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Imagine someone smacking the back of your head - you turn around and no one's there. Another smack, you turn around fast - and still no one. Now you're pissed and you wonder, whose buggin' me? The smacks continue, but there's no person to vent your rage on.

Now imagine a CD-ROM in a stark black and white package. You slide it unwittingly into your Mac, expecting your standard entertainment or education experience. Right away you are subjected to some of the most annoying content ever mastered to disc.

BLACKWHITEBLACKWHITE art strobing incessantly. Bad sound samples blaring with the volume yanked from your control. Clicking is no use; Blam! has you at its mercy. Text and speech are spewed in all directions, pointing nowhere, yielding nothing. This just might be your multimedia nightmare. Perhaps you are a victim of a trap or a joke.

Blam! attaches itself to you in the guise of a CD-ROM magazine, but once purchased devolves into an assault on the consumer. Fans and victims of the work of folks like Lydia Lunch, Georges Bataille, Kim Gordon, Howard Rheingold, and Tom of Finland can indulge in their masochism with repeated perusals of Blam! Two dudes who call themselves Necro Enema Amalgamated put out this magazine because it gets them off, they say. But be careful, they might get off on you.

Blam! leaves me asking myself the age-old question: Is there really anything of worth in shock value? Do outrageous images and sounds impart any special information? I'll allow myself to be provoked with imagery, hoping it will spill some of what it knows; I'll endure it for its promise of some new clue. But I don't have the patience to be played with. Blam! presents itself as a crack in the wall, Blam! says, "take a peek, ooh, that's freaky, that's weird." But Blam! is what kids in dormitories get off on, congratulating themselves on how hip they are. Ignorant juvenilia.

Fuck with me, Blam! threatens, and I'll kill you. But, as usual, it's all talk and empty promises.

Steven Speer