



The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986--2003 (Writing Art)

Gregg Bordowitz

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The HIV epidemic animates this collection of essays by a noted artist, writer, and activist. "So total was the burden of illness -- mine and others' -- that the only viable response, other than to cease making art entirely, was to adjust to the gravity of the predicament by using the crisis as a lens," writes Gregg Bordowitz, a film- and video-maker whose best-known works, *Fast Trip Long Drop* (1993) and *Habit* (2001), address AIDS globally and personally. In *The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous* -- the title essay is inspired by Charles Ludlam, founder of the Ridiculous Theater Company -- Bordowitz follows in the tradition of artist-writers Robert Smithson and Yvonne Rainer by making writing an integral part of an artistic practice.

Bordowitz has left his earliest writings for the most part unchanged -- to preserve, he says, "both the youthful exuberance and the palpable sense of fear" created by the early days of the AIDS crisis. After these early essays, the writing becomes more experimental, sometimes mixing fiction and fact; included here is a selection of Bordowitz's columns from the journal *Documents*, "New York Was Yesterday." Finally, in his newest essays he reformulates early themes, and, in "My Postmodernism" (written for *Artforum's* fortieth anniversary issue) and "More Operative Assumptions" (written especially for this book), he reexamines the underlying ideas of his practice and sums up his theoretical concerns.

In his mature work, Bordowitz seeks to join the subjective -- the experience of having a disease -- and the objective -- the fact of the disease as a global problem. He believes that this conjunction is necessary for understanding and fighting the crisis. "If it can be written," he says, "then it can be realized."

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