

SUBVERSION

CRIMINAL



CULTURE JAMMING

THIS LECTURE
IS CANCELLED

~~thinking in opposition~~

Culture jamming

The band *Negativland* first used the phrase culture jamming in 1984 on their album *Jamcon 84*.

The purpose of culture jamming is to disrupt or subvert media messages in order to expose the practices of large corporations and institutions by creating altered messages.

A postmodern concept

This is very relevant to the postmodern era.

It is skeptical and set in opposition to many of the ideals and values that have underpinned the modernist era.

Culture-jamming uses pastiche, irony, humour and existing motifs and then changes their meaning.



Hell

Joke^{Diet}

@ lightbluecoffee

As an example, this is the re-appropriation of brand identities which have been selected and modified by culture jammers, to reveal corporate truths and provide a commentary on consumerism.

Culture jammers also make interventions in public spaces such as on this Nike 2006 England World Cup poster featuring Wayne Rooney and some shopping bags.



Banksy and *Brandalised*

In 2022 US fashion retailer *Guess* promoted and sold a collection of clothing in conjunction with *Brandalised*. Images of Banksy's work were featured on their clothing collection.

In response Banksy promoted shoplifting the store on IG. After Banksy's post, shop staff covered the inside of the window with large sheets of plain paper, obscuring the display. This proved Instagram to be a very effective culture-jamming tool.



Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK, 1970-1990 at *Tate Britain*, Exhibition: 2023/2024



Fiat Advertisement, 1979.
Reprinted 2023.
Jill Posener.

Photographer Jill Posener describes these interventions as REFACEMENTS.

‘Like many photographers, I’m fascinated by what people write on walls, billboards, and other surfaces. I’m interested in emotions, in the rage or humour expressed, and in efforts to take back our public spaces from commercial interests.’



Culture jamming

‘Culture jamming is an intriguing form of political communication that has emerged in response to the commercial isolation of public life. Practitioners of culture jamming argue that culture, politics, and social values have been bent by saturated commercial environments, from corporate logos on sports facilities [*Principality Stadium*], to television content designed solely to deliver targeted audiences to producers and sponsors [*X Factor*]. Many public issues and social voices are pushed to the margins of society by market values and commercial communication, making it difficult to get the attention of those living in the "walled gardens" of consumerism.’

Centre for Media, Journalism and Democracy (cjmd.com.uw.edu)

Take it back

Culture jamming operates in an effort to remove power and authority from privileged and unchallenged sources and return it back into the control of the individual.

The intention is to challenge commercial, consumptive, corporate culture to form a critique of its' practices and messages.

It has also been described as 'media hacking, information warfare, terror art, and guerrilla semiotics' (jstor.org)

Further definitions of culture jamming

‘Acts of modifying mass media advertisements so that they convey messages different to that originally intended, usually messages that contradict the original meaning or messages that serve as social commentary.’

(sociologydictionary.org)

‘a form of political and social activism which, by means of fake adverts, hoax news stories, pastiches of company logos and product labels, computer hacking, etc., that draws attention to and at the same time subverts the power of the media, governments, and large corporations ...’

(collinsdictionary.com)

**EVER THOUGHT OF JOINING?
TALK TO SOMEONE WHO HAS
LOST A SON IN IRAQ**

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VISIT ARMYJOBS.MOD.UK



Naomi Klein (1970) is a journalist and documentary filmmaker and has written for the *New York Times*.

No Logo focuses on branding and often makes connections with the anti-globalization movement.

