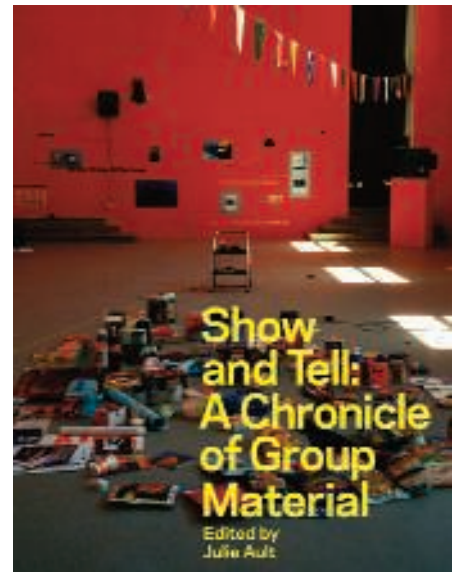


Show And Tell

A Chronicle of Group Material

The first monograph on the New York based artists' collaborative known for its socio-political art practice. Organised by former group members in keeping with the methods and aims Group Material employed, the book charts the origins, processes, developments, projects and contexts of the group's activities, and draws heavily from Group Material's archive, including original documents, photographs, drawings, correspondence, artefacts, anecdotal information and texts. Group Material created 45 projects during its period of activities (1979–1996), each represented through installation photography and information from original proposals, exhibition statements, press releases, responses, etc. One emblematic exhibition project, *AIDS Timeline*, is examined in detail, from collected material and newly conducted interviews. Essays by Julie Ault, Tim Rollins and Doug Ashford further illuminate the methods and principles of Group Material's practice.



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Top: *Show and Tell* cover.
Clockwise from above left: *DA ZI BAOS*, 1982;
Democracy, 1990; *AIDS Timeline*, 1991.
Next page: spreads from *Show and Tell*.

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Figuring that Market might be Group Materials' final interior exhibition, it is designed to reference early shows by using red walls and is planned to be composed exclusively of mass-produced materials and informational artifacts rather than artworks. Specifically it addresses the ways in which market culture is adopting previously marginalized ideological positions and ideals, including those associated with feminism and civil rights. Curating for this occasion means investigating lines of inquiry in promotional culture and a great deal of shopping. A wallet that Julie bought in the early eighties, with the word Freedom silk-screened on it, is used as the iconic emblem for Market. The group produces a set of give-away promotional items including "quick-slit" letter

openers, bumper stickers, "Keepit Clips," and small shopping bags, all with the Freedom wallet image printed on them in lieu of a company logo. Together with a catalog, these elements form the show's publication. 150 advertising slogans that make no direct mention of a product or brand but poetically appeal to "fundamental" concepts about life and society and suggest abstract yet ideologically toned directives, are collected and made into vinyl type transfers in various sizes and colors installed directly on the walls. This language loosely captions the installed objects and screened videos.

Fall 1995. Doug and Julie collaboratively teach the Interdisciplinary Seminar at The Cooper Union School of Art.

Left to right: Thomas Eggerer, Jochen Klein in supermarket, Munich
 -> Collection of materials for Market, awaiting installation
 -> Following page: Video stills, Cops: Caught in the Act, How to Organize Your Home, screened in Market.



CONSTITUTION

TO I CONTRADICT MYSELF.
 THEY WILL THEN I CONTRADICT MYSELF.
 (I AM LARGE, I CONTAIN MULTITUDES).
 WALT WHITMAN 1860-1893

HOW TO CELEBRATE THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BEYOND OF IMAGINING THAT WE PAY TRIBUTE NOT TO A YELLOWED DOCUMENT VARNISHED WITH THICK PLATE GLASS IN WASHINGTON, D.C., BUT RATHER TO A LIVING BODY - LIKE A 200-YEAR-OLD PERSON - STRATEGICALLY VISIONARY AND WISD, BUT NOT BETTER, PERHAPS THE MOST COMPLACENT OF ITS OWN GOOD INFLUENCE AND PERFECTION, WITH THE ADDITIONAL DILEMMA OF PRACTICING WHAT IT PREACHES IN THE EVERYDAY REALITY OF TODAY'S AMERICAN PEOPLE.

MANY WANT TO GIVE THE CONSTITUTION THE KIND OF BIRTHDAY PARTY, CELEBRATING A CELEBRATION OF ISSUES, OF QUESTIONS? GROUP MATERIAL THOUGHT THE CONSTITUTION BY REWRITING IT ASK WITNESS. IN THIS RESPECT, OUR EXHIBITION CONSTITUTION IS A GOOD-SPRITED TONGUE RINGING THE CHIMES OF FINE ARTICLES, EVERYDAY OBJECTS, TALK ART OBJECTS AND FURNITURE ALL FOR OUR GUESTS OF HONOR THE SAME QUESTION OF MANY SCIENTIFIC VOICES AND ANSWERS: WHY DID YOU COME ABOUT AND FOR WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN 200 YEARS AGO AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN TODAY? WHY HAVE YOU SUCCEEDED AND FAILED AT THE SAME TIME? HOW CAN WE PROTECT YOU? HOW DO YOU PROTECT US?

FOR THIS EXHIBITION AT THE TOPIC GALLERY IN POLANDINA, GROUP MATERIAL HAS TAKEN THE CONSTITUTION-AS-DOCUMENT, AS A HISTORICAL OBJECT, AND ENLARGED THE ORIGINAL CALLIGRAPHY, TRANSFORMING IT FROM AN ARTIFACT INTO A SITE - AN ARCHA WHERE WE MAY OBSERVE THE BATTLE BETWEEN PROMISES AND DOUBTS AS MANIFESTED IN THE STREETS OF AMERICA DAILY.

CONTRADICTION - BETWEEN IDEAL AND LIVED REALITY, BETWEEN HEALTH AND POVERTY, BETWEEN CONSCIOUS CULTURE AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCE - AS THE FUNDAMENTAL, HISTORICAL TRADITION OF OUR UNITED STATES, GROUP MATERIAL IS CONSTITUTION AS A CRITICAL PRACTICE TO THIS HISTORICAL CONSTITUTION. THIS PRIMAL AMERICAN DESIGN FOR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM THAT AT ONCE VINCIPACATES AND TUMBLING THE PRICES OF OUR BEST-KEPT HISTORIES, RECONSTRUCTING THE PRICES OF OUR BEST-KEPT HISTORIES, YOU ARE MAKING THROUGH THE MINDS OF THE CONSTITUTION, YOU ARE MAKING THROUGH THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE LIVED EXPERIENCE AND ACTIONS OF YOUR DAILY LIFE, TRANSFORMING CONSTITUTION FROM A NOON TO A YEAR. INTO SOCIAL ACTION.

MAY IS MORE DANGEROUS TO THE FORMING OF A MORE PERFECT UNION THAN THE ILLUSION THAT WE CAN DO SO MUCH. PLEASE STATE ALREADY? NOW TO CELEBRATE OUR CONSTITUTION? BY SPOILING THE PARTY WITH QUESTIONS.

- GROUP MATERIAL

