

# Printed Oddities & Human Curiosities

Revolt at 65 mph

Okra P. Dingle

2002

The Autonomadic Bookmobile is an independent press bookstore and Info-Shop on wheels. It has spent a good part of the last year touring the US, visiting over a hundred cities, covering over 50,000 miles. The Bookmobile supports small, independent and radical publishers of books, zines, newspapers and pamphlets, against the corporate hegemony on printed matter and ideas by chain bookstores and distributors.

Since 1994, the Bookmobile has traveled as a tabling project with the Bindlestiff Family Cirkus on their yearly national tours; in 2001, the Bookmobile expanded into its own project in the form of a brightly muraled, 15 foot box-truck painted by David Gassaway and friends, with built-in bookshelves stocked from Autonomedia, AK Press, Last gasp, RE/Search, See Sharp Press, Charles H. Kerr, as well as self-published books, zines and anti-authoritarian newspapers from around the country. The Bookmobile also carries an extensive reference collection of flyers and broadsheets about D.I.Y. projects, spaces and intentional communities across the country.

The Autonomadic Medicine Show, which accompanies the Bookmobile and is performed by its proprietors, Dr. Henceforth Flummox and Okra P. Dingle. The show draws on several traditions within the variety arts, including Circus, Sideshow, Cabaret, Vaudeville, and the old time purveyors of dubious cure-alls known as the Medicine Shows.

The Show currently presents such acts as the Human Pincushion, Broken Glass Walking, Psychic Surgery, Knife Throwing, the Human Blockhead, pyrotechnics, and accordion and musical saw playing. It's all presented with a vaudevillian, comic flair rather than the traditional gross-out show, with an eye towards minor disorientation to jolt the audience out of daily routine-bound thinking and into a sense of wonder.

Harkening back to when traveling entertainers were a primary source of information and culture in rural small town america, via itinerant pamphleteers, balladeers, Shakespearean orators, soapboxers, tent revivalists and mummies, the show is structured around the oratorical build up of each act. Viewers are engaged with anecdotes of Sideshow history and self-satirizing dissemblings with ridiculous premises before the actual demonstration of some skilled feat, many of which are revealed to be possible only with the help of selected books from inside the Bookmobile.

After the show, the public is invited to peruse the bookmobile, hopefully with a heightened frame of reference similar to what will be encountered in the literature inside.

Although the books provide a forum for Anarchist, Anti-Authoritarian and critical thinking, as well as underground and extreme culture, the Medicine Show consciously avoids overt proselytizing, relying instead on the straightforward presentation of classical variety acts with a surreal twist, leaving the viewers to draw their own conclusions.

The Bookmobile and Medicine Show is perpetually broke and in debt, and seeking creative (non State-sourced) funding, benefits and tax free donations. The Bookmobile is always looking for consignments from independent publishers and zine writers.

Both Autonomedia and Bindlestiff Family Variety Arts have 501c3 status, and can accept tax-exempt donations for the Bookmobile. Mail correspondence can be sent to: Autonomadic Bookmobile, P.O. Box 2128, Stuyvesant Station, New York, New York, 10009.

E-mail us at: [a\\_nomadic@yahoo.com](mailto:a_nomadic@yahoo.com) and check out: [www.autonomedia.org](http://www.autonomedia.org) (click on Bookmobile)

# fifth Estate

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