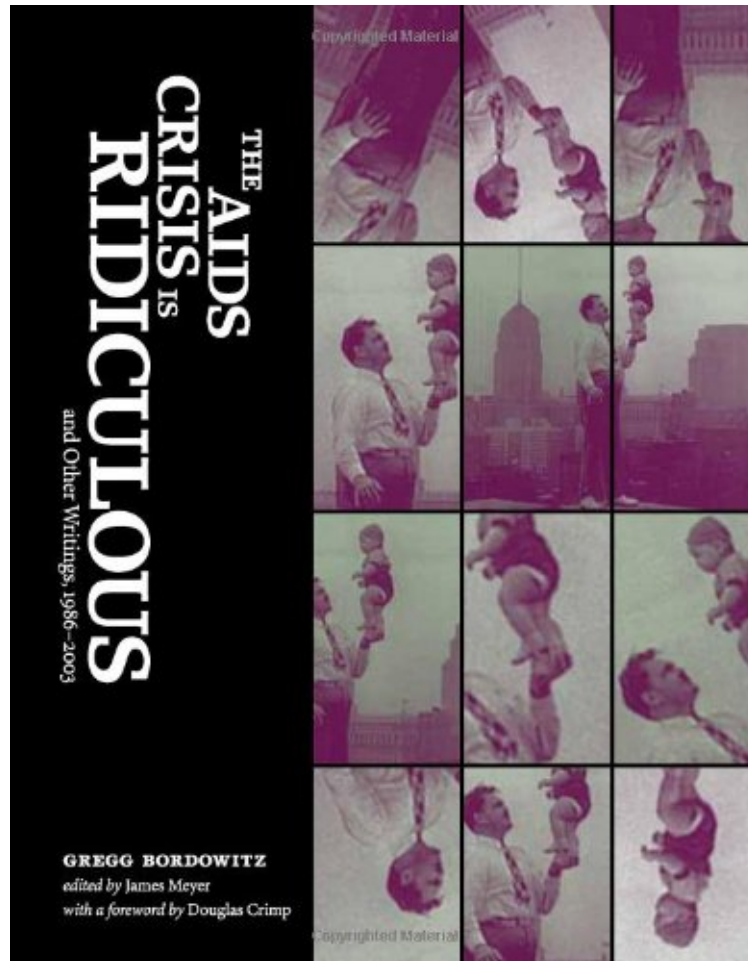


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The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986--2003 (Writing Art)

Gregg Bordowitz

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Gregg Bordowitz : The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986--2003 (Writing Art) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986--2003 (Writing Art):

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."

As a video artist, grassroots organizer, activist, intellectual, witness, and person with HIV, Gregg Bordowitz brings multiple vantage points to this thoughtful and original chronicle of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is good news that Bordowitz's writings, originally appearing in widely disparate and often ephemeral publications, will now be available in one volume. Existing fans can now savor again Bordowitz's prescient interventions over the long course of the epidemic, and new fans can discover his uniquely articulate voice. (Paula A. Treichler, Research Professor, Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, author of *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*) Whether he's discussing the relationship between AIDS-activist video and Charles Ludlam's aesthetic of the ridiculous, applying Walter Benjamin's concept of messianic time to the experience of living with AIDS, or exploring the ethical position of film as witness, Gregg Bordowitz is at once passionately committed to socially engaged, theoretically informed art and searchingly honest about its difficulties. Representing a unique voice that refuses to separate the personal and the political, this is an indispensable collection for anyone interested in contemporary debates about cultural politics. (Rosalyn Deutsche, Barnard College, author of *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*) Along with being a thoroughly engaging read, *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous* is noticeably well-designed. The frequent inclusion of stills from the films and videos described is a welcome addition. *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous* is thoughtful and provocative, and may well find a place in the permanent canon of AIDS literature. (The Gay and Lesbian) *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous* covers a wide range of topics, from coalition-building to the disappearance of New York City as a home for the fringes, from art criticism to South African AIDS activism. (San Francisco Bay Guardian) *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous* interweaves the author's intimate experiences, personal reflections on his own mortality and fear of death, and essential information on AIDS prevention and treatment. The result is a dynamic image of the fight against the pandemic seen through the lens of an AIDS video activist--Gregg Bordowitz himself. (AU: America's AIDS Magazine) In *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous and Other Writings*, Gregg Bordowitz combines memoir and critical practice to startling effect...He opens up not just his world but ours as well. (Richard Meyer Bookforum) I came to this work expecting a book on AIDS -- a collection over time of thoughtful, persuasive writing emerging from the long tradition of American social activism. What I wasn't prepared for was the author's breadth of reflection, nor the depth of his thinking. Bordowitz's capacity for discernment is a constant intellectual delight. The writing borders on the theological, but God has been replaced by art, and theology by the history of writing about art. Bordowitz is unafraid to graze over the vast field of subject matter that this disease -- his disease -- brings into view: his writing emerges from his experience and speculation as a person living in the midst of death and life. Bordowitz deserves to be known and read as a writer as much as an artist. (AA Bronson, artist) Bordowitz's vital book wrestles the culture of American AIDS activism from the quicksand of popular amnesia. (Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, author of *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*) From the Inside Flap "As a video artist, grassroots organizer, activist, intellectual, witness, and person with HIV, Gregg Bordowitz brings multiple vantage points to this thoughtful and original chronicle of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is good news that Bordowitz's writings, originally appearing in widely disparate and often ephemeral publications, will now be available in one volume. Existing fans can now savor again Bordowitz's prescient interventions over the long course of the epidemic, and new fans can discover his uniquely articulate voice." --Paula A. 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About the Author James Meyer is Associate Professor of Art History at Emory University. He is the author of *Minimalism: Art and Polemics in the Sixties* and the editor of *The AIDS Crisis is Ridiculous and Other Writings 1986-2003* by Gregg Bordowitz (MIT Press, 2004).