

June 5, 1991

YAWN

FROWN

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. 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/>.

The Categorical is Not So Imperative

"Today art no longer creates anything but the magic of its disappearance."

—Jean Beaudrillard

Who couldn't know by now that "art strike" is as phoney as a ONE DOLLAR BILL! It claims to be "a bad idea" and bad ideas are the finest art of our age! If you've heard of ART STRIKE—then it's done its art well, and of course, is self-nullifying. If you haven't heard of ART STRIKE, only then is there truly an art STRIKE—but, it hasn't MADE ITS POINT—a point it couldn't possibly have, because, (to you) it doesn't EXIST! Either/or way ART STRIKE is an artistically nullifying song and dance. A dance that reeks of the "CON" of CONceptual ART!

WE KNOW—THE "TRUTH" NEVER WAS.

Art Strike is the best recuperative effort for Æsthetic Domination. A manic onslaught of "art" discussion may accomplish SOMETHING but it will never accomplish NOTHING; or create the vacuum that Art Strike claims to be. After all its arguMental bombardment, Art Strike subtly implies a finer and more scrutinous eye toward—WHAT?—ART! Art that will still thrive after Art Strike stops what it has allegedly stopped doing already. Inactivates its INACTIVITY! Art Strike even carries its own æsthetic "point of view" (a given in all "arts"). It betrays its MESSAGE by projecting optimism (for a brighter art future?)

Poetic Terrorism

The audience reaction or æsthetic shock produced by PT ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror—powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dadaesque angst—no matter whether the PT is aimed one person or many, no matter whether it is "signed" or anonymous, if it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails.

PT is an act in a Theater of Cruelty which has no stage, no rows of seats, no tickets and no walls. In order to work at all PT must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media). Even the guerilla Situationist tactics of street theater are perhaps to well known and expected now.

An exquisite seduction carried out not only in the cause of mutual satisfaction but also as a conscious act in a deliberately beautiful life may be the ultimate PT. The PTerrorist behaves like a confi-

dence-trickster whose aim is not money but *change*.

Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art. Avoid recognizable art-categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental; be ruthless, take risks, vandalize only what *must* be defaced, do something children will remember all their lives—but don't be spontaneous unless the PT muse has possessed you.

Dress up. Leave a false name. Be legendary. The best PT is against the law, but don't get caught. Art as crime; crime as art.

Weird dancing in all-night computer banking lobbies. Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays. Land-art, earthworks as bizarre alien artifacts strewn in state parks. Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-terrorist objects. Kidnap someone and make them happy.

Pick someone at random and convince them they're the heir to an enormous, useless and amazing fortune—say 5000 square miles of Antarctica, or an aging circus elephant, or an orphanage in

through its hol(e)y shroud of DOUBLE NEGATIVE DE-ACTIVITY. So much ANALYSIS and lingual PROBEing of the "IDLE IDEOLOGY of ART" bespeaks an "artistic" flair for "CREATIVE INVESTIGATION" bordering on obsession—and obsessive investigation ALWAYS "INVEST"s more than it detracts. As a matter of fact, shouldn't Art Strikers be DeTracting a little more, instead of issuing SO MANY TRACTS?

THE "TRUTH" NEVER WAS—IT HAS ALWAYS NEVER BEEN!

Art Strike portends that IDEAS will pull us from this malevolent mediation of "Inauthentic Existence." ITS IDEAS! Of course! Yet Art Strike should "create" NO IDEAS in that ideas are the (alleged) CURRENCY OF ART! This Intellectual Battling, rife with relentless philatelic finalities, merely assumes that "TRUTH" is a feat of exhaustion. Who gets to write the LAST WORD on Art Strike's picket sign? A picket sign that will (no doubt) settle in a "mail art" show somewhere.

AND THAT'S THE TRUTH! WE KNOW—THE "TRUTH" NEVER WAS.

Art Strike is an "artistic" rationalization of MASS ENNUI! It suffers the same problematic as its close pal—literary "deconstruction." IT ERECTS more to wade through. ART STRIKE is the eternal yammering that only speaks over and over about how it is going to SHUT UP. '93 will actually be the beginning of the Art Strike because that's when the "ART STRIKE" will truly SHUT UP!

Are Art Strikers painting with NOTHING on their brush?

IS ITS PICKET SIGN JUST A "FREAKY FRESCO"?

WE KNOW THE "TRUTH"—THE "TRUTH" NEVER WAS!

