

ARTISTS SPACE

ART CLUB2000

A selection of press

1993-2009

Artforum, Summer 1993. p. 61 (ADVERTISEMENT)



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Art in America

September 1993

—compiled by Walter Robinson

page 128

Censorship File

Corporate America continues to maintain vigilance against assaults on its image by fine artists, as three recent incidents involving the Gap clothing chain, *Vogue* magazine and Philip Morris cigarettes demonstrate. The first instance involves a summer installation by a group of Cooper Union students (Craig Wadlin, Shannon Pultz, Soibian Spring, Daniel McDonald, Gillian Haratani, Patterson Beckwith and Sarah Rossiter) at Colin de Land's American Fine Arts gallery in SoHo. A parody of the Gap's mass-marketing campaigns, the show used the Gap logo and included photographs of the group dressed in Gap fashions. It drew an angry cease-and-desist letter from a company lawyer, who charged that use of Gap trademarks constituted unfair competition. "If you believe that the attempted satire of your [work] somehow legitimizes it," wrote Gap senior attorney Julie Henderson Kanberg, "you are mistaken." The show closed on schedule without further complaint.

who wear good little Gap ensembles.

For those of us whose sense of style is too hard to break... they'll kill us. The Omnibus Crime Bill contains fifty new counts that will be enforced with capital punishment. FIFTY. Some of these laws are kind of strange, if you think about it. Like capital punishment for anyone caught running guerilla clothing outlets, black market fabric trading, and/or instigation of revolutionary fashions. Do you get the feeling that they're preparing for some sort of backlash? Another FOURTEEN infractions carrying the punishment of death are vaguely written clothing offenses, with very tricky wording like: "what the president deems to be good style..." and "accessories which *might possibly be conceived* as clashing components." In other words, legislative loopholes big enough for the President to drive a Winnebago through with his eyes closed...on QUAALUDES! Combine that with provisions in the same bill that nullify the appeals process for death row inmates, and what we are going to have as we roll into the New World Odor is an elimination of the stylish members of our population in record numbers. And it will all be done LEGALLY. Naturally they are already carrying this plan out.

Why do you think blacks are consigned to their ghetto jails, induced to kill each other, and relentlessly portrayed in the media as The Enemy? Because the black community is the best dressed group of people in the country. Sure Russell Simmons shops at The Gap, but otherwise blacks have a tremendous sense of style that is a direct threat to The Gap. Consequently, as record numbers of white kids began buying suede sneakers which were named for a black basketball star of the 1970s—and started snatching up any other bits of funky clothing—the Old Boys had no other choice but to start killing off such stylin' black trendsetters as Willy Smith and Jean Michel Basquiat.

The gay community is another notoriously well dressed group in our country. I don't want to offend many people by saying this, but They are not going to do anything about AIDS, because They look at it as population control. There will be no mad rush for a cure, medication will be kept out of the hands of the sick, and by the year 2000, thousands and thousands of some of the best dressed people in our country will be dead.

The time to act is now. The longer we hesitate from taking radical action, the more time They have to undermine our freedom. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and our general lack of harmony does Their job for them. We are so caught up in arguments about abortion, gun rights and political correctness, pointing fingers and yelling at each other, that we are missing the Big Picture. The Gap must be defied. We must, like Ricky Powell, wear clashing components, and one step further, we must *be* clashing components. Because once they tell us how to dress, they will tell us how to think, how to have sex, what to read, what to watch, what music to listen to, and what to think. And don't wait for the government to throw a pair of Gap pants in your face and say: "Wear these, sucker!", because by then it'll be too late.

So remember, time is of the essence. We must all unite now to destroy The Gap.

P.S. I don't really believe the Gap killed Kennedy. This is what we call satire; laugh it up. But the fact that America is dressed like shit is no joke. This piece was inspired by the ideas of Craig Hutler, a contemporary political analyst. His office, KC and Associates, can be contacted at P.O. Box 710, Amanda Park, WA 98526. (206) 288-2652. A very interesting man... ✓

FILLING IN THE GAPS

Talking More Paranoid Conspiracy Trash About Your Friendly Neighborhood Denim Vendor. By Art Club 2000

Believe it or not, Hugh Gallagher is not alone. Seven students from Manhattan's Cooper Union art school are also on a crazy mission to goof The Gap. It all started when the students, who call themselves Art Club 2000, ran a fake Gap ad in the Summer, 1993 issue of Artforum International to promote their show, "Commingle," which was being held at the American Fine Arts Company in SoHo. Among other things, the Commingle exhibit offered gallery-goers an opportunity to pose in their own fake Gap ad (and though the show ended on August 9th, the gallery is still offering this service). Of course The Gap threatened to sue American Fine Arts Co. for copyright infringement but let the matter ride when Art Club 2000 agreed to quit running the fake ads. Art Club 2000 did not, however, agree to quit dogging the gigantic clothiers, and the following is an essay by the group about their other thoughts on The Gap.

In our exhibition, "Commingle," Art Club 2000 focused on an investigation of The Gap. In many of our group photos we wear matching costumes which were generously supplied to us by The Gap's "no-hassle" return policy. After a long day of photo shoots throughout Manhattan, one lucky group member would bring back seven matching, sweaty Gap ensembles with the simple explanation, "I decided I didn't like these anymore." The Gap was less accommodating when we attempted to do some reconnaissance photography of their merchandising techniques, architectural detailing, and dressing rooms. On one occasion an Art Club member was physically pushed out of the store by a security guard while other group members ran for their lives.

As our relationship with The Gap continued, we began to feel the need for a closer look into the inner workings of this institution. Several Art Club 2000 members applied for jobs at local branches. The Gap didn't even send us the customary "no thank you" letters.

In our frustration, we decided to look through The Gap's trash. The first night, at The Gap on St. Mark's Place in New York's trendy East Village, we found innumerable inter-office memos, employee evaluation forms, job applications, the telephone numbers of all the employees, a pair of old Gap jeans, and sixteen dollars in cash. This fueled an intensive search over the next three weeks which involved going to almost every Gap, Baby Gap, Gap Kids and Gap Shoes location in Manhattan. Missions were conducted between midnight and 3:00 a.m. in a pick-up



truck with some members sorting through garbage on location, while others catalogued and organized the materials in the back of the truck according to store location number and date found.

The materials collected in these expeditions were a vital source of information in the production of our exhibition, and gave us all a greater insight into the inner workings of this megalopic corporation. Amongst endless stacks of paperwork and packing materials, (which The Gap apparently does not recycle), we found: a Babar rattle, a William Gibson novel, two unopened letters from The Gay Men's Health Crisis, inter-office memos discussing suspicious phone calls, The Gap loss-prevention handbook, employee payroll charts, broken hangers, countless shoe boxes, panty hose, broken anti-theft devices, even a dirty diaper. By looking at the trash, we learned the meaning of the "G.A.P. A.C.T.," the dangers of getting bogged down in tasks, the methods used to prevent employee theft (which include managers checking for garments in the trash before it's dumped), what it means to prevent store "shrinkage," and why the fitting room is a great place to sell. This information practically constitutes its own language, which all The Gap employees use to communicate.

Much of this kind of significant garbage has yet to be thoroughly examined, and the thought that every Gap in every state is producing more and more of it every day boggles the garbologist's investigative mind. The information in all those clear bags holds the promise of filling in all the gaps in our understanding of the store that's becoming a bigger and bigger part of all of our lives. Coming to a convenient corner location nearer to you than you think, The Gap.

Intrigued by Art Club 2000's obsession, we asked one of the group's members, Daniel McDonald, what was up.

Daniel: We found this one thing that managers write to the next shift of managers—you have to write what happened that day. And there was like this piece of paper with "Gap Rap" on the top of it. One of the managers had written down who had come in that day who was famous. And it said "Larry Fishbone" and then they'd crossed out "bone" and written "burne." Plus it said "Regis Philbin and wife" and what they had bought.

GR: WHAT STORE WAS THIS?

I think this was the store on St. Mark's.

WOW, REGIS PHILBIN ON ST. MARK'S. I THINK THAT SAYS IT ALL. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU FIND MOST OBJECTIONABLE ABOUT THE GAP?

I don't actually object to The Gap, but I'm interested and concerned with the omnipresence of The Gap and how invisible they are. Even though they're everywhere and you always see the stores, there's kind of an invisibility to The Gap. You can wear The Gap without really noticing your wearing it. I'm not really against what they're doing. I think it's part of the development of a sort of total, end-all capitalism. And I think a lot of companies are modeling their corporate structure after The Gap—their display techniques, the language they use with employees. I think the most interesting thing about The Gap is that fashion is usually used as fantasy to transform you. But The Gap promises not to transform you. That what they're going to do is let you shine through.

DO YOU OWN SOME GAP CLOTHES?

Oh yeah. Everybody. There would be times when we would be in meetings, discussing this stuff, and we'd look around and everyone would have some fucking thing from The Gap on. ✓

**INTO THE GAP. ART
CLUB 2000. I STILL
REMEMBER THAT
JINGLE AND** GLENN O'BRIEN
**HOW SINISTER IT
SOUNDED TO ME:
"FALL IN TO THE
GAP." IT WAS WORSE
THAN THE U2 SONG
"I WILL FOLLOW."
IT MADE ME THINK
OF THE ABYSS.**



Art Club 2000.
Untitled (Times Sq./
Gap Store) 21, 1992-93
© print: R x 30"



Later I would be troubled by the slogan "For every generation there's a Gap." There's nothing overtly evil about it, but the ambiguity of this line nagged at me. Are generation gaps good?

But over the years, as the Gap clothing-store chain evolved and grew into a new kind of retail operation, not to mention a philosophy of life, I came to accept and patronize it. There's much to like about the Gap. The quality is good, the price is right. It even had a historic impact because it embodied a sort of back-to-basics revolt against designerism and new hope for indebted fashion victims. It made basic hip.

As for their famous advertising campaign "Individuals of Style"—the one featuring real people of varying degrees of realness wearing Gap clothing the way they alone wear it—I thought it was darn effective. All kinds of accomplished people wearing Gap clothes proved that you didn't have to be able to afford Armani or Chanel to dress like the stars.

But to me the greatest Gap ads are the unauthorized parodies: the "Jim Morrison at 50" Gap ad from *Esquire*, the *Los Angeles Times*' "Hitler Wore Denim" piece, and Art Club 2000's "Commingle" exhibition at American Fine Arts Co. in New York last summer. The Morrison Gap ad was an uninvited addition to the famous Gap celebrity campaign. A 50-something Morrison, bloated but sober in his pocket T, was listed as a poet and substance-abuse counselor. The *Los Angeles Times* piece was a goof on the Gap's khakis campaign, which features photographs of historical figures in their chinos: James Dean wore khakis. Hemingway wore khakis. Picasso wore khakis. Etc. When the *Times* pointed out that Hitler wore khakis the Gap responded by pulling their advertising from the *Times Magazine*.

Art Club 2000 had their own conflict with the corporation as a result of their show. The exhibition included shots of the group wearing matching outfits courtesy of the Gap's "no-hassle" return policy, "appropriations" of Gap display materials, and an "Individuals of Style Portrait Center" where patrons could commission their own Gap ad. The gallery walls were stenciled with directives from Gap literature, such as "Every customer will have their needs determined and merchandise suggested to meet those needs."

But what specifically drew the ire of the Gap was an advertisement for their show, placed by American Fine Arts Co. in this magazine, that mocked a Gap ad and, in fact, included the Gap logo. A cease-and-desist letter from the Gap's





law department stated that the ad was trademark infringement, "actionable under the Lanham Act, the Copyright Act and the California unfair competition law." Although I doubt that any Gap customers made accidental purchases at American Fine Arts Co., the Gap's legal department was concerned that consumers might somehow assume that the Gap had approved the use of its logo and image. This is possible and I understand that the Gap attorneys were just doing their job. Were I™ in their shoes I probably would have done the same Thing®.

The seven young artists who constitute Art Club 2000 also applied for jobs at the Gap (they were unsuccessful) and collected and documented the trash produced by Gap locations throughout Manhattan. In the course of these investigations they discovered interoffice memos, employee evaluation forms, employee telephone numbers, clothing, \$16 in cash, a William Gibson novel, unopened letters from Gay Men's Health Crisis, and the Gap loss-prevention handbook. They also found that the Gap apparently does not recycle paper or packing materials, which is fairly naughty but is probably not unique in the industry.

Art Club 2000's freewheeling corporate investigation combines the elegant muck-raking of Hans Haacke with a groovy Pop art sensibility. It makes fun. And if artists aren't going to make fun of artily positioned institutions, who's going to do it?

One of the club's members, Sarah Rossiter, stated the group's goals: "To have the reigns of power handed over to us, and to be viewed as generational spokesmodels. We wanted people to view us as a group intent on being observed as well as innocent, dynamic and perverse." Obviously they succeeded on all counts, with the exception of having the reigns of power handed over to them, but this was, after all, their first show. Perhaps the most successful aspect of their Gap investigation was their rigorous exploitation of ambiguity. It would have been easy for the group to fall into the gap of faux-Marxist pouting often practiced by Comme des Garçons-wearing semioticians. Instead they presented the problem of the Gap with an honest ambivalence that would well serve anyone involved in creative criticism.

Opposite, top to bottom:
 Art Club 2000, Untitled
 (Conran's 2), 1992-93,
 C print, 8 x 10" Art Club
 2000, Untitled (Woolster
 St., Gap Vampire),
 1992-93, C print, 8 x 10"
 This page, top to bottom:
 Art Club 2000, Untitled
 (Limbo Cafe 2/Loved
 to Death), 1992-93,
 C print, 8 x 10" Art Club
 2000, Untitled/The
 Paramount Hotel/Nude),
 1992-93, C print, 8 x 10"

Flash Art International

The Leading European Art Magazine Vol. XXVII n° 175 March/April 1994 US \$7



Global Art (cover: Gabriel Orozco, La D.S., 1993.) - New Deals - Yayoi Kusama - Art & Language
Belgian Beat - Jack Pierson - Fernando De Filippi - Art Club 2000 - Nan Goldin/David
Armstrong, Gotscho - Bill Viola - David Salle - Francesco Clemente - Harald Szeemann



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GLOBAL
ART

ART CLUB 2000



ART CLUB 2000, 1993. MEMBERS: CRAIG WADLIN, SHANNON PULTZ, SOIBIAN SPRING, DANIEL MCDONALD, GILLIAN HARATANI, PATTERSON BACKWITTI, SARAH ROSSITER.

The group portraits of Art Club 2000 read like encapsulated episodes from the sitcoms we grew up with: "A Day in the Library," "A Night at the Movies," "The Coffee Shop," "The Fuzzy Animal Suit Show," images that have assaulted our generation from the day we were pushed out of the womb and placed in front of a TV.

The medium of image — whether it be film, TV, or photographs — proves to be a difficult one for artists of our generation to remain legitimate in. When we were younger, images led us to believe in the love of the Brady family, the racial harmony of "Diff'rent Strokes," and the paternalistic, benevolent strength of Ronald Reagan. As we grew older and less naive, we learned that none of these projections were close to the truth. And worse yet, there grew a sinking, disgusting realization that the images we so loved were being used to dupe, manipulate, and seduce us. The outcome of this upbringing is an incredibly jaded and cynical generation, at once distrustful of all images and at the same time in love with them. It is this attitude that is embodied in their project.

