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GENERAL WORKING GROUP

Proposal
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Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974

Edited and designed by Geoff Kaplan/General Working Group
With Essays by Gwen Allen, Pamela M. Lee, Bob Ostertag and Fred Turner
Possible interview with Tom Hayden

In the 1960s, a media revolution was afoot every bit as daring and explosive as the revolutions taking place in the streets of San Francisco and Paris, Prague and Mexico City. With the development of cheap offset printing, countless groups linked to the antiwar, civil rights and various liberation movements were able to spread their messages through elaborately designed newspapers and broad-sheets. Ranging from the psychedelic pages of The Oracle, Haight-Ashbury's free paper of choice, to the fiery editorials of The Black Panther Party Paper, these papers were remarkable for their Do-It-Yourself ethos; their fervent belief in freedom of expression; and their staunch advocacy of both a politically radical or countercultural lifestyle. In keeping with such convictions, the publications were also extraordinary for their graphic innovations. Experimental typography and wildly inventive layouts gave shape to an alternative media culture as much informed by the Space Age, television, the computer era and socialism as they were the holy trinity of the sixties underground: sex, drugs and rock n' roll.

Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974 examines the role of alternative and underground media in the formation of social movements in the United States and abroad from 1964 to 1974 with a particular emphasis on this media's design. It will document the ways in which the collective media practices of a number of groups graphically fashioned the image of a culture undergoing pronounced change. In an era in which Marshall McLuhan could proclaim "The Medium is the Message," **Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974** treats the design practices of this moment as a type of activism in its own right: as a vehement challenge to the dominance of official media and as a critical form of self-representation. Considering the publications linked to a diverse body of social and political interests (Black power, Women's Liberation, Gay Rights, Environmentalism, the Antiwar Movement, etc.) **Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974** explores these graphic innovations relative to the context of sixties visual culture at large. It also asks about the implications of such work today, at a moment when corporate media has exerted even more decisive control over the free exchange of information.

The history of the underground press reveals a stress on graphic design not typically discussed in the narrative of sixties social movements. And yet technical advances in printing were critical to the proliferation of this media revolution. Among other developments that occurred in the sixties, letterpress machines were replaced by inexpensive and accessible offset presses; Pres-Type (rub down letter sheets) afforded a quick and dirty way to produce eye-catching headlines; and cold type setters, which required no training to use, replaced expensive and complicated Letterpress machines.

These strides in media technology enabled previously untrained individuals to produce their own publications, which were wildly diverse in their visual style. Generally, such papers were established and staffed largely by affluent, college-educated graduates, many of whom were radicalized by the various social movements of the era. While the majority of the design was done collectively by untrained "professionals," several important figures emerged who are now household names within the era's visual culture, including, R Crumb, Rick Griffin, Emory Douglas, Steven Heller, Martin Sharp and Stewart Brand.

The proposed format of **Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974** is 240 pages and 500 images at 10 x 12 inches with essays by authorities on sixties art and media culture. The market for such a title is designers/illustrators/artists, (including the museum market), pop culture enthusiasts, collectors, and people nostalgic for this era and style of graphics. A significant archive of the periodicals are in the holdings of Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut.

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has expressed an interest in mounting a show based on the archival materials of this project.

Bios

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Gwen Allen is an art historian whose work focuses on alternative distribution and art magazines in the 1960s and 1970s. She has published articles on this topic in Artforum, Art Journal, and Umbrella magazine. She has curated exhibitions including "Conceptual Art and the Document" (Cantor Center for the Arts, Stanford University, 1999) and "Closed Circuit: New Video Art" (New Langton Arts, 2000). She has taught Art History and Critical Theory at San Francisco State University, California College of the Arts, and Bates College, and is currently Assistant Professor of Art History at Maine College of Art.

Geoff Kaplan of General Working Group has produced projects for MOCA, Channel One, Reebok, Chronicle Books, Cranbrook Academy of Art, Cal Arts, California College of the Arts, Motorola, and EDS. His work is included in San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection and most recently included in Echirrolles Poster Festival/California Dream exhibition in France and has been recognized by the American Center for Design, American Institute of Graphic Arts, International Design, Graphis, and the film industry. Articles about his work have appeared in the international journals Eye, IdN, and I.D., to name a few. He received his MFA from Cranbrook and teaches in the Graduate Program of Design at CCA. Geoff is a visiting professor at ArtCenter, Maine College of Art, and the Transmedia program at the Sint Lukas Hogeschool Brussels. Geoff travels nationally and abroad lecturing about his work.

Pamela M. Lee is Associate Professor of Art History at Stanford University, where she teaches the history, theory and criticism of art since 1945, with particular focus on the 1960s. She is the author of Object to Be Destroyed: The Work of Gordon Matta-Clark (2000) and Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s (2004) both published by the MIT Press

Bob Ostertag is author, most recently, of People's Movements, People's Press: The Journalism of Social Justice Movements. He co-wrote The Yes Men: The True Story of the End of the World Trade Organization, and the forthcoming Creative Life: Art, Politics, Machines, and Human Bodies. As a composer and artist he has published more than 20 CD and 2 films. His musical collaborators range from the Kronos Quartet to avant gardists John Zorn and Fred Frith, to heavy metal start Mike Patton and dyke punk rocker Lynn Breedlove. During the 1980s he covered the civil wars in Central America as a journalist, and his writings on the topic have been published on many continents in many languages. He is currently Associate Professor of Technocultural Studies at UC Davis.

