

YAWN

YAWN is a sporadic communiqué which seeks to provide a critical look at our culture in all its manifestations. We welcome responses from readers, especially observations of a critical nature. Be forewarned that anything sent may be considered for inclusion in a future issue without specific prior notification. Submissions are welcome and encouraged. It is our policy not to attribute work, unless the content benefits from such attribution. **YAWN** is a collective, mostly anonymous, effort. Contributors receive a copy of the **YAWN** in which their work is used. Monetary donations are requested to help defray the costs of publication. Subscriptions are available for \$10 (cash or unused stamps) for 25 issues. Archive at <http://yawn.detritus.net/>.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS AND OPINIONS ABOUT THE ART STRIKE

1 —How can one participate in the Art Strike (1990-1993)?

—Sure, such a distressing perspective is disorienting to some. As for the art strikers, their tactics vary.

Stewart Home in London (who thought up the Art Strike), seems to have chosen a total strike of creativity, which includes all activity related to the Art Strike (1990-1993). He is limiting his activity to dispatching only documents concerning the Art Strike that were produced before January 1, 1990, to whom ever asks for them. He explains (in a letter dated November 8, 1989): "...Setting up an ASAC simply means providing the public with an address from which they can get information about the Art Strike and organising any other activities which you think might help spread the idea..."

In Iowa, Lloyd Dunn has interrupted the publication of his magazine *PhotoStatic* for three years. Instead, he publishes the sporadic and quasi-anonymous newsletter **YAWN**, almost totally dedicated to the Art Strike (1990-1993). I have found certain of the proposals advanced therein to be excessive, such as its characterization of "The Artist as a Victim of Tourette Syndrome," which suggests that the artist is pathologically dependent on their need to create, like a nervous tic (#7, 12/31/89). On the other hand, I notice this declaration: "There is no Art Strike dogma as such. Instead, it is essential that each Art strike participant construct their own set of activities in support of the Art Strike." (#6, 11/24/89)

2 —It consists of a paradox.

—Sure, the proposition of an Art Strike (1990-1993) is paradoxical, incredible, illogical, bizarre, incoherent, extremist, masochistic, unrealistic, and pretentious, but it is a

social action that has as its primary goal the deliberate provocation of annoyance.

3 —Isn't this pious Art Strike (1990-1993) doomed to failure by lack of impact?

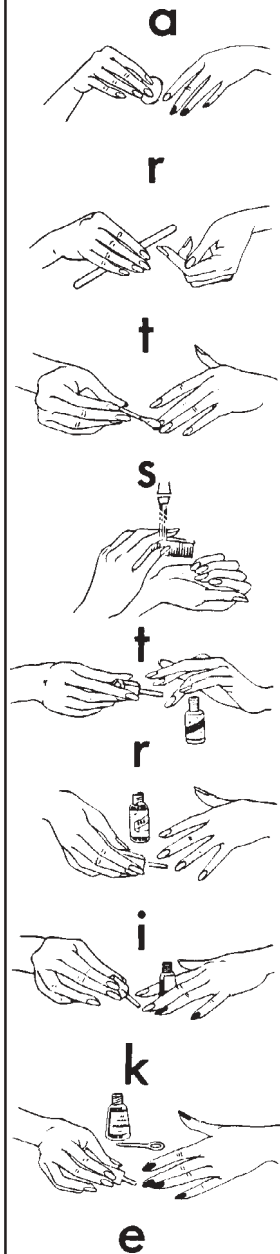
—Sure, this is a possibility. In **YAWN** it says, "the Art Strike (1990-1993) can only affect those people who choose to be affected by it..." (#11, 3/1/90). But in Cicero it says: "...Even if the goodness [that we seek] were not recognized, it would still be good; for whatever we can say in all truth is commended by its own good nature, even if not approved by any man living." [*On Moral Obligation*, I.4.14]

4 —Art is already a strike.

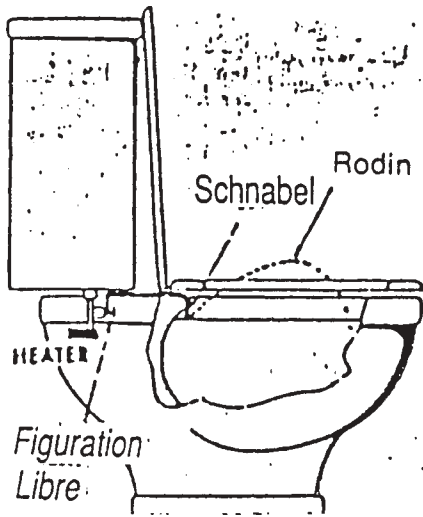
—Sure, there is something to this. On this subject, Lloyd Dunn proposed in the 40th and last issue of *PhotoStatic* (December, 1989): "...the Art Strike is not so much a call for doing nothing as it is a call for *doing something else*. Now, it is quite plausible, according to my interpretation of the *intent* of the Art Strike, for a person (whether they think they are doing "art" or not) to participate in the Art Strike and yet continue to do what they were doing before! As far as I can tell, the Art Strike lashes out at *a set of attitudes* about art; not "art" as such. To clarify my position on this, it is perhaps necessary for us to have two definitions for the word "art". 1) **art**: *virtually any creative activity, definable by the user of the term themself*; and 2) **Art**: *a class and gender-specific activity devoted to the creation of marketable objects...* The Art Strike simultaneously calls for a rejection of Art, and a re-evaluation of art. To be effective, the Art Strike must demoralize Artists, and encourage artists."

