

# AUTHENTICITY SQUARED

## REPOhistory CIRCULATION: Anatomy of an Activist, Urban Art Project

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### The Post-Ironic Condition

The full-page photograph in the September 5th, 1999 edition of the New York Times Magazine revealed a homey, rural living room with wood-trimmed decor. Dried wild flowers stood in a vase beside an antique pendulum clock and a Mason jar of homemade pickles combined to give the image a Andrew Wyeth-like ambiance. Three white people – a mother, daughter, and son-- sat relaxed and shoeless on stuffed leather furniture. No, this was not an illustration for a Martha Stewart interview. Rather the picture accompanied a feature piece entitled “Against Irony.” According to author Marshall Sella we are entering “a new culture war [that] is being waged against the evils of the knowing smirk”.

Yet if the Times piece effectively measures some emerging “new sincerity”, then this condition of post-irony effectively belongs to an economically secure, Ivy League flock reigned over by 24 year old Jedediah Purdy, author of the book “For Common Things: Irony, Trust, And Commitment in America Today”, and the ostensible subject of the Times feature. In one sense post-irony appears to answer a desire to see the world directly, without reflecting-back on how and from where one is looking. It emerges at a moment of critical fatigue not only for disciplines like Art and Art History but also for the more recent fields such as Cultural Studies. It is also convergent with a general infantilization of culture, both high and low, as witnessed in the monopolization of entertainment industry by the Walt Disney Corporation as well as museum exhibitions such as one featuring the reassuring art of

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painter Norman Rockwell. It seems an easy visual consumerism is the order of the day. However, as Theodore Adorno once cautioned “History is in the truth” and not the other way around. If indeed some new, post-post-postmodern is in the works, then the very terms of this sea change are an important site of critical and political intervention.

Or perhaps the art world is simply bored, again, Quotation, irony, and appropriation --watchwords of the last fifteen years-- no longer provide the juice. In their place appear “beauty,” “commitment,” and even “authenticity”. Postmodern pastiche, that form of irony Fredric Jameson once described as “a new kind of flatness of depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense,”<sup>1</sup> is now in such incertitude that even Hal Foster has asked “What ever happened to Post-Modernism?” No more neo-Grecian facades tacked onto concrete box architecture or re-photographed Walker Evans images. But the last fifteen years of cultural production are not that homogeneous. While some forms of “post” modernist art were as superficial as they were historically cynical, for example the neo-expressionist painting style of the early 1980s, other practices never found a comfortable purchase in the postmodern condition, including the politically engaged work of Haacke and Rosler, as well as the collectives Political Art Documentation and Distribution, Group Material, Gran Fury, and REPOhistory among others. With this reservation in mind several questions are apparent including: what will the culture industry find to replace post-modernism, what is driving this change: intellectual torpor or market saturation, and what are the possibilities for politically-engaged art in the so called post-ironic age?

Certainly this is not the first time the post-war art world has reached a cul de sac. In the late seventies the cool heat of minimalism went cold. Oil painting, an allegedly dead art-form, returned. Galleries shifted from Core-Ten Steel to cracked china and pigment. Among other factors it was the bull market of the 1980s and its new urban gentry that fueled the market for a more “gregarious” art suited to modestly sized East Village dwellings. So vibrant was the 80s art economy that by the middle of the decade the mainstream art scene even took a passing interest in work with explicitly political content as witnessed

by Group Material’s involvement in the 1985 Whitney Biennial or the exhibition “Committed to Print” at the Museum of Modern Art in 1988.<sup>2</sup>

Yet if the current “crisis” of cultural direction is already generating copy for the mass media, the art world has been surveying its options as well. And Ironically, several of these have been around before. To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, fashion is always a tigers-leap into the past. Among the contestants for post-

Janet Koenig and Tom Klem of REPOhistory circa 1998





postmodernism is 1. A sort of neo-pop art that looks like it came from the bedroom of a teenager circa 1974 (Jason Rhoads for example) 2. Art and technology: always a safe bet in a society enthralled with special effects (The Guggenheim's SoHo outlet made several stabs in this direction), and finally 3. A stealthy form of l'art pour l'art test-piloted in the Nevada desert by art critic David Hickey. But it is the apparent renewal of interest in the intermittent tradition of activist, politically engaged art concerns this text.

