

http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2002/02/an_introduction.php

An Introduction to Community Art and Activism

By Jan Cohen-Cruz

Activism: direct vigorous undertakings in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue.

— *Random House Dictionary*

This is an introduction to the Community Art and Activism section of the CAN Reading Room. My purpose is to provide an overview of the subject by tracing some historical markers, mapping out an array of forms that activist community art assumes, and considering some of the principles underlying such projects.

While one could understand the whole field of community art as activist in its radical expansion of who can be an artist, I'm including only its most overt manifestations.

Community art is that which is rooted in a shared sense of place, tradition or spirit (deNobriga). Not all community art has an activist agenda; it is as likely to celebrate cultural traditions or provide a space for a community to reflect. But even such community art projects share activism's commitment to collective, not strictly individual, representation. Moreover, as concerns communities of place, artists with strong geographical bonds garner particular opportunities for building alliances when activism is a goal. Even when they have major ideological differences from the majority voice, they may nevertheless have kids in the local schools, or offer workshops there; living in the same environment, they are personally affected by the same nuclear power plants, epidemics and economic ups and downs. Thus can they build on a connection that is already there. Artists who work out of a communal identity grounded in tradition or spirit — ethnicity, ideology or class, for example — ostensibly already know a thing or two about working collectively. Thus they, too, begin their support or contestation of an issue at an advantage over artists used to an individualistic stance.

Community art can be distinguished from so-called political art, which usually refers to an aesthetic object whose subject matter either directly responds to a controversial public action or is intended to challenge public perception about the status quo. Think of great antiwar oeuvres by superb individual artists like Picasso's "Guernica" or Brecht's "Mother Courage," viewable in arts institutions (theaters, museums) and extolled for their universality and artistic virtuosity as much as for their message. In contrast, community-based art is as much about the process of involving people in the making of the work as the finished object itself. Context is also central; this art is situated in more public, accessible and resonant places, geared to a specific audience and a specific time.

I used to feel optimistic about education as activism. I believed that if people only knew what was going on, they'd do something about it. I thought journalists were so lucky — they could genuinely contribute to a cause by informing people about it, leaving others to move people from knowledge to activism. That's where many of us saw a role for theater, to inform the head and move the heart at the same time. But I realized that people often have the information, in all its emotional glory, yet knowledge alone rarely leads to action. Realer than reality TV, we are

I used to feel optimistic about education as activism. I believed that if people only knew what was going on, they'd do something about it.

surrounded by firsthand experience of people in need. Just yesterday, a guy in a thin, dirty, torn sweater and trousers entered a café where I sat reading. At first, he approached every table with a request for money, stating that he was hungry. After no luck with that strategy, he fell to his knees and began singing to the woman at the next table. Only then did the restaurant manager approach him, shaking his head, his finger, his lower arm; his body making the gesture that an eraser makes on a blackboard when the teacher is ready for the class to move on. No, this "head and heart" stuff is not enough; if it were, the sight of this man on his hands and knees, pleading for money for food, would have resulted in a feast. And even had people given him money, charity does not end poverty. What's needed is a catalyst that illuminates a political issue in a way that leads to mass mobilization and action. In what follows, then, I lay out an array of forms that community art at the intersection of activism has taken in the spirit of just such illumination.

I. A Few Historical Markers

Not all activist community art has been in support of progressive politics. In the first 15 years of the 20th century, the mass pageant, actively re-enforcing the status quo in the face of mass immigration, was the most popular aesthetic form in the U.S. Ostensibly about "civic uplift," pageants, in historian Linda Nochlin's view, were grounded as much in an unspoken fear as a "wish to do good for the vast, unprecedented waves of immigrants arriving on our shores." Pageants frequently depicted immigrants in native costume performing native songs and dances in the first act; they would reappear in "American"

garb, singing the national anthem by the end. This was perhaps the first artistic expression in the U.S. of the notorious erasing effect of "melting pot" philosophy.