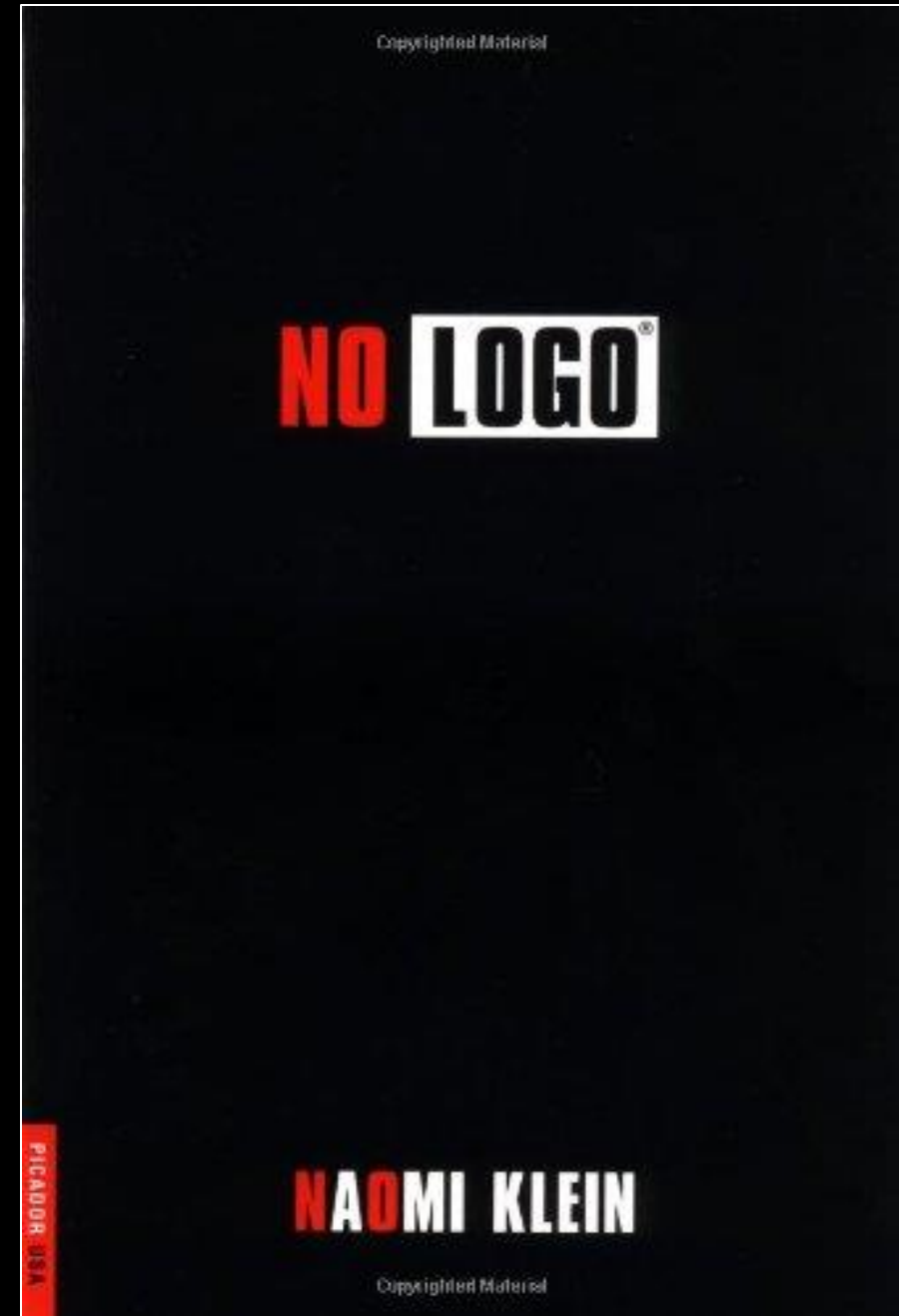
There are four parts:

No Space

No Choice

No Jobs

No Logo



NO LOGO

Naomi Klein published *No Logo* in 2000 and it still bears significance today. It references the practice of culture-jamming. Such was its' influence many brands have indeed modified their businesses, propositions and practices, in the light of *No Logo's* critique.

'This book is not another account of the power of the select group of corporate Goliaths that have gathered to form our de facto global government. Rather, it is an attempt to analyze and document the forces opposing corporate rule, and to lay out the particular set of cultural and economic conditions that made the emergence of that opposition inevitable.'