Activist art asserts a commitment to actual social issues typically distant from the circumscribed concerns of the art world. Group Material's early poster projects on New York City subways, buses, and streets which dealt with issues ranging from US intervention in Central America to Abortion Rights to divestment in South Africa can serve as one example of this approach. However the term engaged art, no less than the words such as irony, authenticity, and commitment, is never fixed, never simply one thing. At all times questions of politics, history and ideology bear down on the meaning of a concept. Consider the phrase "serving the community" that now permeates the rhetoric of foundations, public art organizations, and museums. Certainly its current usage signals the decline of post-modern pastiche, but it also evinces the effectiveness of cultural activism in transforming the way the art world does business. On the other hand "community-based art" has too often become a fig-leaf for urban renewal projects and gentrification. Needless to say the complexity, or better yet the overdetermination, of both cultural and political activity can never be collapsed into a mechanical notion of effectiveness. Instead, if there is a critical opening onto the "post-ironic" condition, it is one that complicates such terms as irony, commitment and authenticity, while at the same time revealing the hidden privilege behind notions such as "common things" and the "new sincerity".

Finally, my own skepticism forces me to question the claims of a budding paradigm shift that champions "authenticity," especially at this historical moment dominated by everything synthetic, from pharmacological enhanced memories and virtual reality, to artificial blood. Of course such doubt is itself historically determined, drawn from my experience as an artist in New York City from the late 1970s onward in which I witnessed both the destructiveness the art world can generate --for example in the gentrification of the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Significantly I have also seen the tremendous resources artists can bring to specific social circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Therefor rather than dismiss my reproach as nostalgia for a neglected activist art practice, consider it instead a cautionary tale about the imprecision of prophesying historical change. To rephrase a question already posed: it is not a matter of how a politically engaged, activist art can exist in a "post-ironic" world, but rather what are the political forces gathering such concepts as post-irony for our consumption? By way of example this text will introduce readers to REPOhistory: a decades-old artists' collective in



*Advantages of a Free Market Economy* by Jim Costanzo for

The New York Post covering controversial REPOhistory sign by Marina Gutierrez 1998, REPOhistory 1992





Free project map 1992 NYC

New York City. As a member and co-founder of REPOhistory I do not offer detached criticism, but rather an engaged discourse regarding the possibilities and limitations of cultural activism.

# REPOhistory

Judging from the majority of reviews REPOhistory has received, the group operates somewhere in-between the disciplines of visual art, urban activism, social history, and radical pedagogy. Its name is itself salvaged from the 1984 cult film “Repo Man” in which several marginalized characters are employed to steal back the property of working people fallen behind in their payments. However contemptible repo-men inadvertently expose the narrow corridor between an illusion of ownership in “the system” and the actuality of debt. Similarly, “REPOhistorians” work the gap between official history, and a re-reading of the past overlapping narratives, forgotten figures, and repressed events.

REPOhistory's inaugural meeting occurred in May of 1989 when a dozen people gathered in response to a three-page proposal distributed by this author. Loosely based on a public art project in Austria 2 in which artists installed site work about the city's veiled Nazi past, the retailored proposal asked artists to "retrieve and relocate absent historical narratives at locations in New York City through counter-monuments, and events." Instead of exposing a hidden fascist history the project was used on the upcoming celebration of the Columbus Quincentennial in 1992.

Several months after this initial meeting the fledgling organization formulated a critical position toward the dominant artistic style of postmodern pastiche. Decrying the “current fashion of “borrowing” historical images out of context”, REPOhistory would instead “narrate the flattened, anonymous spaces where historical memory has been erased.”<sup>3</sup> In practice however REPOhistory’s critical theory of site specificity found itself expressed in two ways: first as a narrative about place using oral histories and public records, and second as an interrogation of historical representation itself. The importance of the latter, de-mystifying approach is summarized by founding member Lisa Maya Knauer who argues that “Histories didn’t just exist or emerge by magic; they are produced, reproduced and contested -- in various arenas, including public school curricula, museum displays...”<sup>5</sup>

