

***Critical Strategies in Art and Media*. Edited by Konrad Becker and Jim Fleming. New York: Autonomedia, 2009. Pp. 182. \$12.95 (paper). ISBN 978-1570272141**

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Eleven years into the new century, it may be time to discuss terms of surrender. Not a surrender to any civilization, but the surrender of civilization to those in control who would use any political participation as a crutch for their failure. The question is not if but when giving up on civilization will be seen as the only rational political stance. Currently, the critical strategy of removing oneself from a failed situation and ceasing participation in a bankrupt enterprise is rarely given serious thought. Giving up is constantly under attack from politicians and those who benefit from the current situation. Activists remain in the service of an imagined future that only extends the crisis, unable to wean themselves from strategies already four decades old. This is the case in the discussion documented in *Critical Strategies in Art and Media*, a new book from Autonomedia that documents a conference of the same name. From the predictable return to 1968 as a vague yet singular moment to the insistence on optimism—recuperating even hopelessness and pessimism for continued production and activity—the most common strategies discussed are pragmatic approaches to working with those who fund art

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