Naomi Klein (*Introduction XXi*)

NO LOGO

‘The most sophisticated culture jams are not stand-alone parodies but interceptions - counter-messages that hack into a corporations own method of communication to send a message starkly at odds with the one that was intended. The process forces the company to foot the bill for its own subversion, ...’

(Klein, p281)





Gordon's Gin.
It Fuck's you up

Détournement and the *Situationist International*

Culture jamming derives from Détournement which is a parody or mimic of an original work.

Détournement has many similarities to culture jamming and was adopted by the *Situationist International* movement in the late 1950's describing it in their first publication as: 'the integration of present or past artistic productions into a superior construction of a milieu.'

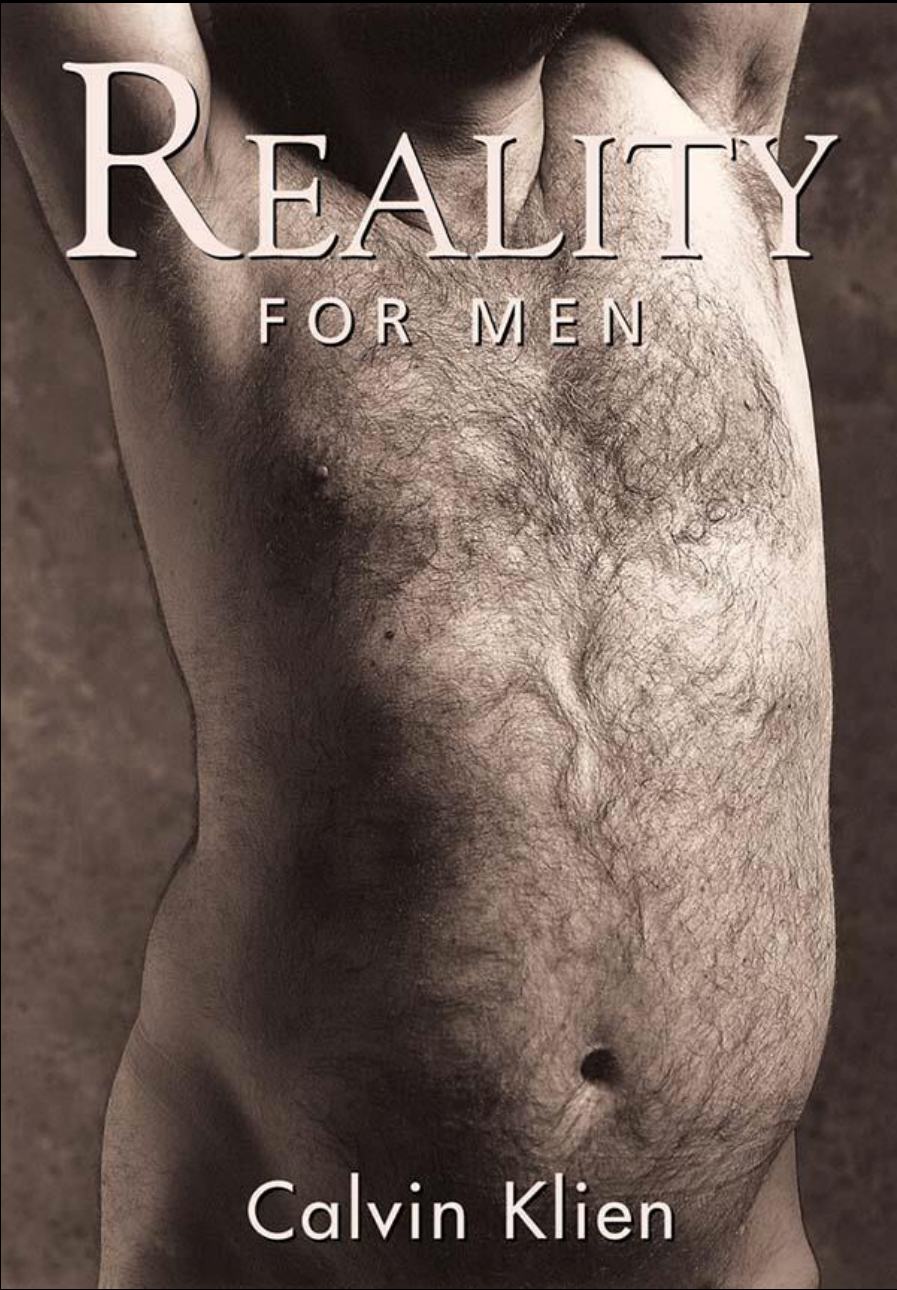
Douglas B. Holt (2010) in *Cultural Strategy Using Innovative Ideologies to Build Breakthrough Brands* described it as: 'turning expressions of the capitalist system and its media culture against itself.'