Over the last ten years REPPOhistory has produced six public art projects and two large gallery installations. 6 The first public work was entitled simply The Lower Manhattan Sign Project (LMSP) and consisted of 39, 18 x 24" silk-screened metal signs displaying art and texts made by over 40 artists working alone or in pairs. Group mem-



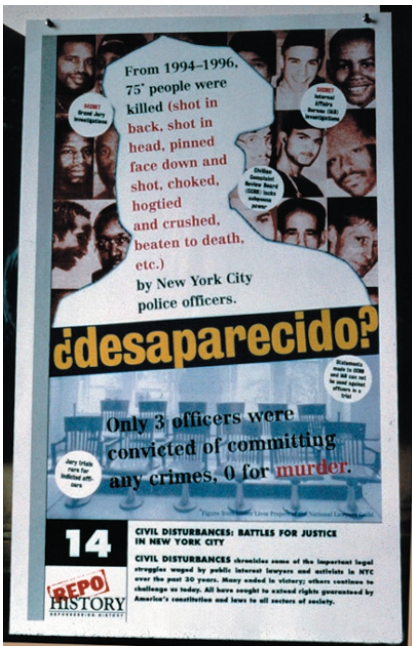
ber Tom Klem pursued the Department of Transportation for weeks until a one-year installation permit was granted. In early summer of 1992, he and others affixed The LMSP on city lampposts in Downtown Manhattan. Among other unknown histories LMSP marked was the site of the city's first slave market, the shape of the islands pre-Columbian coast line, an historic visit by Nelson Mandela, the office of a famous 19th century abortionist named Madame Restell and an alleged slave rebellion against the Dutch in 1741. The same year as The Lower Manhattan Sign Project the group also produced Choice Histories: Framing Abortion, a multimedia installation at Artists Space focusing on women's struggle to control their reproductive and sexual rights. Sexual freedom was also the subject of the group's second public sign-project, Queer Spaces in 1994 that consisted of triangular pink signs commemorated sites significant to New York's gay and lesbian community. And the third public sign installation was in Atlanta Georgia at an African-American neighborhood literally bulldozed underground in the 1960s during "urban renewal." "Entering Buttermilk Bottom" was a collaboration between REPOhistory and local artists that, despite its temporary nature, inspired an annual reunion of people born in the now vanished neighborhood. Curiously most local journalists had never heard of "Buttermilk Bottom" despite the fact this black neighborhood one stood at the heart of Atlanta. In 1996 the artist Tom Klem returned to Atlanta on a NEA sponsored residency, thus extending the New York-based group's out-of-town engagement.

Using art to disseminate alternative information about history, geography, and politics in public space clearly has quantitative, yet also varying, social consequences for different publics. This lesson was learned during "Entering Buttermilk Bottom" and offers insight into the complexity of questions about political art's effectiveness. As REPOhistory member Neill Bogan comments, "stories circulate socially, not geographically--so that one part of a town may never have heard the important stories of another part of town." The political repercussions of "retrieving and relocating" suppressed history took an even more dramatic turn in the group's next sign installation, the 1998-1999 project Civil Disturbances: Battles for Justice in New York City.

Civil Disturbances developed out of a unique collaboration between the collective and a non-profit law office: the New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. The latter provides legal assistance to poor and under-represented people and communities. The twenty, artist-designed street-signs in Civil Disturbances represented, according to group co-founder Mark O'Brien, the legal "cases that have shaped the fabric of life in New York City as much as the streets on which we walk and the buildings in which we live and work." Among the issues provocatively and publicly marked by Civil Disturbances included the mistreatment of citizens by members of the NYPD, the passing of laws to protect women from domestic abuse and to provide people with housing, the legal fight to save various public hospitals, and a class

Leisler's Rebellion by  
Steven Duncombe 1992





Jenny Polak and David Thorne  
Question justice for victims of  
NYPD Shootings, 1998-99  
NYC, 1994

action suit brought against the Giuliani administration in defense of abused children.

