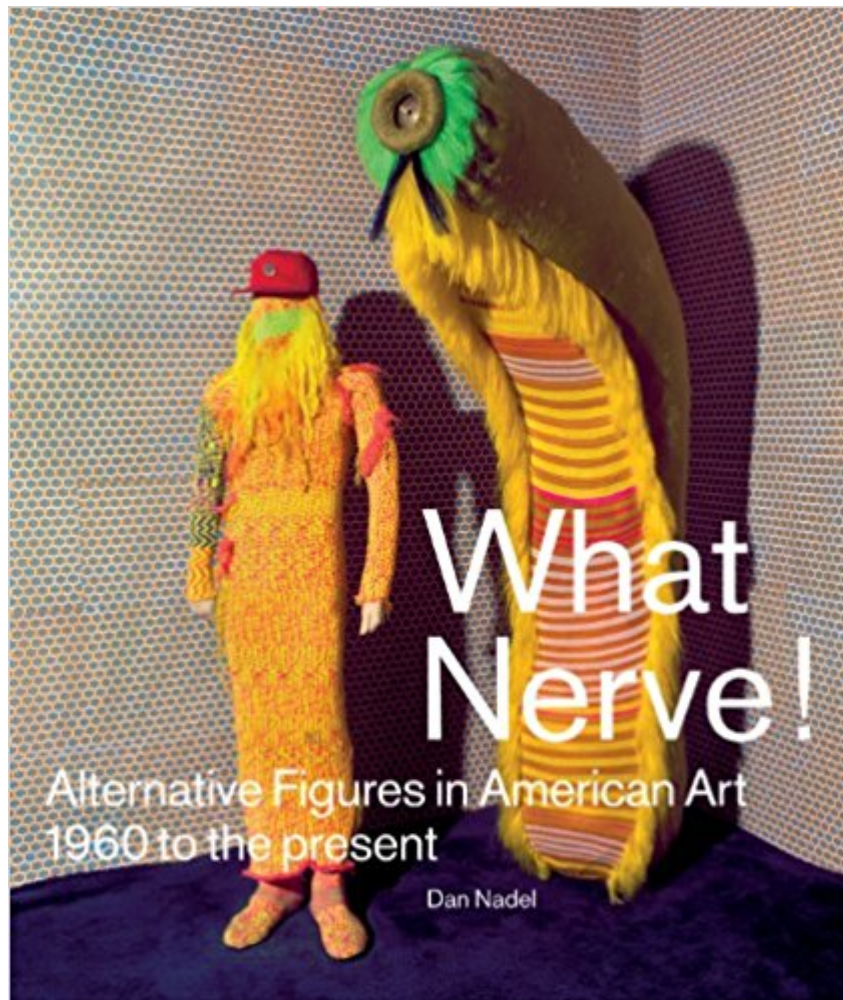




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# What Nerve!: Alternative Figures In American Art, 1960 To The Present