The reason this group is so successful is that the pictures ostensibly attempt nothing more than to portray themselves as outright images. The scenarios they inhabit have been staged to the finest cliché detail — scattered popcorn in the aisle of the movie theater, identical outfits, sitcom faces, and afterschool-special poses. And because we, as viewers, know that there are no "real" feelings or genuine emotions at stake, the photographs are strangely genuine. The Art Club is also invincible; they cannot be betrayed by the medium that has cheapened so many other aspects of their life, because they offer nothing for it to trivialize except sheer posing.

Hugh Gallagher

Art Club 2000 is a 7-person collaborative which first presented its work this past summer at American Fine Arts, Co., in New York with a show entitled "Commingle." This photo of the group on the verge of being beamed down was taken at the Liberty Science Center in New Jersey with "Global Art" (or "Intergalactic Art"? — to use TV vocabulary) in mind and as a reflection of their generation's passion/obsession with StarTrek.

Hugh Gallagher is a New York writer whose work appears regularly in Rolling Stone, Dirt, and Grand Royal.

TRASHING THE ART SCENE

Art Club 2000

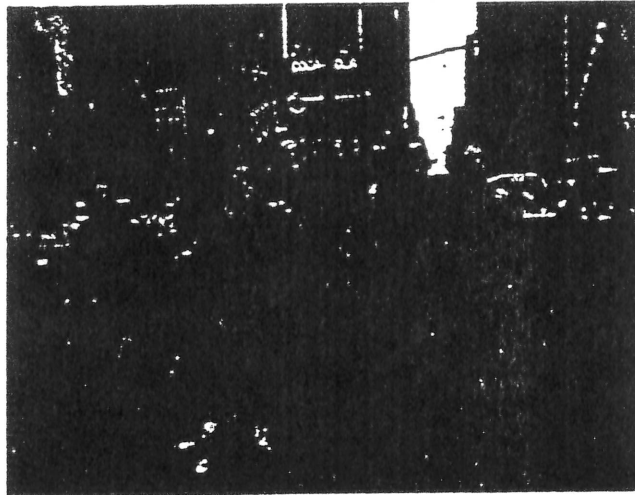
by Michele Simons

Ah, the world of art. Such a dirty place. It smells bad too. Especially when you collect the material for an art exhibit from a bunch of dumpsters in New York City. It's called garbology, and it's the work of a group of seven Cooper Union Art School students known as Art Club 2000. The collaborators, Will Rollins, Craig Walden, Shannon Pultz, Sobian Spring, Daniel McDonald, Gillian Haratani, and Patterson Beckwith, form a group intent on being heard as well as seen.

In their first exhibit, entitled "Commingle," the group featured the garbage of various New York Gap clothing stores. "Much of this kind of significant garbage has yet to be thoroughly examined, and the thought that every Gap in every state is producing more and more of it every day, boggles the garbologist's mind." Some of the glimmering gems Art Club 2000 unearthed from the fleet of Gap dumpsters includes employee phone lists, evaluation forms, payroll charts, a William Gibson novel, a Babar rattle, \$16.00 in cash and some discarded Gap clothing. These and other items were discarded along with endless stacks of paperwork and packing material that the Gap apparently does not recycle. "Commingle," an examination of the Gap's corporate conscience, was inspired as a response to the company's "Individuals of Style" campaign which, according to member Daniel McDonald, "promoted individuality as a tool to sell totally banal clothing."

In the creation of "Commingle," Art Club 2000 combined different media resulting in a project they describe as "somewhere between group therapy, deep ecology, and consumer activism." The group admits to becoming "corporate spies, garbologists, stylists and shoplifters." The show featured various

photographs in which the group "posed as a generation, as artists, as men, as [themselves]." The photographs show members in various locations; clad in matching outfits... generously supplied to them through the Gap's "no hassle return policy." Along with these photographs, "Commingle" consisted of a sculptural installation styled from the "significant



Art Club 2000

garbage" that the group collected, as well as an "Individuals of Style Portrait Center" where patrons could commission their very own Gap-style ad.

These efforts did not go unnoticed by the multi-million dollar clothing chain. The Gap sent Art Club 2000 a nasty cease-and-desist letter wherein a Gap senior attorney stated that "If you believe that the attempted satire of your [work] somehow legitimizes it... you are mistaken." The Gap took no further action, however, and "Commingle" ran as scheduled.

The seven Cooper Union Art School students plan to take their garbology a step further by participating in an upcoming group exhibit entitled "Garbage" at Real Art Ways, in Hartford, Conn. Without a doubt, it will be a sordid affair.

THE FACE

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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GENERATION X

WHO IS IT?

WHAT IS IT?

DOES IT REALLY

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WINONA GETS BACK
TO REALITY

FACING THE MUSIC

Winona Ryder photographed by Ellen Von Unwerth

07 >

ELASTICA • CREDIT TO THE NATION • ECHOBELLY • GENE •

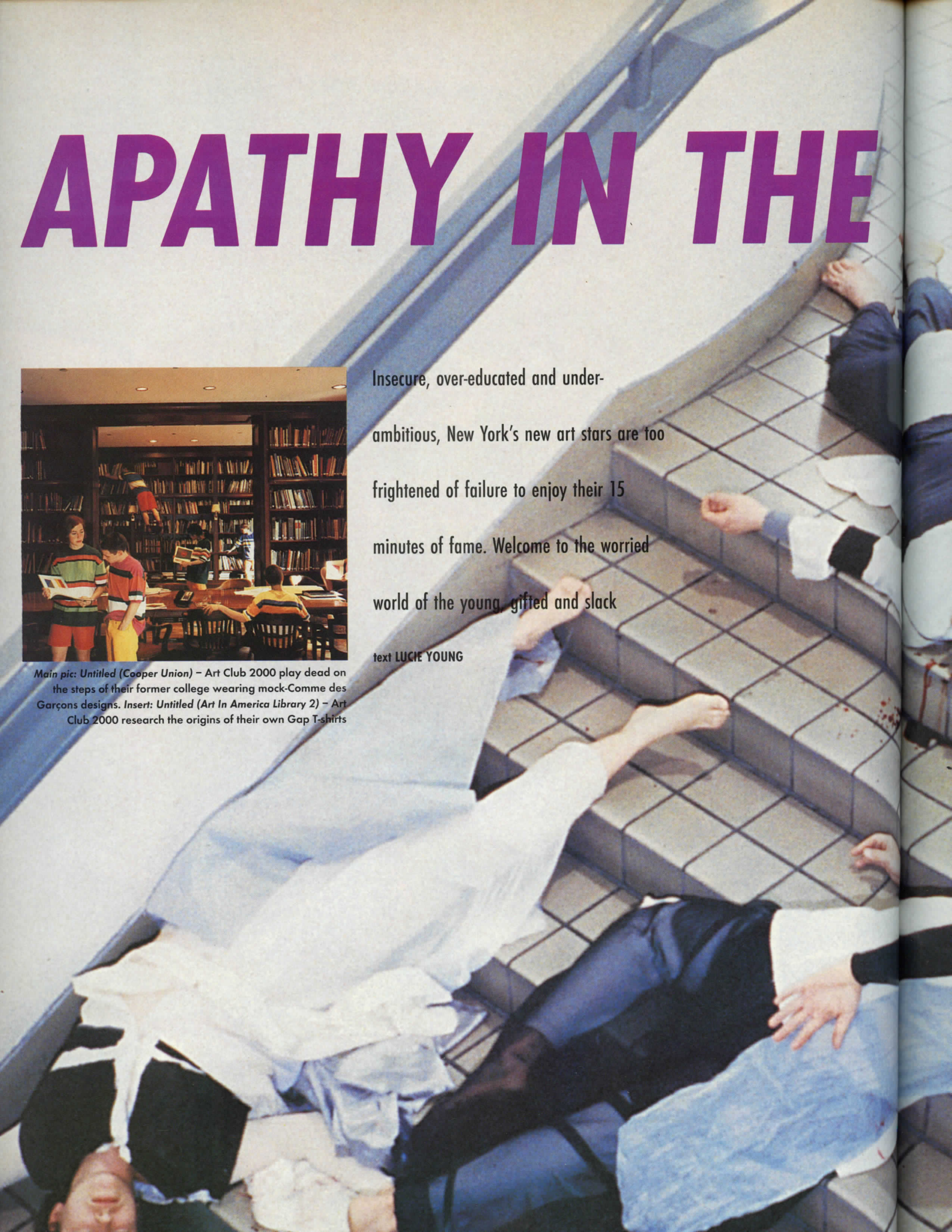
APATHY IN THE



Main pic: *Untitled (Cooper Union)* – Art Club 2000 play dead on the steps of their former college wearing mock-Comme des Garçons designs. Insert: *Untitled (Art In America Library 2)* – Art Club 2000 research the origins of their own Gap T-shirts

Insecure, over-educated and under-ambitious, New York's new art stars are too frightened of failure to enjoy their 15 minutes of fame. Welcome to the worried world of the young, gifted and slack

text LUCIE YOUNG



USA

X-ART



Art world egos, like condoms, usually come in three sizes – large, extra large and liar. During the Eighties, relentless self-publicists like Jeff Koons and Mark Kostabi blurred the boundaries between art and artifice by turning the fact of their own celebrity into an irreducible part of their work. Perhaps it's in reaction to this that New York's downtown art scene has now bred a new strain of artist who is too busy gnawing away at their own insecurity to enjoy their 15 minutes of fame.

If the likes of Sean Landers, Art Club 2000 and Rita Ackermann can be grouped together, then it's probably best to describe them as "slacker artists". College educated, middle class and in some cases critically acclaimed, they are the art world twins of the over-educated, under-ambitious twentynothings described by Douglas Coupland, Richard Linklater »



and Ben Stiller. Any social advantage they possess is just another burden to shoulder along with the anxieties of their generation.

Take the work of Yale graduate and current great white hope of the art world Sean Landers. In *Fart*, one of his most popular works, he's spontaneously scribbled countless epigrams across a giant slab of white paper, that swing from the gleeful, "Hello, I'm in a good mood today. I've dressed myself in a wacky artist outfit," to the gloomy, "Grow up you idiot... Is this the bad art idea I think I fear it is? Come on Sean, save this thing." Landers describes his working process as one part self-love to three parts hate. "I begin in all seriousness and then the spirit rises above me and I see myself like an idiot doing this crap."

In a similarly self-absorbed vein, 26-year-old Rita Ackermann paints canvasses featuring flat-chested, doe-eyed, drugged-up, waif-like girls, which, in her words, "reflect our neuroses about looking good. People our age don't have time to get to know each other, so we make decisions based on a first impression. Everyone is interested in supermodels, for instance, but even if you're bright, we don't have time for what's inside." Slacker art's inward focus is, she claims, an expression of her peers' powerlessness. Landers would probably agree if he could take a minute out from contemplating his navel. But he's normally too busy with his favourite preoccupa-

tion – videotaping and photographing himself naked in a stance not dissimilar to Michelangelo's David. If the pose and his long Byronic curls are intended to offer comment on his own status as a nascent art star, he's not letting on. "It's an Italian sculpture thing," he insists.

In a genre of confused intentions and sometimes contradictory results, slacker artworks often become an identity search in which the basic question "Who am I?" is tackled endlessly with different strategies, until the whole project gets ditched or simply crumbles under the weight of its own pretensions. The trouble, of course, is that outside the gallery all this often looks less like a serious investigation of anything much than the mad outpourings of your barmier friends. Art Club 2000, a group of seven graduates from New York's Cooper Union arts college, state that their mission is a revolt against the Generation X overload that's been so aggressively defining who they are, rather than letting them find out for themselves. To make their point, they've launched a protracted attack against The Gap, the store that's also been targeted by Stiller's *Reality Bites* as the archetypal example of Generation X marketing menace: mainstream corporate America masquerading as laidback Nineties counter-culture.

In last year's gallery show *Commingle*, Art Club exhibited pictures of themselves dressed head-to-foot in Gap gear, which they'd bought and

Above: *Untitled (Puzzle Party)* – Art Club 2000 try to piece together their lives with help from 35,000 jigsaw pieces.



then returned to the same shop, unwashed, in a calculated fuck-you to the store's "no hassle" refund policy. Elsewhere in their show they displayed three weeks' worth of rubbish which they'd culled at night from bins outside various stores. Among the piles of unrecycled cardboard boxes and psycho-babble corporate handbooks, they found the odd quirky gem: a list of the celebs who'd passed through a downtown store in one day (a dullsville bunch of low-key talk show hosts), a William Gibson novel, unopened letters from the Gay Men's Health Crisis Center, character assessments of the staff along with a list of their home phone numbers, and, last but not least, an old pair of Gap jeans. Oddly, no one seemed to point out to them that, in terms of hard-hitting cultural critique, going head to head with The Gap was as mentally challenging as three rounds with Beavis and Butt-head. The group's latest hate figure is IKEA, a similarly soft-core target which they chose for the aesthetic reason that "we dislike its crappy designs". Ambivalence is a key slacker characteristic. Despite all their griping about The Gap, Art Club members freely admit to shopping there. "At times, when we look around in meetings, everyone has some fucking thing from The Gap on," admits member Daniel McDonald. Worse, the entire group applied for jobs with the company – ostensibly to infiltrate the institution and get some dirt on the way it operates, although

they aren't above admitting they could all have done with the extra cash. Art Club 2000 highlight all too well the shortcomings of slacker art. The sneaking suspicion that, critical praise or attempted social relevance aside, the art is essentially as vacuous as the culture it criticises. And that perhaps if they moaned less – "I was out of Yale for eight years before I became an artist," bleats Landers; "It's so easy to fail," gripes Ackermann – they'd realise that, by comparison to many, they've got it easy. Still, in other ways, slacker art is plotting what is, for the art world anyway, virgin territory. A nexus point where video art meets camcorder culture, art objects meet mass-market goods, and the hubris that so often dominates the contemporary art scene is deflated by an honest, if at times only partially successful, bid to grapple with the expectations and demands of growing up. Indeed, their self-deprecating frankness is also a welcome alternative to art's current obsession with death and decay. Some might think it's a poor swap to exchange works about inert bodily fluids and corpses for the squalling of the slacker artist's inner child. But whether their careers take them into celebrity or obscurity, it's at least gratifying to know that fame is unlikely to go entirely to their heads. And that, lurking beneath the narcissism, is a character like Garth from *Wayne's World*, all too ready to leap out and yell, "We are not worthy" •

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V O I C E C H O I C E S

Art

ART CLUB 2000: Last year it was bunny suits. Now the collective of seven arty kids (recently out of Cooper Union) knocks down an entrance wall and leaves it crumpled on the floor, paints the other walls blue or green with color-test borders, and tacks up (with oversize pushpins) their posed and costumed group photos. With Day-Glo Band-Aids, painted tongues, or makeshift Mylar garb, their self-absorbed images in a hermetically sealed world are as slickly artficed as they are terminally silly, but they do convey a post-X generational malaise—and the tiny drum set is adorable. Through August 13, American Fine Arts Gallery, 22 Wooster Street, 941-0601. (Levin)

