

# HOW to '92



Flathead Headress collected  
by white's to decorate homes



After priests and U.S gov't  
banned cultural ways such as  
speaking Salish and drumming  
singing or Dancing. Sold at Sotheby's  
today for thousands of dollars to  
white collector's seeking Romance in  
their lives.

Model Actions for a  
Post-Columbian World



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Texts not otherwise attributed are written by the editorial committee; artists' names are in parentheses.

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Cover: Jaune Quick-To-See Smith: detail from 1991 series "Paper Dolls for a Post Columbian World with Ensembles Contributed by U.S. Government" (photo: Dick Ruddy, courtesy Bernice Steinbaum Gallery.)

Above image: An arrow-swallower, and a shield near Galisteo, New Mexico, circa A. D. 1400.

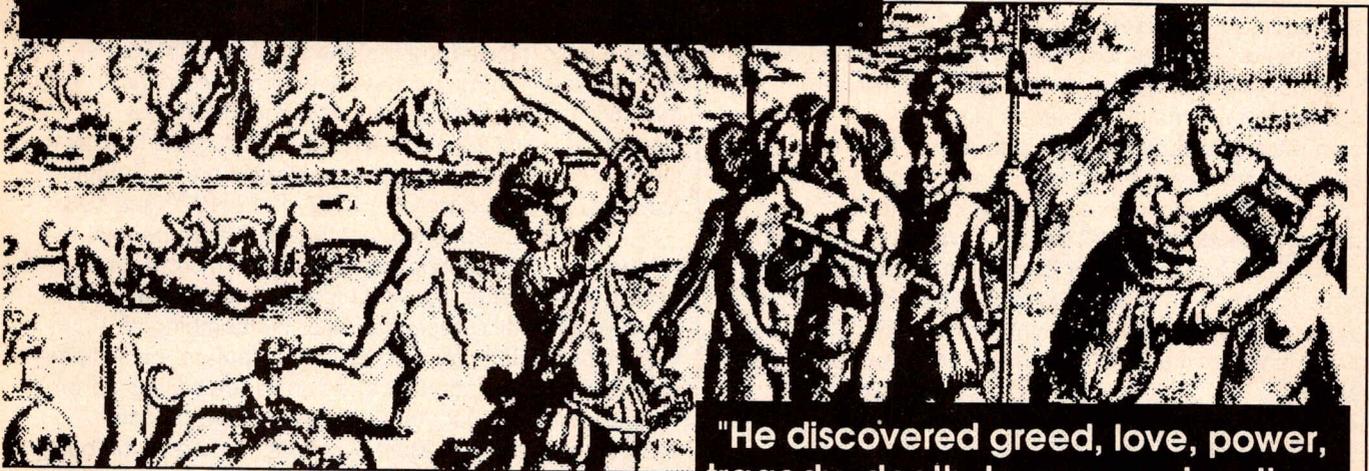
Left drawing: Ismael Frigerio

HOW TO '92 IS A PROJECT OF THE ALLIANCE FOR CULTURAL DEMOCRACY'S CAMPAIGN FOR A POST-COLUMBIAN WORLD. IT IS INTENDED AS AN ONGOING MANUAL FOR CULTURAL ACTIVISM FOR 1992 AND BEYOND. PASS THIS BOOKLET ON!

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# INTRODICTMENT

## CAMPAIGN FOR A POST-COLUMBIAN WORLD



Theodore de Bry/Deborah Small

**1492:** Cristobal Colon — who has never before commanded a ship — sails the ocean blue in search of a passage to India and accidentally lands in the Caribbean. He steals the reward for first sight of land from a member of his crew. On arrival, his scribe draws up a document stating that this land (now the Bahamas) belongs to Spain, although it is inhabited by naked people “with handsome bodies and very good faces...the best people in the world and the gentlest...they love their neighbors as themselves.” (Nevertheless, two days after landing, Colon is seeking a place to build a fortress.) Not understanding the Natives’ language, Colon says they “did not speak.”

This moment has been immortalized by Admiral Samuel Morison: “...the New World gracefully yielded her virginity to the conquering Castilians.” Although others have been there before him, Colon’s officially sponsored expedition makes public the discovery of a “New World,” unleashing the age of modern colonialism. Norsemen found North America and settled in Newfoundland in the 10th and 11th centuries, but Colon’s mandate from the Spanish crown was to “discover and *acquire*.” “My desire,” he writes, “was to pass by no single island without taking possession of it.” On his first voyage, Colon sees three mermaids with the faces of men. Alas, no artists are included in Colon’s expeditionary forces. In fact, writes Kirkpatrick Sale, “apparently not once in all of Spain’s history of discovery did it send out an artist of any sort.”

Through negligence, Colon’s flagship, the Santa Maria, is wrecked off “Espanola” (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic), but Guacanagari, the local Taino leader, saves all its people and cargo and helps them set up the first colony. (He will later flee to the mountains, and dies “a wanderer, ruined and deprived of his state.”) When Colon sails back to Spain, he kidnaps several “Indians,” who are to be given to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and exhibited in Europe along with plants, birds, and some gold. In **1493** (partly financed by wealth stolen from the Spanish Jews, who were expelled from Spain, like the Moors, in 1492), Columbus returns to the Caribbean with 17 ships,

**“He discovered greed, love, power, tragedy, death, treason and mutiny. Then he discovered America”.**

(IBM ad for television miniseries on Columbus)

1200 men, 20 purebred dogs, cows, chickens, pigs, and alien seeds. Environmental destruction begins in earnest. (Colon will later notice that the loss of forests results in less mist and rain.) This time he stays for three years searching for gold. Each “Indian” over the age of fourteen is obliged to deliver a certain amount of gold. Those failing to meet their quotas are punished by mutilation (hands and limbs cut off) and rebels are burned at the stake. Since there is very little gold, people flee or are killed.

Although Colon finds “many statues in the shape of women and many masklike heads very well made,” he decides that “these people have no religious beliefs, nor are they idolaters. They are very gentle and do not know what evil is; nor do they kill others, nor steal; and they are without weapons... aware that there is a God in the heaven...” Yet it is not long before Colon is advising his men to attack Native people; he is “pleased because now the Indians would fear the Christians.” Good “Indians” are called Tainos and bad “Indians” are called Caribs, who are purportedly cannibals, but Colon remarks that “since they were armed they must be people of intelligence.” He sends his hunting dogs, who are said to be able to distinguish “pagan” from Christian tracks, to hunt down Native people. He collects slaves to pay back his debts.

On February 17, **1495**, Colon rounds up 1600 people and takes 550 healthy males and females onto the caravels; the rest are divided up among the colonists remaining on land. Over 200 “Indians” die en route to Europe. (Of the possibly 3 million people living in the area in 1492, only 200 will remain in 1542.)

In **1498**, Colon’s Third Voyage is manned by pardoned criminals. (Meanwhile, the Portugese Vasco de Gama has found the route to the real Indies.) Colon finds the mouth of the Orinoco and guesses that Latin America is a continent. He has begun to call his domain the “West

Indies" and to understand this is indeed a "new world." In 1500, 340 gallows are installed on Espanola, and Colon himself is returned to Spain in chains for greed and bad government. Eventually exonerated, he leaves again in 1502 — badly crippled— for his fourth voyage of exploration. All four of his ships are lost and he is marooned on Jamaica for a year. He sails near the coasts of Honduras and Panama, and is only 200 miles from the Yucatan, but the mainland eludes him.

Colon returns to Spain in 1504 and dies in May 1506, claiming to be ruined but in fact leaving a fortune.

In 1505 African slavery begins in the Caribbean since not enough "Indians" remain to work the colonies.

The Dominican friar Bartolome de las Casas, who comes to Espanola in 1502, is relatively sympathetic to the Native people and maintains, unlike many, that they have souls. He writes that "the Spaniards made bets as to who would slit a man in two, or cut off his head at one blow; or they opened up his bowels. They tore the babes from their mothers' breasts by the feet and dashed their heads against the rocks. [They burned thirteen Indians alive] in honor and reverence of our Redeemer and the Twelve Apostles."

In 1511, Hatuey, cacique of the Guahaba region of Cuba, is offered glory and eternal rest if he agrees to be baptized before being burned alive. Hatuey asks: "Are there Christians in that heaven?" "Yes" is the reply. Hatuey chooses hell, and the fire is lit.

The enslavement of Native peoples continues in North America, with Corte Real, Verrazano, Gomes and Frobisher kidnapping mothers, babies, and men through the 16th century, although European public opinion eventually turns against the practice.

By 1538 the hemisphere is being called the Americas after Amerigo Vespucci. Only Las Casas protests that the "new" continents should be called Columba.

1570: A Spanish mission in what will become tidewater Virginia is wiped out by "Indians."

1607: The second successful invasion of the Americas is begun by the British in Jamestown. Columbus Day is celebrated in the U.S. in 1792 (and again in 1892), but no statue is erected to Colon in Spain until 350 years after his death. His reputation aggrandizes slowly in the New World and then spreads to the Old. Las

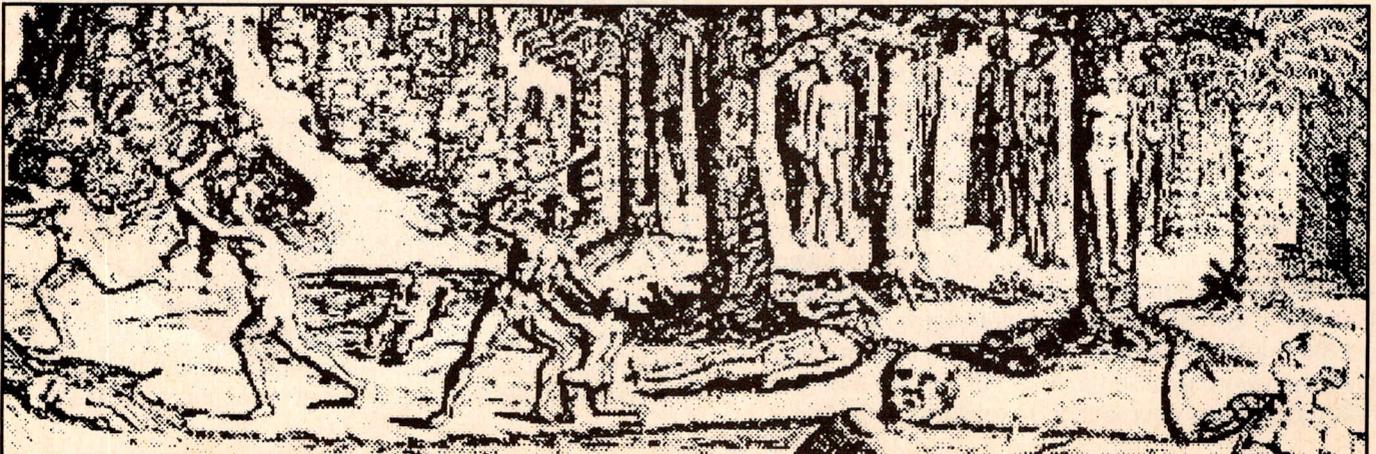
Casa's paraphrases of Colon's journals are unearthed in the 19th century and the heroicization process — compatible with the American myth of the Frontier — begins in earnest.

In 1866, the Vatican begins beatification proceedings for Cristobal Colon. The process is halted when it is acknowledged that the putative saint had a mistress and introduced slavery into the Americas. It is only in 1971 (after a law passed in 1968) that Columbus Day is established as a legal federal holiday in the U.S.A., although various presidential proclamations and local statutes date from 1907, 1912, 1920 and 1934.

1992: Despite the fact that for Native people, the celebration of Columbus (and the trail of murder, theft, and broken treaties that followed his "discovery") is akin to celebrating Hitler's ascendance or the bombing of Hiroshima, 1992 is marked by official fanfare, exhibitions, events; replicas of the first three ships are sailing in from various points abroad; three solar-powered "space caravels are racing to Mars. Anything named Columbus is a focus of attention."

The story of Columbus being told in 1992 features the arrival of "civilization" (European) in a land "unowned" by the hundreds of "primitive" Native nations living there, and thus ripe for the inevitable "March of Progress." The obliteration of 98 per cent of the original population of the hemisphere by massacre, warfare, starvation, and imported disease is pictured as an unfortunate side effect. The official story ignores the gross injustices and incredible suffering that occurred along this march — first of all to the indigenous peoples of the hemisphere, but also to an Africa still mourning the loss of her abducted and enslaved populations, and to the nations of Europe and Asia affected by the industrial revolution's habit of driving people off the land and onto boats.

The Columbus Quincentennial raises a matrix of complex issues relating to the environment, racism, intervention, access to freedom of expression, sovereignty, autonomy, land rights and cultural rights. This booklet offers some alternative ways in which cultural workers can combat the official story. Our focus is not just on Colon-bashing and countering the widespread misinformation about this "hero," but on re-viewing the 500 years of colonialism which he symbolizes, and opening up more hopeful vistas for a Post-Columbian era.





*The white man does not understand the Indian for the reason that he does not understand America. He is too far removed from its formative processes. The roots of the tree of his life have not yet grasped the rock and soil. The white man is still troubled with primitive fears...He shudders still with the memory of the loss of his forefathers upon its scorching deserts and forbidding mountain-tops. The man from Europe is still a foreigner and an alien. And he still hates the man who questioned his path across the continent.... (Luther Standing Bear, Oglala)*

\*The primary sources for this text were Kirkpatrick Sale's The Conquest of Paradise, Columbus' journals from the first voyage, and Tzvetan Todorov's The Conquest of America.

