voices. Use art, make banners, masks, puppets. Don't let there be any confusion (what's called ambiguity in "high art"). Act out who you are portraying, but also wear a sign saying who it is.

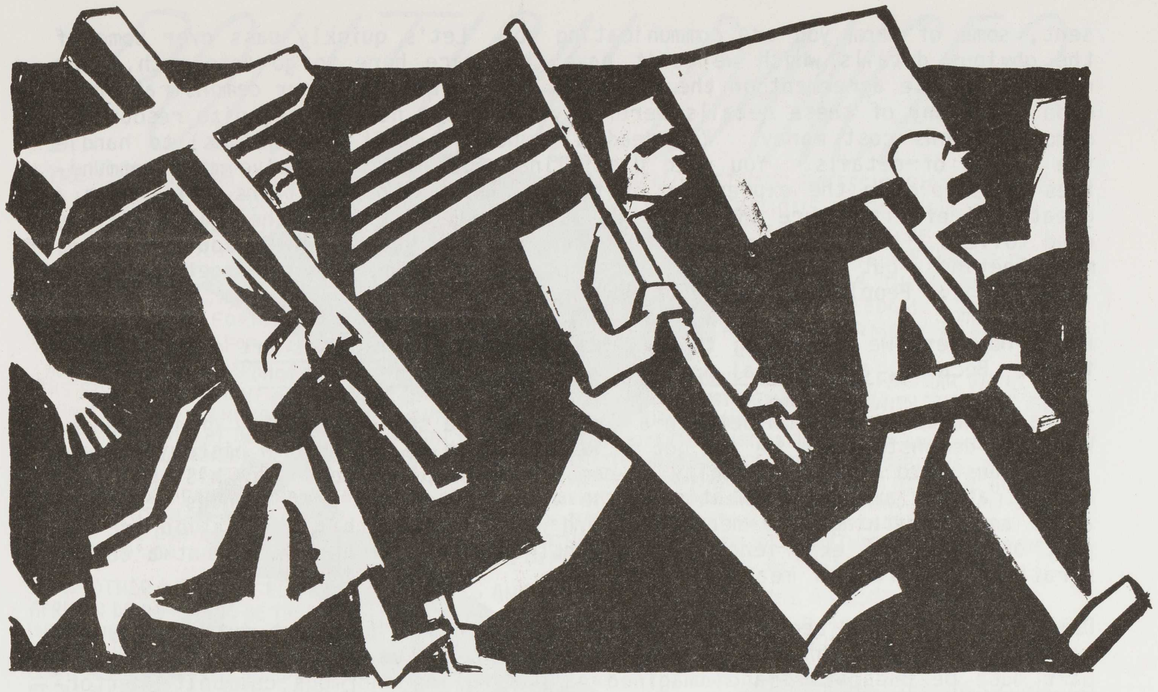
Your model for structure is the comic book, not the essay, not the novel--certainly not the realistic drama (although the soap opera will do just fine). Make trashy, loud, tasteless costumes. Use a great profusion of paper money. (Over)populate your piece with obnoxious businessmen, child-eating bankers, bloodthirsty military men, evil landlords, sinful priests, whores-with-hearts-of-gold. Trust the truth of what you want to say and tell it with the most vulgar, most appealing images. The only formal rule in street theater is to find the fastest, funniest, and clearest way to say what people need to know.

To write a street theater play you start with a political discussion. What do you want to say? What do you agree on in your group? Write in a collective process. Say for example you want to write a play on gentrification. First, you have to research what is going on in the neighborhood. Who are the landlords? What are the banks doing? Who are the people in the neighborhood? What is their history? What are the ways they are being evicted or harrassed? What is the city government doing? Find specific stories of people. All of this stuff is what makes the play--and the reason for doing the play.

As you talk all this out, get up and move around. Don't just describe the landlord, become the landlord. Don't just say there was a fight between the landlord and a tenant: make a street battle out of it. Push each story--without ever losing the truth of it--to its most sensational image. This is improvisation. Write everything down. There is nothing worse than having a great idea and then forgetting it. Dig into your experience and the experience of the people in your neighborhood. Find your metaphors there. Do people play a lot of pool? The pool table can make a whole scene with all of the (cardboard) characters in the play in conflict (some of the them will play dirty pool, of course). Is there cock-fighting, boxing, craps, three card monte, voodoo? Try to place your story inside images from the community life. Just exaggerate them, theatricalize them with a lot of running around and shouting, quick changes. Make good guys and bad guys. What are the other performance traditions in the community? Religious processions? Marching bands? Dancing?

What you are trying to do with street theater is to tell the story of something familiar to people in a way which makes it different: different because you make it clear who's at fault, and because you are telling people they can do something about it. Every street theater play has a happy ending: street theater is based on the belief that people can change things. I don't mean lie to the people. But, the actors can all take off their masks and their costumes and end with a chant of anger or the oppressed characters might organize as an example of what people might do. And, just like with guerrilla theater, the actors have to stay around and talk about the things that might be done.

There are a couple of more things to remember. Rehearse the play alot. Keep your characters simple and direct. Speak clearly and loudly. Be flexible; you're in the street. You never know what might happen--and go with whatever does happen; make it part of the performance if you can. Go in and out of character. The same actors do more than one character. Don't rely on a single cast of performers. Don't worry about verisimilitude: most people don't know what the word means anyway. People want stock characters; stereotypes. The social reality is what is important here, not the personal reality--except for what happens to people at the hands of the bad guys. Take the guff; keep changing the play. Tell a story; tell the truth.



PROCESSIONS--EVERYBODY LOVES A PARADE

There really isn't much to say here, except to remember why small town Memorial Day, Rosebowl, and big city St. Patty's Day parades work. 1) It's clear what they're about. 2) Everybody is in uniforms. 3) There are marching bands. 4) They use main streets and take the traffic off them. 5) There are many different kinds of people: men, women, and children. 6) People are disciplined and march in measured patterns with great energy and commitment (except near the end of the parade where the beer creates a noticeable wobble). 7) Parades end with a culminating event, emphasizing symbols and rituals, not speeches

So what do we need to remember when we create processions? 1. The (fascinating, well-written--bi-lingual when necessary--always visually splendid) handouts should clearly state what we want to say and our (beautiful, sensation-causing) banners should leave no room for doubt about the justice, meaning, and necessity of our march. 2) We should be in costumes, masks, and use puppets. 3) We should use drums, rhythm sticks and blocks, homemade instruments, clapping, and rehearsed chanting (if somebody will add a marching band, don't say no). 4. We should use main streets and take the traffic off them. 5. We should march with many kinds of people: Black people, white people, Latino people, poor people, gay people, children people, women people, men people, worker people, undocumented people, etc. 6. We should agree on the tone (funereal, celebratory, angry) and perform it with all of our bodies, hearts, and minds. 7) Processions end with a culminating event, emphasizing symbols and rituals, not speeches.

MASS DEMONSTRATIONS--ANYBODY CAN PLAN ONE

A demonstration shows power and creates power. You make your demands known and you feel the great potential of the community of participants. The only audience at a demonstration are the people who aren't there, some of whom you repre-