READ ALL ABOUT IT IN NEW YORK'S ONLY GUIDE WITH STYLE

PAPER

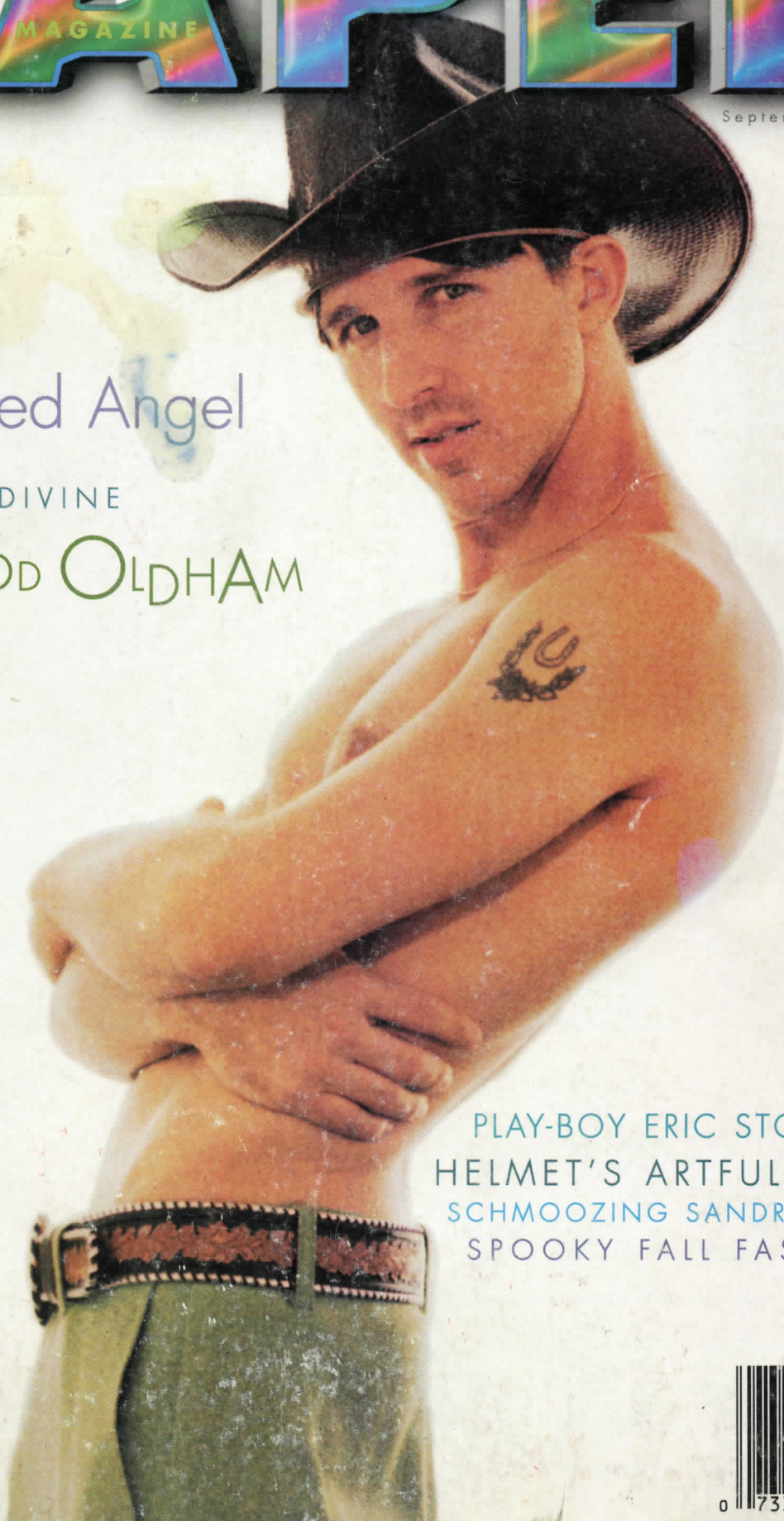
MAGAZINE

September 1994 \$2.95

Naked Angel

FASHION'S DIVINE

TODD OLDHAM



PLAY-BOY ERIC STOLTZ
HELMET'S ARTFUL NOISE
SCHMOOZING SANDRA BERNHARD
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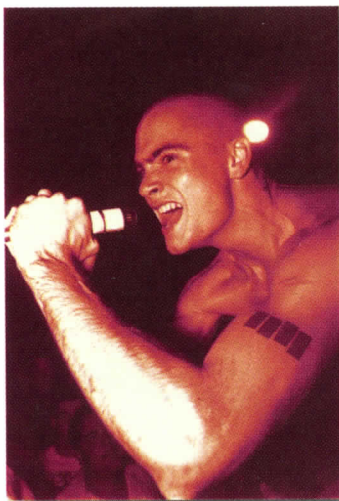
CANADA \$3.95

FUCK, YEAH

Subterranean homesick blues. By Steven Blush

FOR NEARLY TWO decades, Glen E. Friedman's noted photo work has served as a historical log on seminal suburban/urban subculture.

From his earliest days as a 13-year-old skateboarder photographing top mid-late-70's skate icons like Jay Adams and Tony Alva, to his documentation of the burgeoning early-80's hardcore punk scene (captured in the '82 cult soft-cover classic *My Rules*), to his high-profile work as a renowned hip-hop photographer (most notably, the legendary album jackets for Ice T's *Power* and Public Enemy's *Yo, Bum Rush the Show*), Friedman has kept his finger on the pulse — not for fame and fortune but as a vital lifeline. Thanks to the help of many of his music scene compatriots — like Rush impresario Russell Simmons, Fugazi's Ian MacKaye and Beastie Boy Michael Diamond — *Fuck You Heroes* (Burning Flags Press, distributed by his pal Henry Rollins' prolific 2.13.61 imprint), over 100 full-



GLEN E. FRIEDMAN

A blushing young Henry Rollins, 1981

color pages of Friedman's memorable photos, has come to light.

Friedman finds common ground among the rap, punk and skate subcultures he's so rabidly explored over the years. "They're all communicating alternative viewpoints," he says. "It's rebel youth culture — young people

doing what they want to, and being very creative with it. All the people I know from skateboarding in the 70's got into punk rock after that. By 1983, most of the punk rock bands had fallen apart. But at that same time, there was hip-hop as the new rebellious art form; black people yelling about what the fuck is goin' on, and making their own music with scratching. It was totally different. To me, it was a continuation of that punk credo."

Few people today can discuss American hardcore punk rock history with the accuracy and veracity of Friedman. "Punk rock is now just a sound," he relates with a tinge of nostalgia, "and that's legitimate to a lot of people. But back then, we had no other outlet. Sure there was a lot of preaching to the converted, but punk was where you could express ideas. The reason I've done this book is because subculture ain't what it used to be. Because of the media and the hunger for information in the world these days, subculture becomes pop culture very quickly now."

So why *Fuck You Heroes*? "Even though they're all my friends, they're also huge heroes to me, and I honestly think they should be recognized as heroes in this society. They say 'Fuck you' to everyone and everything they are not into. They say 'Fuck you' when they don't agree with what someone else is saying. They don't give a fuck about the standards that people before them have set.

"I'd like people to get something out of this book," Friedman candidly explains. "For people who don't know, it's to get an understanding of where these subcultures really came from. For people who've already been involved, it's to remind you of what got you interested in these things in the first place. Putting this book together just made me feel so great to remember where I came from."

Photographs from *Fuck You Heroes* will be on display at the Thicket Gallery, 44 Lispenard St., from Sept. 13-Oct. 1. ★

GENERATION GAP

Art Club 2000's collaborative critiques. By Julie Besonen

IMAGE IS THE THING FOR ART Club 2000, four men and three women, recent Cooper Union grads, all between 21 and 23 years old. Who they are individually isn't important, they say, although their names are Daniel McDonald, Patterson Beckwith, Gillian Haratani, Craig Wadlin, Shannon Pultz, Siobian Spring and Will Rollins. Formed in 1992, Art Club maintains that in order to remain completely collaborative they have no wish to be represented or quoted separately. "We don't take ourselves seriously, but we do take the idea of ourselves seriously," says one member. This "super-democracy" construct means that every decision made about their work is unanimous, each agreeing on shooting locations and costumes, working as stylist and photographer; no picture is snapped until everyone has looked through the lens and given their approval.

But how do seven opinionated artists agree on every aspect of putting together a show? "We never agree," says one member. "We can never decide anything and then we

change our minds," says another. "We talk and talk and talk and talk and then a week before the show the pressure forces us into high gear and we just do it," explains a third.

American Fine Arts gallery in SoHo has basically been where they "do it," and installations in Berlin and Austria are planned for the fall. In a show last year called "Commingle," the group parodied Gap clothing ads as a way of playing with the dominant stereotypes of their generation. One member would charge seven identical outfits at a Gap store and then, after the photo shoot, return all seven costumes, stinky and soiled, to a different store so she wouldn't have to face the same salesperson. With The Gap's "no hassle" return policy, it wasn't a problem. "The clothes would be a complete mess and I'd just say we didn't like it or it wasn't right for us, and they acted really concerned for our well-being."

The decision to



The seriously unserious Art Club 2000

satirize The Gap, and later IKEA, resulted from Art Club's growing awareness that these corporations were using their age group and counterculture image as a marketing tool. "We wanted to do something that would really represent us instead of taking these

media representations at face value," a member says. "We're adding a level of self-consciousness to it."

With no real agenda other than to make art that interests them — especially art as institutional critique — one member reflects, "in the process we're figuring out what drives us. And if we ever do figure it out then maybe we shouldn't work together anymore. It'd be boring." ★



frieze

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

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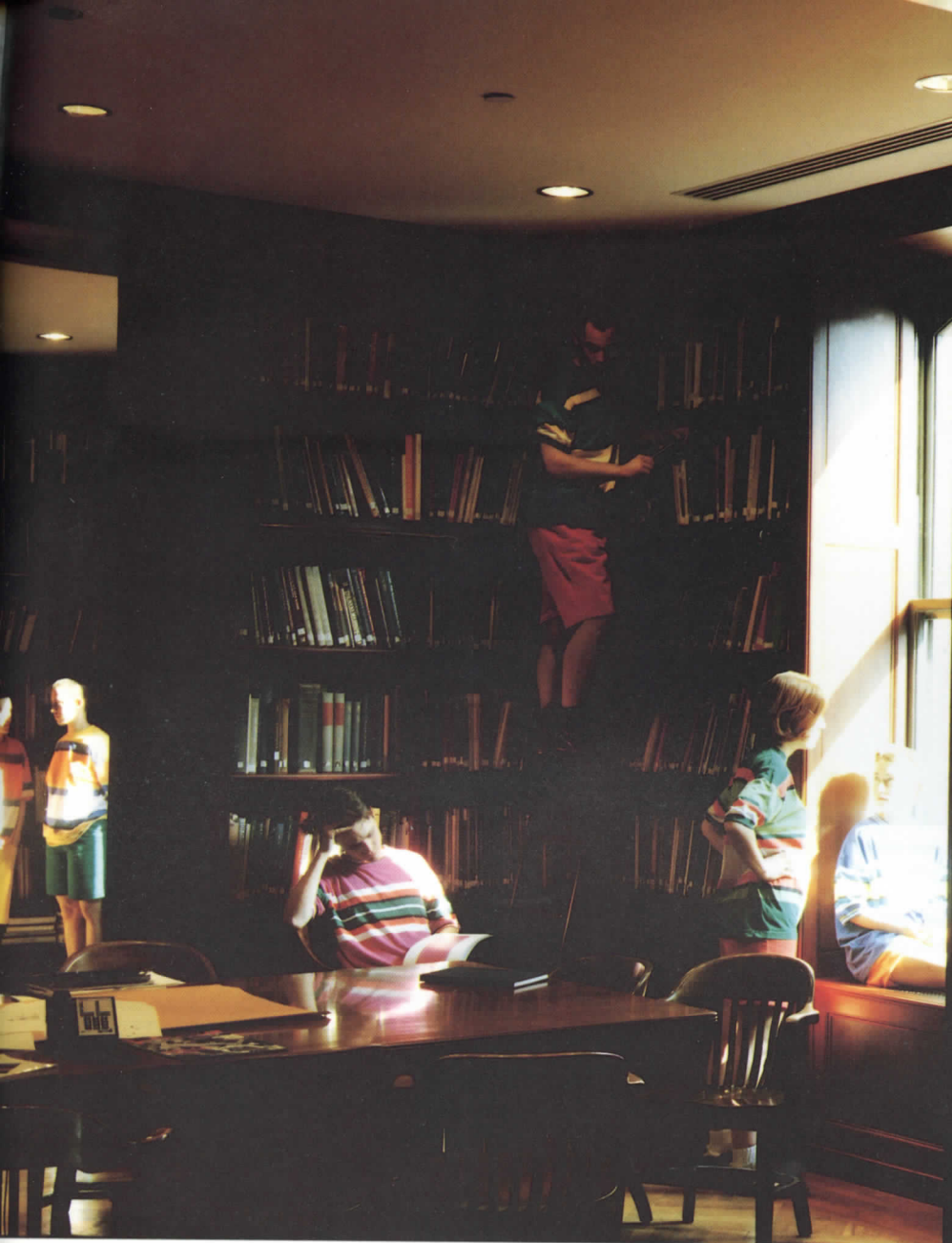


Untitled (7-Eleven) 1993
C-Print 30" x 40"

Courtesy: American Fine Arts, Co., New York

blood and guts after high school

Art Club 2000 interviewed by Collier Schorr



Untitled (Art in America Library I) 1993
C-Print 30" x 40"

Courtesy: American Fine Arts, Co., New York



Courtesy: American Fine Arts, Co., New York



Untitled (Cooper Union/Crows) 1994
C-Print 30" x 40"

I get the impression that you're nostalgic for the future. What happens in the year 2000?

- Everyone learns how to talk to the animals
- Everyone is satisfied with their outfit
- We could all die tomorrow
- Well, nothing happens, really, it's a social thing
- The cool thing about the year 2000 is what might happen...
- Some things will be exciting, other things are going to change just because people expect them to
- It's more like the time before then, when people are trying to figure out what it will mean
- A millenarian is someone who thinks that the millennium will come, that the world won't end, but that the millennium is supposed to be a time of great prosperity and happiness for everyone
- Maybe

When I think about your work, the Paramount Hotel photograph always comes to mind. You're all so young and skinny and hairless and the lighting is just right. It's an erotic picture because of what's not going on. You all seem like virgins and I guess I read it as a metaphor for your project – young kids occupying a grown-up picture, kind of ambient Mouseketeers. But this youthful, adolescent posture is an art-induced hallucination, which makes it more titillating, and makes us more perverse. Do you have us just where you want us?

- No, not really
- We want you, too
- We think that room was designed for taking the picture. It makes you look like art. We were even talking about old classical paintings, like Caravaggios
- It's disgusting to watch people look at that picture deciding which one of us they want to fuck

- All anybody in the art world ever wants to know about Art Club is if we all sleep together. We took that picture to be sarcastic

Every generation's teen stars become less and less thrilled by success because success is so possible. You appear to be your own Malcolm McClaren. Is there a split between producer and product in your mind, or is producing the product?