# LINKAGES



**The social, economic, and political relations established by Columbus and his followers affect how we live and work today, challenging us to envision a different kind of future. The Post-Columbian world will similarly be affected by our understanding of the links between past and present.**

**Environment:** In contrast to the holistic, earth-centered indigenous peoples, the Europeans saw the natural world as something to be conquered, exploited, and turned into commodities. Lands were “cleared” for settlement and for profit, disrupting and destroying indigenous agricultures. Single crop plantation economies quickly depleted the soil, and in the relentless search for mineral wealth, mountains were torn open and riverbeds filled with silt. Old-growth forests were cut, changing the climate and causing floods and erosion. Thousands of species of flora and fauna disappeared.

Since then, skewed development policies, combined with racism, have produced further imbalances. Many “Third World” countries have lax environmental laws in order to attract European or North American firms prevented from doing noxious business at home. In the U.S., most toxic waste sites are located near communities of color. On Indian reservations, where unemployment exceeds 50%, some tribal governments have even lobbied to take toxic waste sites for economic benefits.

Governments and businesses are continually scheming to exploit oil, mineral and other resources on indigenous lands — from James Bay in Canada to the Black Hills of South Dakota to the Amazon rainforest. Issues of indigenous sovereignty and cultural autonomy are intimately linked with environmental preservation. Affected communities need to have a voice in devising solutions, so that proposed remedies do not replicate the colonialist outlook that created the problems in the first place.



**Colonialism, racism and foreign policy:** As Latin American countries became nominally independent, starting in the early 19th century, foreign domination didn't end. The Monroe Doctrine proclaimed the hemisphere as the U.S.'s back yard. European colonizers were replaced by U.S. bankers and businessmen, accompanied or followed by soldiers, military "advisors" or simply armaments to "protect American investments" (Guatemala, Dominican Republic), oppose nationalist movements (Nicaragua, El Salvador) and ward off the Red Menace (Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua). U.S. investments and loans, and local military spending, led to a foreign debt that has crippled most of Latin America.

The U.S. continues to see much of the world as its "back yard." This neo-colonialism is both military (from Vietnam, the Philippines, and the Persian Gulf to Korea, where over 40,000 U.S. troops are stationed) and economic (as U.S. firms seek cheaper sources of labor in Mexico, the Philippines, Malaysia, Korea, and elsewhere).



**Borders/Immigration:** The current borders in the Western hemisphere are largely artificial creations, established through wars and business deals. Most of the southwestern U.S. was taken by force from Mexico. The resulting Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) guaranteed free passage across the border and protected Mexican land titles, language, and cultural rights. Like other treaties it was systematically broken and/or disregarded. Today, the Marines, the Navy, the National Guard and the Immigration and Naturalization Service enforce a border that splits families and communities. Nevertheless, Chicanos are organizing land-grant reclamations, and a vibrant, hybrid border culture has emerged to challenge these territorial, cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Deliberate underdevelopment, IMF-induced austerity programs, economic embargos, civil wars, and U.S.-backed counter-insurgency campaigns bring a constant flow of immigrants to North America. Agriculture, hotels, and other areas of the Southwest's economy are dependent on undocumented workers, who face imprisonment and deportation if caught, and racism and economic marginalization if they stay. U.S. immigration policy favors white refugees from formerly Communist countries or from regimes unfriendly or ideologically incompatible with the U.S. So-called economic refugees — like the ancestors of most U.S. citizens — are usually deported.



**Land/Homelessness:** Native people were the first "homeless" in this hemisphere. Hundreds of "Indian Wars" were fought from the 16th to the 20th century as Native peoples resisted dispossession. The government and multinational corporations still covet the natural resources and lands of Native nations and many communities are divided over related issues. Some tribes have regained (and lost) territories and rights in court, while others have won and lost cases concerning sacred sites and religious freedom. In Latin America, some indigenous communities have simply re-occupied their traditional lands and more such invasions are planned specifically for 1992.

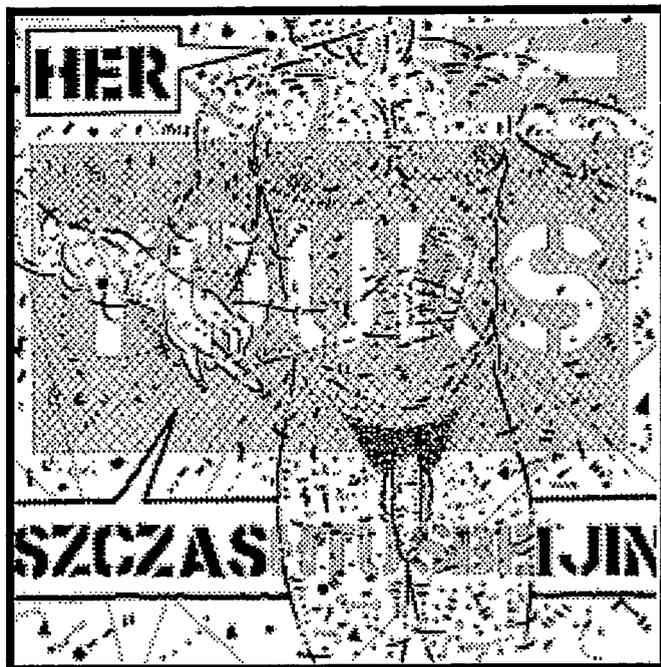
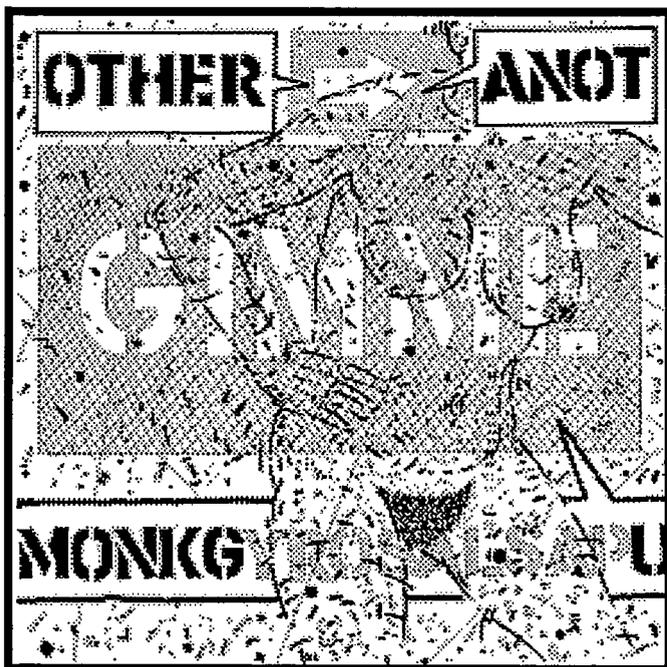
1992 also marks the 50th anniversary of the infamous Executive Order 9066, which put thousands of U.S. citizens and permanent residents of Japanese descent in internment camps during World War II, forcing them — often permanently — out of homes and businesses.

This cycle of dispossession continues and the results are visible on the street corners of this country today.

**Gender/Sexuality:** The conquistadors brought European patriarchal attitudes and practices and did their best to instill these values in the "new world." Both conquerors and priests were disturbed by the egalitarian gender relations of many native nations (and their tolerance for homosexuality and role reversal).

"America" was idealized and represented as a woman. Native women were subjected to rape and brutalization by the Spanish. The first native revolt in the Americas in 1496 was a response to the rape of indigenous women in Espanola. Many slave owners tried to prevent the establishment of stable families among African Americans, and women were subjected to the unwanted sexual attentions of their owners, who usually denied paternity of their children.

Racist, colonialist, and sexist/homophobic attitudes have shaped reproductive policies and laws governing sexuality. Abortion became criminal in the U.S. in the late 19th century partly because the upsurge in abortions among white middle class women sparked fears of race suicide. Early proponents of birth control utilized eugenicist arguments to control the fertility of women of color.



Today a disproportionate number of North American women of color are subjected to involuntary sterilization, while US support for population control (almost always directed at the Third World) and critical health care needs world wide are subject to foreign policy shifts, a situation that has been intensified by the AIDS crisis.



**Repossessing History/Education/Culture:** During the conquest, artifacts, records, and art were destroyed. From the early mission schools to 20th-century boarding schools, Native Americans were punished for speaking their own languages and practicing their own religions and cultures. Enslaved Africans were stripped of their languages and their cultures were forced underground. In the '90s, education is hotly contested terrain. Bilingual education and attempts to broaden standard curricula to include the histories of the disenfranchised are under attack. Several states have passed "English Only" laws so that children in schools and adults in the workplace are punished for speaking Spanish or other languages. Reclaiming history means not only setting the record straight about the past, but also probing what it means for us today.

# Reframing the

# Official Picture



From museum exhibitions, conferences, essay contests and mass recitals of the Pledge of Allegiance, to flower shows, regattas, Hollywood movies (two, and counting), and an arranged marriage between statues of Christopher Columbus and Lady Liberty, 1992 promises to offer a dizzying array of spectacles carrying the official imprimatur of the Quincentenary Jubilee Commission. In planning activist responses to these events, it won't work simply to protest from the outside, vilifying Columbus and jeering at mainstream institutions' various attempts to heroicize him. So infiltrate. Interrupt business as usual and make them work for us by questioning, reversing, or complicating their messages.

## Museums

You don't have to passively accept what the mainstream museums offer. Be a guerrilla docent. Organize your own guided tours.

Analyze the problems of an objectionable (or, still more challenging, those of an outwardly unobjectionable) exhibition. Research the subject. Figure out what myths need debunking. Look into the ownership and history of the individual artworks; for instance, if it is a show of "ethnographic materials," how were they acquired? If it's expensive art objects, where did the collectors' money come from? Are there direct or ironic connections to the art's content? Who funded the exhibition? Is it a corporation that is whitewashing its image in any particular way?

Scope out the joint (layout, guards, when and how official tours and outside school tours are organized).

This is theatre. If you don't want to do it yourself, find an articulate, knowledgeable, and funny person to be your guerrilla docent, someone who is at ease with public speaking and can think on her feet. S/he can be a teacher, historian, artist, actor. If the subject matter concerns colonization, race, gender, be sure the spokesperson is appropriate. Involve local African American, Latin American, Asian American or Native American studies programs if there is a nearby college. If you are researching unfamiliar ground, work out a rough script.

Enter the museum dressed straight. Meet a few accomplices inside. Gather in front of the first target work and begin to speak in a loud, clear voice. (Others can take notes.) You will inevitably attract or be audible to more curious people, and you'll keep their attention if you are lively and informative. Don't be obviously politicized. This is an exercise in subtle and gradual consciousness raising. The trick is to sound absolutely "normal" at the beginning and work up to the more drastic statements. Talking about a few works will usually do it. If you go on too long, you lose your audience. At the end, you can hand out a fact sheet or reading list and encourage continuing dialogue. If you want to call journalists, ask them to participate quietly in the process; no cameras, lights, etc.

### Libraries

The 50,000-member American Library Association has passed a resolution calling for more even-handed treatment of the Quincentennial. Borrow their official credibility by invoking this resolution in your activities. You can work individually, but you'll have more leverage as an ad hoc group.

There are several entry points into your public library system. Most libraries stage public programs. Propose a series of speakers, media; be sure and have it all worked out, and on paper, when you meet with them. Perhaps you are a storyteller and can initiate a children's program. (For this you might even get paid!)



Or you can ask your library to produce a bibliography and/or a resource list (including films, publications, organizations) of locally available materials. They'll appreciate it if you've already done some of the work. (There are already some good thorough bibliographies out there; see resources section p. 32.)

Ask to participate in the book and/or media selection process. Most public libraries allow patrons to recommend books, films, tapes or journals. Prepare a short list with all the necessary information (author/director, publisher/distributor, date of production, address and phone, brief description) and make it clear that they should acquire these materials, not just order them on interlibrary loan.

Offer to construct a Quincentennial exhibit for the library's display cases. In large library systems, these come from a central office; in smaller ones they are arranged by the local director. If you bring materials to your initial contact, your proposal will be all the more appealing.

Contact the branch library director and ask to put flyers and newsletters on the bulletin boards and giveaway racks. If there's any trouble, demand equal access, make a stink about intellectual freedom and the First Amendment.

In all of the above, be civil, but firm. Make sure you follow up with a phone call about three weeks after you submit your proposals. Send reviews that back up your recommendations. If results aren't forthcoming, keep pestering them and get more resolute and militant.

## Historical Societies

Virtually every small town has some sort of historical exhibit. And virtually all of them begin "history" with the advent of white settlers. These are great places to start revising local history from the ground up (especially if you can get coverage in the daily paper). Go talk to the women (almost always) who run it and offer to put together a 1992 exhibit about history before the settlers, past and present information about the town's native "hosts." This can be done very simply by xeroxing and photostating materials from books, or you can get more involved and find local artifacts, bring in collaborators from the local Native American community; ask them to give talks and/or arts and crafts demonstrations or to connect the historical data with local environmental, archeological, or land-use issues.

Your audience will probably be basically conservative, and if you want to move them, start slow or you may not get your foot in the door. Radical information and opinions will be more effective in this context if conveyed in moderate language.

Everyone loves old photographs and maps. They can be enlarged and combined with short quotations from primary sources. Make your work distinct from the permanent exhibits. Do it colorfully or with striking graphic or installation design. Avoid condescension. Be funny where appropriate. (Avoid the small-type, glass-case, musty-flowers approach unless you can make a real artwork of it.)

