

CITIZEN ARTIST

The Mobile Armband Exhibition

On the 26th March 2011 a team of Citizen Artists (Daphne Plessner, Sophia Selby, Rahel Zoller, Nancy Fleischauer, Kristine Bumeister, Parastow Miri and friends Richard, Jonathon and Calum) launched a moving exhibition called the 'Citizen Artist Mobile Armband Exhibition' during the TUC rally in collaboration with the Save Our Placards! Collective.

The exhibition consisted of 120 unique armbands carrying protest slogans generated by an online 'sloganizer'. The sloganizer software combined movie tag lines and promotional phrases (emblems of capitalist consumption) with one's key

word--protest--and resulted in a vast array of hideous and amusing new slogans. In distributing the armbands to protesters, we were in essence playing a double game. On the one hand, we were offering up a subtle criticism, through parody, that questioned the sentiment of the protest march as a carnival. It is a curious phenomenon that the spirit of satire infuses a march. But how is it that the aesthetic of carnival has come to infuse political events turning them into festivals rather than protests per se? Carnivals, although they speak to the political, are in essence highly conservative. They do not alter the status quo.

On the other hand, we were participating in the march and the fact of our presence contributed to the practicalities of the event, i.e., as visible markers of the citizenries' rejection of government economic policy.

However, the aim of the Mobile Armband Exhibition was to launch our critique in the transient space of the march. We wanted to strip away a gallery or museum environment (the conventional space for the display of artworks) with its connotations of branding and 'art' endorsement and instead

embed an art exhibition within a live political event. By transmuting the march into an exhibition as an object in itself, that is, as an arena for the display of objects, we were drawing together our critique and its enactment within the political space of the march. The exhibition was also in part a collaboration with the Save Our Placards! collective--a project run by MA Goldsmiths' students (Guy Atkins and others) and the Museum of London.

About 'Save Our Placards!' project:

The Goldsmiths' team set out to preserve the placards of demonstrators and document the TUC protest. They asked people on the demonstration to donate items to the Museum of London, either on the day or at a separate event organised at the Museum on 2 April, 2011. The students on the march also contributed to the demonstration by providing poster material to the demonstrators to create an historical exhibition for the march. They produced placards with images from past London protests, e.g. Suffragettes, Poll Tax demonstrations and the 'Protein Man' etc. as a way of linking political issues of the past with the present.





**BE YOUNG,
HAVE FUN,
TASTE PROTEST**



**PROTEST:
MAKING PEOPLE
SUCCESSFUL IN A
CHANGING WORLD**

**PROTEST:
ONE NAME.
ONE LEGEND.**

**PROTEST,
THE REAL
THING**

**I LOST
WEIGHT WITH
PROTEST**

