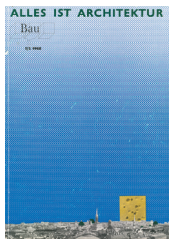




EDITOR'S LETTER



Covers of the magazines clockwise from top left -
NZ House & Garden
 April 2016, **Home NZ**
 April/May 2016, **Bau**
 1/2 1968, **Urbis** Issue
 91.

Hans Hollein's directive that 'everything is architecture' legitimised for groups such as Archizoom, and Superstudio, use of the seductive power of Post-war consumerism. Designs for domestic objects and visions of future domestic landscapes elicited the fervour of the patriotic consumer, with reference to the mass culture of Pop-art or the cutting edge of modern design, in sensuous imagery. Radical in that the groups did not produce buildings but through their design and publication were still able to respond critically to architecture in that period, they took an imaginative leap between socio-political critique of established practice and the desire inducing potential of popular culture.

To 'take bold creative leaps', and 'engage their imaginations' is precisely how Jeremy Hansen of Home New Zealand magazine describes the significance of the latest award winning work of Herbst Architects, a 'resolute, rustic building'. In the latest issue, he describes a break from the mould of their previous work in 'diffuse timber baches', the building represents a conscious decision to create 'an assertive sculptural form'. The acclaimed 'courageous boldness' of the building is communicated in the application of a monolithic rusty corrugated iron skin, an allusion to the humble New Zealand farm shed. As non-conventional and edgy as this material application may appear, it begs the question: why should someone be seen to live in a rusty iron shed? In fact, many millions of people do. Philosopher Slavoj Žižek has described how the rich classes participating in ultra-inclusive liberal capitalism want to maintain the appearance of living a simple unadorned lifestyle, celebrating humble functionality. Paradoxically, the lower classes desire luxury and excess; in the most densely populated third-world bricolage slums, material possessions and ornaments are proudly displayed, a rusty iron shack might be embellished with faux-gold taps. The cover of the afore-mentioned issue alludes to this strange play of assigning value, gold lettering embellishes a matte photograph of the monolithic rusty façade. The fabricated allusions of the building ruthlessly exploit and appropriate the vitality of the poorer classes and the New Zealand vernacular typical of small low-income communities in the Coromandel area. The singular integrity of the rusty box form is interrupted only by small moments where the iron is poetically lifted. This creates narrow windows in the upper storey and reveals the light-weight, temporal nature of the material, appearing now as if it could be peeled off entirely, exposing the functional cladding beneath that shelters the inhabitants from the temperamental Coromandel weather.

"An advertisement for architecture is architecture because it triggers the desire for architecture, and the desire is more important than the fulfilment of the desire."

- from *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X to 197X* edited by Beatriz Colomina