Appeal to family histories. Ask a series of questions that will make people think about the economic and historical forces that brought them to this place. A good hook is surviving place names and other local contributions made by Native civilizations. Some families may even have original documents about the initial contact. Provide a brief reading list to take home. Get schoolteachers involved. They may ask you to come and talk to classes, so make your exhibit portable and it can be used again after it's out of the historical society.

## One example of a successful ongoing action

The evolving campaign in response to the Florida State Museum's "First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570," an exhibition that has been traveling around the country for the past two years. When it opened in Gainesville, Florida, in fall 1989, "First Encounters" was the focus of an intense campaign by Native American scholars and activists who were critical of its one-sided Eurocentric account. A ten-day encampment at the museum sought neither to shut down the exhibition nor to block public access to it, but centered on a demand for a 1000-square-foot addition that would present a Native American perspective on the same events.

This demand to open public discussion of issues raised by the exhibit has been a key to the success of the campaign. Protest organizers have provided detailed critiques of the show and urged the public to view it critically. The results have been mixed, but encouraging. Some changes have been made by the curators; public events have been organized to focus on Native American perspectives. A committee formed in St. Paul brings together Native, African, European and Latino American communities and has formulated new goals, including the hiring of Native American curators to assemble an alternative exhibit, a critique of "First Encounters," and a resource center, both on-site.

The "First Encounters" campaign demonstrates the importance of active Native leadership; the need to articulate coherent critiques that expand rather than close public debate; the necessity of diverse grassroots participation; an emphasis on anti-colonialist issues and setting the historical record straight; and an openness to working with sympathetic mainstream presenters under conditions where we can change the nature of the events themselves.

# MEDIA ACTIVISM



Jerry Kearns

## Mainstream Media

Look critically at how the issues of 1992 are being covered on the news, on talk shows, on TV movies. How often are women, people of color, working-class people allowed to speak for themselves? Gather people to watch, discuss, and criticize TV shows in public or group settings. The "Media Bias Scorecard" prepared by FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) is a good guide (see Resources section).

Phone and write local and national media outlets demanding that they be more inclusive. Suggest specific spokespersons. Set up a media committee to coordinate this work. If you see something you don't like, call immediately to voice your objections and suggest alternatives. A phone or fax zap can be very successful; after a deluge of calls, PBS finally agreed to air the alternative "Gulf Crisis TV Project" during Desert Storm. Use your local radio station to galvanize protest.

## Make Your Own Media

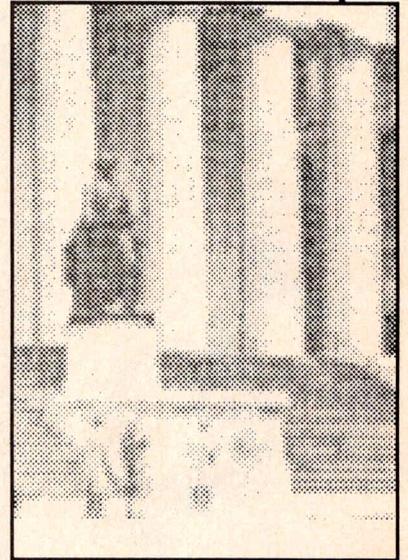
Become a Camcorder Commando! Cheap, accessible, easy-to-use video technology means that you don't have to rely on what you see on TV.

Here's how:

- Get the footage: be sure there's a camcorder at all your demonstrations, performances, workshops, press conferences. Cops will be on either better or worse behavior if video cameras are present. Either way, the visual record can be extremely important. But be warned, carrying a camcorder does not guarantee your safety.

- Contact your local public access cable station. All cable franchises are required to provide airtime to any group or individual in the community, as well as training, staff, studio and editing facilities and equipment. Airtime is available on a first-come, first-served basis. You may not get a great time slot to start with, but it improves if you become a regular. You have to do your own publicity: press releases for local papers, flyers, PSAs on radio stations.

- Send raw footage or finished tapes to Deep Dish TV (See Media Resources, p. 32) for inclusion in their special 1992 series on the Quincentennial. Screen tapes at house meetings or community centers, conferences, schools, or clubs (make a stab at the Rotary Club and similar "untraditional" venues; sometimes they are desperate for speakers and/or open to new ideas).



### Some Ideas for Programs and Formats:

Raw or edited footage from performances, demonstrations, public forums (combine with lively imagery and commentary from participants, organizers, or progressive pundits). Talk shows, people-on-the-street interviews, criticism and analysis including Native Americans, environmentalists, and others discussing the '92 issues, colonialism, revisionist history, local issues that reflect or parallel history. Go to schools and videotape how Columbus is taught; interview students and teachers.

### And Don't Forget about Radio:

Many of the same ideas apply to radio, which is still more accessible and will publicize your activities. Creative writers will find it a lot easier to get a radio play about Columbus produced than a TV program or stage play. Ask your local public radio station to include regular Native American programming.



# Education

## *WE DON'T NEED NO THOUGHT CONTROL*

Education is the crucial issue of 1992. Whether you're a student, parent, teacher, or concerned community member, you can help change how Columbus and "American" history are taught in schools.

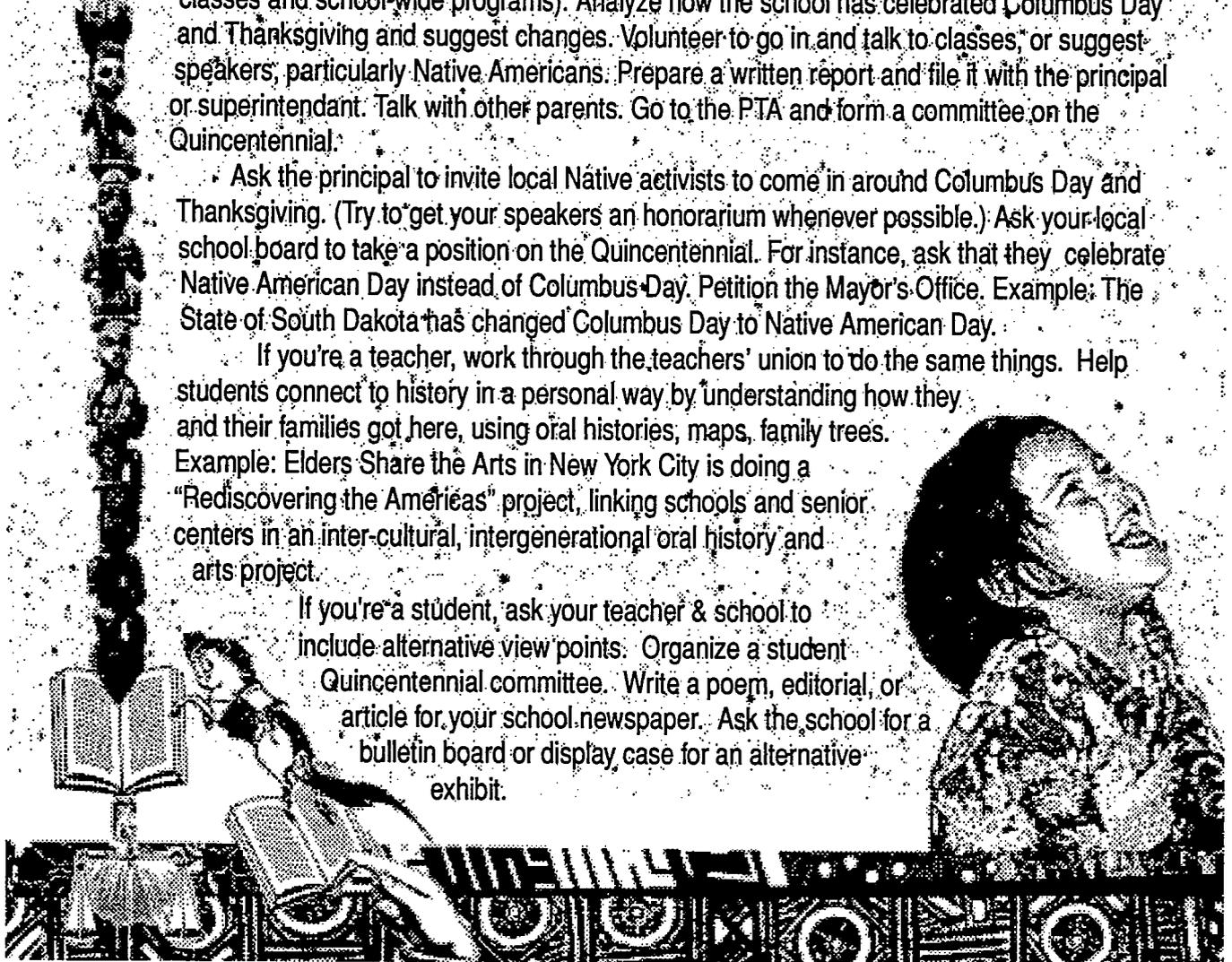
Read the books your kids use. Find out how their teachers are planning to approach Columbus and the conquest and suggest alternative materials and approaches. Order books for your school library (see our Resources section). Let students critique existing textbooks to explore how history is written, and why, and for whom. Offer to help develop more acceptable materials. Example: In Los Angeles, critics were unable to prevent the School Board from approving a controversial textbook, but the Board did empower a group of community members, teachers, and board members to develop supplementary materials.

Contact public schools in your area, find out what they're doing about Columbus (both in classes and school-wide programs). Analyze how the school has celebrated Columbus Day and Thanksgiving and suggest changes. Volunteer to go in and talk to classes, or suggest speakers, particularly Native Americans. Prepare a written report and file it with the principal or superintendant. Talk with other parents. Go to the PTA and form a committee on the Quincentennial.

Ask the principal to invite local Native activists to come in around Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. (Try to get your speakers an honorarium whenever possible.) Ask your local school board to take a position on the Quincentennial. For instance, ask that they celebrate Native American Day instead of Columbus Day. Petition the Mayor's Office. Example: The State of South Dakota has changed Columbus Day to Native American Day.

If you're a teacher, work through the teachers' union to do the same things. Help students connect to history in a personal way by understanding how they and their families got here, using oral histories, maps, family trees. Example: Elders Share the Arts in New York City is doing a "Rediscovering the Americas" project, linking schools and senior centers in an inter-cultural, intergenerational oral history and arts project.

If you're a student, ask your teacher & school to include alternative view points. Organize a student Quincentennial committee. Write a poem, editorial, or article for your school newspaper. Ask the school for a bulletin board or display case for an alternative exhibit.



Tomie Arai

The New World ("Mondo Novo") as Columbus saw it after four voyages. This sketch is by Venetian geographer Allessandro Zorzi, who probably copied it in the 1520s from a map by Bartolome Columbus. Note how "Mondo Novo" is part of Asia.

## CALENDAR

### JANUARY

- 1** The Longest Walk 1992. Begins at Alcatraz island, San Francisco, ends Oct. 7-10 in Washington DC at the Native American Spiritual Conference. Contact: Skip Mohawk, International Indian Treaty Council. 415-566-7251.
- 2** Cincinnati OH: "First Encounters" exhibition opens at Museum of Natural History, thru May 7.
- 31** New York City: Walk Across America for Mother Earth departs to meet other groups at Nevada Nuclear Test Site on Oct. 12. Contact: 1066 N. High St., Columbus OH 43201. 800-466-9255.

### MARCH

- "The Year of Columbus" exhibition at The Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum, NYC, thru 3/93.
- 11** Long Island, NY: "Adios Columbus" exhibit organized by Vistas Latinas, presenting Latina perspectives on the transformation of cultures in the New World, opens at the Hillwood Art Museum, thru April 17. Contact: Miriam Hernandez, 119 E. 101 St. #4W, NYC 10029.

- 21** Denver, CO: The People's Quincentennial, First Unitarian Church. Contact: Los Angeles: Concert for American Indian College Fund. Contact: Gail Bruce, 213-427-8100.
- Spring-** Choctaw Trail of Tears Memorial Walk Retraces 500 mile forced resettlement march from Mississippi to Oklahoma, taken by Choctaw Nation in 1830's.

### APRIL

- 3** Replicas of Columbus' caravels arrive, thru 4/5
- 4** Expo '92 "The Age of Discovery" opens in Seville, Spain
- 11** "A Prayer of Thanksgiving" International event on Shabbat Hagodal (Sabbath before Passover) to mark 500th anniversary of expulsion of 100,000 Sephardic Jews from Spain.
- 15** "Ameriflora" horticultural exhibition opens in Columbus, Ohio
- 17** Naples, FL: SUBMULOC Show opens at Collier County Museum, thru May 22.
- Mississippi to Oklahoma: Choctaw Trail of Tears

Memorial Walk retracing 500 miles the Choctaw were forced to walk to Oklahoma, leaving their lands in Mississippi.

- 20** Columbus, OH: Ameriflora (international horticultural exhibition) opens, thru 10/12
- New York City: Counter-Sail to Spain by a Native flotilla from the U.S., Canada, Central and South America. Contact: Mark Michaels, Native American Council for New York for 1992, 212-598-0100.
  - Wounded Knee, SD: Walk to meet Longest Walk 1992 in Leavenworth, Kansas in June. Contact: 415-566-7251.
  - Seminola, FL: Walk to Charleston, West Virginia to meet Longest Walk 1992 in July. Contact: 415-566-7251.
- 20-10/12** AmeriFlora '92, Columbus, OH
- Full size replica of Santa Maria anchored in downtown Columbus, OH. Open to the public.