- Who is Malcolm McClaren?
- Everyone has been saying for so long that art doesn't need galleries but no one can figure out how
- Annie Lennox's old boyfriend was on MTV the other night saying how punk rock was the greatest conceptual art ever
- Punk made it possible for anyone to start a band
- We're trying to learn how to communicate our self-criticality better, which is there, but it takes ideal viewers to see it. We haven't found them yet
- In the right situation, it seems very easy to achieve a degree of visibility in the art world today

Your dealer Colin de Land is credited on your bio as assembling Art Club 2000, not unlike The Monkees scenario. In the past he has been associated with John Dogg and J. St. Bernard. Do you think dealers have a better chance of making successful art and that a successful dealer can mimic Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady*?

- Colin's not a successful dealer!
- But, really, he taught us all this stuff, he ran a weekly class for us that had guest lecturers, readings, and field trips
- The class demystified the art world, taught us all this stuff about the various mechanisms associated with the reception of an artwork
- Rather than mimicking that plot, Colin was trying to save us from those pitfalls
- It's more like Charlie's Angels – somebody giving you advice over a fucked-up speaker phone
- Rex Harrison was, like, such an egotist in *My Fair Lady*. Colin's not like that at all. He wanted to change the art world, it was never about his ego or success or whatever
- But Rex Harrison wound up learning so much from Audrey Hepburn
- Colin didn't like our pictures at first
- But he was really interested in talking to us about them

What kind of music would you be playing if Art Club 2000 were a band?

- Art Club 2000 is only a good name for a techno band
- We're thinking about it a lot
- We talk about how much a band can communicate with their image
- A band can really set an example
- Music is better than art
- No it's not
- Someone said we were like a band that didn't make any music, we just took photos for the album covers



Untitled (Cooper Union/Snake) 1994
C-Print 30" x 40"

In the GAP project you all wore the same ensembles. While the pictures were an obvious critique of the uniformity of mass-marketed identities, they also highlighted the need people have for hiding out in a crowd or belonging to a clique: the comfort of sameness. Can you talk about why you use the term 'club'?

- It came from the idea of a high-school art club
- It was supposed to be kind of nerdy
- We weren't trying to be professional artists, it was something to do after school or on weekends
- Plus it sounds better in different languages 'Il Gruppo Duemila'
- 'Le Art Club Deux Mille'
- Kunst Klub Zweitausend'
- Conformity is, like, scary and exciting at the same time
- Our outfits match in pictures, but we never match from picture to picture, that's important

Is a club a replacement for a missing movement?

- We don't have to have the same kind of gravity that's attached to a movement. A club is a group that is linked by something, but it's much looser, less specific

How did your second show differ from the first?

- It was smaller and we were finished a day early, which made us think we did something wrong
- We made all our pictures vertical so they could fit into magazines more easily
- People said that they would be able to tell Art Club's market value by their next show
- But we didn't care
- The second show was also in the summer and that was cool because Colin wasn't trying to play us as rising art stars by moving us into the fall season



Group Portrait/Sears Portrait 1993
C-Print 30" x 40"

The photograph of you in the library (among others) has the static feel of a film still, but unlike the high theatrics of Cindy Sherman reaching into the stacks, your caricatures are incredibly subtle. The image is a perfect merger of the Pictures Generation and the Düsseldorf photographers like Candida Höfer. Can you talk about the illusion of narrative, how your audience is directed through a series of vignettes and where you fit into the continuum of photography?

- Yeah, Candida Höfer's pictures of animals were great
- Gregory Crewdson is really cool
- In that picture specifically, we were looking for paintings that corresponded to the colours of clothes we were wearing
- The most inspiring thing right now is Cindy Sherman's new work. She's the best artist anyway. Lately she's been doing stuff for *Comme des Garçons*: awesome postcards and posters of herself in their clothes
- That German work seems like it's all done by students of those people with the water-tower photos, the Bechers, and, like, it's a 20s thing about objective social documentary, which is cool, but we'd rather document ourselves than other people
- Picture theory changed the way art photographers are looked at, or else it was symptomatic of some other conditions that were changing the way people look at pictures, and we do look at pictures that way, no problem or whatever
- But everyone does, so what
- So what
- Sometimes making the pictures seems like just practising – the posing I mean. Then it's like, practising for what? And then the photo becomes an end in itself as if it's real life.



Untitled (Industria Superstudios 3) 1993
C-Print 30" x 40"

- But we're seven so it's kind of a group perception, even though we don't agree about what we're looking at a lot of the time
- That's why photography is great, because it exposes, if you will, what artists are thinking about, looking at, or trying to look like, and it's the cheapest, quickest and most precise way of showing other people

What do you expect from the 1995 Whitney Biennial?

- More of the same
- More painting
- Laura Cottingham said in class one time that the Whitney will showcase whoever their favourite collectors and dealers want them to, and how last year's Biennial was the first to deviate from that system. The trustees got really mad and in reaction, next year's will be a million times worse

In the 80s, a group of usually uncool people suddenly discovered they could be famous like pop stars. It was quite a revelation. Now New York artists are a bit wary of the spectre of publicity, and of becoming too famous outside the institution of art. The 90s could be seen as a move back from film to theatre, to an intimate art that is often too frail to hold up in the spotlight. In a way, your pictures are a return to the 80s and the strategy of success. Are you scholars of the last ten years of art history?

- Maybe we're scholars of the last three years of art history
- We don't think about the collapse of the 80s art market, the collapse of the 90s art market is really sad – people should buy more art
- An art collector is a special, fancy animal

- There's something wrong with that star system. Collectors and gallerists and curators want a sure thing, so they make someone a star, but that's bullshit. A better investment would be to buy dozens of inexpensive works rather than one expensive one
- Doug Ashford said that the art world needs more good people doing things other than being artists, like critics and curators, people who work in galleries and stuff, but there's no money in it
- The art market has made it possible for us almost to break even sometimes
- If you get some kind of validation from the art media it can be good for sales. On the other hand, people start thinking that this thing might be something that they don't want to participate in. Everyone's afraid they're going to buy into the next Mark Kostabi
- A seven person artist doesn't have a very good likelihood of survival. It doesn't make any sense to invest in an artist that isn't one person because of the possibility of their splitting up

In the photograph *Limbo Cafe 2 / Loved to Death* (1994) you are reading two magazines; *Newsweek* with a panda bear and *ArtNews* with a Jeff Koons bunny on the cover. Can you talk about fame in the art world and what your inheritance is?

- The cover of the bunny magazine said 'Who is Jeff Koons and why does everyone hate him?'
- We wanted our cover to say, 'Who is Art Club and why is everyone so nice to us?'
- We've inherited a system that, at best, over-inflates one person's ego. Hopefully having seven people in a group can diffuse some of that

You've been quoted as saying you want to be the

spokespeople of your generation. What is your generation? Who is the spokesperson of your generation now?

- Oh, that was a joke, Art Club is not a spokesperson

Brett Anderson of Suede got a lot of attention for a quote about his sexuality. Anderson said he was bisexual, but that he had never slept with a man. It seems as though homosexuality has been relegated to an idea, something to make celebrities more interesting. In the issue of *The Face* where you were featured as part of a section on Generation X, I noticed that there was no mention of homosexuality. If there is a Generation X do you think it has a gay face and do you think Art Club 2000 has a pansexual aura?

- Well, you know, there's that one character in *Reality Bites* who comes out to his mom and cries
- It's funny when you're a group and you get asked identity questions
- It's just that it's not polite, really
- Plus we haven't agreed on that yet
- There's no spectrum wider than that of human sexuality. Art Club 2000 can only hope to occupy one small section of it at a time
- Technically we're too young to be Generation X

In your last show you included a picture of yourselves assassinated *en masse* on a staircase in your school. You echoed this apocalyptic vision by knocking down a wall in your gallery which is used to announce the exhibition. Why did you kill yourselves off?

- We took that picture because blood was trendy right then
- We mimicked the strategy used to make models look hurt, fucked up, beaten, lobotomised, and sexy. It makes the object even more powerless
- It's like we're dead, but we're still making art
- Cooper Union is the new fashion location. Last Fall *Harper's Bazaar* shot a spread of Christy there, called 'Pure Simplicity' and Ralph Lauren has been taking pictures there too
- We copied the composition of a photo of some female textile students on a staircase at the Bauhaus
- At the same time we were thinking about the recreations in real-life peril TV shows, like *I Witness Video*
- Maybe we have an appetite for destruction, too
- Yeah, maybe that's why we knocked down that wall
- It was supposed to be a punk rock institutional critique
- Pretending to be fucked-up by the school somehow
- But we learned so much in art school
- We're pretending to be Art Club and we're not pretending to be anything else
- Like artists sometimes do
- We haven't killed ourselves off yet, we're still working on that

THE FACE

SPORTING LIVES

Basketball style, Prince Naseem,
Chelsea fans abroad

FASHION HEROES

Can McQueen & Gaster
save British design?



Michelle Gayle

The Orb

Irvine Welsh

Ethan
Hawke



ARMY DREAM
Ethan Hawke photographed
Steven K

Motorcycle emptiness: New York's Art Club 2000 rev up their fashion antics

HYPE!



art times Once they were Art Club 2000, a maverick New York collective looking to comment on modern cultural overload. Now they've re-emerged as AC2KUK, five Americans plus one Brit charging round London and exploring the various media of "pure fashion". Their first big studio concept is shown here: an attempt to play on archetypal "born to be wild" fashion iconography - "the biker style now as likely to be worn by businessmen as anyone else". Which surely brings their conceptual art full circle; "my 52-year-old dad could have done that", anyone? AH



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ART

Review

O SOHO MIO

A show looks at the gallery
exodus to Chelsea

AC2K (the artist formerly known as Art Club 2000), "Soho, So Long," American Fine Art, through Aug 31 (see Soho).

While it may be difficult to recall exactly when Soho first began its metamorphosis from mere locale to state of mind (was it 25 years ago, or 30?), it isn't hard to remember why: Artists migrated to this former manufacturing center and tenderloin district of the Gilded Age in search of studio *Lebensraum*. They found an abundance, and a nascent theme park was born. Of course, the original pioneers of Soho hadn't a clue as to what lay in store for the barren corner they chose to make their own. Painters, sculptors and performance artists begot gallery dealers; bars, restaurants and other businesses soon followed. These attracted tourists and suburban shoppers, who brought chain stores in their wake. And along the way, someone decided that movie stars and investment bankers needed lofts more than artists did.

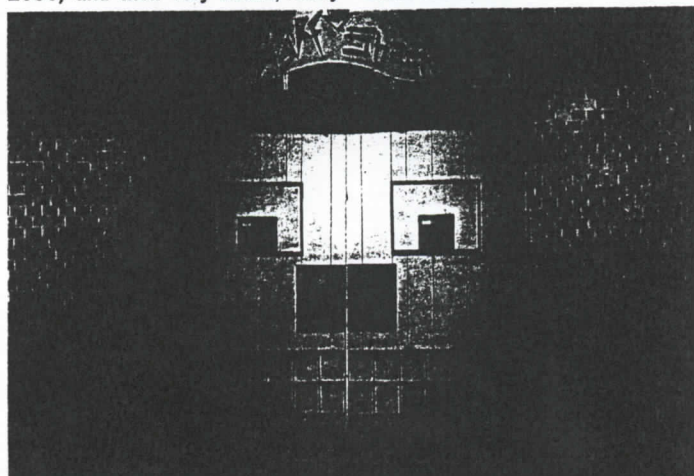
We now know what's at stake when art transforms a neighborhood, which is why art world insiders and real estate developers alike have been avidly waiting to see if the trickle of galleries to Chelsea over the last few seasons turns into a flood. While it's clear that for the coming fall at least, more galleries will be staying in Soho than not, there's now the uneasy sense that Soho's very success has pushed its galleries to the brink of extinction. Still, this irony (compounded by the fact that artists were driven from Soho long ago) is too delicious *not* to be savored by the art world—which is where AC2K (the artist formerly known as Art Club 2000) and their very smart, funny

show at American Fine Art comes in. As its name suggests, AC2K is the latest incarnation of Art Club 2000, a group of artists who have specialized in probing the art world's terminally disadvantaged position vis-à-vis popular culture. In 1993, for example, they reconstructed a Gap store in this same gallery as a site for marketing artistic identity. Here, they brilliantly encapsulate a Soho in transition by casting their current installation as a waiting room—that familiar form of purgatory—complete with couches and vending machines.

The heart of the show is a series of interviews conducted with various young gallery dealers and critics, each of whom proffer their views on Chelsea's dawn as fab gallery nexus. "I hate Chelsea," says critic David Jerrard Rlmanelli. "I think it's, like, an avatar of aesthetic spiritual degradation" (this after boasting how much easier it is for him to cover Chelsea's galleries from his Eighth Avenue apartment). These interviews are in the form of typed transcripts strewn over a coffee table, above which hang photos of the interview subjects. Each of them poses in front of favorite Soho haunts; dealer Andrea Rosen, for instance, is seen exiting the pricey Japanese restaurant, Omen.

The visual kick for "Soho, So Long," however, is a series of objects—both inside the gallery and out on the street—best described as landmarks of Soho in flux. Outside, the gallery's soaped-over front window promises the coming of an Old Navy store. A facsimile of the Drawing Center's dour outdoor flowerbox up the street decorates the exterior, along with a sign that both welcomes and condemns the new Soho Grand Hotel. Inside, there's a scrap of graffiti-scrawled particleboard—signed Samo—which may be an authentic Jean-Michel Basquiat, and AC2K's *pièce de résistance*, a full-scale reproduction of popster Kenny Scharf's "Scharf Schak" souvenir stand near the Soho Guggenheim. The viewer enters the show through its grimacing facade.

Like Scharf himself, AC2K melds art and pop culture with abandon, albeit with a critical savvy that still doesn't take itself too seriously. At a time when art seems to be settling for whimsy, this show's sharp-edged satire stands out.—Howard Halle

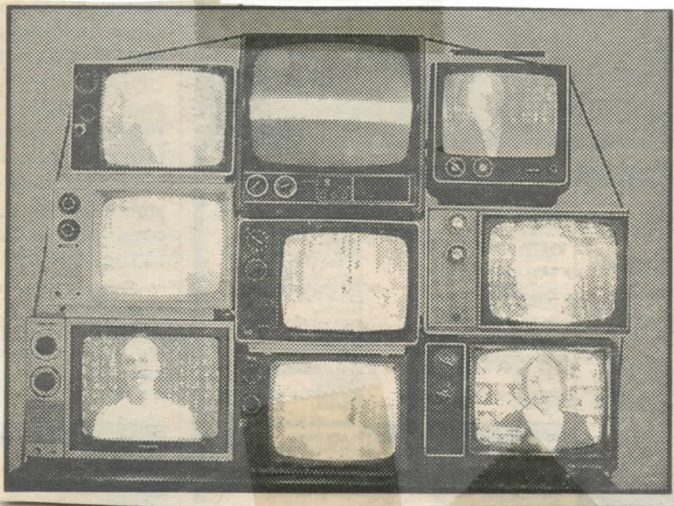


AC2K, *Untitled (Sharp Shack)* after Kenny Scharf's *Scharf Schak*, 1996.

