

THE RADICAL ARCHITECTURE OF LITTLE MAGAZINES 196X–197X

12 SEPTEMBER–9 NOVEMBER, 2008

OPENING RECEPTION

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

CURATED BY BEATRIZ COLOMINA, CRAIG BUCKLEY, ANTHONY FONTENOT, URTZI GRAU, LISA HSIEH, ALICIA IMPERIALE, LYDIA KALLIPOLITTI, OLYMPIA KAZI, DANIEL LOPEZ-PEREZ, AND IRENE SUNWO AT PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

With a mandate that focuses on emerging local artists, it is perhaps unusual for the Contemporary Art Gallery to present an exhibition with an historical focus in the field of architecture. With *Clip/Stamp/Fold*, however, this exception seems slight and more than justified by current trends in visual art practices. While arising from different sets of conditions and with equally diverse intentionalities, many of the little magazines presented in *Clip/Stamp/Fold*, along with many conceptual magazine pieces in the 1960s and 70s, share antecedents in the common culture that continue to inform and inspire a current generation of practitioners. Radical utopian themes of transformation – through conscientious interjections into the broad social fabric, through media, through a realignment of the status and relations of art and architecture – these were dreams of the seventies that are again concrete objectives among artists in our midst. *Clip/Stamp/Fold* seems a timely opportunity to take a retrospective view of some of those impulses, how they were manifested, and how they are being transformed in the light of current issues.

Each iteration of *Clip/Stamp/Fold* – and this is the 6th – has varied in the specific historical material that is included in the exhibition. At the Contemporary Art Gallery all of this material has been gathered from local collections, revealing distinct vectors of exchange between Vancouver and other localities where these ideas were shared and flourished. We are indebted to Adele Weder who has led the CAG's research into this treasure trove. We are, as well, immensely

grateful to the numerous lenders who have generously parted with their precious objects so that this show could provide that rich local picture.

Art and architecture intersect in built form and in the definition of public space. This is recognized and promoted by urban planning policies that require developers to invest in public art, and the city of Vancouver has recently approved robust improvements to its public art policy. Realizing the strong aesthetic and social objectives of this policy will be greatly enhanced by a sustained conversation between artists and architects. *Clip/Stamp/Fold* is an opportunity for the Contemporary Art Gallery to provide a site for that conversation to unfold. Toward this end we have planned numerous events. Many individuals from the art and architecture community will participate in these talks and panels and we thank them for their contributions and support.

The enthusiasm with which architecture and development firms have responded to our appeal for their support has been very gratifying, not just for the financial resources that they have directed to this project, but also for the confirmation that the interest in the issues and themes of *Clip/Stamp/Fold* reach far into our community. The Contemporary Art Gallery is very proud to participate in this project.

—**Christina Ritchie**

Director, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Wham! Zoom! Zing! Rave! – and it's not Ready Steady Go, even though it sometimes looks like it. The sound effects are produced by the erupting of underground architectural protest magazines. Architecture, staid queen-mother of the arts, is no longer courted by plush glossies and cool scientific journals alone, but is having her skirts blown up and her bodice unzipped by irregular newcomers which are – typically – rhetorical, with-it, moralistic, mis-spelled, improvisatory, anti-smooth, funny-format, cliquey, art-oriented but stoned out of their minds with science-fiction images of an alternative architecture that would be perfectly possible tomorrow if only the Universe (and especially the Law of Gravity) were differently organized.

—Reyner Banham, "Zoom Wave Hits Architecture" *New Society* 3, March 1966

An explosion of architectural little magazines in the 1960s and 1970s instigated a radical transformation in architectural culture, in which the architecture of the magazines vied with buildings as the site of innovation and debate. *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X–197X* takes stock of over seventy little magazines from this period, which were published in over a dozen cities. Coined in the early twentieth century to designate progressive literary journals, the term "little magazine" is not taken at face value. In addition to short-lived, radical magazines, *Clip/Stamp/Fold* includes pamphlets and building instruction manuals as well as professional magazines that experienced "moments of littleness," influenced by the graphics and intellectual concerns of their self-published contemporaries.

Clip/Stamp/Fold explores the vastness and heterogeneity of this remarkable explosion of independent architectural publishing in the 1960s and 1970s. The exhibition's annotated timeline serves as a cross-section tracking the progression and the transformations of little magazines through the design of their covers. A selection of original magazines surveys the variety of unique formats, re-introducing rare examples from private collections, and is expanded

by complete facsimiles for visitors to browse. Audio interviews with editors and designers of these publications punctuate the room, and transcriptions of parts of these interviews appear in this newsletter. In addition, many of these editors and designers have been invited to respond to the exhibition through a series of *Little Magazines/ Small Talks* events held at the various venues. Selections of these discussions are presented in the gallery in DVD form. An implicit aim of the exhibition is to invite reflection on contemporary uses of media in architecture. Assembling all these remarkable documents for the first time offers a unique view of a key period of architectural innovation and challenges today's architects to provoke a similar intensity.

The exhibition has been a collaborative research and design project by a team of Ph.D. candidates at the School of Architecture at Princeton University led by Professor Beatriz Colomina and is the outcome of two years of seminars, interviews, and visits with the editors, architects and theorists who produced the magazines. The project team includes Craig Buckley, Anthony Fontenot, Urtzi Grau, Lisa Hsieh, Alicia Imperiale, Lydia Kallipoliti, Olympia Kazi, Daniel Lopez-Perez, and Irene Sunwoo. The exhibition began in 2006 at the Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, and has traveled to the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, Documenta 12, (where it was part of the *Archplus* exhibition "The Making of your Magazines"), the Architectural Association, London, and most recently at the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture, Oslo.

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