## Synopsis

What Nerve! reveals a hidden history of American figurative painting, sculpture and popular imagery. It documents and/or restages four installations, spaces or happenings, in Chicago, San Francisco, Detroit and Providence, which were crucial to the development of figurative art in the United States. Several of the better-known artists in What Nerve! have been the subject of significant exhibitions or publications, but this is the first major volume to focus on the broader impact of figurative art to connect artists and collectives from different generations and regions of the country. These are: from Chicago, the Hairy Who (James Falconer, Art Green, Gladys Nilsson, Jim Nutt, Suellen Rocca, Karl Wirsum); from California, Funk artists (Jeremy Anderson, Robert Arneson, Roy De Forest, Robert Hudson, Ken Price, Peter Saul, Peter Voulkos, William T. Wiley); from Detroit, Destroy All Monsters (Mike Kelley, Cary Loren, Niagara, Jim Shaw); and from Providence, Forcefield (Mat Brinkman, Jim Drain, Leif Goldberg, Ara Peterson). Created in collaboration with artists from these groups, the historical moments at the core of What Nerve! are linked by work from six artists who profoundly influenced or were influenced by the groups: William Copley, Jack Kirby, Elizabeth Murray, Gary Panter, Christina Ramberg and H.C. Westermann. Featuring paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs and videos, as well as ephemera, wallpaper and other materials used in the reconstructed installations, the book and exhibition will broaden public exposure to the scope of this influential history. The exuberance, humor and politics of these artworks remain powerfully resonant. Much of the work in this book, including installation photos, exhibition ephemera and correspondence, is published for the first time. What Nerve! represents the first historical examination of the circumstances, relationships and works of an increasingly important lineage of American artists.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I walked away from the show sensing that these artists were not experimenting but refining fully formed aesthetics...What they produced wasn't high or low imagery, but publics and taste that were wholly their own. (William S. Smith *Art in America*) This show, along with the excellent catalog, teems with ideas that other curators should build on. (Roberta Smith *The New York Times*) It's wonderful how authentic, vital, and even inspiring their whippersnapper principles feel, fifty years later. (Peter Schjeldahl *The New Yorker*) A demonstration of how widely diverse the range of sub-cultural artistry has always been outside of the dominant New York art world. (Matthew Erickson *Frieze*) This published companion to an exhibition of the same title at the Rhode Island School of Design's museum of Art in Providence connects some widely spaced dots. Starting with the figurative artists of the "Hairy Who" in Chicago and West Coast Funk artists and their assorted allies, it recontextualizes painters as various as William N. Copley, Elizabeth Murray and Gary Panter; encompasses the rogue artist/musicians of Destroy All Monsters; and concludes with the erstwhile Providence collective Forcefield. It may not make total sense, but it greatly broadens the view beyond the usual academic and market suspects. (Holland Cotter *The New York Times*) "What Nerve!" opens up the narrow trajectory of art history into a dizzying knot of possible interconnections and influences, suggesting the shapes and lines formed by art history are works of art in themselves. (Priscilla Frank *Huffington Post*) Generally speaking, the art is grotesque, garish and exuberant, cranky, sometimes menacing, often hilarious and, in the case of the Hairy Who and Destroy All Monsters, particularly fresh. (J. Hoberman *The New York Review of Books*) This focus on early works catches the artists when they were young, feeding off the creative energies of their comrades and responding most nakedly to their historical times. (Ken Johnson *The New York Times*) I found "What Nerve!" hugely stimulating. Not only because it's filled with brilliant and original work, but because it's also sprinkled liberally with clunkers — truly groan-inducing, deeply ordinary art. As a result, the show gives your critical criteria a really good workout. Better yet, it raises such interesting questions. Does art thrive in collectivist settings? Is the energy of groups more productive or just more viable in the worldly sense than the heat given off by solitary creators? Is the collective, as an expression of youthful idealism, an end in itself? Or is it, at best, a kind of shell protecting creative individuals in their

embryonic stages, best broken out of? (Sebastian Smee The Boston Globe)A provocativ (Carrie Hojnick Architectural Digest)It's enough to make you want to move to Dayton or Milwaukee and start getting weird. (Scott Indrisek Art Info)'What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art, 1960 to the Present' gives pride of place to misfit artistic subcultures that mainstream institutions have long ignored. (Ellen Schafer Art in America)'This exhibition proposes an alternate history of figurative painting, sculpture, and vernacular image-making from the 1960 to the present that has been largely over-looked and undervalued,' Nadel writes in the accompanying catalogue, published by D.A.P. (Arnie Cooper Art News)An informative catalogue, published in conjunction with the exhibition, is Nadel's attempt to tell the story of this artistic lineage in full. While many of the artists in "What Nerve!" have colourful biographies,. Nadel says that he is wary of overemphasising this aspect. 'The work defies any easy one-liners. The story is the work.' (Jonathan Griffin The Art Newspaper)What Nerve!, the latest exhibit from the RISD Museum, uncovers four underground art movements. These contemporary American scenes span the United States, with moments in Chicago, San Francisco, Ann Arbor, and Providence. Remaining separate from major art-historical movements mostly centered in New York—including Pop art, Minimalism, and Conceptual art—the works in What Nerve! bring the artists' subversive messages to light. (Molly Elizalde Conde Nast Traveler)

Really great catalog of work. A nice keepsake after seeing the show at Matthew Mark's Gallery in NYC.

Gorgeously printed book - USPS shipping was criminally slow

great book that I love .

This is the best art book of the year -- a revival and appreciation of alternative strategies in picture-making from the mid-60s.

I'm an artist looking for more funky, humorous, figurative artists. This is what I was looking for.

Super fast! Great copy!

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