



FIGURE 7.1. Demonstration/performance by the Art Workers Coalition at the Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1971, in support of AWC cofounder Hans Haacke, whose exhibition was canceled by the museum's director over his artwork *Shapolsky et al., Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*. Photographer unknown.



## 7. Artists' Collectives Mostly in New York, 1975–2000

ALAN W. MOORE

The question of collectivism in recent art is a broad one. Artists' groups are an intimate part of postmodern artistic production in the visual arts, and their presence informs a wide spectrum of issues including modes of artistic practice, the exhibition and sales system, publicity and criticism, even the styles and subjects of art making. Groups of all kinds, collectives, collaborations, and organizations cut across the landscape of the art world. These groups are largely autonomous organizations of artistic labor that, along with the markets and institutions of capital expressed through galleries and museums, comprise and direct art. The presence of artistic collectives is not primarily a question of ideology; it is the expression of artistic labor itself. The practical requirements of artistic production and exhibition, as well as the education that usually precedes active careers, continuously involves some or a lot of collective work. The worldwide rise in the number of self-identified artist collectives in recent years reflects a change in patterns of artistic labor, both in the general economy (that is, artistic work for commercial media) and within the special economy of contemporary art. This has to do primarily with technological change in the means available to art, but also change in the scope and purview of contemporary art. At the same time, a public is growing for art produced outside the paradigm of individual authorial production.

This chapter considers a range of artistic collectivity, principally in New York City,<sup>1</sup> and mostly politicized. Two groups are discussed in more detail, the Art Workers Coalition and Group Material. Most artists' collectives formed up behind social movements; they were produced as a result of them and were influenced by them. Artists' groups are usually thought of in connection with politicized art. A clear instance of this is the Art Workers Coalition of New York City, a large, heterodox, and short-lived group formed

in 1969. Thereafter, conceptions of political art changed and broadened. During the last decades of the twentieth century, artists moved regularly from the gallery and museum into the public sphere, and theory moved confidently from aesthetic autonomy to engagement with the social. Within the broad field of visual arts production, this reorientation was accomplished in large measure by the efforts of artists' groups of all kinds. One of the most prominent was the exhibiting collective Group Material, formed in 1979, the second example considered in more detail in this chapter.

It is neither easy nor especially useful to separate collectivity in the visual arts from the welter of group activities in multiple media that made up the war-resisting counterculture of the 1960s. This was a cultural revolution bound up with conceptions of political revolution. Within it collectivity was a general condition of both cultural and political work. The powerful popular models of collectivity that impacted artistic production then and remain influential today did not respect the lines of artistic disciplines. By the mid-1960s two spectacular instances of collectivity on the east and west coasts of the United States had been celebrated in the news media. Based in San Francisco during 1965 and 1966, the rock 'n' roll band Grateful Dead toured with writer Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters performing LSD "acid tests" for (and on) ecstatic crowds.<sup>2</sup> In New York, at nearly the same moment, Andy Warhol ran his silver Factory, producing a stream of silk-screened paintings and films blandly descriptive of an amphetamine-driven ambisexual milieu.<sup>3</sup> These two modes of collectivity, warm and cool, experiential and productivist, time-based and material, both received extensive mainstream press coverage and valorized the cultural collective idea in the popular imagination.

These widely publicized instances of collectivity reflect not only the neotribal 1960s culture,<sup>4</sup> but also the collective nature of much artistic production. Yet the clearest lines of sight on modern collective social formations in art are probably afforded by examining political groups. As the title of this volume indicates, collectivism is a continuous tradition as artists on the left, inspired first by anarchists and then by the ideals of the Soviet Union, sustained modernist collectivism in Europe.<sup>5</sup> With socialist revolutions in China in 1949, models of state socialism pervaded the postcolonial Third World. The arising of the U.S. civil rights movement against southern apartheid, together with the victory of Fidel Castro in Cuba in 1959, inspired artists throughout the Americas. In 1968 an international wave of student rebellion shook both capitalist and socialist states, bespeaking the new political styles of a postwar generation coming of age. The propaganda styles and guerrilla tactics used in insurgent Third World liberation struggles were expressed in much artistic collectivity.

In the ghettos of U.S. cities, as factories closed and poverty spread, Black Panthers, Young Lords (a Puerto Rican movement), and Brown Berets (Chicanos) formed militant revolutionary political collectives in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Artists of color responded to this broad-based nationalist organizing by forming print-making and mural collectives to back the movement and cultural centers to carry out cultural education. These initiatives, supported and shaped by state and federal grants, resulted in a network of community art centers, some of which persist in the regional art worlds of the United States like raisins in tapioca pudding.

The Chicano<sup>7</sup> and black liberation muralists sought to image change—to promote solidarity and positive social values in ghetto environments. They often worked with imagery of an ancient past to build racial pride through a recovery of historical culture. The mythic past of Aztlan, the great lost Mexican nation of which the U.S. southwest formed a part, figures in the murals of Los Angeles, San Diego, San Antonio, and Tucson. Motifs of the indigenous Taino peoples of Puerto Rico marked the graphic work of the Taller Boricua in New York's Harlem. The work of these groups was often visible on the streets of their neighborhoods, asserting the image at least of local control over the urban space of the ghetto.<sup>8</sup> Much of the work was also well known to the movements that spawned these groups through the nationwide network of underground newspapers. It was only dimly visible in mainstream media, however, and largely unsupported by museums and cultural institutions. It was part of the counterculture—albeit a largely segregated part—a blanket term applied to the youth culture of the 1960s by social critic Theodore Roszak in a book of the same name. Roszak and others noted the collective trends among the generation of the late 1960s: the homogenizing psychic influence of shared drug experience and rock 'n' roll music concerts, the influence of social movements based in ideas of equality and freedom, and, finally, the sheer press of demographics as the postwar baby boom of young people entered the world of work and culture.

Of the activist cultural groups, those comprised of visual artists were less known in their time than the theater troupes. The San Francisco Mime Troupe and Teatro Campesino in the west and, in the east, the Bread and Puppet Theatre were highly visible through the close support roles they played at large demonstrations. The Bread and Puppet Theatre was started by sculptor Peter Schumann to support “ban the bomb” demonstrations in 1962, and their performances are heavily based on props, particularly giant puppets.<sup>9</sup> From their home community in Glover, Vermont, the troupe remains a visible part of the peace and global justice movement and tours the country and the world. They help support themselves through the sale of “cheap art,” posters, prints, and paintings that are outgrowths of making props.



FIGURE 7.2. Ah! *The Hopeful Pageantry of Bread and Puppet*, a film about the Bread and Puppet Domestic Resurrection Circus shot between 1990 and 1998, by Dee Dee Halleck and Tamar Schumann. Released 2005. Production still by Ron Simon. Courtesy of Dee Dee Halleck.

Much of this countercultural collectivity came to bear on the world of high art in New York with the coalescence of the Art Workers Coalition in 1969. This group began with an action in the Museum of Modern Art<sup>10</sup> protesting a violation of artists' rights. The well-organized self-removal of a sculpture by kinetic artist Takis brought agitated museum officials out to talk to the artist and his supporters. This and subsequent events were closely covered in the *New York Times*, as well as the "underground" weeklies *Village Voice* and the *East Village Other*, and the group's meetings swelled.