The Paterson Strike Pageant of 1913, by contrast, represented immigrant workers as contributing much more than picturesque and disposable costumes and food traditions. Nochlin theorizes, "In participating in the pageant, they became conscious of their experience as a meaningful force in history and of themselves as self-determining members of a class that shaped history." Created in the aftermath of a strike for decent working conditions that resulted in numerous workers' deaths, it represented the battle between labor and the forces of capitalism while helping participants to deal ritually with grief over their slain comrades.

The Harlem Renaissance (1919-1929) was an early context for various models of African-American activist art. According to Patricia Schroeder, Angelina Grimke's play, "Rachel," was the "first attempt to use the stage for race propaganda" (107). It did so by appealing to gender similarities, using the theme of motherhood to engage the empathy of white women, too. W.E.B. Du Bois favored the activist strategy of realistic plays depicting positive images of African Americans. He called for an African-American theater "about us, by us, for us and near us." In contrast, Alain Locke and the Howard Players favored artistic depictions of black folk culture, celebrating African-American cultural richness, without an overt political agenda. Art that celebrates culture and art that reflects oppression continue to be contrasting models of activism.

Lenin saw an important role for art in the newly formed Soviet Union following the Russian Revolution of 1917. For him, festivals were a means to educate a large population. Intertwining experimentation, politics and popular entertainment enabled audiences to grasp ideology by rendering ideas visually and capturing the audience's attention.

In the 1930s, the U.S. experienced its only grassroots amateur movement of workers creating theater for workers. Inspired by the Russian Revolution, U.S. working-class culture propagated during the Great Depression, due to economic and political polarization. The concept of class culture "presupposed that the conflicting economic and political interests between workers and their employers necessitated a different cultural expression by the conflicting classes" (Friedman). Mass recitation, the most popular form, usually "pitted a chorus of workers against a capitalist or a representative of the capitalist class, such as a foreman or policeman." The aesthetics of this activism was one part agitprop, riling up the audience and directing them towards a particular, propagandistic (i.e., one-sided) agenda, another part communal ritual for the already converted, and a third piece education, sometimes representing activist strategies on stage that workers later tried in their lives.

Like Lenin's embrace of festivals to celebrate and propagate the values of that new state, Hitler created the Nuremberg Party Rallies to celebrate and propagate the values of the Third Reich. Annually for more than a decade, orderly masses of people lined the streets of the medieval Germanic town of Nuremberg. Parades of healthy, athletic, blond soldiers and workers paid homage to Hitler, who was always above and apart from the crowd like a god. Women in traditional Teutonic garb performed folk dances. Everything supported the ideology of an Aryan master race in a context in which the individual could easily be crushed by the mass pro-Nazi crowd. A terrifying example of mass art's capacity to be used to any ends, those rallies stand as a cautionary tale about the dangers of coercive community-based art, actually controlled from above.

Meanwhile in the U.S., the general popularity of World War II did not spawn the atmosphere of controversy that engenders activism. In the same way, the prosperity of the 1950s masked the growing perception that the American dream was not equally accessible to all Americans. The lid finally blew off in the tumultuous 1960s, when broad questioning of the status quo once again found expression in the arts. Identity politics — traditionally under- or misrepresented groups organizing around a primary shared identity, be it based on ethnicity, profession, class, sexual preference or political orientation — became a central trope in activist art. In 1968, Larry Neal published a virtual manifesto of separatism that began: "The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community." In the context of the Black Power Movement, Neal declared the existence of two Americas, one black, one white. He identified the black artist's work as addressing the spiritual and cultural needs of black people and creating a black aesthetic. He stated that the focus of the work would be "to confront the contradictions arising out of Black people's experience in the racist West." He acknowledged the leadership of Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones), in the 1964 creation of the Black Arts Repertory Theatre School. Although the school did not survive, black arts groups sprung up all across the U.S.

