

ART, PROTEST, AND THE ARCHIVES

Jaida Grey Eagle, *Photographs Related to Protest Movements in the Twin Cities*

Taken by Oglala Lakota artist Jaida Grey Eagle, these images capture the pain and outrage that swept across the United States following the murders of three African American men – Daunte Wright, George Floyd, and Winston Boogie Smith, Jr. – at the hands of police in Minneapolis between April 11 and June 3, 2020. Grey Eagle’s art captures a moment of trauma, but also one of protest and defiance, often expressed in strikingly creative forms: bold acts of performativity, vulnerable bodies marching and even dancing in the streets, songs and chants, posters, banners, murals, new monuments raised and old ones brought crashing down. Alongside grief, fear, and anger there is also a kind of collective exuberance here, the discovery of *power* in the *aesthetics* of resistance that seems exhilarating. It is this moment of unforeseen power in beauty mingling with anguish – art merging with protest – that breathes sparkling life into such images, infusing cultural memory with hope that change is possible at times like these. But what is this power? Can art really change the world? Aren’t there more direct ways to fight? What can art do that other forms of protest cannot? Is it still *art* if it engages in politics? Isn’t that just *propaganda*? What happens when protest art becomes fashionable, a *commodity*? When it ends up in a gallery, a museum, or *a rare book library*?

Artists and activists have been asking questions like these for a century or more. We still ask them today. Enlivened by Black Lives Matter, the Dakota Pipeline protests, and countless other recent struggles, a whole new generation faces them, urgently, as it confronts myriad challenges of its own. *Art, Protest, & the Archives* invites concerned citizens young and old to explore questions and answers of generations of artists and activists over the past century. From the avant-garde of “heroic modernism” through the altered landscapes of postwar Europe and America to the global uprisings in 1968 and the new identities, alliances, and struggles that followed: What *challenges* did they face? What artistic *tactics* and *strategies* did they invent? What do they mean for us *here, now, today*?

John Willis, Art Tent. Photographs of the Dakota Pipeline Access Protests in North Dakota

Slingshot Newspaper 1, no. 108, “Hella Occupy Edition” (Berkeley, 2011).

Ken Knabb Papers

Alongside Black Lives Matter, the Dakota Pipeline protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in 2016 remain a source of inspiration for contemporary art activism. Hand colored by activists outside the “Art Tent” at the Oceti Sakowin camp (above), placards bear images of the Water Protector, icon of the grassroots Mni Wiconi [Water is Life] movement. These were designed by local artists, who also produced the striking Lakota ledger art hanging on the glass tower facing the building’s front entrance. Performativity also played a prominent role – rituals, processions, chants, and dance – blending traditional and modern aesthetics to great effect, even in the face of violence from militarized law enforcement. Native American dance can also be seen in the Black Lives Matter protest photos of Jaida Grey Eagle. Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Oakland (at right) likewise drew vitality from artists, who were involved in the movement from the start. Camps were central here, too, creating a space for experimenting with prefigurative forms of community that can be seen as forms of art in their own right. Many artists involved in Occupy had activist roots that went back decades, creating a bridge to the still earlier – almost legendary – flowering of art and protest in the 1960s.

THEN AND NOW, AND THEN AGAIN . . .

American Indian Movement poster for Wounded Knee Vigil (New York, 1973).

Richard Erdoes Papers

Black Mask no. 7 (New York, 1967)

Curious reverberations in pink and green echo across generations separating Occupy Oakland (at right) from a vigil in support of the American Indian Movement's (AIM) occupation of Wounded Knee (above), held in New York in 1973. Coming on the heels of a decade of creative – and at times violent – contestation over civil rights, social justice, the Vietnam War, imperialism, and other struggles, Wounded Knee drew on the vibrant protest culture of the 1960s. But it also marked a transition that in some ways brought AIM closer to the landscapes of art and protest today. Artists of Black Lives Matter, Mni Wiconi, and Occupy were certainly aware of these earlier movements, but questions of meaning and legacy, of relations between the generations, still remain a source of controversy.

When young artists and activists were gearing up for Occupy Wall Street, one of the people they looked to for advice was Ben Morea, a central figure in the 1960s zine *Black Mask* (at right). Steeped in the heady brew of underground art and politics swirling around the Lower East Side, Morea and his rowdy companions looked back still farther, to revolutionaries of the historical avant-garde. Convinced that Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism hadn't gone far enough, *Black Mask* eventually took to the streets, abandoning "art" for direct – albeit highly creative – action in the militant collective Up Against the Wall Motherfucker.

ART AND REVOLUTION IN THE AGE OF "HEROIC MODERNISM"

Ot UNOVISA, utverditeľi novogo iskusstva (Vitebsk, 1920)

Arbeitsrat für Kunst (Berlin, 1919)

Vladimir Mayakovsky, ROSTA poster series no. 632 (Moscow, 1920)

If the protest culture of the 1960s seems legendary, the historical avant-garde's engagement with political revolution has assumed almost mythic status as the foundational moment of twentieth-century art and protest. Emblazoned beneath the boldface "WE WANT" on this 1920 UNOVIS manifesto (at left), Kasimir Malevich's black square announced the arrival of Suprematism as a force to be reckoned with in the new Soviet Union, while Constructivist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky appealed to workers and peasants for support during the Russian Civil War (at right and on the tower behind you). In Germany too, Expressionists rushed to join "worker councils for art" (above), which sprouted up alongside short-lived Soviet republics in 1919. "Can I assume the privilege of art for myself when every person is needed to solve the problems of basic survival?" Hungarian artist László Moholy-Nagy asked the same year: "During the last hundred years art and reality had nothing in common. The personal satisfaction of making art has contributed nothing to the happiness of the masses." Such sentiments were shared by many at the dawn of the age of "heroic modernism."

THE REVOLT AGAINST *L'ART POUR L'ART*

Fondazione e Manifesto del Movimento Futurista (Milan, 1909)

F.T. Marinetti, diagram of Futurism and related movements (n.d.).

F.T. Marinetti Papers

“We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicolored, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitals,” F.T. Marinetti proclaimed in the first *Manifesto of Futurism* (above). “We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind.”

First published (in French) in the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro* on February 20, 1909, Marinetti’s strident call to arms is often fingered as the founding document of the historical avant-garde – particularly when it comes to activist engagement. Like Moholy-Nagy in 1919 – and like Morea’s *Black Mask* manifesto (at left) five decades later – Marinetti took aim at the belief that art had to be sheltered in museums and private boudoirs, away from the base conflicts of the “real world,” in order to achieve its purpose: sheer aesthetic pleasure derived from enjoying art for art’s sake (*l’art pour l’art*). Whether this was true of the French Symbolists Marinetti attacked is open to debate (many Symbolists had deep ties to anarchist revolutionaries), as it is for Oedipal revolts of later generations. But the fact is the revolt against *l’art pour l’art* and *aestheticism* has remained a defining moment for art activists ever since. And that revolt began with Futurism. For all its bluster, Marinetti’s diagram of revolutionary avant-garde movements sprouting from Futurism’s life-giving central trunk is not without some merit as a visual history of art and protest in the early twentieth century. Mayakovsky, Malevich, Moholy-Nagy, and many other artists in the age of “heroic modernism” certainly drew inspiration from the Futurists. A stroll through Marinetti’s personal library, with its inscribed copies from artists across Europe, bears out this impression. Both library and archive are held (ironically, perhaps, given Marinetti’s call to destroy “academies of every kind”) at Beinecke Library.

DADA DRUMS

Dada no. 3 (Zurich, 1919)

This humiliating age has not succeeded in winning our respect. What could be respectable and impressive about it? Its cannons? Our big drum drowns them out. Its idealism? That has long been a laughing stock, in its popular and its academic edition. The grandiose slaughters and cannibalistic exploits? Our spontaneous foolishness and enthusiasm for illusion will destroy them.”

—Hugo Ball, 1916

Dada took the avant-garde revolt against art for art's sake in a different direction. While the Futurists had clamored for *involvement* in struggles of the present — including war, “the world's only hygiene,” as Marinetti famously proclaimed — artists like Hugo Ball at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich celebrated their *distance* from the grisly battlefields of World War I. The problem with art was not remoteness, but complicity. Art for art's sake, like bourgeois culture in general, was part and parcel of the same ideology that caused the war, rationalized it, made it make sense. It was time to *stop* making sense: “Let us destroy let us be good let us create a new force of gravity NO = YES Dada means nothing.”

The radicality of such gestures — and the accusation of art's complicity in oppressive systems of power, violence, injustice — have kept Dada's drums beating loud and clear in art and protest ever since. Strategies and tactics of later generations owe an openly acknowledged debt to the Cabaret Voltaire. But for engaged artists, refusal to join in the ideological battles of the day hardly seemed like a solution.

Even within Dada, partisan zeal soon drove young artists to break away and form a new movement — Surrealism — which quickly pledged allegiance to the communist cause. That Dada failed to carry its revolution beyond the confines of artistic gesture — to stop performing art in order to bring about “the realization and suppression of art” — is an accusation that probably rings true for most art activists today.

NEW MOVES AND NEW WEAPONS FOR THE ARTISTS' BRIGADES

Brigada Khudozhnikov no. 7 (Moscow, 1932)

There is a lot to look at on this cover of *Brigada Khudozhnikov* [Artists' Brigades] (above). Rendered in bold colors and sharply abstract forms, workers stride defiantly on stage along slanting lines of force, superimposed over photographs of Russian throngs on the march, banners raised high in the complex dynamic harmony of a Constructivist tour de force. The message is clear. Cutting-edge techniques of the latest avant-garde join forces with proletarian zeal to carry forward the work and struggle of revolution in the land of a new socialist “theater of masses,” the Soviet Union.

Designed by the brothers Vladimir and Georgii Stenberg and published in Moscow in 1932, this cover (and work of art) comes close to marking a high point of the historical avant-garde in the age of “heroic modernism.” In the fifteen years since the Bolshevik Revolution, radical experiments in politics and social organization had been matched by a breathtaking range of artistic innovations. New moves and new weapons for a struggle that would decide the fate of humanity – or so many believed. Montage, collage, typography, graphic design, architecture, cinema, experimental theater – from rolling trains of agitprop to sophisticated techniques of Brechtian “alienation” – magazines like *Brigada Khudozhnikov* covered it all. Behind this kaleidoscopic innovation lay a conviction that creativity across *all* the arts formed a single, coherent fighting force – an artists' brigade.

The brash look would not last long, however – at least not in the Soviet Union. With the rise of Stalin, modernist aesthetics came under fire for being out of touch with and beyond the comprehension of the masses. Committing suicide in 1930, Mayakovsky (author of the ROSTA posters behind you), fell victim to the very revolution he so passionately embraced, as did many other “heroes” of “heroic modernism.” Whatever one might think of their struggle today, it is hard not to see the power of the historical avant-garde at its peak – and the beauty of the weapons these artists created.

WITH BRUSH AND SCISSORS

George Grosz, *Mit Pinsel und Schere*:

7 Materialisationen (Berlin, 1922)

Brigada Khudozhnikov no. 1 (Moscow, 1931)

Montage was one of the most striking weapons in the new avant-garde arsenal. Taking a pair of scissors to art was a visceral political act in works such as George Grosz's *Mit Pinsel und Schere* [With brush and scissors] (at left). Grosz, who was a central figure of Berlin Dada, invented the montage technique alongside Raoul Hausmann and John Heartfield. At the same time, he joined the bloody Spartacist uprising and the German Communist Party in 1919/20. "Montage is conflict," Sergei Eisenstein wrote in his "Dialectical Approach to Film Form." Gustav Klutsis's cover for the first issue of *Brigada Khudozhnikov* (below) brings a multitude of individual hands together in a collective gesture of revolutionary defiance.

THE HAND OF JOHN HEARTFIELD

Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung 13, no. 40 (Prague, October 1934)

“All fists balled into one,” reads the caption of this photomontage by John Heartfield (at right), published on the cover of an issue of the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* (AIZ) [Workers’ Illustrated Newspaper] dedicated to the “Antifascist Action Unit” in 1934. Only a year before, the Nazi seizure of power had forced Heartfield and the newspaper to flee from Berlin into exile. Across the border in Prague, Heartfield continued the struggle using weapons he had been sharpening for years.

The montaged fist clearly mirrors Klutskis’s saluting hand(s) in *Brigada Khudozhnikov* (at left). But the direction of influence likely went the other way. Heartfield had already made a strong impact on Soviet photomontage before he met Klutskis in 1931/32. In any case, the two approaches differed, most notably in the satire and irony prevalent in Heartfield’s approach. Although not evident here, black humor often infuses his photomontage with a kind of bitter comic relief that only heightens the sense of outrage – and defiance – working class readers must have felt. What better weapon in the struggle against fascism than a hideous toad proclaiming German racial superiority, or a self-devouring cow demonstrating the efficiency of Nazi economics? Heartfield’s photomontage swings from the sublime to the ridiculous – and back again – to great affect on the pages of *AIZ*.

Today, one is more likely to encounter a Heartfield photomontage framed in a museum or on the walls of a private art collection (or in a *rare book library*). They are, indeed, beautiful works of art. But – and for that very reason – they sometimes resurface in contexts not so remote from the original struggle. On a radical flier of the 1960s, perhaps, or an angry zine of the 1990s, or even that ironic blog post from yesterday’s web. Like so many old moves and weapons of the erstwhile artists’ brigades, Heartfield’s weapons will likely find new meaning and new applications in protest culture for a long time to come.

SURREALISM IN SERVICE TO THE REVOLUTION

André Breton, *Second manifeste du Surréalisme* (Paris, 1930)

The eerie assemblage of apparently random “found images” in Surrealist art (at right) seems remote from the urgent struggle evident in the Stenbergs’ *Theater of Masses* or the strident montage of Grosz, Klutis, and Heartfield (at left). But for André Breton, stern leader of the Paris Surrealist faction, such “research” was every bit as serious. Those who saw nothing more than *aesthetics* in Surrealism quickly found themselves expelled as “incorrigible *littérateurs*,” while the legendary Five at the head of the movement (Breton, Louis Aragon, Paul Éluard, Benjamin Péret, and Pierre Unik) all joined the Communist Party in 1926. Published four years later, *The Second Manifesto* included a telegram to Moscow pledging Surrealism’s “service to the Revolution.”

The problem was, Stalin had no use for Surrealism. Even the militant aesthetic of Russian Constructivism seemed “decadent” and “bourgeois” in the eyes of Soviet officials, whose new policy of “Socialist Realism” explicitly repudiated “heroic modernism.” Artists had to abandon avant-garde aesthetics and produce clearly legible *propaganda* or face suppression. Some, like Mayakovsky (whose ROSTA posters hang on the book tower behind you), chose suicide. Others gave in. Still others – including Breton – eventually continued the fight against fascism outside the communist fold. As artists felt a growing compulsion to take a stand in the intensifying battles of the 1930s, none of these choices was easy.

THE OTHER SIDE

Dino Alfieri and Luigi Freddi, eds., *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista: Guida Storica* (Rome, 1933)

The focus on leftist struggle should not obscure the fact – true today, as it was back then – that the weapons of “heroic modernism” could be applied with equal, if not greater, force on the other side. Montage, collage, typography, graphic design, architecture, cinema, experimental theater – all of it came into play at the Futurists’ 1932 *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution* held in Rome (above). The exhibition hall itself was a Futurist triumph, with columns of riveted steel made to resemble towering fasces at the entrance and a labyrinth of jutting corridors and displays capturing the movement’s dynamism in frantic disjointed rhythms inside. In fact, the Futurists fared little better in Fascist Italy than Constructivists in the Soviet Union. After shaping official culture for years, Marinetti and his followers fell out of favor in the early 1930s. The growing power of Nazi Germany – where modernism was denounced as “degenerate art” – may explain much of this. But the same was happening in the Soviet Union under the dictates of Socialist Realism. Radical political experiments on both sides turned against the radical aesthetics that had supported them. In the formative years, however, these weapons cut both ways – and very effectively, indeed.

ART, PROTEST, AND THE AVANT-GARDE IN AMERICA

Art Front 1, no. 1 (New York, November 1934)

New Theatre 1, no. 9 (New York, October 1934)

New Masses 7, no. 3 (New York, August 1931)

While artists were taking sides in the epic conflict between fascism and communism looming in Europe, many in America likewise insisted that “art is a weapon” (at right), as strikes pitted factory workers and miners against big capital and law enforcement during the Great Depression. “We call upon all honest intellectuals, all honest writers and artists, to abandon decisively the treacherous illusion that art can exist for art’s sake, or that the artist can remain remote from the historic conflicts in which all men must take sides,” a John Reed Club manifesto declared in *New Masses* in 1932. Founded at the magazine’s offices three years earlier, the New York club organized May Day parades, public lectures, and protest exhibitions and ran an art school, all of which hewed close to the Communist Party line. *Art Front* (at left) took a more independent stance, but was no less committed to organizing working class resistance. This issue was distributed freely at a rally of the newly founded Artists Union in late 1934.

The bold Constructivist design indicates the strong ties between avant-garde innovation in Europe and activist arts in America, as do the classic stances of agitprop *mise-en-scène* seen on the cover of this issue of *New Theatre* (above), which features an article on Vsevolod Meyerhold’s “revolutionary ballet.” Just as in Europe, debates over the legibility of modernism for working class audiences also appeared. Communist reviews such as *New Masses* often took a dim view of such “formalism,” calling for more accessible forms and even “propaganda.” Homegrown American traditions – above all the art of political cartoons (at right) – vied with avant-garde imports from Europe and often prevailed.

ART AND PROTEST, CLASS AND RACE IN AMERICA

New Masses 6, no. 12 (New York, May 1931)

Langston Hughes, *Scottsboro, Limited: A One Act Play*, in *New Masses* 7, no. 6 (November 1931)

Marching side by side across the cover of this May Day issue of *New Masses* (above), Black and White factory workers present a united front very much in line with images of class struggle in Europe, but the color contrasts also mark a significant difference – the prominent role of *race* in defining the social struggles in America. In fact, the show of solidarity was intended to bolster the communist strategy of enlisting Blacks engaged in the struggle against American racism as a powerful ally in the fight against capitalism. *New Masses* consistently ran features depicting the horrors of White nationalism and racial violence, recruiting prominent Black writers and artists such as Langston Hughes, who published his play, *Scottsboro, Limited*, in the magazine (at right) alongside articles and illustrations that decry the trial as “legal lynching.”

