

Yet another article about Culture-jamming.

I'm into the fourth and last area of filling out my Art Thesis; this area is about hacking. I am learning so much about the coolness of computer type of art that it's not even funny – having so much fun writing my thesis that I kind of don't want it to end. I found a whole site just dedicated to an international art and artificial life contest – someone won a prize by designing a plant holder with an automatic watering apparatus that will water according to how high Home Depot's stock is that day. The plant was bought from Home Depot. (<http://tinyurl.com/byaq9>.)

So lately I have come across <http://www.rtmark.com> thanks to my Main Professor. This is a site where people (activist-type people) can post their projects for others to carry out or wait for sponsors. I can't explain it any better than their recent press release:

Since 1996, the RTMARK brand has accrued value by providing key services to artists, activists and the intellectual community. The RTMARK system supports the incubation of cutting-edge cultural ventures, while providing a unique opportunity for private investors to sponsor these activities. By working with the RTMARK company, activists enjoy anonymity, limited liability, and increased exposure to resources and other activists. Furthermore, RTMARK creates awareness of the corporate citizenship model by imagining an investment system driven by cultural capital.

Here's a sample project:

Isolate the Terrorist Gene

Conduct believable research into isolating a "terrorist" gene. Publish a study indicating that this new information can be used to prevent terrorists from being born. Become completely self-convinced and crusade your findings endlessly. ...

My professor sent me to this page because I was looking for info on the Yes Men and especially the Barbie Liberation Army, one of my most favorite pranks ever. In 1989 the Barbie Liberation Organization was formed – they “absconded with” hundreds of anorexic talking voice-box Barbie dolls who said among other things, “Math is Hard” and “Let's Go Shopping!” and performed electronic surgery on them, switching their voice-boxes with those of the action-figure G.I. Joes, who yelled phrases such as “Vengeance is mine!” The dolls were subsequently returned to the stores in boxes with stickers that said “Call your local TV news.”

Linked to sniggle.net (the culture-jammers encyclopedia) is some press from the prank, one of the unsuspecting victims was quite pleased with the tampered doll:

"I love him. I like everything about him," he said as he and three neighborhood friends played with the doll. "He's teaching me not to fight."

His parents are thrilled, too. Although Zachariah has water guns, his parents say they oppose violent toys and were unwilling to buy the G.I. Joe.

The doll was Zachariah's grandparents' idea. The parents were shocked, but tickled, when the doll turned out the way it did.” - *Brigette Greenberg, San Diego (AP) from <http://tinyurl.com/crc42>.*

This is the kind of art I completely love, the instructional, waking-up kind of art. There is just so much of it to write about though, I don't even know where to start. And I worry that I'm going to miss something really blatant. And what I really need to be doing is finding some sort of critique on this type of stuff and then quoting the critic.

It feels weird to be finishing up something that's going to help define me and how much money I might be able to make in the future. A finished, accepted thesis allows you to put some more letters after your name and ostensibly make more money if you ever try to get a job outside of town. It's cool that I ended up getting letters about something I really love, and it's cool that I finally figured out that I really love it.