Détournement still has significant cultural influence and it can presently be identified in the creations of Banksy, Adbusters and the Billboard Liberation Front amongst many others.

Adbusters

The *Guerrilla Foundation* describes *Adbusters* as an organisation running a 25 year campaign to 'provide an alternative to the corporate-influenced mental environment we all live in.'

Founded in Canada by author, editor, activist, filmmaker, Kalle Lasn in 1989, the movement publishes an (ad-free) magazine that is written by activists, educators, entrepreneurs and writers with the aim to oppose capitalism. *Adbusters* do this through culture jamming whereby the goal is to disrupt the consumer experience to expose some of the less attractive ideologies promoted through advertising, the media and often the product itself.



REALITY

FOR MEN

Calvin Klien

Come to where the flavor is.

Marlboro Country.



Marlboro Red
or Longhorn 100's—
you get a lot to like.

Kings: 17 mg. "tar," 1.1 mg. nicotine—
100's: 18 mg. "tar," 1.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Apr. 75

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Welcome to Malboro Country.



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:
Smoking causes hypothermia
as well as premature death.



Shot on iPhone 6

by Kono M.

Thinner than ever.



Kalle Lasn – co-founder of *adbusters*

‘As our planet gets warmer, as animals go extinct, as the humans get sicker, as our economies bail and our politicians grow ever more twisted,’ Americans just go shopping,’ Adbusters says on its web site. Overconsumption is destroying us, yet shopping is “our solace, our sedative: consumerism is the opiate of the masses.”

‘We’ve got to break the habit,’ ... ‘It will be a shock, but we’ve got to shift to a new paradigm. Otherwise, I’m afraid will be facing a new Dark Age.’

(nytimes.org 2012)

Some organisations that culture jam

- Stop Oil
- Extinction Rebellion
- Fathers4Justice
- Greenpeace
- UNICEF
- Led By Donkeys

All of these groups use subversive media techniques to get their message heard.

Fathers4Justice



Led by Donkeys



Led By Donkeys

Led By Donkeys is a British anti-Brexit political campaign group which uses satire targeted at pro-Brexit politicians. Since the group's creation in December 2018, its four founders have been calling out what they call "thermonuclear hypocrisy". *Led By Donkeys*' first campaign consisted of billboards containing past tweets by pro-Brexit politicians, or quotes presented as tweets. These tweets state the politicians' previous political positions, which according to the group have not stood the test of time.

The campaign was initially run as a guerilla operation, in which *Led By Donkeys* posters were plastered over existing adverts. It was then expanded into a crowdfunded campaign that legitimately purchased advertising space on hundreds of billboards across the UK.



Theresa May ✓

@theresa_may

Follow



I believe it is clearly in our national interest
to remain a member of the European Union.

25 Apr 2016

She didn't tweet it, she actually **said** it!
In a speech to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers

LedByDonkeys @ByDonkeys
changed?

prime



Subversion ...

... is very much an extension of culture jamming.

What is subversion?

Subversion should not be considered as a negative attribute, but one that operates in opposition.