Struggles of class and race did not always align so easily, however. Tensions often emerged, fostering an uneasy coexistence punctuated by moments of open hostility. The NAACP, which had been leading the campaign against lynching for decades, rejected communist attempts to claim the cause as their own. White activists, on the other hand, warned of splitting the ranks by grounding social struggle in a distinctly Black identity. “The basic antagonism of worker toward capitalist, debtor toward creditor, is diverted into channels of racial antagonism, which weakens and confuses the masses, but leaves untouched the original relations of rich and poor,” Meyer Schapiro wrote in *Art Front*: “a foreign enemy is substituted for the enemy at home, and innocent and defenseless minorities are offered as victims for the blind rage of economically frustrated citizens.”

ART COMMENTARY ON A LYNCHING?

Flier for the NAACP antilynching campaign (New York, 1929). *Clippings File of the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection*

An Art Commentary on a Lynching (New York, 1935). *Clippings File of the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection*

Tensions of class and race boiled over when the NAACP and communists staged competing art exhibitions on lynching in New York in 1935. The first, *An Art Commentary on a Lynching*, was organized by Harlem Renaissance writer and activist Walter White, a leader in the NAACP's antilynching campaign. White used his contacts in elite literary circles to solicit endorsements from the cream of New York high society. "Even a morbid subject can be made popular if a sufficiently distinguished list of patronesses will sponsor the exhibit," White wrote to Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. "I fear that I have put this somewhat crudely and inadequately but I trust that you will be able to understand how I am trying delicately to effect a union of art and propaganda." Such deference evoked wrath and scorn from communists, who accused the NAACP of colluding with America's ruling class. The communist-led John Reed Club organized its own exhibition, *Struggle for Negro Rights*, which opened one day after the NAACP show closed. The exhibitions offered sharply contrasting visions of art as a weapon in the fight against racism. White's *Art Commentary* strove for a higher tone that was in line with notions of aesthetic distance and a traditional gallery experience. Yet the artwork itself foregrounded the suffering of victims in ways that left little room for affective distance. The communists' *Struggle*, on the other hand, took a more militant stance, depicting the brutality and violence of White perpetrators and the bravery of Black resistance.

TAKING A STAND IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Zdeňek Nejedlý, et al., *¡No Pasarán!* (Hradec Králové, 1937)

Manifestos of *Contre Attaque* and the English Surrealist Group (1936).

Marcel Jean Scrapbooks

Back in Europe, the epic political struggles of the 1920s and 1930s came to a furious climax in the Spanish Civil War. Led by General Francisco Franco, a Nationalist coup in July 1936 unleashed the conflict, which quickly mushroomed into a grand international confrontation between the extremes of fascism and communism. Artists and activists from across Europe and the United States joined volunteer fighters on both sides in a proxy war that seemed destined to decide the fate of all. “In a political form the question of humanity itself is being asked of us today with a final and perilous seriousness which earlier times did not know,” German novelist Thomas Mann declared in 1937.

Published in Bohemia the same year, a volume of poems and woodcuts by the Czech Surrealist group Devětsil (at left) takes its title from the password of antifascist resistance, *¡No pasarán!* [They shall not pass], a phrase coined by the communist “firebrand” Dolores Ibárruri Gómez in Madrid at the beginning of the war. Marcel Jean’s scrapbook (at right) is filled with notes, manifestos, and even exhibition fliers documenting the role Surrealists played in mobilizing international support for the resistance in Spain. André Breton led the charge in a nonpartisan alliance of antifascist “revolutionary intellectuals,” *Contre Attaque* – alongside Georges Bataille, whom he had once expelled from Surrealist ranks as an “incorrigible *littérateur*.” Not taking a side was not an option.

BLACK SOLIDARITY AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE IN SPAIN

Paul Robeson, “Heaven-Bound Soldiers,” in *Canciones de las Brigadas Internacionales*, 5th ed. (Barcelona, 1938)

“LH with Friends, Spain,” photograph (1937). *Langston Hughes Papers*

Black writers, artists, and activists also took a stand. “In Madrid, Spain’s besieged capital, I’ve met wide awake Negroes from various parts of the world – New York, our Middle West, the French West Indies, Cuba, Africa – all of them here because they know that if Fascism creeps across Spain, across Europe and then across the world, there will be no place left for intelligent young Negroes at all,” Langston Hughes told radio listeners in 1937. “In Spain there is no color prejudice. Here in Madrid, heroic and bravest of cities, Madrid where the shells of Franco plow through the roof-tops at night, Madrid where you can take a streetcar to the trenches . . . , to this Madrid, have come the men of my race and many other races to offer their help.” Among them was actor/singer Paul Robeson, who supported the struggle by turning African American folk songs into battle hymns of the Spanish Republic. Robeson’s rendition of the spiritual “Heaven Bound Soldiers” in this songbook of the communist-led International Brigades (below) appears alongside contributions from Buenaventura Durruti, André Malraux, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Romain Rolland, Antonio Gramsci, and – of course – Ernest Hemingway.

THE BITTER END

Tiempos nuevos 4, no. 5/6 (Barcelona, 1937)

José Luis Rey-Vila, *12 escenas de guerra* (Barcelona, ca. 1937)

The flowering of revolutionary poetry, music, theater, and art in the Spanish Civil War marked the apotheosis of “heroic modernism.” Issued by the anarchist republic of Catalonia in 1937, the gorgeous prints at right illustrate the vitality as well as the precarity of the moment. The Spanish Civil War did not end well. Franco’s ultimate victory in 1939 cast a pall over the brilliance just as Europe was about to plunge into the Second World War. Just as shattering was the discovery that the fight between fascism and communism itself turned out to be illusory, or at least not what it had seemed to those who had done the fighting and dying. Hints of the cynical political calculations lurking beneath the surface first appeared in Barcelona in 1937, when communist troops fired on anarchist allies as Franco’s troops approached. When the Nazis and Soviets signed a pact to devour Poland on the eve of battle in August 1939, little remained of the radical vision of the avant-garde.

“Progress and Reaction have both turned out to be swindles,” George Orwell wrote in 1937. “Seemingly there is nothing left but quietism, robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it. Get inside the whale, or rather, admit that you are inside the whale (for you are, of course), stop fighting against it or pretending that you control it, simply accept it, endure it, record it.”

BIRTH PANGS OF THE POSTWAR AVANT-GARDE

Manifeste des Surréalistes-Révolutionnaires en France (Paris, 1947)

Le Surréalisme révolutionnaire no. 1 (Paris, 1948)

Europe emerged from the ashes of war, devastation, and holocaust with little memory of the catastrophic failings of “heroic modernism” and the historical avant-garde, or so it might seem from this blazing Revolutionary Surrealist manifesto of 1947 (above). Enumerating the dangers of the new Cold War era with greater urgency than ever, it decries Surrealism’s absence from the field of combat before issuing a passionate call for “discipline,” “political vigilance,” and above all “recognition of the *Communist Party* as the *sole revolutionary authority*.” Were it not for the new political geographies of the conflict – “Anglo-Saxon capitalism” encircling “free Europe,” Goebbels (i.e., Charles de Gaulle) “speaking French to call for the extermination of Moroccans, Algerians, [and] Blacks” – one might almost think the Surrealists were still fighting the battles of the Spanish Civil War.

In fact, everything had changed. Within a few years, the landscapes of art and protest in Europe would be transformed almost beyond recognition. As the first truly international movement in postwar Europe, Revolutionary Surrealism marked an important moment in the revival of the avant-garde. But the movement was short lived. Torn apart by new social and political realities, Revolutionary Surrealism collapsed in 1948, just a year after it was founded in Brussels. The networks it created and the powerful links between art and activism that it revived, however, soon formed the backbone of a thriving new postwar culture of protest beyond anything the historical avant-garde could have imagined.

THE NETWORKS OF ASGER JORN

Cobra no. 1 (Brussels, 1948)

Perhaps the most important immediate outcome of Revolutionary Surrealism was the founding of CoBrA (standing for Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam), an experimental artists' group led by Asger Jorn, Christian Dotremont, and Constant Nieuwenhuys (above). Poised at the juncture of radical art and postwar political engagement, Cobra extended and transformed the legacy of Surrealism, developing its own distinctive style while rebuilding a transnational network of connections with a younger generation of artists and activists with new political commitments of their own.

Danish painter Asger Jorn, who had apprenticed at Bauhaus and later worked with Le Corbusier before joining the Danish resistance, played a crucial role as lynchpin not only between generations, but also among nations, overcoming suspicion and hostility on all sides in a Europe still fractured by war. Jorn was tireless in reaching out to former adversaries, first in Italy, where he brought Cobra together with Arte nucleare to found the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, then in Germany, where he forged friendships with the radical Gruppe Spur.

LETTRISM'S *UPRISING OF YOUTH* IN POSTWAR PARIS

Isidore Isou, *Amos, ou Introduction à la Métagraphologie* (Paris, 1953)

Founded in Paris by the Rumanian-Jewish refugee Isidore Isou in 1946, Lettrism also played a pivotal role in rekindling radical activism in the arts. Like Revolutionary Surrealism, Lettrism emerged in dialogue – or more to the point, in *conflict* – with the historical avant-garde. Dada was the inspiration for Isou, who marveled at its creative destruction of sense and syntax, but he criticized the movement for not going far enough. Dada's destruction had stopped at the level of words – the world's “first stereotype,” Isou argued – but Lettrism went farther by blasting words apart to release the awesome diversity and power trapped inside, in *letters*. Joined by a band of young poets and vagabonds, Isou took Paris by storm with frenetic performances of nonsensical sound poetry, jumbled displays of “metagraphic” painting and collage, and finally disruptive screenings of experimental Lettrist cinema that left audiences incensed, enraged, or just plain baffled. The point of it all, as the title of one early zine made clear, was to unleash a social, political, *and* artistic *soulèvement de la jeunesse* [uprising of youth].

Dada poets and artists sharply contested Isou's claim to originality, which made for even more scandal and publicity, but Lettrism introduced new strategies and tactics that left a profound mark in postwar protest culture. Salient among these was the practice of “*chiseling*,” or tearing apart the elements of traditional literary culture, a process that often involved physical defacement of artistic media, including film, and *bouleversement* [reversal, or overturning], the retooling of material scavenged from mass culture for subversive ends.

INTO THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

Internationale lettriste no. 3 (Paris, 1953)

“Nouveau théâtre d’opérations dans la culture” (Paris, 1958)

Among the crowd of Isou’s followers was the young Guy Debord, future leader of the now nearly legendary Situationist International. He broke away from the mainstream Lettrists to found his own rival faction in 1952 – a classic schism with little to show for it, in the best avant-garde tradition. Or at least so it must have seemed. As if to confirm that suspicion, a headline in the splinter group’s paper *Lettrist International* (at left), audaciously reads “We Must Restart the War in Spain.” “It is fifteen years now that Franco clings to power, soiling that part of our future we let go in Spain.”

Like the Revolutionary Surrealists, Debord seems to pick up the cadence of “heroic modernism’s” catastrophic last hurrah without skipping a beat. In fact, however, the encounter with Lettrism had already marked a decisive break. Another was about to come with Asger Jorn, who plugged Debord’s group into his widening network of contacts across Europe a few years later. The result was the fabled Situationist International, founded in the tiny Italian village of Cosio d’Arroscio in July 1957. Published in 1958, “New Theater of Operations in Culture” (at right) clearly shows the distance Debord and his friends had traveled in the span of just a few years.

Below a hazy aerial map of the target – Paris – and a quote from the *Communist Manifesto*, a whole new set of weapons and tactics lay in store: unitary urbanism, psychogeography, experimental behaviors, *détournement*, *dérive*, the “permanent game.” Art and protest in Europe would never look the same.

DÉRIVE AND DÉTOURNEMENT

Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, *Fin de Copenhague: Conseiller technique pour le détournement* (Copenhagen, 1957)

Guy Debord, *Naked City: Illustration de l'hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographie* (Copenhagen, 1957)

Two weapons in the Situationist arsenal were particularly important for postwar art and protest: *dérive* and *détournement*. Elaborated in the text at right, the latter technique is brilliantly illustrated in Debord and Jorn's 1957 artist book *Fin de Copenhague* (above left), subtitled "Technical Adviser for *Détournement*." Fragments of mainstream media are twisted into a collage of subversive messages remote from their intended function – in this case, a show of solidarity with Algeria in its war for independence against France. *Dérive*, or drifting, is essentially the same practice of displacement and repurposing applied to the physical environment of cities rather than the products of mass media.

Illustrated in Debord's *Naked City* (above right), *dérive* highjacks the elements of modern urban planning, fracturing Paris into zones defined by their distinctive emotional – or *psychogeographic* – resonances, and then reassembling them in a new order on long anarchic excursions called "drifts." Transforming the city into a jarring montage of contrasting revolutionary passions, *dérive* was meant to transcend the separation of art and life.

Guy Debord and Gil Wolman, “Mode d’emploi du détournement,” in *Les Lèvres nues* no. 8 (Brussels, May 1956)

The spirit of *dérive* blends wickedly with virtuoso practice of *détournement* in this map of France (at left), where names of cities in the French colonies replace those of the metropole. Published in the Belgian Surrealist review *Les Lèvres nues* [*Naked Lips*] in 1956, the map accompanies a “Users’ Guide to *Détournement*” by Debord and his fellow break-away Lettrist Gil Wolman. Writing under the pseudonyms André Breton and Louis Aragon – legendary leaders of Surrealism’s “heroic” phase – the poets call on comrades to plunder the “literary and artistic heritage of humanity” as material for “partisan propaganda” in a new “civil war.” The four basic “laws” of *détournement* are:

It is the element détourned farthest that contributes most vitally to the impression of the ensemble, and not the elements themselves that directly determine the nature of that impression.

The distortions introduced by détourned elements must tend toward simplification in the extreme, the primary force of détournement being a direct function of its recognition, conscious or disturbed, by memory.

Détournement is less effective the more it approaches a rational response.

Détournement by simple reversal is always the most immediate and the least effective.

THE REALIZATION AND *SUPPRESSION* OF ART

“Manifeste: Avantgarde ist unerwünscht,” *Die Zeitschrift SPUR* (Munich, 1962)

Situationist attitudes about the revolutionary potential of art were conflicted. Despite deep roots in the postwar avant-garde, the movement remained suspicious of art and especially the art *market*, with its drive to convert even the most radical aesthetic gestures into cold hard cash. In order to be truly radical, artists had to renounce complicity with capitalism and take art out of galleries and museums in order to wield it as a weapon in the streets. Debord began expelling artists who refused to abandon the tainted profession of “art” almost as soon as the Situationist International was founded. By the early 1960s hardly any artists were left. “Avant-Garde Unwelcome,” reads a manifesto of the German Gruppe Spur (above), protesting the Situationists’ turn against art in 1960. Two years later, Spur, too, was out.

ART AND PROTEST IN AND OUT OF THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

Jacqueline de Jong, original maquettes for *Situationist Times* no. 1 (1962).

Jacqueline de Jong Papers

“The BIG FIGHT HAD STARTED,” Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong defiantly proclaims in these beautiful maquettes for her new magazine, *The Situationist Times* (above), which launched in the midst of raging controversy over the Situationist stance on art in 1962. Titled “Critique on the Political Practice of *Détournement*,” de Jong’s labyrinthine script recounts the events that led to Debord’s expulsion of Gruppe Spur, the German section of the S.I., at the very moment it was facing arrest and prosecution for blasphemy and obscenity in Munich. Declaring solidarity with the German artists, de Jong promptly resigned, taking the Dutch section – and *The Situationist Times* – with her. As Debord and the new leadership distanced themselves from the movement’s avant-garde origins, the mass exodus of artists led to a kind of Situationist diaspora. Far from relinquishing the field, the new exiles continued sharpening Situationist techniques, experimenting with new forms of art and protest as they scattered across Europe – in some cases even to the United States – over the next decade. Alongside Debord’s faithful, who remained inside the S.I., all would have a role to play in the legendary uprisings of May ’68.

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY: BEATS, HIPPIES, AND THE NEW LEFT IN POSTWAR AMERICA

What is the Meaning of the New Student Left? (Washington, D.C., 1965)

The East Village Other (New York, April 1966)

While young artists and activists were following a wide range of trajectories, from Revolutionary Surrealism and Lettrism to the Situationist International and beyond in Europe, distinctly new landscapes of art and protest were also taking shape along with a new postwar generation in America. Steeped in poetry and jazz, Beat writers such as Allen Ginsberg (at right) played a role not unlike that of Isou and his rowdy band in Paris, kicking off their own homegrown “uprising of youth,” which quickly spread from coast to coast in frenetic waves of spontaneity, creativity, and radical nonconformity. Centered in New York City’s Greenwich Village and San Francisco, this New Bohemia nurtured a growing tendency toward political resistance and rebellion in American counterculture as it evolved into the 1960s. The Free Speech Movement emerged from the powerful confluence of these currents at the University of California, Berkeley, where student protests also fed into rising opposition to America’s involvement in the Vietnam War. Dubbed the “New Left,” this amorphous coalition of hippies, Yippies, radical Marxists, peace activists, and everything in between certainly bore little resemblance to the Old Left of the 1930s. In America, too, protest culture would never look the same.

ANGRY ARTS

Dick Preston, “Angry Arts for Life’s Sake,” *The East Village Other* 2, no. 5
(New York, March 1967)

“The Angry Arts Presents,” mimeographed flier (New York, 1967).