El Teatro Campesino was created in the 1960s as an organizing tool to consolidate farmworkers politically. Aesthetically heir to the 19th-century Mexican *carpa* or tent show, El Teatro exuded the potential for popular performance that favors the underdog to create a vehicle of expression by the powerless. Chicano union organizer Cesar Chavez was aware of the power of humor as a vehicle of critique and mobilization. Not just company director Luis Valdez but the Chicano actors in the company knew those traditions, and thus contributed greatly to "La Causa" of union organizing (Broyles-Gonzales). In this same period, much community art could be seen as an expression of participatory democracy. The range of sites where workshops cropped up was astounding, including prisons, unions, schools, churches, daycare centers; facilities for people with physical/emotional challenges, eating disorders, terminal illnesses, etc. Theater people embraced a variety of tasks. Through Susan Ingalls' New York City-based Children and the Classics, for example, teenagers have adapted classical texts, such as "Romeo and Juliet," to their own lives, strengthening reading skills and self-knowledge at once. Various hybrids of therapy-and-art also proliferated, such as psychodrama, based on scenes from people's actual lives, and drama therapy, working through metaphor and the imagination.

As the national political movements of the 1960s and early '70s waned, artists with activist agendas sought new strategies for using their work for social purposes. As John O'Neal, co-founder of the Free Southern Theater, wrote, "It's not the size of the ship that makes the waves, it's the motion of the ocean." In other words, political art relies on an agitated context for efficacy. Radicality can not be willed — different historical moments offer different possibilities. In the late 1970s, with a heightened consciousness to think globally but act locally, activist art practitioners looked to local contexts in which their work could play a role, for mass attention had shifted away from the national stage, and erstwhile national movements — against the war, for Civil Rights — had diminished. Indeed, I date the beginning of the contemporary community-arts movement at just this time in the mid-1970s. (Not coincidentally, Alternate ROOTS — Regional Organization Of Theatres South, defined by their commitment to communities of place, tradition and spirit — was founded in 1976.) This is the context in which community arts, by and large, finds itself today, frequently engaging in controversies on the local level.

II. Current Configurations of Community Art-and-Activism

A. Partnerships of Artists and Activists

In her introduction to a collection of interviews with activists, Claire Peeps defines the activist's job as "largely the building of social capital — the grassroots networks that enable people to move information and ideas to a broader audience, and ultimately to make change happen." The community artist's work entails the actual shaping of information and ideas, images and feelings, for and with a known audience. In some cases, the two realms intersect smoothly. For example:

Martin Hernandez of the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union/Sindicato de Pasajeros (BRU) initiated a mutually satisfying collaboration with the L.A.-based Cornerstone Theater in 1999. Using their art expertise and local knowledge, theater members helped 12 BRU leaders develop skits about L.A. public-transit concerns, which were performed on the buses, helping to publicize and build support for them (Kohl). Collaborations with community-based artists avoid the typical problem of activists who see artists only as "the opening act," and thus seek the famous to draw a crowd to an event that the activists then take over. Based in shared concerns about local issues, these partnerships are less likely to break down strictly into activists as the content team and artists as mere providers of public attention.

The Environmental Justice Project in New Orleans was the response of a group of artists and activists to the contemporary legacy of slavery. They jointly recognized that "the old Mississippi River plantation region is now home to low-income African-Americans and more than 130 industrial operations that account for the bulk of toxic chemical releases in Louisiana. Residents face enormously high rates of cancer, miscarriages, birth defects and other health problems" (Schwarzman). Junebug and other theater groups passed on techniques such as the Story Circle, which the organizing groups used to enhance their membership's unity and self-awareness as a first step in taking on this problem.

This project evidences a major contribution that activists make to socially progressive artists: context. Dudley Cocke, director of Roadside Theater in Central Appalachia, states, "Too frequently, there's nowhere for people to go with what they experience or learn in our performances. Even if we generate all the positive energy and righteous anger in the world, what happens if there's no organization to follow through?" Cocke also articulates one of the contributions from artists to activists: "As grassroots theater artists, we have a body of ideas, relationships and symbols that we can offer as catalysts for social-change movements" (Schwarzman).

