

THE ART OF BLEEDING

Art of Bleeding is a Los Angeles-based multi-media performance troupe providing darkly comic faux-educational programs in first-aid and safety at clubs, galleries, and art events.

Staging shows from an actual ambulance, The Art of Bleeding creates a “paramedical funhouse” wherein puppets and Saturday morning-flavored costumed characters rub elbows with a voluminous crew of blatantly fetishized nurses. Presiding over all is “beloved mascot” Abram the Safety Ape, whose coloring-book persona belies a more profound role as acolyte of the recklessly metaphysical doctrine of “True Safety Consciousness.” Indoctrinations deviate significantly from Red-Cross training, borrowing rather from the work of Dr. Abram S. Lugner, a radical psychologist of dubious historicity, whose experimental approach to education offers rationale for various Zen pratfalls, carnivalesque disrobings, violently illustrative Grand Guignol effects, and audio-visual barrages of remixed material from old health-and-safety films.

The group’s ambulance also functions as a mobile recording studio for their Gory Details Project, in which true-life tales of medical trauma are gathered from passersby to be shared in an online library of movies and mp3s. A select few of these stories are also re-enacted and discussed within the framework of a sort of tragically misguided children's show, the “Gory Details” web series.

In addition to live shows, videos, recordings, and paramedically-themed sample-based music, The Art of Bleeding has also choreographed public performances of bandaged and crutch-enabled dancers, created grisly anatomical walk-through installations, and staged a parking-lot display of smoldering freshly-wrecked cars peopled with bloodied actors sharing their cautionary tales.

Founded in May 2004, by “Dr.” A.P. Ridenour (AKA Reverend AI) after his decade-long tenure as leader of the Los Angeles Cacophony Society, a group of culture-jamming art-tricksters, The Art of Bleeding continues Cacophony’s tradition of guerilla theater with forays on public streets and sidewalks, opening their ambulance to the curious, distributing cultish literature expounding on True Safety Consciousness, and applying plaster “safety casts” to the unbroken arms of novelty-hungry passers-by.

Regular AoB performers include Brian Doherty and Randy Horton as Abram the Safety Ape, Phil Glau as RT the Robot Teacher, and “nurses” played by Alena Kitson, Vima-Sophia, Jezebel X, Auriana-Lynn, and Emmeline Chang.

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