This all followed on the May 1968 "events" in Paris, an insurrection in which the New York-based Living Theatre played an active role. Sit-ins at the Venice Biennale and takeovers of art schools by their students in England led New Yorkers to feel they "ought to be doing something."<sup>11</sup>

The AWC was an antihierarchical, democratically open organization of artists. They drew up an agenda to transform the art world and pressure museums to change. The demands of the group were grounded in the civil rights struggle—equal exhibition opportunities for artists of color and

women and expanded legal rights for all artists. This reform agenda was summarized, refined, and deranged during a freewheeling "Open Hearings" event in which artists and critics spoke.<sup>12</sup>

Like a "great spinning wheel," as Jon Hendricks called it, the AWC spun off and recirculated other artists' groups. These included the band of Puerto Rican artists who went on to found El Museo del Barrio and the group of feminists called Ad Hoc Women Artists that struck the Whitney Museum. Faith Ringgold recalled the scene at the coalition meeting space Museum: A Project for Living Artists. This was a big loft space on lower Broadway where artists, both famous and unknown, sat around in a circle. "To find out what was really going on in the art world, you had to go."<sup>13</sup>

The AWC was taken seriously by established interests because it included so many prominent artists and critics. Among them were minimal sculptor Carl Andre, technology artist and Zero group member Hans Haacke, Sol Lewitt, critic Lucy Lippard,<sup>14</sup> and curator Willoughby Sharp. Its emergence marked the beginning of a period of substantial change in art institutions in New York City. The AWC itself split in early 1970. One faction merged with the movement against the Vietnam War, while another faction persisted for many years. The Art Workers Community was an artists' service organization, offering insurance and a credit union and publishing the *Art Workers News*. (This AWC echoed the still-extant Artists Equity, an outgrowth of artists' organizing during the 1930s.)<sup>15</sup>

While the 1969 coalition quickly grew to include many different kinds of artists, the Art Workers Coalition was started by cosmopolitan technology artists. Takis (who today lives in Greece) and the German-born Haacke were certainly familiar with artists' uses of collectivity. In Europe, the Zero group was an international avant-garde. The world of technology art was based in research science and technology, with strong academic connections like the venturesome program at MIT. Within the movement, collective work was understood as necessary because of the highly specialized nature of technology. This more productivist mode of collectivity was supported by the funds and influenced by the mores of business and government.<sup>16</sup> Before institutional interest in "tech art" dried up, groups like Pulsa and USCO, with one foot in academic departments and the other in the counterculture, produced complex technology-based environments in popular museum shows around the United States.

The tradition of the techno-art collaborative was forcefully revived in the 1980s with the Survival Research Laboratories, based in San Francisco. Fronted by Mark Pauline, SRL performance work was distributed on video by the group Target. SRL toured robots, made from chopped lawnmower and chainsaw engines and other industrial parts, which were controlled in

thematized battle performances. In nightclubs and parking lots, the SRL crew used remote control to clash their aggressive or abject mobile robots in intentionally frightening evenings with titles like “Bitter Message of Hopeless Grief.” SRL was closely tied to the punk music scene, while at the same time they benefited from California’s aerospace and weapons systems engineers, dropping by their shop to chat.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, numerous groups made lightshows and nightclub effects for the rock music shows that became an essential part of 1960s psychedelic style and the hippie rock venue. One of these groups was the Joshua Light Show, known for its work in concerts at the Fillmore East in New York City. In 1999, performance artist Michael Smith and Joshua Harris, a principle in that lightshow, made a collaborative installation artwork called MUSCO. Through the pretext of the going-out-of-business sale of a fictitious lighting design company that had opened thirty years before, the artists wryly reflected on the question of artistic survival and obsolescence.

A related strain of collective artistic production was briefly exhibited in the show “Aims of the Revolutionary Media” at the above-mentioned New York venue Museum in 1969. Participants in this exposition of critical resistant media included underground newspapers, film collectives like Third World Newsreel, and video groups like TVTV and Videofreex. These groups of artists and journalists used the newly marketed portable video recorders to produce news programs and features pointedly at variance with mainstream television.<sup>18</sup> Their work seeded the alternative media movement, which had a second efflorescence with the rise of cable and satellite TV in the 1980s. Artists like Paul Ryan and Ira Schneider, both part of Raindance, investigated ways to use video as a responsive community-building tool. Ryan did extensive video studies of what he called the triad, the three-person building block of collective organization.<sup>19</sup>

The political impulse within the Art Workers Coalition took on a hyperbolic strain with the formation of the Guerrilla Art Action Group as an outgrowth of the AWC’s action committee. The GAAG produced dramatic actions, many in front of and inside museums, directed against the prosecution of the Vietnam War and the underrepresentation of artists of color within the art world.<sup>20</sup> The GAAG was founded by artists of the Destruction art movement in the Judson Church circle of poets, artists, and dancers. The styling of the GAAG was a self-conscious theatrical militance inspired by Third World guerrilla movements. The GAAG also consciously referenced conceptual art in their “communiques,” constituting a true militant avant-garde of that style. While they worked within the context of the art world, they shared the agit-prop street theater strategies of radical political groups like the WITCH feminists (Womens’ International Terrorist Corps

from Hell) and the anarchist Black Mask (later the Motherfuckers). These groups staged dramatic actions at cultural events, concerts, and political street demonstrations. This radical activism was of a piece with the many symbolic political actions during the late 1960s, like the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupation of Alcatraz and the Statue of Liberty, the Yippie seizure of the pirate ship in California Disneyland, and the Weatherman bombing of the police memorial in Chicago.

Feminist collectivity was a continuous presence exerting pressure on the mainstream. Feminists inspired, directed, and sustained collective organization among progressive artists throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s although they and their issues were often sidelined. Ad Hoc Women Artists and WAR (Women Artists in Revolution) were from around 1970<sup>21</sup> the angry activist face of radical feminist artists in New York, organizing for a piece of the pie. The movement had been working collectively for years. The consciousness-raising group, a key feminist organizing tool, was an adaptation of the Chinese communist practice of “speaking our bitterness,” a discussion intended to reveal the political nature of women’s personal problems. These meetings could generate texts: the east coast Redstockings group regularly published position papers and polemics, individually and collectively authored.



FIGURE 7.3. Feminist art collective Carnival Knowledge posing with porn stars at the time of their Franklin Furnace exhibition “Second Coming,” New York, 1983. Photograph by Dona Ann McAdams



In Hollywood, California, the Womanhouse exhibition project (1972) was an influential example of collaborative work and a defining moment for feminist art. This transformation of a suburban house achieved underground fame as a collective exposition of the plight of American women enslaved by male expectations and entombed by housework. The Womanhouse project was a work by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro with their students in a feminist art program. Judy Chicago's subsequent major projects, the *Dinner Party* and the *Birth Project*, were both made in collaboration with other artists and craftswomen, elevating traditional anonymous female cultural production, china painting and needlework, to the status of high art.

The feminist art movement, like its political counterpart, was advanced through its own network of independent journals,<sup>22</sup> like the *Feminist Art Journal*. The most adamantly collective of these was *Heresies*, founded in 1977 by a "mother collective" of activist artists and critics. Each issue was edited by an autonomous editorial group. Through 1993, a parade of volumes dealt with key issues for radical artists, including housework, working collectively, violence against women, and lesbian art. Today the collective Guerrilla Girls builds on this tradition of feminist agitation within the art world. The group debuted in 1985 with a street poster campaign documenting continued inequities in the exhibition of male and female artists. In recent years the Guerrilla Girls have published popular books revealing the structural sexism of western art history.



FIGURE 7.4. The Guerrilla Girls marching in costume for a pro-choice demonstration in Washington, D.C., 1992. The girls urged right-to-lifers—and the Catholic Church—to repent their sinful, modern ideas. Photograph courtesy of the Guerrilla Girls.

In New York's Soho (an acronym from lower Manhattan "SOuth of HOuston" Street), the Art Workers Coalition expressed the general mood of discussion and cooperation that led to the establishment of co-op galleries and alternative spaces. The Soho zone of derelict factories slated for urban renewal became an artists' district in the 1960s. The founders of the co-op 55 Mercer Gallery met each other at the AWC. The abstract painters' collective Anonima (1960–71), also active in AWC, opened their gallery uptown. The co-op, in which artists band together to maintain a gallery, was an institution familiar to artists from the 1950s, when painters opened a number of them on 10th Street. To this Soho added the model of the artists' space, or "alternative space,"<sup>23</sup> an exhibition venue that was soon supported by state and federal monies to exhibit work by an ever-increasing stream of new artists.