ACT UP — AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power — was exemplary not only in bringing together experts in performance art, publicity, law and medicine to jointly create actions, but also in refashioning artists into the hybrid role of artist-activist. According to performance artist and AIDS activist Richard Elovich, activist art "is the opposite of developing performance art, where I start intuitively and hone down. Here we begin with clarity — what exactly we want to say — and then determine how to say it" (Solomon). Elovich's insight is relevant for others creating art whose primary purpose is communicating a political demand. Alisa Solomon describes a 1988 action that put pressure on the government to spend more on AIDS research and development:

Busloads of newly trained shock troops arrive at the bleak 18-story FDA [Food and Drug Administration] office. ... Blocking entrances, posting their "silence=death" banner on the building's roof, ACT UP closes the building within half an hour. ... Every 32 minutes — the rate at which an American dies of AIDS — one group of demonstrators cuts through the incessant chanting with shrill air-raid whistles and falls 'dead' to the pavement. ... Another affinity group made up of people with AIDS collapses to the ground beneath cardboard tombstones reading ... "AZT wasn't enough."

Whereas art is often evaluated according to its originality, activist art may be appreciated more for its repeatability. In this spirit, Norma Bowles is looking to replicate her "cootie shots" project, which uses any combination of a set of short plays that deal with issues of tolerance in elementary-school performances. The plays were created for the project by professional playwrights. Having had great success in L.A., Bowles is now looking for theater companies and drama departments across the country to develop local cootie-shots teams.

Whereas art is often evaluated according to its originality, activist art may be appreciated more for its repeatability.

Activism can be physically and emotionally exhausting. Esther Kaplan describes a movement's need to care for its members: "In addition to being a catalyst for action, art may provide relief from the tyranny of the day-to-day" (Peeps). The simple pleasure of sharing stories or ending a meeting with a song can nourish the activists as well.

B. Artist initiatives

Many activist art projects are strictly the brainchildren of artists. The range of forms they take includes: *Collective political expression*: NYU drama student Mike Manos, describing his participation in a Bread and Puppet Theater demonstration against the bombings in Afghanistan, fall 2001, describes art as a vessel for the performers as well: "I was participating in something that made my own position about the war very visible, much more visible than I could ever make it individually. We were really experiencing our ideas in a big way, which is vitally important, when many activists get discouraged by the seeming impossibility of making themselves heard." In contrast to the image of the solitary genius, the collective nature of this work makes it powerful for the individual.

Equal role of community-art process in nurturing activism: For example, creating a play by interviewing people with lived experience of a controversial subject is often a way of showing them respect and strengthening their resistance. Or the more activist component may spring from the art, as evidenced by the massive fundraising, sparked by Eve Ensler's play "The Vagina Monologues," to counter violence against women.

Expression for erstwhile spectators: Artist Marty Pottenger hung 30' canvas banners from a fence in N.Y.C.'s Union Square in the immediate aftermath of September 11. As she describes the banners, "On top of each in large letters were Gandhi's words: PEACE WILL NOT COME OUT OF A CLASH OF ARMS, BUT OUT OF JUSTICE LIVED. Below this I left a space, with markers and pens hanging at either end for people to write whatever they wanted to. Different banners displayed the same text in Arabic, Hebrew, Chinese, Spanish, Farsi and Russian." Indeed, all over Union Square people chalked, scrawled, spoke and sang their responses after September 11, initiated by artists or not.

Augusto Boal's theater of the oppressed (TO) premises spect-actors rather than spectators; able to take action, they become the subject who acts rather than the object who is acted upon. Boal was inspired by pedagogue Paulo Freire's shift from a "banking method" of education where the student is a passive object into which the teacher deposits knowledge, to a partner in critical education, conceived as a dialogue, a joint problem-solving activity. Boal's concept "rehearsal for the revolution" means that while not itself direct action, TO provides a space to practice and prepare for activism. Such techniques include forum theater, in which spectactors help think through a social problem (racism or sexism, for example) by acting out possible solutions to a specific situation in which it was manifested. By generating theatrical

techniques that don't require a particular education or artistic virtuosity, TO democratizes access to civic dialogue. (See various essays on Boal in the CAN Reading Room.)

