

Teach-in with Gran Fury

Occupy Wall Street Arts & Labor Teach-In with Gran Fury

Friday, March 23, 7-9 PM

Einstein Auditorium, Barney Building,

34 Stuyvesant Street between Second and Third Avenues, NYU

What can the Occupy movement learn from the intersection of visual arts and direct action in groups like Gran Fury and ACT UP? To explore this question, please join Arts & Labor for a teach-in and discussion with members of Gran Fury, an art collective active from 1988 to 1995 that grew out of ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power).

Some of the questions that might emerge from this discussion include: How did ACT UP and Gran Fury target not only broader cultural attitudes about AIDS, but specific laws, regulations, and government policies, and did that require tactics different from those of OWS? How were specific targets (for instance, access to healthcare and the price of prescription drugs) part of a larger economic system? How did ACT UP and Gran Fury critique these systemic problems, and how can this critique be advanced today? How did a movement that began largely through the efforts of white, gay men deal with issues of diversity? How can activist groups build alliances and coalitions? How do we navigate the relation between a smaller affinity group and a larger social movement?

Central to our discussion is the question of how artists and art workers participate in social movements and how art, activism, and direct action functioned then and now.

About Gran Fury

Gran Fury originally formed as an affinity group to organize an exhibition on the AIDS crisis at the New Museum, "Let the Record Show. . ." (1987), and went on to create numerous media interventions in the form of posters, billboards, and public service announcements aired on television. They produced such visually striking graphics as "The Government Has Blood on Its Hands," "Read My Lips," "Kissing Doesn't Kill," and "Women Don't Get AIDS (They Just Die From It)." An exhibition of their works is currently on view through March 17 at 80WSE, New York University. An online archive of their work is available from the New York Public Library at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeysearchresult.cfm?parent_id=1060927&word=%3E.

For a brief summary of their history, see the interview with Douglas Crimp here: http://www.actupny.org/indexfolder/GRAN%20FURY_on_ARTFORUM.pdf.

This event is part of an ongoing series of educational initiatives and direct actions organized by the Occupy Wall Street Arts & Labor group.

Arts & Labor is a working group founded in conjunction with the New York General Assembly for #occupywallstreet. We are artists and interns, writers and educators, art handlers and designers, administrators, curators, assistants, and students. We are all art workers and members of the 99%.

Arts & Labor is dedicated to exposing and rectifying economic inequalities and exploitative working conditions in our fields through direct action and educational initiatives. By forging coalitions, fighting for fair labor practices, and reimagining the structures and institutions that frame our work, Arts & Labor aims to achieve parity for every member of the 99%.

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