



# Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition

*Yates McKee*

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**The collision of activism and contemporary art, from the Seattle protests to Occupy and beyond**

The collision of activism and contemporary art, from the Seattle protests to Occupy and beyond What is the relation of art to the practice of radical politics today? *Strike Art* explores this question through the historical lens of Occupy, an event that had artists at its core. Precarious, indebted, and radicalized, artists redirected their creativity from servicing the artworld into an expanded field of organizing in order to construct of a new—if internally fraught—political imaginary set off against the common enemy of the 1%. In the process, they called the bluff of a contemporary art system torn between ideals of radical critique, on the one hand, and an increasing proximity to Wall Street on the other—oftentimes directly targeting major art institutions themselves as sites of action.

Tracking the work of groups including MTL, Not an Alternative, the Illuminator, the Rolling Jubilee, and G.U.L.F, *Strike Art* shows how Occupy ushered in a new era of artistically-oriented direct action that continues to ramify far beyond the initial act of occupation itself into ongoing struggles surrounding labor, debt, and climate justice, concluding with a consideration of the overlaps between such work and the aesthetic practices of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Art after Occupy, McKee suggests, contains great potentials of imagination and action for a renewed left project that are still only beginning to ripen, at once shaking up and taking flight from the art system as we know it.

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