Production of educational material: Marshall Weber's videotape, "The Crimes of Punishment," produced, directed and edited with Glenn and Jackie Austin, catalyzed dialogue and social change concerning the U.S. correctional system. It contains footage of prisoners, visitors, social workers, state legislators, prison officials and guards, tours of the Dane County Jail and the Milwaukee House of Corrections, and images of prisoner artwork from around the United States. It premiered in November 1993 to audiences of tens of thousands over Madison's WYOU and other local stations, and has had more than 200 cablecasts on at least 16 public-access stations in seven states (Weber).

Art Impacting Policy/ Legislation: As a city counselor in Rio de Janeiro, Boal developed Legislative Theatre to translate needs discovered through forum theater into a dossier used as a basis for making laws. Seventeen municipal laws were enacted through this process. Achieved or not, even having policy change as an aim shapes an activist art project in a meaningful way. The dream goal of "common green/ common ground," a play I produced with 43 N.Y.C. community gardeners and NYU students, was to protect all of the city's community gardens. This would have importantly reversed the status quo; many of the 700+ neighborhood green spaces are on formerly abandoned city land that N.Y.C. has been selling off. While we came nowhere near attaining that goal, we did intermix a potential network of people who care about community gardens. As a result of a relationship that the production cemented, a group from the East Village's More Gardens Coalition went to Harlem's Project Harmony and helped put a pond in their neighborhood garden. An NYU student organized a Halloween party for neighborhood kids in that same garden. Another NYU student helped Hugh Hogan from N.Y.C. Environmental Justice Alliance with a "candidate report card," trying to find out the mayoral candidates' intended policy on green urban space. The 100 people involved in that project now have a much more concrete idea of what it would take to really effect policy. We are humbled but not discouraged.

Art and beauty: It is false to assume that activism is without an aesthetic dimension. NYU student Mike Manos writes of Bread and Puppet Theater: "Bread & Puppet's work is very beautiful, so there is an added benefit of knowing that one participated in the creation of beauty, important when many activists are especially sensitive to ugliness in this world, and problems they wish to solve. Beauty reminds us why we do it." More on this later.

Creating a public presence: Bernice Johnson Reagon described how, during a march, the sound of protestors' singing preceded them as they walked, "so that by the time they reached their destination their voices had already occupied the space in a way the police could not reclaim. It wasn't just the message of the music that was important, but its ability to give physical presence and visceral force, to the movement" (Peeps). The dramatic use of public space is another recurrent strategy.

Sequential art/activism experience: At her Institute on the Arts and Civic Dialogue, Anna Deavere Smith supported a group of artists who deal with social issues. Smith conceptualized art and activism as two stages. A core audience made a commitment to three summers of viewing Institute art:

We were able to keep these people coming back, and we did that by attracting their attention and engaging them in ideas through our skills. Then we'd be ready to deliver them to organizers who did have expertise in getting them to do something that had to do with social change. ... Aren't we better off spending our time in a concentrated situation with people whom we can create relationships with ... and thinking less about what we leave behind in their communities, and more about how we send them forward? (Guinier and Smith)

One might find the idea of "delivering" these people to activists a bit patronizing. But in fact this was a very select audience including highly thoughtful and engaged people like Lani Guinier, the first black woman professor at Harvard Law School; Howard Gardner, acclaimed for his books articulating the seven different kinds of intelligence; and Smith's partner at the Institute, director of Harvard's Afro-American Studies Department, Henry Louis Gates. Moreover, the idea of a sequence, from art to activism, is useful in this broad mapping out.

Expanding content and form: Jump-Start Performance Company (JS) is a group of San Antonio, Tex., artists who are diverse in terms of ethnicity, aesthetic approach and artistic discipline. JS is a work of activist art in itself, a "direct, vigorous undertaking" where values and practices other than those in the culture at large may be expressed. To quote from their mission statement, "By encouraging visionary thought and nontraditional approaches, Jump-Start is committed to the creation of art that is a lasting voice of many diverse cultures." These include queer, experimental, African-American, Latino and youth cultural expressions. JS prides itself in being hard to pin down. While particular projects tend to attract

particular, like-minded constituents, JS has garnered much local support because of its highly successful, long-term arts program in local schools. The school work is not oppositional, but it provides the company with a place at the local table where their more expansive ideology, challenging the status quo, thus also takes root. (See Keith Hennessy's report on Jump-Start in the Grassroots Ensemble Theater Research Project, coming soon to CAN.)

