



Green peace

Manhattan artists Mouths Wide Open use toy soldiers to play antiwar activists

The little green men invading New York City may be armed, but they come in peace. Since early 2005, plastic toy soldiers tagged with BRING ME HOME stickers have been discreetly placed in public places around town by Manhattan artist collective Mouths Wide Open. The plastic people have been spotted perched on pay phones, nestled in library stacks and balanced on Siamese water valves.

The stickers also list the group's website (www.mouthswideopen.org), so that passersby who find them can learn about the artists, voice their opinions about the project and order their own soldiers. Mouths Wide Open, which formed in 2002, is a group of friends and acquaintances, mostly artists, whose members ascribe to the Günther Grass quote: "The job of a citizen is to keep your mouth open."

The response to the soldier project has been mostly positive, in part because the group consciously chose a gentle message to distribute. On their website, an NYPD officer wrote that he was "impressed with the message delivery." Merry Conway, a founding member of Mouths, points out that "if we had used more aggressive language like FUCK BUSH, he probably wouldn't have reacted in the same way."

During their travels, Mouths members have delivered their antiwar soldiers farther afield. In addition to U.S. cities, the toys have made their way to Switzerland, South Africa and other locales where, the group hopes, their toy soldiers will help bring the real ones home.

—Rhena Tantisunthorn

For more info, visit www.mouthswideopen.org

Talking points

The illustrated guide to **fad illnesses**

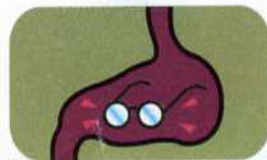
By **Bob Eckstein**

One in three Americans suffer from fad illnesses. Recognized throughout the medical community as sometimes real, sometimes imaginary, these maladies provide victims with an opportunity to beg for sympathy and a sense of self importance. Use this guide to help you choose the right fad illness for you.



Chronic DVD Consumption *The buying of movies which do not stand up to repeat viewing. Symptoms include **Must Like Dogs**, **Dodgeball**, and **Leprechaun 3**.*

Low Potter Tolerance *The inability to jump on this bandwagon and give a rat's ass about Harry Potter.*



Second-Hand iPod Music Inhalation *Found in extended periods of subway or airline travel.*

Receding Rectal Coverage (or Exposed Panty Hyperventilation) *Caused by daughter leaving house in low-riding jeans. Can lead to **Acute Butt-Crack Blindness**.*



Compulsive Reflex Cell Phone Calling *Subconscious attempt for attention and gadget flaunting followed by **Chronic Blackberry Squinting** & **Finger Joint Pain**.*

Annoying High-Res Photo Circulation *The habit of e-mailing dull family photos before they are resized.*



www.bobeckstein.com

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"When you get men together without their clothes, you'll have the occasional ding-dong. No pun intended." See page 168.