As an artists' neighborhood illegally ensconced among derelict factories, Soho was already home to unorthodox real estate arrangements. George Maciunas, self-proclaimed *chef d'école* of the international Fluxus movement, dedicated much of his energies to purchasing properties there through a rotating capital pool. Maciunas called these Fluxhouses. He also assembled "Fluxkits," with contributions by many artists "edited" into a single multipartite box. Fluxus was (and is) a loose-knit transnational network of artists who often worked together. While Maciunas idealized the Bolshevik artists' group Lef, historian Barbara Moore insists the group was more "anthological" than collective.<sup>24</sup>

Dick Higgins, a key writer and publisher in the Fluxus scene, propounded a theory of intermedia to explain simultaneous work in poetry, music, performance, and visual art. In music, Fluxus performances related to the numerous international improvising collectives of musicians in the new music and loft jazz scene. The artists of Fluxus were regularly visible in New York through the large Avant Garde Festivals produced by Charlotte Moorman from 1963 to 1980 with financial support from John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

The best known of the new Soho artists' spaces was 112 Greene Street, started by Jeffrey Lew who owned the building. The place was a center of postminimalist process sculpture, continuous freewheeling material experiments, and improvisational dance. This space was a model for the U.S. federal National Endowment for the Arts workshop grants category, which spread monies across the country to fund similar "alternative spaces."<sup>25</sup> These would include Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art (LAICA), And/Or in Seattle (both founded in 1974), Washington Project for the Arts (WPA), Hallwalls in Buffalo (both 1975), the Social and Political Art Resources Center (SPARC) in Los Angeles (1976), Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago (1979–98), and Atlanta's Art Workers Coalition (1976–82).

The guiding light of 112 Greene Street was Gordon Matta-Clark, also instrumental in the first years of Food, a restaurant founded as a collective and linked to commune farms. Matta-Clark also convened the group Anarchitecture, a short-lived collaborative concerned with the intersection of art and urban space whose members exhibited anonymously. Matta-Clark's work was based in the collective, both actual and conceptual. His later grand cut-ups of condemned architecture relied on a crew of riggers and sculptors. Matta-Clark, however, did not reject the authorial signature. Nor did Paul Thek, an American living in Europe, who became famous for a series of installation works in museums during the 1970s executed with a group of artists he called the Artist's Co-op. Members of Thek's crew had creative autonomy within areas of the overall environment, leading to a densely constructed, richly symbolic piece.

Despite its collective creation, Thek's work with his co-op was subsumed into what influential curator Harald Szeeman called "personal mythologies." Erstwhile Fluxus artist Joseph Beuys was also one of Szeeman's mythologists. In 1974 the charismatic German, who had opened an office for direct democracy in the 1972 art exposition "Documenta 5," toured the United States for the first time, propounding a mystical Marxian vision of "social sculpture" that had a strong effect on many artists. Versions of this idea have informed the work of many subsequent artists' collectives.

Always consistently collective in their austere authorial stylings is the Art & Language group of conceptual artists. They were based in England, but in the 1970s several members from England and Australia were in New York, working with Joseph Kosuth. The New York Art & Language group launched a sustained collaborative critique of formalist art criticism and the structure of art markets and institutions. With the convening of the group Artists Meeting for Cultural Change, Art & Language's process of discussion and critique was brought to a local public of artists and activists. Journals like *The Fox*, *Red-Herring*, and the *anti-catalog* reflect this moment.

The *anti-catalog* was a collaboratively written response to the 1976 Bicentennial exhibition of the Rockefeller collection of historical American art at the Whitney Museum. In a sharp and extensive critique inspired by British critic John Berger's book *Ways of Seeing*, the authors pointed out the absence of women, African, and Native American artists in the exhibition and more broadly questioned the possibility of a nonideological history of art. This was a significant early instance of revisionist cultural history produced on a national anniversary, the American Revolution. By 1992, the quincentenary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas, activists and artists committed to community arts work could mobilize an extensive

nationwide program of events and education to assert the priorities of indigenous people.<sup>26</sup>

Even as the AMCC was meeting in New York to question the art world's structures through the lens of Marxian political economy, a contingent mode of collectivity appeared among graffiti writers of the mid-1970s.<sup>27</sup> This vernacular art form was born in the ghettos of New York City from the graphic opportunities presented by the new technology of spray cans and felt-tip markers. The quintessential work of graffiti art is the signature, the writer's name or "tag." Still, performing this "sport" of spray-painting subway trains is both illegal and dangerous, and it required close coordination and support among "crews" of teen-aged writers. In 1972, sociologist Hugo Martinez rented a studio for some of them to work together on canvas, and they exhibited in Soho art galleries as United Graffiti Artists (UGA).

In the later 1970s, the rise of punk rock in New York and London stimulated visual artists to embrace a DIY (do-it-yourself) practice and an aesthetic of damage and rude collage. In the United Kingdom, Malcolm McLaren appropriated Situationist theory to stage-manage a youth subculture of "punk" street fashion with the rock band Sex Pistols at the center.<sup>28</sup> The U.K. punk music scene was entwined with Jamaican music, reggae, and "toast," a proto-rap. These same currents were felt in the Caribbeanized ghettos of New York, as the hip-hop culture was being born.

With the rise of conservative governments under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the left went on the defensive. The 1980s is largely recalled for the superheated art market, but the decade was in fact a golden age of artists' groups. Self-described producing collectives emerged, groups that made of their coherence a point of principle and purpose, and in the process refined and enlarged the models of artistic collectivity.

In the bohemia of downtown Manhattan, the band- and crew-based practices of art rock and super-8 filmmaking thrived. The first artists' group to achieve prominence in New York was Colab (Collaborative Projects), which produced a show in Times Square in 1980. This exhibition was a groundswell of popularly accessible socially themed artworks held in an empty building that had housed an erotic massage parlor. Critics called it "punk art"—"three chord art anyone can play." The South Bronx art space Fashion Moda participated in the Times Square Show, bringing in some of the new generation of graffiti artists who had been exhibiting in the Bronx as part of the hip-hop culture of writers, rappers, and break dancers. A forty-member democratically run membership group, Colab inspired other artists to form groups and mount huge shows in Brooklyn lofts, seeding the present-day artists' communities there. Earlier in 1980, artists emulating 1970s' Puerto

Rican activists had seized a building on New York's Lower East Side and opened it as a collectively run cultural center.<sup>29</sup> ABC No Rio was passed on to successive managements until today it is an anarchist cultural center run by a collective with close ties to the publishing group Autonomedia.

The longest-lived and best-known of these politicized groups or collectives was probably Group Material. The first collective was comprised of thirteen artists, several of them Joseph Kosuth's students. After a series of meetings, Group Material opened one of the first art spaces in the East Village in 1980. There they developed their work as curation, a heady mix of pointed even polemical political art mixed with popular and folk culture in clean, strongly styled exhibitions. A show of their neighbors' objects, "People's Choice" (Arroz con Mango), was a key event for the group, driving them toward a populist program.

After 1981, the group shrank and they gave up the East Village space. Group Material produced projects in public spaces, including subways and buses, and on a vacant department store facing Union Square Park. They began to work from an office in the Taller Latinoamericano run by



FIGURE 7.5. Production still from the collaborative video production *Cave Girls*, photographed in the backyard of the art space ABC No Rio, New York, 1983. Pictured are Rebecca Howland, Judy Ross, Kiki Smith, and Marnie Greenholz. Photograph by Ellen Cooper. Courtesy of Collaborative Projects.

exiled artists from Central America. After a small show at the Taller on the theme of strife in Central America, the group engaged with the exiles to produce the monumental installation at the P.S. 1 museum in Queens, New York of a timeline of U.S. intervention in Central America. This was part of the 1984 Artists' Call, a broad cultural front protesting Reagan's support for repressive regimes in El Salvador and the U.S.-funded counterrevolution in Nicaragua. The installation featured the raw materials—piles of coffee, copper ingots, bunches of bananas—that U.S. corporations extracted, mixed in with artworks and artifacts of popular culture, like a red Sandinista bandana.