Miscellaneous Ephemera from the Library of John E. Herzog

In early 1967, some 500 writers and artists followed the Angry Arts’ call to join in assembling a collective “Collage of Indignation” against America’s involvement in the Vietnam War. Staged in “a context of happenings, poetry readings, films, music and theater” in Greenwich Village, Angry Arts Week was to feature “panoramic size canvases, upon which you, the artists of New York, are asked to paint, draw, or attach whatever images or objects that will express or stand for your anger against the war,” the organizers explained. “We are also interested in whatever manner of visual invective, political caricature, or related savage materials you would care to contribute. Join the spirit of cooperation with other communities of the city in a desperate plea for sanity.”

UP AGAINST THE WALL

Black Mask no. 4 (New York, February–March, 1967)

Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, “Free Food Belongs in Free Streets,” mimeographed flier (New York, ca. 1968). *Miscellaneous Ephemera from the Library of John E. Herzog*

The radical currents of art and protest swirling in the East Village also included Ben Morea’s *Black Mask* (at left), the anarchist arts zine that “followed Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism to the point where they must be left behind” in order to achieve a revolution that “transcends the separation between art and politics” (see issue 7 on the other side of this case). Published just after Angry Arts Week, the issue at left demanded an all-out assault on Western civilization, a “civilization based on murder and exploitation, a civilization rotten to its core.” Echoing the sentiments of Guy Debord – who, in turn, reprinted a *Black Mask* manifesto in the *Internationale Situationniste* – Morea ultimately reached the same conclusion about art’s radical potential and dissolved the review, turning to more direct, sometimes violent, forms of action in the militant underground collective Up Against the Wall Motherfucker. Although not averse to armed confrontation with the police, Up Against the Wall also continued to perform creative actions, such as “Trash for Trash,” in which piles of uncollected refuse were unceremoniously dumped into the fountain at Lincoln Center in support of striking garbage workers. They also provided social services, organizing squats and distributing free food. Quick and dirty fliers like this one (below) were a staple. Pushing a mimeograph machine down sidewalks on the Lower East Side, Morea and his merry band offered to print fliers on the spot for anyone who had an ax to grind.

REVOLUTIONARY BLACK ARTS

“Manifesto of Revolutionary Black Art” (Detroit, ca. 1968). Miscellaneous Ephemera from the Library of John E. Herzog

Black artists and activists played a central role in shaping American protest culture. Alongside the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement, radical poets, such as Amiri Baraka, and militant groups including the Black Panthers promoted a distinctively Black aesthetic that infused the struggle for social justice with vital energy (see the table display on the north side). As in the days of the Harlem Renaissance, tensions surfaced. The postwar Black Arts movement often seemed remote from Beats, hippies, and the largely White culture of the New Bohemia. Discovered in one of Beinecke’s rich collections of radical ephemera, however, this “Manifesto of Revolutionary Black Art” (above) clearly circulated in the same milieu as fliers of the Angry Arts and Up Against the Wall (at left). Postwar American protest culture was as diverse as it was robust.

AMIRI BARAKA AND THE RADICAL BLACK ARTS

Imamu Amiri Baraka, postcard (ca. 1965). Pamphlets by and about LeRoi Jones

LeRoi Jones, Black Art, ownership inscription of Langston Hughes (Newark, 1966)

El Hajj Malik: The Dramatic Life and Death of Malcolm X, playbill (New York, 1971)

The powerful force of the Black Arts in postwar American protest culture is abundantly evident in the work of LeRoi Jones – or Amiri Baraka, as he called himself following the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965. Baraka got his start in the radical milieu of artists and activists in Greenwich Village (see table case on the south side), where he initially drew inspiration from the Beats – and even introduced Allen Ginsberg to Harlem Renaissance legend Langston Hughes. In 1961 he joined the Black nationalist movement, a step that eventually led to his break with the Beats and his move to Harlem, where he founded the Black Arts Repertory in 1965. Less than a year later Baraka moved to Newark to set up Jihad Press, a major outlet for the radical Black Arts and, later, his newspaper *Black New Ark*, founded in 1968. “We want a black poetry/And a Black World,” Baraka wrote. “We want poetry that kills.” Expressing both rage and desire in lines drenched with raw emotion, *Black Art* (above and at right) draws from Baraka’s experience of everyday racism to compose a verse manifesto that has inspired generations in the struggle for social justice.

BLACK POWER AND THE ART OF THE PANTHERS

Emory Douglas, *All Power to the People* (San Francisco, 1970)

With a rifle slung over his shoulder, a young Black man calls out the newspaper's headline, "All Power to the People," as he strides boldly through the street with the latest edition of *Black Panther* in this beautiful poster (at left) by Emory Douglas. Still potent today, the impact of such images of strength and defiance was all the more striking in the 1960s, when mainstream-media portrayals of Black Americans were rare and generally confined themselves to images of docile servants or the complacent smiles of solid middle class citizens. Douglas openly defied and often consciously inverted the meanings of racist stereotypes, turning the power of mass media against the ruling White elite in ways that were calculated to solicit knowing gestures of recognition and acknowledgment from Black audiences. The message was clear. Young Black men were powerful and graceful, and they had no reason to shy away from taking their place front and center on stage.

"Emory's art was a combination of expressionist agitprop and homeboy familiarity," Amiri Baraka later recalled. "I always felt that Emory's work functioned as if you were in the middle of a rumble and somebody tossed you a machine pistol. It armed your mind and demeanor." The threat of violence – and the blatant machismo – of much Panther rhetoric and imagery has often evoked criticism. Many worried at the time that a militant interpretation of Black Power would only provoke a backlash and play into the hands of Whites. At the same time, Black women refused to take a back seat, assuming powerful roles that forced the *Black Panther* newspaper to display compelling images of feminine strength as well. There is no doubt that the strict hierarchy and discipline of the Panther organization seemed increasingly out of step with the times, closer to the "heroic" demeanor of the historical avant-garde of the 1930s than the egalitarian sentiments of the New Left after the Second World War. Yet as controversial as its legacy remains, the Panther aesthetic offered attractive models of Black strength and *beauty* that did much to change attitudes about the places of both in American culture for (the) good.

EMORY DOUGLAS, MINISTER OF CULTURE

The power of art was obvious to Black Panther founders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, who formally acknowledged it by creating a Ministry of Culture and appointing Emory Douglas to be its head. The *Black Panther* newspaper often carried full-page ads, endorsed by the Ministries of both Culture *and* Information (such as the poster above), encouraging readers to buy and display Douglas's work as a show of solidarity and a compelling way to spread the word. "The Ghetto itself is the Gallery for the Revolutionary Artist's drawings," the Minister of Culture declared, speaking of himself in the third person. "His work is pasted on the walls of the ghetto, in store front windows, fences, doorways, telephone poles and booths, passing busses, alleyways, gas stations, barber shops, beauty parlors, laundry mats, liquor stores, as well as the huts of the ghetto."

PANTHER STYLE

“1968: Ballot or Bullet,” *Black Panther* 2, no. 11 (November 1968)

“The Nationalist Dress Suit,” magazine advertisement (ca. 1969). *Pamphlets by and about LeRoi Jones*

“Anatomy of the Black Aesthetic: An Examination” (Philadelphia, 1969).
Printed Ephemera of African American Political Activism and the Arts

For young Black radicals in search of role models in the rapidly changing culture of the 1960s, fashion was perhaps even more compelling than Douglas’s brilliant graphic art in cultivating a sense of beauty and grace as well as power. Attired in black leather jacket, boots, and miniskirt, Kathleen Cleaver strikes a decidedly fashionable pose (complete with shotgun) in this campaign poster (at right) published in *Black Panther* in 1968. Asili Kawaida offers a fetching ensemble for Black nationalist men in Baraka’s Newark (above), while Philadelphia’s Lee Cultural Center announces an evening of critical commentary on the handsome poster at right.

ACTOS: LATINO REVOLUTIONS ON STAGE

“Council for Justice Presents El Teatro Campesino de Delano” (ca. 1968)

Jon Lewis, photographs of El Teatro Campesino performances in California (1966).

Jon Lewis Photographs of the United Farm Workers Movement

As the Panthers were beginning to enact a new vision of Black Power on the streets of Oakland, another revolution unfolded in California’s grape fields, where striking Latino workers literally took to the stage to perform *actos* – San Joaquin Spanish for “skits” – in the newly formed El Teatro Campesino of Luis Miguel Valdez. The son of migrant farmworkers, Valdez started writing plays in college and joined the San Francisco Mime Troupe, a radical theater ensemble that used traditional forms of farce and melodrama to incite audience activism in the struggle for civil rights. When César Chavez led a strike against Delano grape growers in 1965, Valdez looked for a way to reach out. Finding simple exhortation ineffective, the young actor coaxed farmworkers to play parts in a staged act of social conflict with the simple ploy of hanging signs around their necks that identified their roles, such as *Huelgista* [Striker] and *Esquirol* [Scab]. After some initial hesitation (especially on the part of the scab), “everybody started cracking up,” Valdez remembered. Soon the room was filled with volunteers asking to play other roles. El Teatro Campesino was born.

GUERRILLA THEATER

Bread and Puppet Newspaper no. 3 (New York, January 1963)

Blending elements of traditional *commedia dell'arte* and medieval pageant plays with popular reference points in local Latina culture, Luis Valdez's comic *Teatro Campesino* (at right) closely resembled agitprop, the militant popular theater invented by the Soviet avant-garde and later honed to a fine art in the legendary "didactic pieces" of Bertolt Brecht performed by and for communist workers in the 1930s. Signs, masks, and eventually puppets – simple and obvious stage devices – transformed striking farmworkers into the personification of social stereotypes in conflicts that clearly mirrored the actual struggle but eschewed any attempt at realism or illusion. *Striker*, *Scab*, *Pátron* [Boss], *Pachuco* [Punk] were caricatures, not real individuals, as actors and audience alike could see. The laughter they provoked, however, brought real insight into the nature of class conflict. "In a Mexican way, we have discovered what Brecht is all about. If you want un-bourgeoisie theater, find unbourgeoise people to do it," Valdez remarked. "Real theater lies in the excited laughter (or silence) of recognition in the audience, not in all the paraphernalia on stage. Minus actors, the entire *Teatro* can be packed into one trunk, and when the *Teatro* goes on tour, the spirit of the Delano grape strikers goes with it."

The transformative performativity of El Teatro's *actos* resonated widely in the American protest culture of the 1960s, alongside other radical-theater ensembles such as the San Francisco Mime Troupe, where Valdez got his start, and Bread and Puppet in New York. Together they formed the core of a broad movement known as "guerilla theater."

Marching through the streets with gigantic puppets (some up to fifteen feet tall), Bread and Puppet wielded art as a blunt instrument, often in the midst of massive protest demonstrations, in brilliantly performed acts of opposition to the war in Vietnam. The coarse drawings found in *Bread and Puppet Newspaper* (at right) give a sense for how the group reveled in the power and apparent naivete of plain, honest storytelling – in this case, a tale of a fallen "hero's" return – related almost as if in the words of a child.

PARADISE NOW?

Julian Beck, *Songs of the Revolution* (New York, 1963)

The Living Theater, “Paradise Now,” broadside (1968). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

One of the most unruly – and legendary – performances of “guerilla theater” took place at Yale. Shortly after midnight on September 27, 1968, Julian Beck and Judith Malina led more than 300 cast and audience members in various states of dress (and undress) out of the School of Drama onto York Street, where New Haven police promptly arrested the couple along with six other participants for indecent exposure and breach of the peace. One young man, clad only in a red bandana around his waist, was reportedly subdued with mace. “We’re breaking down the barriers that exist between art and life, barriers that keep most men outside the gates of Paradise,” Beck told reporters. It was opening night of the American premier of the Living Theater’s *Paradise Now*.

The play (if such it was) was indeed designed to break down all kinds of barriers. Drawing on the ceremonial tradition of call-and-response, it was structured around three “rites,” in which audience members found themselves with little choice but to engage in uncomfortable, at times aggressive, personal exchanges with the cast, who left the stage and mingled closely with the crowd. *I don’t know how to stop the wars. You can’t live if you don’t have money*, actors insistently confided, forcing eye contact as they sidled up next to spectators one by one. *I’m not allowed to smoke marijuana. I’m not allowed to take off my clothes*. After this opening “Rite of Guerilla Theater” actors began to disrobe, inviting the audience to join them for a “Rite of Universal Intercourse,” which involved forming a large pile of bodies on stage. The final act led cast and audience alike out into the night, chanting “the street ... Free the theater ... the theatre of the street...”

Not everyone wanted to join this revolution. “It was frightening; you didn’t want to be there,” Al Pacino recalled after attending a performance in Brooklyn a month later. “I felt, *Something’s going to happen to me here; this is going to turn into a riot*. So I went outside and had a smoke.”

HAPPENINGS IN EUROPE

Happening News no. 5/6 (Antwerp, 1966)

Melvin Clay, Frank Stern, and Simon Vinkenoog, *Open het graf* (Amsterdam, 1962)

Despite his discomfort at *Paradise Now* (at right), Al Pacino was certainly no stranger to intense open-ended performative encounters, which had been a staple of the Happenings movement in New York since the late 1950s. Invented by Allan Kaprow, Happenings were highly scripted performances designed to provoke unpredictable responses by immersing audience members in awkward situations that demanded emotional involvement. The tactic found ready application in the radical milieu of the East Village, which provided part of the “context” for Angry Arts Week in 1967 (see south table case). Issued in Antwerp a year earlier, the wildly collaged zine *Happening News* (above) reflects its impact in Europe, where it also fed into the rising antiwar movement. *Open het graf* [“Open the Tomb”] (at left) took place across the border in Amsterdam in 1962.

PROVO PROVOCATIONS AND NEW BABYLON IN AMSTERDAM

“Provos in New Babylon,” *Provo* no. 4 (Amsterdam, 1965)

Constant, *New Babylon: Tien lithografieën* (Amsterdam, 1963)

European Happenings found a friendly environment on the streets of Amsterdam, where they blended into a heady brew of art and protest not unlike the one fermenting across the waves in Greenwich Village (see south table case). Among the movements that emerged was the Provos, an amorphous group of radicals and anarchists who employed Happenings as a central tactic in their strategy of *provocation*, inciting incidents of police brutality as a means to win publicity and sympathy for their cause, particularly among the youth. Another element in the mix was New Babylon (at left), a project launched by Constant Nieuwenhuys (known simply as Constant), one of the founders of the Situationist International, who had left the movement when tensions over the role of art started to heat up in 1960. The Provos eagerly joined New Babylon (above), which sought to realize the Situationist utopia of permanent *dérive* by constructing a new city devoted to the human need for *play*. Simon Vinkenoog, one of the organizers of the Happening *Open het graf* (at right), wrote the “Preamble for a New World” in Constant’s *New Babylon*.

THE PRECARIOUS POWER OF PLAY

Cor Jaring, Ed van der Elsken, et al., *10-3-66* (Amsterdam, 1966)

Modest Cuixart, “Provo = new art, provo = new living” (ca. 1966)

The Provos’ strategy of confronting police with seemingly random acts of play was clearly not without risk. But it was effective. On March 3, 1966, police responded with predictable force to mass protest demonstrations targeting the wedding procession of Princess Beatrix, heir apparent to the Dutch throne, whose husband turned out to be a former officer in the German Wehrmacht and member of the Hitler Youth. Photos and headlines such as the ones collected in this Provo publication (above) flooded the newspapers, resulting in resignations of both mayor and chief of police in Amsterdam. Riding a wave of indignation, the Provos fronted candidates in the ensuing municipal elections – Constant was one of them – and succeeded in winning seats on the Amsterdam City Council. Not everyone was happy with the anarchist group’s change of tactics, but at least some of the Provos’ proposals were put into action. If Amsterdam still has a unique vibe and feel today, the Provos can claim part of the credit. “Provo = new art, provo = new living,” reads the typewritten caption on a contemporaneous drawing (at left) that powerfully evokes the spirit of New Babylon and *Homo ludens*, or man at play.

BEAUTY IN THE STREETS: MAY '68

Atelier Populaire, *La Beauté est dans la rue* (Paris, 1968)

Photographs of the Atelier Populaire (Paris, 1968). *John Kugelberg Collection of Paris May 1968*

Provos, Happenings, guerilla theater, radical poetry and radical chic, *dérive* and *détournement* – all the strategies and tactics that had emerged in the postwar art-and-protest culture came together in a massive youth uprising often collectively remembered today as “May ’68.” In fact, the revolt lasted several years and spread across the globe, with actions flaring up throughout Europe (eastern and western), the Americas, Africa, and Japan. Nevertheless, for most the epicenter seemed to be the uprising of May 1968 in Paris, when students declared solidarity with striking workers, occupied the Sorbonne, the Odéon Theater, and the École des Beaux Arts [School of Fine Arts], and finally built barricades to fend off attacks from police on the streets of the historic Left Bank. Renamed the Atelier Populaire [Popular Studio], the workshops of the “Ex-École des Beaux Art” (at left) became a factory co-op churning out thousands of posters that covered the city in a dazzling blanket of revolutionary color. “Beauty is in the street,” this one reads (at right; others hang on the book tower behind you). Indeed. And it was putting up quite a fight.

SITUATIONISTS ON THE BARRICADES?

Comité Enragés-Internationale-Situationniste, “Adresse à tous les travailleurs”
(Paris, May 1968)

Comité de l’Occupation de la Sorbonne, “Mots d’ordre à diffuser maintenant par
tous les moyens” (Paris, May 1968)

The Situationists’ role in the Paris uprisings of May ’68 has been a matter of some controversy. Documents such as the *détourned* comic-strip “Address to All Workers” (above) and “Slogans to be Disseminated Now by All Means” (at right) clearly reveal not only the influence but the presence of Situationists in the organizing committees of the rebellion and the occupation of the Sorbonne. Nor can there be any question of the powerful impact of Situationist writings, starting with Mustapha Khayati’s *On the Misery of Student Life*, published during an important incident that got the ball rolling at the University of Strasbourg in 1966. Published a year later, Debord’s epochal *Society of the Spectacle* and Raoul Vaneigem’s *Revolution of Everyday Life* both circulated widely, not only among *enragés* [the enraged] at the University of Nanterre, where the revolt began in March, but through the networks of transnational counterculture in the form of pirate translations.

