The War Resisters League, founded in 1923, owns the building at 339 Lafayette Street. The organization was active in the peace and anti-nuclear movements throughout the 1980s. For the WRL, see http://www.nonviolence.org/wrl/about.htm.

sought to ``forge a viable network of politically sympathetic exhibition outlets for activist art," something no New York artists' collective had before attempted.[35] PAD/D members attended and sponsored national conferences, and produced art, primarily in projects for the street and in support of political demonstrations. The group's newsletter, which later spun off a calendar called *Red Letter Days,* provides a useful chronology of political art exhibitions and discussions during this period.

In the first issue of *1st Issue*, Lippard and Kearns (who often wrote and worked together) pointed to the theoretical work they hoped to accomplish in the artworld: ``We reject the way the art market has denied art's social function and defuses it by setting up false dichotomies between abstraction and figuration, `political and formalist,' high and low culture. Perhaps the most insidious idea we have to combat is that you have to give up art to be involved in the world, or give up the world in order to be an artist." The kind of ``personal/political fusion" they sought had been most visibly modeled by feminists. They also included a caveat that work with PAD/D would not ``serve as a means of advancement within the artworld structure of museums and galleries. Rather we have to develop new forms of distribution economy."[36]

In a 1998 article, former member Greg Sholette wrote that PAD/D's mission was to build a bridge between the organized left and artists. Structured like a political party, ``its objective was to produce a truly alternative and oppositional cultural sphere." Many among the 20-odd artists in the group had experience in AWC, AMCC, the Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union,[37] and Fluxus. The group's ``immediate

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[35] Greg Sholette, ``News from Nowhere," *Third Text, op. cit.*, p. 54.

[36] Lucy Lippard and Jerry Kearns, ``Waking Up in NYC," *1st Issue*, February 1981, pp. 1-3. Although the concern with ``alternative economies" is often voiced in writing by Lippard, it is not clear what she meant by this or what kinds of ``economies" political artists planned or developed during this period.

[37] The Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union was based in Newark. Amiri Baraka was a principal in the group, and holds the AICU papers (conversation with Thomas Cummings, Newark Public Library).

ideological foundation," Sholette wrote, was built upon the collective fraction of New York Art & Language that produced the journal *Red Herring*. That group's objective, influenced by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, was to produce a North American ``proletarian culture" to prepare for the collapse of capitalism in the aftermath of the global economic crisis of the late 1970s. This analysis guided the group for two years.[38]

The theoretical work that Lippard and Kearns proposed in their first article was to refine the idea of ``activist art." This project was continued in subsequent issues of *Upfront* by Vanalyne Green and Margia Kramer in ``Against `Inner Exile'," a sort of manifesto for an art of ``unique, compressed, intense visual constructs of experience, information and material" that responds to specific social needs. ``We distinguish activist art which engages in communicative, reconstructive action through a process of symbolic dialogue leading to reflection, education and action, from fetishized consumer commodity art."[39] ``Activist art" was advanced by Lippard as a paradigm for the practice of contemporary political art. She defined it in 1984 as a practice wherein ``some element of the art takes place in the `outside world,' including some teaching and media practice as well as community and labor organizing, public political work, and organizing within the artist's community."[40] Sholette further refined the term: ``activist art is the opposite of those aesthetic practices that, however well-intentioned or overtly political in content, remain dependent on the space of the museum for their meaning."[41]

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[38] Greg Sholette, ``News from Nowhere," *Third Text, op. cit.*, p. 54.

[39] Vanalyne Green and Margia Kramer, ``Against `Inner Exile,'" *Upfront*, December-January 1981, no. 3.

[40] Lippard, in ``Give and Take: Ideology in the Art of Suzanne Lacy and Jerry Kearns," in *Art and Ideology* (New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984), p. 29; cited by Greg Sholette, *op. cit.*, p. 49. Activist art is discussed historically by Nina Felshin in the introduction to Felshin, ed., *But Is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Bay Press, WA, 1995).

[41] Sholette, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

PAD/D's principal early projects were directed towards producing artwork for the street. Street works were part of the ``Death and Taxes" project, a hybrid group of events and exhibitions produced in April of 1981. Many of these works are reproduced in *1st Issue*, together with artists' comments on their experiences in presenting the streetworks and the reaction of members of the public. For example, in *War on the Armory*, Group Material member Tim Rollins projected slides criticizing military spending onto the 167th Regiment Armory for several hours each evening. ``Reactions ranged from sidewalk cheers to rotten fruit thrown at the windows."[42] Death and Taxes was produced in conjunction with the storefront Gallery 345.[43] During the summer when Group Material moved, Tim Rollins organized another exhibition at Gallery 345 called ``Demonstrate! Agitate! Participate! Communicate! Liberate!," built around ``the history of progressive demonstrations, new work for demonstrations and fantasies of future demonstration projects."[44] This demarcation of the form of the political demonstration through an art exhibition represents the kind of work of definition and historicization that PAD/D artists sought to do for their politically involved mode of working.

In early 1982, PAD/D sponsored a national conference of activist artists and art organizations called the February 26th Movement. Its intention: ``to develop new forms, theory and distribution systems for progressive culture," and to build a national network of ``activist art" organizations. One panel discussion, ``NYC: Politics in Form," included representatives from ABC No Rio, the Black United Front, Cityarts (the muralists group), Colab, Fashion Moda, Group Material and

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[42] *1st Issue*, May-June 1981, no. 2, p. 3. As seen in a poster for the event, Death and Taxes was a complex event, taking place in more than a dozen locations, and featuring multiple media (poster in Artists Call/PAD/D Streetworks folder, PAD/D Archive, MoMA Library).

[43] Gallery 345 folder, PAD/D Archive, MoMA Library. Although both Gallery 345 and PAD/D are gone from the 339 Lafayette St. building, as of this writing (2000), RepoHistory, an outgrowth of PAD/D, and the cable TV production group Paper Tiger Television have offices there.

[44] *1st Issue*, *op. cit.*, Calendar, p. 8. The exhibition addressed the need Lippard described a couple of years later. ``Because we've been denied information on the historical continuum of artists working for social change in this country, our development has been slowed and we're constantly reinventing the wheel" (Lucy R. Lippard, in *Artists Call National Newsletter*, n.d., in folder ``Artists Call" 1/2, PAD/D Archive, MoMA Library).

PAD/D.[45] The composition of this grouping sketched out a broad coalition of New York art organizations dedicated to an agenda of social change. While this configuration of alliance may have been wishful thinking on the part of PAD/D conference organizers, there was a certain degree of migration between groups as artists showed in other group's exhibitions. Colab members sent work to Group Material exhibitions (for example, Mike Glier and Christy Rupp of Colab) as did artists from Fashion Moda (like Joe Lewis and John Fekner). Group Material members Tim Rollins and Doug Ashford worked closely with PAD/D.

While the broad coalition suggested by the 1982 conference remained utopian, such a coalition did form to support the January 1984 events known as ``Artists Call." This large-scale cultural protest was developed over two years, and involved hundreds of artists, musicians, filmmakers, poets and writers exhibiting and performing at multiple venues. It was intended as a protest against United States armed intervention in Central and South America, particularly El Salvador and Nicaragua. Artists Call had its beginnings when Lucy Lippard visited a show of Salvadoran artists in a café in May of 1982 and met Daniel Flores. Flores and other artists exiled from El Salvador and Chile came to a ``Second Sunday" event to meet the New Yorkers of PAD/D. The next month, Doug Ashford organized ``*¡Luchar!*, an Exhibition for the People of Central America" as a project of Group Material at the Taller Latinoamericano, a 21st Street space shared by numerous Latin American cultural groups.[46] The Taller was near several of New York's new nightclubs, including Danceteria, which was probably the largest, just down the block.

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[45] The February 26th Movement conference, held at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center, is discussed in *Upfront*, February/March 1982, no. 4. Another panel, ``Activist Art USA," featured art groups from around the country. Also on the program, billed as one of three ``political bands," was East Village artist David Wojnarowicz's rock group, 3 Teens Kill 4/No Motive.

[46] This chronology is given in Daniel Flores y Ascencio and Lucy R. Lippard, ``Artists Call: For Solidarity and Culture," in *Art & Artists*, January 1984, vol. 13, no. 4, the newspaper of the Foundation for the Community of Artists, a successor organization to the Artworkers Coalition. See also Marvin Jones and Chris Huestis, ``Artists Call: An Interview with Lucy Lippard," *The New Common Good*, n.d. (This newspaper was given out free in the East Village during the 1980s.) Both are in Artists Call folder 2/2, PAD/D Archive, Museum of Modern Art Library.

Consequently the show was seen by many artists and young people. Lippard wrote of this show as art reviewer for the *Village Voice*.[47] Organizer Ashford's call for work had stipulated that ``all artwork should either directly or thematically address the relationship between popular movements for self-determination in Latin America and United States government policy.''

Lippard noted, ``Ashford received a lot of apprehensive phone calls that fell roughly into two categories: artworld artists worried that their contributions would be seen as naïve and politically incorrect; and artists working in left organizations worried that their contributions would be seen as `too dogmatic' and not artful enough.''[48] Clearly the old divide between politics and art which Lawson had pointed to a year earlier was still in effect. True to Group Material's mode of exhibition, the show contained ``works not traditionally seen as fine art: multiples, reproduceables and work by non-artists as well as flags, campaign graphics and propaganda materials.''[49]

As Group Material's agenda came to coincide with Lippard's and that of many other PAD/D members, she wrote a mini-lineage of Group Material's methods. ``Group Material has developed an installation style of its own for `single-issue' shows. The inclusion of `non-art,' an urban roughness or downward mobility, and a chaotic mixture of artworld styles all originated in the pioneering Co-Lab [sic] and Fashion Moda shows from 1979 on—their apotheoses being the on-target Real Estate Show and the grimy, gritty, and occasionally grand Times Square Show of 1980. In its 13th Street space from 1980-81, Group Material refined that approach within a more determinedly progressive framework. The trademark red walls and black stenciled words integrated anarchy into an informative and still dynamic whole. *¡Luchar!* (struggle!) is far less decoratively integrated than the usual GM show and harks

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[47] Lucy R. Lippard, ``Revolting Issues,'' *Village Voice*, July 27, 1982, p. 75. In Group Material folder, PAD/D Archives, MoMA Library.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

back a bit to a Co-Lab randomness. The non-art—FDR [Democratic Revolutionary Front of El Salvador] and Sandinista banners, a triangular red FMLN [Farabundo Martí Liberation Front of El Salvador] neckerchief/mask, occasional Central American kitsch, and some marvelous histories of the Nicaraguan revolution painted by schoolchildren there—merely filled some interstices. The real difference between *¡Luchar!* and the Times Square Show was the relative clarity of the politics. The willful, if often well-intentioned 'My-art-is-my-politics-but-I-don't-know-what-I-think' style that characterizes much alternative art is mostly absent."

At the opening of the *¡Luchar!* exhibition, Flores announced he was founding INALSE, the Institute for Arts and Letters of El Salvador in Exile. By summer of 1983, serious planning for a large event in support of the El Salvadoran exiles by New York artists had begun. Many of those involved were veterans of the Vietnam-era group Artists and Writers Protest (which sponsored the Angry Arts Week in early 1967), and the Art Workers Coalition. The younger artists drew their ``collective experience'' from Colab, Group Material, PAD/D and Fashion Moda.[50] While it is outside the scope of this dissertation, the Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America in January 1984 was an important large-scale political art event.[51] It was national in scope, with events in 28 cities. In New York,

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[50] Flores and Lippard, *op. cit.* Doug Ashford and Julie Ault of Group Material were on the steering committee for Artists Call, along with Jon Hendricks of GAAG (by then no longer active). Among those from Colab, Christy Rupp was closely involved in Artists Call. Mike Glier (who represented Colab at PAD/D's February 26th Movement panel discussion) and John Ahearn participated, as did Joe Lewis from Fashion Moda. In an interview, Lippard said that in planning a benefit for INALSE she worked with Leon Golub, Claes Oldenburg, and Mark di Suvero among others, and ``the thing mushroomed.... It was the first time some of us had worked together since Vietnam'' (Jones and Huestis, *op. cit.*).

[51] An unsigned editorial in *Art & Artists*, viewed Artists Call as ``an important step forward in the remobilization of the artists community.'' The house organ of the Foundation for the Community of Artists (a successor group to the AWC, see Chapter One), explained Artists Call as part of ``a continuum of awareness which includes the 1980 South Bronx people's 'Counter-Convention,' the June 12, 1982 Anti-Nuclear Rally, the August 27 and November 12, 1983 marches on Washington, D.C., and the upcoming Anti-Apartheid Exhibition.'' The writer notes that artists are playing important roles in organizing other demonstrations (*Art & Artists,* January 1984, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 2; PAD/D Archives, MoMA Library).

over a thousand artists took part at 31 galleries.[52] Probably the most important results were the close contacts between politically inclined Anglo and Hispanic artists in New York and artists in exile from Latin America. In hearing of the ``politicized zone" of Latin American culture, the New Yorkers learned of societies where the role of intellectuals as a political force was more important than their own, often marginal position in the United States.[53] The alliance across the United States of North and South American artists raised the visibility and status of Latin American artists in New York.[54] Flores and Lippard wrote that the event might ``sow the seeds of new cultural and esthetic principles, and clarify what culture means in North America."[55] The Artists Call event seems like a milestone in the advent of a multi-cultural artworld.

During the event Artists Call sponsored a daylong series of workshops covering interactions between people in groups, how to set up quick exhibitions and temporary shows, and how to do streetworks (fig. 51)—``MAKING the STREET the Hoarse THROAT of the CITY."[56] These were sort of mini-seminars in activist art. The historicizing exhibition Rollins organized at Gallery 345 in 1981 demonstrated PAD/D's self-consciousness about the form of streetworks, and the

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[52] Poster and press release for ``Artists Call Round Two" at Franklin Furnace, March-April 1984 in folder ``Artists Call/PADD Streetworks," PAD/D Archives, MoMA Library.

[53] Flores and Lippard, *op. cit.* The authors observed that the Latin American outlook towards cultural workers is more like that in Europe.

[54] Shifra M. Goldman, *Dimensions of the Americas: Art and Social Change in Latin America and the United States* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 34. A senior scholar at UCLA, Goldman coordinated Artists Call events in Los Angeles.

[55] Flores and Lippard, *op. cit.* In the preface to her *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America* (Pantheon Books, NY, 1990), Lippard writes ``I owe much that is buried in this book to the U.S. Solidarity movement with Central America, to the cultural vitality of the Nicaraguan Revolution and the FMLN in El Salvador, and to the vital young artists of Cuba."

[56] Poster announcing ``It's Cold Here but It's Hot in Central America: A Day of Workshops to Connect People and Cultural Projects," January 18, 1984, held at the Brecht Auditorium, a Marxist study center, then on West 19th Street. Mary Beth Edelson and Yvonne Owens were the ``facilitators" at the interaction session; Lucy Lippard and Robin Michals [sic?] did the exhibitions session; and Charles Frederick and Jeff Dreiblatt did the streetworks session.

Artists Call meeting responded practically to the need to share information on methods and tactics.

In refining ``street art" as a form of political art, PAD/D and Group Material were to take divergent approaches. For PAD/D, the activist art practice of streetworks grew out of the agit-prop of street demonstrations, a long-standing tradition of political art.[57] As they evolved from producing placards for mass demonstrations, PAD/D artists based the production and exhibition of their street art of posters and spray-painted stencils on bill posting, that is, the non-sanctioned use of urban space.[58] To bring art to the street, Group Material used the sanctioned public space of commercial advertising. In their first work the format was the billboard. The project Da Zi Baos (Chinese for ``big word poster"), organized by Mundy McLaughlin and Julie Ault, saw large yellow and red text posters mounted on the façade of a vacant department store on Union Square in April of 1982. Group Material invited political groups and social service agencies[59] to contribute texts, and provided others from interviews on the street. Although it referenced the Chinese mode of popular

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[57] Street demonstrations are historically rooted in a long Western tradition of political pageantry. In the United States this included 18th and 19th century ``civic processions" and parades. During the early 20th century suffragist parades and the pageantry movement enriched political rituals (see David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 1990). The political demonstration and the pageant converged during the early modernist period in New York in the 1913 Paterson Strike Pageant produced by artists and striking workers in Paterson, N.J. (see Martin Green, *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant*, Collier, NY, 1988). The tradition of political demonstration continued on the streets throughout the century, and was complemented by the emergent genre of streetworks done by artists in Soho (see Lucy Lippard, ``The Geography of Street Time: A Survey of Street Works Downtown," Block, ed., *New York-Downtown Manhattan*, 1976, *op. cit.*; see also Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (Routledge, 1998).

[58] Commercial bill-posting in New York is a long-standing practice. Historically, vacant stores and construction palisades in New York City have been papered over with movie posters by commercial companies, a practice that continues today. This advertising is accompanied by much less visible political postings. Street posters and outdoor advertising have been significant influences on modernist art (see ``Advertising," Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik, *High & Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1990, and bibliography; see also Sally Henderson and Robert Landau, *Billboard Art*, Chronicle, CA, ca. 1980, a popular book with a general essay on commercial billboards and many photographs of bill-postings in early 20th century New York.

[59] The groups included CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador), the Home Health Care Workers Union, Planned Parenthood, the Prison Reform Board, and the New York State Division of Substance Abuse.

political expression,[60] the work conflated political and social comment with commercial display. In fact, the installation of the Da Zi Baos posters on the abandoned department store was *not* sanctioned. The posters, however, were designed so that their appearance would be minimally disruptive, that is, they looked like billboards, and blended in with the commercial environment of Union Square.

In the 1983 ``Subculture," Group Material purchased subway and bus advertising space for artists' messages using NYSCA grant monies. Prepared by the artists to the standard size of advertisements on the transit system, these placards were visible for a month (fig. 52). They were reportedly well-received by the audience of commuters, and provided a strong example of a contemporary public art which contested advertising on its own ground. ``I saw some of these anti-ads at work on the trains," wrote Glenn O'Brien in *Artforum.* He wished painters working on ``canvases destined for collection" could see ``the double takes, bafflement, and laughs the works brought to the riding public."[61] As in Da Zi Baos, Doug Ashford, said ``we were really talking up the authority of graphic forms and asking everyone to keep in mind the corporate aesthetic and content of most subway advertising." Still, in ``the 'don't look at me and I won't look at you'" social space of the subway, he felt artist Merrie Dee's multiple paintings depicting a woman fleeing a burning shack worked best.[62] Ashford's comments show the close attention the group paid to how people looked at art in different contexts. While Group Material's first show in

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[60] Sholette writes that the paper used for the project was brought back from China, acquired on a trip Tim Rollins took with Joseph Kosuth and Janet Koenig (letter from Sholette, November 1999).

[61] Glenn O'Brien, ``Review: Group Material's Subway Poster Show," *Artforum*, December 1983, vol. 22, no. 4, p. 81. Group Material was not unique in their approach. Richard Goldstein, in his column ``Artbeat" writes of the battle over political art in billboards. Barbara Kruger's message on the Times Square Spectacolor board was removed because an advertiser complained, said Jessica Cusick of the Public Art Fund which sponsored the works. In Washington, D.C., ``radical billboardist" Michael Lebron was having difficulty purchasing space from the subway authorities for a work attacking Reaganomics (in *Village Voice*, December 27, 1983, n.p., in ``Richard Goldstein" file, PAD/D archives, MoMA Library).

[62] Steve Kurtz, et al., ``Interview" *Art Papers*, September/October 1988, pp. 24-29, p. 26.

the mode of commercial urban display had been ignored by the press, Subculture was well-reviewed. Appropriately, it was also covered in the New York tabloid press.[63]

PAD/D and Group Material used means of communication in their streetworks that were already in place. Public transport during these years was liberally decorated with graffiti markings, and downtown streets were plastered with posters for music events and art shows. The artists of Colab regularly put works in the street (best known of these is the Colab-affiliated artist Jenny Holzer with her *Truisms*; fig. 53). In his 1985 book *Street Art*, Allan Schwartzman discussed much of this production. Street art belongs to a politicized 20th century tradition, he wrote, which includes art done during the Russian Revolution, murals in Mexico and projects for the American WPA. Yet Schwartzman discounted its contemporary political significance. PAD/D, he observed, papered the Lower East Side with ``posters made by artists who place political pronouncement above esthetic invention,"[64] and he did not mention Group Material at all.

For Schwartzman, the principal exemplar for contemporary street art was graffiti, the popular art movement that began as part of the hip-hop youth culture of the South Bronx. Artists arriving in New York in the late '70s with ``university credentials...turned to the graffitists for a new public identity detached from authority's influences." Inspired by the graffiti artists' use of public space for private advertisements, artists ``propelled themselves into the streets to communicate directly with the vast crowds of people they did not have access to in the discrete art

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[63] Paul La Rosa, ``Subway Art on the Way," *Daily News*, August 9, 1983, n.p., discusses the earlier exhibition the group held on the M5 bus (in ``Group Material" folder 1/4, PAD/D archives, MoMA Library); Jerry Tallmer, ``Art Rides in a Hole in the Ground," Saturday, September 17, 1983, n.p. *loc. cit.*.

[64] Allan Schwartzman, *Street Art* (Dial Press, NY, 1985), p. 7. While privileging esthetic invention, Schwartzman acknowledges that ``today's street artists...do not aspire to change the definition of an artwork, but rather to question the existing environment with its own language."

world."[65] The popularity of graffiti art in the gallery marketplace did not last long past the mid-1980s in the United States, although the movement's artists continued to receive support in Europe.[66] The street art of young, white downtown artists was Schwartzman's subject, however, and he credits these artists with ``having let the world back into art, and changed our understandings and expectations of public art," reinstating art's ``necessary public character."[67]

Schwartzman's understanding of street art was informed by the East Village gallery movement unfolding as his book was written. Walter Robinson, one of the leading critical supporters of the East Village galleries, had been a president of Collaborative Projects after the Times Square Show. He saw the growth of small commercial galleries in the area as an outgrowth of Colab's ``do it yourself" example. In comparing Colab to the East Village, Robinson said, ``Colab was supposedly dedicated to collaboration and was actually used as a stepping stone by a lot of individuals, which I found obnoxious. The East Village wasn't dedicated to

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[65] *Ibid*, p. 5. Schwartzman discusses the best-known artists influenced by graffiti practice, Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

[66] The decision by the Sidney Janis Gallery to drop graffiti artists from its stable reflected the diminishing interest in the style in New York during the early 1980s. Italian and German galleries and museums continued to exhibit and support graffiti artists. For a concise account of the graffiti movement in the artworld, see Irving Sandler, *Art of the Postmodern Era* (Icon Editions, NY, 1996), pp. 472-79.

[67] Schwartzman, *op. cit.*, p. 106, 12. The response of politically minded artists to graffiti art was mixed. Leon Golub said that graffiti art was political in that it was an assertion of self, a manifestation of a fight against oppression. ``By marking up subway cars, they assert themselves, discover a public presence, a will to power." When graffiti was put on canvas for sale in galleries, Golub went on, ``it's not political" (interview with Jeanne Siegel, ``Leon Golub: What Makes Art Political?," in J. Siegel, ed., *Artwords 2: Discourse on the Early 80s*, UMI, 1988, p. 55). Of the Group Material artists Tim Rollins was initially interested in the style, stating ``it's art that falls out of a social condition, and that helps us to find out about what the art means to everybody." But, he noted, ``now it's turning into a style, and the artists are being compromised by the lure of success...the social context is what gives it its meaning, and this is being ripped from it" (Suzi Gablik, ``Report from New York: The Graffiti Question," *Art in America*, October 1982, vol. 70, no. 9, p. 37). Later Rollins characterized graffiti as ``totally irresponsible" in the context of his work with the Kids of Survival in the South Bronx which entailed promoting ``structure and discipline" (Grace Glueck, ```Survival Kids' Transform Classics to Murals," *New York Times*, Sunday, November 13, 1988, pp. 1+, in Rollins artist's file, MoMA Library).

collectivism. It was dedicated to free-enterprise and individualism but it actually functioned as a collective, that I found pleasant."[68]

In 1983 Doug Ashford of Group Material disparaged the socially relevant art that filled the East Village galleries. He saw much of it as irresponsible, art produced without attention to context. The ``dripping figure in the street," Ashford remarked (referring to Richard Hambleton's ``shadow man" series of brushed black silhouettes in public places), was one idea [on the street], and in the gallery quite another." The corporate world eats up the idealism and alternatives of the last five years ``like cake." ``Outside of its previous social context," Ashford wrote, ``artwork with content is being used to assimilate real political work into a spectacle of pseudo-activism."[69] Ashford's piece is an early expression of the fear many artists working in political modes felt that the forms they were evolving would be appropriated for the market.