In the broad front of activist art organizing against Reagan's foreign policies, Group Material worked with the advocacy group Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). They also worked closely with the artists in PAD/D—Political Art Documentation/Distribution. PAD/D formed in New York in 1981 and quickly became an organizing and archiving resource for a network of groups in the United States and abroad working under the banner of cultural democracy. (Today these archives are in the Museum of Modern Art library.) The group formed around Lucy Lippard, then writing regularly about art for the weekly *Village Voice*. PAD/D held regular lectures and discussions, produced performances and projects, and made signs for demonstrations. A key project of PAD/D was *Not For Sale*,<sup>30</sup>



FIGURE 7.6. Political Art Documentation/Distribution's (PAD/D) antigentrification street poster project *Not For Sale*, East Village, New York, 1984. Photograph courtesy of Gregory Sholette.

a campaign of works on city streets contesting the gentrification of the Lower East Side, then becoming known as the East Village.

By the mid-1980s, a thriving scene of largely artist-run commercial galleries had spread to this ethnically diverse working-class neighborhood, launching many careers and forming the visual arts substratum of a city-wide nightclub culture.<sup>31</sup> Bouyed by the booming art and luxuries market in the Reagan years, some galleries moved to the upscale Soho district. Most failed. But the galleries had glamorized the district, accelerating gentrification on the Lower East Side.<sup>32</sup> This was the complicated urban economic process emblemized by PAD/D artists and their allies in *Not For Sale*, which directly critiqued artists' complicity. Colorful graphics were mounted on the walls of several street-corner "galleries" and posted throughout the district. The London-based antigentrification Docklands Community Poster Project began in 1981, and PAD/D had collected their posters in their archive. Today a successor group, Art & Change, continues to produce billboards and do teaching projects in London to develop "local narratives" around issues of diversity.

For most artists, the collective experience in the East Village was entrepreneurial. Group Material had opened the first art gallery of the 1980s in the East Village, albeit in advance of the commercial wave. In 1985, the group curated a show called *Americana* in the ground floor of the Whitney Museum as part of the Biennial exhibition. As the neo-Expressionist and appropriationist artists of the East Village gallery movement showed their work upstairs, Group Material's show comprised a veritable manifesto of a critical point of view on U.S. culture, mixing video, audio, store-bought packages, and artwork by artists high and low. (They exhibited painter Leroy Neiman, who despite his wide popularity had been frozen out of American museums.) The centerpiece of the exhibit was an appliance—a washer-dryer combination. This dense, rigorously structured installation at a major exhibition put Group Material on the map, and their institutional opportunities increased. These included the 1987 "Documenta" exhibition in Germany where the group mounted *Castle*. This curation was based on a parable from Kafka, a story in which lions, after generations of attacks, become part of a temple ritual. The complex assemblage mounted on metal walls strived to produce the "look of power," mixing historical cultural objects with consumer products to evoke the fascination of hegemonic symbolic order. The choice of the parable seems like a metaphor for the dynamics of "institutional critique,"<sup>33</sup> a problem that absorbed the attention of many artists in the 1990s.

As the Reagan years of the 1980s wore on, the mounting toll of the AIDS epidemic turned a civil rights crisis for gay people into a struggle for survival. Resistance to conservative government and religion and pressure



FIGURE 7.7. Doug Ashford of Group Material addressing an audience at the offices of CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador). Copyright 1984. Photograph by Lisa Empanato.



FIGURE 7.8. Group Material, *Da Zi Baos*, Union Square, New York, 1982. Photograph courtesy of Julie Ault and Group Material.



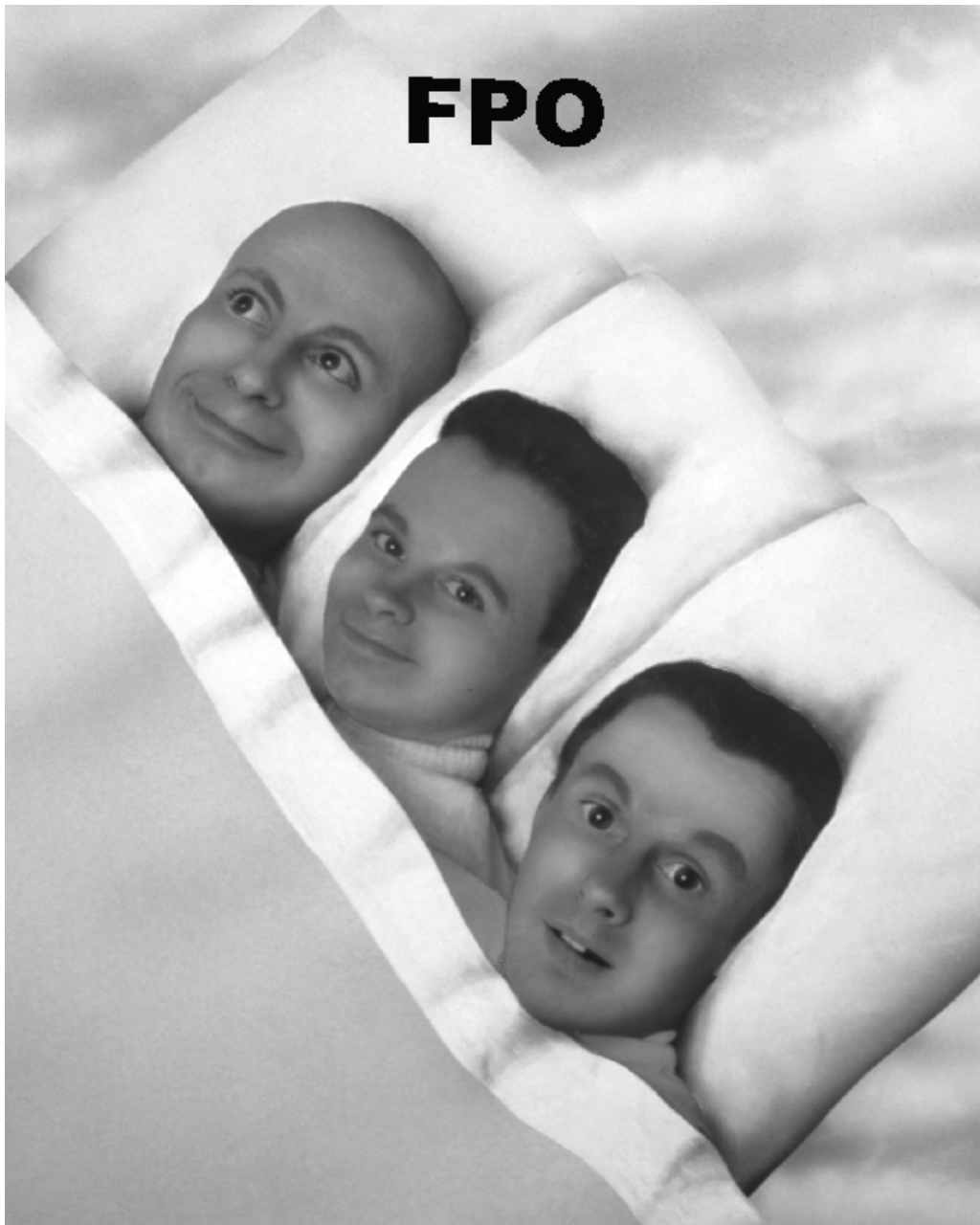
on health bureaucracies became urgent matters for action. ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, formed 1987) included numerous action cells of artists, collectives that made graphics for the street and video for cable TV. One of these, Gran Fury, was named for the police department's favorite model car for undercover work.<sup>34</sup> These groups used the increasingly receptive art institutions as a base to bring their message to the public. The work collectives produced—posters, telegenic demonstrations, videotapes—was highly instrumental, using commercial techniques to get the angry message out. These groups worked like advertising agencies for their cause, laying a baseline of sophisticated agit-prop graphics and an example of collective cultural production in social service.

