



Commodity Activism: Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times (Critical Cultural Communication)

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Buying (RED) products—from Gap T-shirts to Apple—to fight AIDS. Drinking a “Caring Cup” of coffee at the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf to support fair trade. Driving a Toyota Prius to fight global warming. All these commonplace activities point to a central feature of contemporary culture: the most common way we participate in social activism is by buying something.

Roopali Mukherjee and Sarah Banet-Weiser have gathered an exemplary group of scholars to explore this new landscape through a series of case studies of “commodity activism.” Drawing from television, film, consumer activist campaigns, and cultures of celebrity and corporate patronage, the essays take up examples such as the Dove “Real Beauty” campaign, sex positive retail activism, ABC’s Extreme Home Makeover, and Angelina Jolie as multinational celebrity missionary.

Exploring the complexities embedded in contemporary political activism, *Commodity Activism* reveals the workings of power and resistance as well as citizenship and subjectivity in the neoliberal era. Refusing to simply position politics in opposition to consumerism, this collection teases out the relationships between material cultures and political subjectivities, arguing that activism may itself be transforming into a branded commodity.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Without doubt this important collection of essays will contribute significantly to the new and growing field of 'critical consumer studies'."-J.R. Mitrano, *CHOICE*

"*Commodity Activism* is eminently useful. Mukherjee and Banet-Weiser's collection is an important intervention into what had become a tired debate about political agency and consumer culture. It is also a very timely anthology, helping us better understand the practices of a current generation of activists who recognize that the terrain upon which they struggle is not some idealized land of pure politics outside the influence of consumer culture, but instead, a challenging topography of brands and logos, style and story, celebrity and spectacle." -*International Journal of Communication*

"*Commodity Activism* will be of interest to a wide range of scholars, including those focused on critical/consumer studies, American studies, media studies, and critical rhetorical studies. Any academic interested in exploring consumer politics, or contemporary trends in social activism, or in constituting social controversy, will find this text replete with starting points for future scholarship." - *Journal of American Culture*

"Commodity activism has a long history but never has its significance been more complex to unravel than today, when the boundaries and direction of political action are unclear, commercial forces mobilize consumers' values to secure their emotional loyalty, and individual consumers hope their choices mean that 'something is being done.' Roopali Mukherjee and Sarah Banet-Weiser's smart, empirically rich and globally wide-ranging new collection provides us with very welcome coordinates in this difficult terrain." -Nick Couldry, author of *Why Voice Matters: Culture and Politics After Neoliberalism*

About the Author

Roopali Mukherjee is Associate Professor of Media Studies at the City University of New York, Queens College, and the author of *The Racial Order of Things: Cultural Imaginaries of the Post-Soul Era*.

Sarah Banet-Weiser is Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism and the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity* (1999) and *Kids Rule! Nickelodeon and Consumer Citizenship* (2007), and the co-editor of *Cable Visions: Television Beyond Broadcasting* (2007) and *Commodity Activism: Cultural Resistance in Neoliberal Times* (2012), both available from NYU Press.

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