It is the attempt to transform established order by means of exploring unconventional, non-conformist routes of creativity. It can be used as illumination that shines a light and makes things visible.

It is an agent of progressive change.

Primarily the label of subversion is applied because it highlights things that aren't necessarily what organisations want us to think or see.

A conduit for change

Subversion is a compelling creative tool that should always be considered as part of your creative process. It can lead to unexpected and exceptional results. Subversion can only take place when rules are broken. Not for the sake of it, but as an opportunity to bring about radical transformation and change.

Subversion should encourage confidence in creative risk-taking and provide the inspiration to make irrational and contrary decisions.

Subversion is not only a significant creative process, but also a valid research methodology.

It is a technique and point of view adopted by numerous movements within art and design history, especially since the beginning of the twentieth century such as Dada, the Surrealists and the Situationists.

Dadaism

Dadaism rejected cultural standards and values, and advocated total freedom in their art. As a response to the first world war, their output was absurd, paradoxical and opposed harmony.

They rejected reason, rationality and the Modernist order of capitalist society. They replaced this with humour, chaos, nonsense and anti-bourgeois sentiment (middle class sensibility).

In the Dada Manifesto of 1918 Tristan Tzara explained: ' I write this Manifesto to show that people can perform contrary actions together,'

They used improvisation to express individuality and to challenge accepted artistic practice.

Surrealism

Also started after the first world war, and greatly influenced by Dadaism, Surrealism was a philosophical, literary and revolutionary artistic movement that explored the workings of the mind and championed the irrational through the unconscious and dreams.

The surrealists rejected conventional artistic and moral values. By defying reason, they exuded an enormous cultural influence that is still apparent today.

Situationist International (SI)

Formed in Italy in 1957 and made up of a collection of activists, artists, intellectuals and theorists they were devoted to the disruption and reimagining of the systems which govern everyday life. They valued the decentralization of creation, with artists working in collaboration or under shared names to undermine the notion of the single genius or visionary.

The notion of "Spectacle", originally outlined by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle*, is key to understanding both the conceptual underpinnings of the Situationists and their distrust of consumerism.

Subversion as a creative tool.

Subversion has therefore been a valid creative approach and critical tool through which to view the world around us.

In many ways it is the curious child asking 'why?'

Whether challenging practical techniques, formal behavior, tradition, ceremony, established protocols, ways of seeing, approaches to problems and inspiration for creative output, it can help generate impossible ideas.

Subversion as a research methodology.

To undermine, challenge, oppose, question, contradict are useful positions to take when embarking on research.

Subversion is not undertaken to defeat an ideology, but to question it.

It is useful to challenge given 'truths' and this is the basis of all philosophy. Subversion provides an immediate viewpoint to start reconstructing realities, rather than accepting those that are given.

Surviving adversity.

Many pieces of creative work have adopted subversive techniques to change things for the better.

Often, a social, cultural, political or practical change is necessary to improve the quality of life for many, yet conventional forms of communication may not be effective in bringing about this change quickly enough.

In spite of prohibitive circumstances, subversion can ensure the wellbeing of others on many levels.

Subversion can help individuals survive in the face of many challenging situations.

We will look some examples relating to child protection, public health and personal safety.

Whilst we look at these case studies, consider how you could subvert your own creative work for the power of good, and help others survive through adversity.

NSPCC

A medium or format can carry with it traditional expectations and conventional approaches.

For a 2002 NSPCC advert, 2D animation is mixed with live action and a cartoon slapstick soundtrack. This approach subverts the genre of the children's cartoon to great effect.

The outcome is a harrowing, disturbing and surreal vignette that challenges our expectations.



David Droga, creative director of *Saatchi & Saatchi* at the time, explained:
'... we wanted to show the kind of violence and abuse that advertising regulators would never allow. Having a cartoon child enabled that to happen, making viewers extremely uneasy about the juxtaposition of an animated world with the grim reality of child abuse.'