Yet despite the groups record of obtaining temporary installation permits from the city this time around REPOhistory was first stonewalled and then refused permission for Civil Disturbances. Not until the intervention of the law firm Debevoise & Plimpton did the Giuliani Administration issue a permit. Yet the victory over City Hall did not end the battle for art on city streets because after the project was finally installed several signs “disappeared” from public view. Among these was Janet Koenig’s work documenting the Empire State Building’s prolonged non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Marina Gutierrez’s piece critiquing housing discrimination by the city against Puerto Rican families in her Brooklyn neighborhood, and a sign by William Menking that “landmarked” the site of an illegal demolition of low income housing on the lot where a luxury hotel now stands near the “new” Times Square. As it turned out the art was being removed in each case by building managers or local politicians.<sup>8</sup>

In the wake of these sidewalk struggles it became clear that the concept of public space --as a democratically accessible medium for social discourse-- remains a politically abrasive one, especially to people and institutions with the power to prohibit that access. One way to gauge the effectiveness of engaged work is from the news coverage REPOhistory received in the main-stream press. In this sense, several articles in the New York Times and numerous other local news and cable TV programs suggests that the project effectively reached a broad audience. As before, art journals largely overlooked the group’s work. In retrospect Civil Disturbances also marked a turning point in REPOhistory’s concept of site specific art practice from one that marks sites to a mobilization of space. This is most fully realized in the current project, Circulation.

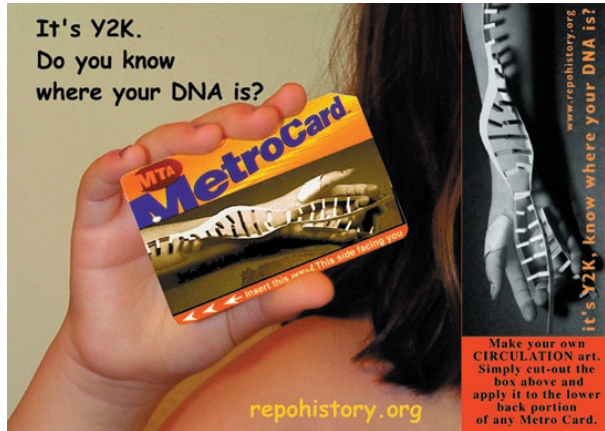
## CIRCULATION

With CIRCULATION, REPOhistory approaches the city itself as aspecific site containing a number of vital features including public transportation, sewer and water works, shifting housing and income patterns, and waterfronts. Often overlooked, these systems shape the physical topography and discursive meaning of the city. One of the least known aspects of this civic anatomy is the daily processing and distribution of human blood products from donors to bloodbanks, to hospitals and clinics. Effectively this routine forms an invisible circulatory system. Its vitality is conveyed in the statistic that nine out of ten New Yorkers who reach the age of 72 have received a blood transfusion.<sup>9</sup> Blood is also one of the worlds most valuable commodities. According to Douglas Starr, author of “Blood; An Epic History of Medicine and Commerce, “ a barrel of crude oil, for example, sells for about \$13 at this writing.

Queer Spaces REPOhistory on the  
anniversary of the StoneWall  
Uprising







The same quantity of whole blood, in its “crude” state, would sell for more than \$20,000.”<sup>12</sup>

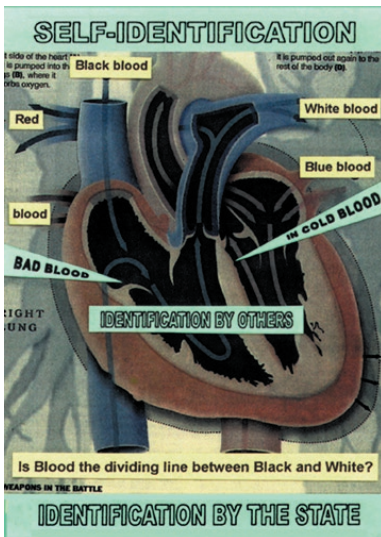
The material economy of blood also has a discursive dimension that is both complex and at times paradoxical. In contemporary society Blood is invoked both as a medium of health as well as a source of deadly pathogens. It is both a symbol of human fraternity and of racial segregation. Anger and even violence can accompany these linguistic formations as witnessed by recent murders committed over imagined threats to the “purity of white blood” by the racist organization Aryan Nation. Blood is also the subject, and occasionally the medium, of contemporary artists including the work of Andre Serrano, Ana Mendieta, Andrew Castrucci, and David Wojnarowicz as well as the former activist collective Gran Fury who confronted government neglect of the AIDS crisis through publicly situated graphics.<sup>13</sup> Finally, and ominously, blood cells and the circulatory system are the portal through which powerful new technologies of commerce and control are being refined. One notorious example of the latter is a proposal by New York City Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Howard Safir to begin collecting genetic profiles of all arrested citizens.<sup>14</sup>