Groups such as DIVA-TV, which documented the dramatic demonstrations and confrontations of the “positive” people's movement, were able to put their work on public access cable television. This opportunity, secured by an earlier generation of video activists, had been sustained and developed by successor groups of video artists. When cable TV came to New York in the 1970s, numerous producing groups formed.<sup>35</sup> The longest lived of these are the political Paper Tiger collective and the national Deep Dish satellite network.

General Idea came together in Toronto in 1969, and the three artists lived together. The group made videotapes and published *File* magazine, a standout in the vibrant Canadian neo-Dada and correspondence art scene.<sup>36</sup> In 1970–71, they promoted a campy “1984 Miss General Idea Pageant,” and in 1974 founded the Art Metropole artists' bookstore. In 1986, the group moved to New York and soon began producing work around the crisis of AIDS. In “One Day/One Year of AZT” (1991), they filled a gallery with giant pills to denote the constant heavy regime of medications AIDS patients must take. Jorge Zontal and Felix Partz died of AIDS-related causes in 1994; AA Bronson continues to work solo and with other artists.

The AIDS crisis reshaped art by devastating the ranks of artists and changing the attitudes of many toward political action. AIDS activists imbued the collective with the fervor of a life-and-death struggle. This cauterized lingering socialist productivist associations, revealing the collective as a mode of expedient community response to the key issue of the day. The urgency of AIDS activism streamlined the thinking around what Lucy Lippard called “activist art.”<sup>37</sup> “What counts in activist art,” said one activist artist, “is its propaganda effect; stealing the procedures of other artists is part of our plan—if it works, we use it.”<sup>38</sup>

Group Material featured the AIDS crisis as one of the four components in their late 1980s project *Democracy* (discussed below). They developed an AIDS Timeline along the lines of the Artists Call installation



**FIGURE 7.9.** General Idea, *Baby Makes Three*, a self-portrait as three babies. *Left to right*, Jorge Zontal, AA Bronson, and Felix Partz of General Idea (1969–94). Chromogenic print, 763 × 635 mm. Self-published, 1984/89. Courtesy of AA Bronson.

and exhibited it in the 1991 Whitney Biennial.<sup>39</sup> This project, executed as gallery installations and in published form, is probably their best-known work. The chronological installations included art, documentary texts, activist videos, and cuts from popular media. Each ensemble was intended to agitate and spur activism. The artworks included many by HIV-positive artists. Poignantly, Group Material member Felix Gonzalez-Torres died of the disease in 1998.

In addition to impassioned and inventive activism, the epidemic called up an extraordinary work of popular collective mourning—the AIDS quilt project. Inspired by the sight of a sea of placards carried by memorial marchers in San Francisco in 1985, the quilt is simply a collation of commemorative fabric pieces made to remember those who died. The quilt is spread in public places around the country, an exhibition practice that started with the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in 1987. Eventually some 44,000 individual remembrances have become part of the largest community art project in the world.

An incident developed through the 1980s in the realm of institutional public art commissions that had important consequences for the practice of public art. A controversy arose over Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, a permanent commission for a site in lower Manhattan installed in 1981. After public protests led to protracted hearings, the work was removed in 1989. The art community defended Serra for the violation of his rights. Still, the affair induced reflection.<sup>40</sup> Many came to believe that autonomous avant-garde art would not work well in many public contexts.

A “new public art” came into its own as institutional support went to work with methods rooted in conceptual and performance art by feminists and political artists. Among these, artists like Meirle Laderman Ukeles and Suzanne Lacy consciously staged the collective as a subject. This kind of work had been named “social sculpture” by Joseph Beuys during his U.S. lecture tours (although it could be argued that he did not make any). Suzanne Lacy began working as a feminist activist doing dramatic tableaux for demonstrations. She continued working very deliberately within the realm of the social.<sup>41</sup> Her 1987 work *Crystal Quilt* was a kind of mass public conversation in Minneapolis between hundreds of pairs of elderly women seated tête-à-tête at tables in a plaza.

Collaborations between artists and specific communities also include a project begun in the Heidelberg section of Detroit in 1986. Tyree Guyton and his grandfather began to paint polka dots on the sidewalks of this African-American community distressed by abandonment. They affixed toys and household goods to empty houses and signposts. Guyton was joined by others, and his enterprise of decoration became a collective creation. In

1993 curator Mary Jane Jacobs put together a show in Chicago called “Culture in Action” that came to define this mode of work for municipal cultural agencies and museums.<sup>42</sup>

In 1989, several former members of the PAD/D *Not For Sale* group formed REPOhistory,<sup>43</sup> a public art collective specifically concerned with the artistic recovery of lost pasts. Their first sign project, marking sites of past conflicts in lower Manhattan like the location of old New York’s slave auctions, were important in helping turn public historical representations toward a reflection of this nation’s often uncomfortable past.

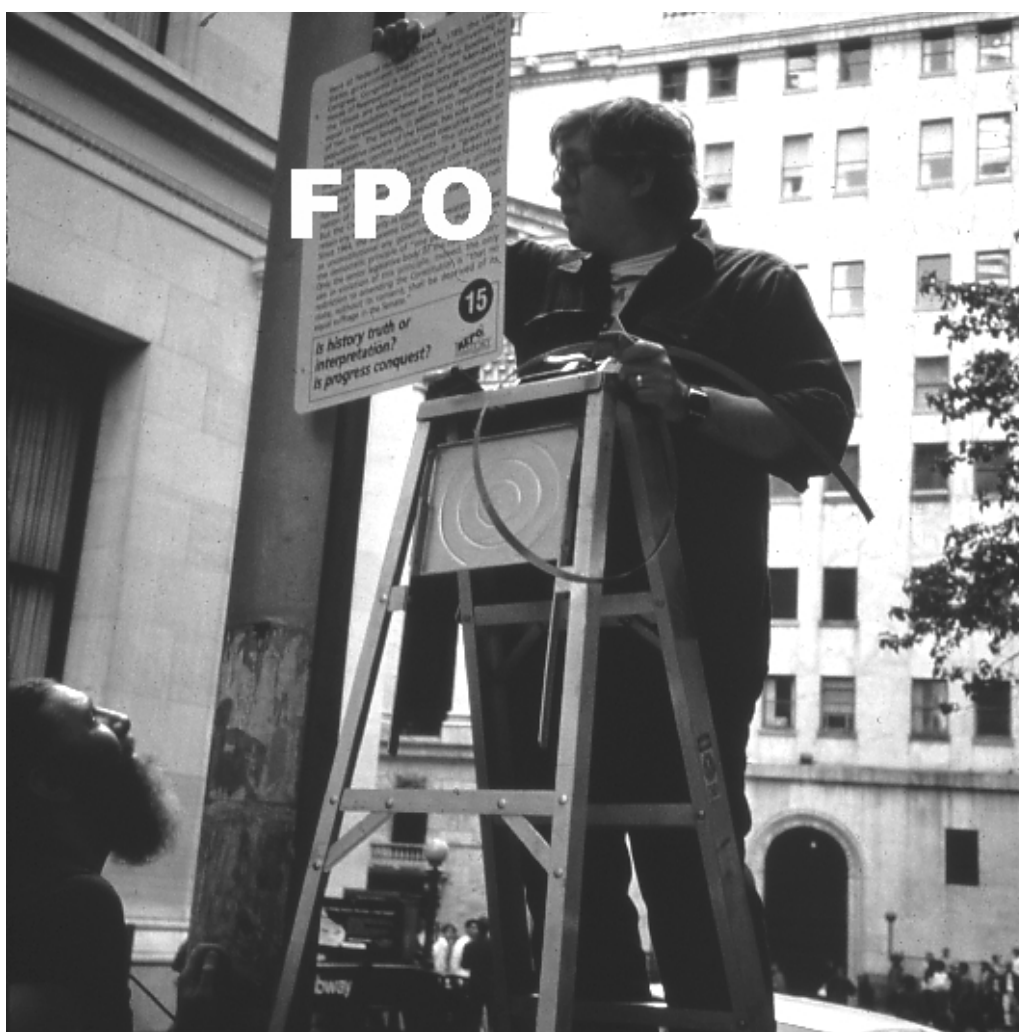


FIGURE 7.10. REPOhistory members Ed Eisenberg and Tom Klem (on ladder) installing a counterhistorical street marker on a lamppost near Wall Street, New York, 1992. Photograph courtesy of Gregory Sholette.