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NEW YORK POST

SATURDAY, JULY 19, 1997



TALKING HEADS: The pundits of "1970" stop making sense.

MUST MUSEUM

by whitney scott

WHO: ART CLUB 2000

WHAT: "1970"

WHERE: American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. between Grand and Canal streets

WHEN: through Sept. 26

WHY: This delightfully down-scale installation is a riff on the year 1970 — the midpoint of the conceptual art movement — which prized the idea above the object. (No matter that Art Club 2000, the young collective that put the show together consists of people who weren't even born until after the year 1970). It's still fairly relevant commentary on what the art world has become in the last 25 years.

Being that the show is rooted in conceptualism, it is light on objects. One room features a tower of TVs featuring the talking heads of "1970" veterans like Carolee Schneeman, Vito Acconci and Les Levine, while just around the corner is a banquette of red couches for viewing full-length video interviews with the same entertaining cast, who offer compelling theories about why we've made no progress at all.

Art Club 2000

'Night of the Living Dead Author'

American Fine Arts
22 Wooster Street, SoHo
Through June 17

A famous essay by Roland Barthes and a cult horror movie inspired "Night of the Living Dead Author," a sly, spare installation by the young collaborative pranksters known as Art Club 2000. The installation comically dramatizes the plight of the artist who accepts the argument of Barthes's 1967 essay "The Death of the Author," that individual creativity matters far less than do institutional forces in determining the nature and meaning of modern art.

After the death of the author, the artist, deprived of the life force enjoyed by old-fashioned creative types, lives on as a zombie, parasitically feeding off the fruits of the market-driven art world. In a photograph, group members present themselves as gray-faced ghouls, gnawing on human limbs like extras from "Night of the Living Dead."

The main installation offers a goofily melodramatic vision of the art world as a police state. In a room dimly lighted by revolving police lights, a phalanx of cardboard policemen, each wearing a sash labeled "Punishing Enforcers of an Oppressive Regime," welcomes viewers into a room occupied by a leather-upholstered bench borrowed from the Leo Castelli Gallery. On the wall, an electric sign emits messages like "Consumption determines production," "When I hear the word checkbook I take out my culture" and Art Club's own zombie manifesto.

It's hard to tell whether the group means to mock or advance late 1990's possibilities of ideological subversion, but in either case they've produced a funny and smart piece of satirical theater.

KEN JOHNSON

ART

Reviews

Millennial hug

Art Club 2000 embraces the century's end, and finds no Y2K problem By **Howard Halle**

The idea of the artist's retrospective has always had a whiff of death about it. While certain artists (the lucky ones) enjoy major surveys in their lifetimes, the real business of assessing an artist's achievement doesn't happen until after he or she has shuffled off this mortal coil. Add the fact that the value of his or her work usually spikes when he or she dies, and it becomes clear that, more than diamonds, death is an artist's best friend.

That irony is hardly lost on Art Club 2000, the satirical artist collective that has spent much of the '90s puncturing the pretensions of the art world and the world at large with its sardonic—and sometimes sophomoric—brand of humor. The first thing that greets you upon entering "1999," Art Club's self-styled "retrodisrespective" at American Fine Arts, is an effigy of the Grim Reaper holding back a curtain to usher you into the show. Although this tableau may give you pause, fear not: It's a send-up of Charles Willson Peale's *The Artist in His Museum* (1822), recently featured in MoMA's "The Museum as Muse" exhibit. As in the original, the viewer is being beckoned toward a universe of dead things, only here, it's made

up of what passes for "living" at the turn of the century.

Well before the era of supermodels or Heaven's Gate, Art Club lampooned fashionistas and suicide cults—which it saw as flip sides of the same coin. Indeed, one of the funniest images here is a color photograph showing the gang in cheesy togas, "poisoning" themselves by smearing make-up on their tongues. It's just a small part of a show that looks more like a stoopsale than a retrospective, though its arrangement of leftover bits from prior work—life-size cutouts of the group in bunny suits, a recreation of Soho's touristy Scharf Schak—is more artful than the aggregates of moldering paperbacks and rusting Ab Rollers one normally encounters on a weekend in Cobble Hill.

In this respect, "1999" differs only slightly from prior Art Club efforts (and there have been seven shows in as many years at this same gallery), where old pieces were sometimes recycled. This method nicely encapsulates the group's retro sci-fi sensibility, its penchant for gazing at the future through a past-fogged present—

though the group is hardly alone among '90s artists in grasping the difficulty of finding the cutting edge in a culture mired in retrospection. Nor is Art Club alone in indulging in the semiotics of arrested adolescence. The big difference, however, between Art Club 2000 and someone like Sean Landers is its attachment to the progressive tradition of Modernism—its idealism, if you can call it that. It is a collective, after all, in an age when socialism has supposedly been

between how Soho once was and how it is now).

When Art Club first got together straight out of art school, its work was notable for its combination of club-kid cool and I'm-with-the-band goofiness. There were the aforementioned parodies of cults, as well as of the Gap's seeming stranglehold on mid-'90s consciousness. Art Club took the viewer on outings to the 7-Eleven and the Liberty Science Center in a kind of triumphal romp through suburban tackiness. Its members even became epi-celebrities in their own right; among the ephemera from their career, gathered here on a wall full of pinned-up images, are photos of the group, dressed up like classic punks, for a spread in *The Face*.

That said, "1999" is as sad as it is funny. The Scharf Schak re-creation takes up the middle of the installation's sculptural centerpiece (just beyond death's door, so to speak). The grinning face familiar from the corner of Prince and Mercer streets—where artist Kenny Scharf's original T-shirt-and-tchotchke kiosk stands—is partially obscured here by fragments of other work, like the facsimile of one of the Drawing Center's curbside planters, and the sign alternately protesting and welcoming the Soho Grand Hotel. It's all admittedly a bit inside-baseball in tone, but suitably somber nonetheless. As the millennium draws to a close, it seems we are all in mourning for the 20th century; why shouldn't Art Club 2000 be, too?

Art Club 2000, "1999" is on view at American Fine Arts, through Saturday 3 (see Soho).



Art Club 2000, "1999," installation view.

ground into dust by global capitalism. True, we're supposed to take its activities as tongue-in-cheek: There is the group's celebration of our culture's image-is-everything ethos, not to mention the winking nod to millennial dread in the italicizing of 2000 in Art Club's name. But there's something deeper in the work, a certain poignancy, especially in recent shows like "Soho So Long" and "1970" (both of which essentially charted the differences

Flash Art



Micha Klein
The Arrival of the Rainbow Children (version for Flash Art)
C-print, plexiglass, pvc, wood



VIRGIL MARTI

HOLLY SOLOMON

Virgil Marti displays an operatic passion for the bad taste of middle class existence. In baroque screen-prints of beer cans, high-school bullies, and suburban kitsch, he lays claim to a tacky Americana that works as counter-myth to our plastic, moneyed era. Marti's current installation is wallpapered with prints of the "Beer Can Collection" amassed by the artist and his father. Still stored in his parent's basement, Marti's cans represent lingering conflicts between a trashy upbringing and cultivated tastes. The elegant printing, framing, and selection which refines this display of alcoholic consumption questions the base needs underlying connoisseurship. Conversely, the effete presentation of American eagles, hunters, and Mustangs on Budweiser cans, calls into play a set of blue-collar values which can be equally exclusionary. High art becomes the stuff of memories, degraded and sentimental, because Marti refuses to relinquish the past.

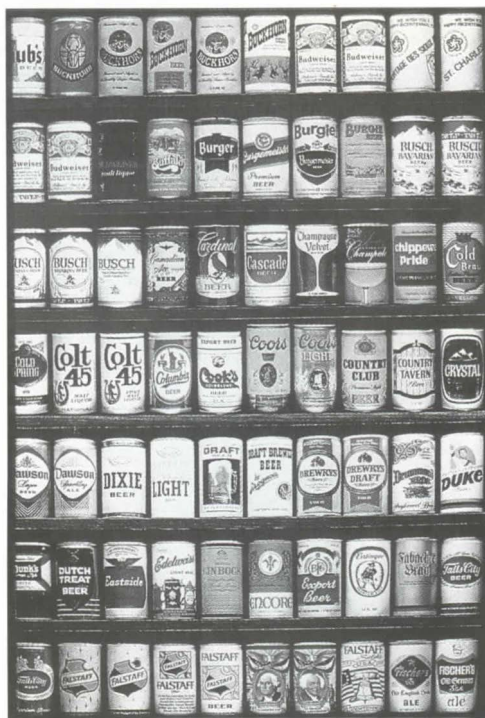
Rococo suburban home decor, photographed 70s style, and recolored in Warhol's hallucinatory oranges and reds conveys Marti's second obsession; lifestyle porn. Some photos come paired with seedy snippets from "naturist" magazines, others are coupled with fantasy teenage hang-outs or glossy silver backings. The lurid coloring of the sunken dens and shag carpeting discolors suburban harmony and drags his classic pop palette into the realm of bad taste. The empty bachelor pads remind us of friends and lovers, once desired, now gone. Marti climaxes the exhibition with a series of glitzy, yet awkward, self-portraits. The artist's display of pale-skin and scrawny physique is reminiscent of Steven Meisel's fashion spreads of heroin chic. For Marti such ads appropriate his youth, but teen-age memories can only come up short against such attractive models. Hip corporate entertainment reaches into the past, so Marti's portraits gaze blankly at tomorrow. Rejecting inferiority, Marti defines a new type of sex symbol: "antiheroic, self-aware, the wave of the future."

Michael Cohen

ART CLUB 2000

AMERICAN FINE ARTS

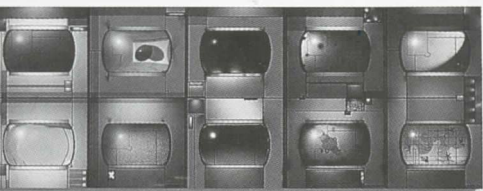
Art Club 2000 was formed in 1992, a youthful group of misfits insouciantly satirizing popular American iconography with low grade knock-off type installations and deadpan snapshot photography parodying fashion and advertising. Incorporating real brand name products, reproductions of display racks, and logos such as The GAP or Ikea, the Art Club ransacks and twists apart the demographic, cookie-cutter methods of mainstream business marketing. Savvy to



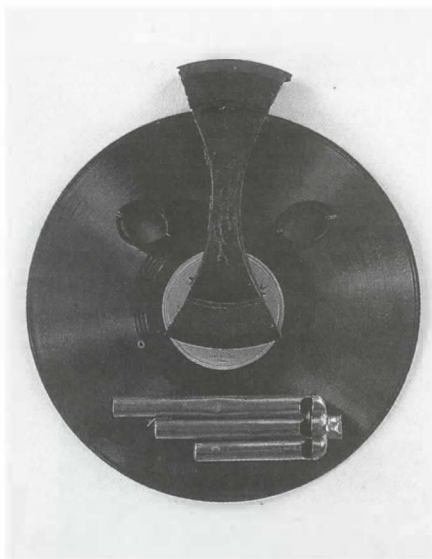
VIRGIL MARTI, Beer Can Library, 1997. Detail of installation (Art Alliance). Screenprinted 4-color process wallpaper.



ART CLUB 2000, 1999, 1999. Installation detail.



JEREMY BLAKE, Samurai Sleeper, 1998.
Digital C-print on formica, 36 x 84 inches.



ROMUALD HAZOUM , Red Robin, 1999.
Mixed media, 19 x 10 x 6 inches.

the discourse of the artworld, the Club makes fun of its institutions while managing to ingratiate themselves as a part of its machinations.

The seven-year show called "1999" featured a puttin'-on-the-hits hodgepodge of memorabilia from *Night In the City* (1995), *SoHo So Long* (1996), *1970* (1997) and others. Parodying Charles Wilson Peale's stodgy oil painting — from 1822 called *The Artist in His Museum* (featured in the "Museum as Muse" at MoMa) — the front room of the gallery was decked out as a proscenium style entranceway with a burgundy velvet curtain (replete with tassels) and a sculpture of the grim reaper. Beyond this portal was a stagey platform stacked with old televisions playing videos from 1970: a fascinating and historical series of interviews with the likes of Alex Katz and Vito Acconci reminding about the old days. Cardboard cutouts of club members in fuzzy bunny suits were installed alongside a panoramic light-box with a photo of art dealers from SoHo, most of whom have already migrated to Chelsea, giving the piece a vintage quality. A replica of the Drawing Center's plant box and the Scharf Shack were arranged on the platform with cutouts of policeman, and a siren. Offstage, the left wall was plastered with photos, a shot of the gang in an elevator wearing silver leotards or seated at the u-shaped Formica counter of a doughnut shop epitomized their deadpan touch.

Art Club bastardizes the picture of sameness and conformity in groups and systems, upstaging the clich s of brand name marketing with their droll criticisms of mass merchandising. Like a long running sit-com in syndication, Art Club's cultural laughtrack is filtered through a Pop cheapness, to be enjoyed in perpetual reruns.

Max Henry

JEREMY BLAKE

FEIGEN CONTEMPORARY

Jeremy Blake's debut New York solo show, "Bungalow 8," features drawings, a suite of three digitally animated films, and three corresponding digitally painted stills, and has at its center a series of conundrums. Poised between opposing artistic genres — painting and photography, representation and abstraction — the work also hovers between prettily rendered opticality and cool intellect. Most of Blake's work is created using a software painting program that mimics the physical qualities of paint, but leaves no textured surface on the canvas. The resulting "paintings" are then digitally printed as large C-print photographs. On the surface, the three smart-looking, flatly rendered rectilinear photographic stills featuring California modern home interiors hung in the front gallery might be the work of any number of artists whose art examines architecture and social space. The artist manages to distinguish his work, however, by his decision to present his "paintings" digitally, resulting in their immaterial and

somewhat ghostly presence. Although he does not use pigments or brushes, the artist manages to inject interest into painting in a way that few young artists working with oil and canvas have managed to do.

A pair of curtains divides the back of the gallery space from the drawings and digital paintings. In the darkened rear gallery space, the digital stills evolve into a series of projected films featuring shifting, kaleidoscopic scenes. In these films — also created using painting software — the interior of a building slowly disintegrates into its own exterior, windows slide open and closed, and the lights of the city illuminate as the sun goes down. Some of the films' effects are even more psychologically unsettling — walls begin to undulate and breathe, a backyard swimming pool boils and steams like a witches' cauldron, a monitor embedded in a wall broadcasts a film clip over and over. The stills are fresh and original, and together with the films create a vision that resonates in the mind long after the show is over.

Sophia Warner

ROMUALD HAZOUM 

THE PROJECT

Romuald Hazoum 's masks are constructed out of the urban detritus of the cities where his exhibitions take place. He plays on the Western conception of African art. It's ironic to see the other end of the so called primitive influences advanced by Picasso, among others, thrown back at us by a bonafide West African in a traditional and stereotypical format — made of our own garbage. A black toilet seat lid with dominoes for eyes, for example. The masks are all life sized, although they really wouldn't function well as such, with crack vials standing in for eye openings and telephone wire as hair. An upside down detergent jug with a knit cap makes a likely face as do old style vinyl records with other junk fashioning eyes, noses, ears, and mouths. The work imparts an eerie presence akin to the best religious masks, yet here the intent is purely secular, in fact they're funny.