III. A Few Principles of Art at the Intersection of Activism

Art becomes increasingly activist as the frame around it extends spatially and temporally. The tightest frame is the art object itself communicating a point of view about a social issue, intended for any time, place or audience, even if the reference is *specific*. (So for example, in Ibsen's "A Doll's House," Nora is repressed according to the mores of her times, but she is also a metaphor for any individual oppressed by any society.) Expanding the frame spatially means not looking at just the art product but the whole context, especially the specific audience/participants. Peeps writes, "The artist may seek to rally audiences directly around a particular issue. Think of Pete Seeger singing 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' at an antiwar rally on the Washington Mall." Expanding the frame temporally means paying equal attention to the processes leading up to and following the art piece as sites for activism. Art's capacity to cause spectators to question the status quo and break habitual views of life is a prerequisite for activism. A key to understanding this idea is Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, or domination by consent. In contrast to domination by force, hegemony is powerful because people see its manifestations as normal. Raymond Williams explains:

The process of education; the process of a much wider social training within institutions like the family; the practical definitions and organization of work; the selective tradition at an intellectual and theoretical level; all these forces are involved in a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture, and on them, as experienced, as built into our living, reality depends. If what we learn there were merely an imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolatable meanings and practices of the ruling class ... which get imposed on others, occupying merely the top of our minds, it would be — and one would be glad — a very much easier thing to overthrow. (Cited in McConachie)

Because hegemonic cultures are dynamic and incomplete, they are to various degrees open to counter-hegemonic alternatives. In fact, many people have power and shape the values and attitudes of a society. Art need not merely reflect large social, political and economic realities. But to bring about change, people must form blocs that, according to Gramsci, are heterogenous and loosely aligned through ideological belief as well as economic self-interest. This contrasts sharply with the position that social classes and an elite cadre of intellectuals are the makers of history. Art can help create the consciousness that motivates people to form such blocs.

Art can put people in touch with their desire. Activism within a grassroots, i.e. bottom-up, framework valorizes what the community wants, as opposed to a top-down approach that any political entity, right or left, could use. Art has the capacity for reflection and exploration of what one individual or group wants. Theoretical support for this position has been convincingly articulated by philosopher Herbert Marcuse, who spoke to the subversive potential of the imagination, with its ability to not be colonized by prevailing ideology, to generate new ideas and to reconfigure the familiar.

Activism within a grassroots, i.e. bottom-up, framework valorizes what the community wants...

Years ago, as his student, cultural critic Carol Becker argued that the imagination had become oppressed by the effects of the mass media, and held hostage to the prevailing culture. Marcuse responded that "the miserable reality can only be changed thru radical pol praxis." However, Marcuse saw the aesthetic dimension as offering an indirect route. This he contrasted with Marxist utilitarianism, which condemned the bourgeois and celebrated proletarian art. Seeing civilization as repressive, Marcuse argued that art serves best as an imaginative space for freedom to regenerate the lost, hidden, creative, spiritual and intuitive capacities of human life. Art is subversive because it reminds people of what has been buried. There are nevertheless two conditions within Marcuse's concept of aesthetic dimension: 1) Art has a responsibility to help society deal with its hidden conflicts and contradictions; 2) The work must embody hope, the human ability to imagine what doesn't exist and give it shape.

Marcuse advocates for the beautiful, arguing that its sensuousness *is* subversive. Becker avows that the left's historic lack of understanding in this regard may be a reason for many artists' resistance to political movements: fear that it will deny them the pleasure of artmaking in itself, to be replaced by "issues."

