

L'UNDERGROUND À LA LOUPE

List of periodicals

Allez chier (Montreal, QC)
Artichoke (Calgary, AB)
Beaux-Arts (Montreal, QC)
Body Politic (Toronto, ON)
Box of Water (San Francisco, CA)
Centerfold (Calgary, AB)
DAVINCI (Montreal, QC)
Fanzini (Brooklyn, NY)
FILE (Toronto, ON)
Fine Art Press
FLUXUS Magazine (New York, NY)
Gasp (Montreal, QC)
Heresies (New York, NY)
Homogenius (Toronto, ON)

Intervention (Quebec, QC)
Issue (Vancouver, BC)
K. (Vancouver, BC)
Last Issue (Calgary, AB)
Le Sabord (Trois-Rivières, QC)
Lubie (Saguenay-Lac St-Jean, QC)
Midcontinental (Winnipeg, MB)
NEX (Montreal, QC)
OVUL (Ottawa, ON)
Papers (Chicago, IL)
Parachute (Peterborough, ON)
Salmon Hut (Toronto, ON)
Sous le manteau (Montreal, QC)
Spinning Off (Los Angeles, CA)

Spirale (Montreal, QC)
Splinter (Toronto, ON)
Stammer (London, ON)
Stamp Axe (Montreal, QC)
Steack haché (Montreal, QC)
STRIKE (Toronto, ON)
sub-TERRAIN (Vancouver, BC)
The Act (New York, NY)
Vanguard (Vancouver, BC)
Véhicule (Montreal, QC)
vicarious THRILL
Vice Versa (Montreal, QC)
Virus (Montreal, QC)
Xero (Montreal, QC)

Thank You

I would like to thank the publishers, artists and donors who recognized the historical importance of these publications — or just wanted to clean up their attics and basements — and entrusted these documents in our care so that we may share them with researchers.

I thank Michael Blum for his research, artistic acuity and care of the collection.

I thank everyone at Artexpte for their dedicated and collaborative work and our technicians Chris Lloyd and Oliver Longpré for their time and expertise.

Lastly, thank you to DHC/ART Foundation for Contemporary Art and OBORO for their equipment loans.

Sarah Watson
General and Artistic Director

Credits – Cover Image : Booster Clevellini, in Anna Banana and Michael Scott and Bernard Kelly et al. *A Book About VLE: Mail/Art, News & Photos from the Eternal Network*. Vancouver, BC: Banana Productions, 1983, p. 36.

It was the first day of Michael Blum's research residency. We were walking through the collection discussing publications that might be of interest when Michael told me that art documents, the kind held in the Artexpte collection, had never been the starting point for the development of his previous artworks. He identifies research questions and subjects of historical interest in sources outside art — municipal, national, personal archives and news articles — and then works his way back to an artwork. And so it began, a residency that offered an unfamiliar challenge to his working methods and proposed a new art-to-art research equation to consider.

L'underground à la loupe is also a new direction for Artexpte. We are accustomed to supporting research that mines the textual information in the collection and traces the circulation and publication histories of the holdings. Michael Blum's work in the Artexpte collection is an investigation into the visual culture of a selection of periodicals in circulation from the 1960s to the 1980s. This amalgam of images, presented here in magnified formats, without the presence of the original print documents, represents for Artexpte, a new means of questioning the nature, function and reception of these publications now.

During his research, Michael Blum sought out small-circulation magazines created for special interest publics. He selected handmade publications with a DIY aesthetic and attitude that comprise varied forms of societal critique.ⁱ Many of these also provided information not widely available at the time of circulation.ⁱⁱ Images and fragments of texts from these magazines have been cropped, reframed, assembled and magnified here in the form of cinematic, denatured pages that expose the specific materiality of these publications. Halftone dots loom large as markers of the inexpensive reprographic techniques employed. Tendrils of ink from felt-tip pen drawings bleed into grainy paper stock. A predilection for the use of visually concise images such as content appropriated from conservative media, caricatures, defaced portraiture, reworked photographs and surrealist collage, establishes aesthetic and activist affinities within and between the three projected image loops.

These projections form a composite, albeit selective, representation of attitudes, political stances and information comprised in these special interest publications. The multiple layers of appropriation and citation inherent in the photographing and reworking of these images suggest multiple ways to trace the gaps in history between then and now. The reframed portraits — group and individual — confront one another in sidelong glances and frontal gazes. The art historical references point back to the reframed images, the artistic interests of their editors and the unsteady divides between fine and popular art cultures.

The visual repetition of the permanently unsettled subjects of gender equality, race relations, LGBTQ rights, religious conservatism, violence, monarchy and colonialism, force a compressed time-lapse reconsideration of the function and methods of specialized publications in our here and now. At a time when publications like these, and what they stand for, is necessary; how can a history from below, or from the outside, be written and circulated? What are its forms? What are its ends?

Sarah Watson
General and Artistic Director

ⁱ Circulation

Some of the magazines such as **FILE** (Toronto, ON), **FLUXUS Magazine** (New York, NY) featured well-known artists and operated with financial support from public and private sources and thus circulated more widely than others. They are included in the selection based on their editorial ethos and special interest content.

ⁱⁱ Information

Many of these periodicals shared information that was censored or not widely available to their publics at the time of circulation. **The Body Politic** (1971-1987) was a monthly magazine and one of Canada's first significant gay publications. It was instrumental in sharing public health information and resources about AIDS. **Allez chier** (1969) published by the editor of **Sexus** (1967-1968), a magazine censored by the Montreal morality squad. **Allez chier**, published, among other subjects, interviews with incarcerated activists, articles about accessibility to abortion and featured pages by Quebec artists.



21.03.18 – 19.05.18

Michael Blum: *L'underground à la loupe*

ISBN 978-2-923045-31-3



art
actuel
2-22

espace 301
2, rue Ste-Catherine Est
Montréal, QC, H2X 1K4

ARTEXTE

MICHAEL BLUM is an artist born in Jerusalem, educated in Paris, based, among others, in Amsterdam and Vienna, before moving to Montreal in 2010, where he is a Professor at Ecole des arts visuels et médiatiques (UQAM). His projects include *Exodus 2048*, which staged a possible future in the Middle East (Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2008, New Museum, New York, 2009), *Our History // Notre histoire*, a pair of mock national museums dedicated to the preservation and presentation of respectively Canadian and Québécois history and culture (Galerie de l'UQAM, Montreal, 2014), and *Palazzo Chupi*, an investigation of the relation between art and real estate around painter and filmmaker Julian Schnabel's architectural landmark in New York's West Village (Optica, Montréal, 2015). In 2016, he produced *Remorial Arnhem* (Sonsbeek'16, Arnhem, NL), a series of 12 commemorative sites throughout Arnhem challenging the overwhelmingly single memory of 1944 and opening a multiplicity of narratives rooted in the city fabric, as well as *The Swap*, the latest episode of the *Pollec Trilogy*, which was shot in Shanghai. In 2017, he produced the book *Great and Less Great Fires in Glasgow* during a residency at the Center for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow. After a Research Fellowship at the Canadian Photography Institute, Ottawa, where he revisited the iconic National Film Board Still Photography Division collection, he's now working on a publication with this material, *Canadiana Remix*.