### MAY

- 14** St. Paul, MN: "First Encounters" exhibition opens at Science Museum of Minnesota, with counter-exhibit, performances, etc. Contact:
- 16** Houston, Texas: "Counter-colonialismo", a touring exhibition including many Native and Chicano artists, organized by the Centro Cultural de la Raza, Mars Art Space and Mexic-Arte, opens at Diverse Works, through June 22. Contact: Patricio Chavez at 619-235-6135.
- 22-25** Atlanta: National Gathering of the Alliance for Cultural Democracy with workshops, performances, strategy sessions. Contact: Genie Barringer, 521 Harold Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30307, 404-377-9748.

### JUNE

- 5** Washington, DC: SUBMULOC Show opens at Washington Project for the Arts, through July 10.
- 10-14** San Juan, Puerto Rico: Grand Regatta Columbus 1992 with replicas of the three ships.
- Williamsburg, VA: "Discovering America," exhibition at historic Jamestown settlement celebrating many "discoverers" of America, from Paleo Indians to Phoenicians to British. Thru March 1993.
- 15** New York City: "Lower Manhattan Street Sign Project," site-specific public art installation created by REPOhistory, opens, through November. Part of citywide series of public art projects taking a critical view to the quincentennial.

Columbus being greeted by the Indians. An idealized interpretation by Theodore de Bry.

Indians having their hands chopped off for failing to meet the gold dust quota. From a book entitled *Spanish Cruelties*, published in 1609 with engravings by Bartolome de las Casas.



Contact: REPOhistory, 339 Lafayette St., #301, NYC 10012.

**24 "American Encounters" Exhibition opens at National Museum of American History in Washinton, DC. Focuses on cultures of American Southwest.**

- "Discovering America" exhibit opening at Williamstown, VA Historic Jamestown Settlement. "From Paleo Indians who crossed the Bering Strait to ancient Phoenicians to the British." Thru 3/93

**26 New York City: Replicas of Columbus' caravels arrive, thru July 29.**

#### JULY

**3-7 New York City: Grand Regatta Columbus 1992. Native American Festival in Flushing Meadow Park and Native American Youth Conference. Contact: Mark Michaels, 212-1598-0100.**

**11-16 Boston: Grand Regatta Columbus 1992 in Boston Harbor.**

- Vermont: Walk '92 Honoring Wabanaki. Leaves from various locations and converges in Montpelier in August. Contact: Joelen Mulvaney, 802-479-1931.

- Florida: Seminole Tribe Festival and Pow Wow,. Contact: James A. Jumper, 305-583-7112.

**31 Boston, MA: Replicas of Columbus' caravels arrive, thru August 16.**

#### AUGUST

**31 Austin, Texas: "Counter-colonialismo" opens at Mexic-Arte Museum Multicultural Works, through October 24.**

#### SEPTEMBER

**11 Morehead, MN: SUBMULOC Show opens at Concordia College, through October 9.**

**21 Miami, FL. "First Encounters" exhibition at History Museum of Southern Florida.**

- Santa Fe, NM: Concert and festival: Contact: Suzan Shown Harjo, 1992 Alliance, 202-547-5631.

- Philadelphia, PA: Moving Festival. Intercultural arts festival at 6 community sites over 3 weekends in September and October. Contact: Kim Niemela, COSACOSA Art At Large, 215-487-2354.

- "Music of the Americas" theme to annual Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Thru 10/92

#### OCTOBER

**2 San Francisco: Replicas of Columbus' caravels arrive, thru October 25.**

**3 Boston: Conference and Pow Wow. Contact: Bruce Oaks, Boston Indian Council, 617-232-0343.**

**7 Washington DC: Native American Spiritual Conference and end of Longest Walk 1992. Contact: Skip Mohawk Intern ational Indian Treaty Council, 415-566-7251.**

**9 Boulder, CO: Interactive exhibition at the University of Colorado Art Gallery. Contact: (303) 492-8300.**

**9-12 "International Indian Treaty Council Protest" San Francisco, CA; Organized by AIM, will include demonstrations and mock trails of Columbus, Cortes and de Soto.**

**10 San Diego: National March to Commemorate 500 Years of Raza Resistance with performances, festival. Contact: National Chicano Moratorium Committee: POB 4265, Chula Vista, CA. 91911. 619-522-6782.**

**12 Mexico City, Mexico: Culmination of Peace and Dignity Journeys 1992. Contact 312-733-6363.**

**12 Western Shoshone Reservation/Nevada Test Site: End of Walk Across America for Mother Earth.**

**12 New York City: Hour of Silence for Mother Earth — shut down traffic, curtail use of electricity, etc. Contact: Mark Michaels, 212-598-0100.**

**12 San Francisco: 500 Years of Resistance Demonstrations. Contact: Bay Area Coalition, Eva Aguilar, 415-834-4263.**

**12 Managua, Nicaragua: Continental Gathering of Indigenous People. Contact \_\_\_\_\_?**

#### NOVEMBER

**7 Sacramento, California: "Counter-colonialismo" opens at Galeria Posada and the Center for Contemporary Arts, through December 19.**

#### DECEMBER

- "Where Next Columbus" exhibit opens at National Air & Space Museum, Washington, DC dealing with the technological, economic, political and ethical issues of space exploration.

#### JANUARY 1993

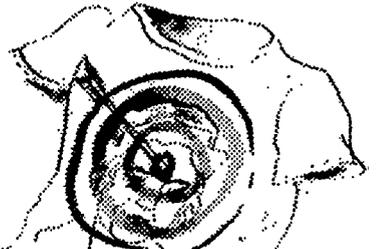
**15 Phoenix, Arizona: "Counter-colonialismo: opens at Mars Art Space/The Heard Museum, through March 24**

Captions taken from *Columbus: His Enterprise* by Hans Koning  
World Map drawn by Juan de la Cosa 1492

Todd Ayoung

The Spaniards hanging Indians and setting fire to their houses. Engraving by Bartolome de las Casas.

# ART ON YOUR SLEEVE: WEARABLE OPINIONS



One easy way to get a word — or image — into the public debate over the Quincentennial is to wear it.

T-shirts become something more than a fashion statement when adorned with graphically striking messages that are clear and direct. Ready-made “Stop the Ships,” “Stop Columbus” and other designs are available through the Submuloc Society, Indigenous Thought, Northland Posters, and other groups (see Resources section).

For greater impact, slogans and designs can be custom-made for any occasion. Single color graphics are easy to silkscreen (or just paint one-of-a-kind) at home, with two or three colors possible for the more adventurous. Many commercial shops handle small runs, using original artwork, quickly and affordably.

Simple designs can also be reproduced in other forms. Think about paring down the length of your leaflets and using a series of short statements with attention-grabbing images on T-shirts, buttons, hats, pins, even belts and earrings.

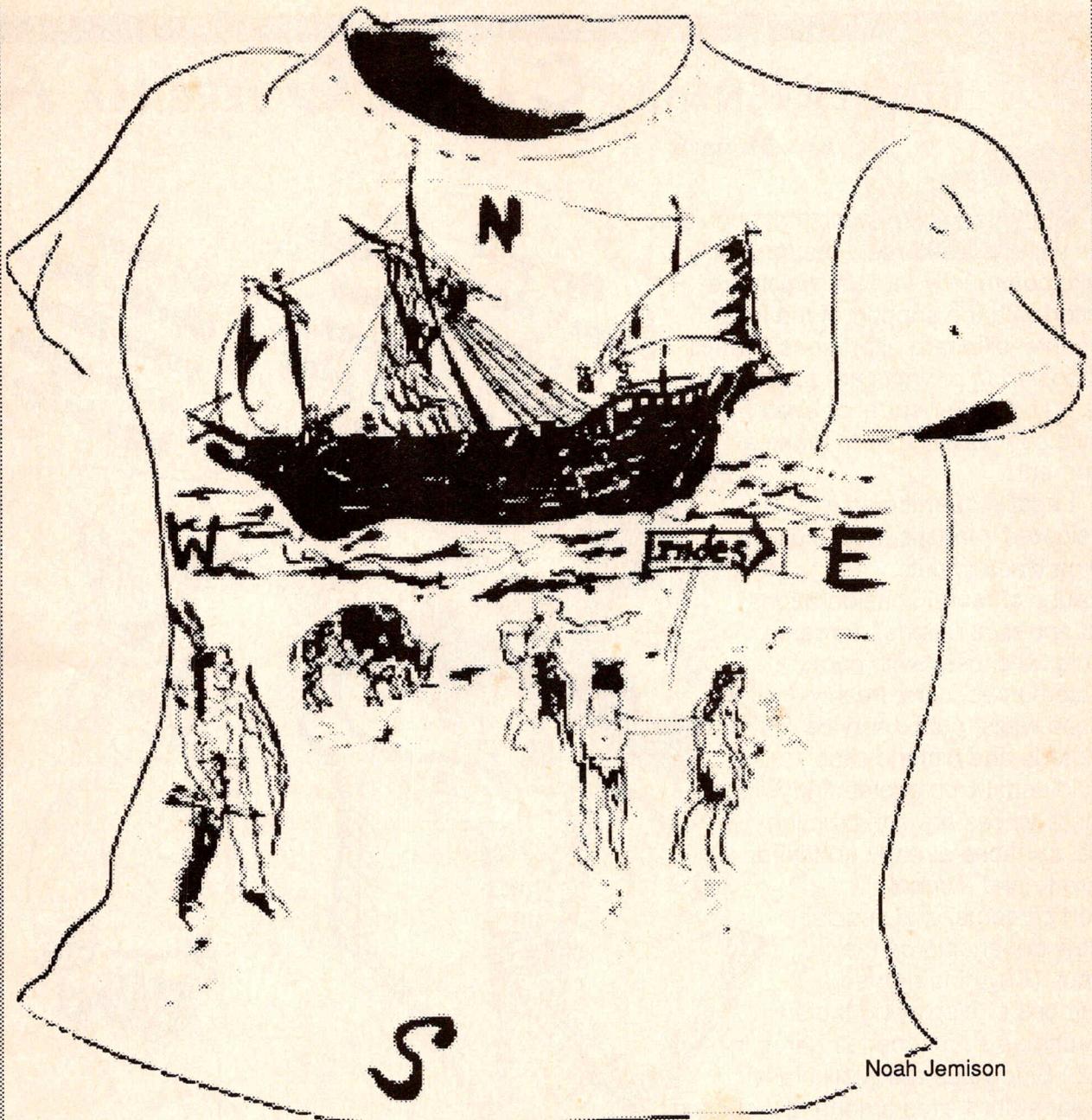
Wearable art is particularly useful at indoor actions or in malls, where hand-held signs are usually forbidden. (Single letter or word pinned on the back of your coat or on a

sash across your chest is inconspicuous, but the parts become a whole when you all suddenly line up in a hotel lobby or on an escalator.) You can also ask participants to wear coordinated colors for a symbolic statement at demonstrations and other mass actions, or just for appearances at public events.

Easily recognizable consumer/novelty items and found objects — from Statue of Liberty hats to oversized “We’re # 1” fingers — are cheap and easy to transform. For everyday wear, more complex, evocative images can become conversation-starters with co-workers, friends, and strangers who would otherwise never engage in political discussions.

For first timers or shy people, masks are often a comfort and can be made from just about anything (paper bags or plates, cardboard, foil, photographs or xeroxes). Visually arresting and reusable masks can be moulded from plaster bandages: cut them into 1” x 2” strips; protect your face with vaseline; layer wet gauze over your face, let dry, and decorate as you will.

Once you’re comfortable with putting your body where your mouth usually is, you’ll be ready to join in official Quincentennial events — and change them. Historical dress-up is fun and effective for giving voice to witnesses other than Columbus about what really happened.



Noah Jemison

Groups like Adelante Street Theater in New York have made good use of sandwich-board cartoons at demonstrations and other street actions. A few people wearing hand-painted costumes fashioned from cardboard and string (worn either front/back or side/side) can tell the story of Columbus' "discovery" in a quick series of vignettes. Again, the key is images that are simple and clear — cartoons of ships, continents, gold, etc.) The boards should be as light and large as possible (foam core works well), but you should be able to move around in a crowd without hurting anyone.

Demonstrations during the Gulf War were spiced up by people acting the roles of reporters, cameras and televisions, playfully covering the media's coverage of events — or lack thereof. Part of the spectacle of '92 will be the spectacle itself, so don't let the media off the hook.

