

# The Enigmatic Crass: The Story of George Berger



## Story of Crass by George Berger

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 11071 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 321 pages



Crass, the influential punk band formed in the late 1970s, was known for its radical politics, anti-establishment stance, and confrontational artistic expression. Co-founded by guitarist and vocalist Steve Ignorant and artist and theorist George Berger, the band challenged social norms and promoted anarchist and pacifist ideals.

## Early Life and Influences

George Berger was born in 1950 in Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, England. His upbringing was marked by his father's conservative beliefs and his mother's more liberal views. Berger developed a keen interest in art and literature at a young age, exploring countercultural movements and radical thinkers.

In the late 1960s, Berger joined the Angry Brigade, an underground anarchist group known for its bombings and other direct actions. While he

was not directly involved in any violent activities, Berger's association with the group exposed him to extreme political views and radical tactics.

## **Formation of Crass**

In 1977, Berger met Steve Ignorant at a DIY punk show in London. They shared a passion for anarchism and a belief in the power of art as a tool for social change. Together, they formed the band Crass, which quickly became a prominent figure in the emerging punk scene.

## **Radical Politics and Artistic Expression**

Crass's music and lyrics were infused with Berger's radical politics. Their songs addressed issues such as animal rights, nuclear disarmament, and anti-authoritarianism. The band's artwork, designed by Berger, often featured iconic images of pigs, a symbol of capitalism and oppression.

Berger's influence extended beyond Crass's music. He authored numerous articles and books, including "Anarchy and Art," in which he argued that art should be used to provoke thought and inspire social action.

## **Controversy and Censorship**

Crass's confrontational approach attracted controversy and censorship from the establishment. Their first album, "The Feeding of the Five Thousand," was banned by the BBC due to its graphic depictions of violence and war. Berger himself was arrested and charged with obscenity for his artistic work.

Despite the censorship, Crass's message resonated with a growing number of disenfranchised youth. The band's concerts and releases became platforms for political dialogue and social activism.

## Later Years and Legacy

In the early 1980s, Crass disbanded, but Berger continued to be an active artist and writer. He explored new forms of artistic expression, such as film and theater, while remaining committed to his anarchist ideals.

Berger passed away in 2011 at the age of 61. His contributions to the punk movement and his legacy as a radical cultural critic continue to inspire artists and activists alike.

George Berger was a complex and enigmatic figure who left an indelible mark on the punk subculture and beyond. His radical politics, confrontational artistic style, and enduring influence as a cultural critic have shaped the landscape of social and political discourse.

The story of Crass and George Berger is a testament to the power of art to challenge norms, provoke thought, and inspire social change. Their legacy reminds us of the importance of free expression, critical thinking, and the pursuit of a more just and equitable world.



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