Group Material, when they opened their cleanly designed storefront on East 13th Street in 1980, had run one of the first East Village galleries. But, after one season in the East Village, Group Material began to curate and produce exclusively for display in the public realm and within non-profit art institutions. The new galleries of the East Village were commercial. According to Liza Kirwin, ``The originality of the first artist/dealers lay in their strategy of presenting consumerism as a subversive act. Journalists [of the popular press], tapping into a potent tradition, described the East Village as a new avant-garde, one divested of any sense of resistance to the marketplace and hence completely in tune with the consumer culture of the

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[68] Walter Robinson, from a 1994 interview with Liza Kirwin, in Kirwin, ``It's All True: Imagining New York's East Village Art Scene of the 1980s," PhD Dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 1999, p. x. Robinson was art editor of the *East Village Eye* from 1983-85; Robinson and Carlo McCormick wrote a key essay on the East Village, ``Slouching Toward Avenue D," *Art in America*, Summer 1984, vol. 72, no. 6, pp. 134-62. See also his interview with Jeanne Siegel, ``Walter Robinson: Eye on the East Village," in *Artwords 2, op. cit.*

[69] Doug Ashford, ``Kiss of Death," *Real Life Magazine*, nos. 11/12, Winter, 1983-84. Ashford's title refers to the feeling among many artists that to be known as a maker of political art was the 'kiss of death' to career ambitions.

1980s."[70] The public space these galleries attended to, as Kirwin discusses, was the advertising pages of the major national art magazines.

In May and June of 1983, a group within PAD/D organized "Not for Sale," the first of a series of exhibitions and streetworks against "gentrification" on the Lower East Side. This word named the process by which poor neighborhoods are converted to middle class housing through financial speculation and the eventual displacement of their original residents.[71] The Not for Sale project signalled the rise of visible organized resistance by artists to the inexorable transformation of what had been their neighborhood, a struggle which continued throughout the 1980s and much of the '90s.[72]

Not for Sale was in large measure conceived as a response to the spread of commercial galleries in the East Village, and was an attempt to persuade artists to resist the gentrification process. The logo of the project was a parody of the official seal of the city, showing the Indian refusing the Dutchman's cash offer for

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[70] Kirwin, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Kirwin believes that the notion of an avant-garde opposed to commercial galleries was a "cliché" as early as the end of the 19th century. She quoted Robert Jensen: "the commodification of art represents only a mythical fall from grace" (in *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siecle Europe*, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 9-10). Among her list of East Village galleries she included no mention of Group Material.

[71] See Janet Abu-Lughod, ed., *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* (Blackwell, MA, 1994) for multiple views on the gentrification process there. For artistic responses and implications for theories of urbanism, see Brian Wallis, ed., *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory and Social Activism, a Project by Martha Rosler* (Bay Press/Dia Art Foundation, 1991); and Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (MIT, 1996). During the 1990s, artists began to work directly with the homeless (see and Andrea Wolper, "Making Art, Reclaiming Lives," in Felshin, ed., *op. cit.*), and homeless artists began to be assimilated into the market category of Outsider Art (see Roger Cardinal, "The Art of the Homeless," *Raw Vision* (UK), no. 8, Winter 1993-94, p. 43).

[72] This struggle, and the Lower East Side as a location for cultural resistance, was the organizing theme in the reflective exhibition of artists' collectives organized by ex-PAD/D member Greg Sholette at the New Museum in summer 1998. "Urban Encounters" included RepoHistory reflecting on PAD/D, Godzilla (an Asian artists group) reflecting on the Basement Workshop, and ABC No Rio, Guerrilla Girls, and Bullet Space reflecting on themselves. Bullet, a gallery and sometime collective located in a squatted East Village building, produced *Your House Is Mine* (1989-1991), a two-part project against gentrification comprised of a newsprint tabloid, and an edition of silk-screened posters, some of which were put up on the street, recalling PAD/D's 1983 Not for Sale project.

Manhattan. The call for proposals and the production of art was accompanied by a simultaneous organizing effort conducted by a subcommittee of PAD/D,[73] contacting East Village housing activists, commercial organizations, and the new art galleries. A letter the subcommittee sent to the galleries early in 1983 asked them to produce exhibitions which ``reflect the diversity of the Lower East Side," and suggested they join the local merchants' association to fight for commercial rent control.[74] The first Not for Sale exhibition opened during the spring of 1983 at El Bohio on East 9th Street where PAD/D had its offices, and at ABC No Rio.[75] At El Bohio, a mural was already in place on the interior wall by the entrance painted by PAD/D member Anton Van Dalen. Executed for the Ninth Street Survival Show of 1980,[76] a large, little-noted exhibition that filled the four floors of the building, Van Dalen's mural was spray-painted through stencils in a mode favored by PAD/D artists for streetworks. The work depicted ``real estate" as a giant cockroach impinging upon the people and buildings of the neighborhood.[77]

Carlo McCormick, who was emerging as the leading critical proponent of the East Village art scene, referred to the show in a general article he wrote for a downtown newsweekly. ``Gentrification isn't the issue," he wrote, ``it's the reality. This became apparent to all, save misdirected leftists like Lucy Lippard, with the gentrification show at El Bohio this summer." Far from the ethnic diversity PAD/D sought to exhibit and evoke, the work in the East Village was by ``young, upwardly mobile

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[73] The ``Not For Sale" subcommittee of PADD formed out of a reading group Greg Sholette hosted, and included Janet Koenig, Glenn Stevens, Ed Eisenberg, Jody Wright, Michael Anderson, Karen Kowles, Eileen Whalen and Sholette. The group had an autonomous relation to the rest of PADD, which they thought was ``under-theorized" (letter by Sholette to Kirwin, 1999, *op. cit.*).

[74] ``Proposals to Lower East Side Galleries from PAD/D's Anti-Gentrification Committee," in Not for Sale folder 5/16, PAD/D Archive, MoMA Library.

[75] See Moore and Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-129 for an account of Not for Sale at ABC No Rio and elsewhere.

[76] A poster for this show is in the ``9th St. Survival Show" folder, PAD/D Archives, MoMA Library.

[77] The work is reproduced in Moore & Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 126. The piece is a first expression of motifs that concerned Van Dalen throughout the '80s and '90s. In the late '90s the artist performed his story of the neighborhood in a traveling show using his flat, cut-out and stencilled artworks as props.

white artists.... The dealers, collectors and critics who hesitantly venture into the East Village are looking at white artists in white galleries in an increasingly upper middle class neighborhood. It's all new to these visitors, and in their quick looks around lie the future livelihood and potential fragmentation of the galleries."[78] PAD/D artists responded in a letter to the magazine describing their efforts to link community activists and artists in coalition, and criticizing McCormick's ``underlying texture of resignation."[79]

In the call for work Not For Sale sent out for their second exhibition in 1984, the PADD subcommittee directly attacked aspects of the East Village gallery scene. ``Are you sick of hearing art market hype about Lower East Side art, artists and galleries; neo-expressionism/unfocused angst; skyrocketing rents; graffiti on canvas; seeing stores and restaurants close because they can't swing new rents; seeing the Lower East Side become Sohoized?"[80] The subcommittee pointed directly to the role artists played in the economic and social processes that were transforming the neighborhood, which they called by its former designation rather than the more recent appellation ``East Village."[81]

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[78] Carlo McCormick, ``Growing Pains: The Lower East Side Art Boom," *New York Beat*, November 1983. This short-lived newspaper was edited by John Howell. McCormick and Roselee Goldberg were the art editors (in Not For Sale folder 12/16, *loc. cit.*). Lippard's review of the show, ``Too Close to Home," appeared in the *Village Voice* June 14, 1983, pp. 94-95.

[79] Letter to the editor, *New York Beat*, December 1983, p. 7 (in Not For Sale folder 15/16, *loc. cit.*). Signed by members of the PAD/D Not for Sale Antigentrification Subcommittee, the letter was drafted by Greg Sholette (in Not For Sale folder 12/16, *loc. cit.*).

[80] ``Are you sick of..." call for work, in Not for Sale folder 2/16, *loc. cit.*

[81] The East Village was so named during the 1960s, an initial period of middle class encroachment. With that name, it complements the West Village (Greenwich Village). Historically the area had been denominated the Lower East Side, a center of Jewish life and culture (see Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, 1976, and Albert Parry, *Garrets and Pretenders*, 1939). The distinction between the two designations also keys into the neologistic name ``Loisaida," from the Spanglish, as coined and used by Nuyorican poets like Miguel Algarin, Miguel Piñero, and Bimbo Rivas. The name ``East Village" symbolically erased both its former and present ethnic inhabitants.

In common usage, Lower East Side may denote the entire area of the east side below 14th Street, but usually means the area below Houston St.; East Village denotes the area above Houston St., below 14th St., and east of Third Avene.

Seeking to produce a ``more tactical and flexible event," Not for Sale asked artists for multiple copies of a poster-like artwork which would be put up on the street.[82] In an advertisement for the show featuring a suitcase as its central motif (fig. 55), the street walls at different locations that had been postered and stencilled by PAD/D artists were ironically named and given graphic logos—the ``Discount Salon," the ``Leona Helmsley" (after the wife of a senile real estate tycoon who herself underwent a sensational prosecution for tax evasion), ``Guggenheim Downtown" and ``Another Gallery."[83]

Three of the posters PAD/D produced were used to illustrate Craig Owens' article ``The Problem with Puerilism" (fig. 56), which appeared in the same issue of *Art in America* as a kind of polemical coda after Walter Robinson and Carlo McCormick's round-up article on the East Village gallery scene.[84] Robinson and McCormick mentioned the Lower East Side as an important site of the ```anti-alternative space' movement" with ABC No Rio and Group Material,[85] although they noted work from these places had not been included in survey exhibitions of East Village art. Owens saw the ``empty diversity" of the East Village art scene as nothing more than a miniature simulacrum of the art market *status quo*, and most of the art as an appropriation of subcultural difference which pointed the way for the leveling influence of the culture industry. Years later, Robinson would regard this polemic as a set-up, perpetrated by Owens and *Art in America* editor Hal Foster who outranked

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[82] Letter from Sholette to Kirwin, *op. cit.*

[83] Poster for ``Out of Place: Art for the Evicted," Not for Sale folder 15/16, *loc. cit.*

[84] Craig Owens, ``The Problem with Puerilism," *Art in America*, Summer 1984, vol. 72, no. 6. This piece was reprinted in the posthumous collection Owens, *Beyond Recognition* (University of California, 1992), but without the PAD/D posters as illustrations; the PAD/D project was not mentioned in Owens' text.

[85] Robinson and McCormick, ``Slouching," *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Robinson on the *Art in America* editorial board, and part of a reaction by a threatened elite which helped to kill the market for East Village art.[86]

The Not for Sale subcommittee researched squatting internationally, and this form of direct seizure of abandoned buildings owned by the city became increasingly organized and effective during the 1980s. Not for Sale's initial efforts to organize artists and gallery owners around real estate issues in the early 1980s preceded the development of a militant squatter movement in the Lower East Side later in the decade.[87] Seth Tobocman, a PADD member during this period, worked with Peter Kuper, Sabrina Jones, and later Eric Drooker on the comic book *World War III Illustrated* (fig. 58). The artists who produced the publication (which first appeared in 1980) describe themselves as a collective. In 1984 they released their ``Captive City'' issue containing collaborative imagery describing the processes of gentrification and the drug trade in the neighborhood. These themes became constants in the often hallucinatory narrative graphics published in *WWWIII.* Tobocman's blocky, 1930s-style illustrations were in tune with the East Village version of neo-expressionist figuration, but their overt political content directly referenced art of the socialist past. His often-reproduced one-page cartoon version of housing activist Yulanda Ward's thesis on urban displacement and spatial deconcentration,[88] is a succinct argument for squatting. Tobocman continued his

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[86] Robinson cited in Kirwin, *op. cit.*, p. 131, n. 54. Robinson's reaction came out of his assessment of the practical consequences of critical discourse; Owens' text was imbued with the critical perspectives of the Frankfurt school, and did not explicitly evaluate the art he discussed.

[87] The movement of squatters in the East Village evolved out of the co-op movement of the 1960s and '70s. When the city government encouraged them, those who fixed up abandoned buildings were called ``homesteaders.'' When the city wanted to sell the abandoned properties it owned, they sought to evict the squatters, and the movement turned increasingly militant and violent, especially after the Tompkins Square riot of 1988. After the city eviction of squatters at East 13th Street in 1998, the movement largely faded away. (See Andrew Van Kleunen, ``The Squatters: A Chorus of Voices... But Is Anyone Listening?'' in Abu-Lughod, ed., *op. cit.*; re. artists in the East 13th Street squats, see Alan Moore and Clayton Patterson, eds., *Inside Out: The Art World of the Squats*, NYC, 1995.)

[88] Yulanda Ward, ``Spatial Deconcentration: Freedom of Housing Choice or Minority Removal?'' (paper presented at Grassroots Unity Conference, Washington, D.C., 1980; cited by Van Kleunen, *op. cit.*, p. 310, note 26.

long-term involvement with the squatting movement in the Lower East Side.[89] McCormick's insider analysis of the East Village art situation in 1983 ultimately proved correct. At this writing (2000), rentals in the East Village (and much of the Lower East Side) are among the most expensive in Manhattan. The squatter movement has been almost entirely extirpated.

In the late 1980s the East Village gallery movement rather abruptly collapsed.[90] Those galleries that had built up a clientele moved to Soho, many of them to the ``Broadway corridor'' of former garment businesses and sweatshops newly developed as gallery and professional office space. Most showed cooler abstract or media-based styles of art, called ``neo-geo'' or appropriationist. Although in their call for work they had explicitly rejected ``neo-expressionism'' along with ``graffiti on canvas,'' the PAD/D Not for Sale project was implicitly linked with both. Their own poster for the closing party of the Not for Sale exhibition at El Bohio featured a quote from *Village Voice* writer Richard Goldstein: ``What makes this show matter is its suggestion of an aesthetic distinct from the `painterly' concerns of neo-expressionism, yet every bit as oriented toward impact and emotion.''[91]

Group Material evaded the PAD/D Not for Sale subcommittee's close engagement with a losing political and economic battle as well as the artists' unfortunate identification with a short-lived style of figurative expressionist art. In their practice, Group Material matched their public work with work contrived for the gallery space. The group had started with such a space on East 13th Street, a former social

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[89] These experiences are retailed in Seth Tobocman's graphic novel *War in the Neighborhood* (Autonomedia, NY, 2000).

[90] Liza Kirwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-300. The ``media death knell'' was Amy Virshup, ``The Fun's Over: The East Village Scene Gets Burned by Success,'' *New York*, January 22, 1987.

[91] Not for Sale closing party poster (in Not for Sale folder 16/16, *loc. cit.* Doug Ashford reiterated this later: ``A lot of political art does the same thing with content that expressionist art does with emotion.'' Group Material's practice was more analytical, trying to ``diagram different social forces'' (``Interview'' with Steve Kurtz of Critical Art Ensemble, *Art Papers*, September/October 1988, pp. 24-29). Greg Sholette disputes the identification of ``Not for Sale'' work with neo-expressionism, pointing out that most of the work was not expressionist (letter, November 1999).

club which they had meticulously renovated. Rather than exhibit illegally on the street and in marginal art venues like El Bohio and ABC No Rio, Group Material began to concentrate their efforts on the alternative spaces of the 1970s which had become permanent adjuncts in the New York contemporary art exhibition system—neo-institutions, in effect. In 1983 Group Material's members mounted their ``Primer for Raymond Williams''[92] at Artists Space (fig. 59); in 1984 during Artists Call they did the Central American Timeline at P.S. 1 in Queens (fig. 60, 61). The timeline grew out of *¡Luchar!*, but was greatly expanded, and provided a chronological syntax for integrating art works, commodities (like stacks of bananas), and information in wall texts provided by different Central American solidarity organizations. In 1985 the group was invited to do an exhibition as part of the Biennial at the Whitney Museum.

Curator Lisa Phillips' inclusion of Group Material in the 1985 Biennial certified the group's prominence. ``After we did that thing at the Whitney,'' Doug Ashford recalled recently, ``we got calls from everybody.''[93] Americana (fig. 62), their exhibit in the downstairs gallery, was a dense, coherent presentation, and aspired on several levels to compete with the rest of the Biennial exhibition. For some critics, it evoked the Times Square Show.[94] Although Group Material eschewed explicit comment, Americana was a kind of echo of the protests and critique that AMCC and the *Anti-Catalog* directed against historical American art eight years earlier. In one of the group's interviews Julie Ault said, ``The project was site-specific and

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[92] This exhibition made Group Material's theoretical concerns explicit. Among left theorists of culture, the group privileged the socialist literary critic Raymond Williams over more abstruse French post-structuralist theory. His article ``Base and Superstructure'' refined Marxist analysis of art away from a crude economic determinism using a variety of ideas, including Lukacs' concept of totality, Gramsci's concept of hegemony, and a nuanced view of alternative cultures. Williams concludes with a call to view art as a practice, not as an object, and works as ``notations'' (in Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, Verso, 1980). Group Material's theoretical concerns were further expressed in the 1987 show ``Resistance—Anti-Baudrillard,'' at White Columns.

[93] Interview with Doug Ashford,1998.

[94] Dan Cameron mis-identified Group Material as ``co-organizers'' of the Times Square Show, a collective that had remained ``closer to its populist roots'' than the ``career-springboard collectives like Colab and Fashion Moda.'' Cameron also wrote that Coosje van Bruggen helped Group Material to conceive ``Americana'' (Cameron, ``A Whitney Wonderland,'' *Arts*, Summer 1985, p. 69).

institution-specific—our version of what a Biennial should be." The artists were curating "in an expanded sense," showing "more artists of color than they [the museum] have probably ever shown... It was a model of inclusion rather than exclusion."[95]

To make the ground-floor, street-level museum gallery feel "more democratic," the artists put up commercial adhesive wallpaper in garish colors and patterns. The installation was hyper-stimulating—"densely instrumentalized," as Ault later described it—no space was left neutral. The group exhibited art with consumer goods, "linking curatorial choice with shopping."[96] The "cultural artifacts," Lippard wrote, were "chosen for their brand name puns: Total, Wonder Bread and Home Pride represented mass-produced, fake nourishment; Bold, All, Gain and Cold Power became participants in the class struggle, helped along by a blender and an electric can opener. Stay Free and New Freedom maxi pads touted an unfulfilled sexual revolution," and songs in easy-listening version included "You're Blind," "This Land Is Your Land," "We're Not Gonna Take It," "I Don't Want to Play House" and "The Stripper."[97] For Lippard, Americana was an explicit political allegory. The group wrote in their press book that "Americana transformed the museum gallery into an arena of combat between the champions and the critics of the traditional American self image."[98]

In working toward "a redefinition and reclaiming of culture"[99] in Americana, Group Material included "kitsch" and "outsider art" in Americana. Most notable among

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[95] Interview by Jim Drobnick, "Dialectical Group Materialism," *Parachute* 56, n.d. [1989], p. 30, in Group Material folder, *loc. cit.*

[96] Julie Ault, "Public Strategies," *op. cit.*

[97] Lucy R. Lippard, "One Foot Out the Door," *In These Times*, July 9-22, 1986, p. 21 (PAD/D Archive, MoMA Library).

[98] Group Material statement from red press book; pencilled on it is the date 1985; this text is retained in their 1989 statement (Group Material folder 1/4, *loc. cit.*).

[99] *Ibid.*

the former was a large painting by LeRoy Neiman, known for his pictures of jazz musicians and athletes in a quasi-impressionist style. Neiman's work is well known through mass market editions and frequent illustrations in national magazines (especially *Playboy*), but he had long been considered beyond the pale of serious art institutions. To have his work included in the Americana installation meant for Neiman that he had been included in the Biennial, and he was glad of the recognition.[100] While Neiman's inclusion rankled many who felt he did not belong in a museum of contemporary art with a historical commitment to avant-garde expressions, for Group Material it was part of their dialectical approach. ``We tried to unite an aesthetic instead of saying one thing is better than the other," said Rollins. Putting Neiman—who is ``as far as artists go, about as far Right as there is"—into Americana, said Ashford, was part of setting up ``a dialogue between polarities," including different points of view in order to enlighten rather than propagandize.[101]

``Our exhibitions are a kind of analysis," Ashford went on, ``where artworks decipher, comment, enlighten, legitimize each other."[102] Gerald Marzorati understood the form of the show as museum walls made into ``giant collages" which shows ``the social fabric, or what passes for one—a warp and weave of pictures." These pictures can ``pieced together into a narrative," as the viewers' desires for meaning and stories join disjunct art pieces and seam rough edges. Marzorati's analysis proceeds from his description of a continuously playing television set in the

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[100] Personal communication, Marc Miller, who was writing for the *East Village Eye* at the time of the exhibition and attended the opening. LeRoy Neiman had already been exhibited in a Los Angeles museum, which Irving Sandler attributes to the celebration of ``bad art," part of the warming climate towards painting (Sandler, *op. cit.*, p. 466). The New Museum held a ``Bad Painting" show in the early 1980s. (See Peter Plagens, ``Bad Painting," in *Moonlight Blues: An Artist's Art Criticism*, UMI, 1986)

[101] Interview with Lynne Tillman, ``What Is Political Art Now?," *Village Voice*, October 15, 1985.

[102] *Ibid.*

installation.[103] The terms of film criticism inflected another attempt to situate Group Material's exhibition practice, as in her review of the group's exhibition ``Primer (for Raymond Williams)" at the Kitchen gallery, artist-critic Jeanne Silverthorne suggested that ``it might be more useful to abandon the debate over whether collaborations like this one are propaganda rather than art and to see them in a protean relationship with other efforts analogous to that between documentary and `fictional' films."[104]

Group Material's Americana installation was not universally well received. Some felt the Whitney had co-opted the group. Writing in the *Village Voice*, Kim Levin construed the clothes washer and dryer which Group Material exhibited in Americana as a metaphor for the group's ``titillating, weakly rebellious installation." The Biennial as a whole was ``cleaner, brighter, whiter and softer than ever, and it's a real washout." There was nothing in the show that hadn't been in the commercial galleries all year long. She saw LeRoy Neiman's inclusion—the ``shock of schlock"—as the most provocative thing in a show that lacked the ``grubby strength" of the Times Square Show. Although the group had tried to ``outwit" the Whitney curators, Group Material ``ended up doing the dirty work for them"[105] (presumably by showing so many women and artists of color). Group Material responded angrily in a letter to the *Village Voice*, insisting they had not been used by the Whitney Museum. The show, they claimed, was ``but one small demonstration toward a program of cultural change," intended not for the Whitney or art critics, but ``for the large[r?] public."[106]

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[103] Gerald Marzorati, ``Picture Puzzles: The Whitney Biennial," *Art News*, Summer 1985, v. 84, no. 6, p. 76.