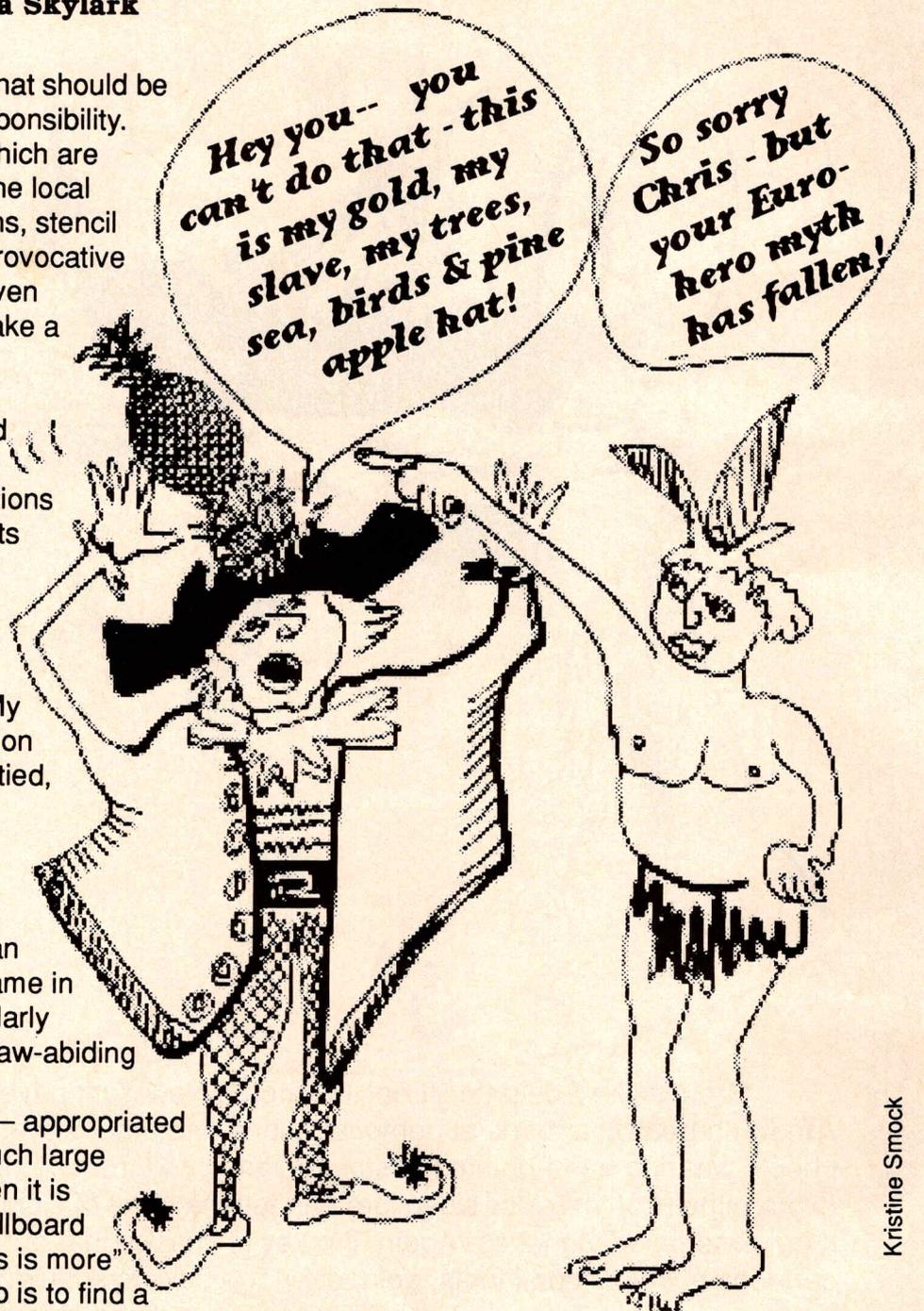
# QUINCENTENNIAL CAPERS: GUERRILLA ART

Eva Skylark

Guerrilla art is a tactic that should be used with discretion and responsibility. Unlike community murals, which are painted with the support of the local residents, billboard alterations, stencil and poster projects are provocative acts that invade neutral or even hostile spaces in order to make a statement.

Legally, guerrilla art is considered vandalism, a kind of high-class graffiti. Because of moral considerations (and approval ratings), targets should be chosen with care; private homes, cars, freshly painted walls, public service billboards and historic sites should usually be avoided. My favorite places are construction walls, surfaces already graffitied, cigarette and alcohol advertisements, and special targets depending on the project. (Anything named Columbus or displaying Indian stereotypes should be fair game in 1992.) Sidewalks are particularly popular stencil sites among law-abiding types.

A "corrected" billboard — appropriated from those who can afford such large scale — is most effective when it is witty and well executed. In billboard alteration, the old adage "less is more" is a good guide. The first step is to find a suitable billboard or two; this means fairly low, relatively small, easily accessible, not too well-lit at night (or unlit after midnight, as many are), and carrying a message that lends itself to alteration. Three or four people is the best group size and the project can easily be done in an evening. Everything should be prepared before



Kristine Smock

going out — foreground and background colors mixed for changing letters, paste-ons prepared, wheat paste mixed, and jobs clearly delineated.

Paste-ons are useful for lines of neat text or artwork, while single letters are more easily altered by painting directly on the surface.

Billboards are bigger than they look, so you need to measure, even if only approximately, the spaces you will replace. A pickup truck in which to carry ladders and equipment is useful. You can use the ladder to climb up and then take it with you to reach the top of the billboard. I have not found lookouts to be particularly useful (though it might work better if we had walkie-talkies). Your best protection is speed, calm, luck, and the fact that almost no-one looks at billboards at night.

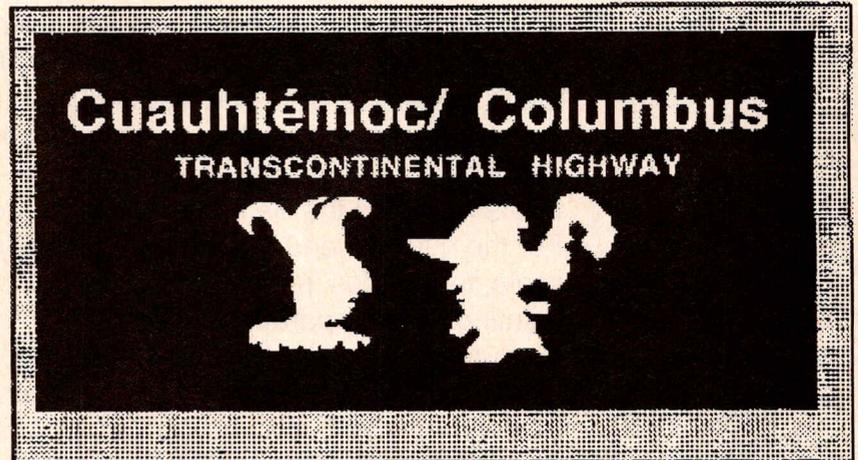
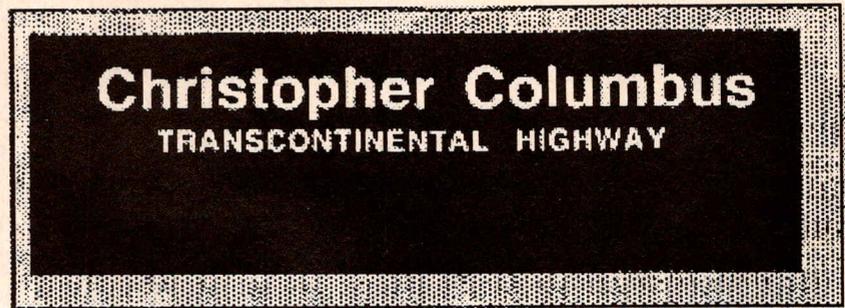
Poster and stencil projects are quicker and easier. They depend for their effect on saturating an area, so they are visible wherever a passerby turns. This is easiest if there are a lot of people putting up the

images over a period of time in an organized campaign throughout a city or a neighborhood. When there are a number of different images, it is useful to have a logo on or with each, to identify the project. Stencils can be cut from cardboard, but I prefer double waxed stencil paper, which is strong, easy to cut, and allows for more complexity. It is advisable to carry the stencils and spray paint in a shopping bag or other container, so that when you are not actually stenciling you are less conspicuous; however, a scarf offers some protection from the fumes. You can also send

stencils around the country so the same image becomes truly ubiquitous.

Quincentennial projects can be reworked bicentennial signs, as recently seen on a dam wall in Riverside County, California, and in stenciled alterations of the Christopher Columbus Highway signs on Interstate 10. For the stencil project, the first step is to spray out

Christopher with the background color. By the time the other two stencils have been applied, the paint should be dry enough to lay in the replacement.



200 YEARS OF FREEDOM: 1776-1976

500 YEARS OF GREED: 1492-1992

# PAINTING THE WALLS FOR '92

**Tim Drescher and Miranda Bergman**

The value of a mural project is that it gives focus and publicity to political analysis. 1992 provides special opportunities for both. Necessary points of departure are organizing skills, desire for change, and finding a muralist experienced in group work. But remember the goal is to establish a process where people work together, and there is no room for heroic egos. This is more important than "doing a big painting."

Ask folks who live/work near the wall what is important to them and work with a trained artist to give these thoughts original expression. Develop a sketch with a specific wall and a specific audience in mind. Be sure you have a contract or lease with the owner of the building that legally binds future owners as well. The wall should have good visibility (facing the traffic on one-way streets, high enough to be seen over cars and low enough to be noticed). It must be in decent condition — no crumbling brick walls — since this is crucial to the life of the mural, as is the choice of materials. For the quickest and easiest transfer of sketch to wall, design on a 1" to 1" scale, take slides, project and trace them. (For extensive technical detail on painting, wall preparation, and transfer, as well as history, bibliography, and invaluable organizing tips, see *Mural Manual* by Mark Rogovin, Marie Burton, and Holly Highfill, edited by Tim Drescher, published by Beacon Press, Boston, and the Public Art Workshop, Chicago 1975.)

A large project can involve dozens of people, but with limited time and money, smaller images can also be effective when the site is well chosen. If you ask non-artists what they want to see, odds are they will suggest pre-validated images such as cliches, advertisements, album covers, etc. So don't ask them to do the visual design, but ask them what matters to them, and you take it from there in the first step of an ongoing give-and-take process.

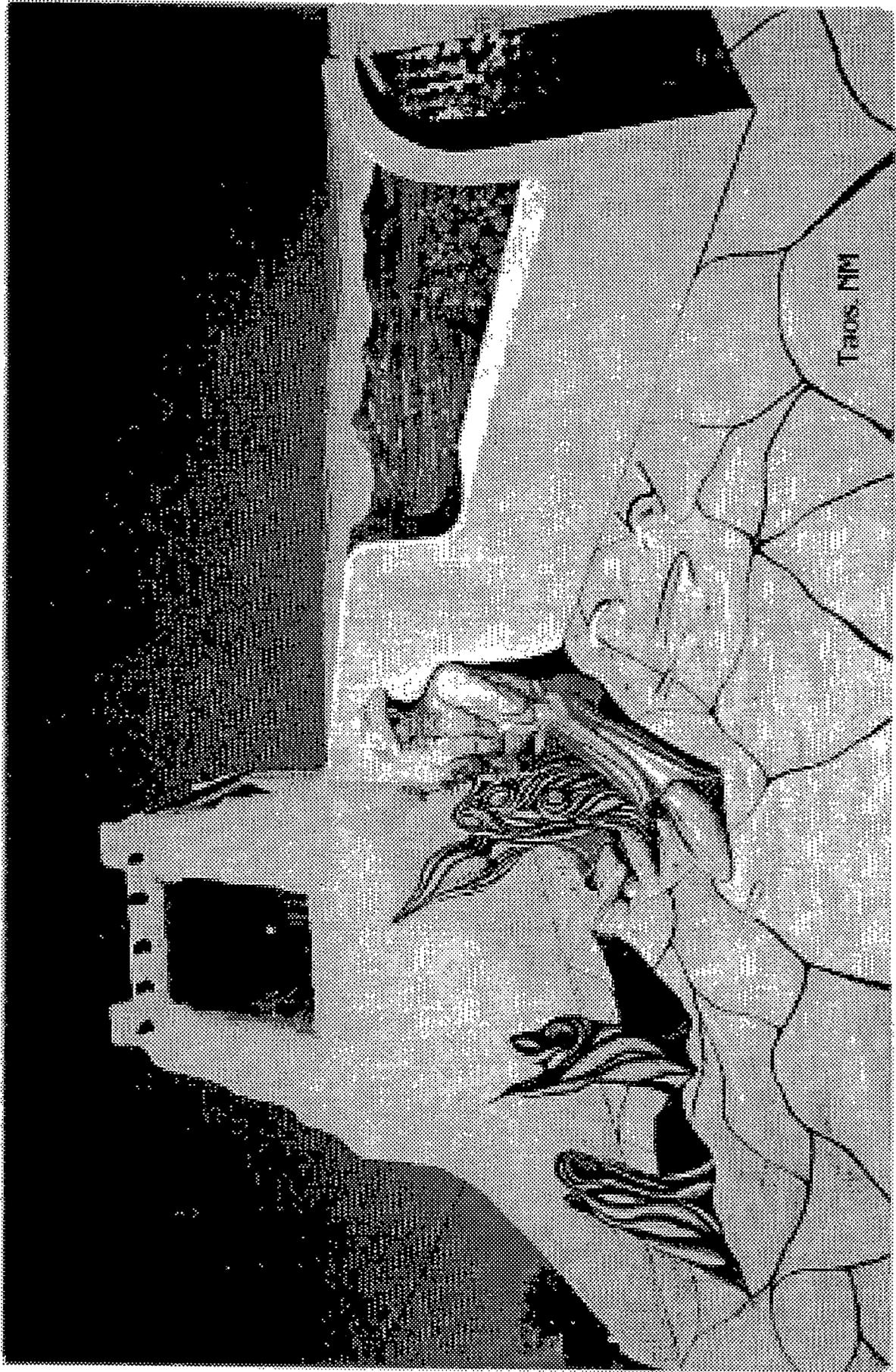
Don't be afraid to work with children. You can talk about the significances of Columbus and help them create their own visual ideas. Then you put several kids' suggestions into an overall form. Everyone paints, but you the artist retain control over the final product to give it greater esthetic impact.

## **Mural skills can also be applied to:**

Parades or demonstrations: Not merely slogans stretching across a street, but full-blown paintings carried by one or several people, getting across an idea in an unexpected way. Also eye-catching are paintings on cut-out shapes carried on 8' sticks, or as sandwich boards with string over the shoulders. Foam core is lightweight, takes paint well and can be reinforced with minimal framing. Cardboard is okay for one-time use, but it warps with paint and time, and turns to mush in the rain.