[*Lettre Documentaire n°9*, 4/25/90]

IT HAD TO HAPPEN



AN END TO COMMODITY CULTURE



YOUR TOILET
CAN BE
ART TOO
SAVE
HUNDREDS
OF DOLLARS

SOME OPINIONS ABOUT THE ART STRIKE

•**Alexandre Iskra**, non-union pastry chef, Marseille, January 1990: "They talk about an art strike (1990-1993)!... I swear that this voluntary public castration exasperates me! Even worse, I'm indifferent to it. In reading the various documents which you [*Lettre Documentaire* n°4] have collected and carefully translated, alas, inspires lassitude.... In its time, the dada manifesto had scope; this is out looking for a point."



•**Jacques Massa**, pataphysician, Paris, January 1990: "The Art Strike makes me oscillate between indifference and perplexity. I've discussed it only with Mark Bloch (*Panpost*) who is rather in agreement as far as perplexity goes."



•**Jean-François Robic**, photocopier, Strasbourg, January 17, 1990: "As you can see, I am not participating in the Art Strike. I find it a bit naive. It would be necessary for me to do the strike by myself, and for me that's impossible. Even if art is a social practice—all right!—art is already a strike."
[*Lettre Documentaire* n°6, February 1990]



Anti-art is art because it has entered into a dialectical dialogue with art, re-exposing contradictions that art has tried to conceal. To think that anti-art raises everything to the level of art is quite wrong. Anti-art exists only within the boundaries of art. Outside these boundaries it exists not as anti-art but as madness, bottle-racks and urinals. [SMILE]

MAIL ORDER INFO — The anonymous pamphlet *CONFESION IN SUPPORT OF THE 1990-1993 ART STRIKE*, which first appeared in English, and which has been translated into French by *Lettre Documentaire*: *CONFESION EN FAVEUR DE LA GREVE DEL'ART* (1990-1993), is now also available in a Spanish version: *CONFESION EN APOYO A LA HUELGA DE ARTE* (1990-1993) and a German version: *GESTÄNDNIS ZUGUNSTEN DES KUNSTSTREIKS 1990-1993*. This cleverly plagiarized cartoon is offered free to those who want it, but we hereby inform those scrupulous souls that the cost of production and mailing comes to 5 francs per copy. In return, there are no rights reserved and it can be re-photocopied at will. We'd also like to point out that the German edition is also distributed by CASH Versand, PLK 133 117 C, 1000 Berlin 12, West Germany. This distributor also offers a catalog of publications in English and German, notably devoted to Neoism and the Art Strike (1990-1993).

In addition: *ANTICOPYRIGHT*, P.O. Box 368, Cardiff Wales CF2 1SQ, is a free service for the (re)distribution of fly-posters of a seditious nature. Copies of these fly-posters are sent out to those who want them, to be re-photocopied and posted wherever the recipient has the opportunity. This seems dangerous to us, but interesting. A catalog summarizing what's offered (around 200 fly-posters) is available.
[*Lettre Documentaire* #9]

DOTTING THE 'I'S AND CROSSING THE 'S

Lettre Documentaire, not having a dogmatic concept of the Art Strike (1990-1993), finds it opportune to offer it minimum service, in partially maintaining its activity of observation and description of certain particular artistic forms, which would in any case be a legitimate part of its larger activity of observation and description of various forms of reality in general. We force ourselves however to hold to this task, aiming for a certain editorial seriousness, in that we don't value the effusiveness and the ill-considered foaming at the mouth that seems to characterize not only much of the babble of the official and mercantile realms, but also much of the babble coming from the underground. Besides, *Lettre Documentaire* (from the Latin *documentum*: that which serves to instruct) intends to pursue, as it grows, its didactic project of observation and description of certain non-artistic forms of reality, if not for the purpose of studying their intrinsic psychotropic qualities, then more generally for dealing with the sincere sense of wonder for "the totality of things that happen." Nevertheless, we do not disregard the virtues of an Art Strike (1990-1993) as a vow of artistic chastity: it seems to us that an Art Strike has the beneficial power of a fast. But we simply feel that the Art Strike (1990-1993) is more useful as a rumour than as a catechism.
[*Lettre Documentaire* #9]

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