The games and the "yawning" will end in '93. Then it's time to ABOLISH ART! Because once we have abolished art, REVOLUTION will be the only art left!

ART ABOLITION COMMITTEE

'93—∞

Bombay, or a collection of alchemical manuscripts. Later they will come to realize that for a few moments they believed in something extraordinary, and will perhaps be driven as a result to seek out some more intense mode of existence.

Bolt up brass commemorative plaques in places (public or private) where you have experienced revelation or had a particularly fulfilling sexual experience, etc.

Go naked for a sign.

Organize a strike in your school or workplace on the grounds that it does not satisfy your need for indolence and spiritual beauty.

Graffiti-art loaned some grace to ugly subways and rigid public monuments—PT art can also be created for public places: poems scrawled in courthouse lavatories, small fetishes abandoned in parks and restaurants, xerox art under windshield wipers of parked cars, Big Character Slogans pasted on playground walls, anonymous letters mailed at random or chosen recipients (mail fraud), pirate radio transmissions, wet cement...

—Hakim Bey



Dear **YAWN**:

I do art to make myself feel very important. I have a sense, a fear, that I am hollow, that the world is hollow and will collapse in on itself at any minute without the steel girders of Art to support this delicate membrane. Art tells me that what I know is good. It is a mirror upon which I paint my greatest desire, imagining it to be my own reflection. This is why the Art Strike is ultimately bad praxis. Without this spectacular surface, I would have to face my inner void. It is almost as though I fear the annihilation of my Self, that through art I make myself. So please, leave me alone. Show some modicum of humanity and allow me the comfort of this gilded cage, this well-tailored curtain. I write with tears as I am too close to all this and must now rest to regain my strength, and God willing, some small creative spark.
R. Fear, San Leandro CA

Notes on the Mail

Please note that the official **YAWN** address has changed; all future correspondence will be received at the new address, which is P.O. Box 227, Iowa City IA 52244. Mail will continue to be picked up at the old address, albeit sporadically.

Several people have independently sent **YAWN** their "comments" on its output in the form of envelopes which look completely normal on the outside, but upon inspection, reveal themselves to be completely empty. Such "creative" responses to the Art Strike, although terse and perhaps even apt, do little to encourage the dialog and debate which **YAWN** holds is so necessary to help clarify our current predicament. We will not berate these senders in print, because they are, in fact, doing *something*. But if they feel that there is something "wrong" with the Art Strike (in)action—and there is much that is—perhaps they could tell us what they feel it is. On the other hand, we at **YAWN** do tend to prefer these kinds of pseudo-responses to the small packet of animal dung we received the other week!

Keep reading; keep responding.

[Ed.]

Statement from the Montevideo ASAC

I think that art-strike aims to [...] the distortion of the artistic expression. The language of "how it's said" or of "the authority of who says it" or "how pretty the way it is said!" the elegance of expression to the detriment of truth, serves only to smother reality under a layer of words or signs, signals which are senseless in the majority of cases, in the sense of the interest of whoever is using it, in our specific case, the capitalism-system seeking to preserve itself.

It is against this alienated artistic language that the "Inobjetal Art" and the "Art-Strike" had arisen.

The art, without confusing end with means, could not develop in the area of a defiled expression, the semantism of the language, the function of which has been altered in order to serve ends which are not its own.

If to this distortion we add the ambiguity of the elements of the language (words, colours, sounds, etc.), the meanings of which depend upon and are modified by the systems of reference, which in turn are born upon (and born in) the ideologies which arise in every social class, then we understand the importance attributed to it by the prevailing system, to dominate every channel, whether written or oral or artistic, through which it flows, as it thus ensures the determination of its values in preference to those which workers' activity or the activity of exploited sectors may generate.

I think that Art-Strike must relocate the artistic means where they can play a revolutionary role, to become weapons for the struggle against the social injustice.

Clemete Padín
 ASAC (Latin America)
 C. de Correos 1211
 Montevideo, Uruguay

Cultural Workers in Support of **YAWN**

ASAC (United Kingdom), BM Senior, London WC1N 3XX, England
 ASAC (Eire), c/o Tony Lowes, Allihies, Bantry, West Cork, Ireland
 Lang Thompson, P.O. Box 49604, Atlanta GA 30359
 I.M.I., 617 N Upland St, Metairie LA 70003
 Hakim Bey, P.O. Box 568, Brooklyn NY 11211