Backdrops on the stage at rallies, in parks, or for local rock groups, educational events, budget protests, school meetings, festivals. Try Tyvec. It's superlight, cheaper than canvas, and is already bright white, so it needs no priming.

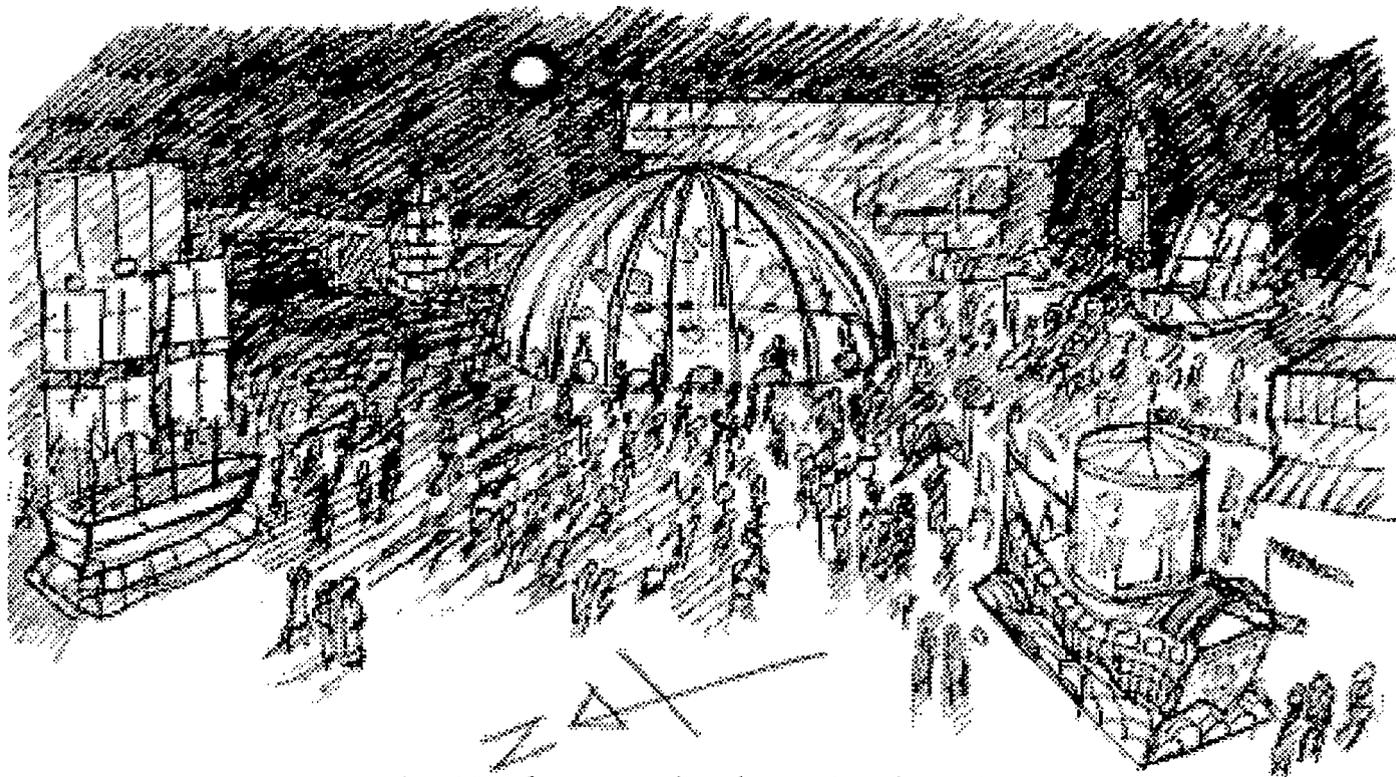
Avoid cliches. Have fun. Be funny. Include a capable photographer in the project so that it can be properly documented and sent to the media (color slides for TV and lectures; black-and-white glossies for reproduction).



El Santero' by George Chacon, Taos Mural, 25 ft x 50 ft, 1989

# TELLING IT IS ONLY HALF THE STORY: COMMUNITY EVENTS

Charles Frederick



## *An Exchange of Tokens in the City*

Wen-ti Tsen

My working definition of community/cultural animation is that it is collective storytelling which results in social action, itself a form of reflection on the retold story of the community.

One way to get started is to be invited or contracted, because people know what you have done and understand how it might be useful to community development. For your work to be understood, you should be able to describe in theoretical and practical detail how your previous projects were composed, and be able to discuss their significance.

If you are not invited — and most often you will not be — you should know your own affiliations, your authentic place within the community where you want to work. Although this community must be part of your own subjectivity, you need not actually live “there.” However, you and those you will be working with should be aware of some truly common ground, so that you are not seen as an invading missionary.

First, then, you work alone. You analyze and name what the community is; the anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s term “thick descriptions” is useful here. You should be familiar with the cultural traditions of the community and you need to learn, and articulate, the internal relationships within it as well as its confining conditions within the world at large. You need to understand the community’s crisis of subjectivity as well as the “objective” material oppression — the conditions of the people in history and the struggle around how they are named in history. Most important, you need to know what sustains the community.

The community’s sustenance is their wisdom, and from this knowledge you can help compose a response to their crisis. You must earn the trust of other people in the community. You offer them

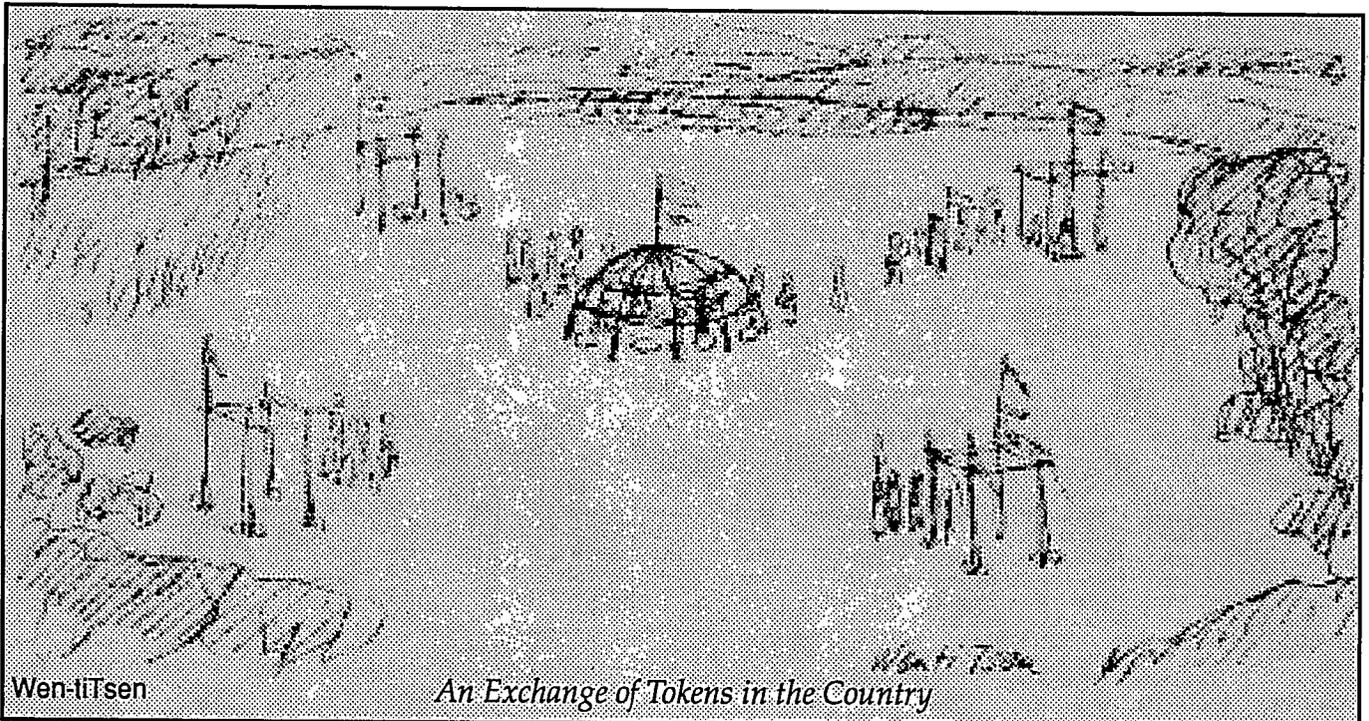
your descriptions so they can amend them in formal or informal collective discussions (Paolo Freire's "dialogic pedagogy"). You participate in a common daily economy and culture of life and needs; you demonstrate what service you can contribute to the community.

The amateur's first concrete, participatory creation is always storytelling; each individual story is a chapter of the collective narrative. But this must be carefully organized when people tell their stories, they often replicate the distortions and misrepresentations they have learned about themselves and others. So your work is to apply your artistic and intellectual resources and training to find new ways the stories might be told truthfully.

While doing this, you must be prepared to help heal people as they are exposed to their own pain, and to assist them so they can express but not be trapped by their anger. When stories get told, what must be learned to make sense of experience is also revealed — as well as what must be corrected. Getting people to accept this responsibility to the complexity of truth about themselves and the world is extremely important. You must be ready to offer ways to inform their storytelling with comparative wisdom and knowledge from other communities.

This is sketchy, but it is how it begins. When the storytelling is underway, a means must be found for people to begin to perform or present in visual form the new story they are beginning to tell — the story of their pride, their freedom and their power, encoded within their traditional symbolic languages as well as within newly invented languages or those honestly borrowed from other cultures. The community may also organize political actions as a means of expressing their collective story as well as a way of imagining and creating its next chapter.

In cultural animation, the social/cultural/political performance is always simultaneously symbolic and material. This means that what people do needs to be in some way material — effective in the world. But what is most important about this effective action in the context of a community's cultural identity is that the action is simply the next chapter in the community's narrative. When the narrative is told altogether, it becomes symbolic — sustenance for the community as it enters new moments of history.



**Concept:** Center Circle: Native Culture- Points-North: European migration, East: African migration, South: Latino migration, West: Asian migration. **Act:** From each migrating point, a procession is formed, each person brings a token of heart (a note, a picture, a poem, an object, etc.) to the Center Circle as tribute. In return a token of earth (a pebble, a handful of sand, cup of water, etc) is received as a symbol of tenancy. **Location:** May be performed in the countryside, a field, on a city plaza, with a city map, in a room, a gym, etc. **Structures:** A structure may be made for the center and each of the points, in any degree of complexity, by representatives of each culture.

# GETTING THE WORD(S) OUT INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION

## In 1985 Cultural Correspondence

published *The Art of Demonstration*, a 32-page comic-format booklet full of how-to-info, illustrations, and radical spirit, which served as a model for this publication. As editor and publisher of CC, I contributed an introductory poem that told a story about people and what they did, and I designed a blank page (a rare sight in a lefty mag), bordered by a quote from C.L.R. James, urging people to write from their day-to-day experience.

I also contributed the distribution scheme. We didn't spend money and time working through distributors (who take very few copies) and hustling reviewers (as if people need permission to read such a book). Instead we spent the entire "advertising" budget to print thousands of extra copies, which we then handed out at demos and meetings, beginning with the April Actions in Washington, in conjunction with the "Festival of Resistance" and the "Spectacles of Transformation" organized by a coalition of artists' and writers' groups.

In the six years since *The Art of Demonstration*, I have worked as a desktop publisher because of its democratic potential. What used to be the most expensive and inflexible part of publishing (typesetting) is now the cheapest, fastest, and most flexible, thanks to computers and laser printers. Typesetting is the invention that made mass literacy possible. Individuals and groups with access to computers can now afford to publish themselves.

Desktop publishing (DTP) programs are software applications which take a text file

Jim Murray

produced by word-processing software and enable you to design it for the effects you want. Anyone who has done any word processing can learn the basics of DTP very quickly.

One important democratic feature of DTP is that you can make changes extremely fast and cheaply (pennies per page of text), thereby involving more people in the actual creative production process, and you don't have to bother with the tedious paste-up of a fixed design. Also, DTP can break down the usual alienating division of labor among writers, designers, and typesetters.

For example, in the late '80s a group of undergraduate students at U. Mass desktop-published their own series of books about the student movement and revolutionary popular culture, effectively subverting elitist publishing. The computer disc can be equivalent of the audio cassette tape as a grassroots form of communication worldwide. The key is that we can make them, copy them, and pass them on ourselves. Comic books, postcards, posters, leaflets on interactive disks... the mind boggles.