Set to take place in Mid-February of the year 2000, Circulation seeks to excavate the social history of this singular human organ. The project also dispenses with REPOhistory’s customary street signs, substituting instead art that literally circulates in actual public spaces. This includes postcards, small objects, images, magnets, and stickers distributed through the mail as well as in subway cars, art galleries, needle exchange programs, health care facilities. A project map, a window installation at Printed Matter, several high school art collaborations, a street performance and a specially designed interactive WebSite at rephistory.org complete the program. The incorporation of a WebSite as part of a public art installation is an important departure for the group. Each work distributed by Circulation will include the Web address: rephistory.org. According to artists Jim Costanzo and Cynthia Liesenfeld, the WebSite will function as the project’s digital “heart”, pumping ideas and images in and out of its inter-active matrix. Viewers will become participants as they log-in, uplink, or download art and information. Meanwhile, the project map being designed by artist Janet Koenig serves to coordinate the spatially dispersed art, educational collaborations, and project distribution sites into one visual directory. Available free at numerous city locations it weaves the project’s im-

Gregory Sholette’s sticker-postcard for REPOhistory CIRCULATION 2000. The text on the back of the card discusses the NYPD’s plan to archive DNA from all arrestees claiming “The innocent have nothing to fear.” Months prior to this statement an unarmed African immigrant, Amadou Diallo, was shot to death by police in his home.

Lisa Hecht’s corpuscle installation at Printed Matter bookstore, NYC





Miscegenation is critiqued by artists Leela Ramotar and Miguelangel Ruiz

ages into a diagram of New York City's hospitals, blood banks, medical facilities and related sites.

Among the works in *Circulation* are Tom Klem's black and white portraits linking two modern chemical processes: photography and blood typing. The individuals in Klem's photographs are rendered in a nearly clinical documentary style and identified, like slabs of meat, solely by their blood types. 12

The issue of racial contagion is the subject of several works including a collaboration by Miguelangel Ruiz and Leela Ramotar displaying a human heart transformed to a battlefield of race with the text "Black Blood," "Blue Blood," and "White Blood." And artist Carola Burroughs, herself a multi-racial person, offers a compendium of terms for "miscegenated" people including "Griffe", "half-breed", "Octoroon", and "metis" superimposed on an image of Zebras. Artist Jim Costanzo also addresses metaphors related to blood in his multi-lingual graphic treatment of collective nouns such as Nation, Tribe, Clan, and Family.

Other projects focus on the politics of medical research including Kevin Pyle's drawings of human pharmaceutical subjects and enlarged blood cells. Printed on magnets his images are to be attached to the outside of medical research facilities around the city. George Spencer's miniature sculptures of pharmaceutical products will also be secretly distributed outside drugstores, hospitals, clinics, and the corporate headquarters of drug corporations. Chicago-based artist Lisa Hecht is designing a series of wallpaper patterns based on blood cells that will be part of the window installation at Printed Matter Bookstore.

Cynthia Liesenfeld's web-based work uses humor and technology to explore the subject of women's menstrual blood. One of the highlights is an interactive "Flow Calculator" allowing browsers to estimate how much menstrual fluid they will expel in a lifetime. German artist Trebor Scholtz is staging a street performance entitled "Flow," in which seven-foot helium balloons attract passers-by to a sidewalk parley involving issues ranging from blood and nationalism to the state of art and health care. The politics of the blood-banking system become the subject of Chicago-based artist Jeni Sorkin's project that looks at issues of discrimination and blood safety. And Irish artist Brian Hand draws comparisons between the bloodied gun-site icon of secret agent 007, and the 1972 civilian massacre known as "Bloody Sunday" in Northern Ireland pointing out that the officer in charge, General Sir Michael Jackson, is now leading the NATO peace forces into Kosovo."

