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Misconceptualism Uber Alles!: the AS220 Annual Residents Exhibition

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There are two huge milestones in the history of twentieth century ART which have been adapted and adulterated at THE BEATNIK LEAGUE so relentlessly that regardless of how (very) important they are to me, personally, I am inclined to wish they never existed: These odious art historical monuments are DADA and CONCEPTUAL ART.

Although both art forms originally emerged as complex cognitive dilemmas designed to ignite the sleeping intellect, they have, ironically, served as a support for some of the most mindless twaddle ever to be perpetrated under the rubric of Art.

Naturally, since mindless twaddle is as essential to UMBERTOS PIPE DREAM as is the rubric of ART, the majority of the abominations "created" in the ambience of AS220 reflect this tendency to abuse art historical precedents and generate innumerable examples of the ultimate redundant-oxymoron: FAKE ART.

When Marcel Duchamp declared brazenly, at the beginning of this century, that in the future all the artist would do is point his finger and declare found objects "art", he had no idea what a tidal wave of half-assed, college educated, retard OTT-makers destiny was preparing to drown his high-minded progeny in. I guess he meant well.

Don't get me wrong friendz, there are many ambitious, astonishing and beautiful works in this exhibit, quite a few of which are based on the very art historical precedents which I have mentioned above, and I will spend some time later this month exploring these works in STATE OF THE ART.

But meanwhile, I'd like to focus on the epidemic of misconceptualism that is the history of AS220, and the manner in which a virtual-landfill of "fake art" has traditionally buried the genuine article at THE BEATNIK LEAGUE.

Part Two: GOOD ART IS BAD FOR MY EGO

Exactly a year ago I was struck by cognitive lightning while I stood on the sidewalk outside AS220 and listened to Umberito tell me about a Winslow Homer exhibition by which he had been greatly impressed. "Man! That exhibition brought me to my knees! I'm glad there isn't more art of that quality around because it would be very bad for my ego." he said.

The aforementioned bolt of lightning which struck me milliseconds later was the realization that the fundamental misconception upon which the BEATNIK LEAGUE is precariously founded is not the fallacious sentiment "open and unjuried" but rather an infinitely more pernicious notion.

The horrendous misconception at the root of all activities tainted by Umbertos skewed view of quality, is that Art can be an adjunct or support for ego. OT!

"Talent" and "ego" may, inevitably, be seen to be inextricably linked but ART AND EGO ARE FUNDAMENTALLY AND UNIVERSALLY ANTITHETICAL.

To borrow from the Buddhists, "Nirvana IS samsara, but samsara is not nirvana."

GOOD ART IS BAD FOR YOUR EGO, which is good.

Art is a transcendental vehicle for Christ sake! A fucking direct conduit to the mind of god! It is not a prop for some infantile poseur. A guitar case for a monk and shit-on-a-shingle designed by Yves St. Laurent are about as likely to put y'all in touch with the divine mind as junior prom decorations and a cage fulla campy alarm clocks.

What these "works" will put you in touch with is a sad substratum of oot-whirled lost souls who never stop trying to separate themselves from the seamless fabric of the universe. Why would anybody wanna do dat?
The only rational explanation for AS220 to expand into the area of cable access programming is as a Public Relations activity, and as an advertisement for the fabulous LIVE EXPERIENCE available only at THE BEATNIK LEAGUE.

Unfortunately, as we have seen across the history of the commune, whenever a new venue is created it becomes clogged with the KISCONCEPTUAL IST WORKS and assorted synaptic crud of Umbertos latest bunch of shills and suck-ups. TV220 is following the path previously plowed deep by COMPLEX MAGAZINE, an appalling potpourri of crap presented without emphasis next to some tiny artistic event. So that, what could be a sterling opportunity to showcase the diversity of talent aggregated at AS220 has been turned into an incoherent half hour of totally unrelated and disconnected glimpses of AS220 at its worst.

Figuring most prominently in this latest incarnation of "The An220 aesthetic" (vanity + incompetence) is Richard Goulis— the alleged gallery director at the AS220 complex. (This fella is so internally conflicted I find it frightening. At a Meeting in February at which we were to discuss my exhibition plans for the next few years, richard attempted to physically threaten me half a dozen times and then insisted on being allowed to apologize after each outburst.)

Anyway, The overall incoherence of these television programs can be very simply attributed to the fact that Richard is trying to express himself. However if you have ever conversed with the man, or seen any of his performance art or borne witness to any of his paintings it would become immediately apparent that Richard has absolutely nothing to express.

He does have some technical expertise in video production which could, with some external guidance, serve the P.R. possibilities of TV220, but in the meantime his mixture of seemingly accidental editing, dada segues and flat out prostration in the presence of Umbertos latest executive vanity make his ventures onto the statewide interconnect primarily annoying.

Jesus! Nothing sends me running for my tranquilizers faster than these BEATNIK LEAGUE television productions. YEAH, I LOVE THE OPENING TITLES AND THEME MUSIC (see Lucy Searle and Bert play tug of war with a 400 thousand dollar check!) but LAWD before they let divine umberto videotape another interview would somebody please look up the word sycophant and show him what it means. SHAMELESS!

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude for Berts prodigious abilities as a salesman and his endless capacities for flattery and smarmy insinuation, but does he hafta doit on TEEVEE? Its really embarrassing. And listening to his disconnected ramblings about "the problems of society" and the need for "obstacle-free self actualization sites like AS220" is really enough to make me wanna open my veins in a warm tub. Whatever became of the poised, telegenic spokesperson Umberto so magnificently metamorphosed into on other peoples T.V. programs? Dr. Chazans suits were fabulous until they started wanting to interview the doctor himself.

Meanwhile this gigantic waste of energy continues the well established practice of abusing a few brief moments of artistry with an avalanche of tedium, mediocrity and inapropiate advertising. Geoff Adams has inserted several pieces of MTV styled commercial product into the mix, making for a creepy juxtaposition of visual slickness and an absolute conceptual vacuum. Which of course is just the sort of ridiculous sublimity that sends this (can I say incoherent often enough?) video miasma veering inextricably into misconceptualism.

The benchmark of Umbertos MISCONCEPTUALIST REGIME is the continual confusion of "selling" and "communicating", a problem which is also permanently hard wired into the medium of television. ART MUST COMMUNICATE. Commerce may thrive on misrepresentation and misconception, but Art cannot be separated from the truth.

This becomes an even more enormous problem when you are dealing with the medium of television, because TV has existed almost completely since its inception as a skill for commerce and the hidden agenda of the captains of industry.

With the emergence of TV220 this problem becomes nearly insurmountable as it is combined with the MISCONCEPTUAL MISSION of the Bert Crenca Administration: T.V. produced by people flagrantly ignorant of the nature of their own intentions. Half-assed, wanabe, amateur-dilettante television. Blechhh!