He also paints. In the second room were earth toned (the materials actually are acrylic medium mixed with dirt brought along from Benin) canvases bearing simplified symbols of female sexuality. In the middle of each painting is a flat rectangular area with a crudely painted, linear motif representing womanhood in one guise or another. In *Ablayo* a triangle with a slight slit and a wavy line behind it is intended to invoke Lesbos. His paintings are roughly textured; backgrounds impatiently applied with house paint rollers and scratchy emphases around the cryptic markings. He aims for an "outsider" or naive effect, but his sophistication is evident in the choice of materials. He seems to hold an accusatory mirror up to the face of Western society: but it doesn't appear to be an hostile statement, it's more of an innocent and witty observation.

Christopher Chambers

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DEUXIEME EDITION NUMERO 5752

LE DÉPART DE LA FÊTE DE NOÛL EST EN VENTE LE 30 DÉCEMBRE 1999. COURTESY AMERICAN PINE ARTS CO.



Caption

Do you, promise not to transform?
– Gareth James

As a young artist recently out of undergraduate art school in London, my first reaction to the work of Art Club 2000 in the early nineties was peremptory and hostile. I remember, surprisingly clearly, muttering ‘wankers’ under my breath before turning the page on the spread of their signature Gap photos that appeared in *Artforum*. Of all the images of the members of Art Club 2000 dressed in Gap clothing – in a library, in Times Square, on a rooftop, outside a fast food joint – I think it was the limpid lollygagging in the image of them inside the Conran shop that irritated me most, seeming so slight and vacuous compared to the angry, sarcastic golf-zombies that the London group BANK was producing at the same time. When I turned the page, it was with conviction – a ‘forever’ sort of thing.

Now, in agreeing (enthusiastically) to write about them fifteen years later, the conventions of wedding speech writing would seem to apply to this situation: after the initial provocative remark of dissent the speaker proceeds to reveal how the years and greater familiarity with the subject have led him or her to reject the first mistaken impression for a more sturdy sort of truth. While at weddings the formula is principally a way of getting laughs, a similar method is often present in art criticism, suggesting that the critic often shares with the wedding speaker the design of sneaking in his or her courageous honesty or clever guile under the cloak of a description of the rich complexity of the subject.

This essay was headed that way, but early drafts were impoverished by my attempts to disavow the initial irritation that the convention prescribes, to the extent that the text drifted away from something potentially important about Art Club 2000. The problem became one of writing in fidelity to that initial hostility rather than upon its disavowal, even at the risk of becoming some monstrous hypercube variant of the wedding speaker-critic.

My second encounter (not the second reaction, since I never quite succeeded in turning the page with any finality on those images) was with their penultimate exhibition, ‘Night of the Living Dead Author’, at American Fine Arts, Co., in New York in 1998. In Walter Benjamin’s essay ‘Critique of Violence’ and Jacques Derrida’s later commentary upon Benjamin’s text, Benjamin and Derrida show that there is no rational foundation to social inequity, but only a recursively structured series of performative speech acts that confer rank and privilege. The utterance that substantially changes the legal status of a single citizen into a married one through the phrase ‘By the power vested in me I now pronounce you husband and wife’ or into an imprisoned one by the phrase ‘I sentence you to 10 years...’ is preceded by one in which an individual is made an official of the law or church, by another official who was previously appointed in the same fashion by an institution which itself was given its authority by a prior speech act, that itself originated in... The interminable regress of this performative speech continues until one encounters the brute facts of violence and the Law.¹ In Art Club 2000’s exhibition, the spectator

1 See Walter Benjamin, ‘Critique of Violence’, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott), New York: Schocken, 1986; and Jacques Derrida, ‘Force of Law: The “Mystical Foundation of Authority”’, *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice* (ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson), London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

was confronted with eight cardboard cut-out prints of a cop, lined up one behind the other in single file, producing something like the repetitive structure of the *mise en abyme*. The exhibition contained numerous allusions to the work of other artists (Mariko Mori, Jenny Holzer, Matthew Barney, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman and Vanessa Beecroft among others), these proper names designating the artistic subjects that live on in high style despite the avowed deconstruction of the subject position of the artist: these are the ‘living dead authors’ of the exhibition’s title, no different in effect from the ad nauseam of the obstinately repeating cop.

Although this only occurs to me now, it is compelling in retrospect to link the affective charge of redundancy in these two bookend images I have of Art Club 2000. Just as ‘behind’ the uniform of every cop there is not, in fact, an ‘authentic’ subject but just another subject being worn by the form of power that speaks through it, in a semiotic analysis we might enumerate the subject positions offered within Art Club 2000’s photographs and magazine interventions (straight, preppy, queer, hot or not, vacuous or studious, white, Asian, suburban, cosmopolitan and so on) but it seems clear that such procedures of differentiation are explicitly surrendered to capital from the very beginning of the project. We need to remember how prevalent the multiculturalist dependency on the logic of recognition was in the years immediately preceding Art Club’s first work in order to understand how provocative this abdication was. In place of the demand for subjective recognition (the demand placed upon the other to recognise my ‘I am...’), we are offered instead a cheerful sort of *jouissance*, produced in images that embody the brute redundancy of distinction under capital. In language reminiscent of the Maoist protagonists of Jean-Luc Godard’s *La Chinoise* (1967), Sarah Rossiter, one of the members of Art Club 2000, stated the group’s goals in *Artforum* in such a way that the project of producing particular identities seems entirely displaced by the goal of attaining operational power: ‘To have the reigns of power handed over to us, and to be viewed as generational spokesmodels. We wanted people to view us as a group intent on being observed as well as innocent, dynamic and perverse.’²

In all truth, I have no idea how much sincerity can be attributed to this claim. I decided not to consult ex-members about this essay both because I write knowing that Jackie McAllister is writing the companion piece to this essay and he is far better placed than I am to write the group’s history, but also because it would make it difficult to return to my initial hostility. So I will proceed by taking their statement at face value. I will return a little later to some contemporary criticisms that dealt with a perceived theoretical insufficiency in regards to the statement’s first claims, but for the moment I will focus on the last: perversity. Sylvère Lotringer has had much to say about the pervert, in a fashion clearly influenced by the 1960s and 70s French and Italian cultural-political movements that strove to identify a mode of practice outside of the institutionalisation of left-wing politics. But I am trying not to fall back on these movements to find an antecedent for Art Club 2000 – I am thinking a little further back, to Diogenes in fact, the great cynic philosopher.

There are conflicting accounts of the death of Diogenes, but my preferred one is that he died by deciding to hold his breath. Forget about the physical impracticality of such an achievement – it is the myth’s sense of a recalcitrant refusal that is important here. Before Diogenes refused the proper forms of an authoritarian Nature, he lived in a tub rather than a house, and walked through the streets carrying a lighted lamp during the daytime, telling all and sundry that he was looking for an honest man, and excoriating the follies and pretences of a corrupt society. When Plato gave Socrates’s definition of man as ‘featherless bipeds’ – and was much praised for this characterisation – Diogenes plucked a chicken and brought it into Plato’s Academy, saying, ‘Behold! I have brought you a man.’³

Surely this ought to be enough to consider Diogenes an honorary Art Club member, but it is to another tale that I want to turn: according to Peter Sloterdijk, who gives a central place to Diogenes in his *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1983),

² Glenn O’Brien, *Into the Gap: Art Club 2000*, *Artforum*, vol. 32, no. 6, February 1994, pp. 72–75.

³ Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, vol. 40, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.

Diogenes distinguished himself from the other cynic philosophers by becoming the kynic, the *dog* philosopher, defecating and masturbating in public. In particular, Sloterdijk tells us, Diogenes liked nothing better than to warm himself in the sun on the steps of the temple while the other philosophers were in the cool interior, debating some great notion or other.⁴ By way of a greeting for them when they exited the temple, Diogenes would take a fresh shit on the steps, in order to remind them that their bodies shat, farted and sweated, no less than a dog’s, as they transported their minds from one debate to the next. Not only does this kynicism find its modality in the perverse, but it also favours a defiantly non-dialogic form of monstration, of showing, over the dialogic forms of the day. In both these respects, this is a tradition to which I would like to connect the work of Art Club 2000 – one that was overlooked in the contemporary assessments of their work, heavily influenced as these analyses were by a postmodernist critique of representation that was hegemonic at the time in relation to notions of critical art.

Many important and explanatory critiques indebted to Poststructuralist thought were developed during the late 1980s and early 90s, but by the time Art Club began to operate, in the early 1990s, postmodernism was beginning to lose some



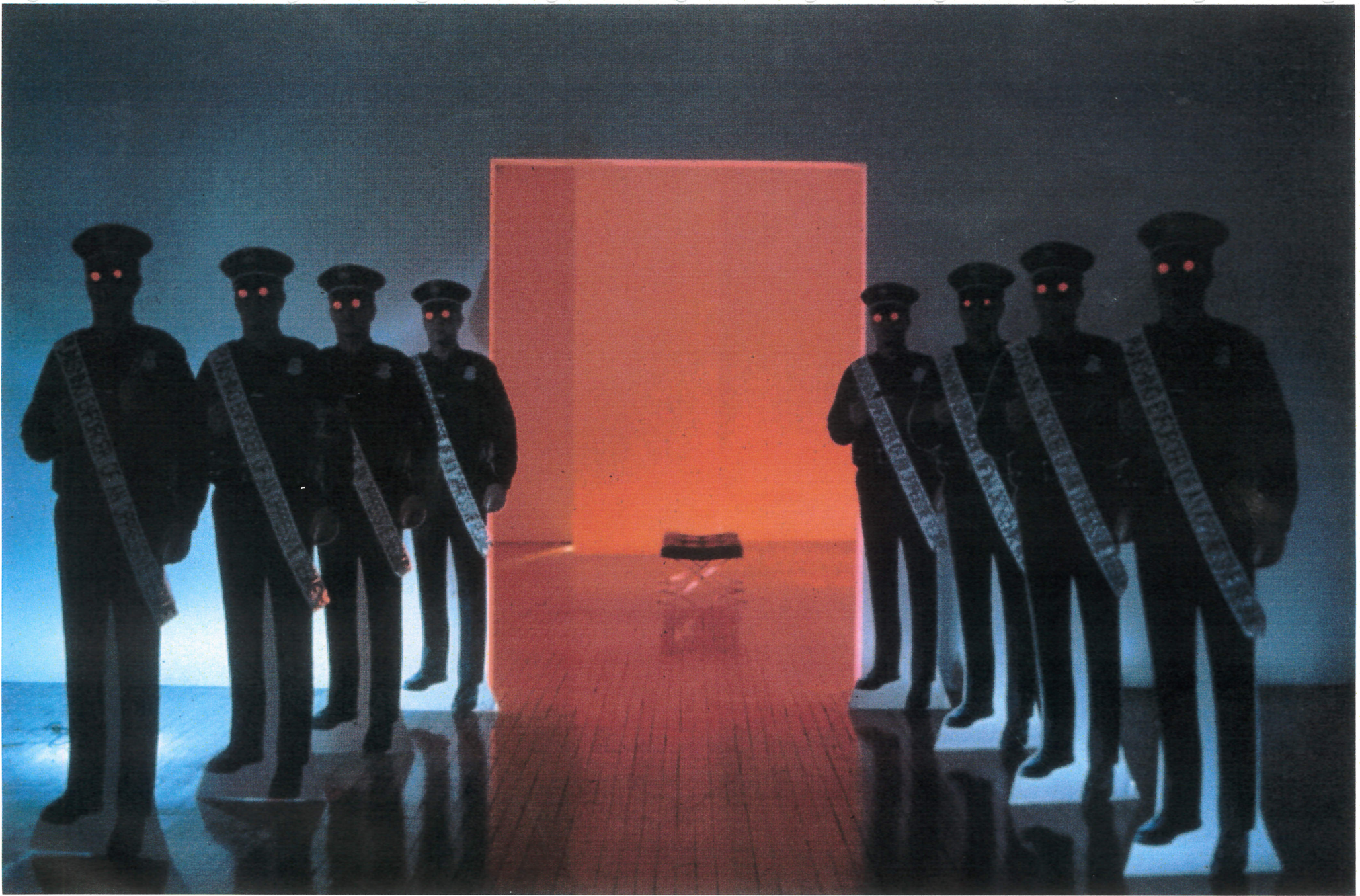
Caption

of its hitherto invincible aura. Whether affirmative or negative, it seems that the only artistic positions critics ever considered for the group were those of Warholian dandyism, on the one hand, or those of first- and second-generation practices gathered together under the term ‘institutional critique’, on the other. To be fair, I think Art Club 2000’s members also saw themselves negotiating some relation between these approaches: their statements were neither entirely ludic (they did, after all, deploy tropes of art-as-research or institutional critique) but also not exclusively analytical (they did clearly think that there was some problem with art itself that needed lampooning).

overleaf

Caption

⁴ Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason* (trans. Michael Eldred), London: Verso, 1988. See in particular ch.5 for his discussion of Diogenes as the kynic philosopher (*kynon* means dog in Greek).



Since the cessation of the group's activities around 2000, one unfortunate consequence of the (otherwise welcome) revelation that the legendary Colin de Land was not just the Club's gallerist but also a participant in the group is the tendency for the argument to be resolved by falling back on the fiction of a Machiavellian individual directing the younger members. Suddenly, the Cooper Union kids⁵ can be written as the 'Pop' to de Land's 'Critique'. This is not just a disservice to the Club, but to de Land too: the need to force de Land into the position of the phallic signifier that grounds all other signifying operations relates back to a general hermeneutic anxiety over authorship in group situations. It also opens onto what might be a larger question concerning power and representation, one particularly relevant to Art Club 2000's practice.

I have recently been looking into Jean-Joseph Goux's theory of the general equivalent – the 'standard measure' that allows like to be exchanged with unlike – largely because of the way in which George Baker has made use of it in his recent work on Francis Picabia.⁶ Goux writes:

The general equivalent pertains first of all to money: what is in the beginning simply one commodity among many is placed in an exclusive position, set apart to serve as a unique measure of the value of all other commodities. Comparison (essential to equitable exchange) and the recognition of an abstract value despite perceptible difference institute not simply a difference but a privileged, exclusive place, that of the measuring object – either an ideal standard external to exchange or currency proper, which takes part in circulation.⁷

Goux's *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud* was first published in France in 1973, but only made available in English a few years before Art Club began, and Baker's recent work is, to my knowledge, the first to really integrate it within an art context beyond the occasional footnote reference, so it was hardly available as a critical paradigm for art until now. But from this vantage point, Goux's work offers the possibility of giving a general reading of Art Club 2000's practice, in which it is precisely what is excluded in the production of the general equivalent or phallic signifier (whether in art criticism or the culture industry) that becomes the target of Art Club 2000's perverse procedures of antagonising and excitation. Perhaps 'target' is misleading: I'm not of the impression that Art Club were analytically identifying something excluded as a result of the ascendancy of an object in circulation amongst others to the special status of the general equivalent and then going to work on it, demonstrating its derogated status.