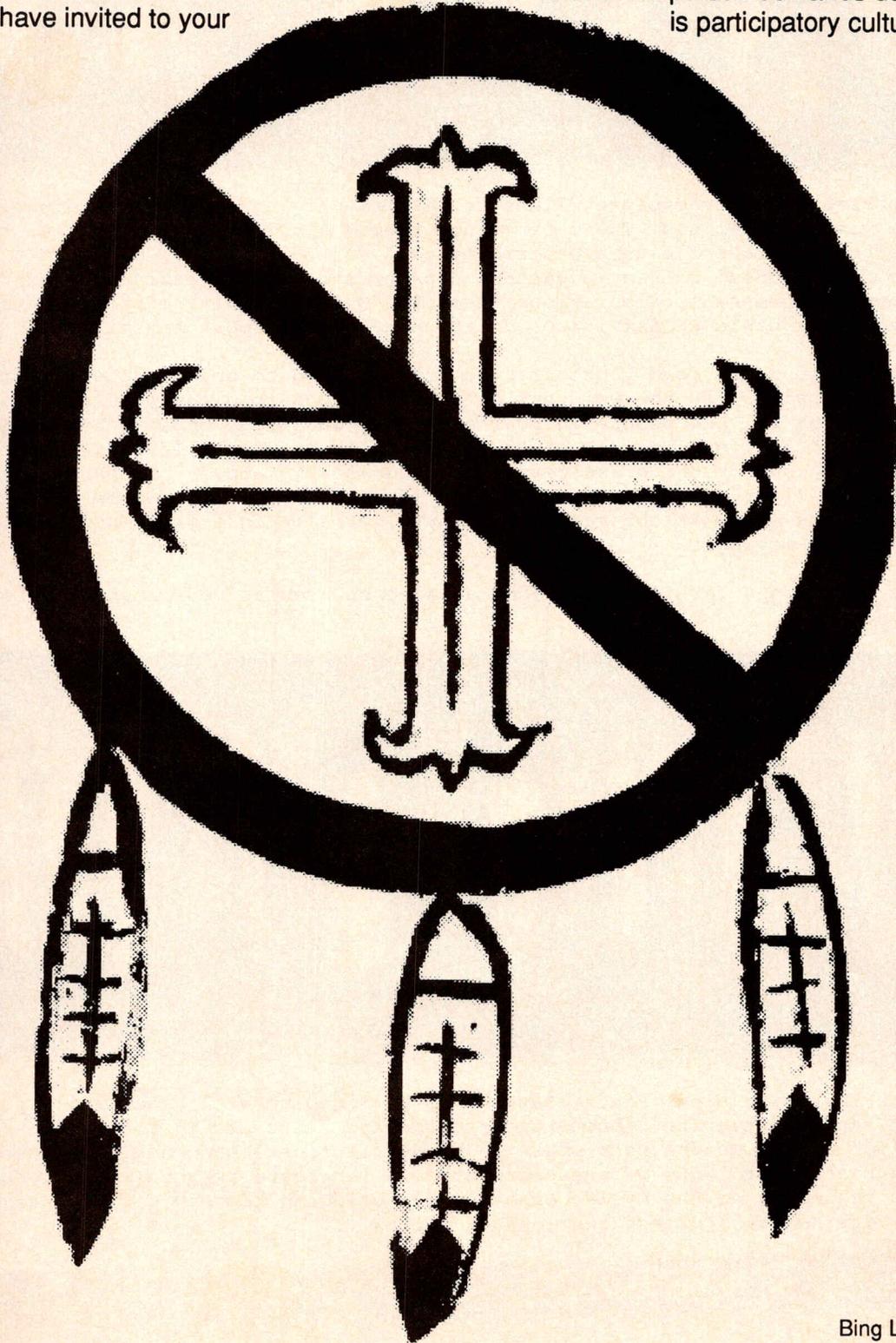
Information distribution alone is an Old Left concept: linear, topdown, didactic, boring. Cultural activists have no particular models to replicate, but countless democratic forms to imagine and create. As I work one-to-one with many people, I reiterate these principles:

Say what you mean. When in doubt, tell the truth. Make it readable. Trust people to be looking for what you are offering. Use the first person singular; that is who you are. As far as I'm

concerned, publications and demonstrations and meetings that do not include honest, personal, emotional storytelling have nothing to do with cultural activism. People are very sensitive to how they are being treated, and that's good, so treat them as equals. The more particular you are, the more generally you will be understood.

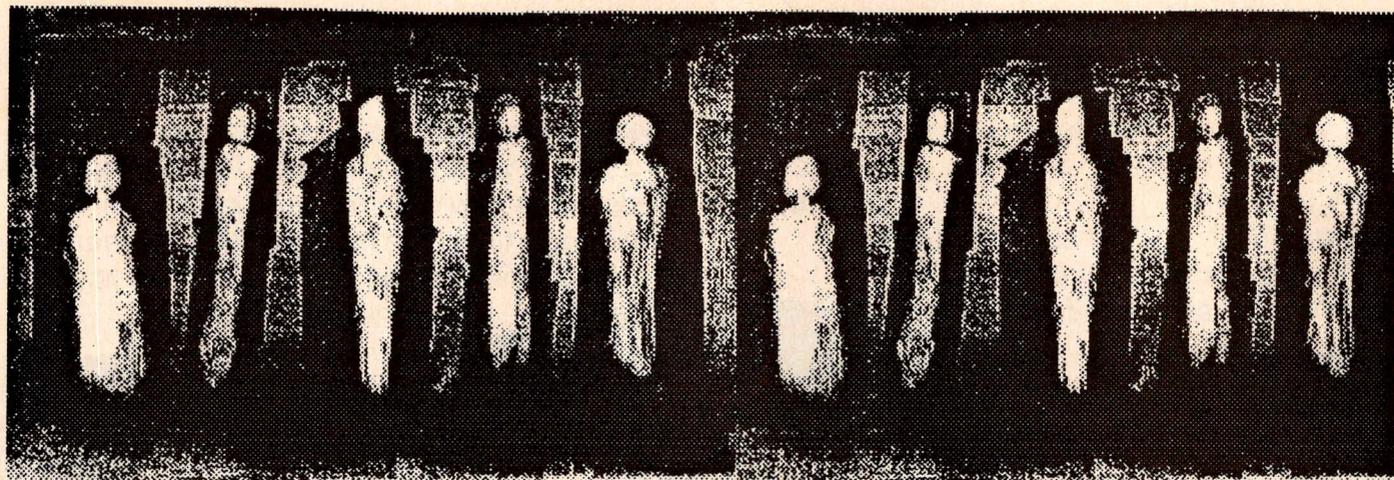
Put yourself in the shoes of the person you have invited to your

meeting or demo or publication. Tell them what you would want to know, and listen to them. Spend lots of time talking with people about why they are there, then set goals and limits together. How you organize is what you organize. The means are the ends. It is a new culture we are building, one "issue" at a time. The movement grows every time a different person demands democracy. DTP is participatory culture.



Bing Lee

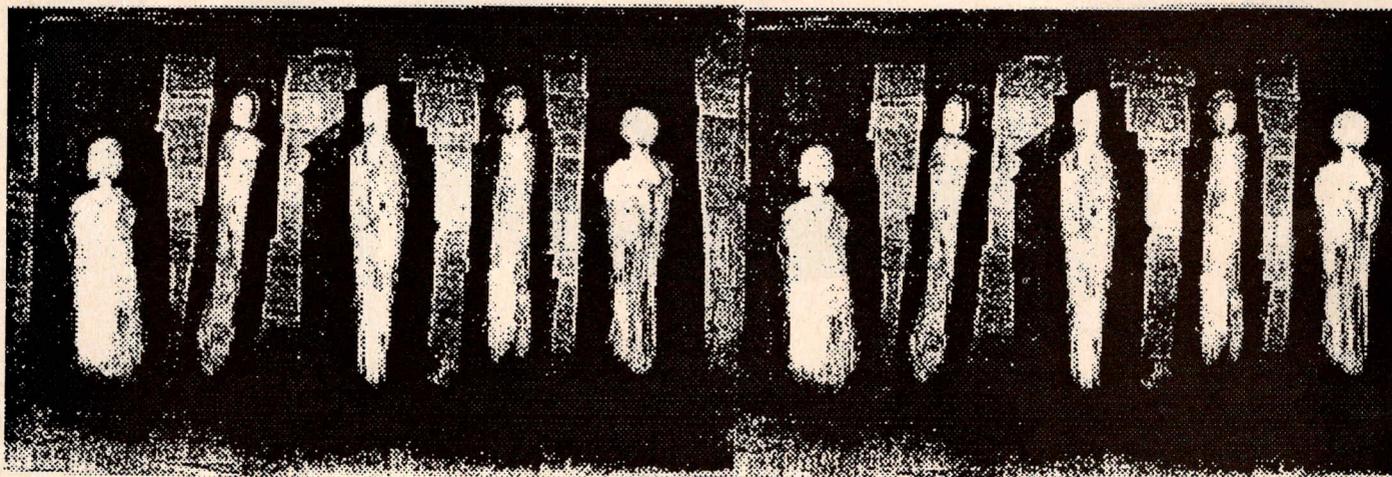
## DEMO-TACTICS



All demonstrations, from picket lines to parades, are enhanced by imaginative, creative visual materials. These can range from a single mask or costume, to wordless placards to elaborate floats and performances. For '92 actions, don't wait for Columbus Day parades. Use any occasion: lobster and oyster festivals, Old Heritage Days, Town Bicentennial celebrations, etc. The Quincentennial campaign is a matrix for most of our basic social issues so it connects to almost anything.

If you're calling the demo yourself, you usually need to obtain a permit from the local police chief. Get the word out as widely as possible for participation and try to connect with all the people in your community who might be affected by these issues. (See "Linkages" above.) Don't forget college groups. If you're just joining a demo, you can contact the organizers or you can simply appear and participate. What we usually do (in rural Maine), especially if we think we may not be entirely welcome in a parade, is enter at the very last minute, or slip in from around a corner after it has started moving.

Here are some ideas for floats, which can also be used as performance "sets" in other situations.

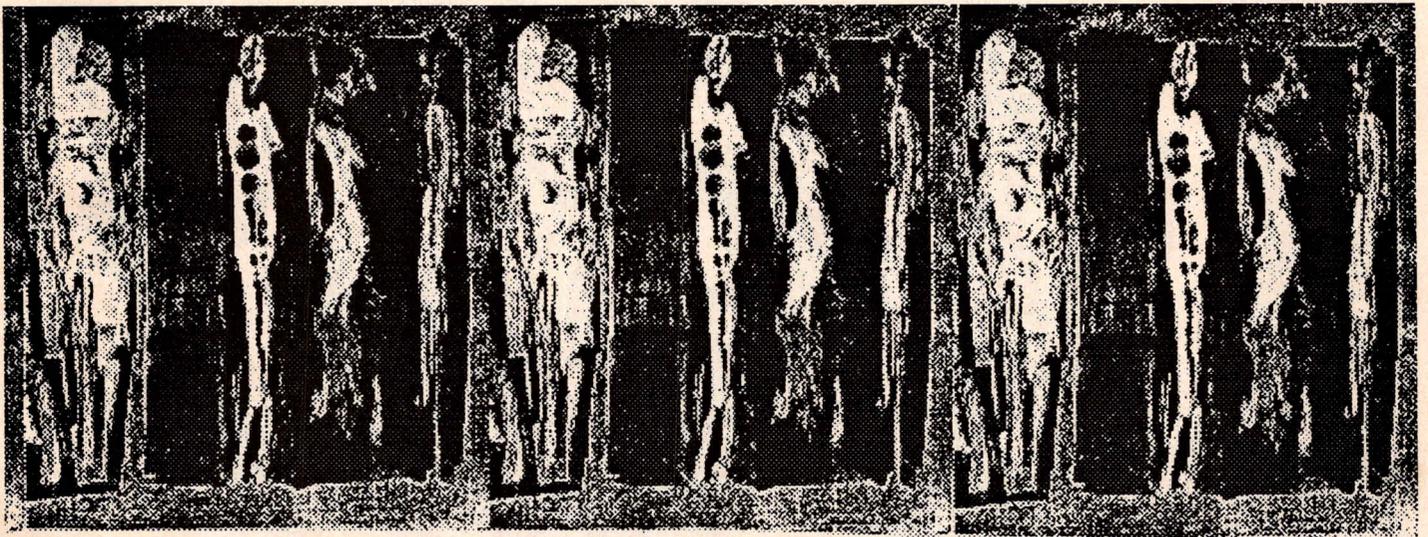


Push three wheelbarrows (Nina, Pinta, Santa Maria) rigged up with black sails to connote plague, death, and destruction. (Duct-tape a cardboard skirt around the wheelbarrow and paint it to look like a wooden boat; make it higher in front than back.) The boats can have corporate figureheads or logos of the slave-trading interests they represent. You can dress as death with the names of the myriad diseases you bring to the New World on cardboard signs around your necks; a priest can lead or follow....

Draw in old-world/new world double symbols. Have a marching kazoo band wearing a combo of Desert Storm camouflage fatigues and conquistadors' helmets or puritans' ruffs, yellow ribbons, "we're here to kick butt," and "support our cannon fodder" (or slave or indentured labor) signs. Or as recently seen in the West Athens, Maine, 4th of July celebration, you can simply dress like a farmer and push a wheelbarrow of manure with a sign saying "New World Ordure."

On the back of a pickup truck you can have a game show, "So You Think You Know the New World?" with a spinning board offering prizes: disease, slavery, torture, massacre, cultural imperialism, etc. Hand out cards with a leading question on one side and an unexpected answer on the other.

Most parades in Maine end with game booths and auctions, cakewalks, greased pig contests, so you can park near the action and draw a crowd, tell fortunes for a Post-Columbian World, or do skits of Columbus arriving in the New world. Post LAND USE REGULATIONS or RULES OF ETIQUETTE on trees. Native people can present their immigration policy. Columbus or pilgrims or British noblemen or French trappers can arrive in boats (strapped to the shoulders) or a conquistador can ride a horse constructed with a wood or wire frame,



cardboard, glue, staples, papier mache (and any wild materials at hand for decoration). Gifts might be exchanged with the Native people to convey historical information: trinkets for corn, tobacco, water, food, meat, fish; gonorrhea for starvation; slavery for wives and children; liquor for gold; smallpox-infected blankets and poisoned food for furs.

Painters, poets and performers can collaborate by reading the U.S. Agency for International Development's distorted version of the discovery and conquest (front page of the first issue of Huracan). Have one performer recite the lie in one medium while another displays the truth in another medium, using mime, dance, visuals, a crank-roll or flip-chart "movie."