[104] Jeanne Silverthorne, Review, in *Artforum*, November 1982.

[105] Kim Levin, ``The Whitney Laundry," *Village Voice*, April 9, 1985.

[106] Group Material, ``Whitney Wringer," letter to *Village Voice*, May 21, 1985.

Peter Plagens, in *Artforum*, also scored the social critique in Americana as ``thin." He read the Group Material installation together with the rest of the Biennial, which contained many East Village artists, as ``jejune...instructing in the obvious...the result of a hip shopping spree."[107] Levin concurred that Americana ``provides the hook to hang this year's Biennial on: Commodity time is here."[108]

In their predilection for legible, poetic and story-telling arrays of consumer goods, and in the selection of artists they included in their exhibitions, Group Material's members linked themselves with what would become the dominant art trend of the later 1980s, commodity art and appropriation. (The prominent inclusion of a General Electric washer and dryer in Americana explicitly evoked Jeff Koons' appliances in plastic vitrines of 1981, works based on the appropriation of consumer commodities.) In interviews given immediately after Americana, Group Material members distanced themselves from artists such as those in PAD/D. ``We are not political artists," said Mundy McLaughlin. ``We may be leftist but we do not make our work political. We take what we get and make a landscape of people's perceptions."[109] To be understood as a political artist in the artworld of the 1980s, said Tim Rollins, means, ``You are ghettoized. Your effectiveness is reduced."[110] In the course of this survey it has not been possible to examine the pattern and development of Group Material's curatorial choices. But the collective, smaller and more closely connected to the artworld than PAD/D, curated with an eye to artworld fashion, choosing many artists whose stars were rising.

For Lucy Lippard, Group Material represented the higher type of post-modern artist. She wrote of Americana as ``a Total Artwork" in which ``every contributing artist was a collaborator." ``Group Material and Friends" (by which she meant the artists

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[107] Peter Plagens, ``Nine Biennial Notes," *Art in America*, July 1985.
[108] Levin, *op. cit.*

[109] ``Turning Over a New Leaf in the Exciting History of Chapter," *Western Mail* (Wales, UK), Tuesday, April 30, 1985, re. GM at the American Festival in Wales, in GM folder, PAD/D archive.

[110] Tillman interview, *Village Voice*, *op. cit.*

they regularly included) ``have invented and/or adapted post-modernist strategies of representation and appropriation." But the exchange ``rarely goes the other way. Both groups can think, but the post-modernists usually can't act."

Lippard is drawing a distinction between a ``post-modern" art which included political art, art with social content, and art structured according to theoretical principles derived from materialist thought, like appropriation and commodity art, and a more activist art, which PAD/D both embodied and supported. Group Material's practice was rooted not in activism but in exhibition, yet these exhibitions remained well-analyzed, clear-sighted and specific in regards to issues of immediate political concern. Consequently, while they were not activists, Group Material represented a higher type of post-modern artist.

With their work at the Whitney Museum, Group Material began its engagement with institutions in earnest. Jeffrey Deitch wrote that the Times Square Show of 1980 posed a challenge to dealers,[111] a challenge which was promptly met, first when the galleries took on many artists with a social message in their work, and second by the rise of the artist-dealer, most notably in the East Village. Similarly, Group Material's practice posed a challenge to curators, particularly those in institutions.[112]

Among the first to take on the challenge was William Olander,[113] who came to the New Museum in New York from the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin

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[111] Jeffrey Deitch, ``Report from Times Square," *op. cit.*

[112] Although Group Material's curation was strategic in relation to artworld fashion as well as political issues, the exhibitions produced by the duo of Tricia Collins and Richard Milazzo in East Village galleries and later in Soho privileged the former. The pair's groupings of works were explicated by a dense, hypertrophied theoretical bombast, what Richard Milazzo later called ``cartoon theory" (Moore, ``Processing Myth" (interview with Collins and Milazzo), *Cover*, October 1990); see also Collins and Milazzo, *Hyperframes: A Post Appropriation Discourse* (Editions Antoine Cadeau, Paris, 1989); ``Dan Cameron on Collins and Milazzo," *Artforum*, vol. 38, no. 2, October 1999, p. 125.

[113] See Gayle Rodda Kurtz, *William Olander: The Practice of an Activist Curator* (Masters Thesis, Hunter College, City University of New York, 1991).

College, Ohio in 1985. He brought Group Material to the New Museum in 1986. Olander's method of curation emphasized the group process inherent in the group show. In articles, speeches and curations he developed an idea of what he called postmodern ``social aesthetics."[114] In 1982, the curator described a new ``radical realism" in art. This was not the disinterested realism of Pop art, but the ``realism of postmodernism, for which art means nothing other than its ability to separate us from the dominant, and dominating culture, and to relocate us within the culture as a whole."[115]

Olander's was one of many attempts to describe a new landscape of contemporary art in which art with overt political content was part of the mainstream. This discourse has particular significance for public art,[116] and had immediate consequences for public funding of the arts during the ``culture wars" that began in 1989 with the conservative attack on the National Endowment for the Arts.[117]

The New Museum curator's description of a radical realist postmodernism also points to the increasing centrality of the medium of installation in recent art, particularly in the museum context, and often with the museum as content.[118] Much

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[114] Olander coined the term in an essay for *Art and Social Change, USA* (Allen Memorial Art Museum, 1982), Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[115] William Olander, *Face It* (Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, OH, 1982), cited by Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 18. This exhibition included John Ahearn, Mike Glier, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Jeff Way and Michael Zwack. After 1984, Olander's conception of postmodernism was based on Frederick Jameson (Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 26). Olander died of AIDS in 1989. In a 1990 essay David Deitcher, writing in Olander's stead (Kurtz, p. 19), further defined the late curator's idea of the social aesthetic (Deitcher, ``Social Aesthetics," in Brian Wallis, ed., *Democracy: A Project by Group Material,* Bay Press, WA, 1990).

[116] See for example Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Bay Press, Seattle, 1995); Mary Jane Jacobs, *Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago* (Bay Press, Seattle, WA, 1995).

[117] See Brian Wallis, ed., *Art Matters: How the Culture Wars Changed America* (New York University, 1999).

[118] This art has been amplified by recent theoretical considerations of museum display, like Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne, eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions* (Routledge,

of this work is indebted to Group Material, which, until its dissolution in 1997, continued to refine their mode of exhibition art. What this offered viewers, Greg Sholette writes, was ``a visual, textual and tactile symbol of what an ideal cultural democracy might look like if one were to emerge."[119]

My account of Group Material concludes with the exhibition that began their years of greatest prominence.[120] Today Group Material may be best-remembered for the late 1989-1991 *AIDS Timeline* projects. These exhibitions and publications dealt with public awareness and official response to the mounting epidemic of the disease. The project received broad national and international exposure, and inspired many other artists to AIDS activism. Several other issue-oriented and activist collectives arose in New York in the later 1980s and early 1990s, including the Guerrilla Girls[121] (1985-ongoing; fig. 63), Gran Fury[122] (a branch of ACT-UP, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), Women's Action Committee (WAC), among others.[123] These groups may or may not directly owe their inspiration to the success of Group Material, but they certainly took advantage of the institutional space the earlier collective had cleared.

1996), and Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen, eds., *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances* (Bay Press, Seattle, 1995).

[119] Greg Sholette, ``News from Nowhere," *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[120] See Jan Avikgos, ``Group Material Timeline: Activism as a Work of Art," in Felshin, ed., *op. cit.*

[121] Guerrilla Girls, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls* (Harper, NY, 1995).

[122] See Richard Meyer, ``This Is to Enrage Your: Gran Fury and the Graphics of AIDS Activism," Felshin, ed., *op. cit.*.

[123] Lippard names a host of groups concerned with gender issues: Boys with Arms Akimbo, Testing the Limits, Visual Aids, Fierce Pussy, Lesbian Avengers and Dyke Action Machine (Lippard, ``Too Political," *op. cit.*, p. 52).

Afterword

This brief survey of a particular lineage of some politically-inflected New York City artists' organizations sketches a framework for further inquiries. Many complicated stories lie buried beneath the landslide of historical disregard (what Lucy Lippard called ``cultural amnesia''),[1] and the project of an integrated and expanded history of artists' organizations during this period has yet to be fairly begun.

The social and cultural activism of the 1960s, epitomized by the ``events'' of May 1968 in Paris, mark a true beginning—one which was already a culmination of an earlier period of activism.[2] In New York, the Art Workers Coalition is an especially important organization to understand historically, since it included so many artists and cultural activists and was the focal point for so many issues. It exemplified the challenge artists made to the city's museums, cultural institutions, and systems of patronage to include more diverse artists and reflect a broader range of social experiences. In the years since its short existence, the example represented by the AWC has been used to support ideological and theoretical positions, even as this political organization has remained largely unexplicated as a historical object.

The AWC was a united front, a moment of collective unity that encompassed those who held progressive political beliefs, and those—women and artists of color—who felt themselves oppressed by indifferent cultural systems. But, like a ``great

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[1] Lucy Lippard, ``Too Political? Forget It,'' in Brian Wallis, ed., *Art Matters* (New York University Press, 1999). She continues, ``If artists don't concentrate on the art world, if they are primarily concerned with audiences who will never write, curate, collect or fund art, they run the risk of being forgotten before they are even acknowledged'' (p. 45).

[2] See Francis Frascina, Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the Art Left in Sixties America (Manchester University, UK, 2000)

spinning wheel," as Jon Hendricks described it,[3] the organization did not long cohere. To return to this moment of union, to understand the AWC and how it broke apart, is a way to begin to reknit the separated histories of recent art in the United States.[4]

Operating at first from within the AWC, the Guerrilla Art Action Group can be instructively understood as an American form of instrumental conceptual art. GAAG was also clearly an instance of ``anti-art," the Marcuse-derived notion of a radicalized art for the streets historically rooted in German Dada. Although GAAG was never held up as an instance of anti-art, which was only briefly discussed as a general aesthetic term,[5] the group understood themselves as an art project within a historical continuum that included German Dada. Their work also makes sense when seen as part of an international movement of politically-oriented conceptual art practice.[6]

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[3] Interview with Jon Hendricks, March, 1999.

[4] I have been painfully aware of the absence of womens' groups and organizations of artists of color from my narrative. I even felt duped into following an antique New Left agenda that excluded these interests *a priori*. Yet the problem of separation has continued since 1970, and become frozen in institutional form: separate journals, academic programs, and archives. While this helps to establish and maintain strong identities, general histories have become difficult to write.

[5] See Ursula Meyer, ``The Eruption of Anti-Art," and Gregory Battcock, ``Art in the Service of the Left" in Battcock, ed., *Idea Art, op. cit.*; also Battcock, ``Marcuse and Anti-Art," *Arts*, Summer 1969, *op. cit.*. As a general aesthetic concept, see George Dickie, ``What Is Anti-Art?," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Summer 1975, vol. 33, no. 4; Dickie based his discussion largely on Harold Rosenberg who was not sympathetic to the form. Donald Kuspit later based his attack on activist art (which may be seen as an articulated successor to anti-art) on Rosenberg (Kuspit, ``Crowding the Picture: Notes on American Activist Art Today," *Artforum*, May 1988, vol. 26, no. 9).

[6] Many national examples of this practice are contained in Philomena Mariani, ed., *Global Conceptualism, op. cit.*. Among them is the ``Rosario group" of Argentinian artists that inspired Lucy Lippard (see Lippard, ``Escape Attempts," in Ann Goldstein, ed., *Reconsidering the Object of Art*, 1995, *op. cit.*); their project, Tucumán Arde (Tucumán Burns), was a fully developed instance of an anti-government journalistic conceptual art (see Mariani, *op. cit.*; also *Part 5*, http://www.gsuc.cuny.edu/dsc/arde.html_ as of February 2000 for a detailed description of the project). Jon Hendricks of GAAG told me in 1999 that he was not aware of the Argentinians' work.

The New York Art & Language story has been largely stage-managed from England, and, despite copious published materials, it has been difficult to discern the full shape of the A&L contribution to the discourse and practice of artists' collectivity in New York. It is important to understand what happened in the many artists' loft meetings which took place over several years in Soho during the 1970s, meetings which culminated in a variety of collective undertakings. While for many the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change rekindled dormant 1960s activism, the AMCC also seems to mark the end of a certain socialist model of collectivity as it tailed out in feuds and fractionation over points of ``revolutionary'' theory. The activities of A&L and AMCC, however, had significant effects within the academy, and their work should be considered within the historiography of American art history.

What succeeded the socialist model of a critical seminar of peers was the artists' production group and exhibiting organization—Colab. This group was molded in large part by the availability of government funding, and was conceived in part as a response to the institutionalization of Soho's alternative exhibition spaces. These spaces, begun by artists, had become professionalized by the mid-1970s. They were in effect neo-institutions, ``identified with expanding cultural provision rather than with spaces controlled by artists.''[7] Working through open meetings and committees, Colab began producing art and film liberally inflected, if not often guided, by collective ideas and methods. This particular group, only loosely coherent, was a nexus of separated social circles, and it did not sustain itself as a significant innovative force long past the point of its ``coming out party''[8] at the Times Square Show. Although Colab continued for several more years, the group's early members

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[7] Sandy Nairne, ``The Institutionalization of Dissent,'' in Reesa Greenberg, et. al., eds., *Thinking About Exhibitions* (Routledge, 1996). Nairne was writing about art spaces in London. These spaces inspired Alanna Heiss to found the Institute for Art and Urban Resources which launched the largest neo-institutional exhibition space, P.S. 1.

A broad range of artists' reflections on the question of ``alternative spaces'' are found in Collins and Milazzo, eds., *An Anthology of Statements Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of White Columns New York* (White Columns, NY, 1991).

[8] John Ahearn, a chief organizer of Colab's Times Square Show, used this phrase at the time.

opted to leave it for gallery careers, and the next group in leadership largely did the same.

Colab's model of a popularly pitched publically-oriented art, successfully promulgated at the carnivalesque 1980 Times Square Show, profoundly challenged the art left during a period of burgeoning underground music and fashion and resurgent high art commodity production. Colab's high tide of popularity in the public eye coincided with the success of Fashion Moda, the multi-cultural South Bronx art space with which Colab was allied. Fashion Moda was explicitly non-political, and closely identified with the broadly influential graffiti art movement, and the space helped some graffiti artists move from their illegal vernacular practice in the city's transit system to the gallery market through institutional exhibitions. As it happened, the commodification of graffiti art compromised its authenticity in the minds of many politicized observers. As a consequence, the artists of this movement were denied standing in the contemporary artworld.[9] The reception—and, ultimately, the rejection—of graffiti art during the 1980s needs to be better understood.

Group Material opened one of the first gallery spaces in the East Village, and tried in a disciplined manner to build political and curatorial frameworks around the populist modes of art exhibition broached by Colab and Fashion Moda. The programmatically political group PAD/D (Political Art Documentation and Distribution) emerged later, in 1981, and a subcommittee of the group challenged the largely artist-run galleries that mushroomed in the East Village during the early 1980s on the issue of gentrification. While these two groups often worked in alliance, particularly during the early '80s, Group Material eventually became the more popular model of a new kind of collective organization—streamlined in its

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[9] Again, this paradox speaks to the consequences of politically-derived discourse within an environment of elite high culture production (see my discussion of Craig Owens, Chapter Four, p. 122). In this instance, artists of color from the working class were denied equal standing with their white, college-educated peers. In rejecting the clamor and ``regressive" art practices of ``populism," critics who relied on a Marxist tradition often seemed blind to the damage certain positions inflicted.

productions and operations, and ambitious for success as a group within an increasingly receptive institutional ambit of exhibition. Both the interactions between PAD/D and Group Material, and the emergence of a mainstream political art within the context of a revitalized activist cultural practice in the 1980s deserve further study.

This story ends before institutional support and the culture wars of the later 1980s brought Group Material to the height of its prominence. The group contined until 1997, and PAD/D, which disbanded in 1986, spun off the successor group RepoHistory.[10] Resurgent feminism, and the battle to make the public aware of the AIDS plague engendered numerous important collective organizations, like Carnival Knowledge,[11] ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and its artistic arm Gran Fury,[12] and the Florida collective Critical Art Ensemble.[13] Collectives, and new understandings of the collective figured significantly in new genre public art in the United States, and internationally through the phenomenon of ``service art."[14]

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[10] See RepoHistory at: http://www.repohistory.org/ as of February 2000. Greg Sholette is a member of this group.

[11] Carnival Knowledge, a group of feminist artists and performers, began its work with PAD/D in 1984 in an exhibition at Franklin Furnace (see Anne Pitrone and Elizabeth Kulas, eds., ``Feminism, Art & Pornography: Carnival Knowledge," *Upfront*, Fall 1984). The group emphasized female sexual pleasure, and explored the status of sex workers and representations at work in pornography, issues which divided the feminist community and drew fire from conservative politicians.

[12] For Gran Fury, see Richard Meyer in Felshin, ed., *But Is It Art?, op. cit.*; and Douglas Crimp, ed., *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism* (MIT, 1988).

[13] See CAE website, http://www.critical-art.net/_ as of October 1999, with essay ``Observations on Collective Action," *op. cit.*.

[14] ``Services: Working Group Discussions on Institutional Commissioning of Art Projects, Luneburg, Germany, 1994," *October* 80, Spring 1997. Videotapes of this conference, organized by Andrea Fraser, are at American Fine Arts gallery. In 1998, a number of artists grouped together in an organization called Parasite (see Silvia Kolbowski, ``Some of Everything You've Ever Wanted to Know About Parasite," *Documents* 14, Winter 1999). Their archive, briefly available to the public, was a resource for this dissertation.

During the last decade of the 20th century, the collectives which formed around the production of technology art production during the 1960s have been reprised through groups dedicated to digital art production.[15] These include groups like Rhizome and adaweb, and ``hacktivist" groups like RTmark,[16] for whom the collective image provides glamour and some protection from scrutiny for activities which are in a liminal and fluid zone of the law. And, as in the world of 1960s technology art, another ``collectivity" is continuously present as a model for collaborative creative activity in New York, that is the constantly evolving culture industry corporation as digital artists are hired by companies in the burgeoning digital economy.[17]

Today the collective artists' organization is a frequent actor in the field of contemporary art. Since the collective examples considered here have engendered many successors, the history begun in this dissertation could easily be extended through the century's end. At the same time, later 20th century traditions of collective populist and activist art should be understood against a fully articulated historical background of artists' organizations, including Artists Equity, Depression-era artists' unions,[18] early modernist exhibiting organizations like the Society of Independent Artists,[19] turn of the century anarchist and progressive art societies and

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[15] The work of these recently-arisen groups, as well as many others in the electronic arts, is covered by the journal *Artbyte*, and Rhizome's listserve (http://www.rhizome.com as of February 2000).

[16] The work of these groups is often discussed on Rhizome's listserve; see also the journal *Adbusters* (Canada), which considers them within the context of political graphic design; and Kalle Lasn, *Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America* (William Morrow, 1999), by the publisher of *Adbusters*. For a discussion of electronic civil disobedience, see the articles at http://burn.ucsd.edu/~mai/hacktivism.html as of February 2000.

[17] Tim Griffin of *Artbyte* magazine pointed this out in a paper he read in March, 2000 at the Swiss Institute, forthcoming in the Australian magazine *Art + Text*.

[18] Susan Noyes Platt, *Art and Politics in the 1930s: Modernism, Marxism, Americanism* (Midmarch Art Press, NY, 1999) includes a chapter on the Artists Union.

[19] This group is best known as the scene of Marcel Duchamp's non-exhibition of *Fountain*, the infamous urinal, at the SIA exhibition in 1913 (see Thierry de Duve, ed., *The Definitively Unfinished Marcel Duchamp*, MIT, 1991). There were numerous other artists' groups around the SIA (e.g., Penguin Club, discussed in an unpublished paper by Tom Wolfe of Bard College), and exhibiting organizations competed with it, like the Salons of America, founded by Hamilton Easter Field.

schools, the Arts & Crafts movement, artists' colonies, utopian enclaves,[20] the Ruskinian movement for art education, and antebellum 19th century exhibiting societies and art academies. This history is not always tied to political issues as it has been since the Popular Front subsumed the progressive cultural movement in the 1930s. American artists' modes of collectivity and sociality have helped them to survive and produce in a capitalist system which values art primarily as individual production for the art market. This history describes a flow of resistant cultural formations which move through time, changing shape in temporary alliance with artists' chances to live cheap, and to escape alienated labor, first in the industrial shop, and now in the service and information industry.

The immediate utility of a dissertation such as this may lie in what light it sheds on institutional and social conditions around artistic production during the period under study. Between Takis' removal of his art work from the Museum of Modern Art in 1969, the act which precipitated the formation of the Art Workers Coalition, and Group Material's ``return" to the Whitney Museum with a heterodox collection of art and artifacts from popular culture in 1985, may be seen the lineaments of what Greg Sholette describes as a ``reversal" of the institutional terms of art exhibition.[21] Between 1969 and 1985, we move from an art exhibition space that *a priori* excluded all but autonomous art objects—the famous ``white cube" of Brian O'Doherty's description[22]—and which, in the hands of the Conceptual artists became a stage set for subversion, to an exhibition space that seemed to allow entrance to almost anything so long as an artist framed it in aesthetically convincing terms. The AWC and AMCC identified art museums with an enemy ideology, a war-making state and exploitative corporations whose directors sat on museum

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[20] A brief discussion of these in a long-range political context is found in Donald Drew Egbert, *Socialism and American Art in the Light of European Utopianism, Marxism and Anarchism* (Princeton, 1952; with epilogue, 1967)

[21] Greg Sholette, ``News from Nowhere," 1998-99, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 62.

[22] O'Doherty, 1976, *op. cit.*

boards. This confrontational attitude put an edge on the ``institutional critique''[23] behind much Conceptual art, and helped drive the development of alternative spaces. With a reversal in the terms and conditions of both traditional institutional and neo-institutional art exhibition, an earlier tradition of critique as the basis for art production feels increasingly academic.

A major part of the art history of Group Material's long period of work within art institutions was the establishment of the exhibition as a medium of art. Group Material worked in tandem with curators like William Olander, and later with the Dia Art Foundation, to develop unusually styled exhibitions which could function as sites of discourse. Other artists, like Fred Wilson, have expanded the form, working with museum collections as material, and developing novel forms of installation. Members of Group Material, working as individuals, continue to organize innovative exhibitions as their art.[24] While their work helped to expand the artist's role to that of curator, it also strengthened the hand of curators of contemporary art, given them more flexibility in the style of presenting contemporary art.

For many of the interested participants in this story, the utility of a history such as this will be to hone the distinctions between mainstreamed, gallery-exhibited political art embodied in objects, and a community-engaged, issue-specific activist art practice. Lippard described this ``loosely'' as the contrast between ``political art [which] makes people think politically through images'' and the practice of activist artists who ``face out of the art world, working primarily in a social and/or political context.''[25] The activist artists of the 1980s were caught in a double bind: their work was often considered ``aesthetically uninteresting'' by many critics. Even as ``the art

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[23] The term is Benjamin Buchloh's (see Chapter 1, note 72). James Meyer's 1993 essay, *op. cit.*, historicizes the concept and, using the work of Miwon Kwon on site-specificity, extends the notion of critique to recent artistic practice.

[24] See Doug Ashford, ``The Exhibition as an Artistic Medium,'' *Art Journal*, Summer 1998, for his considerations on exhibition-making as a way of teaching art.