Even as critical and community-based modes of work were reshaping conceptions of public art, discourse sharpened among political philosophers around erosion of the public sphere in contemporary society and the concomitant privatization of public urban spaces. Thinkers like Jürgen Habermas<sup>44</sup> observed that the mass media had created a simulated public sphere based solely on the manipulation of consumer desire. In response, Group Material sought to represent a kind of ideal public sphere in a project called *Democracy* produced at the Dia Foundation space in Soho, New York.

The complex event was produced between 1988 and 1989 engaging four issues: education, electoral politics, cultural participation, and AIDS. The work at Dia began with a roundtable of experts convened to frame the issue under consideration. Then Group Material mounted a multimedia exhibition that functioned as a center for meeting and discourse. Then a town meeting was held, where disparate voices could be heard on the issues. Finally, the results were published in a book.<sup>45</sup> In recalling this project, Doug Ashford described it as “a centering device for other kinds of cultural and social work.” The format of using exhibitions as forums, he believes, was one of Group Material’s principal achievements.<sup>46</sup> The *Democracy* meetings and exhibits also substantiated the discursive method of Group Material’s work. What David Deitcher called the “friction” of diverse elements in a Group Material installation that “sparks insights into a given theme”<sup>47</sup> was enlarged and generalized into a process in the two-year long project at Dia (1987–89) and the 1990 book.<sup>48</sup> Dia’s commitment to this type of work continued with a second project produced by Martha Rosler around the issue of homelessness. “If You Lived Here” included the work of a number of artists’ groups: PAD/D, Bullet Space, Mad Housers, and work on issues around the United States/Mexico by the Border Arts Workshop.

The projects of Group Material and the artists commissioned to make public art were supported and administered by foundations and cultural institutions. At the same time, numerous groups were active on the radical margins of the New York art world. Among these were the squatters of the Lower East Side.<sup>49</sup> With its intimate link to the necessity of housing, squatted buildings are collective laboratories, and sometimes artistic ones. New York squatters were involved in the Dia exhibitions, but their primary reality was the day-to-day pressure by the city police to evict them. Successful collectivity was a cherished revelation of “people power,” but triumphs, like the building seized as a community center, were short-lived. Banner art for demonstrations and political graffiti were important propaganda tools for the squatters. “Housed” artists forged links with organizers among the homeless, and squats opened galleries as cultural centers of resistance. These venues helped to soften the image of squatters who were constantly portrayed

on TV and in the tabloid press as obnoxious and riotous. Bullet Space was the most innovative of these spaces, producing numerous collective exhibitions and a tabloid called *Your House Is Mine* (1989–91).

In the United Kingdom, as in Amsterdam, Berlin, and cities in Italy, squatters had a sounder legal basis for taking vacant buildings, and the movement was older, wider, and better organized. Throughout the 1990s, the Squall collective organized squatters and ravers in England—participants in the nomadic dance and music culture called rave—against repressive legislation. A strong radical ecology movement fought against building new roads, and in the mid-1990s, spectacular art-based activism arose in the group Reclaim the Streets. RTS demonstrations were ludic occasions, styled as parties and celebrations. This reflects a theoretical current that has guided activist cultural work since 1968, an ethic of urban play based in the revolutionary urbanist theories of the Situationists (especially Constant) and their academic ally Henri Lefebvre who wrote of the social “production of space.”

Strategies of cultural activism have been refined and enlarged with the emergence of a broad popular global anticorporate movement in the late 1990s. Organized against the rise of neoliberalism, new cooperative modes rely on affinity groups and central spokescouncils to organize and direct actions. International demonstrations in the early twenty-first century were carefully choreographed affairs, coordinated by e-mail lists and text messaging to cellular phones, with groups of actors differently garbed depending upon their intentions for a particular situation. A shifting array of contingent artists' collectives supported the street work with costumes, posters, banners, and performances. The emphasis was on telegenic spectacle and tactical surprise.

As the example of this activism makes clear, the Internet is a powerful networking tool that is inexorably transforming the social sphere. As access to the World Wide Web spread in the 1990s, a global movement of anticorporate activists at last became visible to its geographically separated constituents. Alternative Internet-based media was inspired by the example of the Serbian independent radio station B92 that switched to streaming its signal over the Internet after the wartime government closed its transmission tower in 1996. After the events of Seattle in 1999, new activist media like the global IndyMedia network arose helping to connect the movement by reporting on demonstrations and actions. Many of these Web sites use collaborative authoring software, so that visitors can post their own stories and photos to the site.

With the dissolution of the bipolar cold-war world—the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union—autonomous popular power has seemed to many the only route to global justice in the

face of states and corporations perceived as collusive partners operating through sweeping new international commercial treaties. The rise of indigenous peoples' movements has given this movement a soul and strong examples of antistatist decentralized organization. The media savvy Zapatistas of Chiapas in southern Mexico, with a charismatic thoughtful leadership, exemplify the claims of the new indigeneity.

As soon as the Internet medium arose, so did new forms of digital art and Internet art. In the 1990s artists formed groups to work in this new medium in a reprise of the sort of collectivity that marked the technology art boom of the 1960s.<sup>50</sup> These included groups and collaborations like adaweb, Rhizome, Etoy, and the activist oriented RTMark (properly spelled “®™ark”). What has driven a lot of the new technology art and Internet projects is broad change in the conditions of media art production. The fluid networked community of computer programmers includes “hackers” with an ethic of independence and a proprietary sense about the cyberspace they collectively created. Originally developed as a communications tool for the military, the Internet evolved from nonprofit and institutional beginnings. The ethos of what Richard Barbrook called a “high-tech gift economy”<sup>51</sup> pervades the development of free- and shareware programs. Many of these are written for the operating system Linux, which is an open source program (i.e., written in publicly accessible, nonproprietary code).

There is a continuous conflict between artists, many of them involved with collectives and public art, who seek to enlarge the sphere of public creativity and an art market that requires a scarcity of artistic products. This is basically a conflict between inventive creativity and the embodied power of capital.<sup>52</sup> Artists' collectives regularly address questions of intellectual property that have become key legal issues in the twenty-first century. Chief among these is the issue of copyright. General Idea was sued by *Life* magazine in the late 1970s over the format of their artists' periodical *File*. The Residents, a mysterious San Francisco rock group that performed anonymously wearing tuxedos, top hats, and big eyeballs on their heads, made a collage music that was at the heart of an avant-garde rock music scene. Small in commercial terms, it evaded industry control. Negativland, another San Francisco media art group, was dramatically sued for their collage work. Like collage films and sampling music for rap recordings, questions around the proprietorship of cultural property have arisen continuously as the outcome of artistic practice in multiple media.<sup>53</sup> Collectives acting like corporations diffuse responsibility. They add to the traditional outlaw and revolutionary expedient of the alias. Within the “Neoist” movement, malleable artistic identities arose that could be claimed by any participant, like Monty Cantsin and Luther Blisset.<sup>54</sup>

In the hastily capitalized Internet businesses, entrepreneurial patterns often reciprocated artistic strategies. Pseudo.com (closed 2000) was an online entertainment business positioned to catch a posttelevision wave that did not materialize. Their promotions were more art projects than public relations, their personnel were often artists, and their office style recalled 1960s "guerrilla media" groups like TVTV more than the TV networks they sought to challenge. RTMark also mimed "dot com" business practice. These artists' Web site is essentially a corporate front. The Web site includes an investment program that networks monies for "cultural sabotage." Artists post the projects they want to build, and people all over the world subscribe to realize them. These have included building devices and engineering "pranks": RTMark itself switched the voiceboxes on Barbie dolls and GI Joes in stores, and the Velvet Strike project devised "hacks" to add antimilitary and homoerotic content to Internet-based "shooter" video games. RTMark has supported other groups of media artists who do "hacking" work, like the Electronic Disturbance Theater and the prankster Yes Men.