But there were many sources of inspiration, and many groups were involved, not all of whom had any particular connection with – or sympathy for – the Situationists. The ebullient displays of color and beauty dominating the landscapes of Paris defied the hard line Debord and others had taken against art as brazenly as any of the artists who were expelled or had left the Situationist International at the beginning of the decade. If *dérive* and *détournement* had a role to play, it was arguably thanks to these exiles of the Situationist diaspora as much as Debord and the hardcore faithful, who joined hands with the revolutionaries in what might be called a last-minute return to the fold.

SLOGANS TO BE DISSEMINATED NOW BY ALL MEANS

The Situationists' hand is clearly evident in this memo, signed by the Comité de l'Occupation de la Sorbonne at 7:00 p.m. on May 16, 1968. A list of prescribed slogans is preceded by this inventive array of suggestions for preferred means of dissemination:

... leaflets, announcements over the mic, comic strips, songs, graffiti, speech balloons on paintings in the Sorbonne, announcements in theaters during films or while disrupting them, speech balloons on posters in the metro, before making love, after making love, in elevators, every time you raise your glass in a bar

Occupation of Factories

Power to the Workers' Councils

Down with the Spectacular Society of Commodities

End the University

Humanity will not be happy until the last bureaucrat is hung by the entrails of the last capitalist

Death to Cattle

Free the four [comrades] condemned for looting during the day of May 6th

The fifth slogan is a *détournement* of a quote by French Enlightenment philosopher Denis Diderot: *Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest*. During the occupation, the phrase actually appeared in a speech balloon on a painting at the Sorbonne.

MORE THAN A MATTER OF STYLE

Conseil pour le Maintien des Occupations, *À Bas la Société spectaculaire marchande*
(Paris, 1968)

Jacqueline de Jong, *Réforme la société, ouvriers, étudiants, participez mouvement soutien*
(Paris, 1968)

The complex role of Situationists in the Paris uprisings of 1968 is clearly illustrated in the sharp contrast between these two posters. The stark and austere one at right was designed by Debord and is notably devoid of images. Its focus is entirely on the text, *Down with the Spectacular Society of Commodities*, which resoundingly echoes Debord's classic 1967 pièce de résistance, *The Society of the Spectacle*. It is also to be found on the Sorbonne Occupation Committee's list of "slogans to be disseminated now by all means" (farther right).

Drenched in passion and color, the poster at left was painted by none other than Jacqueline de Jong, the rebellious editor of *The Situationist Times*, who had decisively taken sides with Gruppe Spur in the schism over the role of art and left the Situationist International in protest in 1962 (see south case). The poster is in fact a *détournement* of the committee's entire notion of prescribed slogans. A close look reveals that de Jong *painted over* most of the text, which was printed at the Atelier Populaire and then handed out to artists to "illustrate," leaving visible only the words *she* wanted to disseminate. It is a brilliant act of defiance and, at the same time, a perfect deployment of the Situationist's most powerful (and undeniably artistic) weapon.

The posters of May '68 assume many hues and tones, but the lion's share come down squarely on de Jong's side as far as respect for the power of art goes. Asger Jorn, one of the founders of the Situationist International, who also left in the early 1960s (and was Jacqueline's lover for most of the decade), expressed it most delightfully on a May '68 poster of his own: *Break the Frame that Suffocates the Image*.

ART AND CONFRONTATION IN AMERICA

“Media and Arts of Confrontation,” conference flier (New York, ca. 1969).

Miscellaneous Ephemera from the Library of John E. Herzog

Art figured prominently in American protests of 1968, but so did violence. At a civil rights rally in February, three Black men were killed and 28 others injured when police opened fire on the crowd. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in April and Robert Kennedy in June. In August demonstrators faced off against 23,000 National Guardsmen at what was meant to be a playful antiwar protest in Chicago. Against such violence, some artists abandoned the brush for the gun. Ben Morea’s *Up Against the Wall* certainly did. Weapons play an eye-catching role in the militant aesthetic of the Panthers (at left and behind you, on the tower), who organized armed squads to protect Blacks from police violence from the start. What exactly were “the arts of confrontation” (above)? Questions about militancy and the aesthetics of resistance loomed large.

AM I NOT A MAN? CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE AMERICAN '68

The Black Panther 2, no. 1 (Oakland, March 1968)

Independent Socialist Club, “The Death of a Man,” flier (Berkeley, April 1968)

“Poor People’s Campaign,” *WIN* 4, no. 1 (June 1968)

One of the most iconic slogans of American art and protest in 1968 is “I Am a Man,” printed in boldface on signs carried by Black workers in a Memphis sanitation strike that began in February. Inspired by Ralph Ellison’s 1952 classic novel *Invisible Man*, the phrase is at once straightforward and complex, a subtle *détournement* underscoring both the dignity and the visible presence of Black workers on Memphis streets simply by removing the word *invisible* from the opening sentence of Ellison’s novel. It also has historical resonance, answering the eighteenth-century Abolitionist catchphrase “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” inscribed beneath the iconic image of a slave in chains, kneeling. Echoes continue down to the present, where activist artists, such as Dread Scott (*I Am Not a Man*, 2009) and Hank Willis Thomas (*I Am a Man*, 2013) have *détourned* it in turn. Most recently, Black Lives Matter has taken it up.

The phrase is clearly visible on a Memphis strike poster stuffed into a trash can in “The Death of a Man” (at left), which was printed after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4th of that year. Its appearance – and distorted echo in the title – is significant. It was, after all, in Memphis that King was shot down, just a day after delivering his “Mountaintop” speech in support of the strike. “The strategy of non-violence died with him,” the flier raged, calling on Whites to join in the fight “led by militants like the Black Panther Party and protected by armed self-defense.”

Not everyone agreed, however. The Panthers themselves leaned in a more artistic direction about the need to abandon nonviolent tactics at a rally in Oakland (at right), employing music, dance, and the radical chic of the Black aesthetic to great effect in the campaign to free Hughey Newton. Others chose to honor King’s memory by pushing forward with plans for his nonviolent Poor People’s Campaign (far left), which kicked off a few weeks after his assassination.

FESTIVAL OF LIFE, CONVENTION OF DEATH: THE YIPPIES' '68

Youth International Party, “This Be-Out Is the Best Yet,” mimeographed flier (New York, 1968). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Youth International Party, “Yippie! Chicago Aug 25–30” (New York, 1968).
Jim Fouratt Papers

Alongside civil rights, the antiwar movement dominated American landscapes of art and protest in 1968. Both came together in the Youth International Party, or Yippies, founded by Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman. Emerging from the heady currents swirling in Greenwich Village (see south table case), the Yippies drew on tactics of guerilla theater and Happenings to stage acts of mischievous insubordination that provoked much media attention. Hoffman and Rubin made headlines with pranks such as the March on the Pentagon, where Allen Ginsberg led chants supposedly intended to end the Vietnam War by “exorcising” and “levitating” the building in 1967. A few months later Hoffman threw fistfuls of (fake) dollars from the balcony of the New York Stock Exchange, setting off a mad scramble for cash on the trading floor that made quite a scene.

Things became more serious in 1968, when Yippies occupied prominent spaces in New York in a series of Be-Ins and Be-Outs (above) inspired by the popular sit-in tactic developed by Black civil rights activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s. In March, violence broke out at Grand Central Station when baffled police finally assaulted thousands of revelers who were singing, dancing, chanting, smoking marijuana, and shouting antiwar slogans in the main hall.

A more serious confrontation took place in August, when Yippies held a six-day Festival of Life to counter the Democratic National “Convention of Death” in Chicago (at left). Some 10,000 hippies, Yippies, civil rights activists, antiwar protesters, and others descended on the city, meeting an aggressive response from the National Guard. Riots ensued, culminating in hundreds of protesters and police being injured, and 600 protestors were taken into custody in the “Battle of Michigan Avenue.” The trials of the Chicago Seven and Black Panther leader Bobby Seale – who was also arrested at the protest – became a kind of tribunal, in which the American public on both sides passed final verdict on the American '68.

NEW AGENTS, NEW STRUGGLES, NEW LANDSCAPES

“Afeni Shakur on the Panther 21,” *Rat: Subterranean News*, February 6–23
(New York, 1970)

Martha Shelley, “Gay is Good,” *Rat: Subterranean News*, February 24–March 9
(New York, 1970)

What was the final verdict on the American '68? Then as now, opinions differed sharply. For many, the massive turmoil during and around 1968 was a last hurrah — or a dying paroxysm — of the vibrant protest culture that had grown up in postwar America. A narrative of failure, even betrayal, often prevails. This cautionary tale features a tragic antihero, the revolutionary-turned-insurance-salesman, who makes peace with racism, capitalism, and “the System” to thrive in post-'68 society, where nothing has changed. Others focus on the gaps and silences of 1960s revolutionaries, the predominance of straight White men and Black Panther machismo, with its militant postures, rigid hierarchy, and patriarchal political party structure. Criticisms such as these, however, reveal just how much has *changed*. From dress and lifestyle choices to basic cultural assumptions — and even politics — the landscapes of post-'68 America bear little resemblance to anything that came before. Signs of change were not long in coming.

Issues of *Rat* (at right and left) give a sense of the seismic shifts in American protest culture that followed swiftly on the heels of '68. Founded in March 1968, *Rat* gave voice to students occupying Columbia University that spring alongside Yippies, Panthers, Up Against the Wall — in short, the same blend of actors and causes that had dominated American counterculture for years. By the spring of 1970 things looked different. “Women Take Over *Rat*,” ran the headline for the lead story on February 6, announcing an editorial coup that put radical feminists in charge. While continuing to cover all aspects of radical underground culture, *Rat* increasingly focused on groups that were sidelined by '68. “Look out straights! Here comes the Gay Liberation Front, springing up like warts all over the bland face of Amerika, causing shudders of indigestion in the delicately balanced bowels of the Movement,” Martha Shelley proclaimed beneath a beautiful image of two lesbians caressing one another on February 24. “Gay is Good.”

THE EVOLUTION OF REVOLUTION— GAY LIBERATION FRONTS

Diane DiDornic, photograph of Jim Fouratt and Robert McLane (New York, 1971).

Jim Fouratt Papers

Jim Fouratt, notes from an editorial meeting of *Purple Star* (1971). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

“Third World Gay Revolution,” flier (1970). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Few sources give a clearer picture of the changing landscapes of American protest culture than the Jim Fouratt Papers. One of the Yippies’ founders, Fouratt (at right) was deeply immersed in the 1960s culture of art and protest, participating in the first demonstrations against the Vietnam War in 1965 and helping organize the Yippie Be-Ins of 1968. The rich assortment of notes and ephemera in Fouratt’s early files captures the blend of currents swirling around the Lower East Side. But they contain little hint of the new actors and causes that soon would consume most of his energy and passion.

Present at the Stonewall Uprising of June 1969, Fouratt helped found the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and became a leading activist in the movement as it morphed and evolved over the next few years. “Gay is Good” – the title of Martha Shelley’s rousing manifesto in *Rat* (far right) – is just one of the phrases to appear in Fouratt’s notes from a meeting at the radical feminist journal *Purple Star* in 1971 (at left). *Sex is a power trip – Why we split – Gay lib is anti-war – Oppressed-oppressor – Personal is political – Poems from Calvary – 3rd World Gay Revolution platform – I’m confused* – the flood of ideas, images, and groups on this page conveys the chaotic energy and excitement the gay rights movement injected into American protest culture post-’68.

It would take some time to absorb these new impulses. Third World Gay Revolution (TWGR; above left) was a coalition of Black and Latino activists who split from the Gay Liberation Front in 1970. Bristling at racial prejudice in the GLF, they also pushed back at homophobia in the struggle against racism, both at home and abroad. “Our straight sisters and brothers must recognize that we, third world gay women and men, are equal in every way within the revolutionary ranks,” TWGR declared. “We each organize our people about different issues; but our struggles are the same against oppression, and we will defeat it together.”

Photograph of activists during Gay Pride Week (Austin, 1971). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

“Gay Revolution Party Manifesto,” *Ecstasy* no. 1 (New York, 1970). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Charting Fouratt’s path through the shifting landscapes of art and protest in the early 1970s is not easy. Groups, zines, initiatives align and compete, seeking to define the contours of gay liberation on the new terrain. “Gay is a process of attaining mutual and equal, social and sensual relationships among all human beings,” reads a manifesto of the Gay Revolutionary Party (below), which identifies itself as “a group of people formerly involved in the Gay Liberation Front” in the first (possibly the only) issue of *Ecstasy*. (The statement is barely legible as it is superimposed over a photo of Stonewall on the facing page.)

Straight is the systematic channeling of human expression into various basically static social institutions and roles. The original expression of straightness was gender: the division of humanity into castes, woman and man, on the basis of the biological sexes, male and female. In this process, females were deprived of their subjectivity and their erotic energy was suppressed, while males developed roles involving aggression and the search for power and dominance. Since gay, roleless, relations acted in opposition to this process, they were suppressed.

Fouratt joins male and female activists (at right) to explore the possibilities of “roleless relations” at Austin’s Gay Pride Week in 1971.

RED POWER

May Flowers (1971). Jim Fouratt Papers

Red Power bumper stickers (1969–1976). Richard Erdoes Papers

Native Americans also claimed vast new territory in the evolving landscapes of post-'68 art and protest. “We wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with the Caucasian inhabitants of this land,” the Indians of All Tribes declared, offering “24 dollars in glass beads and red cloth” when they took possession of Alcatraz Island in November 1969. Lasting into 1971, the Occupation of Alcatraz marked the debut of Red Power, a movement for Native American rights and *sovereignty* that blended militancy, performativity, and dazzling displays of art and humor to project a distinctively fresh voice in American protest culture. The term *Red Power* was coined by Oglala Lakota author and activist Vine Deloria Jr., whose 1969 “Indian Manifesto,” *Custer Died for Your Sins*, did much to set the terms of Native American struggle down to the present day. Together with Black Power and the new voices of gay revolution, Red Power joined in making “a powerful fist” at the massive antiwar demonstrations the Yippies organized in Washington, D.C. for May Day 1971. Discovered in the Jim Fouratt Papers alongside documents of the *Purple Star* journal, the poster at right brilliantly illustrates solidarities among players old and new in the process of redefining American protest culture after 1968.

GUNFIRE AND GHOST DANCES AT WOUNDED KNEE II

Indian Voice 3, no. 2 (San Jose, April 1973)

Park Slope Poster Collective, “Prevent a Second Massacre at Wounded Knee”
(New York, May 1973). *Richard Erdoes Papers*

Two years after the Occupation of Alcatraz, activists of the American Indian Movement (AIM) joined several hundred residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation to seize the town of Wounded Knee, site of the historic 1890 Massacre. They proclaimed it property of the Oglala Lakota Nation in late February 1973. Within hours, police began setting up roadblocks, and by the next morning the town was surrounded by an armed blockade that lasted seventy-one days. Wounded Knee II, as the standoff soon came to be known, elicited support not only from activists, but also the American public, as Federal Marshals and FBI agents brought in armed personnel carriers, grenade launchers, and .50 caliber machine guns to confront what had been a largely symbolic act carried out by the descendants of victims of the original slaughter. Faced by sporadic exchanges of gunfire, activist and medicine man Leonard Crow Dog revived the ritual Ghost Dance his great-grandfather had performed to protect the Lakota in 1890. “Standing on the hill where so many people were buried in a common grave . . . , I felt tears running down my face,” Crow Dog later recalled. “I heard the voices of the long-dead ghost dancers calling out to us.”

GUARDIANS OF TURTLE ISLAND

“The Longest Walk” (Woodstock, 1978). *Richard Erdoes Papers*

“We are the spiritual rebirth of the Western Hemisphere, we are the physical evidence of the Western Hemisphere; we are the guardians of Turtle Island,” protesters chant on this broadside from 1978 (above). The Longest Walk marked the culmination of a decade in which the Native American struggle had gained firm footing in post-’68 protest culture. Starting with ceremonial rites on Alcatraz Island, the procession proceeded cross-country, pausing to hold workshops and address state legislatures with drumbeat and song, arriving in Washington, D.C., five months later, in July: “Welcome to Indian Country!” Red Power had indeed come a long way. A year before, the United Nations had recognized one of AIM’s major accomplishments – the International Indian Treaty Council – an organization of indigenous peoples from North, Central, and South America, who now had a voice on the world stage. Claims to speak for the “Western Hemisphere” rang surprisingly true. The struggle was far from over, of course, as the Dakota Pipeline protests clearly show. But in 2017 the “guardians of Turtle Island” could draw support from transnational networks of art and protest that went farther than ever, thanks to the perseverance and creativity of *their* ancestors forty years before.

REVERBERATIONS

Leslie Marmon Silko, “We Dance to Remember” (Berkeley, 1991)

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Sacred Waters: Narratives and Pictures* (Tucson, 1993)

Weaving together threads of spirituality, indigenous identity, and resistance, the lines of Laguna Pueblo poet Leslie Marmon Silko (at right) capture the distinctive tones and cadences that carried Native American struggle to the heart of art and protest in the wake of '68 – a period when she was beginning to project her own powerful style. Published in her 1991 novel *Almanac of the Dead*, the poem also hits other notes that resonated loudly at the time and later took hold in movements for environmental justice and alter-globalization at the end of the century. Telling the tale of a cross-border revolution of indigenous peoples launched from Chiapas, Silko's novel may well have helped inspire the Zapatistas, who in turn have become the heroes of a new generation engaged in creative struggles across the Global South today.