Art can open a space for critical thinking. By its definition, art is a nonproscriptive space, an "imagine if," not an "accept this or else." As such, it offers a built-in antidote for even the most well-meaning activism's tendency to tell people what to think and do. Anna Deavere Smith writes,

Is there also the possibility that after we have performed, the audience can go away and dream or think, so there's also the space that art, I think, wants to make if there's really going to be a change of attitude? Because a change in the way that you think is so personal. You can have other people help you, but it's like any kind of conversion; in the end, it's in your heart. (37)

"Life is more important than art. That's what makes art so important."— John Malpede

At their core, both activism and community art are about not only our collective, but also our multiple identities. Being an artist may be part of one's identity but it's not the whole thing. So even when an artist is "doing" activism, she brings her aesthetic self. Conversely, activists may also be artists. Similarly, "communities" are not fixed, monolithic entities any more than individuals are. This is a great thing. It means that for as strongly as one holds certain beliefs, one also feels oneself part of a place perhaps, or an ethnicity, or a class. Interacting around these several identities engenders personal relationships — a wildly effective way to break stereotypes and, by extension, change social attitudes. The homophobe whose child blossoms in an art project at the local school taught by a queer local artist may begin to question his prejudice. Artists are also rendered more accountable in the context of local relationships; there's a price to pay for calling the local cop a "pig" if he is also the person who patrols your neighborhood. We're all more responsible to one another when we're in a web of relationships and that's what community art provides.

SOURCES

Online at the CAN Reading Room

Kohl, Erica, "[Organizing and Theater: Bus Riders Union](#)," Case study of an arts - and - organizing project using community story in Los Angeles, Calif.; in "[Connecting Californians: Finding the Art of Community Change](#)," 2001.

Paterson, Douglas L. "[A Brief Introduction to Augusto Boal: Augusto Boal and his Theatre of the Oppressed](#)," 1996.

Peeps, Claire, "[Getting in History's Way](#)," from 'Activists Speak Out: Reflections on the Pursuit of Change in America,' edited by Marie Cieri and Claire Peeps (Palgrave), 2001.

Pottenger, Marty, "[Letter from an Artist](#)," 2001.

Schwarzman, Mat, "[It's About Transformation: Thoughts on Arts as Social Action](#)," 1993.

———"Drawing the Line at Place: The Environmental Justice Project: Artists and organizers collaborate to address environmental issues in Louisiana," 1996.

Weber, Marshall "[Taking Down the Walls from the Outside](#)," 1996.

Other Texts Cited

Becker, Carol, "Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art," in her collection, "The Subversive Imagination" (New York: Routledge), 1994.

Broyles-Gonzalez, Yolanda, "El Teatro Campesino" (Austin: U of Texas Press), 1994.

deNobriga, Kathy, "An Introduction to Alternate ROOTS," High Performance, Winter 1993.

Friedman, Daniel, "Workers Theatre of the 1930s" in Bruce McConachie and Daniel Friedman, eds., "Theatre for Working-Class Audiences: 1830-1980" (Westport, Colo.: Greenwood Press), 1985.

Guinier, Lani and Anna Deavere Smith, "Rethinking Power, Rethinking Theater," in Theater Vol 31, #3, Fall 2001.

Manos, Mike, unpublished student paper, 2001.

McConachie, Bruce, "Cultural Hegemony and Theatre History" in Thomas Postelwaite and McConachie, eds., "Interpreting the Historical Past" (Iowa City: U of Iowa Press), 1989.

Neal, Larry, "The Black Arts Movement," The Drama Review Vol 12, # 4 (T40), Summer, 1968.

Nochlin, Linda, "The Paterson Strike Pageant of 1913," in "Theatre for Working Class Audiences".

O'Neal, John, "Motion in the Ocean," The Drama Review Vol 12, # 4 (T40), Summer, 1968.

Schroeder, Patricia, "Transforming Images of Blackness" from Janelle Reinelt, ed. "Crucibles of" Crisis (Ann Arbor: U Mich Press), 1996.

Solomon, Alisa, "AIDS Crusaders ACT UP a Storm," in ed. Jan Cohen-Cruz, "Radical Street Performance" (London: Routledge), 1998.

Jan Cohen-Cruz co-edited "Playing Boal: Theatre, Therapy and Activism" and edited "Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology."

Original CAN/API publication: February 2002