[25] Lippard, ``Too Political?,'' *op. cit.*, p. 49.

world demanded more complexity of activist artists...political groups demanded more accessibility."[26] Nina Felshin expanded on this problem when she wrote, ``Participation through interpretation—a key strategy of activist art—is impossible if ambiguity and obscurity, however provocative aesthetically and intellectually, bar comprehension."[27] As remarked above, activist cultural practice continues through the work of collectives, and the lineage of activist art practice is being adapted—formalized, co-opted, and institutionalized—as ``new genre public art."[28]

Aside from contributing background to contemporary arguments over public art, this dissertation raises methodological questions which it cannot adequately address. Art history, organized around the monograph and chastened by the interests of markets and institutional capital, has not really come to grips with artists' organizations, and the question of how to analyze and historicize their production together with work by individuals. I have often treated organizations in this work like super-individuals, whereas a more subtle analysis would concentrate on the interplay between the members of a given group.[29] To consider collectivity as a form in recent art may simply return a new perspective to monographic art history,

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[26] Lippard, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57.

[27] Nina Felshin, ``Introduction," in Felshin, ed., *But Is It Art?, op. cit.*, p. 25. Felshin's essay historicizes and defines activist art. What sets this kind of practice apart from other political art is ``methodologies, formal strategies, and activist goals" (p. 9). The strategies include: ``collaboration among artists, public participation, and the employment of media technology in information delivery" (p. 11).

[28] See Mary Jane Jacobs, *Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago* (Bay Press, Seattle, WA, 1995), and Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Bay Press, 1995).

[29] Subtle can be trouble. There are good ideological reasons to consider groups generally, *without* such an analysis. These include affirming their right to exist within the sphere of contemporary art in the first place, and avoiding privileging those within them who have made subsequent successful careers in the market. Affirming leaders provides historical rationales for later artists to use and step through groups as ``scaffolds" on their way to fame. In any event, reasonably accurate internal analyses of recent artists' group will have to be generated by the members themselves.

providing another way to privilege artists like Gordon Matta-Clark and Tim Rollins.[30]

My principal intention in writing this dissertation has been to avoid a framework which considers politicized artists organizations and the work they did through the lens of specific political struggles.[31] This approach marginalizes political art and its instrumentalities as dependent types of production which need not be considered together with mainstream art. The political impulses of artists have led them to produce work that is more than instrumental art in service to a movement. These impulses have also exerted continuous deforming and reforming pressures upon the institutions and practices of contemporary art exhibition.

In 1975, New York Art & Language member Michael Corris wrote, ``I wondered why there were no comprehensive accounts of artists' collectives or a social history that incorporated, as a major perspective, the conscious use of the concept of community as an ideological tool by artists."[32] While this dissertation has not answered his call, it may at long last at least have begun.

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[30] I did not consider Group Material member Tim Rollins' work with the Kids of Survival, a group of young people in the South Bronx, with whom he produced art in collaboration, but this work extends and complements that of Group Material. When Rollins left the group, he was replaced by Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

[31] Deborah Wye, *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art* (Museum of Modern Art, 1988), is a classic instance.

[32] Michael Corris, ``Historical Discourse," *The Fox*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1975, p. 87.

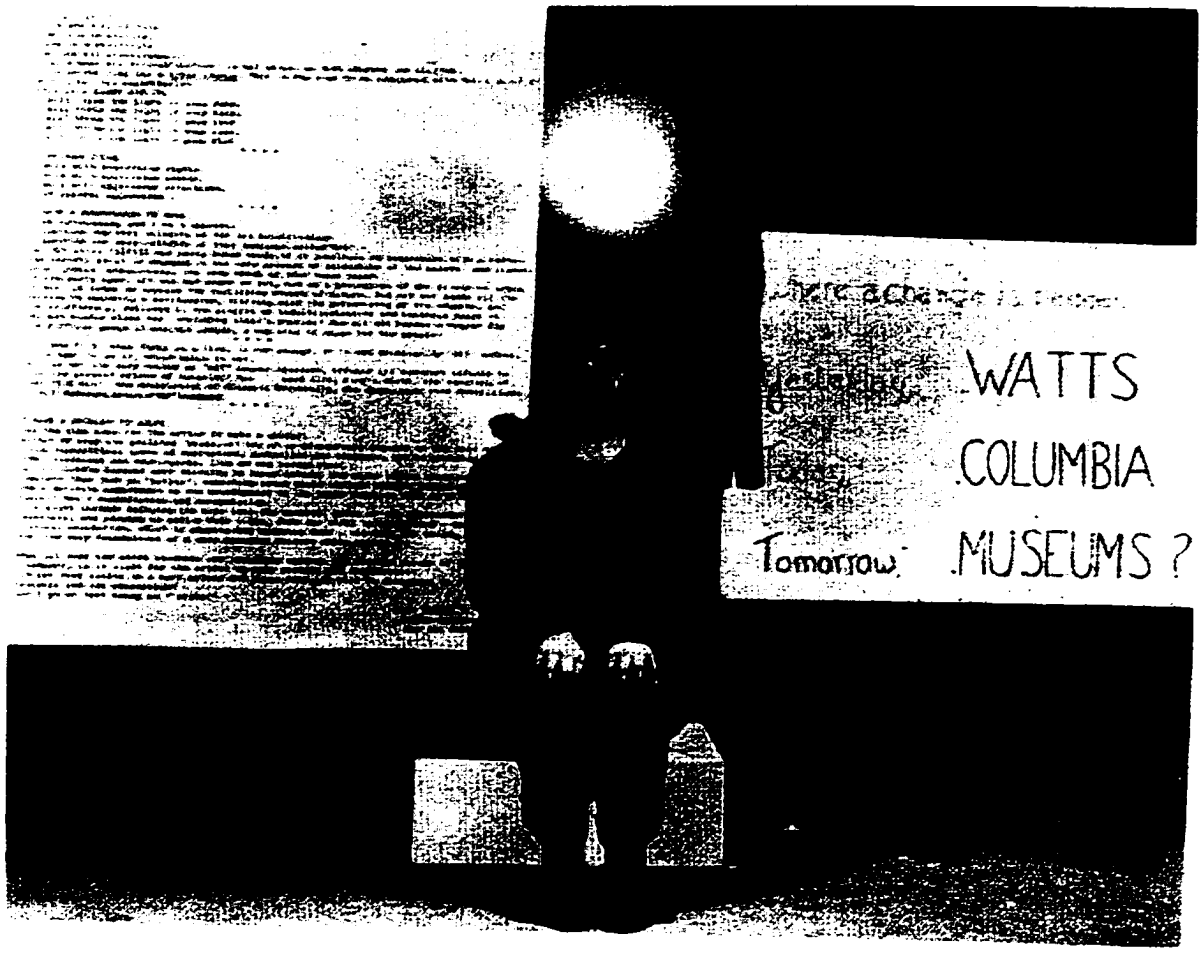
1 — Takis removes his artwork from exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, January 3, 1969. At left, a long-haired Willoughby Sharp. Photo by Mehdi Khonsari.

2 — Gregory Battcock speaking at the Art Workers Coalition Open Hearing, April 1969. Photo by Fred W. McDarrah.

3 — Pulsa control room for their installation at the Museum of Modern Art during ``Spaces" exhibition, early 1970

from Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display*, MIT Press, 1998, ill. 5.11

4 — protestors outside the Dada and Surrealism exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 1968. Photo by Peter Moore.

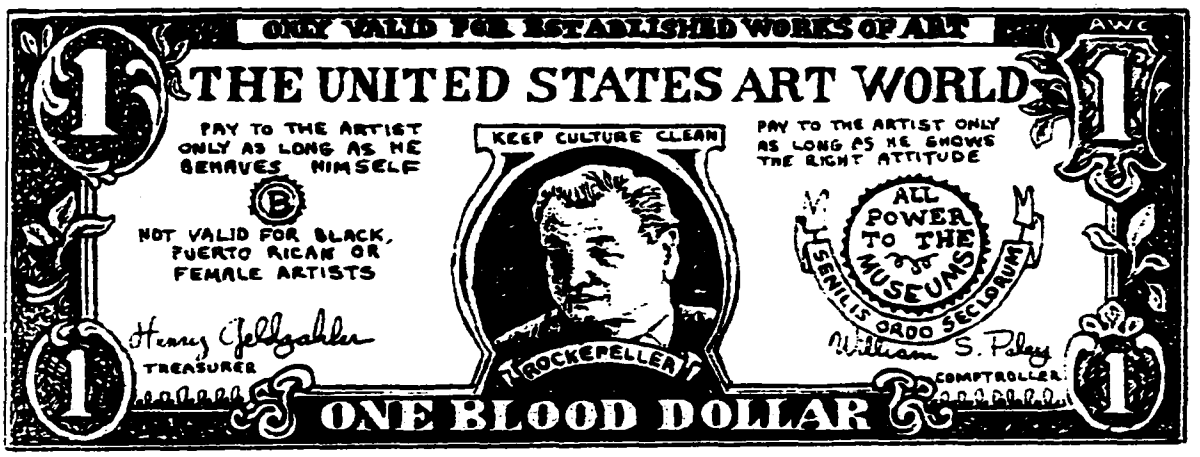


5 — Jean Toche presents manifesto ``Some Notes," December 11, 1967. Photo by Julie Abeles.

from *GAAG Documents* (Printed Matter, NYC, 1978).

6 — Guerrilla Art Action Group action in the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art on November 18, 1969, "A Call for the Immediate Resignation of All the Rockefellers from the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art." Photo by Ka Kwong Hui.

from Lucy Lippard, *Get the Message?* (E.P. Dutton, 1984), p. 11



7 — Anonymous, Rockefeller dollar, n.d., from Art Workers Coalition file, Museum of Modern Art library

8 — ``*and babies?*'' poster produced by the Art Workers Coalition, 1970 from a photograph by Ronald Haeberle.

from Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art* (Phaidon, 1998)

9 — the AWC poster *``and babies?"* is held up in front of Picasso's *Guernica* in a January 3, 1970 demonstration by GAAG and AWC. Photo by Jan van Raay.

from Adrian Henri, *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance* (Thames and Hudson, 1974), ill. 145

ARTICLE I

Our Art Actions are a concept.

Anyone who wishes can use the concept of the Guerrilla Art Action Group, and its content, as they please.

Under no condition, may the ideas that we use, the written material, and other content involved, be copywrighted, nor can it become the exclusive possession of anyone.

ARTICLE II

We do not advocate violence, nor the use of violence.

If there is any physical violence in our Art Actions, it is only directed to ourselves, and as a means of symbolically dramatizing the danger of reality-violence, of oppression, and of repression.

If any person other than ourselves, or the performers involved in the Art Actions, should become the victim of a form of physical violence, even by accident, it would negate the aims and purpose of our Art Actions.

ARTICLE III

We see ourselves as questioners.

Our intention is never to impose our own point of view, but to provoke people into a confrontation with the existing crises.

Our methods are only a few of the possible ways to dramatize a problem.

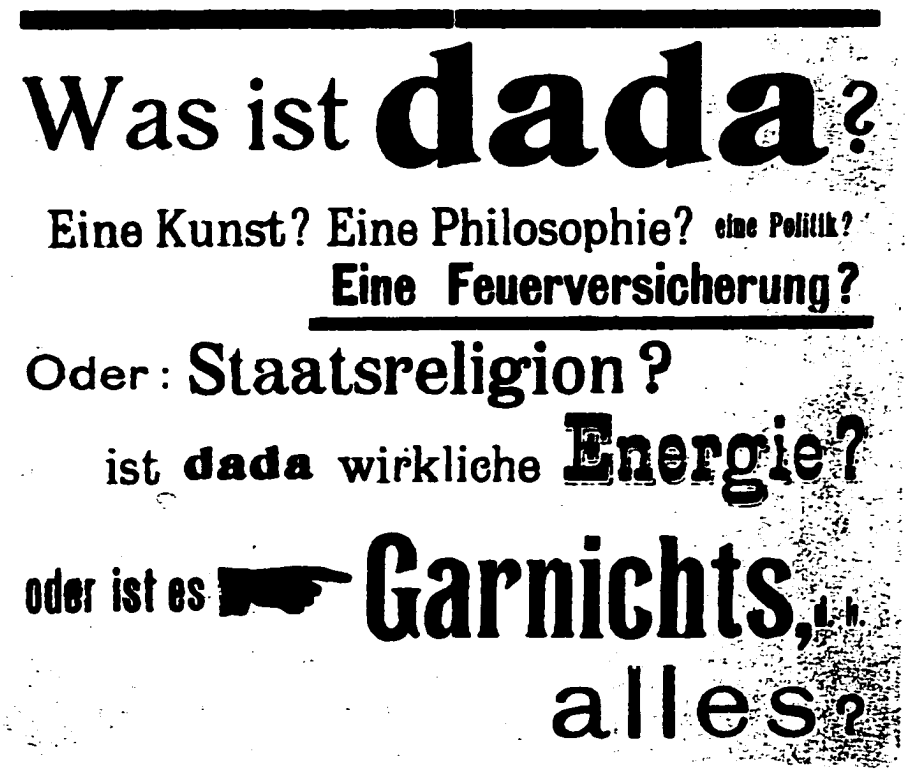
SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS 4th DAY OF MARCH 1970
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF NEW YORK
No. 03-3673307
Qualified in Bronx County
Cert. Filed in New York County
Clerk's Office
Term Expires March 30, 1971

March 4, 1970.
GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP
Jon HENDRICKS
Jean TOCHE

Jon Hendricks
Jean Toche

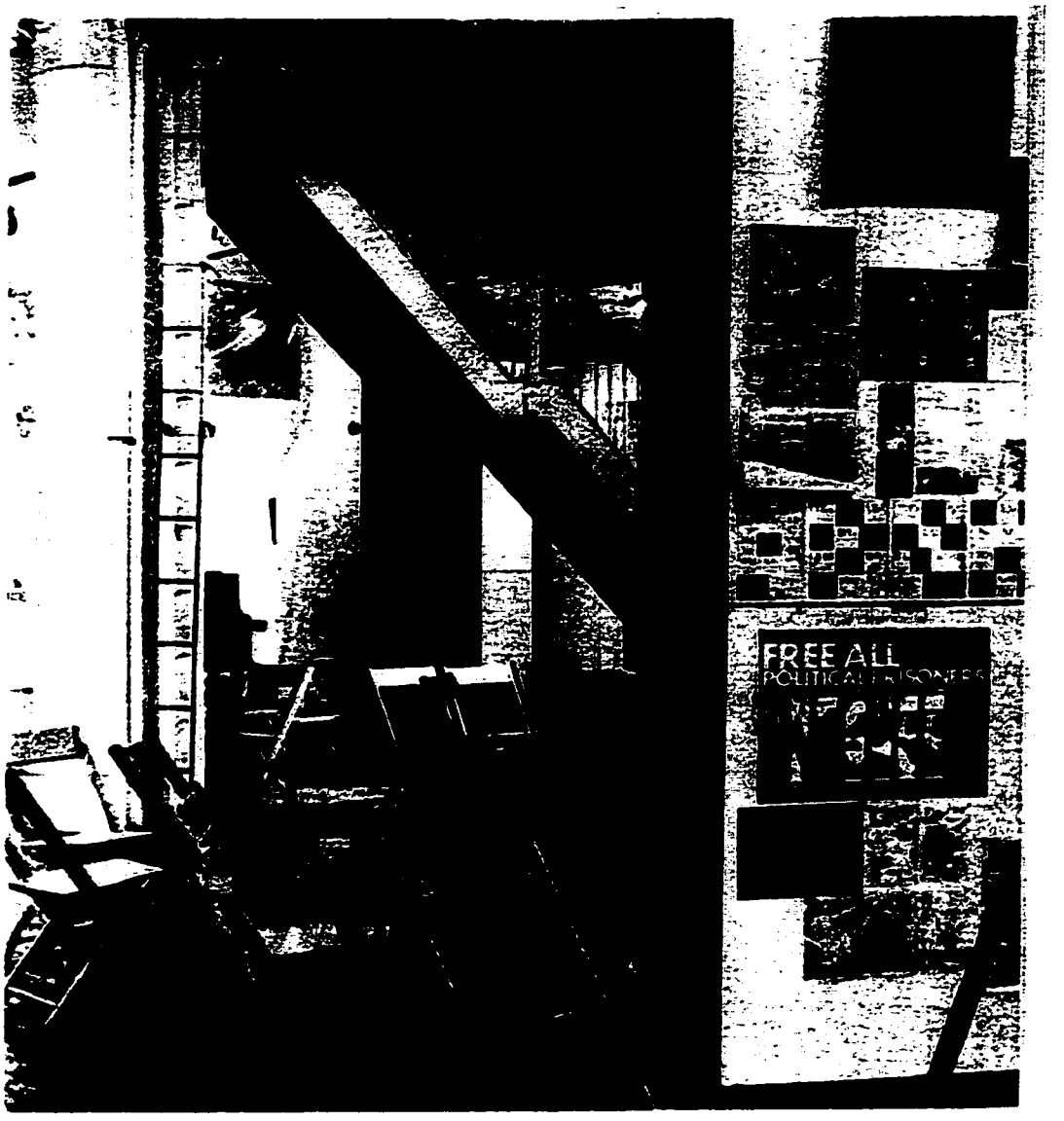
10 — Guerrilla Art Action Group statement, March 4, 1970

11 — flyer advertising the book *GAAG Documents* (Printed Matter, NY, 1978)



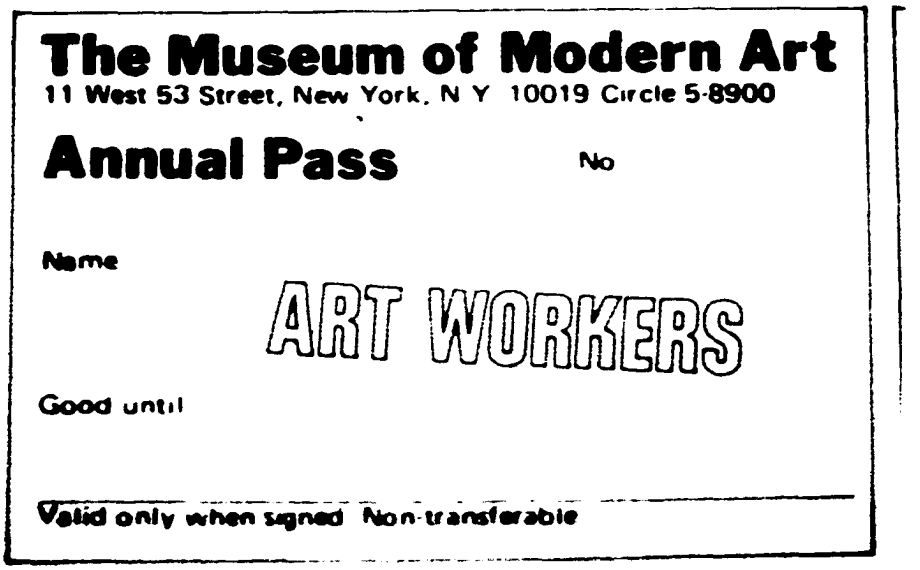
12 —Raoul Hausmann, typography from *Der Dada*, Berlin, no. 2, December 1919.

from Timothy O. Benson, *Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada*, UMI Research Press, 1987

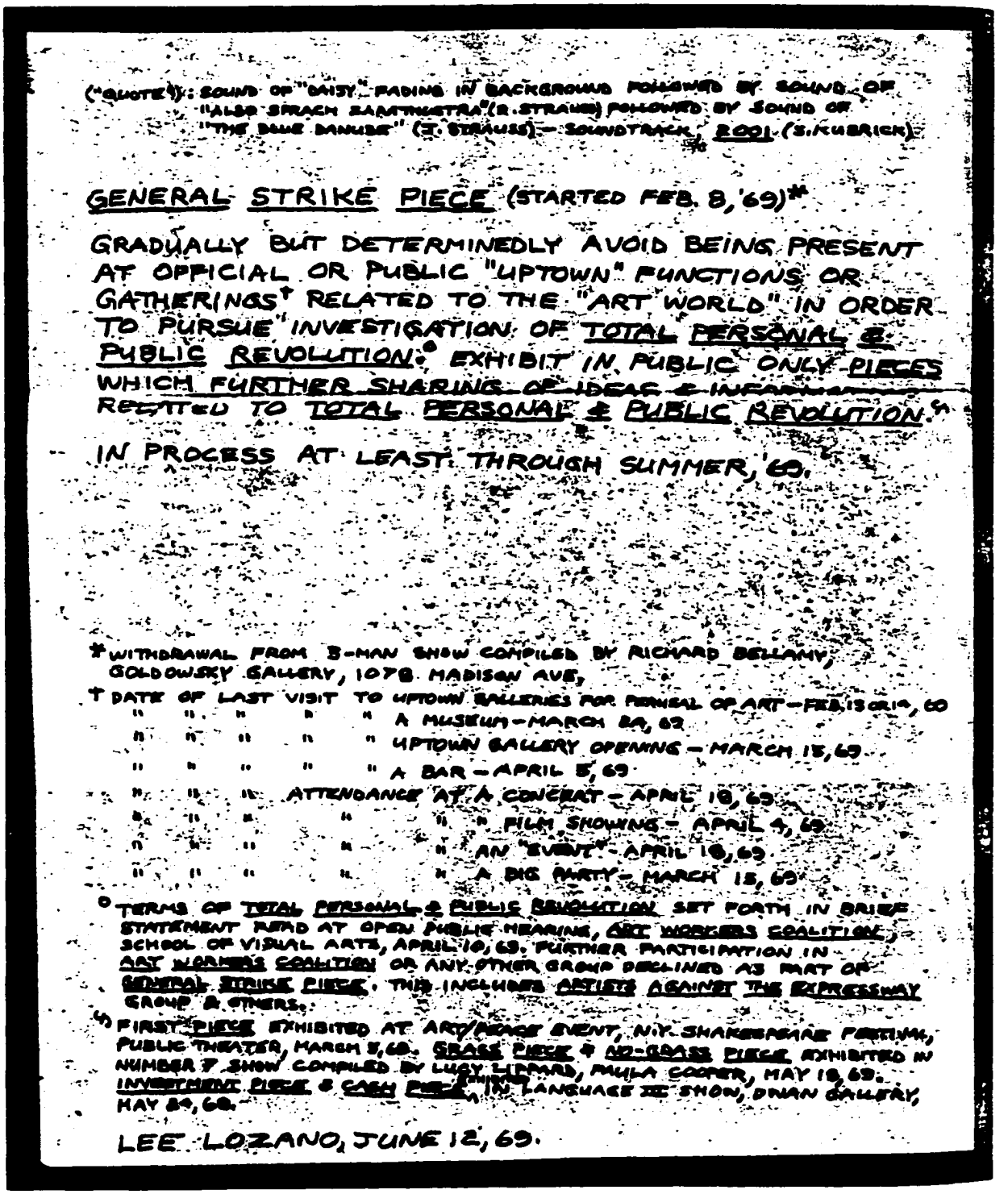


13 — installation view of the Aims of the Revolutionary Media (ARM) show at MUSEUM: A Project for Living Artists, November 1969. Photo by Mehdi Kohnsari.

14 — installation view of the Aims of the Revolutionary Media (ARM) show at MUSEUM: A Project for Living Artists, November 1969. Photo by Mehdi Kohnsari.



15 — an annual pass to the Museum of Modern Art anonymously altered for the Art Workers Coalition; as reproduced on the cover of *Open Hearing* (Art Workers Coalition, 1969).



("QUOTE"): SOUND OF "DAISY" FADING IN BACKGROUND FOLLOWED BY SOUND OF "ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA" (R. STRAUSS) FOLLOWED BY SOUND OF "THE BLUE DANUBE" (J. STRAUSS) — SOUNDTRACK, 2001 (S. KUBRICK).