Activist art is pedagogical by nature and an important component of *Circulation* are the integrated collaborations with city Public High School students being coordinated by Lisa Maya Knauer. Among these are Meryl Meisler's project at the Institute for Collaborative Education

Kevin Pyle sketches on magnetic postcards for *CIRCULATION* 2000





where students will work with nearby Beth Israel Hospital to produce a zine and Web-Site exploring the word blood as it appears in the vernacular of youth culture. Meanwhile artist Oscar Tuczon and teacher Andre Knight are developing a video project at the alternative City as School made up of interviews with members of the Health and Hospital Workers Union as well as blood donors, surgery patients, needle exchange clients, and AIDS activists. A third public school project will be organized by Stephanie Basch in East Harlem while artist Keith Christensen is developing a collaborative work with his students at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota that will be linked via the Internet.

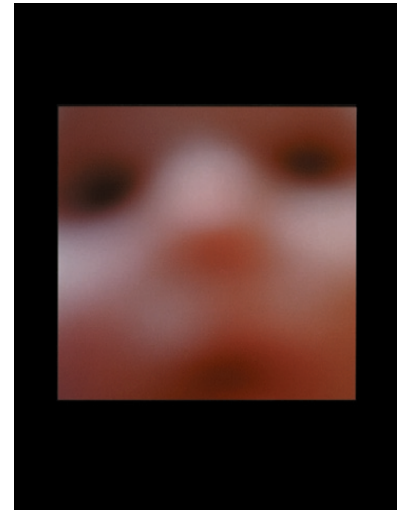
In addition: Jasmine Gartner and Chilean artist Ivan Navarro contribute a light installation mapping the city's blood routes, Jayne Pagnucco contemplates a rare congenital blood disease present in her family, and British artist Jenni Polak exposes racial segregation at INS detention centers. The global commodification of blood is the subject of Marilyn Perez's piece, while artist Sarah Vogwill offers a surrealist "blood" portrait, and Cris Pietrapiana a "Fountain of Blood." Artists Russet Lederman, David Sansone and Sharon Denning contribute "on-line" projects. Finally Circulation will also include a posthumous work by REPOhistory founding member Ed Eisenberg as well as work by myself that is to be distributed on subway-riders "Metro-cards" addressing issues of public surveillance via DNA sampling.

As blood is deconstructed it appears less and less organic and more and more cultural. But the question that finally must be raised is how to politically repossess the idea behind "post-irony." In other words how does one re-think authenticity?

## Authenticity squared

From the perspective of an engaged art practice, this "repossession" begins

outside and between the circumscribed discourse of the present art world, that is in ongoing political conflicts over the demand for low income housing, the fight for legal and civil rights and control of public space, access to health care and abortion, opposition to police violence, as well as to an emergent surveillance culture in which the industrialization the human body and the pharmacological administration of a "collective" happiness is rapidly converging. However, this proposition leaves the problem of aesthetics in a quandary all too familiar to many socially engaged artists. Simply put: Too often art that has "authentic" political content is expected to be first and foremost politically "effective." This notion, itself in need of deconstruction, mechanically calls for art that is instrumental, unplayful, even pedantic.<sup>13</sup> One provisional solution to this difficulty is the concept of "remobilized realism" offered by scholar Bruce D. Campbell who ap-



Jayne Pagnucco debates the future of her son's blood disability in an age of genetic screening

Todd Ayoung marks the ordeal of Native Americans in Manhattan in the 1600s and 1990s





Janet Koenig and Lisa May Knauer examine the lives of abortionist Madame Restell and Anthony Comstock in the 1800s NYC.

plies this phrase to the work of a new generation of Mexican artists that quote the “official” mural-painting style of David Siqueiros, and Diego Rivera, but who apply this borrowing to specific, anti-government conflicts.<sup>1414</sup> Unlike the depthless and detached form of postmodernist appropriation, this “poaching” aims to re-motivate social-realist aesthetics for localized, subversive needs. At the same time it re-uses the “authority” found in the original reference for oppositional ends. But re-mobilizing or re-motivating realism also implies a commitment to representing the world not as immediately accessible “experience”, but as a culturally articulated complexity that remains “in-play” and open to a degree of interpretation.