Find out what fortunes in your area were made off destruction of the environment, slave trade, real estate, etc., and make demonstration art about it; or about how people in your area treated the native populations; or do an homage to the 20 million beavers killed to satisfy European fashion. Compare the current destruction of rain forests and the historical destruction of the eastern woodlands. Find new symbols. The osprey, for instance, could replace the eagle as national symbol because it's not as ruthless, gets along better with its fellow creatures, and is not a scavenger.

The possibilities are ENDLESS.

Natasha Mayers

# WAY OUT THERE: PUBLIC ART





### **There is some activist public art that does not fit into the**

categories previously covered. It often balances between the avant garde and political action, fusing the experimental forms of the former and the social consciousness of the latter. It can take time, money, and long-term planning.

Much of this work uses photography and texts in ways that mimic or appropriate advertising techniques. For instance: bus and subway posters, art in bus shelters or on bus benches. (Sometimes there are ways to get these spaces free; call your local Chamber of Commerce or arts council for guidelines.) While these mediums are more vulnerable than any other to censorship, good publicity can be gained from controversy. Sometimes the message gets out further and faster if it's opposed. That was the experience of the highly successful "America's Finest Tourist Plantation" bus project in San Diego in 1988, which called attention to the contributions and persecutions of undocumented workers. Group Material, Gran Fury, and ACTUP Denver are other groups that have often and effectively used this form to escalate interest or anger on specific issues.

Street signs is another medium that is becoming more frequent, and is a natural for the renaming of places and groups named after Columbus. You have to have permission if they are going to stay up long enough to balance the expense and time, and as with other such forms, there may be some negotiations around content.

"REPOhistory" (as in repossessing history) in lower Manhattan will soon be a source of expertise on the meandering paths to municipal approval and installation of two-sided text-and-image signs marking hitherto invisible historical events.

Another way of getting art into the public eye is to attract the sponsorship of a newspaper that will give you a centerfold, a series of full pages, a page a week, or whatever, for different artists to express themselves on different '92 issues. (If this can be coordinated with local actions and events, all the better.) Funding will be necessary here too, but as with all of the above, always try first to get space, materials, even a fee, donated.

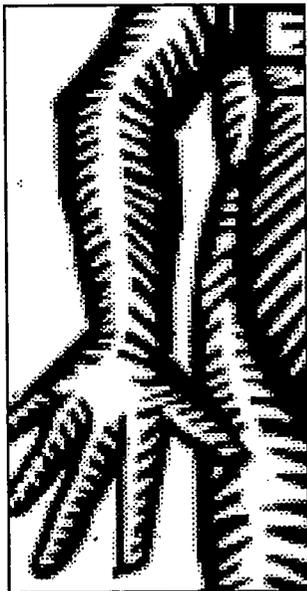
On a grander and more expensive scale there are billboards. Like murals, these must be financed by some community, advocacy, or arts group. Many environmentalists object to all billboards as eyesores, so you may find double adversity here. However, their public visibility can't be beat, and satirical views of Columbus writ large on busy thoroughfares will throw a wrench into the idolatry campaigns.

Group exhibitions on '92 themes can be held in the windows of vacant (or sympathetic) stores in busy shopping areas. (Lots of spaces are available in these "post" recession days.) Individual artists can make installations in the windows or they can be used for collaborative pieces and information. Laundromats, food co-ops, and restaurants are other venues that offer more and unexpected accessibility. Even banks will sometimes let you deposit your subversive images.

The "chain-reaction" artwork is an example of conceptual activism. This can be organized on a scale as grand as the 1984 Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America (in which exhibitions and events were held simultaneously in some 30 cities across the U.S. and Canada) or the still grander "Day Without Art," which calls annual attention to the AIDS crisis as hundreds of art spaces nationwide hold vigils, veil artworks, or simply close down. A chain reaction can also be done by just circulating a single poster or stencil design that appears simultaneously in many cities, or in many sites in one city.

Collective projects in which an artist or artists' group works directly with unions, organizations, or with local government (for example, Mierle Laderman Ukeles' longstanding and fruitful position as artist in residence with the NYC Department of Sanitation) are models for art/real life collaboration. Artists working directly with the public become adept at coping with cumbersome bureaucracies. Although large amounts of money are often involved, the actual pay is as low or nonexistent as in most social-change art.

The public artist, then, must be artist and activist and diplomat. As well as talent and imagination and skill, s/he must have saintly patience, tolerance for endless frustrations, meetings, misunderstandings, and philistine anti-cultural comments (from both right and left). The reward is seeing one's project executed and working.



# RESOURCES

## Organizations

- Alliance for Cultural Democracy (ACD). National network of community and cultural activists; publisher of Huracan (a Quincentennial newsletter), the Directory of Arts Activists, Cultural Democracy (an occasional journal), and HOW TO '92.
- National Conference on the Quincentennial in Atlanta, May 22-25, 1992. POB 7591, Minneapolis, MN. 55407. 612-724-6795.
- Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC). Interdenominational peace and social justice group. Publishes CALC Report, organizers packet for 1992. POB 1987, Decatur, GA. 30031. 404-377-1983.
- 1992 Alliance. National Native American network, supported by the Elders Circle. c/o Morning Star Foundation, 403 10th St., Washington DC 20003.
- International Indian Treaty Council, 710 Clayton St., #1, San Francisco 94117. 415-566-0251.
- South and Meso-American Indian Information Center (SAIIC). Liaison between South, Central and North American indigenous groups; publishes newsletter. POB 28703, Oakland, CA. 94604. 415-834-4263.
- Traditional Circle of Native American Elders. c/o American Indian Institute, POB 1388, Bozeman, MT 59715.
- Submuloc Society. An organization of Indian artists utilizing their freedom of expression through art activities that will impact on the Quincentennial; designs buttons, T-shirts, c/o MICA, 2151 Emory Rd., Ronan MT 59864. 406-675-4088.
- Columbus in Context. c/o GOLES, 525 E. 6th St., NYC 10009. Activist group working in media and education.
- Native American Council for New York for 1992, American Indian Community House, 404 Lafayette St., NYC 10012. 212-598-0100.
- Atlanta Quincentennial Alliance (AQUA). 765 Myrtle Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30308.

## Publications

- Indigenous Thought. Quarterly newspaper. Committee for American Indian History, 6802 SW 13th St., Gainesville, FL 32608. 904-378-3246
- Native Nations. Bimonthly magazine. 175 Fifth Ave., Suite 2245, NYC 10010. 212-741-2365.
- Northeast Indian Quarterly. Special Issue, "View From the Shore: American Indian Perspectives on

the Quincentenary" (Fall 1990) includes an extensive resource directory. Illustrated, scholarly articles on Native issues and perspectives. 300 Caldwell Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. 607-255-4308.

- 1492-1992 Re...View. Bilingual (English/Spanish) newsletter on Quincentennial. POB 801, New York, NY 10009.
- Report on the Americas. Monthly magazine published by the North American Congress on Latin America. December, 1991 issue on the quincentennial. Contact: NACLA, 475 Riverside Dr., NYC 10115.
- Huracan. Quarterly newspaper. ACD, POB 7591, Minneapolis, MN 55407.

## Resource Guides

- Rethinking Columbus, special issue of Rethinking Schools; an important teacher's guide and anthology of articles, stories, poetry (many by Native writers); extensive resource listings including curriculum guides. 1001 E. Keefe Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53212. 414-964-9646. \$4/single issue, bulk rates available. For information on Rethinking Columbus workshops, write Bill Bigelow, 1233 NE Schuyler #4, Portland, OR 97212.
- Dangerous Memories: Invasion and Resistance Since 1492. Excellent collection of primary materials and historical analysis, including 50-page teaching guide, extensive bibliography and other resource listings. Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America, 59 E. Van Buren, Suite 1400, Chicago IL 60605. 312-663-4398.

## Media

- Deep Dish TV. National public access cable satellite network, producing counter-Quincentennial series to begin airing in August 1992. Extensive collection of prior programs and public access directory. 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012. 212-473-8933.
- Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR). Progressive media watchdog organization. 130 W. 25th St., 8th floor, NYC 10001. 212-633-6700.
- Paper Tiger Television. Collective producing public access programs including "New Word Order" on Columbus and children's literature; extensive backlist of programs on race, class, gender, colonialism; also publishes how-to book on media

activism. 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012. 212-420-9045.

•Media Network. Social issue media clearinghouse. Publishes excellent resource guides. Audiotapes available from conference on quincentennial organizing. 39 W. 14th St., NYC 10011. 212-929-2663.

•"After Columbus: 1992 and Beyond." Monthly public affairs radio program available for rebroadcast or classroom use. c/o WBAI-FM, 505 8th Ave., 19th floor, NYC 10018. 212-279-0707.

•"The Columbus Controversy: Challenging How History is Written". 24-minute VHS videotape directed by Nick Kaufman with Bill Bigelow, John Mohawk, William McNeil.

•Native Americans on Film and Video, edited by Elizabeth Weatherford and Emilia Seubert. Annotated catalogue of some 400 films and videos. \$7.50 from National Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., NYC 10032. 212-283-2420.

•"Spirits of the Present", 13-part radio series on Native American issues, available for classroom use or rebroadcast. Contact: Peggy Berryhill or Michael Johnson, Smithsonian Institution,

Museum of American History, Rm. BB40, Washington, DC 20560.

### Performing Groups

•In the Heart of the Beast Puppet Theatre, 1500 E. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 01379. 612-721-2523

•Underground Railway Theater. Touring with "The Discovery of Columbus" (for young people) and "The Christopher Columbus Follies: An Ecocabaret." 41 Foster St., Arlington, MA 02174. 617-643-6916.

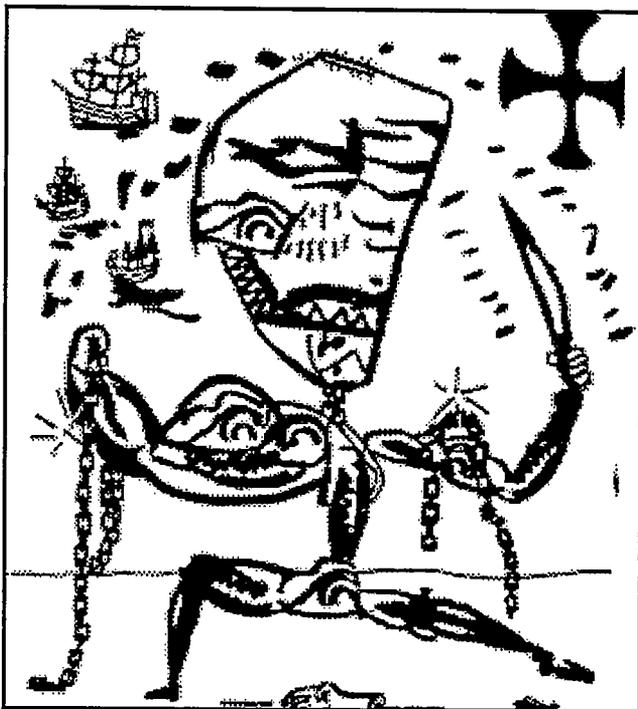
•Elders Share The Arts (ESTA). Has developed "Rediscovering America" oral history and arts curriculum for intergenerational and cross-cultural audiences; workshops and conferences on cultural diversity. Contact: Susan Perlstein 718-388-4403.

### Visual Arts

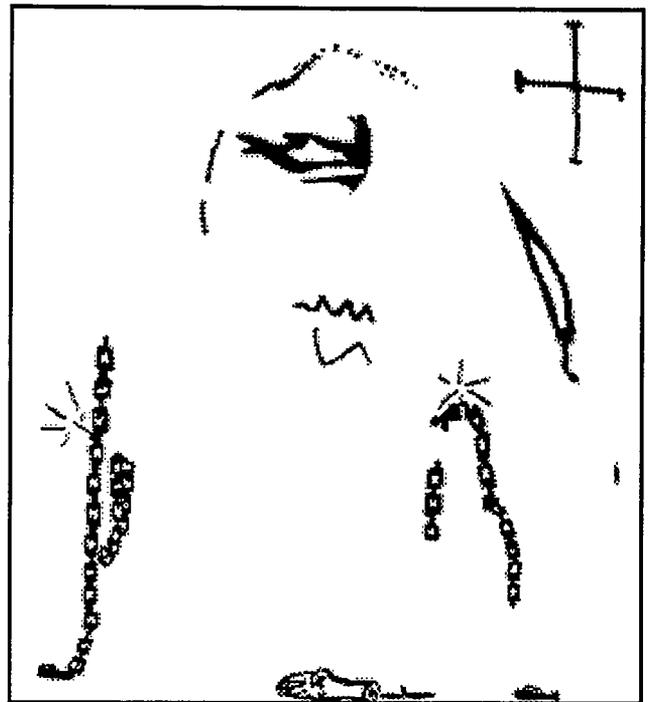
•Northland Poster Collective. Poster, buttons, t-shirts on ecology, Native Americans, labor, Central America and other issues. 612-721-2273.

•REPOhistory. NYC-based artists collective, installing counter-historical street signs, accompanied by performances, brochures, walking tours. 339 Lafayette St., Rm. 301, NYC 10012.

\* W E L C O M E T O T H E P O S T - C O L U M B I A N W O R L D \*



Doug Minkler



**DRAW COLUMBUS**  
Liar Slaver Murderer Thief

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**PAPER DOLLS**  
**FOR A POST**  
**WORLD**  
**WITH ENSEMBLES**  
**CONTRIBUTED**  
**BY**  
**U.S. GOVERNMENT**  
*Department*