GENERAL STRIKE PIECE (STARTED FEB. 8, '69)*

GRADUALLY BUT DETERMINEDLY AVOID BEING PRESENT AT OFFICIAL OR PUBLIC "UPTOWN" FUNCTIONS OR GATHERINGS† RELATED TO THE "ART WORLD" IN ORDER TO PURSUE INVESTIGATION OF TOTAL PERSONAL & PUBLIC REVOLUTION.° EXHIBIT IN PUBLIC ONLY PIECES WHICH FURTHER SHARING OF IDEAS & INFORMATION RELATED TO TOTAL PERSONAL & PUBLIC REVOLUTION.§

IN PROCESS AT LEAST THROUGH SUMMER, '69.

*WITHDRAWAL FROM 3-MAN SHOW COMPILED BY RICHARD BELLAMY, GOLDOWSKY GALLERY, 1078 MADISON AVE.

† DATE OF LAST VISIT TO UPTOWN GALLERIES FOR PERIOD OF ART — FEB. 15 OR 16, 60
" " " " " A MUSEUM — MARCH 28, 62
" " " " " UPTOWN GALLERY OPENING — MARCH 15, 69
" " " " " A BAR — APRIL 5, 69
" " " ATTENDANCE AT A CONCERT — APRIL 10, 69
" " " " " " FILM SHOWING — APRIL 4, 69
" " " " " " AN "EVENT" — APRIL 10, 69
" " " " " " A BIG PARTY — MARCH 15, 69

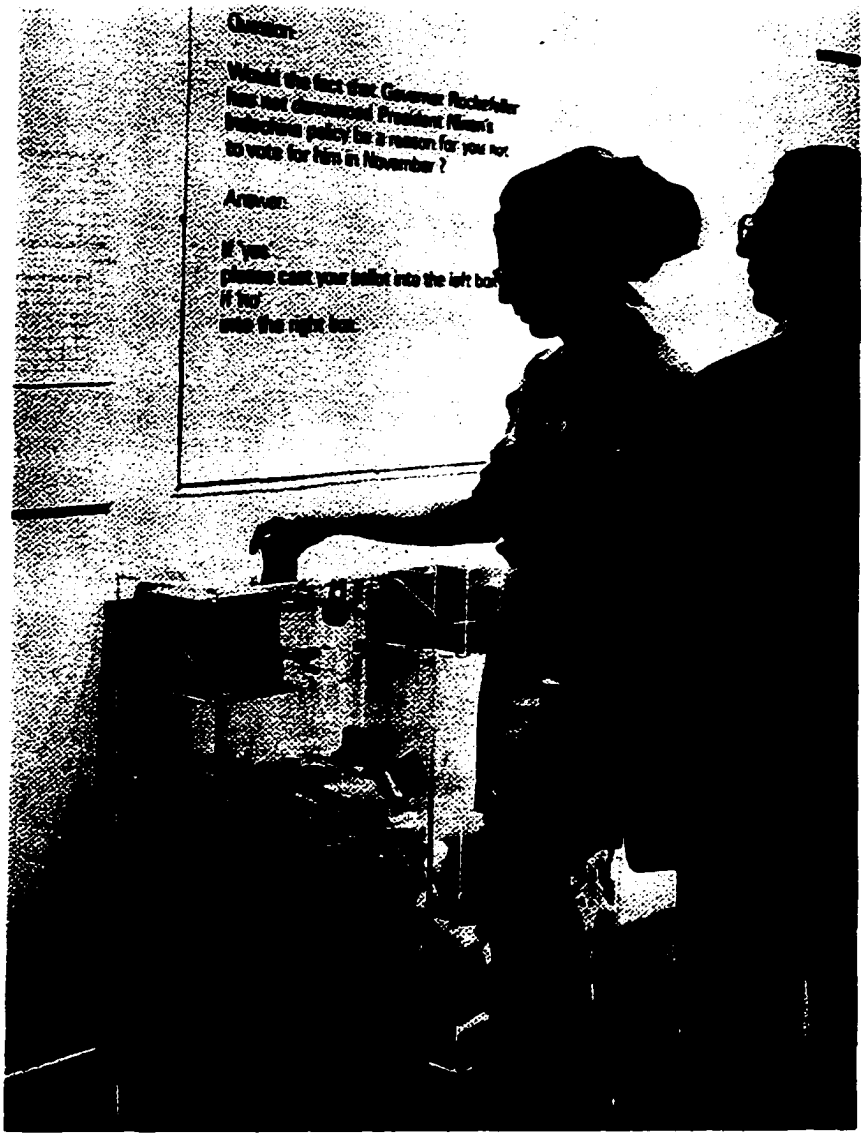
° TERMS OF TOTAL PERSONAL & PUBLIC REVOLUTION SET FORTH IN BRIEF STATEMENT READ AT OPEN PUBLIC HEARING, ART WORKERS COALITION, SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS, APRIL 10, 69. FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN ART WORKERS COALITION OR ANY OTHER GROUP DECLINED AS PART OF GENERAL STRIKE PIECE. THIS INCLUDES ARTISTS AGAINST THE EXPRESSWAY GROUP & OTHERS.

§ FIRST PIECE EXHIBITED AT ART/FORCE EVENT, N.Y. SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL PUBLIC THEATER, MARCH 5, 69. GRASS PIECE & NO-GRASS PIECE EXHIBITED IN NUMBER 7 SHOW COMPILED BY LUCY LIPPARD, PAULA COOPER, MAY 18, 69. INVESTMENT PIECE & CASH PIECE, IN LANGUAGE III SHOW, DWAN GALLERY, MAY 24, 69.

LEE LOZANO, JUNE 12, 69.

16 — Lee Lozano, *General Strike Piece*, 1969

from Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (MIT Press, 1999), pl. 12

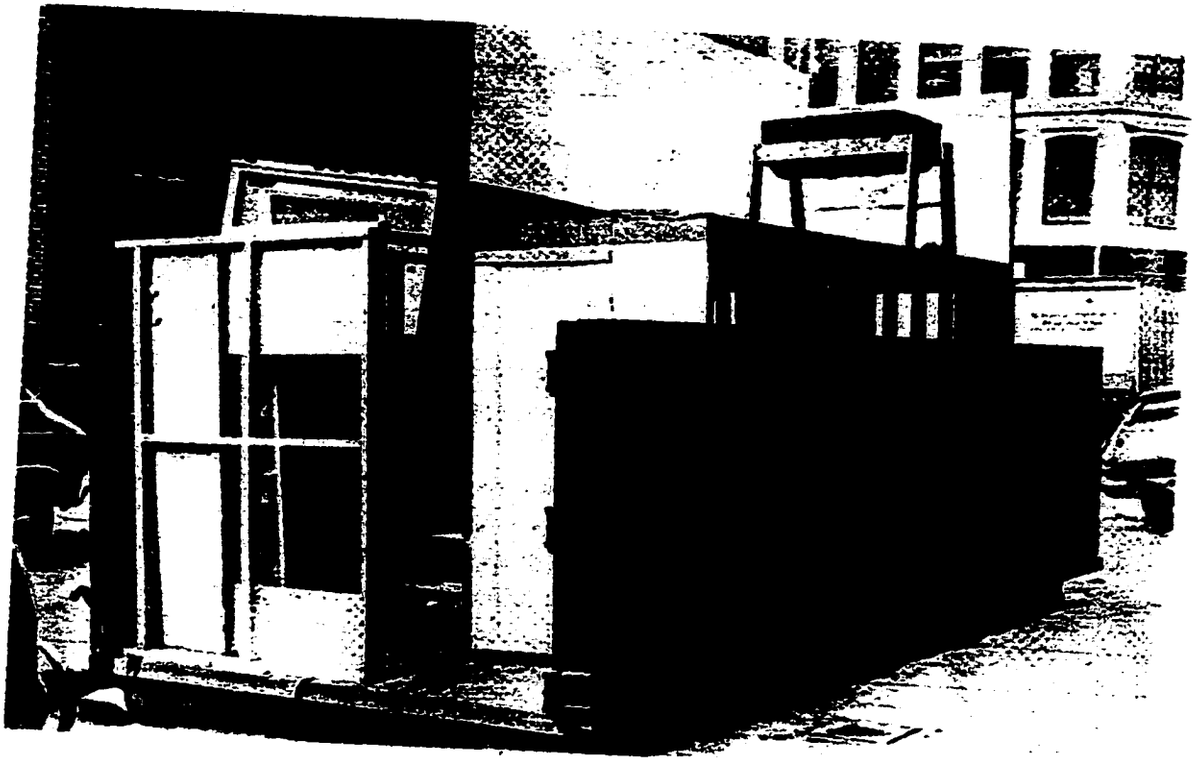


17 — Hans Haacke, *Viewer Poll* at "Information," Museum of Modern Art, 1970

from Mary Ann Staniszewski, *Power of Display* (MIT Press, MA, 1998), ill. 5.7

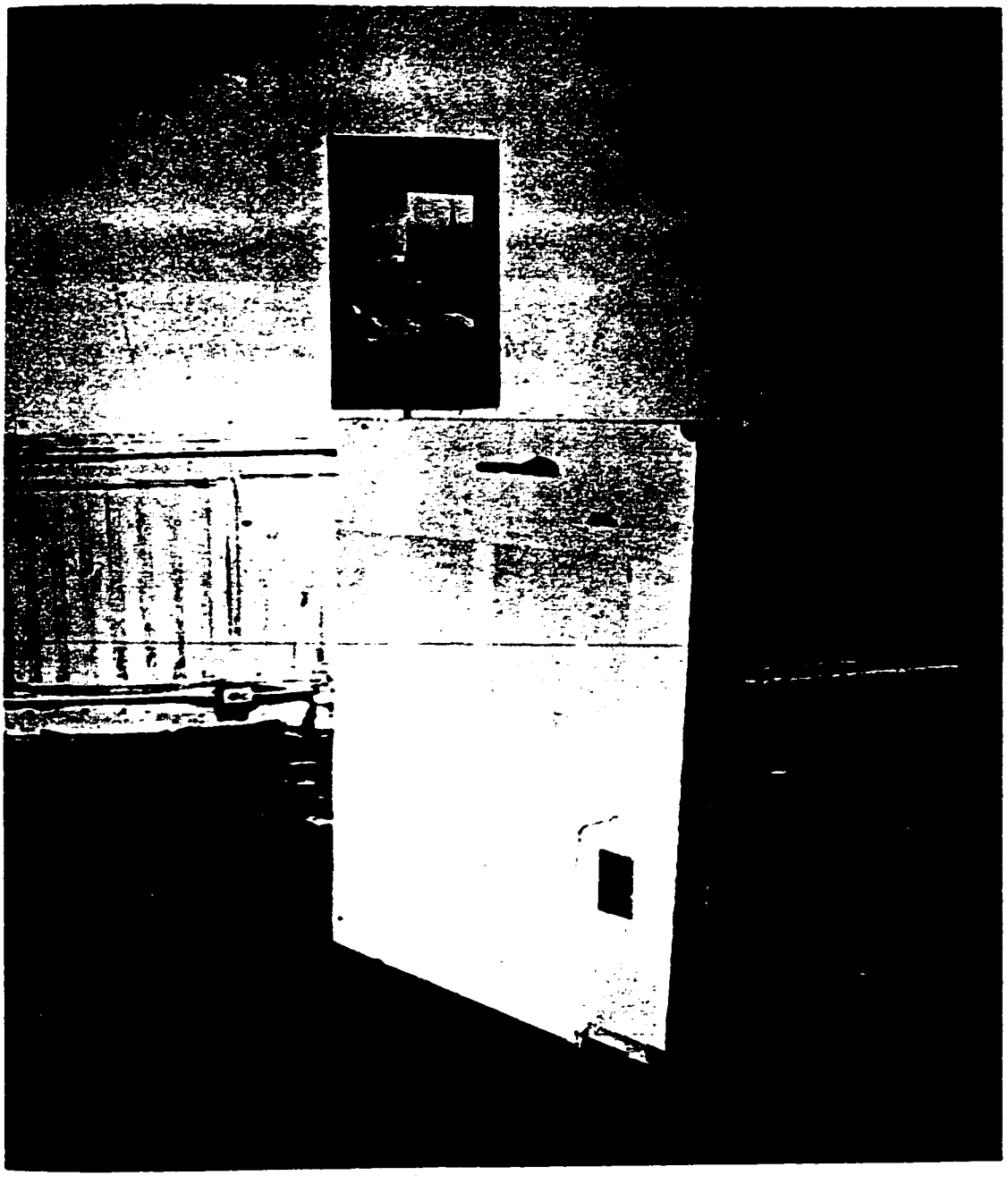
18 — John Van Saun sleeping, illustration in catalogue, *John Van Saun* (Richard Feigen Gallery, September 1969)

from *John Van Saun* (Richard Feigen Gallery, September 1969)



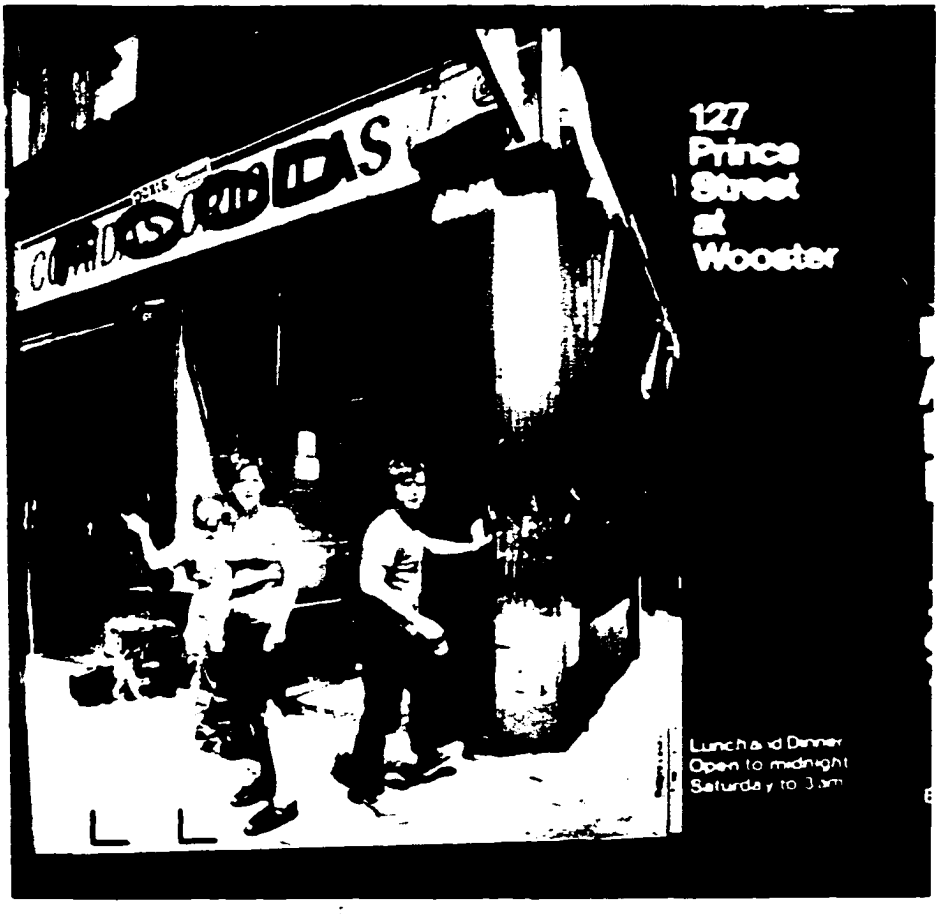
19 — Gordon Matta-Clark, *Open House Dumpster*, 1972. The piece was reconstructed for a 1997 exhibition at P.S. 1

from Pamela M. Lee, *Object to Be Destroyed* (MIT Press, 2000), p. 200.



20 — Gordon Matta-Clark, "wall sandwich" cut from Food restaurant during renovation with a photograph of the hole mounted on the wall behind it.

from Robyn Brentano with Mark Savitt, *112 Workshop/112 Greene Street: History, Artists and Artworks* (112 Workshop, NY, 1981), p. 37.



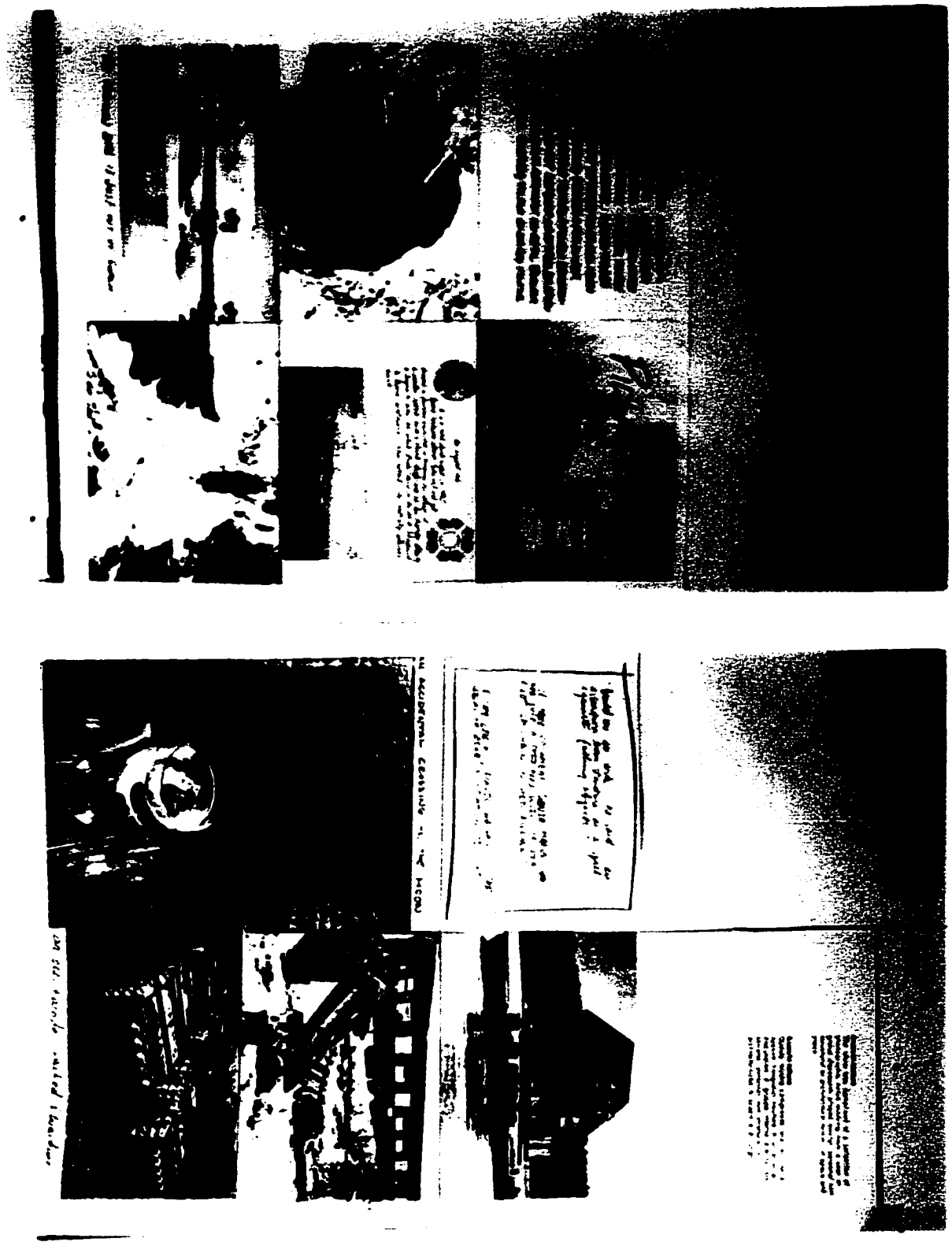
21 — advertisement for Food restaurant in *Avalanche* magazine shows a photograph of the storefront before it was remodeled altered with the word "FOOD" (*Avalanche* no. 3, Fall 1971, p. 10).

22 — exterior of the completed Food restaurant

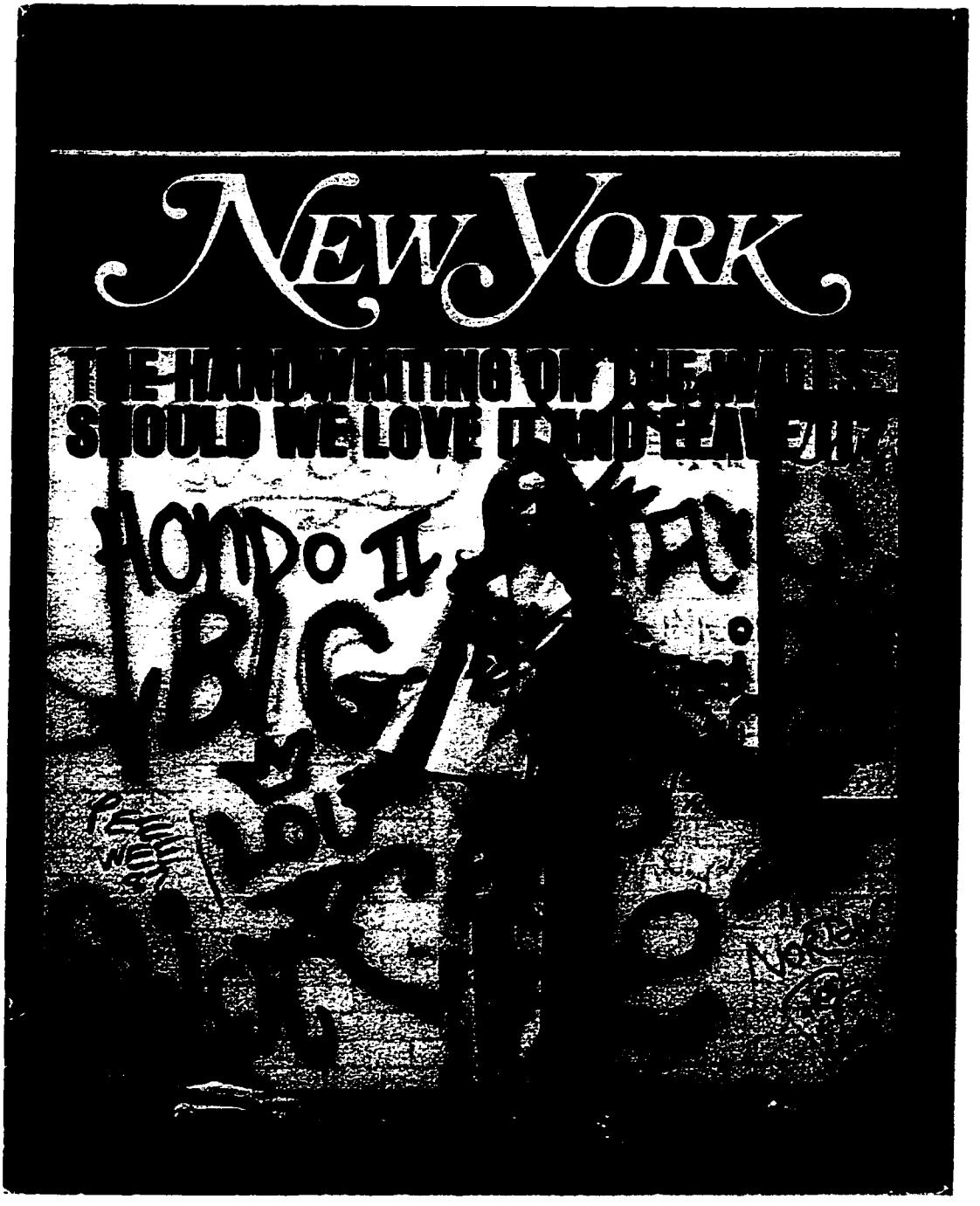
from Mary Jane Jacobs, ed., *Gordon Matta-Clark: A Retrospective,* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1985)

23 — Anarchitecture group meeting. Left to right, Suzanne Harris, Ree Morton, Jeffrey Lew, and Gordon Matta-Clark, 1974.

from Mary Jane Jacobs, ed., *Gordon Matta-Clark: A Retrospective,* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1985)



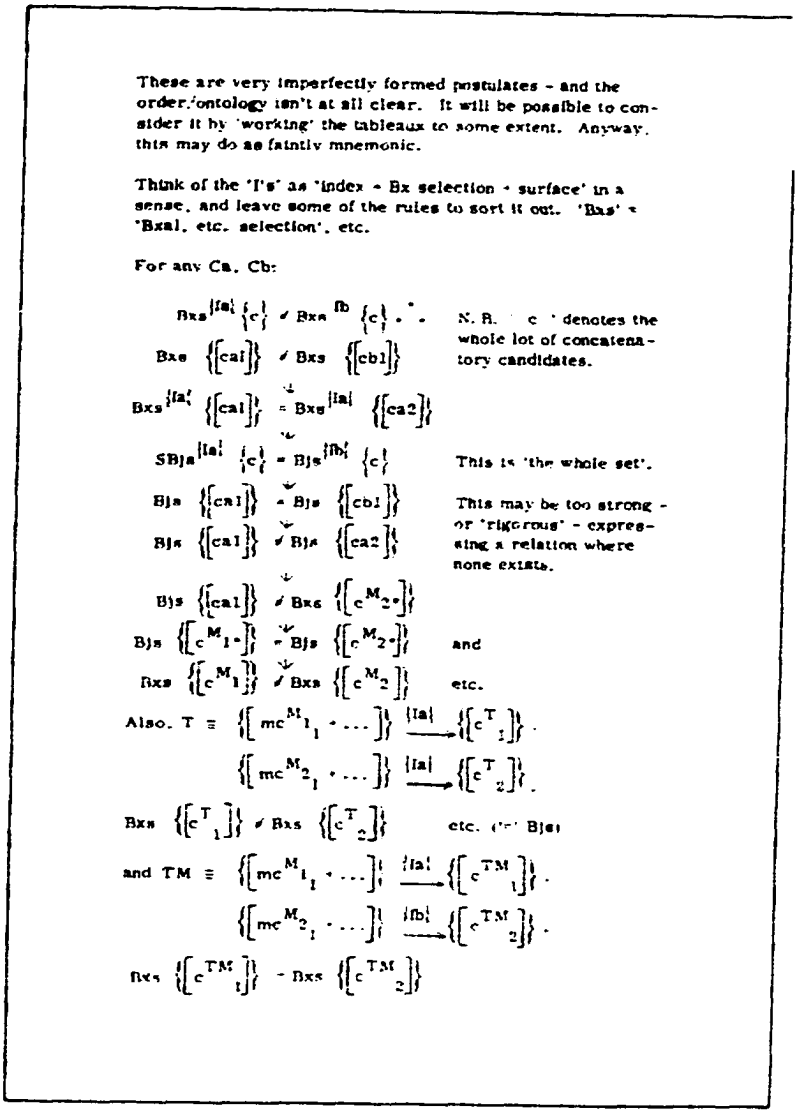
24 — Photos by the Anarchitecture group in *Flash Art*, June 1974, no. 46/47, pp. 70-71.