"A NEW '68 WITH DIFFERENT WEAPONS"

Tano D'Amico, photograph of a parade during the International Congress Against Repression (Bologna, September 1977)

"Rivoluzione sotterranea," in *Get Ready: Periodico fatto a mano* (Milan, 1972)

In Europe, too, the 1970s brought breathtaking changes to the culture of art and protest as new agents and new struggles transformed landscapes across the Continent in the wake of May '68. The extent and character of this metamorphosis was most vividly evident in Italy, where a decade of smoldering underground revolt finally erupted in brilliant displays of creativity and defiance across the country in what was quickly dubbed "a new '68 with different weapons," or simply *Il Movimento del '77*. Culminating in the International Congress Against Repression in Bologna (at right), the *Movimento* embraced a wide range of causes, from women's rights and abortion to prison reform, environmentalism, and gay liberation to pacifism, anti-imperialism, and class struggle. While activists for these causes didn't always see eye to eye, a sense of common identity and purpose sustained momentum through most of 1977. As much as anything, the *Movimento* embodied this common sense of agency, which had been cultivated in a conscious effort to gather the radical diversity of a generational rebellion under the banner of a new revolutionary class – the "young proletariat," as the counterculture zine *Re Nudo* called it – in the Italian underground.

Some of the weapons developed for the new "class struggle" of diversity against repression are on dazzling display in this magnificent *détourned* allegorical representation of the "Underground Revolution" (at left). Striding across a purple battlefield in the dress and liberty cap of Marianne, the personification of Revolutionary France in 1789, a defiant Marx raises the flag of victory over a forest of fists, feminists, and bayonets in a tour de force worthy of (a much updated) John Heartfield. Published just four years after May '68, it appeared in the "handmade periodical" *Get Ready*, which took its title from Smokey Robinson's soul hit, reprised by the Motown band Rare Earth in 1970. From Dada to *détournement* and a dash of American rock, all the tricks and tactics of twentieth-century art and protest came together in this explosive mix.

THE NEW FACES OF REVOLUTION

Paola Agosti, photographs of gay liberation and feminist activists in Rome
(April 1976; March 1977)

Tracing gender symbols on their cheeks before a demonstration in Rome (above), young women take part in a ritual that was common in the *Movimento del '77*, where painted faces and dancing in circles – *girotondi* – were among the “new weapons” widely employed in performative acts of playful, creative defiance. Women played a central role, often joining other groups fighting the repressive norms of capitalist patriarchy, such the Unitary Italian Revolutionary Homosexual Front, or FUORI! (at left). Feminists and gay liberation activists had both been recruited in efforts to cultivate a new and more inclusive sense of class identity in the Italian underground. Still, tensions flared. Feeling sidelined, women increasingly looked to separatist solutions as the movement wound down. Fledgling solidarities within the “young proletariat” (at right) proved fragile.

***OUTSIDE!* THE FIGHT FOR GAY LIBERATION IN ITALY**

FUORI! 5, no. 6 (Turin, fall 1976)

Surrounded by a crowd of supporters (at right), a young man brandishes an issue of *FUORI!*, the journal of the gay liberation movement, at a demonstration in Rome. An acronym for the Unitary Italian Revolutionary Homosexual Front, it is no accident that *fuori* is the Italian word for *outside*. Angelo Pezzana, the movement's founder, had initially tried to make common cause with Marxists, but he soon broke away. "Today we refuse those who speak for us," he declared in the first issue of *FUORI!* (1972). "For the first time, homosexuals speak to other homosexuals. Openly, with pride, they declare themselves to be such. For the first time the homosexual enters the scene as a protagonist, directs his own story in the first person." Like Italian feminists, however, Pezzana led the movement into alliance with the Radical Party in 1976, and a year later *FUORI!*, too, had a role on stage in the Italian '77.

YEARS OF LEAD?

Tano D'Amico, “Ragazza e Carabinieri” (Rome, 1977)

Désir: Pratica per una gestazione del consenso (Cassavillari, 1977)

Tano D'Amico's photograph of the resolute gaze of a defiant young woman shoulder-to-shoulder with armed policemen on all sides (above) captures the beauty of the new face of revolution at its finest hour. Yet it also contains hints of a profound fall. Painted faces; the graceful encircling dances of the *girotondi*; radical *détournements* of language, meaning, and everyday life; astonishing photomontage – the objects on display here do scant justice to the sheer joy of creative rebellion that spilled out onto the streets in 1977. Turn the page on the stunning cover of *Désir* (at right), and another rousing essay appears, singing the beauty and power of taking control of one's own body for the first time.

But it is only part of the story. Looming in D'Amico's iconic image is the powerful threat of violence, which also spilled out onto the streets in abundance. Debates over the role of violence in the movement raged throughout the 1970s, remembered by many Italians as “the years of lead” – for all the *bullets* that were fired. When militants kidnapped and murdered former Prime Minister Aldo Moro in the spring of 1978, the *Movimento* came to a grinding halt – along with much of post-'68 protest culture across Europe. Little survived the repressive climate that followed.

FROM ROCK FESTIVALS TO PERMANENT REVOLUTION?

Fausto Giaccone, Photographs of the Isle of Wight Festival (1970)

Parapluie no. 1 (Paris, November 1970)

Juxtaposing reportage on “prohibited festivals” with an eye-catching mashup of *détourned* images and headlines featuring “permanent revolution” (among other things), a layout in the French zine *Parapluie* (above) brilliantly illustrates the centrality of rock festivals in the underground media networks of radical counterculture after 1968 (see upright display at left). But what did they have to do with *protest* culture? Music itself certainly played a role, as performances often revolved around activist messaging. Beyond that, festivals also offered occasions for audiences to enact and perform the kinds of alternative community they imagined en masse, in the here and now. The legendary Woodstock Festival was transformative not only for the *experience* of vast crowds living together out in the open for days, but also because of the *logistics* involved. Traffic, crowd control, provisioning, sanitation, health care, permits – the *prefigurative performativity* of festivals was as much about organization as it was about reveling. Mounds of trash at the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival (at right) hint at some of the continuing challenges. At left, a young man peruses copies of the underground zine *Oz* at the same festival.

FESTIVALS OF THE YOUNG PROLETARIAT

Re Nudo no. 28 (Milan, 1974)

The Isle of Wight Festival (at left) surpassed Woodstock, attracting some 600,000 to 700,000 revelers in August 1970, a massive show of generational solidarity that inspired similar experiments across Europe. The Italian underground zine *Re Nudo* (above) quickly seized on festivals as means for the “construction of an alternative reference point for the utilization and self-management of our own liberated spaces.” Announced in September 1971, the first *Re Nudo* Pop Festival set the stage for a series of counterculture blowouts that grew larger and more ambitious as momentum built over the 1970s. Like Woodstock and the Isle of Wight, *Re Nudo*’s festivals encountered resistance, and one year organizers decided to sidestep local authorities entirely, choosing a remote location for the festival, which was held illegally after failing to obtain the necessary permits. Renamed the Festival of the Young Proletariat in 1975, it moved to Milan, where it became the centerpiece in *Re Nudo*’s strategy of rallying the diverse elements of Italian counterculture around the banner of a new and more inclusive revolutionary “class.” It was this sense of common identity and purpose, cultivated in part at festivals, that drove much of the creative explosion of art and protest in the *Movimento del ’77* (see north table case downstairs).

BEAUTY, PERFORMATIVITY, AND PRECARITY AT PARCO LAMBRO

Fausto Giaccone, *Photographs of the Festival of the Young Proletariat* (Milan, 1976)

Franco Ortolani, *La Festa di Parco Lambro* (Padua, 1978)

Delicacy, grace, beauty mingle with gentle submission and *vulnerability* in Fausto Giaccone's striking photograph (at right), taken at the last Festival of the Young Proletariat in Milan's Parco Lambro in July 1976. Marking the culmination of *Re Nudo's* experiments in identity formation and the prefigurative performance of revolutionary community (see display case at left), Parco Lambro seemed to capture the joy in open rebellion against repressive social norms that characterized revitalized cultures of art and protest on both sides of the Atlantic after 1968. Dancing a naked *girotondo* (above), male and female explore "roleless relations" – as the Gay Revolution Party manifesto had put it a few years before (see north table case downstairs) – unshielded bodies thrust out against established strictures of "power and dominance" in a fearless display of performative defiance. The extreme emphasis on bodies and performativity at Parco Lambro also demonstrated the solidarity and *trust* that had formed among diverse new actors in the landscapes of post-'68 protest culture. There was also great precarity in this stance. At Parco Lambro, tender scenes alternated with the episodes of brutal violence that erupted when angry youth recruited from among Milan's poor unemployed lashed out, attacking gays and others with whom they felt no sense of common identity or purpose. The last festival of *Re Nudo's* revolutionary "young proletariat" prefigured not only the new community of creative energy that appeared on the streets of Italy in the *Movimento del '77*, but also the dissent and violence that brought it to an end.

FEMINIST BODIES IN THE STREET

Paola Agosti, Photographs of feminist protests in Naples, Florence, and Rome
(1975–1977)

The playful, graceful encircling dance of the *girotondo* (at left) was a leitmotiv of performative protest in and around the *Movimento del '77*, but it held a special significance for Italian feminists, who foregrounded explorations of the body – and reassertion of control over it – as essential in the struggle for a new and distinctive *libertà femminile*. “It was impossible to even start thinking about politics without addressing this first,” one activist later recalled. “We felt that what hindered us in our *libertà* was in a first instance located in the relationship with our body.” For many, the physical process of self-discovery began in the *consultori autogestiti* – underground clinics that provided “self-managed” reproductive health care, including abortions, which remained illegal in Italy until 1978. Women’s bodies had been front and center in a protest three years earlier in Florence (above). “Only woman has the right to decide about our body,” the sign with the drawing reads. “Enough medical speculation on our body,” reads another to the left. At other protests women carried brooms and signs declaring “I’m a witch because I decide.”

Whether playful or confrontational, the act of putting feminist bodies on the street provoked threatening – and sometimes fatal – responses. Holding their hands aloft to form an inverted vulva, or yoni – the movement’s signature gesture – Italian women oppose police in battle gear (at right) with the ancient symbol of divine feminine procreative power on the streets of Rome in 1977.

BODIES THAT HURT

Günter Brus, *Wiener Spaziergang*, photographs by Ludwig Hoffenreich (1965), in *Die Schastrommel* no. 8a (Bolzano, June 1972)

Valie Export, *Body Sign Action* and *Erosion* (1971), in *Die Schastrommel* no. 7 (May 1972)

Performativity and the body intersect with protest in many ways, from the delicate and playful to hostile confrontation. The Viennese Actionists took a particularly extreme approach, flaunting both the vulnerability and transgressive power of the body in performances intended to inflict emotional harm. In *Vienna Walk* (1965, at left), Günter Brus made his body a canvas, which he then took for a stroll past troubling historic sites in Vienna, starting at Heroes Square – where Hitler had celebrated Austria’s joining the Third Reich in 1938 – in order to draw attention to the unreconstructed Nazi past of the country’s current ruling elites. In *Body Analysis* (1968), Brus went much further, slitting his thighs and chest with a razor before drinking his own urine, vomiting, and finally singing the Austrian national anthem while defecating on stage. If it was painful and disgusting to watch, “polite” Viennese society had inflicted much worse. Hiding behind delicate notions of propriety seemed even more outrageous – and criminal.

Feminist artist and activist Valie Export took aim at conventions in patriarchal society that were somewhat less “proper.” Walking into a darkened movie theater with her pants unzipped in *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (1969), she dared men to look at “a real woman’s body” in a more threatening pose. *Body Sign Action* (above and at right) also offered voyeurs a different perspective on female nudity, as Export first had a garter tattooed on her leg and then rolled her naked body around in broken glass.

VALIE EXPORT IN TRANSLATION

Body Sign Action

Books are made from parchment / Parchment = processed animal skin / Codex (books made from parchment) / Book \leftrightarrow Person / Books as extensions of people / The person as codex / The person as signal carrier / As information carrier / An object is depicted identically / An object whose function is no longer used / A historical function is depicted like this / Depiction as reconstructed function

Erosion

experimenta june 4 1971 . amsterdam October 1971.

body-material-interaction — identical material evokes identical meaning. changes in the material's circumstances also change the material's meaning. glass as a pane means: transparency. glass as shards means: lesion. this minimal variance arises from artistic characteristics, which are the characteristics of cognition.

i roll myself in glass shards: a semantic analysis through bodily demonstration

THE FINE ART OF THE HAPPENING

Allan Kaprow, *Assemblage, Environments & Happenings* (New York, 1966)

“Up Against the Wall Theatre,” flier (New York, 1968). *Jackson Mack Low Collection of Printed Ephemera*

The powerful role of performativity in protest culture since the 1960s owes much to the rarified art of the Happening, introduced by Allan Kaprow in Greenwich Village in 1959. Kaprow, in turn, owed much to the historical avant-garde, having studied at Black Mountain College, where European émigré artists found refuge from fascism, bringing experimental techniques of Bauhaus and absurdist theater along with them in the 1930s. Inspired by Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism, Kaprow’s first Happenings invited a select group of connoisseurs to participate in tightly scripted scenarios designed to provoke curiosity, confusion, anxiety, and other responses – emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic – with highly unpredictable results. From the controlled environments of lofts and galleries, Happenings spread quickly into the streets, inspiring the “guerilla theater” tactics of Bread and Puppet, Living Theater, and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker (at right). Across the Atlantic, Dutch Provos and Viennese Actionists tapped the radical potential of Happenings in much the same way. Distressed by this broad diffusion, Kaprow disavowed the term in 1966. But the spirit (if not the Art?) of Happenings seems to be here to stay.

SITUATION(IST)S IN THE STREETS

“Oproep an het Provotariaat,” (Amsterdam, ca. 1965)

Guy Debord, *Guide psychogéographique de Paris* (Roskilde, 1957)

Like Allan Kaprow’s notion of the Happening (see display case at left), the Situationist tactic of *dérive* – or *drifting* – has done much to shape the landscapes of art and protest since the 1960s. In fact, the two concepts bear more than a surface similarity. Both emerged from intense engagement with the legacies of Dada and Surrealism, both seek to eradicate the passivity of spectators, and both aim at provoking intense emotional responses through immersion in situations that are at once carefully structured – or *constructed*, in Situationist speak – and highly open-ended. The great difference, at least as far as the Situationists were concerned, is that Happenings were merely “art,” while *dérives* took to the streets in search of new *revolutionary* passions. Guy Debord’s psychogeographic map of Paris (at right) illustrates the concept.

Breaking the city into zones of sharply contrasting emotional resonance, Debord’s map then stitches them together along new lines – the routes of a possible *dérive* – so the urban landscape becomes a gigantic emotional roller coaster ride (or jarring modernist collage), jolting drifting youth out of their mesmerized boredom and into the arms of passionate revolution.

While many found the idea appealing, not everyone agreed that Happenings – or *art*, per se – were devoid of revolutionary potential. Dutch Provos drew Debord’s ire with manifestos such as this “Appeal to the Provotariat” (above), which playfully combined Situationist ideas with Happenings in an approach that was perhaps less rigorous but also more effective (the Provos soon won seats on the Amsterdam City Council).

ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF TOGETHERNESS: MACONDO IN MILAN

Macondolore Macondolcezza (Milan, 1978)

For about a hundred days, from late October 1977 through February 1978, the culture of art and protest congealed into a kind of sustained *dérive* or Happening in the streets of Milan. Organizers named it *Macondo*, after the fictional town in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Situated near Brera in the historic city center, Macondo took shape in an abandoned factory that became home to a fluctuating population of artists, activists, hippies, and gays – the same “revolutionary class” of marginalized youth of *Movimento del '77*, who were behind the massive protests outside (see north table case downstairs and display cases at left). Needing a break, Macondo's founders created an environment in which their struggle seemed already to have been won. An organic restaurant, flea market, exhibitions spaces, cinema, and a massive sound system filled the old factory with life, which spilled out onto the streets in block parties and guerilla theater. “It was a utopia, a huge festival, a new way to be together of the highest quality: aesthetics, music, the variety of people who would never have met together anywhere else,” one Macondolite recalled. The pages of *Macondolore Macondolcezza* [Macondo sorrow/ Macondo sweetness] on display here recount the adventures of some of those who drifted through.

MACONDO SORROW, MACONDO SWEETNESS

Macondolore Macondolcezza, the title of Macondo's zine, captures the bittersweet experience of the place, where all the strategies and tactics of post-'68 art and protest briefly seemed to come together in real life. "No chance!" the leaping figure at left shouts. And, indeed, police descended on Macondo in full force in February 1978. Taken into custody, Macondo's founders narrowly escaped thirty-year prison sentences. The page at right tells the story of the final confrontation, fittingly in the fictional form of street theater. Dressed as a clown, a Macondolite fakes a knife wound using tomato sauce and a bag of tripe under his clothes. Another pretends to have her teeth kicked out by police, while a photographer squeals in delight at capturing "the whole truth" on film for the press. At top right a police officer plants a bag of heroin at the bloody scene, sealing Macondo's fate.

OCCUPY BERLIN AND FRANKFURT

Kommune I: Gesammelte Werke gegen uns (West Berlin, 1967)

Photograph of an occupied house (West Berlin, ca. 1985). *Posters and Fliers Relating to Squatting in Germany, Italy, and Spain*

MAD: Anarchistische Heft no. 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1973)

Laying claim to physical space was a key tactic in strategic attempts to realize alternative forms of community in the here and now. Festivals offered a venue for fleeting experiments, while the occupation of buildings like the abandoned factory in Milan's Macondo (see display case at left) allowed more sustained attempts. Communes went even further, seeking to establish a permanent bridgehead for creative utopias.

Founded in Berlin in 1967, Kommune I (at left) brought a small group of activists together for a prolonged experiment in communal living. Once inside, no doors were allowed as residents vowed to share their lives openly and without restraint. Creativity, collectivism, and anarchism set the tone, inspiring a playful style of art and protest they dubbed *Spassguerilla* – “fun guerilla” – action. Plans to “assassinate” American Vice President Hubert Humphrey with whipped-cream “bombs” first provoked alarm, then chagrin, and finally amused affection, after a local news channel showed how Kommune I manufactured its gooey “IEDs.” Things quickly grew serious, however, as Kommune I's provocative fliers brought jail time for “enticing arson.”

Occupations such as this provoked frequent clashes with police – not only in Berlin, but across Germany, as this illustration of “Frankfurt Street Battles” (at right) shows. Radicalization and militancy followed. By the early 1970s Kommune I had become a breeding ground for terrorists in the Red Army Faction (see upright display to your right).