Thus to speak about a post-ironic authenticity, in a politically useful way, is to do so to the second power: as a term both unnatural and overdetermined. It is to recognize the impossibility of grounding the authentic, the real, or the belongingness of things in any absolute or trans-historical foundation, while at the same time acknowledging the actuality of a non-discursive, material world that affects the way we frame this very discussion. It is, in a sense, authenticity squared: not a directly accessible “real”, but one nevertheless determined by material conditions both natural as well as cultural and historical.

Therefore if such endeavors as REPOhistory’s “repossession” of blood --a substance whose biological “authenticity” appears to be as close as my fingers are to this keyboard-- can re-locate human physiology as an ideological site not all that different from a building, battlefield, or public monument, then terms like “post-irony” are also open to such deliberation and “recuperation.” Similarly if there is a lesson here about irony and authenticity, perhaps it is this: That such concepts must always first be understood as a relationship between history and politics, even if at times understood in the most inelegant, banal sense of these terms. Rather than a naturally transparent ground from which to rethink the role of culture in America today, a post-ironic authenticity, if read in the compound fashion suggested here, could be the starting point for a political engaged art-activism in the coming millennium. Without this conceptual doubling-over however, the idea of authenticity championed by “post-ironists” such as Purdy, will soon lose its Waldenesque charm. At that point we might anticipate seeing the label “Common Things” on everything from whole grain cereals and history books to campaigns for law and order.

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The author wishes to thank the many REPOhistory artists and collaborators including. Tom Klem, Janet Koenig, Jim Costanzo, Lisa Maya Knauer, Jayne Pagnucco, George Spencer, Gregory Sholette, Mark O’Brien, Stephanie Basch, Kevin Pyle, Miguelangel Ruiz, Leela Ramotar, Carola Burroughs, Lisa Hecht, Trebor Scholtz, Jeni Sorkin, Brian Hand, Meryl Meisler, Oscar Tuczon, Andre Knight, Keith Christensen, Jasmine Gartner, Ivan Navarro, Jenni Polak, Marilyn Perez,



Sarah Vogwill, Cris Pietrapiana, Russet Lederman, David Sansone, Susan Schuppli, and the late Ed Eisenberg

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## NOTES

1 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1991, p. 9.

2 see Gregory Sholette, "News From Nowhere: Art Activism and After, Report from New York," in Summer 1999 issue of *Third Text*.

3 the project was entitled "Points of Reference" and was curated in 1988 in Graz Austria by Werner Fenz.

4 Internal REPOhistory position paper 10, 89, by Sholette, Ayong, Pagnucco, Knauer Prawn, et al.

5 Lisa Maya Knauer from an unpublished paper on REPOhistory.

6 For a description of the groups formation and its first project see Lippard, Lucy R. "Anti-Amnesia," in *Z* magazine 5:12, Dec. 1992, pp. 63-66.

8 For more on the battle over Civil Disturbances see David Gonzalez "Lampposts As a Forum For Opinion," *York New York Times*. May 20 1998, (Metro) pg. B1, and Stuart W. Elliot "Some Legal History Still Being Overturned," *NY Times*. City Sect. 11/15/98, p 5.

12 see Douglas Starr's book *Blood: An Epic History of Medicine and Commerce*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York: 1998

13 Ineed, curator and medical doctor Köan Jeff Baysa, is currently organizing an exhibition entitled "Blood Culture: Images and Issues of Blood in Contemporary Art"

14 On December 31 1999 Police Commissioner Safir outlined the NYPD DNA collection plan stating that "The innocents have nothing to fear..."

12 Blood typing is the standard system for classifying blood using the letters A, B, AB, O and so forth. Developed in 1900 it separates individuals into pools of like-tissue types and is indifferent to differences of class, gender and race. Yet despite this "color-blind" system the US military and most Southern hospitals continued to segregate "white" and "negro" blood up until the late 1960s thus pointing to the mutability of abstract knowledge by actual systems of power.

13 Fortunately, few interesting artists pay attention to such Calvinism, which can often be imposed in different ways, not only by the limited perspective of current art discourse, by occasionally by non-art activists in communities and political organizations.

14 Bruce D. Campbell is on the faculty of Modern and Classical Languages at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN. His phrase "Remobilized Realism" comes from an unpublished paper "Dissident Revisions in National Form: Mural Art after the Mexican School," presented at the College Art Association Conference in Los Angeles in 1999.