25 — cover of *New York* magazine, March 26, 1973 features article on graffiti authored by Richard Goldstein

26 — Gordon Matta-Clark cutting a hole in the floor of P.S. 1 in Queens, New York, for the art space's inaugural exhibition in June, 1976. Photo by Harry Shunk.

from *Rooms P.S. 1* (Institute for Art and Urban Resources, NY, 1977)



These are very imperfectly formed postulates - and the order/ontology isn't at all clear. It will be possible to consider it by 'working' the tableaux to some extent. Anyway, this may do as faintly mnemonic.

Think of the 'I's' as 'index = Bx selection = surface' in a sense, and leave some of the rules to sort it out. 'Bxs' = 'Bxa1, etc. selection', etc.

For any Ca, Cb:

$Bxs^{|a|}\{c\} \neq Bxs^{|b|}\{c\}$. N. B. 'c' denotes the whole lot of concatenatory candidates.

$Bxs\ \{[ca1]\} \neq Bxs\ \{[cb1]\}$

$Bxs^{|a|}\{[ca1]\} = Bxs^{|a|}\{[ca2]\}$

$SBjs^{|a|}\{c\} = Bjs^{|b|}\{c\}$ This is 'the whole set'.

$Bjs\ \{[ca1]\} = Bjs\ \{[cb1]\}$ This may be too strong - or 'rigorous' - expressing a relation where none exists.

$Bjs\ \{[ca1]\} \neq Bjs\ \{[ca2]\}$

$Bjs\ \{[ca1]\} \neq Bxs\ \{[c^{M}{}_{2}*]\}$

$Bjs\ \{[c^{M}{}_{1}*]\} = Bjs\ \{[c^{M}{}_{2}*]\}$ and

$Bxs\ \{[c^{M}{}_{1}]\} \neq Bxs\ \{[c^{M}{}_{2}]\}$ etc.

Also. $T \equiv \{[mc^{M}{}_{1}\ * \ldots]\} \xrightarrow{|a|} \{[c^{T}{}_{1}]\}$.

$\{[mc^{M}{}_{2}\ * \ldots]\} \xrightarrow{|a|} \{[c^{T}{}_{2}]\}$.

$Bxs\ \{[c^{T}{}_{1}]\} \neq Bxs\ \{[c^{T}{}_{2}]\}$ etc. (= Bjs)

and $TM \equiv \{[mc^{M}{}_{1}\ * \ldots]\} \xrightarrow{|a|} \{[c^{TM}{}_{1}]\}$.

$\{[mc^{M}{}_{2}\ * \ldots]\} \xrightarrow{|b|} \{[c^{TM}{}_{2}]\}$.

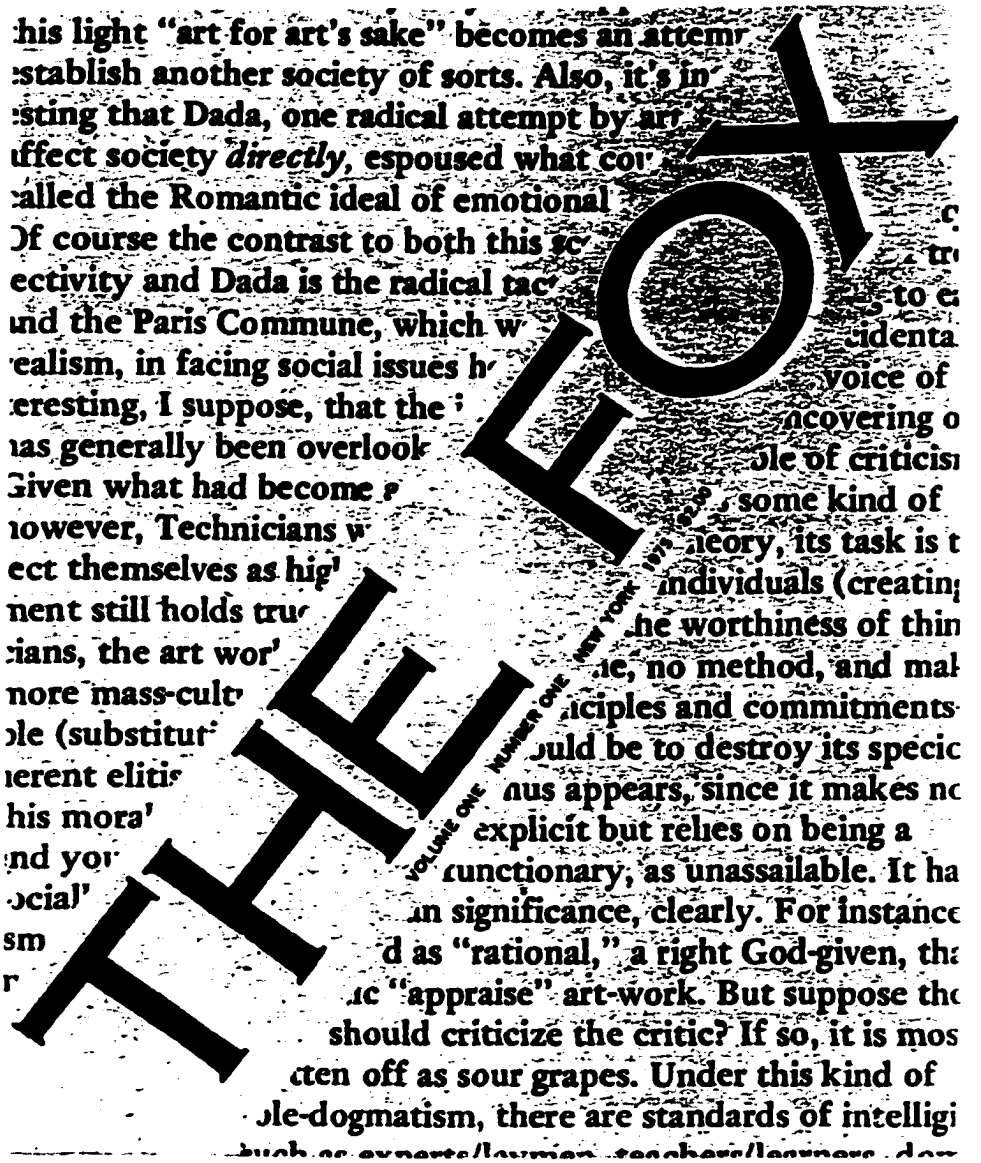
$Bxs\ \{[c^{TM}{}_{1}]\} = Bxs\ \{[c^{TM}{}_{2}]\}$

27 — chart from the discussion of "going-on" in *Art-Language*, vol. 2

from Charles Harrison, *Essays on Art & Language* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford UK, Cambridge MA, 1991)

28 — still from the film *Borba u New Yorku* by Zoran Popovic shows a recording session for songs by Music-Language group, members of Art & Language and the Red Crayola (note copies of *The Fox* on the wall). Red Crayola is continued today by Mayo Thompson.

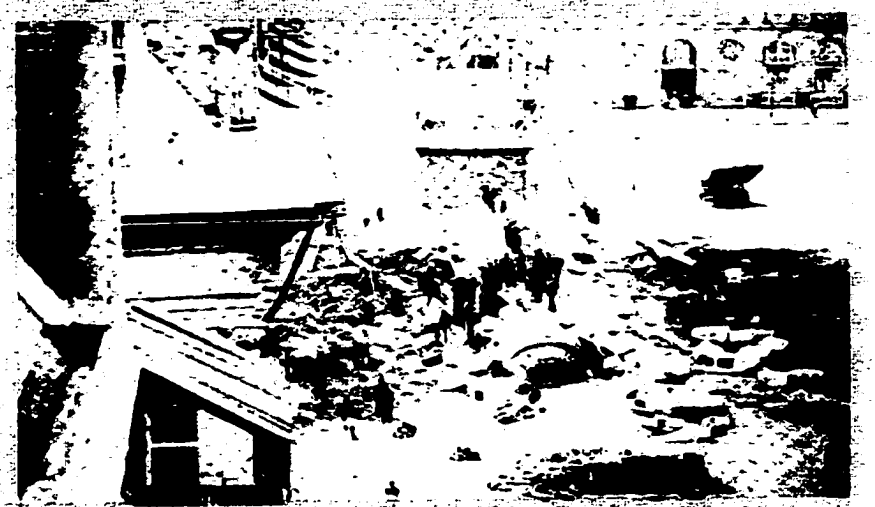
from Charles Harrison, *Essays on Art & Language* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford UK, Cambridge MA, 1991)



29 — cover of *The Fox*, no. 1, 1975.

Avant-Garde?

In 1871 'radical art' wasn't a question of style.



In May 16, 1871, the workers and artists of the Paris Commune toppled the Victory Column at the Place Vendome. This monument to despotism and imperialism was seen as a cultural and political affront to the revolutionary movement. The achievements of the Commune included the formation of an Artist's Federation organized to free the arts from the domination of the bourgeoisie.

If you think art is 'neutral' you're kidding yourself-- and ignoring history.

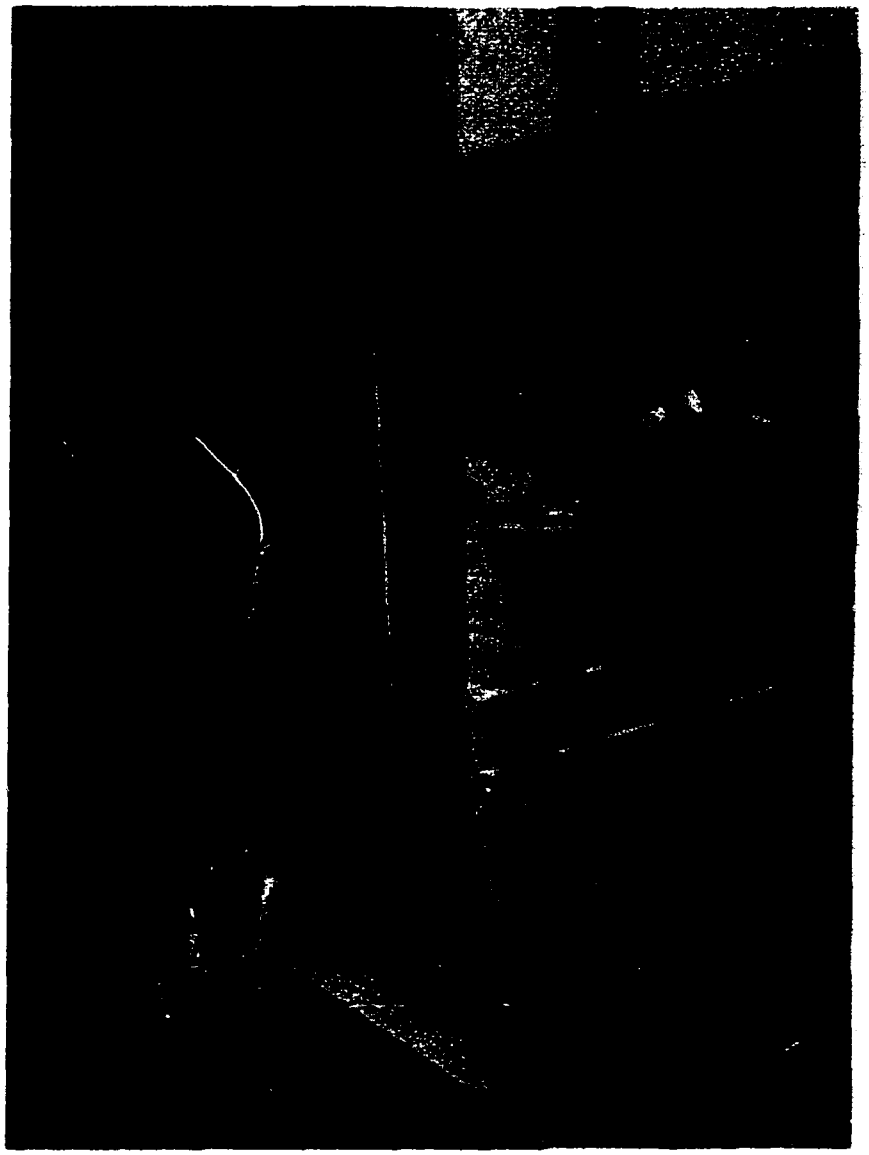
Artists Meeting for Cultural Change examines the political nature of culture--how it is used, and how it uses us. We can actively oppose and change the existing structure of society. Come Sunday nights at 8:00 to Artists Space, 155 Wooster Street.

30 — street poster advertising the meetings of the Artists Meeting for Cultural Change. Reproduced in *anti*-catalog, p. 78.

an *anti*-catalog

Because it calls the neutrality of art into question, this Anti-Catalog will be seen as a political statement. It is, in reality, no more political thar the viewpoint of official culture. The singularity of that viewpoint—the way it advances the interests of a class—is difficult to see because in our society that viewpoint is so pervasive. In this Anti-Catalog, we have attempted to elucidate some of the underlying mechanisms and assumptions. Our effort is not intended simply as a critical exercise. Culture has the power to shape not only our view of the past but also the way we see ourselves today. Official culture can only diminish our ability to understand the world and to act upon that understanding. The critical examination of culture is thus a necessary step in gaining control over the meaning we give our lives.

31 — cover of the *anti*-catalog (Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, NY, 1977)

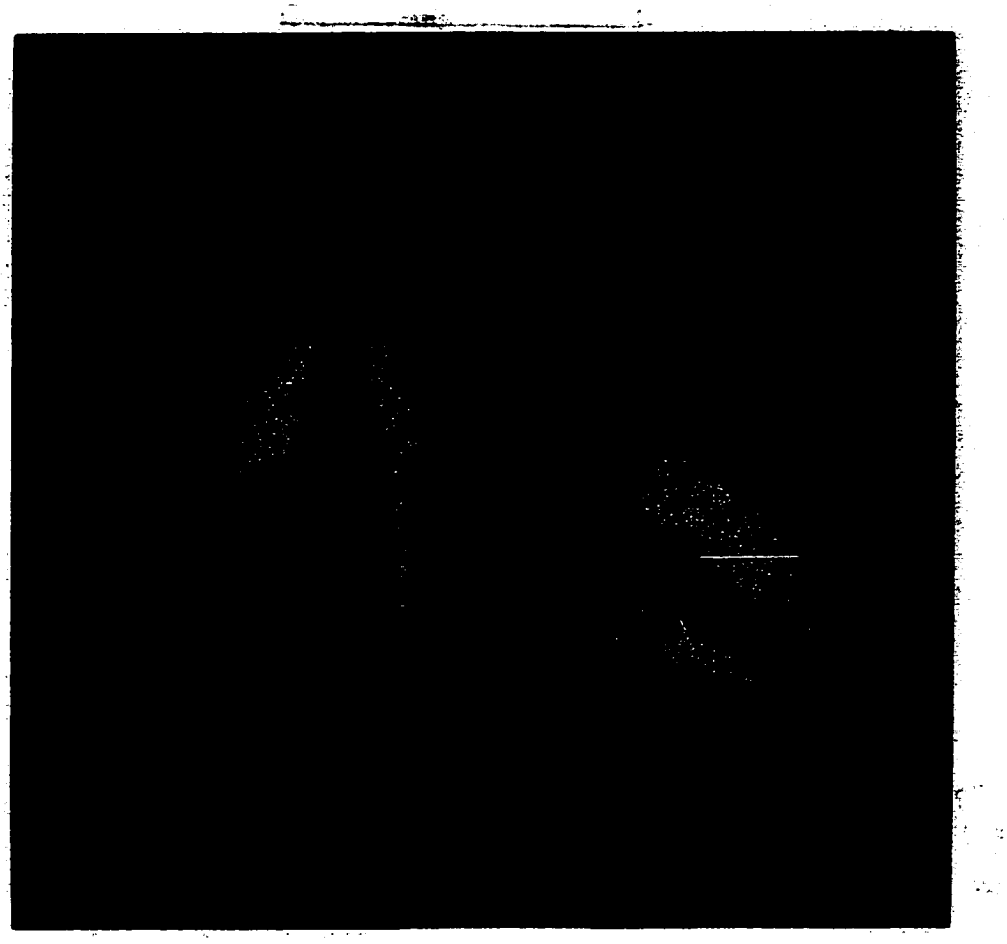


32— Robin Winters, *Silent Food for Speechless Fools*, 1976.
Photo by Lizbeth Marano.

from *The Kitchen Center for Video and Music 75-76*
(Haleakala, Inc., NY, 1976)

33 — image transmitted via QWIP facsimile transmitter, *Send/Receive*, by Tom Otterness, ca. 1979

from Collaborative Projects, Inc., bound volume called the ``Black Book," 1980, n.p. (title page reads: ``I. 1980 ACTIVITIES...").

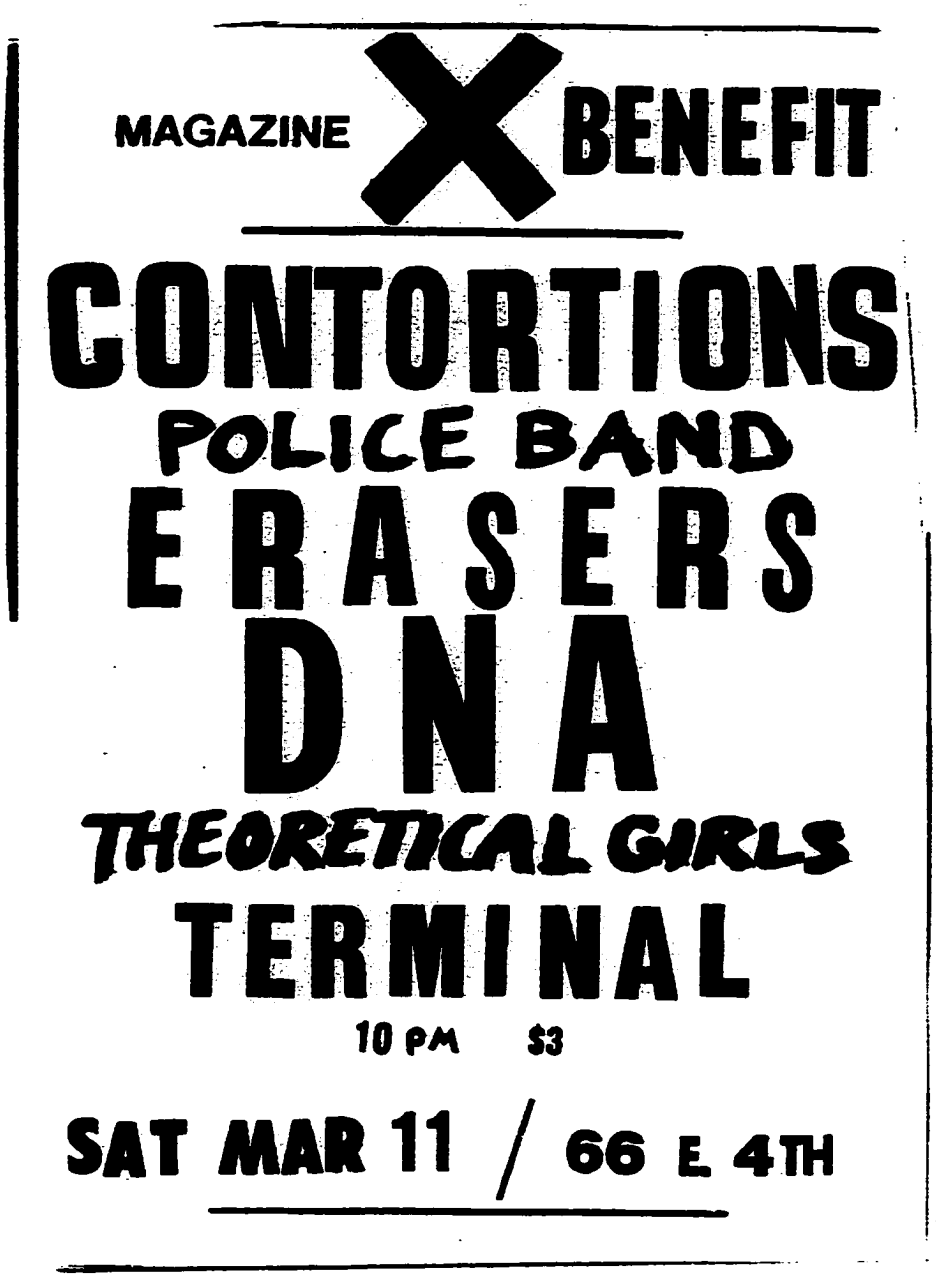


34 — Patti Astor (left; later proprietor of the Fun Gallery in the East Village), and Anya Phillips in the film *Kidnapped*, by Eric Mitchell, 1978

Polaroid from the videotape

35 — cover of "Punk Till You Puke," a special issue of the Canadian magazine *File* on New York rock music, edited by Diego Cortez, Anya Phillips and Jimmy de Sana, vol. 3, no. 4, Fall 1977.