There were attempts to get the commercial banned after many complaints, but NSPCC's defence was that the imagery was "an effective means of communicating the seriousness of the issue and moving people to take action if they were concerned about a child.' This defence was upheld.

This is a good question

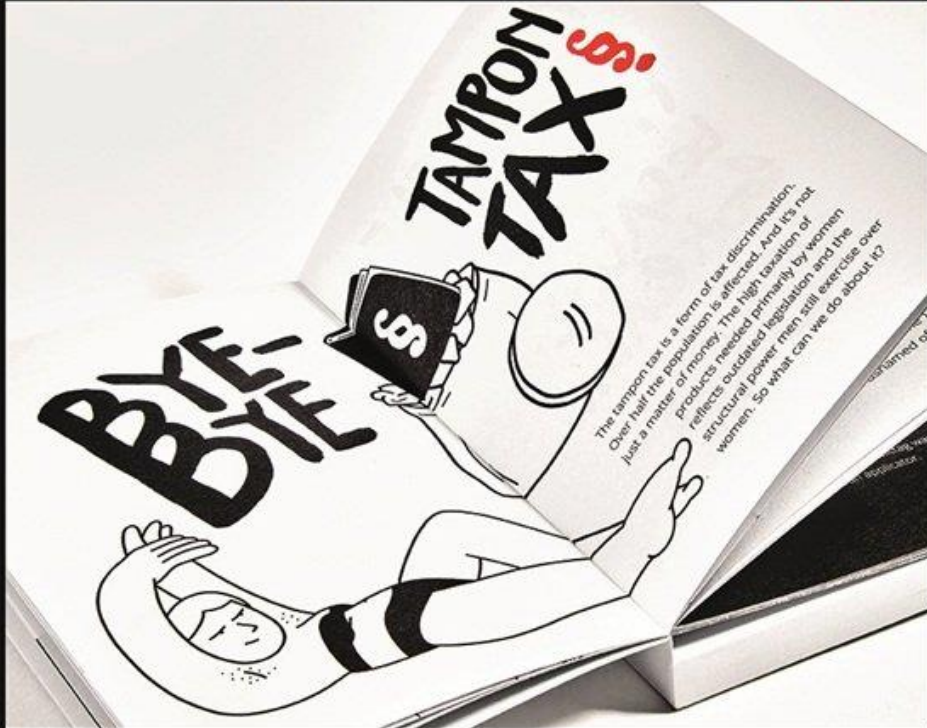
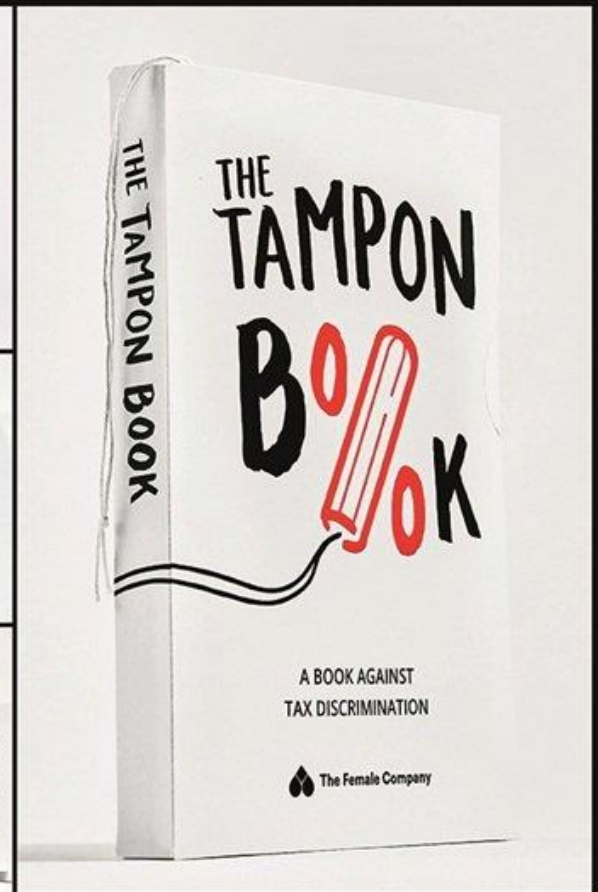
WHY ARE
PERIODS
A **LUXURY** AND
CAVIAR
ISN'T?