“FRANKFURT STREET BATTLES” IN TRANSLATION

Published in the anarchist zine *MAD: Anarchistische Hefte* [Anarchist Notebooks], the text of this graphic expresses German squatters’ radicalization, which often emerged from violent confrontations with the police:

The Frankfurt street battles and reaching for paving stones are the materialized fury and response to a system that maintains its existence through murder, cynicism, and destruction. Our critique is not limited, but total.... We want everything!!!

Long live the West End street party

ON THE BARRICADES AT WOUNDED KNEE

Owen Luck, *Photographs of the Occupation of Wounded Knee, South Dakota*

Wounded Knee 1973 (East Palo Alto, 1973)

When some 200 Native American activists seized the South Dakota town of Wounded Knee, declaring it to be property of the Oglala Lakota in February 1973, the potential for violent confrontation with law enforcement quickly became reality. Within hours, police began setting up roadblocks, and by the next day the protesters were completely surrounded. Backed by armored personnel carriers, grenade launchers, and .50 caliber machine guns, United States Marshals and FBI agents turned the area into a war zone. “Man, this is just like Vietnam,” a war vet exclaimed one night, as live tracers and automatic gunfire tore up the road in front of the occupiers. Lasting seventy-one days, the siege claimed the lives of two Native Americans, while on the other side a federal agent was paralyzed for life.

Responses to the violence were complex. As with the Frankfurt street battles raging over house occupations in Germany at the time (see display case at left), armed clashes provoked militant defiance, with activists pledging to fight back “as long as a drop of Indian blood warms the hearts of our men” (at right). But resistance took many forms. Ceremony and ritual played a central role at Wounded Knee, where Leonard Crow Dog and Wallace Black Elk led activists in prayer, song, dance, and the burning of sweet grass in what many saw as the most memorable moments of the occupation. Despite the murder of Buddy Lamont, who was killed by snipers on April 26, and the town being a smoldering ruin, militants wanted to keep fighting, but the local Oglala community disagreed and negotiated a surrender. Federal forces took the leaders into custody and finally lifted the siege on May 8.

OWEN LUCK ON WOUNDED KNEE

These photographs were taken by Owen Luck, a Vietnam veteran turned photojournalist, who spent much of the occupation with the Oglala, documenting the complex blend of militance and spirituality in their struggle, which he actively supported. He also wrote about the experience:

That night, there were ceremonies in what had been a cafeteria. Even though there had been ongoing small arms fire from the government positions, all weapons were collected and put aside before the Chanupa [pipe] was revealed for prayer. Leonard Crow Dog and Wallace Black Elk purified the air with burning sweet grass. The pipe was offered to the four directions. Crow Dog spoke first in Lakota then in English of the original Wounded Knee in 1890, and how it was important to remember that we were part of a just cause, that we were not to sink to the level of the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] and the FBI. He reminded us that it was our responsibility to behave with honor and dignity.... The drum sounded, followed by the voices of many Indian nations heard in harmony. They sang, and when they were done the room was silent. Crow Dog passed the pipe, and the people were blessed by the smoke. The room was silent, yet the music rang in my ears. Following the ceremony, there was singing and traditional dancing well into the night.

WE HOLD THE ROCK

Alcatraz Indians of All Tribes Newsletter 1, nos. 1 and 2 (San Francisco, January and February 1970)

Indians of All Tribes, Alcatraz Is Not an Island (Berkeley, 1972)

Lasting from November 1969 to June 1971, the Occupation of Alcatraz Island blended art and protest with experiments in alternative governance – and a fair amount of ironic wit – in what was quickly becoming a central strategy of activist culture, the seizure of physical space for the prefigurative enactment of alternative futures. “We, the native Americans, re-claim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by *right of discovery*,” the opening proclamation began. “We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living. We will offer them our religion, our education, our life-ways, in order to help them achieve our level of civilization and thus raise them and all their White brothers up from their savage and unhappy state. We offer this treaty in good faith and wish to be fair and honorable in our dealings with all White men.” A brilliant act of *détournement*, the claim to represent a sovereign government was followed by the establishment of day care, schools, sanitation, housing, cooking, laundry facilities – even a Bureau of *Caucasian* Affairs (as opposed to Indian Affairs) to patrol the borders. All decisions were made by consensus of an elected council.

Unlike Wounded Knee (see the display case directly opposite, behind you), the Occupation of Alcatraz did not provoke an immediate armed response, because the Nixon administration, already embroiled with other protests, decided to wait it out. Left to their own devices, Native American activists built a creative, cooperative, often playful community of resistance. At its height, some 400 individuals joined. Eventually the Occupation lost cohesion as tensions emerged among the various groups involved, and the original student organizers left to go back to college. At this point, government officials decided it was time to apply pressure, cutting off access to electricity and fresh water in late spring 1971. Three days later a fire swept the island. When Federal Marshals and the FBI finally stormed in on June 10, only a handful of (unarmed) men, women, and children remained.

THE HOUSE OF DESIRE

Archive of the Casa del Desiderio (Rome, 1977). *Pablo Echaurren Papers*

Covered in a deluge of ideas, proposals, tactics, complaints, exclamations, impromptu sketches, and collaged bits on a maquette, these pages are a tiny sample of an exceptional archival find: every scrap of paper that was left hanging on the walls of the Casa del Desiderio, an occupied house at the center of Rome, when police stormed it in December 1977. It would be impossible to imagine the creative commotion that reigned there – a boutique tourist hotel occupies the site today – had one of its fleeing residents not had the presence of mind to collect the precious stack. “I’m leaving, along with everyone else,” a frustrated communitarian vents (at right), dismayed at the “tangents” and “infernal meditations” of others. “It’s all about creating the willingness to sprinkle cerebrally sparkling solutions in the air ... let’s play with our brains!” “Will they speak of a *collective* history?” another asks. “Fill spaces with life! Fill life with spaces!” And another: “Poni will bring his tech devices.” “MUSIC – SLIDES – RECORDS!” Two colleagues huddle over one of the many zines produced at the House of Desire in the sketch above, while the maquette (at far right) announces a working group’s proposal for yet another publication. Everyday life at the very heart of the *Movimento del ’77*.

THE ART OF OCCUPY

The Occupied Wall Street Journal nos. 1 and 4 (New York, October and November 2011)

Central to the first generation of post-'68 protest cultures, occupation has often resurfaced as a powerful strategy, most recently in the “movement of the squares,” a series of occupations that started with the Arab Spring and spread to Spain, Greece, and the U.S. in 2011. Alongside the *indignatos* on Madrid's Puerto del Sol, one of the most influential of these was the encampment at Zuccotti Park, home of Occupy Wall Street (OWS), which lasted from September to November 2011. “An occupation is a kind of happening, a performance piece that generates political affects,” Michael Hardt and Toni Negri wrote in a 2012 *Declaration* of solidarity with OWS. Negri, who had been a leader of Italy's *Movimento del '77*, may have been remembering that earlier generational revolt, where Happenings and performance art, *dérive* and *détournement* flowed together in a carnival-like atmosphere embodied in occupations, such as Macondo and the Casa del Desiderio (see display at left).

In fact, artists were in on the ground floor of OWS, many having cut their teeth in collectives with roots going back to art activism in New York of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Banners, tents, puppets, masks, buttons, stickers, floats, a whole gallery of handmade signs (many fashioned from pizza boxes delivered to the site) transformed Zuccotti Park into a “living work of art bringing every aspect of life into sharper focus.” Like Red Power activists on Alcatraz, OWS organizers faced the challenge of building the rudiments of a functioning society and government from scratch. Seeking to prefigure the egalitarian community they imagined, occupiers established governance by consensus in General Assemblies, facilitated by the “People's Mic,” a kind of improvised string-and-can approach to communication that passed messages mouth to mouth across the assembly to ensure everyone had a voice. In practice, the system was not hugely successful, but — as in past experiments — the experience of enacting and performing creative community proved transformative. So much so that Yates McKee, one of the artists involved, has written of a “post-Occupy condition.”

SOLIDARITY, APPROPRIATION, AND DISSENT

Jaida Grey Eagle, *Photographs Related to Protest Movements in the Twin Cities* (2020)

“An Open Letter to Jerry Rubin,” *Gay Flames Pamphlet* no. 3 (New York, 1971).

Jim Fouratt Papers

Solidarities such as Native American involvement in recent Black Lives Matter protests (above) can be powerful and transformative, but as Occupy Wall Street’s call to “decolonize the 99%” demonstrates (see display case at left), the creative community that emerges from effective art and protest can also conceal deep divisions and dissent. OWS’s claim to speak for “the people” provoked sharp protests from those who did not feel represented by the largely White, middle class assemblies at Zuccotti Park. Who *were* the 99 percent, really? “An Open Letter to Jerry Rubin” (at right) voiced similar dissent from gay activists, who deplored Rubin’s homophobia and insisted he stop speaking for “the Movement” until he “fixed his bad mouth” in 1971. Tensions among the diverse new agents of post-’68 protest culture could easily boil over, as indeed they did at Parco Lambro on the eve of Italy’s momentous *Movimento del ’77* (see display case on the opposite wall). Who *were* the “Young Proletariat,” really? Community and dissent exist side by side – as they *must* in a thriving protest culture – forming a delicate balance that all too easily tips into discord and/or appropriation.

CREATIVE TENSIONS

Queers Read This (New York, 1990)

Queer Nation stickers (San Francisco, ca. 1990)

“Don’t Tread on Me.” Printed in pink over Queer Nation’s rousing first manifesto, *Queers Read This* (above right), the words form a brilliant – and brilliantly *artistic* – expression of the creative tensions that emerge from the uneasy balance of community and dissent at the heart of protest culture. The angry warning is directed at homophobic violence and straight indifference to the deaths of millions in the ongoing AIDS epidemic – in *solidarity* with the activist group ACT UP, to which its authors belonged. Yet it was also directed *against* that group, which focused on men, but most of all the submissiveness of its tactics. “I’m angry,” the manifesto reads. “Angry as I listen to a man tell me that after changing his will five times he’s running out of people to leave things to. All of his best friends are dead. Angry when I stand in a sea of quilt panels, or go to a candlelight march or attend yet another memorial service. I will not march silently with a fucking candle, and I want to take that goddamned quilt and wrap myself in it and furiously rend it and my hair and curse every god religion ever created.” Declaring independence, Queer Nation carried the struggle forward in their own voice, vibrantly transforming it along the way.

FROM THE BEAUTIFUL TO THE SUBLIME

Hundert Blumen no. 2 (Berlin, July 1972)

“Bleat for Peace? Don’t Be Sheep.” (ca. 1970). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Hermann Nitsch, *Aktion*, in *Schastrommel* no. 2 (Bolzano, May 1970)

For many, perhaps even most, art means one thing: *beauty*. Peace, harmony, the union of diverse colors and forms into a single, organic and, above all, *pleasing* whole. But as many an art activist will hasten to tell you, *this is not necessarily true*. Even the Romantics understood there is another side to art – terrifying, overpowering, beyond all measure or capacity to control. They found it in Nature, in storms and floods and little boats tossed on a churning lake. And they called it the *sublime*. Whatever you choose to call it, there can be little doubt that not all the art on display in this exhibition was meant to *please*, and certainly not to *paint over differences* with idyllic scenes of gleeful flower children like the one at left (in fact, *Hundert Blumen* took its name from Mao’s Hundred Flowers and was by no means committed to peaceful coexistence).

To be sure, the power of art lies in its ability to coax and soothe, to make people laugh and to bring them together. But it also has the power to incite, to convey and evoke deep *displeasure, anger, disgust, dissent* – even the power to *harm*, as the Viennese Actionists went to gruesome lengths to do (at right, see also display on the opposite wall). This kind of protest art is not about beauty, harmony, or the absence of conflict. Whether art that *hurts* is effective or appropriate – or even conscionable – has been and continues to be hotly debated. Now more than ever. But such debates belong to the history (and most likely the future) of art and protest. Wielding art as a weapon in any struggle means grappling with thorny issues such as this.

AKVARIUM AND MIT'KI

Viktor Nemtinov, *Photographs of Subculture and Protest in Leningrad/Saint Petersburg*

Viktor Nemtinov's photograph above shows the band Akvarium in a private apartment, and the one at right is of an exhibition by Mit'ki, an underground art collective formed in Leningrad in the late 1980s. Akvarium held ambiguous relations to Soviet and Western spheres, signing with the official state record label Melodiia but also touring and recording in the West. Bandleader Boris Grebenshchikov's look and manner emulate a Western rock star's reckless abandon, in sharp contrast to the conventions of Soviet estrada. Visual markers of Westernness – the singer's beard and cigarette, the Bob Marley flier on the wall – speak to the band's rebellious spirit. In contrast, Mit'ki's avant-garde style was in dialogue with facets of everyday Russian culture. This included consuming alcohol in collective fashion, rather than solitarily (at a time when the government was promoting temperance) and meeting in seemingly inhospitable places, such as basements and boiler rooms. The striped naval shirts, or *telnyashky*, served as visual markers of the group's solidarity and also referenced aspects of Soviet cultural uniformity to which Mit'ki hyperconformed as part of their artistic movement. The looming sculpted corpse in a *telnyashka* reflects the necro-realist movement that emerged alongside Mit'ki, an artistic expression emphasizing dark humor, death, and the macabre, often in a satirical way. Mit'ki's and Akvarium's aesthetics and presentation departed from the polished, sanitized style of government-sanctioned propaganda art – as do the tilted angles and cropping/obscuring of human figures in Nemtinov's photographs.

JOSEPH BRODSKY'S "ON THE TALKS IN KABUL"

Joseph Brodsky, "K Peregovoram v Kabule" (1992). *Joseph Brodsky Papers*

Talks between Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and Afghanistan's Rabbani government in 1992 marked the end to the Soviet Union's decade-long war in Afghanistan. These events inspired dissident poet Joseph Brodsky's satirical critique of Soviet foreign policy. At face value, the poem seems to evoke vulgar caricatures and regressive archetypes (similar to those in his infamous poem reviling Ukrainian independence). Yet this poem, here in a hand-edited draft, invites a more nuanced reading as an ironic presentation of Russian diplomats' orientation at the Kabul talks. Brodsky, an émigré living in the United States, had publicly stated his opposition to the war in 1982, calling the image of Soviet tanks crossing the Afghan plateau an "existential nightmare." The contrast between Soviet weaponry and the environment where it was employed was an aesthetic affront to the senses. This civilizational gulf is exhibited in the poem's descriptive vocabulary, which incorporates Western terminology that is foreign to Afghan culture and even to the Russian language. Stanza II concludes with such terms: "Where one could get in a Mercedes and out of the blue would/Forget instantly about the blood feud/And where an article, sheer and pale/Sliding from the hips is your veil."

This display was guest curated by the Working Group on Protest in Russia & Ukraine, part of the Yale-based Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies Northeast network. Focusing on cultural activity outside state-sanctioned directives of the Soviet regime, the group chose objects representing:

- (1) groups whose dissent entailed resurgent avant-garde aesthetics (the art collective Mit'ki and their occasional photographer Viktor Nemtinov);
- (2) high-profile poet Joseph Brodsky, whose practice of unofficial culture came at the cost of exile; and
- (3) rock musician Boris Grebenshchikov, who toed the line between official and unofficial art.

Student curators: Nazpari Sotoudeh, Columbia; Arista Siebrits, Rutgers; Kathleen Mitchell-Fox, Princeton; May-Fleming, U. Maine; Gabrielle Gorodetsky, U. New Haven; Nicole Gonik, Hunter College; Caroline Dunbar, Yale; and Peter Busscher, U. Pittsburgh. Additional curation: Emily Ziffer/Ian MacMillen, Yale.

ART AND PROTEST IN PUTIN'S RUSSIA

Chto Delat = What Is To Be Done, nos. 10, 18–19, and supplement (Saint Petersburg, February 2006; September and November 2008)

From Mayakovsky to Pussy Riot and beyond, activist art in Russia has played a powerful role in shaping cultures of protest around the world for well over a century. But it has often come at a high cost: Mayakovsky's suicide, driven by mounting Stalinist repression of the Soviet avant-garde in 1930; the imprisonment and exile of Brodsky (see display at left) at the height of the Cold War; criminal sentences for Pussy Riot in 2012 – all sent ripples through landscapes of art and protest near and far, but especially at home. “How do politics begin?” “What does it mean to lose?” “When artists struggle together.” These issues of *Chto Delat* speak to the rich legacy of activist art, but also to the challenges it faced, the serious ups and downs that followed *perestroika* and the collapse of one authoritarian regime, which was quickly replaced by another.

Founded in 2003, *Chto Delat* is one of many art collectives that emerged as Russia recovered from the social, economic, and political chaos of the 1990s. Theater, video and performance art, workshops, seminars, an art school, even a year-long *dérive* in Saint Petersburg were among *Chto Delat*'s contributions to a thriving new culture of art and protest that gathered significant momentum once Putin stepped aside (temporarily) in 2008. Four years later, some 50,000 people gathered on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square to protest Putin's return to power in June 2012. Mass arrests and a wave of repressive legislation followed, driving Russian protest culture back underground, where it continues to simmer, boiling over only rarely, and with increasingly dire consequences.

IS IT ENOUGH? ART, PROTEST, AND WAR

Neither *Chto Delat* nor anyone else fighting Putin inside Russia was able to stop the invasion of Ukraine that had claimed 43,000 lives and displaced 14 million others as of March 2023 (when this text was written). What can art and protest do against such brutality? To most Ukrainians, including artists who had fought alongside *Chto Delat*, protestations of transnational solidarity mean nothing when Russian aggression is destroying their lives. “We totally respect and understand the anger of anyone who is demanding a total and undifferentiated boycott of Russian voices in any context,” Dimitry Vilensky wrote, announcing *Chto Delat*’s decision to withdraw from a Teach-in on Ukraine for Artists and Activists in December 2022. “We respect this view of Ukrainian patriots at a time of fascist war, in light of all the regime’s atrocities. But we cannot agree. Silencing our common history and our emancipatory heritage is exactly what Putin is doing. Please do not help him.”

