

33 Artists in 3 Acts



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best-selling author of *Seven Days in the Art World*

social class.” In pursuit of this theme, they decided that the chalkboards should not be a standard green but the elusive color of money. They found a recipe on the Martha Stewart website involving powdered tile grout that allowed them to customize the hue.

One of the most talked about sessions of “#class” was Ben Davis’s “9.5 Theses on Art and Class,” a riff on Martin Luther’s famous “95 Theses” about the failings of the Catholic Church. One of Davis’s contentions is that class antagonism manifests itself in critiques of the art market. He sees the visual arts as having an essentially “middle-class character” that is “dominated by ruling-class values” and laments their “weak relations with the working class.” Davis is writing a book based on the ten-page document that he circulated at “#class.”

Powhida suggests that working collaboratively to create events might be more politically responsible to our times than making objects that display individuality, but he loves “entertaining” himself in the studio by sketching and drawing on his own. Indeed, the artist is best known for his satirical drawings. In a work titled *Post-Boom Odds* (2008), he refers to himself as a “genius trading in specificity and desperation . . . making fun of shit.” His most notorious drawing was published on the cover of the *Brooklyn Rail* in November 2009. Titled *How the New Museum Committed Suicide with Banality*, it featured caricatures of Jeff Koons (described as “the guest curator”) and Massimiliano Gioni (“the free agent”) who are censured for their part in filling the public space of the New Museum with a private collection, that of Dakis Joannou (labeled “the trustee”).

Dalton and Powhida started working together in 2008, when their respective dealers (Edward Winkleman and Schroeder Romero) suggested they collaborate on something. “Our galleries noticed that we both did work that was text-based and obnoxious,” says Dalton. “Critical and humorous!” corrects Powhida. So the pair made a set of condolence cards for artists and other art-world insiders to send to one another. On one was written, “I am so sorry for your loss of representation,” next to a drawing of a tombstone engraved with the words, “Your career, 2001–2008, R.I.P.”

The two artists have never tried to create a unified identity or joint