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985, p. 36.)



36 — street poster advertising a benefit for *X Motion Picture Magazine*, 1978

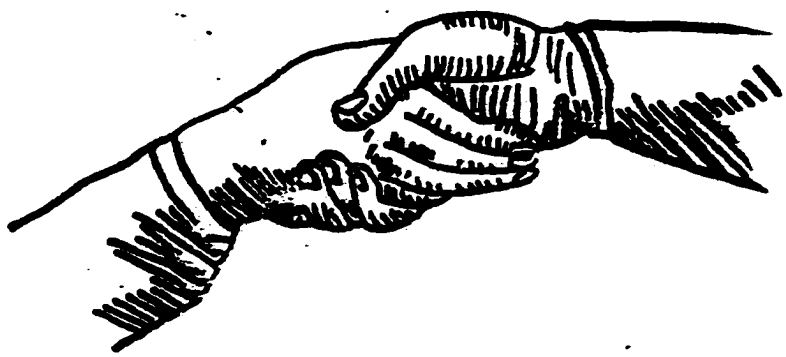
from Collaborative Projects, Inc., bound volume called the "Black Book," 1980, n.p. (title page reads: "I. 1980 ACTIVITIES...")

THE OFFICES OF
FEND, FITZGIBBON, HOLZER, NADIN, PRINCE & WINTERS

305 BROADWAY ROOM 600 NY NY 10013 (212) 233-3794

A MOMENT OF TRUTH

(with drinks)



MEMBERS OF THE OFFICE WILL BE AT 112 WORKSHOP, 325 SPRING STREET, 7-9 PM, FRIDAY, MARCH 28 TO ANSWER QUESTIONS AND DISCUSS PUBLIC POLICY.

AN EXPOSITION OF OUR SERVICES ALONG WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL INQUIRIES WILL CONTINUE THROUGH APRIL 8, TUESDAY-SATURDAY, 1-6 PM.

38 — announcement for a meeting at 112 Greene Street held by the Offices of Fend, Fitzgibbon, Holzer, Nadin and Winters, 1980

from Collaborative Projects, Inc., bound volume called the "Black Book," 1980, n.p. (title page reads: "I. ACTIVITIES...")

39 — crowd at "The Manifesto Show," held at Colen Fitzgibbon's storefront studio at 5 Bleecker Street, 1979. Front row, left to right: musician Randy Ludacre, artist Mike Glier, dancer Cara Brownell (seated on floor), artist Robert Cooney, (at right, perusing desk) artist Kathleen Thomas. Photo by Vincent Falci.

from Lucy Lippard, *Get the Message?* (E.P. Dutton, 1984), p. 168.

40 — Rigoberto Torres and John Ahearn perform live portrait casting

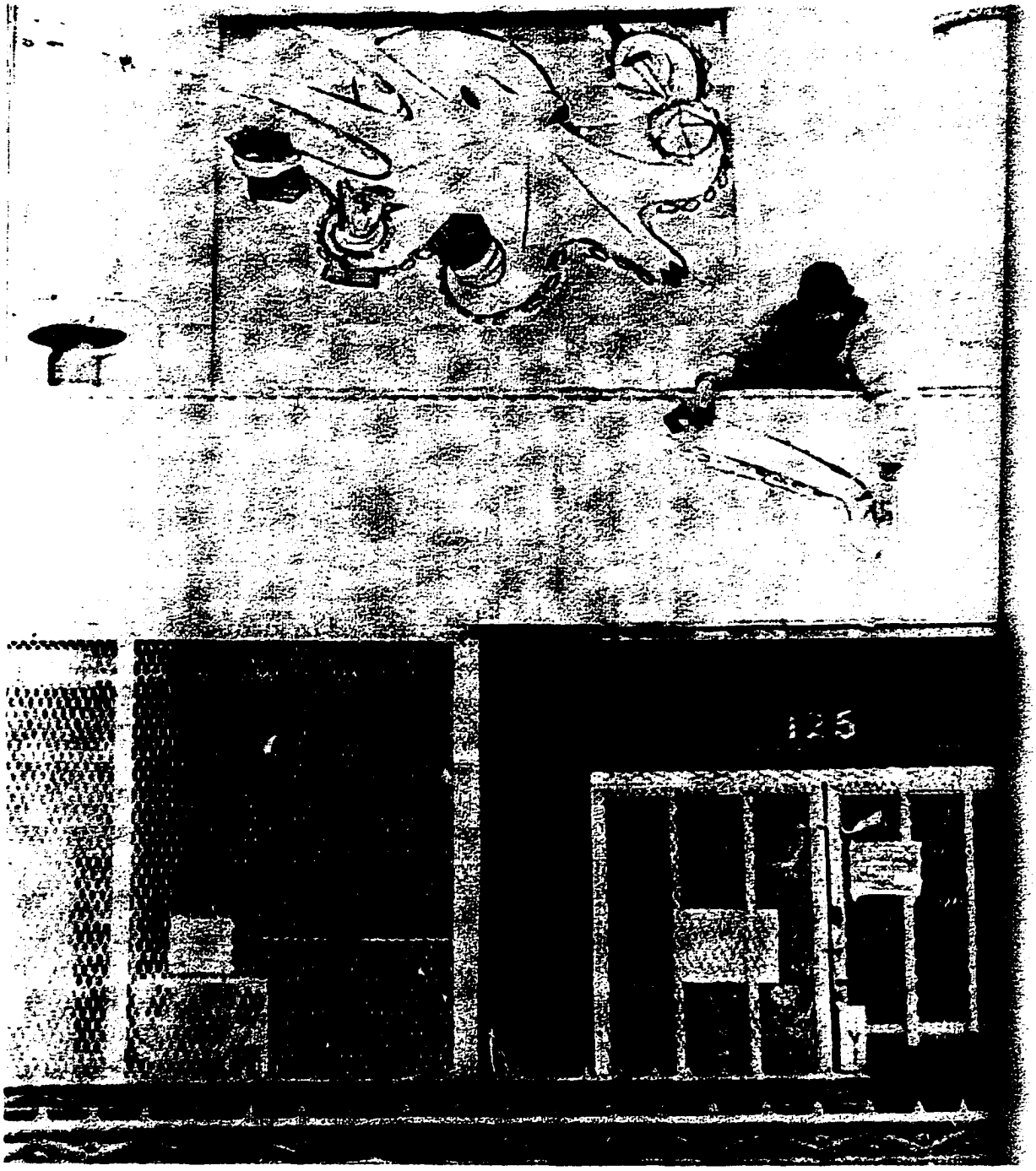
from ``Indoor/Outdoor" auction exhibition catalogue, El Bohio Community and Cultural Center, 1986

41 — John Ahearn's exhibition opens at Fashion Moda, Bronx, New York, 1979. Photo by Lisa Kahane.

Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985), p.19

42 — Exterior of Fashion Moda gallery in the South Bronx with mural by Crash (Johnny Matos) during the graffiti exhibition, 1980. Photo by Lisa Kahane.

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)



43 — Rebecca Howland affixes painted paper octopus to the exterior of the Lower East Side storefront occupied for "The Real Estate Show," 1980. Photo by Ann Messner.

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

44 — Exterior of the building housing the Times Square Show at 41st Street and 7th Avenue, New York, 1980. Photo by Lisa Kahane.

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

45 — Opening night crowd at the Times Square Show, June 1980.

from Lucy Lippard (as "Anne Ominous"), "Sex and Death and Shock and Schlock: A Long Review of The Times Square Show," *Artforum*, October 1980

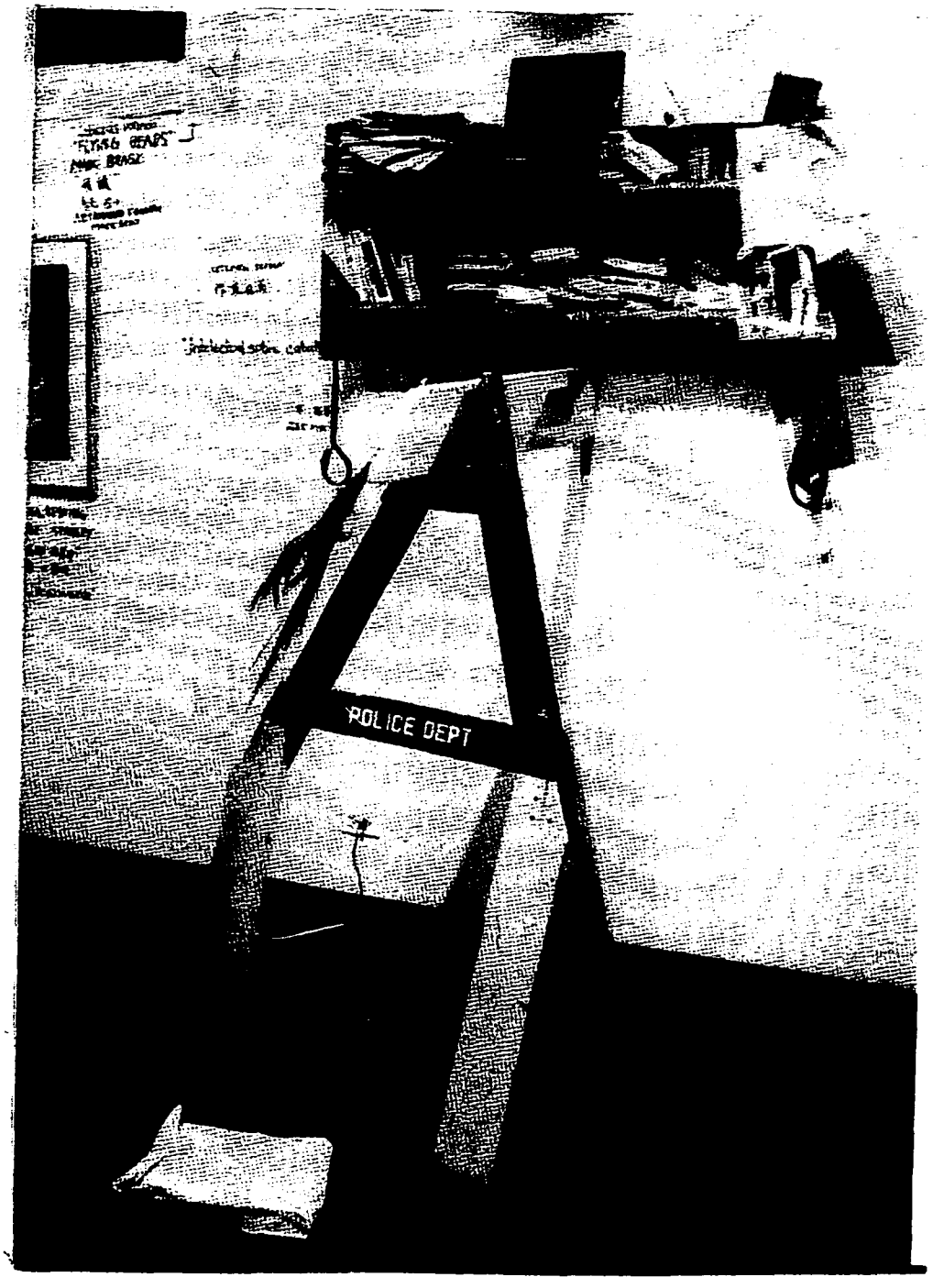
46 — Gift shop at the Times Square Show, 1980.

from Lucy Lippard (as "Anne Ominous"), "Sex and Death and Shock and Schlock: A Long Review of The Times Square Show," *Artforum*, October 1980

Directors of Fashion Moda, William Scott, Joe Lewis and Stefan Eins, left to right, in the group's South Bronx studio—"challenging art as an elitist thing."

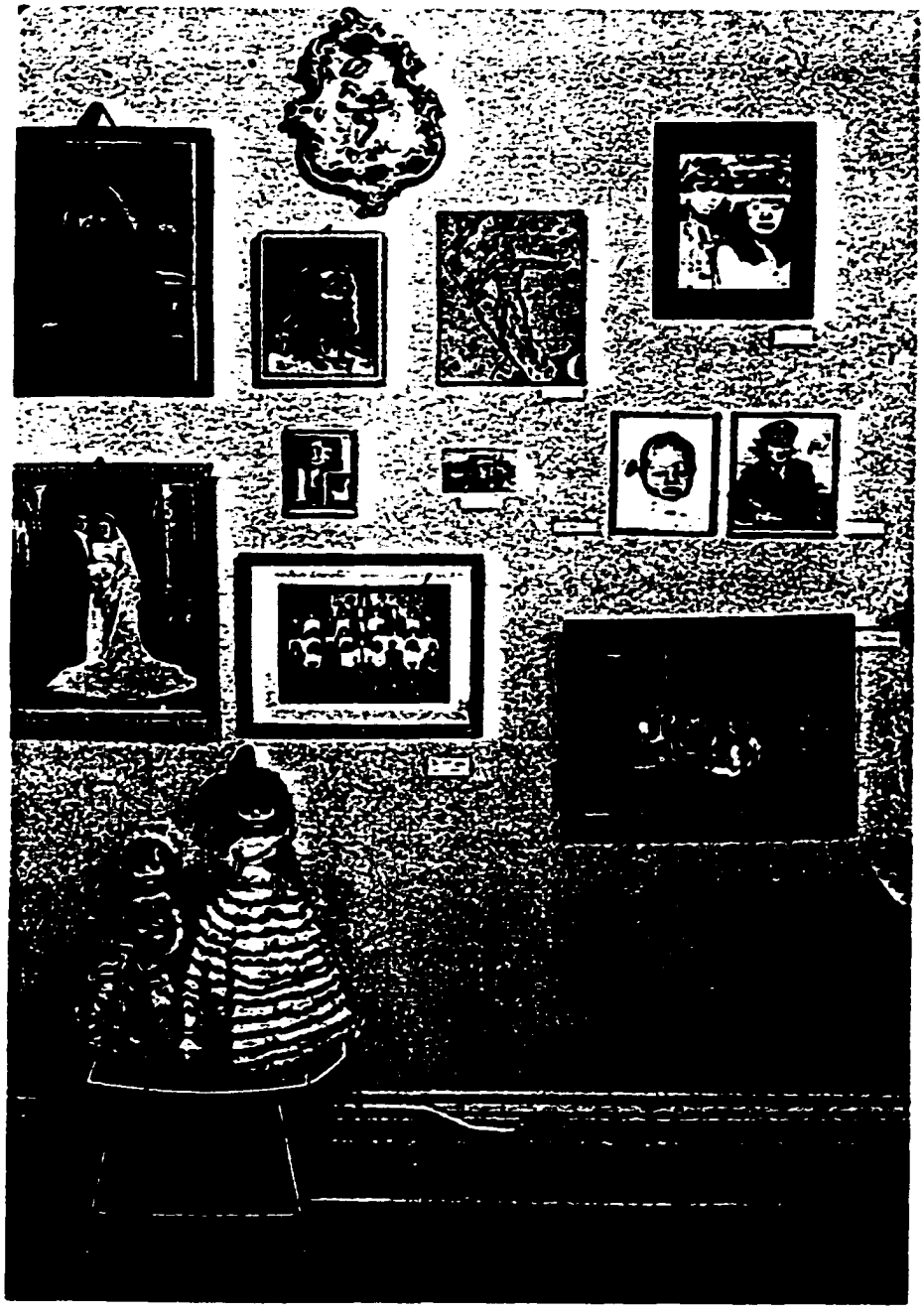
47 — Co-directors of Fashion Moda (from left) William Scott, Joe Lewis and Stefan Eins, photographed for *New York Times* article by Lou Manna, February 1, 1981, shortly after the New Museum show (reproduced with *Times* caption).

from Julie Ault, ed., *Cultural Economies: Histories from the Alternative Arts Movement, NYC* (Drawing Center & Real Life Magazine, 1996)



48 — Installation by Joe Lewis at the New Museum "Events" exhibition, December 1980-January 1981.

from *Events: Fashion Moda, Taller Boricua, Artists Invite Artists* (New Museum, NY 1981)



49 — Group Material, ``The People's Choice (Arroz con Mango),'' an exhibition held at the group's East 13th Street storefront in 1981.

1st ISSUE POLITICAL ART DOCUMENTATION /DISTRIBUTION
February 1981

PAD: Waking Up In NYC

PAD (Political Art Documentation/Distribution) is an artists' resource and networking organization coming out of and into New York City. *Our main goal is to provide artists with an organized relationship to society;* one way we are doing this is by building a collection of documentation of international socially-concerned art. PAD defines "social concern" in the broadest sense, as any work that deals with issues—ranging from sexism and racism to ecological damage or other forms of human oppression. We document all kinds of work from movement posters to the most personal of individual statements. Art comes from art as well as from life. Knowing this makes us want to learn more about the production, distribution and impact of socially-concerned art works in the context of our culture and society. Historically, politicized or social-change artists have been denied mainstream coverage and our interaction has been limited. We have to know what we are doing. In New York. In the US. In Canada and Latin America. In Europe. In Asia and Africa. The development of an effective oppositional culture depends on communication.

UN CERTAIN ART ANGLAIS!

A Certain English Art. (Postcard) Rasheed Araeen, 1979

PAD celebrated its first birthday with a Valentine's evening of entertainment and discussion around a slide show of political art (followed by dancing, but not in the streets—yet). We began in February 1980 as an amorphous group of artworkers dimly aware of a mutual need to organize around issues, but without much notion of how to do it. We met at Printed Matter once a month and agreed to start collecting documentation so we would have a physical core from which to reach out. For a while we looked at each other's work, discussed it, and thought about a social club and various possibilities for cultural activism. Then in late Spring we were offered a room in a former high school on the Lower East Side under the aegis of Seven Loaves—an umbrella group for community arts organizations. Suddenly we existed physically. We *had* to be in the world, and that led to the present structuring, still in process.

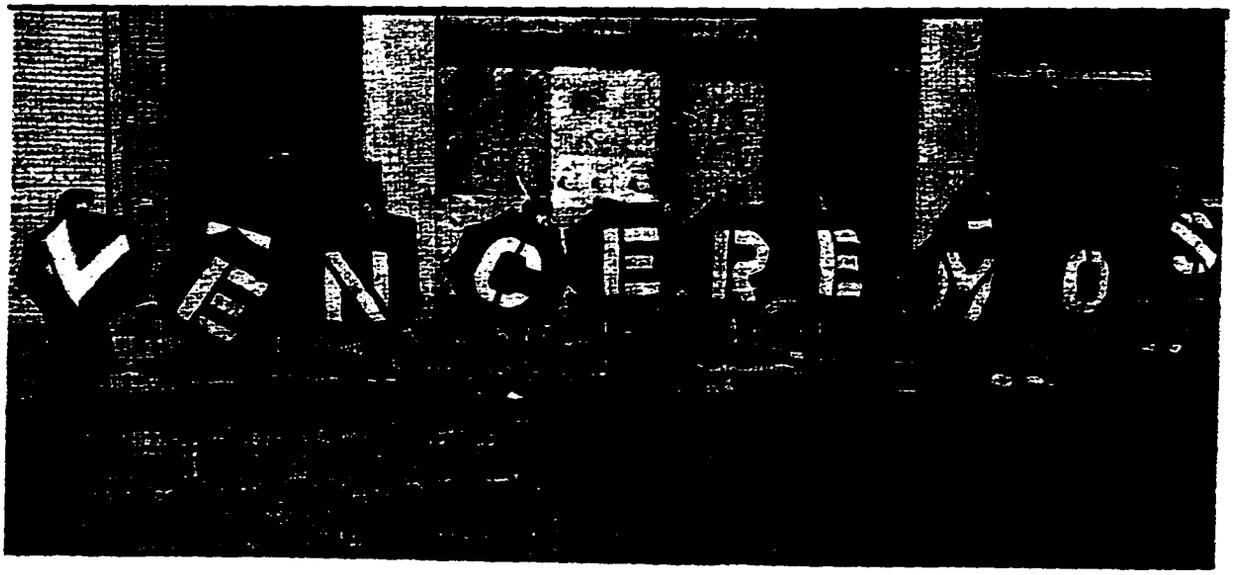
We have three kinds of meetings now: 1) The relatively flexible core or work group of 15-20 people gets together on three Sunday afternoons a month at the Seven Loaves space (when not too cold). Here we deal with: soliciting and handling of the archive materials; how to connect with other cultural organizations in NYC with similar purposes so there's no overlapping and duplication of work. (For instance, we are working with Cityarts Workshop, which has an impressive resource center on the community mural movement, and with Karin di Gia of Gallery 345, who has a collection of original political art.) We are also beginning to connect with and inform each other about the political events and struggles taking place in the city, understanding the ways these relate to national and international situations. Finally, we are thinking about collectively created issue-oriented exhibitions in public spaces, such as windows, subways, libraries, etc.

2) The open meetings with which we began. They take place on the second Sunday of every month at 8 PM at Printed Matter (7 Lispenard St., NYC 10013; 925-0325). Here reports are made from the work group and a brief visual or verbal presentation is given by a PAD member or guest as a sort of laboratory to stimulate discussion, education, consciousness raising and activism.

3) We are just beginning a series of public events centered around specific social issues seen in their historical perspectives, focusing on how they were opposed or supported by the socially concerned art of the time: for instance in May, a day on militarism in the "cold war" era, the Vietnam era and today, discussed by people from WRL (the War Resisters League), CARD (Committee Against Registration for the Draft) and artists who have done work with anti-militaristic content. We want to understand how the dialectic between oppositional art and society changes and takes different forms at different moments. These public afternoons will be publicized, and will lead up to an Autumn conference, at which we hope to bring together a wide coalition of cultural groups and artists. (For more information on events, see the "Calendar" section of PAD.)