In recent years, collectives have become regular actors in the art world on all levels. The collective as an art idea has been mainstreamed. Many of the artists who worked with earlier groups and collectives forged successful solo careers. They often used the lessons and forms of work they had learned in the groups of which they had been a part. Tom Otterness, formerly of Colab (1978–89), took up the collective as a theme in his projects for bronze public sculpture. In his works, tiny figures squabble over giant pennies as they struggle to build a colossus. Two other artists involved with Colab, Peter Fend and Wolfgang Staehle, have continued collective engagements. Fend works regularly with others and has long maintained a collective or corporate front for his exhibitions of world-altering ecologically based energy proposals. Staehle founded the Internet service provider called The Thing, a host to numerous artists' projects. Tim Rollins left Group Material to work with the Kids of Survival (KOS), a group he formed with young people from the South Bronx neighborhood where Rollins had long taught the learning disabled. Together they produce large-format paintings on paper prepared from the pasted-together leaves of classic books. Another Group Material member, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, went on to make "gift economy" sculpture, piles of candy and printed sheets that the viewer is invited to carry away.

The ideas of new public art have been significantly refined in recent years by U.S. artists working primarily in European venues. Artists like Christine Hill and Andrea Fraser have developed work around what Fraser calls "service art."<sup>55</sup> In the late 1990s, much of this work was shared in a series of presentations in New York and archived under the collective name of Parasite. This networking of advanced art in the realm of the social—still



broadly denominated “neoconceptual,” although it includes much new media work—is carried on in New York at this writing by the 16 Beaver Group. In Portland, Oregon, Red 76 produces socially based art projects, while the Chicago-based Temporary Services is an actively producing artists’ collective.

The collective as subject and work with groups is key to several artists exhibiting in galleries and international art fairs. Rirkrit Tiraviniya, Mark Dion, and Thomas Hirschhorn often rely upon groups to execute projects and provide social context for their works. In the mainstream context, the collective has been used to introduce young artists. These entrée groups include the short-lived video, music, and performance group Forcefield of Providence, Rhode Island, the group of musician/computer artists called Beige, and the object makers Royal Art Lodge of Winnipeg. One of the most complex hybrids of dispersed authorial identity was developed by Colin de Land at his American Fine Arts gallery in New York. De Land exhibited the fictional artist John Dog (him and Richard Prince), held conferences with critic Storm van Helsing (the artist Gareth James), and exhibited the art student collective Art Club 2000, some of whom took over the gallery after de Land’s untimely death.

The two case studies examined in this chapter have been groups that in a sense usurped or took on the characteristics of other collective formations. The Art Workers Coalition was a sort of guild, or labor union. It came together out of a grievance, and sought to affect the art exhibition system. Group Material functioned as a kind of roving museum or pseudo-institution in its own right. Through their curatorial activity they addressed subjects that established institutions could not, while at the same time questioning the political and social position of the museums that hosted them.

To concentrate on these two groups is to emphasize the structural change that artists’ groups engineered—and in a sense, reflected—within the larger frame of artistic work, exhibition, and reception. And, despite the clear political motives, declarations, and actions of these groups, it is to emphasize that the collectivity formed by contemporary artists arises out of the nature of the work of art making itself.

Artists’ collectives do not make objects so much as they make changes. They make situations, opportunities, and understandings. The collective mode of organization has become another strategy artists use to construct situations that work on particular social problems or sets of issues. This approach reached a kind of milestone of acceptance on the international art exhibition circuit with the multiple “platforms” of the 2002 “Documenta” exhibition and the “Utopia Station” at the 2003 Venice Biennale. That show/situation was built through meetings and continues to travel in

Europe. The new collectivism is about vision and the future. Authorship is beside the point.

#### NOTES

1. New York City is the site of my dissertation research. It is also inarguably the world capital of contemporary art. Despite the reluctance of galleries and museums to exhibit collective work, the city has seen continuous significant group formation by artists, and many international groups have also exhibited here.

2. Dennis McNally, *A Long Strange Trip: The Inside History of the Grateful Dead* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002); Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, [1968]).

3. Steven Watson, *Factory Made: Warhol and the Sixties* (New York: Pantheon, 2003). Warhol's was a new mode of artistic collectivity. At the same time, and in conscious opposition to Warhol, a classically avant-garde mode of collectivity arose around the March Gallery on 10th Street in New York during the early 1960s. The No! Art group produced antipatriotic and scatological exhibitions, inflected by images of the Holocaust. They worked collectively, according to Boris Lurie speaking in a recent film interview, like a "kibbutz," *No!art Man*, directed by Amikam Goldman, 2003.

4. The "neotribal" nature of youth culture in this period is reflected most explicitly in culture, in the plural forms of new psychotherapeutic methods, and in the drug culture that borrowed substances and rituals directly from the religions of indigenous American peoples.

5. The Communist Party spun off numerous collectives, especially print-making, film, and photography groups during the 1930s in the United States. Most of them were harassed out of existence by the FBI after the war. See Andrew Hemingway, *Artists on the Left: American Artists and the Communist Movement 1926–1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002). There is a continuous tradition, then, of politicized collective work among artists that undergirds the examples discussed in the text below.

6. For an account and timeline of the Black arts movement, see Mary Schmidt Campbell, ed., *Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963–1973* (Harlem [New York]: Studio Museum, 1985); for an account of the Chicano art movement, see Richard Griswold del Castillo, Teresa McKenna, and Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, eds., *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation, 1965–1985* (Los Angeles: Wight Art Gallery, University of California, 1991). For an account of the Puerto Rican art movement, see Yasmin Ramirez, "Nuyorican Vanguard, Political Actions, Poetic Visions: A History of Puerto Rican Artists in New York, 1964–1984" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2005).

7. Chicano or Mexican-American artists had a relation to the strong collectivist traditions arising out of the Mexican Revolution, like the great mural projects of the 1920s and 1930s under Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco.

8. In related work, a white group of muralists called the Los Angeles Fine Arts Squad produced cool, affectless trompe l'oeil murals in the late 1960s and early 1970s, architectural paradoxes made from the local streets of the bohemian Venice beach community. One (destroyed) featured an improbable snowfall on the boardwalk

with well-known local characters. Another mural group that went against type was Smokehouse, a group of African-American artists who made abstract murals in Harlem; see Michel Oren, "The Smokehouse Painters, 1968–70," *Black American Literature Forum* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 509–31.

9. Stefan Brecht, *Peter Schumann's Bread and Puppet Theatre*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen; New York: Routledge, 1988). The Bread and Puppet Theatre remains active today from its base in Glover, Vermont, and continues to march in political demonstrations. Large puppets have become standard features of recent international antiwar and anticorporate demonstrations.

10. As well as the preeminent modernist museum, the MoMA is an institution founded by the Rockefeller family. The political engagements of the family, particularly Nelson's governorship of New York and later term as vice president of the United States, opened the museum to charges of colluding in the Vietnam War.

11. Willoughby Sharp, interview with the author, 1999. A relatively apolitical curator of technology art, Sharp was organizing an exhibition of technology artists in Mexico City for the 1968 Olympics when the infamous Tlatelolco massacre of protesting students took place. For background, see Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine, 2004); George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987). For the Mexican events, see Paco Ignacio Taibo II, '68 (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004).

12. Art Workers Coalition, *Open Hearing* (New York: Art Workers Coalition, 1969).

13. Faith Ringgold, Archives of American Art, interview with Cynthia Nadelman, September 6, 1989; roll 4779, pp. 130–31. Ringgold was closely involved in the parallel struggles of African American artists in groups like the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition, which formed in 1968.