Watching the solidarities of global protest culture crumble in the face of this slaughter, one is bound to ask: Is art enough? And, even if it isn’t, should one give up? Or is it better to say, as Vilensky concludes: “Glory to Ukraine, glory to the people of Belarus and Russia who resist, glory to anyone who does their best to stop the war and care about life not death!”

INSTITUTIONAL CRITIQUE: ART AND PROTEST IN THE MUSEUMS

Jan van Raay, photographs of protests at MoMA (June 18, 1970) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (May 22, 1970) in New York. *Jan van Raay Photographs of Art Strike Protests*

Poppy Johnson, et al., “Action/Interview of the Guerilla Art Action Group on Radio WBAI on 1/5/70” (New York, January 1970)

The question of whether art is “enough” (see display at left) expresses doubts on many levels, from the purely practical – Can art actually *effect change*, and if so *how?* – to the ideological and strategic: How is art positioned in relation to *structures of power* that maintain systemic injustice and oppression? Accusations of *complicity* have been a leitmotif since the revolt against art for art’s sake in the age of “heroic modernism,” and the expulsion of artists from the Situationist International did much to shape the landscapes of protest culture in postwar Europe (see table case displays downstairs).

Rattled off in relentless succession in this “Action/Interview of the Guerilla Art Action Group (GAAG)” (at left, right, and above), accusations of art’s complicity with the status quo became particularly acute in post-’68 America, where they focused sharply on the *institutions* that embedded art and artists in a corrupt network of profit and power responsible for systemic racial violence, sexism, and the ongoing atrocities of the Vietnam War. Galleries, art critics and reviews, and above all *museums* became targets for strikes and sit-ins at New York museums including the Whitney, Met, Guggenheim and, especially, MoMA, where GAAG threw blood on the floor and held posters in front of Picasso’s *Guernica* showing victims of the My Lai massacre with the simple question “And babies?” Still resonant today, the accusations on these pages are worth reading and pondering seriously.

ART AND PROTEST IN THE ARCHIVES?

Black Mask no. 1 (New York, 1966)

The posters produced by the Atelier Populaire are weapons in the service of the struggle and an inseparable part of it. Their rightful place is in the centers of conflict, that is to say in the streets and on the walls of factories. To use them for decorative purposes, to display them in bourgeois places of culture or to consider them as objects of aesthetic interest is to impair both their function and their effect. This is why the Atelier Populaire has always refused to put them on sale.

— Students occupying the École des Beaux Arts, Paris, May 16, 1968

The blazing manifesto in *Black Mask* (at right) brings us full circle, back to the beginning of this exhibition and the links it makes among the struggles of the present and those of the historical avant-garde in what seems a distant past, mediated through Ben Morea's fiery zine and the underground culture of art and protest of the 1960s (see south table case downstairs). Echoing the Futurists' call to "demolish museums and libraries" — and anticipating the declaration by Paris students in May '68 above — *Black Mask* insists that art *as protest* has no place in bourgeois institutions of culture: "our struggle cannot be hung on walls." The idea that acquisition and display in such places deprives protest art of all revolutionary agency remains powerful, as does the Guerilla Art Action Group's argument that "culture is being used by corporations and the government to better and sanitize their images" (see display at left).

But what does that say about the issue of *Black Mask* lying here behind protective glass? Or any of the hundreds of other objects on display? Is this entire exhibition a retrograde recuperative action on the part of the Establishment meant "to impair both their function and their effect"? Or does preservation and public access — such as it is — make possible the rediscovery and *reactivation* of protest culture now and in the future? The curatorial premise behind the show and the collections was admittedly the latter. But the question remains: Do the artefacts of art and protest *belong* in the archives? What do *you* think?

WHAT (IF ANYTHING) SHOULD GO HERE?

This exhibition has explored some of the ways art and protest have come together in struggles for liberation and social justice over the past century and the questions artists have raised along the way – questions about the power of art, its strategies and tactics, its ability to bring about real change.

The show also asks about the role institutions should play. Should protest culture end up in places like this? This empty display mount is meant to leave *you* with that question. What should go here? Should it be one of the many voices that are absent, often because Beinecke Library has not chosen to collect them? What would *inclusion* mean for those communities? Or should the mount remain empty, because protest cannot really be protest inside these walls? What would *absence* imply? What if art and protest simply fade away along with their struggles?

It's just an empty mount. But the questions it asks are not so easy to answer.

ART, PROTEST, AND THE MEDIA IN MAY '68

Pas de rectangle blanc pour un peuple adulte (Paris, 1968)

“Journée nationale de l’ORTF” (Paris, 1968). *Gabriel Paris Collection*

“Que se passe-t-il à l’ORTF” (Paris, 1968). *Gabriel Paris Collection*

The wave of colorful images and text that splashed across Paris on the posters of the Atelier Populaire are among the most eye-catching manifestations of postwar European protest culture. But they were just one piece in a wide network of creative “counterinformation” channels that aimed at undermining the official version of events unfolding on the streets in May ’68. Protesting censorship at the government-controlled television channel ORTF, the same image appears on a poster (above) and a mimeograph flier (at left) inviting Parisians to hear the news from journalists striking in solidarity with the protesters at ORTF. “No white rectangle for an adult people,” the poster reads: “Independence and autonomy for ORTF.” “The images you see, the information you hear is no longer ours, but that of the government,” journalists declare on the back of another flier (at right). “The entire staff of ORTF is on strike.” The establishment of alternative media networks was one of the most important strategies in May ’68, and it quickly spread across Europe in an explosive profusion of underground zines. Art and protest would never look the same.

THE UNDERGROUND PRESS SYNDICATE

Underground Press Syndicate address list (New York, ca. 1970). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Oz no. 8 (January 1968)

The establishment of counterinformation networks was an important strategy in confronting the power of mainstream media on both sides of the Atlantic. The addresses on this Underground Press Syndicate (U.P.S.) flier (at right) give some sense for the rapid spread and impressive geographic reach of alternative media in the U.S. in the late 1960s. Distributed at an American Library Association conference, it bears a note that rings true, but discordantly so, given the document's arrival at Yale in the papers of gay rights activist and club owner Jim Fouratt. “**Librarians:** Every library should have U.P.S. papers (They were recently cited as the one hopeful alternative in the President's commission on the causes of violence, report on mass media!) You must subscribe.”

Published out of London, *Oz* (at right) was one of the most widely read and admired zines of the underground revolution. News about sex, drugs, and rock and roll were a staple, but political undertones increasingly became overt calls to action, as the mashup of *Playboy* and Vietnam soldiers from *détourned* comics here aptly illustrates. Richard Neville, the founder of *Oz*, surveyed the attitudes and aspirations of U.P.S. editors (see a few responses above right), publishing the results as *Play Power* in 1970.

GRAFFITI NEWS

“The Subway Sun,” *International Graffiti Times* 7 (New York, 1986)

Responses to a survey of underground press editors (1968). *Richard Neville Papers*

Writing on walls has a long history stretching back to antiquity, and graffiti was one of the methods on the Situationists’ list of “slogans to be disseminated by any means” in May ’68. But it was not until the 1970s that the art really came into its own. “A public remains only blind, fearful & powerless,” the *International Graffiti Times* (IGT) (above) declared. Alongside an aerosol paint can is the identification, “Weapon in the crime of art.”

Criminalization was, in fact, a huge problem in New York, where police and transit authorities launched a harsh campaign to stamp out graffiti, provoked by the use of subway cars as gliding walls that could spread the art across the metropolitan area. “One of the things that I remember so clearly were the written commentary that had no problem setting the record straight,” one IGT reader recalled.

Responding to a survey in 1968, underground zines reported similar problems with the law (at left and right). “We (editor and coeditor) were busted on a state vagrancy charge of being ‘lewd, disorderly, and dissolute persons,’” the “gadfly” *Natural* wrote. “Spokane is a strange town – not a hick town – not a big city – We are one of many forces trying to push her into the 20th century.”

THE FINE ART OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA

Peter Handke, “Ankunft”; and Akomaye Oko, “Bitte,” in *Luchterhands Loseblatt Lyrik* nos. 7 and 15 (West Berlin, 1966; 1969)

Ranging from mimeographed fliers to slick zines, such as *Oz*, the alternative media networks of art and protest could also include more established firms like Luchterhand, which issued these beautifully designed “loose-sheet lyrics,” “because,” as the slipcase for the first six portfolios announced, “poems are lone wolves.” Founded in 1924, Luchterhand became an important outlet for writers from the Communist East with the onset of the Cold War, and in the mid-1960s it joined several artisanal presses in West Berlin’s thriving counterculture in the task of disseminating protest literature in fine editions. Taking a jab at sensationalist coverage in the mainstream press, Peter Handke’s visual poem “Arrival” mimicked the typography and layout of one of Berlin’s more popular (and seedy) tabloids, the *Bild-Zeitung*, in a brilliant display of rebellious *détournement*. After 1968, Luchterhand followed the solidarities of global protest culture, publishing in translation insurgent poetry from Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa. Written during the Ibo people’s catastrophic war for independence from Nigeria, Akomaye Oko’s “Please” appeared in 1969 in a set devoted entirely to Biafra.

NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND POST-'68

Le Torchon brûle no. 4 (Paris, 1972)

Re Nudo nos. 24–25 (Milan, 1974)

Alternative channels of communication spread quickly after the confrontation with mainstream media in May '68 (above left). The Underground Press Syndicate, a vast network of counterculture zines, transformed landscapes of protest culture in Europe and America (above right and far right), cultivating new communities of resistance. Born at the École des Beaux-Arts at a meeting of the Women's Liberation Movement in 1970, *Le Torchon brûle* (at right) promoted the views of radical feminists who had had little say in the messages pumped out by the Atelier Populaire two years before. "It's not so much about writing as giving way to cries-in-writing, like you yourself can give birth to your own body, and a cry of life comes out of it," explained lead editor Marie Dedieu, who defined the zine's approach as a "break with journalism." *Re Nudo* (at left) cast a wide net, providing a forum for feminists; gay, lesbian, and trans activists; and others who had traditionally been excluded from the Italian Left. The conscious attempt to cultivate a common sense of revolutionary "class identity" among these diverse agents culminated in a massive wave of collective uprisings across Italy, the *Movimento del '77* (see north table case downstairs and display cases to your right).

ZINES IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL REPRODUCTION?

“Spew: The Homographic Convergence” (Chicago, 1991)

Aché: A Free Publication for Black Lesbians 1, no. 4 (Albany, California, May 1989)

The profusion of alternative media and cultivation of new identities in the wake of 1968 (at right) must pale by comparison with the seemingly unlimited channels of “counterinformation” in today’s digital age. Yet the continuities between these two revolutions, separated by just a few decades, seem apparent in looking at materials such as these, produced at the dawn of the digital era. “I am who I am, doing what I came to do, acting upon you like a drug or a chisel to remind you of your me-ness as I discover you in myself,” Audre Lorde’s lines declare on the first issue of *Aché*, a “Free Publication for Black Lesbians” launched just across the Bay from Silicon Valley in May 1989. Recently acquired with the Lisbeth Tellefsen Papers, *Aché*’s archive offers a fascinating glimpse into the laborious complexities of self-publication at the time, while a flier for the 1991 queer zine convention in Chicago (at left) documents the work of distribution that sustained such publishing. The worldwide web has transformed production and distribution in a flood of alternative media that would have been unimaginable back then. Yet paper zines are alive and well, thanks to a recent revival.

HIROSHIMA IN YOUR LAUNDRY POWDER?

“Considerée en elle même, la ‘Jeunesse’ est un mythe publicitaire ...” (Paris, 1968)

Guy Debord, sketches for commercial advertisements (Paris, ca. 1965).

Raoul Vaneigem Papers

Seizing control of the weapons of mass media was another way to confront its power. The Situationist tactic of turning mainstream culture against itself – *détournement* – was often put to effective use in fliers like this one (at right) in May '68. “Considered in itself, ‘Youth’ is an advertising myth” – a seductive image clipped from an advertisement explains – “profoundly tied to the capitalist mode of production as an expression of its dynamism.” A few years earlier, Guy Debord and Michèle Bernstein showed a keen appreciation for marketing style (and irony) in these mock ads for laundry soap (at left). “‘Class’ powder is a little more expensive, but it’s the only one that preserves your *standing* and your capital – laundry,” the top one proclaims. The ad underneath strikes a rougher note: “Explosive! Interactive! A HIROSHIMA IN YOUR LAUNDRY POWDER. It’s the immediate end to all resistance from dirt. With Flash no more boiling, no more rinsing, no more anything” – though this last phase “is very contested,” Debord admitted – “they’re telling me to say – ‘Flash works on its own’ or ‘nothing more to do’ instead.”

SITUATIONIST TIMES IN AMERICA

Prizelie (Richmond, 1993). *Ken Knabb Papers*

Fifth Estate (Detroit, fall 2002). *Ken Knabb Papers*

Turning the power of advertising against itself has continued to be a powerful weapon in the culture of art and protest. “Honest, not fabrication,” one side of this *Prizelie* flier promises (at left), a deft act of *détournement* that takes the sophisticated manipulation of modern marketing to new heights. Linking Rodney King and Saddam Hussein with a closeup of lipstick and a smile, the other side ties together top news stories of 1993 with commercial allure in a sardonic nod at the parallels, associations – and threats? – encoded in the seemingly random barrage of nightly news on mainstream media. Few clues remain as to the authors, who published a series of these fliers from New York and Virginia in the early 1990s. They are to be found in a folder of “Miscellaneous American Situ” in the papers of prolific writer, translator, and sometime activist Ken Knabb, who has continued to pump Situationist ideas into circulation and practice from his Berkeley home for more than fifty years. Several issues of the anarchist zine *Fifth Estate* – founded in Los Angeles in 1965 – are preserved in an adjacent folder.

ACT UP

Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc., *Deadlier than the Virus* (New York, 1991).

Larry Kramer Papers

ACT UP stickers (New York, 1991). *Printed Ephemera Related to ACT UP and AIDS Activism*

One of the most imaginative, skillful, and effective campaigns to hijack the tools of advertising was launched by the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP). Founded in 1987, ACT UP employed many tactics of art and protest, from props and floats to performative “die-ins,” but its appropriation of commercial graphics has remained particularly influential. Bold and concise combinations of text and image were key, as in the hallmark SILENCE = DEATH graphic (at right), a potent *détournement* featuring the pink triangle used to target homosexuals in Nazi Germany. Posters, stickers, T-shirts, and billboards spread messages designed to shock mainstream America out of complacency. The “Deadlier than the Virus” slogan, blood red on black, makes a mockery of political ads (above, you can hardly miss it). “10,000 New York City AIDS Deaths – How’m I Doing?” another poster asked, next to a newsprint photo of Mayor Ed Koch. The goal was to “fight for attention as hard as Coca Cola fights for attention,” as the graphic design collective Gran Fury put it. The stickers at right were designed for the New York Day of Desperation on January 23, 1991.

THE ART OF *PERSIFLAGE*

Der Besetzer (West Berlin, February 1982)

Kill (Frankfurt am Main, May 1976)

Mimicking the look and feel of popular German serials, these “issues” are just two examples of the art of *Persiflage*, another tactic employed to hijack the branding and appeal of mainstream media for subversive ends. Instantly recognizable to anyone who has spent time in Germany, the distinctive white frame and typeface of *Der Besetzer* [The occupier] (at right) broadcast the message of the powerful squatters’ movement in what at first glance appears to be an issue of the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, comparable to *Time* or *Newsweek*, which currently has a circulation of nearly one million subscribers. *Kill* (at left) echoes the format, title, and even the motto – “Independent. Non-Partisan” – of *Bild-Zeitung*, a tabloid that sold over five million copies daily in the 1980s. This “special edition” questions the alleged suicide of Ulrike Meinhof, one of the leaders of the terrorist Red Army Faction (see upright display case on opposite wall), while in custody at Stammheim Prison on May 9, 1976 (the date of this “issue”). Rhyming *Bild* with *Kill* not only underscored the (not implausible) accusation of murder, but also took a jab at the mass media concern of Axel Springer, often compared to Rupert Murdoch in terms of his influence on popular opinion.

Persiflage was a popular ploy in Germany, but it can be seen throughout Europe and elsewhere, including *The Occupied Wall Street Journal* (on display along the wall to your left), along with thousands of other examples from around the world up to the present day. Having remained popular, the tactic has also become much easier to employ in today’s age of digital media, where you can now take your pick of “fake newspaper generators” online.

TACTICAL MEDIA, OLD SCHOOL

Ken Knabb and Ron Rothbart, “Hello Men!” sticker (Berkeley, 1970).

Ken Knabb Papers

Jill Posener, *Spray It Loud* (London, 1982)

Mimicry and *détournement* allowed post-’68 protest culture to hijack the power of mainstream media along parallel channels, such as zines, fliers, and *Persiflage* (see displays at left). But they could also be employed in more direct assaults by momentarily seizing spaces occupied by the marketing industry itself. Inspired by the Situationists, prankster activists Ken Knabb and Ron Rothbart attached speech balloons, such as the one at right, to advertising posters around Berkeley in the wake of May ’68. “The people who put me up here have got you just where they want you – by the balls,” a dazzling model might have warned, instead of urging men to spend their wages on an endless, doomed, and costly chase after the most manly products: “Sucker.” The photos at right illustrate various techniques employed by British feminists attacking White Horse Whiskey billboards in 1982. “There are different ways of showing how much you hate a particular ad,” Jill Posener’s caption explains. “The man has been completely painted out in one instance, the poster has been torn to shreds in another, and, on the third, a clever transfer, using the same lettering as the advertising slogan, has been added.” Like *Persiflage*, the tactic of commandeering mainstream media space has been adopted and adapted in the digital age, where it has come to be known as *tactical media*. “Tactical Media are what happens when the cheap ‘do it yourself’ media, made possible by the revolution in consumer electronics and expanded forms of distribution . . . are exploited by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture,” Geert Lovink and David Garcia wrote in 1997. “Their typical heroes are: the activist, Nomadic media warriors, the praxxter, the hacker, the street rapper, the camcorder kamikaze.”