PAD's theory is going to develop out of real experience instead of from the idealized and romanticized notion of a

50 — *First Issue*, number 1, published by Political Art Documentation and Distribution (PAD/D), February, 1981

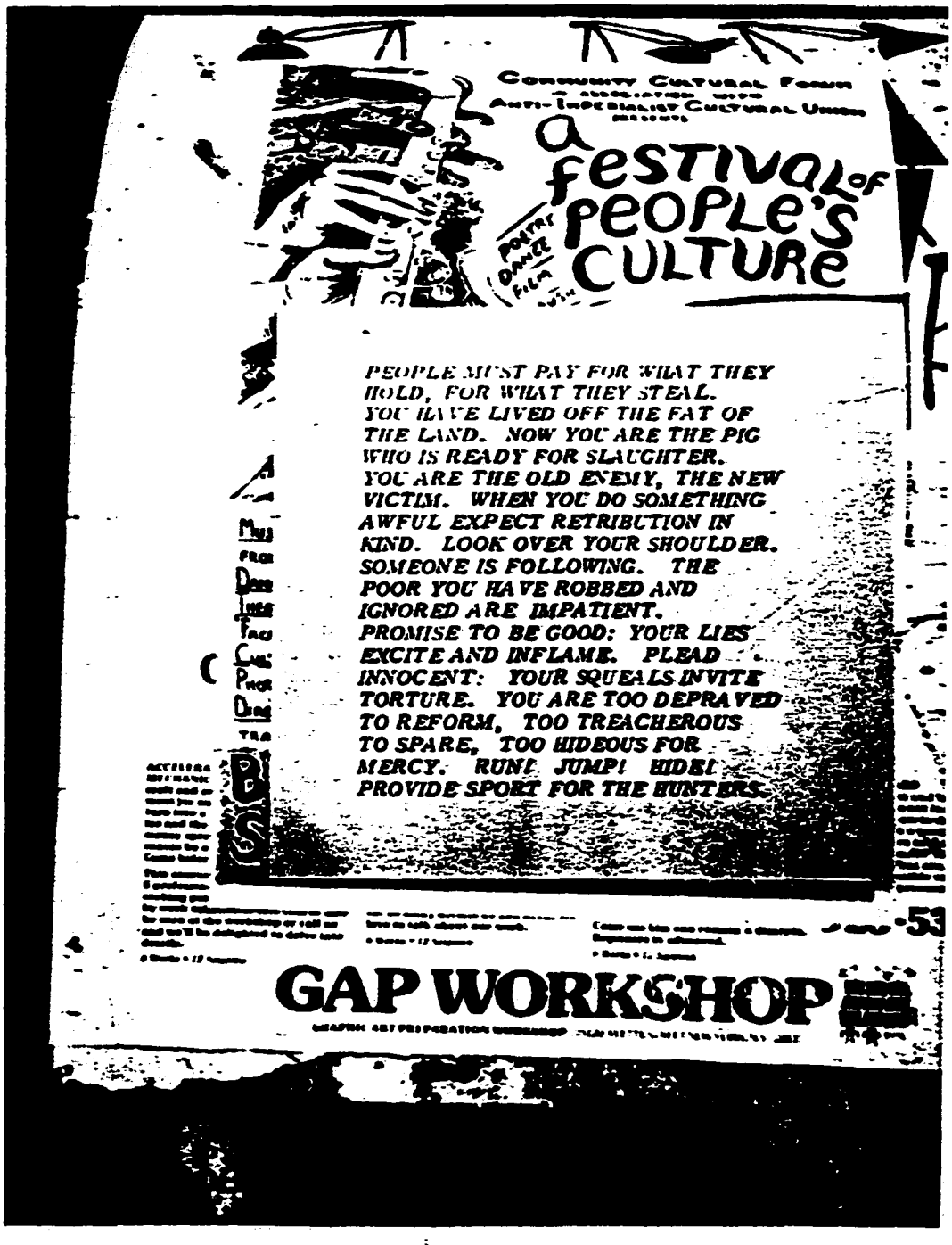


51 — street performance produced by Papo Colo for Artists Call (Against U.S. Intervention in Central America), 1984. Photo by Linda Eber.

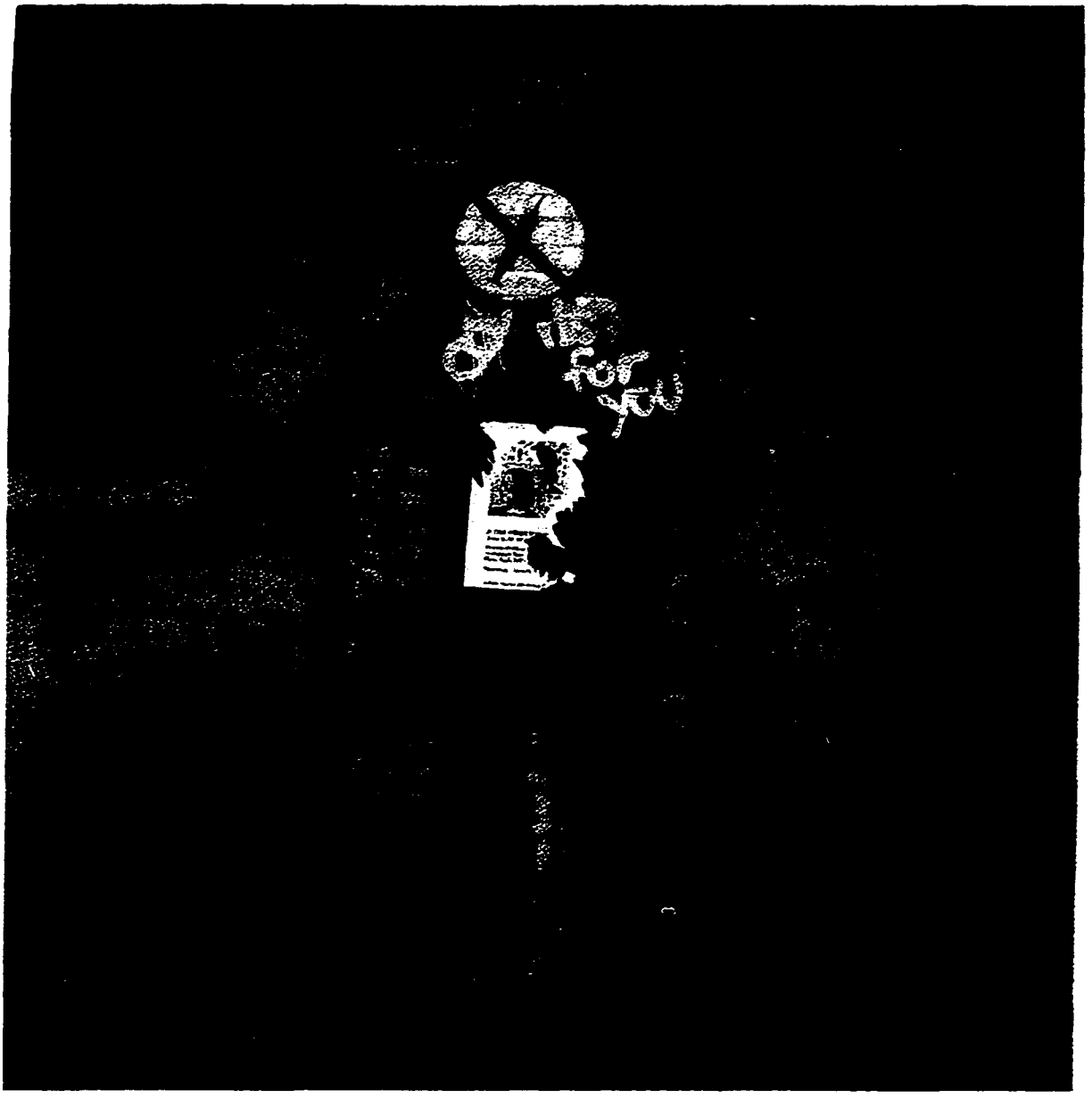
from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

52 — Group Material exhibition on the New York subway, "Subculture," 1983. Poster design by Doug Ashford

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

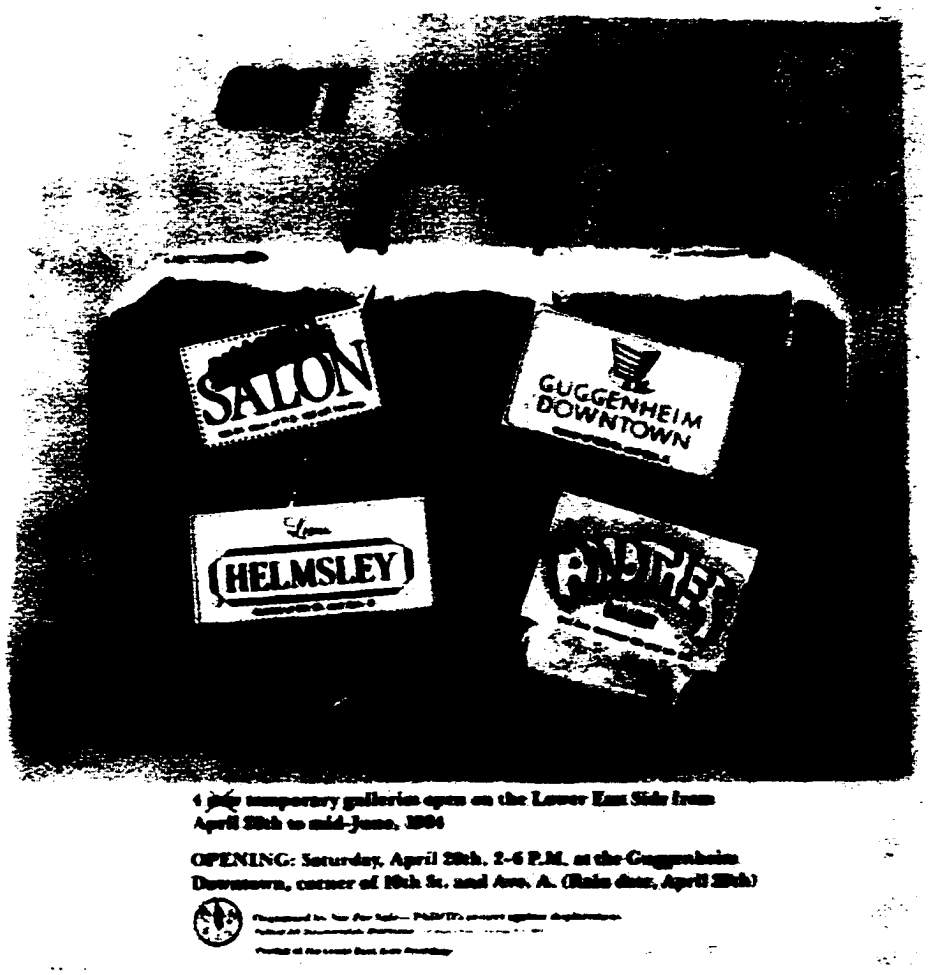


53 — Jenny Holzer, poster pasted on the street, 1982. Holzer's work is pasted over another poster announcing an event hosted by a group that is part of the Anti-Imperialist Cultural Union.



54 — One of Richard Hambleton's ``shadow man'' figures on a Manhattan street has been incorporated into later graffiti.

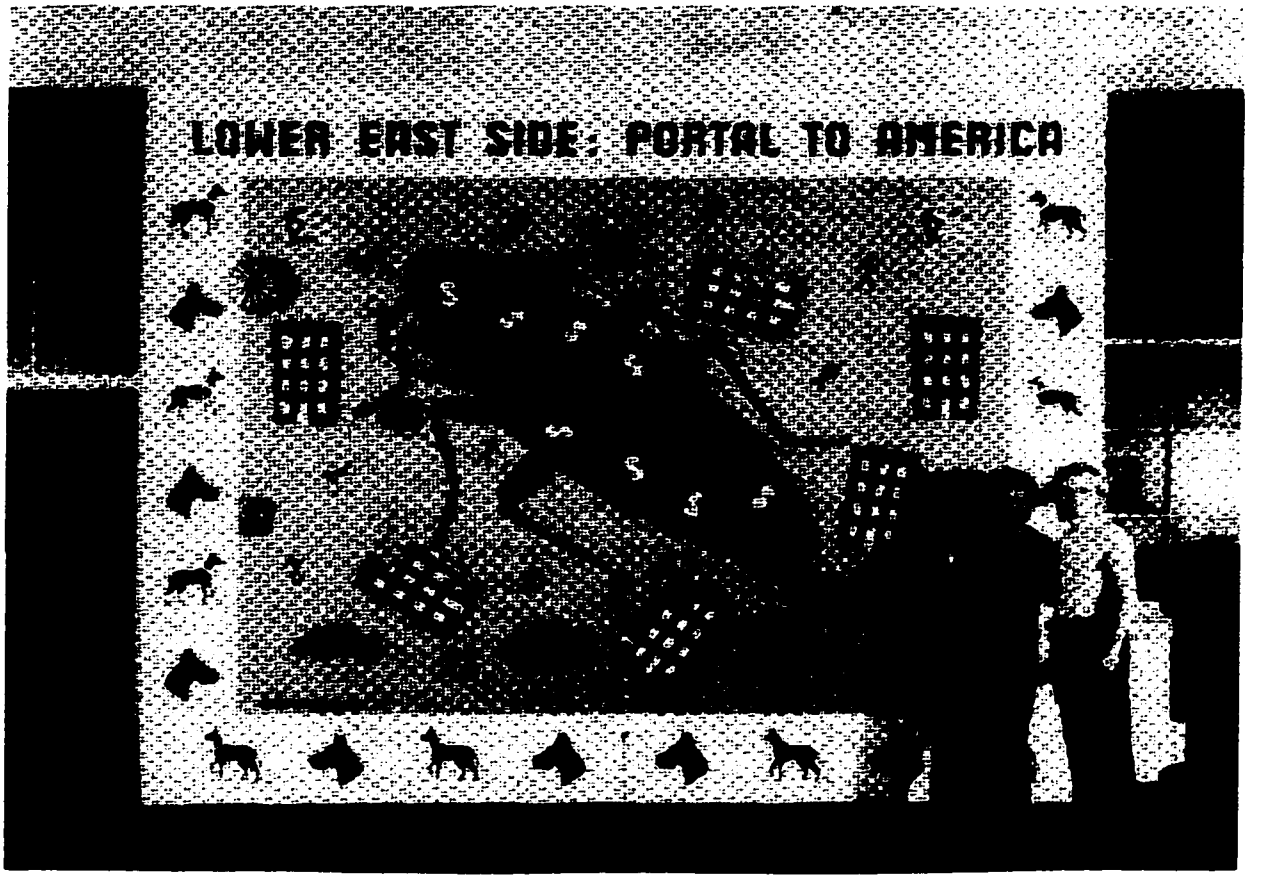
Peter Frank and Michael McKenzie, *New, Used & Improved: Art for the 80's* (Abbeville Press, NY, 1987)



55 — poster for Political Art Documentation/Distribution's "Not For Sale" outdoor exhibition, 1984.

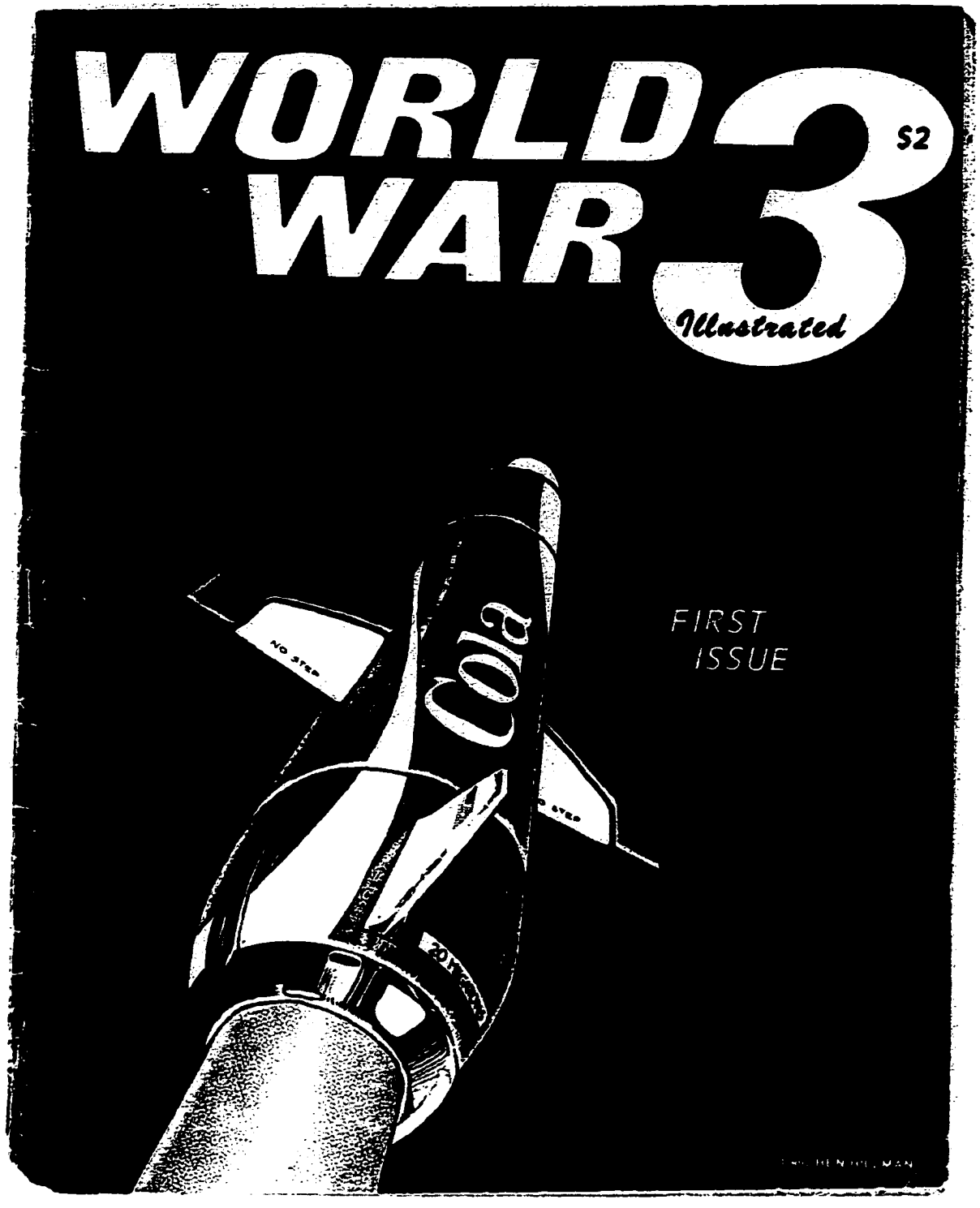
from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

56 — **Craig Owens' article in *Art in America* illustrated with PAD/D works from the "Not For Sale" project, Summer 1984.**



57 — artist Anton Van Dalen and Chino Garcia, Charas community organizer and El Bohio building manager, stand in front of the mural Van Dalen painted at El Bohio in 1980 for the "Ninth Street Survival Show." The mural remained in place until the 1983 "Not for Sale" exhibition at El Bohio.

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

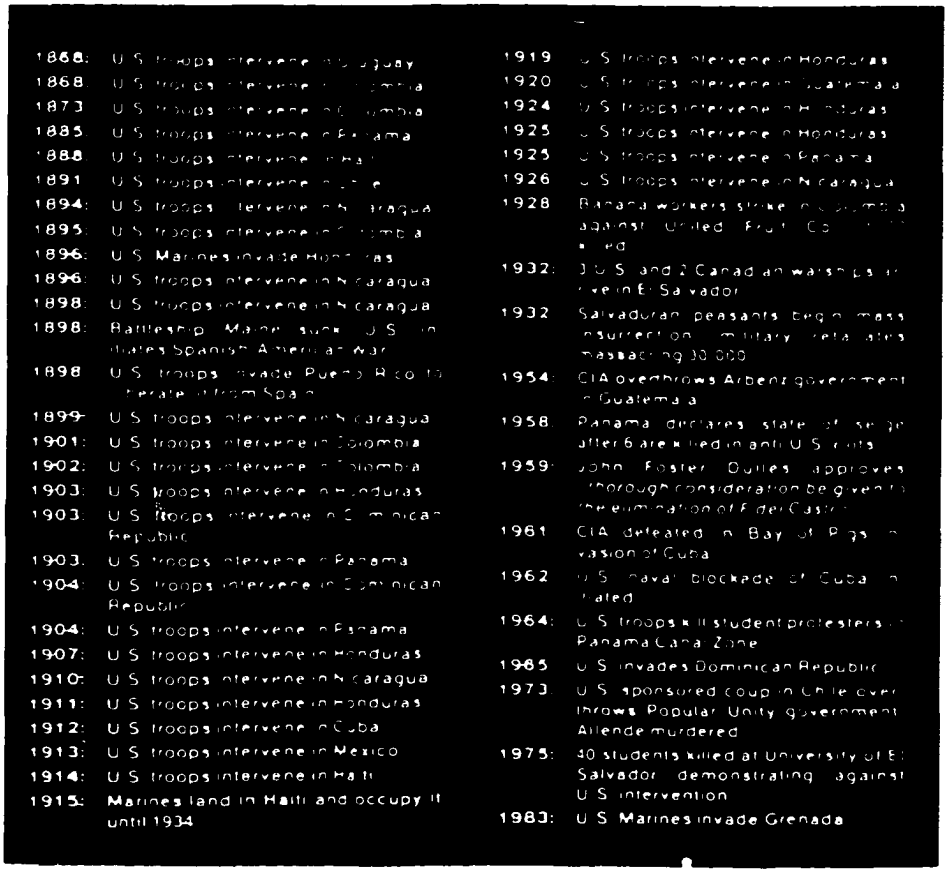


58 — first issue of *World War 3 Illustrated*, 1980

59 — Group Material installation at Artists Space, ``Primer (for Raymond Williams),'' 1982. Photo by Kenji Fujita.

60 — Group Material's ``Timeline" exhibition at P.S. 1 for Artists' Call, 1984. The large sculpture at center is by Anne Messner.

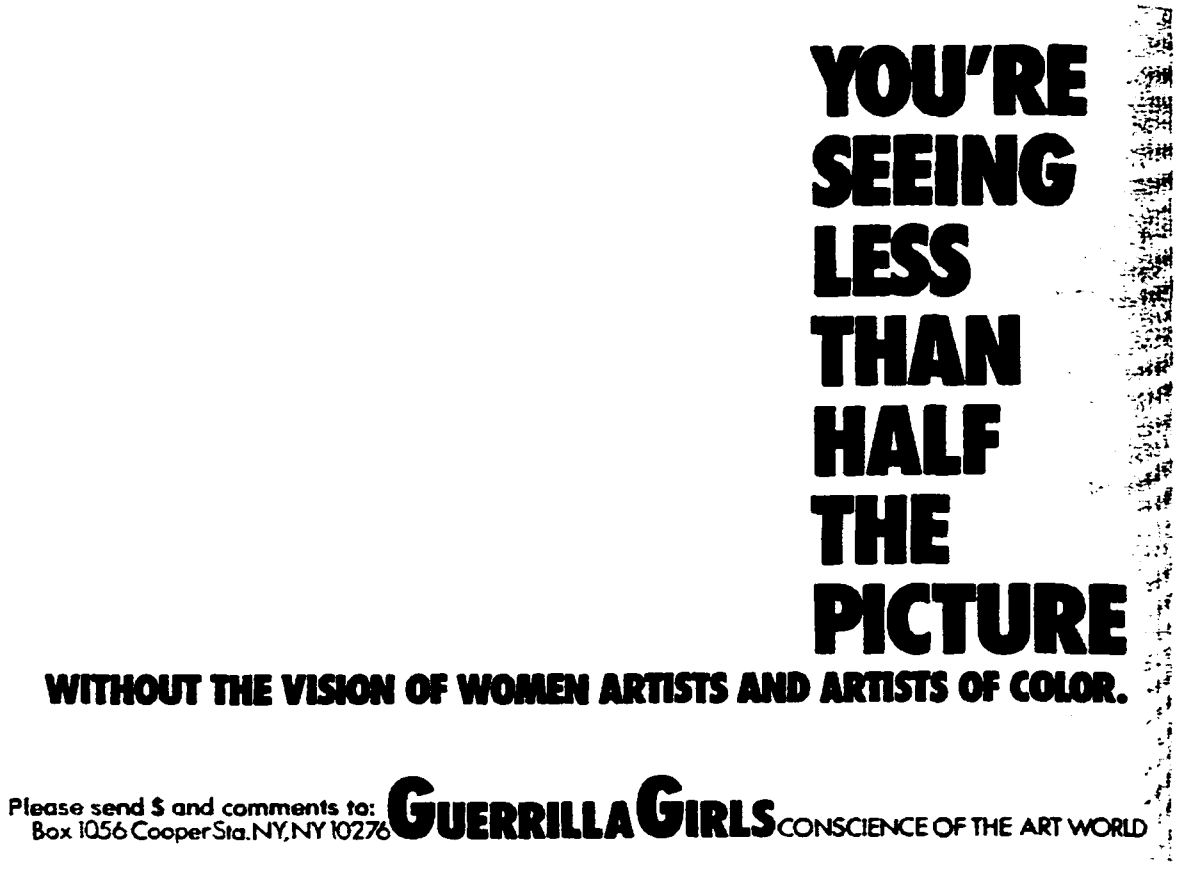
from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)



61 — timeline prepared by Group Material for the Artists' Call exhibition at P.S. 1, 1984

from Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (Collaborative Projects, NY, 1985)

62 — Group Material installation ``Americana" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1985.



63 — Guerrilla Girls street poster, 1989

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[see also Jaime Davidovich]

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