Rather, in a retrospective look at their practice such as this, it is as a matter of disposition – precisely the disposition of the *kynic* – that they seemed to be drawn to anything that displayed the displaced condition of the excluded (anything at all that had been replaced by the presumption of a general equivalent to stand in its place), and proceeded to work *with* these 'excluded' – returning to them a determinative force in the distribution of meanings that had been entirely sequestered by the general equivalent. For Goux, the *Father* becomes the general equivalent of subjects, the *Phallus* the general equivalent of objects, *Language* in questions of the sign. These ascensions happen according to a logic of replacement that facilitates the measure, exchange and valuation of objects, but only at the cost of a necessary exclusion:

Metaphors, symptoms, signs, representations: it is always through replacement that values are created. Replacing what is forbidden, what is lacking, what is hidden or lost, what is damaged, in short, replacing with something equivalent what is not itself, in person, presentable: such indeed is the scene, and such are the interminable dealings, mobile or immobile, which are plotted upon it.⁸

5 The original members of Art Club 2000 were studying with Hans Haacke and Mark Dion at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, and initially came into contact with American Fine Arts, Co. through a project initiated by Dion.

6 George Baker, *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris*, Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2007.

7 Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud* (trans. Jennifer Curtiss Gage), Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990, p. 3.

In other words, the practice of art criticism itself (particularly in its nascent meta-critical mode)⁹ might itself come under suspicion for what has been excluded from its object of analysis in order for it to function as the measure of art, the ground of exchangeability between heterogeneous works, and the discourse authorised to discern value in those works. Such an antagonistic relation to criticism is perhaps now something of a commonplace – and all too often adopted as a banal anti-intellectual stance – but I need to go a little further to explain what might be meant by Art Club's procedures of 'excitation' of the matter excluded in the ascendancy of a particular object to the status of the general equivalent. The claim that is being built here suggests that Art Club's 'transgressive' activity presented an open face to all the forms of the general equivalent listed above, rather than isolating one in particular (let's say the sign in Warhol or the patriarch in questions of the institution) as the key explanatory discourse.

Goux was writing in relation to the three-way tension between the institutionalisation of political analysis in France (specifically the policing role assumed by the French Communist Party, whose influence extended into the universities), the Gaullist regime's entrenchment of power and the popular workers' and students' movements of the late 1960s. While their efforts were less momentous historically, the members of Art Club, it seems, were similarly trying to make sense of the relations among institutional critique, Gap Inc. and their own artistic educations. Thus, just as it was important for Goux to note that Marx's own methodology was significantly oriented to an anti-paternal dimension of signification found in *matter* itself in order to overturn the Hegelian dialectic as well as overthrow the hegemony of capital, so, too, I think we might find an analogous concern with the sexualisation¹⁰ of bodies, images and discourses in the field of art when the normative definitional powers of the institutions of art are troubled by the slippery singularities of practice. That is to say, we might look for an anti-paternal dimension in Art Club 2000's practice in which matter, or simply *stuff*, bucks the best attempts of the signifier to bring order to it, to imprint it, as Goux would say, with the gravitas of its forms.

It seems therefore, to be out of a profound and insufficiently explored necessity that Marx attempted to overthrow metaphysics by appealing to a dimension of signification which is anti-paternal – matter, which, with historical or even prophetic aim, he terms 'perfected naturalism'. Matter, along with nature, has always had a maternal semantic archaeology (reactivated by Plato and Aristotle themselves). In Aristotle the opposition between *form* and *matter* is of sexual extraction, as betrayed by the genetic image of its founding conception.

The sexual implications of the genesis of value forms are inherent in the investments to which the symbolic scission, as previously defined [between form and matter], perhaps originally gave rise. For if this scission effected by the symbolic function allows a constant value to be postulated in spite of difference and an ideality to be maintained throughout changes in materiality (an operation without which there would be no meaning, or exchangeable value), this same schism is at the source of the sexual divide. In any case, it echoes the philosophical imaginary of difference in procreation and production. The father provides form, the mother (*mater*) contributes matter. Plato and Aristotle, aligning themselves with an enduring metaphorical archaeology that is older than philosophy, maintained as much. If (paternal) form is invariant, (maternal) matter is the changing and relative receptacle that possesses no determination or consistency apart from the imprint of this ideal form.¹¹

Here the temptation would be to return to Diogenes, demonstrate how his kynicism could problematise philosophy's masculine profile, make his practice homologous once again with Art Club and thereby wrap it up. But in a comment

8 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

9 The older explanatory or exegetical modes of attending to art leave the artwork in the position of primary object, whereas the meta-critical, at the very least, displaces it from its presumed centrality, and, in this reading, potentially replaces it with a reading of the criticism itself, moving the work into a marginal position relative to the general equivalent that criticism might become.

10 Jacques Lacan employed the term sexualisation, and not sexuality, to indicate that the subject is inscribed as a man or woman by virtue of the signifier rather than by virtue of their biological constitution. See *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan XX: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–73 (Encore)*, (ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink), New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.

11 J.-J. Goux, *Symbolic Economies*, op. cit., p. 5.

that will give us pause before signing off on their heroics, Art Club 2000 member Daniel McDonald stated in an interview with *Grand Royal* magazine:

I don't actually object to The Gap, but I'm interested and concerned with the omnipresence of The Gap and how invisible they are. Even though they're everywhere and you always see the stores, there's kind of an invisibility to The Gap. You can wear The Gap without really noticing you're wearing it. I'm not really against what they're doing. I think it's part of the development of a sort of total, end-all capitalism. And I think a lot of companies are modelling their corporate structure after The Gap – their display techniques, the language they use with employees. I think the most interesting thing about The Gap is that fashion is usually used as fantasy to transform you. But The Gap promises not to transform you. That what they're going to do is let you shine through.¹²

Immediately, the efficacy of a semiotic critique of The Gap is thrown into question because the corporation is now seen to offer only the most minimal and cursory of representations necessary to put the advertising mode of address into motion, and its efforts appeal to an erotics of indeterminate matter rather than the differen-



Caption

tial function of identification. In other words, The Gap rejects the conventional deployment of fantasy for the purposes of seducing the consumer, dissembles the fact of its invariant forms and presents itself instead as a willing receptacle, ripe for the imprints of the subject. Of course The Gap cannot actually divest itself of authority by a mere rhetorical reversal, nor could a materialist turn imputed

12 *Grand Royal* interview with Daniel McDonald and Art Club 2000, "Talking More Paranoid Conspiracy Trash About Your Friendly Neighborhood Denim Vendor", *Grand Royal*, issue 1, 1993. Available at <http://www.beastiemuseum.de/gr/1996/Magazine/Issue1/Features/GAP/default.htm> (last accessed on 13 August 2009).

to Art Club be in and of itself sufficient to challenge the logic through which power elevates one sign to the status of the general equivalent.¹³

Therefore, looking to Art Club 2000 for a thorough-going institutional analysis of The Gap is a misrecognition of its labours, because it is fundamentally the *act* of representation – in the sense of one thing standing in the place of another, or more precisely, of another that will be replaced and substituted by an equivalent because it cannot be made present in person – that is addressed by their work. Just as Diogenes does not even attempt to produce an adequate representation of an honest man, what is addressed is the *fact* of the accession to power of a representative, one which covers its tracks and its exclusions behind it, rather than the particular representative as such that is the target of their perverse plays. Does the work ask us to conduct a close reading of Art Club's decision to deploy The Gap's grunge look in Times Square, its preppy look in Conran's or at the library at the offices of *Art in America*? It seems like there is little for us to gain in doing so. But what is made palpable is how fragile the general equivalent is when it is returned to circulation with other signs and real bodies. Just as the Phallus's power can be dissolved by laughter when it is exposed as a penis, or the Father's authority fails to survive an actual display of anger, so, too, The Gap's clothing struggles to maintain the exclusive position of the general equivalent when it is revealed once again as just one commodity in circulation with others. Far from allowing you to shine through, The Gap's grunge denim looks more likely to smother and asphyxiate.

If I am not wildly off the mark in these thoughts, the most compelling Art Club 2000 images are the ones in which the gaze of the spectator is not met by the members. Forget Manet's *Olympia*. There is no peeking through to rupture the representation in question (the group, the idealised goddess) and subsequent self-reflexive moment in which the producer and the consumer of the representation become self-conscious together. Regrettably for my construction, one of the images that remains most compelling – *Untitled (Paramount Hotel/Nude I)* – is likely a direct quotation of *Olympia*, as much as of the countless naked group portraits that were in vogue in fashion magazines in the 1990s. Perhaps this ruins my argument about the non-identity between the depicted producers and consumers of the image, but the fact that in this photograph there are no clothes speaking in place of the subject is possibly the reason for its exceptional status. If what interests me is Art Club 2000's noisy monstrations that clumsily fail to keep the secret of the accession of the general equivalent, perhaps the promise not to 'transform' might be rendered instead as the decision not to 'imprint'. Unfortunately for those who want more analytical demonstration in their art, such monstrations might simply reproduce the paternal imprinting of matter that is precisely under question. But such 'showings' might very well be better described as a kind of public masturbation that, at the very least, marks a limit to capital's ability to enforce substitutions – thus making Art Club a group of wankers after all. Magnificent ones.

13 Goux continues: "Even if this 'materialist' direction may be considered as a simple turn-about that leaves the oppositional structure [between idealism and materialism] intact, it is situated in a strategy that challenges the logic of general equivalents by reinstating what the metaphysics of value and idea (that is, metaphysics period) was obliged to eliminate in the course of its development." J.-J. Goux, *Symbolic Economies*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.



Caption

AC2K, A.F.A., Co. & C. de L.
– Jackie McAllister

Art Club 2000, an artists' collective during the 1990s, was made up of eight enterprising art school undergraduates: Craig Wadlin, Soibian Spring, Sarah Rossiter, Will Rollins, Shannon Pultz, Daniel McDonald, Gillian Haratani and Patterson Beckwith, who made art and produced exhibitions – two activities they understood as having separate implications. When the group began they were studying at Cooper Union – a tuition-free institution in New York's East Village – with teachers such as Hans Haacke and Mark Dion, meaning that although the members were exposed to the extreme capitalism of the city, they were also allowed enough distance to appreciate its effects.¹ Art Club 2000, with its precocity, became a unique clash of commodity fetishism and institutional critique.

The collective was formed through the instigation of Colin de Land, the late New York gallerist who became known for his anti-conventional commercial gallery, American Fine Arts, Co. De Land's interest in developing the Art Club 2000 experiment stemmed from his disappointment with the machinations of the New York art world, and with an art economy predicated on money and stardom. In many ways AC2K – a group of young people with nothing to lose in terms of art-world standing – could be seen as de Land's 'fuck you' to the art world and its careerist denizens.

De Land's involvement from the beginning is essential to the group's history. Its association with his gallery provided AC2K with a platform from which to develop works and exhibitions, as well as a modus operandi of insistent questioning. The gallery itself was a peculiar and revealing institution within the New York art world, as de Land strove to place it between the commercial and the non-profit. Its name, when examined syntactically, illuminates the activities that took place within its walls: for de Land, it proposed an 'event horizon', both limiting and de-limiting, naming a category, American Fine Arts, while refusing to corral what might occur within it into preordained outcomes.² The extra comma and 'Co.' shifted the focus from the art shown to the actors found within.

Patterson Beckwith recalls that de Land would repeat to them, 'Youth gets power because it doesn't know what to do with it.'³ For de Land, these students embodied that power. Working within the 'Gen X' label (terminology coming into popular parlance around that time), the group's members aligned themselves with the sardonic attitude of that generation while also moving to express latent strains in youth and particularly consumerist culture. Art Club 2000 was both fascinated with and immersed in mass media, and their outlook was fully permeated by the spectacle of advertising, national brand names and art stardom. They exercised a resistance borne from theory, incorporating critique directed towards themselves and operating in the manner of critical ethnographers. The group focused on the unacknowledged biases at play within both the art world and society at large, identifying and lampooning modes of ambition and vacuous desire: the class and personal aspirations involved, for example, in

- 1 Hans Haacke was a professor at Cooper Union from 1967 to 2002. Mark Dion was a visiting professor. Other influential professors included Doug Ashford of Group Material, Laura Cottingham, Gregory Crewdson, Douglas Crimp, J. Hoberman, Rosalyn Deutsche, Niki Logis, Lorna Simpson and Faith Wilding.
- 2 In the theory of relativity, an event horizon is a boundary in space-time, beyond which events cannot affect an outside observer. This metaphor can be read as a sci-fi revision of Harold Rosenberg's formulation that the action of painting takes place within an 'arena'. This idea, of a canvas as an arena, which Allan Kaprow extended into the realm of performance art, became the most fruitful outgrowth from Abstract Expressionism – or 'Action Painting', as Rosenberg would have it.
- 3 All quotes from Patterson Beckwith and Daniel McDonald come from conversations with the author, May 2009. First-hand accounts of AC2K, unless otherwise noted, come from Beckwith and McDonald.

gentrification or fashion advertising. Their first exhibition, 'Commingle', which took place in 1993 at A.F.A., Co., featured group-portrait photographs – their trademark – in Gap attire. The gallery was fitted out with Gap store fixtures and littered with internal memos and correspondence, scavenged late at night from the garbage of the then-new Gap store on St Marks Place.⁴ A documentary impulse was central to AC2K's activities – photographs and videotapes were the collective's favoured media – and, combined with the use of the self-portrait, it allowed the group to navigate between the polarities of complicity and recuperation with their objects of critique. (Didn't Roland Barthes say something to the effect of 'recuperation is the great law of History?')⁵

While at Cooper, a good part of the education of Art Club 2000's members lay in their visits to local galleries. Haacke would pin every exhibition invitation he received onto a bulletin board, and quiz students on what they had seen during their class critiques. After class, the group would head to Eileen's Reno Bar (later renamed The Jolly Roger, and now called The Thirsty Scholar!) on Second Avenue, where New York's most prolific serial killer, Joel Rifkin, was a regular.⁶ As Daniel McDonald recalls, 'It was a hardcore, scary bar. It was also where most of the real learning took place.'

Dion remarked recently that though these students had been influenced by Haacke's ideas since their foundation year, they seemed irresistibly drawn to the commercial gallery scene. (Dion and his contemporaries – such as Gregg Bordowitz, Andrea Fraser and Jason Simon – were highly sceptical of galleries, especially the East Village variety, and kept their distance from them.) 'Turns out,' Dion added, 'Colin was the only one who would give them [AC2K] the time of day.'⁷ In Beckwith's recollection, towards the end of a summer internship at A.F.A., Co. between their second and third years at Cooper, de Land asked Beckwith and Wadlin whether they wanted to 'do something', 'work on something', 'do a show' at the gallery. De Land's only requirement was that a class be conducted with all members of the incipient group, with him participating. This turned into weekly meetings for approximately eight or nine months, in preparation for an exhibition at the gallery. De Land conducted long question-and-answer sessions, exposing the youngsters to his laconic but persistent questioning, which George Baker has characterised as having the 'quality of death'⁸ – it forced you, through continued inquiry, to confront your beliefs right down to their foundational level. Together, as Beckwith recalls, de Land said they could 'identify a huge appetite for relief from bullshit, people could latch onto something'. They would make 'something that was interesting or visually compelling, something that might confuse or dismay, something not retrograde; something that would examine the condition of its own production; to make visible or obvious that which is latent in culture'.