UNDERGROUND COMIX

Zap Comix no. 0 (San Francisco, 1968)

Guy Debord, “Le prolétariat comme sujet et comme représentation” (Paris, May 1968)

New Masses 7, no. 8 (New York, January 1932)

Political comics have a long history stretching back at least to the late eighteenth century. By the 1920s, they had an established place in American protest culture, featuring prominently alongside the historical avant-garde, whose appeal and *legibility* was sharply contested in reviews like *New Masses* (at right, see also south table case downstairs). At the same time, the genre was hijacked for small pornographic booklets known as *Tijuana bibles*, an innovation that did much to inspire subversive comics as an underground art in the early 1960s. Guy Debord and company had already chosen cartoons as a genre of choice in the practice of *détournement* – the subversive repurposing of mass media and popular culture – a decade earlier in Europe. Appearing often in the *Internationale Situationniste* review, *détourned* comics circulated in fliers like this one (above), printed by the Council for the Maintenance of the Occupations, in May 1968. The same year, in San Francisco, Robert Crumb published the first issues of *Zap Comix* (at left), inaugurating a style that spread like wildfire through transnational zine networks including the Underground Press Syndicate (see shelves at upper right and far right) in the coming decade.

“LE CRUMB” IN EUROPE

Cannibale no. 0 (Rome, June 1978)

Actuel, new series no. 1 (Paris, October 1970)

Kicked off by Robert Crumb’s *Zap Comix* in 1968 (at far right), underground comix spread rapidly to Europe via the Underground Press Syndicate. Crumb’s impact is plainly evident on this issue of the French zine *Actuel* (at right), whose editor honored him with the simple appellation “Le Crumb” in 1970. Inspiring a whole new genre – French *graphzines* – Crumb’s revolution made an even bigger splash in Italy, where it merged into the *Movimento del ’77* (see displays on this floor and in the north table case downstairs). Founded by Stefano Tamburini and Massimo Mattioli in 1977, *Cannibale* (at right) marked the debut of a group of highly skilled and irreverent *fumettisti*, whose comics shaped the tastes and attitudes of an entire generation of Italian rebels. Glorified under the seal “Heavyweight Champion Editors” on the back, the group eventually included Andrea Pazienza, Filippo Scòzzari, and Tanino Liberatori, who drew the creepy portrait of Tamburini cannibalizing himself on the front. *Cannibale* gave way to *Il Male* [Evil] and finally to *Frigidaire*, a popular national lampoon led by Vincenzo Sparagna, who took pains to keep the artistic revolution going and is still active in Italy today. Sparagna’s papers, along with the *Frigidaire* archive, can now be consulted at Beinecke.

ART AND PROTEST IN THE TRENCHES

Gabriel Paris, *Untitled riot scene* (Paris, 1968)

“*Moyens en lutte contre la répression*” (Paris, 1968)

Peoples Medical Handbook (Berkeley, 1969)

Painted by Gabriel Paris, whose posters were among those that created an explosion of color and beauty across Paris in May '68, the riot scene above forces viewers to confront a much uglier and disturbing side of protest culture: the uneasy proximity of art and *violence* in activist milieux for much of the past century. Violence often came as a result of armed confrontations with police, as peaceful protesters were forced to defend themselves in the ensuing melee. The flier at left lists purely *defensive* “means in the struggle against repression” – preventing and treating injuries from tear gas, chlorine gas, and other wounds – as does the *Peoples Medical Handbook* at right, printed during clashes with police in Berkeley in 1969. But not everyone believed that peaceful resistance was enough. Even the most playful and creative activists could be radicalized by scenes like the one in Paris’s painting. Painful, unwelcome, the question of violence remains a thorn in the side of art and protest – perhaps more so than ever today. The documents on display in this case are intended to provoke thoughtful, *constructive* dialogue around the problem, which seemingly will not just go away on its own.

BRUSH, RIFLE, AND PEACE SIGN

Emory Douglas, *Afro-American Solidarity with the Oppressed People of the World*
(San Francisco, 1969)

Carlos Marighella, *Mini-Manual of the Urban Guerilla* (ca. 1969). *Jim Fouratt Papers*

Nick Parados, *Propaganda of the Deed*. *Underground Manual* no. 3 (1970).
Jim Fouratt Papers

“Violenza e non violenza,” in *Re Nudo* no. 14 (Milan, September 1972)

Emory Douglas’s beautiful rendering of a powerful African American woman wielding a paint brush, rifle slung over her shoulder in solidarity with “the Oppressed People of the World” (above) captures the tense interaction between art and violence in post-’68 protest culture, as does the peace sign (below), formed from a raised arm with a machine gun in its fist. Between the militant aesthetic of the Black Panthers and Italian debates over “violence and nonviolence” in *Re Nudo*, there seems a world of difference. In fact, the Italian zine was well versed in what activists were saying in America. Responding to a reader’s complaint, the editors quote the Weathermen: “Hippies and students who fear ‘black power’ should go read Rap Brown and G[eorge] Jackson.” On both sides of the Atlantic, the question was central, and lines were hard to draw. Discovered in the Jim Fouratt Papers, alongside fliers for playful Be-Ins and Happenings, the unassuming booklets at right and left contain detailed instructions for making IEDs.

Uwe Wandrey, *Kampfreime* (Hamburg, 1968)

The shiny metal covers of this fetching little book of “battle rhymes” have a nasty purpose, as the subtitle reveals: “battle edition with sharp edges for the phase of revolutionary resistance.” The label inside reads “suitable for self-defense” — should police respond with violence.

THE YEARS OF LEAD

Tano D'Amico, Photographs of turmoil in Rome (March and April 1977).

Tano D'Amico Photographs and Papers

Nowhere was the blend of spontaneous creativity and violence more volatile than in 1970s Italy. Featured often in this show, the *Movimento del '77* put all the tools of art and protest into play, from Dada and *détournement* to prefigurative performativity. Yet violence was also part of the mix. Founded in 1970, the Red Brigades conducted a campaign of terror many Italians still remember as “the years of lead” – for all the *bullets* fired. The question of militancy provoked intense debates. While many took a clear stand on one side or the other, lines were often blurry, and they shifted constantly, especially when clashes between police and demonstrators turned fatal. In the end, violence brought the movement to a screeching halt. In March 1978, the Red Brigades abducted conservative politician Aldo Moro, killing five of his body guards (at left). The government roundup swept far and wide, including the arrest in April of *Autonomia* theorist Toni Negri and other movement leaders. The scene at the University of Rome (at right) was a sign of things to come. After Moro’s lifeless body was dumped in Rome, states across Europe passed antiterrorist laws that put heavily armed police on the streets at the smallest sign of peaceful dissent. European art and protest has yet fully to recover.

FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE

Action nos. 28 and 37 (Paris, October 1968 and January 1969)

“Baader-Meinhof lassen grüssen,” in Berliner Anziünder no. 2 (West Berlin, 1972)

“When it’s unbearable, you don’t bear it anymore,” a Paris zine declares (at left) above rows of helmeted riot police with goggles – a recurrent image on posters from May ’68. And again, in January 1969: “No to the order that kills” (above). Scenes of street fighting in Paris (at right) posed a serious challenge across Europe as violent confrontations with authority upped the stakes, convincing some it was time to fight fire with fire.

At its most extreme, the radicalization of post-’68 protest culture took root in terrorist organizations like Germany’s Red Army Faction (RAF), also known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang (below). “They’ll kill us all. You know what kind of pigs we’re up against. This is the Auschwitz generation,” one of RAF’s founders insisted. “You can’t argue with people who made Auschwitz. They have weapons and we don’t.” The belief that Germany and Austria were run by unrepentant perpetrators of mass murder drove Viennese Actionists to perform gruesome acts of violence against themselves (see displays on this floor). Terrorist groups like RAF directed that rage against regimes. “Baader-Meinhof send their regards,” a headline in the anarchist zine *Berlin Arsonist* reads (below), over RAF statements claiming responsibility for the bombing of a U.S. military base as reprisal for carpet bombing in Vietnam.

As in Italy (see below right), the turn to terror brought a thriving protest culture to an end – not only in Germany, but throughout Europe. States, too, decided it was time to fight fire with fire. By the early 1980s, even the smallest peaceful demonstrations met with heavily armed riot police everywhere.

BETWEEN ART AND VIOLENCE

Rat (New York, July 1–15, 1968)

Josef Leonhard Krancher, *Ballade “Baader-Meinhof”*: *Erzählt und in’s Holz geschnitten* (Munich, 1980)

Body art and an assault rifle take center stage on the beautifully troubling cover of this issue of *Rat* (above), the underground zine that was “taken over by women” in the wake of ’68 (see north table case downstairs). Published shortly after police stormed the student protesters occupying Columbia University, the scene captures the same ambivalence on display throughout this case, playing a moment of gentle vulnerability off against a threat of extreme violence (literally) at the artists’ feet. Inside, readers found tactical advice on how to prepare for battles in the street (at right): “With summer coming we can once again look forward to the honest reactions of people against the conditions that oppress them. We can also look forward to the armed tools of the state using their oppressive power to break up these actions.” Printed on handmade paper (below), a fine press edition lovingly executed in woodcuts with shades of Albrecht Dürer’s *Four Horsemen* soaring overhead recounts *The Ballad of Baader-Meinhof*, the tale of Germany’s terrorist Red Army Faction. How are we to grasp the blatant aestheticization — perhaps even *glorification* — of violence in thriving cultures of protest at or near their peak?

BETWEEN ART AND COOPTATION

If We Did It, This Is How It Would've Happened (ca. 1990s?). Ken Knabb Papers

Pablo Echaurren, “*Questa non è una pittura,*” manuscript notes (Rome, 1977).

Pablo Echaurren Papers

Chto Delat no. 25 (March 2009)

Art and protest is a highwire act. At times of extreme struggle and armed confrontation, the balance can easily tip toward violence. On the other side, though, is the threat of cooptation by the system protest art ostensibly seeks to fight. “A fetishized act of banality, your work is a trough for the gallery owners and critics,” an anonymous screed in Ken Knabb’s “Miscellaneous American Situ” file rages, attacking New York’s fashionably rebellious street art. The avant-garde were nothing more than “advanced scouts of capital” in this view — art itself “the *excrement of action.*” Accusations of complicity are certainly nothing new. The historical avant-garde itself emerged from a revolt against art for art’s sake, and Guy Debord expelled the original artistic core of the Situationist International for much the same reason (see south table case downstairs). Following his lead, artist-turned-activist Pablo Echaurren turned his back on galleries and started painting walls and faces (and illustrating the radical newspaper *Lotta Continua*) in the heady days of Italy’s *Movimento del '77*. “This is not a painting,” Echaurren wrote, working out his own ideas about art activism in a clever *détournement* (at left) of Magritte’s painting *This Is Not a Pipe*. Can art really oppose the system from inside its markets? What happens when protest art ends up in galleries and museums — or a *rare book library* — rather than out on the street? Or, as the Russian art coop *Chto Delat* aptly put it when activist art was all the rage in Moscow: “What is the use of art?” (at right). As far as *protest* goes, the question remains a subject of much heated and *creative* debate.

UP AGAINST THE WALL, ART

Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, “We Are Outlaws,” in *Rat*
(New York, September 6–19, 1968)

Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, “Armed Love,” in *Rat*
(New York, January 24–30, 1969)

Ben Morea’s answer to the question about art’s “use” could hardly have been clearer in May 1968. Abandoning art for direct action, the former *Black Mask* editor founded the militant group Up Against the Wall Motherfucker. “There are no limits to our lawlessness,” the group declared in one of the many Up Against the Wall “manifestos” published in *Rat* (at left). “We defy law and order with our bricks bottles garbage long hair filth obscenity games guns bikes fire fun + fucking.” That was then. By the time young activists came seeking counsel on the eve of another New York revolt—Occupy Wall Street—Morea thought “Armed Love” (at right) was no longer much use. Cops were fat then, we could run faster, we had better guns back then, he argued. We wouldn’t have had a chance against the militarized police of today. There may also be other lessons in Morea’s story. Forced to flee the (foreseeable) response, he spent thirty years hiding from the law in Colorado. When he finally resurfaced, the lively protest culture of the 1960s was long gone, its legacy contested. Morea’s advice to young activists at the start of the new millennium seems sound in any case: whatever you do, it’s got to be something *different*.

ROSTA POSTERS

Vladimir Mayakovsky, ROSTA posters, set 320 (Moscow, ca. 1921)

Made in a frenzy by Russian Constructivist poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, these posters were meant to be hung on the windows of Russian telegraph offices (ROSTA), which were usually located at train stations, in order to reach peasants with appeals to support the Red (Bolshevik) cause in the Russian Civil War. This set includes twelve panels. The texts read (left to right, 1–12):

1. Hunger?
2. Who will win?
3. If to the frontier hungry people look for hope
4. This is what will happen.
5. If to Wrangel people look for hope
6. This is what will happen.
7. If to the Mensheviks people look for hope
8. This is what will happen.
9. If to the SRs [Socialist Revolutionaries] people look for hope
10. This is what will happen.
11. Just look to them [the Reds] for hope
12. And you'll deal with hunger lickety split.

LAKOTA LEDGER ART AND POSTER BY GILBERT KILLS PRETTY ENEMY III

These pieces were made by Hunkpapa Lakota artist Gilbert Kills Pretty Enemy III in support of the protests from April 2016 to February 2017 against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. For more on Lakota ledger art, see overview label past the security desk to your right.

Incredible Hulk Fights the Black Snake (2016, at right)

Stand with Standing Rock (2016, at left)

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art

LAKOTA LEDGER ART BY QUINTON MALDONADO

These pieces were made by Oglala Lakota artist Quinton Maldonado in support of the protests from April 2016 to February 2017 against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. For more on Lakota ledger art, see overview label past the security desk to your right.

No Meth (2016, at left)

Black Snake Killa, No DAPL (2016, at right)

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art

LAKOTA LEDGER ART BY JOE PULLIAM

This piece was made by Oglala Lakota artist Joe Pulliam in support of the protests from April 2016 to February 2017 against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. For more on Lakota ledger art, see overview label past the security desk to your right.

*Nathan Standing in Prayer at Lincoln Memorial
(2017, at right)*

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art

LAKOTA LEDGER ART BY JOE PULLIAM

This piece was made by Oglala Lakota artist Joe Pulliam in support of the protests from April 2016 to February 2017 against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Plywood Prayer (2017, at right)

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art

LAKOTA LEDGER ART

Ledger art is an act of cultural preservation and resistance that traces its origins back to Native American practices predating the arrival of European settlers on the Great Plains. Drawing and painting figures and designs on rock, hides, and fabric, women and men depicted memorable events, creating visual histories that surrounded them on tipis, shields, robes, leggings, and other clothing. Among the Lakota, a member of each local community was chosen to produce “winter counts,” yearly chronicles that, together with oral narrative, allowed the tribe to pass its history from one generation to the next. Settler colonialism, with its decimation of the buffalo and the forced reduction of Plains tribes to reservations, nearly brought an end to the art. But Native Americans held on, switching from bone and natural pigments to colored pencils, crayons, and watercolors, and from hide to *ledger paper*, which came to the Plains along with colonialist governance in the nineteenth century. Incarcerated at Fort Marion in Florida, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche, Arapaho, and Caddo were encouraged to revive the art by their captors, who even asked the prisoners to draw their White warden. After being released, a few survivors brought ledger art to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where it was passed on to another generation – despite the notorious injunction “Kill the Indian and save the man,” dictated by the school’s founder, Richard Henry Pratt. The Lakota endured similar trials. Confined at Fort Robinson after the Battle of Greasy Grass, they were also given paper and pencil to draw scenes of Custer’s last stand, which they did with particular relish, as contemporary Oglala artist Merle Locke recalls. With the rise of Red Power and the American Indian Movement, ledger art revived with a vengeance in the 1970s. Blending resilience, creativity, and defiance, in 2016 the tradition demonstrated its full strength and vitality in protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Like their ancestors, the artists whose work is on display here continue to adapt to new media and new formats. “Lakota art is in constant motion, very dramatic and always moving,” Locke mused. “Creating creativity is an art that is in itself hard work and that is what Lakota art is all about.”

LAKOTA LEDGER ART AND POSTER BY GILBERT KILLS PRETTY ENEMY III

These pieces were made by Hunkpapa Lakota artist Gilbert Kills Pretty Enemy III in support of the protests, which lasted from April 2016 to February 2017, against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. For more on Lakota ledger art, see overview label to your left.

Morton County Sheriff's Last Stand (2016, at left)

American Indian Movement, Water Protectors (2016, at right)

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art

Emory Douglas, *See Revolutionary Art Exhibit*
(San Francisco, 1969)

*I Want You for the U.S. Cavalry (1974). From the
Richard Erdoes Papers*

*Liberez les prisonniers politiques noirs USA! [Free Black
political prisoners in the USA!] Free Huey Newton!
(Paris, 1968)*

Operários camponeses à luta, venceremos [Farm workers to the struggle, we will win] (Paris, 1968, at left). Poster printed at the Atelier Populaire in solidarity with the Antifascist Action Committees for a People's Revolution in Portugal

Jacqueline de Jong, *Pouvoir du peuple* [Power of the people] (Paris, 1968, at right)

Atelier Populaire, *La police s'affiche aux Beaux Arts. Les Beaux Arts s'affichent dans la Rue* [The police show up at the Fine Arts (Academy). The fine arts show up in the street] (Paris, 1968).

There are two puns here: “*La police*” can also mean “the font,” and the verb *s'afficher* (to show up, to appear, or to be displayed) contains *affiche*, the French word for poster.

LAKOTA LEDGER ART BY JOE PULLIAM

This piece was made by Oglala Lakota artist Joe Pulliam in support of the protests from April 2016 to February 2017 against the Dakota Access Pipeline at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Warrior Water Protector (2017, at right)

From the John Willis Collection of Lakota Art