The Tampon Book

In Germany, tampons are considered 'luxury' goods and are therefore taxed at the top rate of 19% whereas countries like India, Kenya and Canada have abolished the tax. However, products such as flowers, truffles or oil paintings are considered daily necessities and therefore are on taxed at 7%. The same 7% also applies to books.

So *The Female Company* exploited this loophole. As books are also taxed with 7% they decided to sell their tampons as a book, or rather inside a book. A simple change of packaging led to its product reclassification.

After significant pressure, and the fallacy highlighted by this book, on 7th November 2019 the German Government abolished the tax.



Teddy Gun

In 2017, 39,773 people died from gun-related injuries in the United States, according to the CDC (*Centres for Disease, Control and Prevention*). This figure includes gun murders and gun suicides, along with less common types of gun-related deaths including those that were unintentional, involved law enforcement or whose circumstances could not be determined.

Common sense gun laws will help prevent these deaths.

Regulation

Gun violence is a huge problem in Chicago: every year, more than 1,000 people are shot. This campaign argues for common sense regulations by contrasting the manufacturing regulations of teddy bears compared to guns.

Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence

The resulting Teddy Gun is a tragically ironic, but powerfully subversive symbol, of the lack of regulation for the latter. The campaign was made by Creative agency *FCB Chicago* for *Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence*.





VS. GUNS REGULATIONS



ASTM F 963-11, Section 4.3, Stuffed Material
ASTM F 963-11, Section 4.5, Sound Producing Toys
ASTM F 963-11, Section 4.6, Battery-Operated Toys
(except labeling and/or instructional literature requirements)
ASTM F 963-11, Section 4.7, Stuffed and Beaniebag-Type Toys
ASTM F 963-11, Section 4.8, Magnet
(except labeling and/or instructional literature requirements)

[illegible]

13 U.S. Code § 1371a - Children's products containing lead; lead paint rule
14 U.S. Code § 2050b - Prohibition on sale of certain products containing specified phthalate
15 U.S. Code § 5521 - Product certification and labeling

PUT PRESSURE ON CONGRESS AT
TEDDYGUN.COM



ILLINOIS COUNCIL AGAINST HANDBGUN VIOLENCE

*Comparison is based on Federal safety regulations for the manufacture of domestic toys and firearms.



TEDDY GUN™

AN IRONIC SYMBOL FOR THE LACK OF COMMON SENSE GUN REGULATIONS

CAN A STRIKING DESIGN OF A TEDDY BEAR MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (ICAHV) works to bring the issue of common sense gun laws to the attention of both state and federal governments.

Introducing Teddy Gun, an ironic symbol for the lack of common sense gun regulations, because there are more regulations for manufacturing a teddy bear than for a gun.

To change this, we needed to put pressure on congressmen, so we created a provocative brand experience that could not be missed. We exposed the lack of gun laws using the physical Teddy Gun, the design featured in an online teaser and short documentary film, plus a provocative street display, and a guerrilla-style poster directed readers to our site. Finally, we contacted congressmen in Washington DC and Illinois, then asked people to put pressure on their own using our site's social tool.

The Teddy Gun limited thoughtful conversation and, ultimately, put pressure on congressmen, and now an ICAHV-supported bill is gaining unprecedented momentum in the state legislature.



Embrace subversion as a creative opportunity

Subvert your own work.

Reinvent it.

Do the opposite.

Change the direction.

Undermine it.

Repute ideologies

Challenge core ideas.

Unveil a new reality.

Be brave and see what you get.

DIAL UP THE MADNESS

Dan Wieden