The activity of Art Club 2000 (1992–99) straddles two distinct periods of American Fine Arts, Co.'s existence, and includes seven exhibitions at the gallery (though individual members of the group are still making work on their own). During the early 1990s, A.F.A., Co. relocated from 40 Wooster Street in SoHo further south to number 22, closer to Canal Street with its gaudy, cut-price merchants. At number 40, de Land's was the first gallery in a building that had housed a scale business, selling every size of scale – from those used for weighing trucks right down to the antique, wooden-boxed, sensitive sets that were particularly popular with drug dealers. Prior to the Wooster Street move, there had been earlier ones around the East Village and there would be a final move – strongly resisted by de Land – to Chelsea near the end of the gallery's existence (recorded in AC2K's exhibition 'SoHo So Long' in 1996). During the depressed New York art market of the late 1980s, some of the more high-profile artists left the gallery, including Jessica Diamond, Cady Noland, Sam Samore and Jessica Stockholder.⁹ Their decampment

4 The store, now closed, is once again a pizzeria, itself a relic of Olde New-York as it sits among the *izakayas* and *yakitori* bars now catering to the young Japanese revellers of the East Village.

5 Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962–1980* (trans. Linda Coverdale), New York: Hill & Wang, 1985, p.130.

6 Rifkin was convicted of the murder of nine women (although it is believed he killed as many as seventeen) between 1989 and 1995, mostly drug-addicted prostitutes that he would pick up in his truck on nearby Allen Street. See Gary Indiana, 'One Brief, Seamy Moment', *New York Stories: Landmark Writing from Four Decades of New York Magazine*, New York: Random House, 2008, pp.297–306.

7 Conversation between Mark Dion and the author, July 2009. Future members of Art Club 2000 made their introductory visit to American Fine Arts, Co. prior to taking Dion's class at Cooper.

8 George Baker spoke at the memorial service for de Land held at Great Hall, Cooper Union, on 26 October 2003, followed by the opening of the exhibition 'Wild Nights: Remembering Colin de Land' at CB's 313 Gallery, next door to CBGB club, which hosted the memorial concert 'Rockout: At CBGB & OMFUG', headlined by Kembra Pfahler's *The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black*, a favourite of de Land's.

marked a turning point for de Land and American Fine Arts, Co. Although these artists had gained exposure and critical attention while being represented by the gallery, after their departures de Land decided to focus the energies of the gallery on activities within its walls, rather than the dreary path of career management. From then on, gallery artists were expected to assume a greater load in regard to their own representation.



Craig Wadlin, Shannon Pultz, Soibian Spring, Daniel McDonald, Gillian Haratani, Patterson Beckwith, Sarah Rossiter
American Fine Arts, Co. 22 Wooster Street, NYC 10013 (212) 941 0401, June.

Caption

In this new situation, AC2K's 'Commingle' opened. The question of the group's name became pertinent – up until then they had identified themselves to each other as The Secret Art Club. On the exhibition's invitation card, and in the *Artforum* advertisement for the exhibition, only the members' names were listed.¹⁰ The first two appearances of the name Art Club 2000 didn't happen until 1994 in two articles written by the humorist and musician Hugh Gallagher: an article in the March/April issue of *Flash Art*, for which the group produced a picture of Art Clubbers on the moon, *Untitled (Earthrise)*, taken at the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City 'as a kind of press photograph', and an interview that ran alongside 'The Great GAP Conspiracy', a rant by Gallagher in the first issue of *Grand Royal*, the magazine published by the Beastie Boys.¹¹ The *Artforum* advertisement did not use the gallery's customary FrizQuadrata font, but took the form of a fake Gap advertisement, with de Land as the model, using the

9 Following Black Monday, with the subsequent collapse of the East Village scene, there was a winnowing period for New York galleries, from poster shop to blue chip. Galleries that survived were either at the top end or were like A.F.A., Co. – run with every conceivable cost-cutting measure. Those galleries that were 'middling' in their approach were swept away, or perhaps, to quote the King James version, 'So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.'

10 De Land only advertised with *Artforum*, which he considered *The New York Times* of the art world – 'the magazine of record' – and the magazine would sometimes cut de Land a deal for quarter-page, black-and-white advertisements in exchange for electrical work done in their offices.

11 Hugh Gallagher, 'Global Art: Art Club 2000', *Flash Art*, March/April 1994; and interview with Daniel McDonald and Art Club 2000, 'Talking More Paranoid Conspiracy Trash About Your Friendly Neighborhood Denim Vendor', *Grand Royal*, issue 1, 1993, available at <http://www.beastiemuseum.de/fr/1996/Magazine/Issue1/Features/GAP/default.htm> (last accessed on 13 August 2009).

same fonts and design as the company's then ubiquitous 'Individuals of Style' campaign that featured artists and actors in pocket T-shirts.

In response the clothing company faxed a 'cease and desist' letter to the gallery, threatening to sue. According to Beckwith, this letter was somewhat crucial to the group's continuing beyond the first exhibition; it both enervated and excited them to get a reaction from the corporation. The Gap letter also resulted in AC2K's first bit of critical attention, as they publicised the company's response and were consequently mentioned in the news section of *Art in America*, written by Walter Robinson (who was also their first collector). The group's combination of critique and self-marketing was noted the following year by Glenn O'Brien, who wrote in *Artforum*:

*Perhaps the most successful aspect of their Gap investigation was their rigorous exploitation of ambiguity. It would have been easy for the group to fall into the gap of faux-Marxist pouting often practised by Commes des Garçons-wearing semioticians. Instead they presented the problem of the Gap with an honest ambivalence that would well serve anyone involved in creative criticism.*¹²

This ambivalence was achieved with a certain level of self-deprecation: during this period Art Club 2000 referred to themselves, tongue-in-cheek, as 'generational spokesmodels'. The term originated on *Star Search*, a television show aired from 1983 to 1995 and hosted by Ed McMahon, in which contestants competed in several stock genres of entertainment, from comedy to vocals to 'spokesmodels'. Spokesmodels, who introduced the performers, were perhaps the least talented and intelligent contestants, and often flubbed their lines, but provided the real entertainment for some viewers.

The mode of precept-questioning that was developed in the group's weekly meetings was also the model for their second exhibition, 'Clear' (1994), which used Cooper Union and surrounding East Village locations as backdrops and subject matter. This time their group-portrait photographs mimicked the style of high-end photography (Linda Evangelista and Christy Turlington had starred in fashion shoots at Cooper Union that summer). However, as Beckwith and McDonald remember, by then it had become more difficult to sustain a collaborative approach, and as time went on there were fewer meetings with fewer attendees. The group's research and production methods began to resemble those of the exquisite corpse, with images assembled bit by bit, each collaborator adding to the composition in sequence. This tendency ran contrary to the privileging of process and of collaboration that de Land had insisted on, and threatened to move them towards the mire of the blinkered, career-obsessed art world.

Also around that time, AC2K were invited to do shows internationally, and headed to Europe. There, McDonald says, the Sword of Damocles hung over them: de Land was not travelling with the group, and so the trip constituted a real test for their established way of working. While preparing the exhibition at Transmission Gallery in Glasgow, which was to open in October 1995, they admitted that they didn't know anything about Scotland, and focused their questions on the Scottish person they knew best in New York – me. They came to my Brooklyn home to pick up a painting of mine and a Scottish-themed work by Martin Kippenberger (co-owned by de Land and me), as well other personal effects and memorabilia to include in the exhibition 'Jackie McAllister (In Cooperation with Jackie McAllister)'. The group filmed an interview between myself and Douglas Gordon, which was handled in a rough manner and badly developed, so that the images and sound were difficult to decipher. The exhibition met with mixed, often negative, responses in Glasgow, where many felt its conception of Scotland did not tally with the shiny new hopes and dreams of the Glasgow Art School scene. Indeed, this lull between my formative perceptions of Scotland – I left in the early 1970s, at eleven years old – and the present scene had formed part of my discussion with Gordon.

McDonald recalls an alcohol-soaked opening (sponsored by Beck's Beer), where some AC2K members, dressed in plastic tartan aprons, served home-made scones. Eventually it became apparent that some people thought Jackie McAllister was a fictional artist invented by AC2K to make fun of all things Scottish, and some of the audience seemed to want to fight with the AC2K members. In fairness, the exhibition itself played into this misapprehension; they had, after all, tried to create a museum-style retrospec-

tive of the work of Jackie McAllister, an artist unknown in Scotland, and whose face was never shown in the video that 'starred' him.

In Milan, that same year, the group produced the exhibition 'Milanarian' at Galerie Facsimilie. They had already planned and designed the exhibition before leaving for Italy, but changed course once they arrived, instead producing a new work responding to media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi's decision to run for prime minister. Then, as now, the subsumption of liberal democratic politics by capitalism was evident: the portfolio of Berlusconi's holding company, Fininvest, included three (of seven) national television channels, various digital television channels and some of the country's largest-circulation newsmagazines. The exhibition featured a mural, inspired by a billboard the Art Clubbers saw when driving from the Milan airport, that showed a sea of TV antennae, with Disneyesque cartoon vultures shitting blobs of Benetton's trademark green colour onto the spikes. Thought bubbles contained texts from, amongst others, Guy Debord (who had died the year before) and Lucy Lippard, as if these scavenger birds were discussing how they might interrogate the spectacle of Berlusconi's political campaign.

Exhibitions at this point returned to something resembling de Land's original vision, and so with renewed interest he became more involved; this time as a collaborating artist rather than mentor. The group had become smaller – some members had graduated and moved away – while the core of AC2K 'lived art', working at the gallery and spending all their time with de Land. One of the projects resulting from this renewed collaborative dynamic was a response to the first 'quality-of-life' crackdowns initiated in New York by Rudy Giuliani, Mayor from 1994 to 2001.¹³ At that time, the question 'What is a cop?' came up frequently during the group's discussions, and in answer the exhibition 'Night of the Living Dead Author' (1998) was an installation of life-size cardboard cops, who wore sashes reading 'Punishing Enforcer of an Oppressive Regime'.¹⁴ These cut-out sculptures coexisted with texts visible in a LED display – mimicking the work of Jenny Holzer – that exposed the posturing of, among others, Matthew Barney, Vanessa Beecroft, Mariko Mori, Richard Prince and Cindy Sherman. Sitting on the cracked black leather of a Mies van der Rohe Barcelona ottoman, borrowed from the Leo Castelli gallery, visitors could read Wadlin's appraisals, scrolling by on the display:

Mariko Mori's practice of modeling herself on heroines from manga and anime ... Vanessa Beecroft's signature presentation of uniformly stripped young women in the vein of fashion ... and Matthew Barney's Nike romanticism of sports and mythology ... without so much as a wee bit of criticism of these forms or industries ... A vast number of artists build careers around a particular facet of an already determined culture ... (i.e. fashion, film, advertising, television, music, science, history, politics) ... These artists seem to side with the death of authorship by attaching themselves to some meaningful source ... but mean only to reclaim the spoils of authorship ... by creating an identity inseparable from their work ... continuing to supply the system without attempting to change it...

AC2K also dedicated a line indicting themselves: 'Witness the simplistic misunderstanding of theory by Art Club 2000'.

If the signature style of these artists, AC2K argued within 'Night of the Living Dead Author', had been the negation of authorship and the taking on of other professions or subcultures, by the mid-1990s these radical gestures had been chosen by rote. It was as if the same phrase was being written over and over again on a blackboard, when the original intent had been to wipe the board clean, and start all over again. De Land similarly insisted that 'appropriation' should not be viewed as a style constrained by a five- or ten-year historical period of the early 1980s, but rather, like representation and abstraction, as a major mode of art-making whose history had only just begun.

In two exhibitions that would end their activities as a collective, AC2K also moved towards historicising themselves. '(A Retrodisrespective)' (1999), held at A.F.A., Co., exhibited all their unsold works, with the leftover sculptural pieces on one platform in

¹³ Following the 'broken windows' theory of zero-tolerance policing, the Giuliani administration prosecuted minor infractions (such as squeegee men, who cleaned car windshields at city intersections, fare-beaters on the subway and jaywalkers) in order to prevent the occurrence of major crime.

¹⁴ The title alluded to Roland Barthes's essay 'The Death of the Author' (1968), published in English in R. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (ed. and trans. Stephen Heath), London: Fontana Press, 1977, pp.143–48.

¹² Glenn O'Brien, 'Into The Gap: Art Club 2000', *Artforum*, vol. 32, February 1994, pp.72–75.

the gallery's back room and the remaining flat work on the walls. The front room was empty, and the entryway leading to the second room was screened off by a velvet curtain, held back by a tall grim reaper figure. Walter Hopps has described the source of this allusion – Charles Willson Peale's self-portrait *The Artist in His Museum* (1822), a reproduction of which hung in the exhibition – as seminal to the history of American art: it highlights, he said, a great tradition, 'social critique married to self-promotion'.¹⁵

'Art Club 2000 (Retrospective)' (1999) was mounted in Mexico City at the Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil. Curated by Magali Arriola, the exhibition showed AC2K's final work, a kind of miniaturised Aztec pyramid constructed from cans of Coca-Cola. The sculpture referred to Vicente Fox, the recently inaugurated President of Mexico who had formerly been the president of Coca-Cola in Mexico, where he helped the beverage company become the country's top-selling soft drink. The work resonated, perhaps, with *The Storming of the Teocalli by Cortes and His Troops* (1848), painted by Emmanuel Leutze four years before his classic *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851), which



91

The Imaginary War Theatre of Shuji Terayama: The Children's Revolution in *Emperor Tomato Ketchup*

– Thomas Dylan Eaton

99

Termite Tracks: *Routine Pleasures* and the Paradoxes of Collectivity

– Michael Ned Holte

107

The Bienal de São Paulo Unseen/Undone (1969–1981)

– Isobel Whitelegg

115

Afterword

– Mark Lewis

portrays the futile resistance of Aztecs to the invading Spanish troops, parallel to the economic colonisation of Mexico through the 'soft diplomacy' of soft drinks.

On 2 March 2003, aged 47, AC2K's boon companion, Colin de Land, died of cancer in Manhattan. Unlike his influential predecessors in art dealing – Daniel Kahnweiler and Leo Castelli – Colin de Land and American Fine Arts, Co. do not provide an easily imitable model for 'operating' an art gallery, but along with their progeny, Art Club 2000, they set an example for a mode of continual renewal and involvement, tempered by the bracing questioning of perceived roles and methodology. While both frustrating and enlightening, this mode came to critically inflect all aspects of art conceptualisation, production, presentation and dissemination.

Caption

¹⁵ Walter Hopps in conversation with the author, in a discussion of the work of artist Danny Tisdale, 'The Black Museum', *Grand Street*, vol.55, Winter 1996, p.159.