14. Lippard's work is the principal published source on the AWC today. See Lucy Lippard, "Art Workers Coalition, Not a History," *Studio International*, no. 180 (November 1970), and Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts," in *Reconsidering the Object of Art: 1965–1975*, ed. Ann Goldstein and Anne Rorimer (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

15. David Sokol, "The Founding of Artists Equity Association After World War II," *Archives of the American Art Journal* 39 (1999): 17–29.

16. Many of the technology art groups are profiled in Douglas M. Davis, *Art and the Future; a History/Prophecy of the Collaboration between Science, Technology, and Art* (New York: Praeger, 1973). The best-known art and technology partnerships were brokered by EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology), run by Bell Labs research engineer Billy Klüver. EAT paired individual artists with engineers to realize projects. The Swedish-born Klüver saw EAT as distinct from the European groups working with art and technology (personal conversation, 1999). A related project in England was the Artists Placement Group, which sought to put artists into corporate businesses and government agencies. Founded in 1966, APG included John Latham and Barry Flanagan. It has been continued since 1989 by Barbara Steveni as O+I—for Organization and Imagination. John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 54–57.

17. Conversation with Mark Pauline, 1987.

18. Deirdre Boyle, *Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

19. Paul Ryan's work in "threeing" is described on his Web site and in his book, *Video Mind, Earth Mind: Art, Communications and Ecology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), which also discusses his alternative history of video art. See the texts under "Ten Lessons in Threeing" at Paul Ryan's Web site <http://www.earthscore.org>. For Raindance, see Davidson Gigliotti, "A Brief History of Raindance" at <http://www.radicalsoftware.org/e/history.html>.

20. Guerrilla Art Action Group, *GAAG: The Guerrilla Art Action Group* (New York: Printed Matter, 1978).

21. Women Artists in Revolution, *A Documentary Herstory of Women Artists in Revolution* (New York: WAR, 1971; rev. ed., 1973).

22. See Carrie Rickey, "Writing (and Righting) Wrongs: Feminist Art Publications," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary Garrard (New York: Abrams, 1994).

23. A recent close consideration of this movement is in Julie Ault, ed., *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; New York: Drawing Center, 2002).

24. Barbara Moore in conversation, 2003. She ran the Bound & Unbound bookstore (now part of Specific Object). Former GAAG member Jon Hendricks, however, upheld the interpretation of Fluxus as a collective.

25. For a timeline of the alternative space movement, see Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985*.

26. This work was coordinated by the Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD) and associated with community activists Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard that grew out of NAPNOC (Neighborhood Arts Programs National Organizing Committee) founded by Eric Val Reuther (of the UAW Reuther family). Both organizations are now defunct.

27. The New York movement is discussed in contemporary books by Henry Chalfant and Martha Cooper. Joe Austin and Ivor Miller have recently considered the history of the movement and government measures against it. During the 1970s and 1980s, graffiti writers were active in other major cities as well as New York, especially in Philadelphia. Today the movement is worldwide.

28. Dick Hebdige's influential book on youth movements, *Subculture*, appeared in 1979, and became a keystone in the emergent academic discipline of cultural studies. Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) is the best-known account of the relationship between punk and Situationist theory.

29. Alan Moore and Marc Miller, eds., *ABC No Rio: The Story of a Lower East Side Art Gallery* (New York: Collaborative Projects, 1985).

30. Gregory Sholette, "Unnatural Speculations: Nature as an Icon of Urban Resistance on NYC's Lower East Side 1979–1984," *Afterimage*, September–October 1997, 17–20.

31. Dan Cameron et al., *East Village USA* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004); Steven Hager, *Art after Midnight: The East Village Scene* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); Liza Kirwin, "It's All True: Imagining New York's East Village Art Scene of the 1980s" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1999).

32. Scholars who have considered these developments include Christopher Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side: Culture, Real Estate, and Resistance in New York City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Neil Smith, *The New Urban*

*Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996); and Janet L. Abu-Lughod et al., eds., *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

33. Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art, 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," in *L'art conceptuel* (Paris: Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989); it was republished in *October 55* (Winter 1990), and in Buchloh's 2003 book.

34. See Richard Meyer, "This Is to Enrage You: Gran Fury and the Graphics of AIDS Activism," in *But Is It Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism*, ed. Nina Felshin (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995).

35. Among the New York cable TV groups active in the late 1970s and early 1980s were Communications Update, Red Curtain, and Potato Wolf. See Liza Bear, "All Aboard! A Survey of Incentives and Impediments to Public Channel Usage by New York Artists and Fellow Travelers," *Independent* (New York), March 1983, 11–15.

36. For Canadian art groups, see Luis Jacob et al., *Golden Streams: Artists' Collaboration and Exchange in the 1970s* (Mississauga: Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, 2002). Craig Saper, in his book *Networked Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) argues that the correspondence art movement and its allies were the precursors of Internet art.

37. Activist art is discussed historically by Nina Felshin in the introduction to *But Is It Art?* ed. Felshin.

38. Douglas Crimp and [Adam] Rolston, *AIDS Demographics* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), 16.

39. The AIDS Timeline project was first shown at the University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, in 1989. It was initiated there by Larry Rinder, who later became chief curator at the Whitney Museum.

40. Works on the *Tilted Arc* affair include Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk, eds., *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), and a good recent discussion of the policy implications in Toby Miller and George Yúdice, *Cultural Policy* (London: Sage, 2002).

41. She has also written extensively; see Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995); and Kym Preusse, ed., *Accidental Audience: Urban Interventions by Artists* (Toronto: Off-Site Collective, 1999). Grant Kester discusses Lacy in his *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

42. Mary Jane Jacob, ed., *Culture in Action: A Public Art Program of Sculpture Chicago* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995). In the Chicago exhibit, the group Haha built a hydroponic garden to grow vegetables for AIDS hospices.

43. Founding member Gregory Sholette, an editor of this volume, has written and spoken extensively on REPOhistory.

44. Jürgen Habermas's key book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, first published in 1962 was translated into English in the 1980s.

45. Brian Wallis, ed., *Democracy: A Project by Group Material* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990).

46. Author's interview with Doug Ashford, 2001.

47. David Deitcher, "Polarity Rules: Looking at Whitney Annuals and Biennials, 1968–1985," in *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985*, ed. Ault, 21.

48. Brian Wallis, ed., *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism, a Project by Martha Rosler* (Seattle: Bay Press/Dia Art Foundation, 1991).

49. See Alan Moore and James Cornwell, "Local History: The Battle for Bohemia in the East Village," in *Alternative Art, New York, 1965–1985*, ed. Ault. Reminiscences and analyses of this period are collected in Clayton Patterson et al., eds., *Resistance: A Radical Political History of the Lower East Side* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007). Although it is ostensibly fiction, the graphic novel by Seth Tobocman, *War in the Neighborhood* (New York: Autonomedia, 2002), includes real personalities and incidents in this struggle.

50. See Rachel Greene, *Internet Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

51. Richard Barbrook, "The Hi-Tech Gift Economy," *First Monday*, March 2002, [http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3\\_12/barbrook/](http://www.firstmonday.dk/issues/issue3_12/barbrook/).

52. This description of the conflict of interests between creativity and power was made by Christopher May, a theorist of intellectual property, at an October 2003 seminar at New York University.

53. In 1988, the British writer Stewart Home organized a "Plagiarism" convention in London where these issues were addressed; see S. Home, *The Festival of Plagiarism* (London: Sabotage, 1989).

54. Stewart Home, *Neoist Manifestos* (Stirling: AK Press, 1991). One of these Monty Cantsins (Istvan Kantor) threw blood on the wall in the shape of an X at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1988. This Monty also participated in the New York City Rivington School, a rowdy group of sculptors on New York's Lower East Side in the 1980s.

55. Andrea Fraser, "Services: A Working-Group Exhibition," in *Games, Fights, Collaboration: Das Spiel von Grenze und Überschreitung*, ed. Beatrice von Bismarck, Diethelm Stoller, and Ulf Wuggenig (Stuttgart: Cantz, 1996).

