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Joey Skaggs launches Art of the Prank

POSTED BY DAVID PESCOVITZ, APRIL 1, 2007 2:36 PM | [PERMALINK](#)

For more than four decades, prankster artist [Joey Skaggs](#) has been tweaking the media, thumbing his nose at the bourgeoisie, making fun of The Man, and performing random acts of sensible mockery around the globe. With a resume that boasts such brilliant gags as a "Cathouse for Dogs" (1976) that landed him on ABC News, a 1992 lottery with a first prize of renaming rights to the Brooklyn Bridge, and [Final Curtain](#) (2000), a funeral company enabling artists to create their own tombs and memorial exhibitions before they die, to dozens of other hoaxes and pranks, Joey is the quintessential culture jammer and reality hacker.



Today, April Fools' Day (natch!), Joey launched [Pranks.com](#), home to the new group blog "Art of the Prank" with contributions from such tricksters, luminaries, and jokers as the Rev. Al, Ron English, Nancy Weber, and V. Vale. Congratulations, Joey, from your pals at Boing Boing! This morning, Joey took time to answer a few of my questions just as New York City's 22nd Annual April Fools' Day Parade, of which he is committee chair, began marching down Fifth Avenue:

BB: What's the big idea?

Skaggs: Art comes in many colors and hues, shapes, sizes and forms. It can be decorative, functional, socially iconoclastic, or even politically revolutionary. To me the prank is fine art. Perpetrating pranks has enabled me to be expressive in many mediums. I incorporate sculpture, painting, graphic design, advertising, public relations, writing, directing, and acting. The execution of a prank, just like creating a painting or a sculpture, involves intent, content, technique and the magic that occurs when it takes on a life of its own.

Pranking is all about deception, and deception is an integral part of our lives, from art to politics to relationships. Whether it's our efforts to deceive other people, someone else's efforts to deceive us, or our own self-deception, the need to believe seems to be deeply embedded in our psyche.

With the Pranks.com blog, I hope to give more exposure and attention to artists, activists and writers who incorporate aspects of pranking in their work -- who use deception to bring attention to deception, propaganda to counter propaganda and creative dissent to combat mindless acceptance of authority. To me, pranks are way more than just a hostile or vindictive "Ha ha, the joke's on you!" Pranks can be an antidote against the mind-numbing corporate, government and religious propaganda that constantly invades our lives. A good prank exposes something and stimulates a new perception which hopefully leads to alternative thinking.

The Pranks.com blog will cover a broad spectrum, from the innovative to corporate co-option, from the legal to the illegal, from the acceptable to the questionable. It's meant to be fun, amusing, stimulating, informative, expletive and inspiring. It will be a portal for all those interested in the subject.

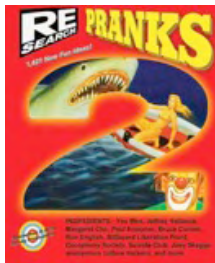
BB: Is pranking more important now than ever before?

Skaggs: Consciousness seems to be a very slow evolutionary process. Our reality seems to be seriously out of sync with what really matters. There's a universal sense of anger and apathy, and a feeling of helplessness to do anything effective about it. So, instead of waiting for the big asteroid to put an end to this virus gone amuck called humanity, pranks provide a shot of B12 to the mind. Satire has always been the thinker's tool to evoke a change of awareness and perception.

BB: Do you have any advice for the young people of today?

Skaggs: Stay young consciously. Keep an open mind.

[Link](#) to Pranks.com



For more on Skaggs and pranksterism, check out the life-changing books [Pranks](#) and [Pranks 2](#) from [RE/Search Publications](#).

Previously on BB:

- Universal Bullshit Detector Watch by Joey Skaggs [Link](#)
- Skaggs pranked BOING BOING the print 'zine [Link](#)
- RE/Search Pranks 2 book [Link](#)

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TENN SAID: "My Zen Buddhist teacher also embraced the bowl. He's given that and cigarettes up, though. Last time ..."

TAKUAN SAID: "Careful there Tenn, good old fashioned, stiff necked prickly self-reliance is also a valuable tool. ..."

JOHNINSAPORO SAID: "ILL ICH asks: "Does anyone have any figures on how many people have actually been reasonably HELPED ..."

TAKUAN SAID: "just the Panasonics ..."

COURTNEY SAID: "Will they call it the salivanome? ..."

TAKUAN SAID: ""If you're going to be a Buddhist, you have to embrace the bowl." that could also be interpreted to ..."

TENN SAID: "What about lesbian women? ..."

MSANON SAID: ""Maybe in a few years there will be an effective, cheap and safe male contraceptive, but for some ..."