

# PIN-UP

**MAGAZINE FOR  
ARCHITECTURAL  
ENTERTAINMENT**

**ISSUE 9**

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*Plus  
FIVE PIN-UP  
CASE STUDY  
HOUSES*



aquí volvemos adornos frívolos (2008); mixed-media installation. © Hans-Georg Gaul and assume vivid astro focus, courtesy Peres Projects, Los Angeles/Berlin



ameixa vazio attack fátima (2008); neon installation. © Edouard Fraipont, courtesy Casa Triângulo, São Paulo, Brazil



alarmante vision absolutement furieuse (2010); wallpaper detail, dimensions vary. © assume vivid astro focus, courtesy Galerie Hussenot, Paris

International art collective assume vivid astro focus (avaf) is best known for its raucous, large-scale, multimedia installations, which function very much on an architectural level. It was founded in 2000 by one Brazilian and one French artist, who prefer to be known by their collective moniker only, an attempt to avoid individual authorship and give equal billing to their many collaborators — a flexible, ever-expanding army of artists, musicians, performers, sculptors, muses, transsexuals, and filmmakers, all of whom help make their vision come alive. The spaces they create together challenge art-market boundaries, seamlessly blurring the lines between media — sculpture, performance, video, and architecture. But more importantly, they keep pushing the boundaries between accepted social roles. In each piece, participants are stripped of their given social function, making roles interchangeable, non-existent, or simply unimportant — artist becomes curator, curator becomes artist, collector becomes collaborator, muse becomes graphic designer, critic becomes muse, audience becomes performer...all morphing into an unprecedented social, hierarchical, and material fluidity. The audience is just as important as the live band, which is just as important as the wallpaper, which is just as important as an art-historically significant work brought into the space, and so on. In a sense everything that enters avaf's realm becomes part of the overall piece, creating a

## ART FROM BERLIN, NEW YORK, SÃO PAULO



absorb viral attack fantasy (2006); mixed-media installation. © Atsushi Yoshimine and assume vivid astro focus, courtesy Hiromi Yoshii Gallery, Tokyo



a very anxious feeling (2007); mixed-media installation. © Joanne Kim and assume vivid astro focus, courtesy John Connelly Presents, New York



homocrap #1 (2005); mixed-media installation. © Josh White and assume vivid astro focus, courtesy MOCA, Los Angeles, and Peres Projects, Los Angeles/Berlin

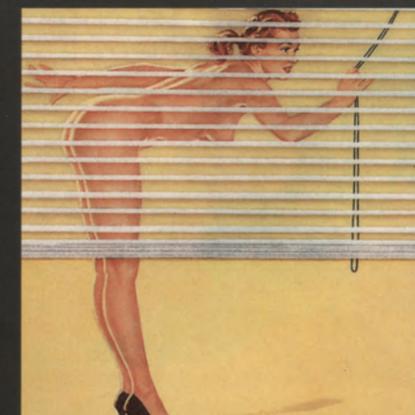
modern hybrid that is less classic installation art and more long-term happening — part community center, part disco, part music venue, and part activist headquarters. At the root of this disregard for the structures of society in general — and of the art world in particular — are avaf's generous ideas about the future: they are ecstatic about the democratization of technology, and the speedy unrestricted sharing of information, which, in its finest incarnation, is the sharing of knowledge. Their built environments embrace this and compete with the volume of stimulation offered in cyberspace, honing in on and paying homage to everything that inspires them. They replace the negative white noise of contemporary pop consumer culture with their own brand of white noise — one that celebrates the interconnected web of human creative output. For those who've never had a chance to experience their special blend of spatiality firsthand, a retrospective book on their first decade of work has now been published by Rizzoli, with all the group's projects featured in one succinct volume, titled simply *avaf*. A visual assault and complete sensory overload, this ultimate fanzine features deliberately overstimulating visuals that perfectly translate the collective's multilayered three-dimensional environments onto paper.

— Michael Bullock

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## A BOOK FROM BARCELONA

### Beatriz Preciado



## Pornotopía

Arquitectura y sexualidad en «Playboy» durante la guerra fría

Finalista Premio Anagrama de Ensayo

ANAGRAMA  
Colección Argumentos

Beatriz Preciado's new book *Pornotopía: Arquitectura y sexualidad en «Playboy» durante la guerra fría*, is available in Spanish only through Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona, 2010.

*Being brought up in a very repressive and conformist manner, I created a universe of my own where I was free to live and love in a way that most people can only dream about.*

The words are Hugh Hefner's, and they're the founding premise for *Playboy* magazine's ethos throughout the nearly 60 years of its existence, presenting its ideal world as a counter way of life within the American-Dream ideology of happiness. In fact, *Playboy's* launch marked one of the first assaults on post-war popular culture, polarizing the social tissue of the McCarthy era into two spatial-gender-division discourses: the suburban family house (seen by feminist

Betty Friedan as "a comfortable concentration camp" for women), and the urban bachelor penthouse (seen by Hefner as the interior stage for redesigning masculinity). Later on, *Playboy* would turn upside down not only the visual, spatial, and sexual regimes of conservative, puritan, and anxious American society, but also the then still-unstained-principles of International Style architecture in the United States and beyond. This complex interplay of pornography, architecture, and consumer society is the subject of *Pornotopía: Arquitectura y sexualidad en «Playboy» durante la guerra fría* written by Spanish philosopher and queer activist Beatriz Preciado.

The author, who teaches philosophy at the Sorbonne, reads the *Playboy* universe as the first "pornotopia" of the mass-media age, a mass-consumable world within another world of hyper-consumption, a "Vatican State of vice" devoted to the spectacle of a new libidinal wealth, warming up the Cold War. According to her book — which is the outcome of a doctoral dissertation in Theory and History of Architecture at Princeton University — Hefner saw architecture as a device to stage his ideal sexual order, in opposition to the gender segregation of the time, which for him led to nothing but homosexuality (something he was never comfortable with). Just as he designed his domestic interior as a laboratory for the production of his own subjectivity, he designed *Playboy* as "a interior magazine for the urban man," specializing in undressing the domestic space of his perfect heterosexual player. This over-exposition of interiors would offer not only the dissolution of gender divisions in space, but also a unique pornographic artifact: "the sexo-political theatre" of the pleasure seeker — a man, who like Hefner, uses his bed to both work and have sex. Hefner's sexual revolution thus created architecture as playful provocation, whose kaleidoscopic, techno-prosthetic interiors transformed the domestic realm.

Preciado portrays Hefner as a pop architect and *Playboy* as a multimedia case study for architectural innovation at the intersection of mass media and pop culture, drawing on the work of Beatriz Colomina, Sigfried Giedion, Michel Foucault, Anthony Vidler, Mario Gandelsonas, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Judith Butler, Lynn Hunt, and Nancy F. Cott, to name just a few of those who have investigated architecture, power, and gender studies. As a cultural critic who writes history as a vivisection of centers of production of meaning, the author unveils this prosthetic hyper-structure of fascinating configurations of pleasure, knowledge, and representation, and its role in subverting the political margins between the public and the private domains in space during most of the Cold War and beyond. If *Playboy's* logic was to turn its multi-media-architectural Cold War pornography (production of both pleasure and capital, combined with dubious gender politics) into a horizontal playground, Preciado's logic exemplifies an exciting multi-position-mirror survey to accommodate a radically new understanding of space, pleasure, and democracy in the present: pornotopia as the location for architectural hedonomania.

— Maria Prieto

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