Fred Turner is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Stanford University. He is the author of two books on American media culture since World War II, Echoes of Combat: The Vietnam War in American Memory (Anchor Books, 1996/2nd ed. University of Minnesota Press, 2001), and From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network and the Rise of Digital Utopianism (University of Chicago Press, 2006, in press), as well as a number of articles. A former journalist, he has written for a wide variety of American newspapers and magazines and has taught Communication at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.

Chapter Outline
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Historical Context	Bob Ostertag
Design in the 60s: Alternative Media Culture	Fred Turner
Design as a Social Movement	Gwen Allen
International Media Revolution	Pamela M. Lee
Graphic Time-line/Context	Geoff Kaplan

History(s) of the Alternative Press

Bob Ostertag

This essay will place the 1960s alternative press in historical context. First, similarities and differences between the 1960s underground press and that of previous times will be explored. Social movement press has played a crucial role in every social justice movement in American history, movements which have fundamentally shaped our country's history. How does the movement press of the 1960s compare with the press of the abolitionist press and woman suffrage press? Finally, the essay will look at the contribution of the 1960s press to the larger issue of how the counterculture of the era shaped the world we live in today. Conventional wisdom sees the 1960s as a "failed" social movement(s) that squandered its political opportunities away to drugs, infighting, and ideology. To the contrary, this essay will argue that the 1960s reshaped our culture and politics more profoundly than many revolutions commonly considered to be "successes," and that the underground press played no small role in this regard.

Bohemian Technocracy and the Alternative Press

Fred Turner

Conventionally, the counterculture of the 1960s has been remembered as a single, relatively unified movement aimed at challenging a similarly unified American mainstream. The alternative press of the period is no exception: born out of the social movements of the era, papers ranging from the *New Left Review* to *Village Voice* to *Radical Software* still seem to many to speak with a single anti-establishment voice. This essay will show that in fact, a large segment of the counterculture, and with it, key elements of the alternative press, actually embraced the core ideals of mid-century American technocracy. It will turn first to the psychedelic papers of San Francisco and New York and show how their aesthetics reflect a joint embrace of Beatnik satori and cybernetics. It will then examine the *Whole Earth Catalog*, perhaps the single best-selling counterculture publication of all time, with an eye to showing how its founder, Stewart Brand, celebrated that same fusion. Finally, it will turn to the journal *Radical Software* and argue that the fusion of the psychedelic and the cybernetic helped set the stage for the embrace of a wide variety of then-new media technologies. Far from turning away from mainstream America, this essay will conclude that these publications in fact celebrated both the tool-centered social ethos and the systems theories that dominated the military-industrial hierarchies of the time.

Design as a Social Movement

Gwen Allen

What does social revolution look like? This essay examines the graphic design of alternative and underground publications of the 1960s as it relates to the social and political ideals they espoused. Periodicals such as *Oz*, *Earth First*, *Off Our Backs*, *The Furies*, *The Oracle*, *The East Village Other*, *The Whole Earth Catalog*, *Radical Software*, and *The Black Panther Party Paper* were crucial tools for communicating "the movement" to a broader public. However, just as the counterculture itself was composed of the distinct and sometimes disparate agendas

of the civil rights, anti-war, gay and lesbian, feminist, new communalist, and environmental movements, the underground press was deeply heterogeneous, ranging from the psychedelic style of *The Oracle* to the Art Nouveau influenced pages of *Avatar* to the social realist approach of the *Black Panther Party Paper*. This essay offers a close formal analysis of these publications and historicizes their graphic innovations within the context of art history as well as in relationship to contemporary social, political, and technological transformations. While often depicted as a group of amateurs whose hallucinogenic imagery, barely legible fonts, delirious borders, and crude layouts reflected either a lack of skill or a mind-altered state, this essay argues that the editors and designers of the underground press strategically employed a range of visual tropes and aesthetic devices, even as they challenged the conventions of official high culture and mass produced commercial culture, alike. Indeed a careful look at these publications reveals a range of sophisticated visual practices that parallel those utilized by artistic movements from Dada to Conceptual art including: avant-garde tactics of photomontage and appropriation; do-it-yourself techniques that functioned as a kind of "deskilling," opposing the slickness of mainstream media; the development of a politics of representation around queer identity; and new models of communication and distribution drawn from cybernetics and new media. The radical media practices of the alternative press aimed less to report reality than to transform it: these publications envisaged a different world, and in doing so incited a generation to not only read about this world, but to attempt to bring it into being.

What We Were Reading: The Creation of a Counter-Public Sphere

Edited by Pamela M. Lee

"What We Were Reading" is a compilation of responses to a survey forwarded to approximately 10-15 artists, designers, critics and historians. The ambition of the survey is to capture personal recollections of the period of the mid-1960s to 1970s as they were shaped by the diverse aesthetics of the alternative, underground and countercultural press. I am interested in the ways in which these graphic practices are formative to the larger historical imaginary of that moment.

The prospective respondents have been chosen for satisfying one or both of the following conditions: 1.) Their work variously engages the range of political, social and/or countercultural movements from 1964 to 1974 and 2.) They have demonstrated authority or experience in the visual and/or graphic arts of the period, whether from the perspective of theorist or practitioner. Each contributor will be asked to reflect on a series of questions concerned with the alternative press, the extent of their involvement with it, and their responses to the explosion of new design practices linked to the evolution of printing technologies during the 1960s. Participants will be asked to contribute in the ballpark of 500-750 words.

Questions on the survey might read as follows:

- Where were you living during the period in question and what was the extent of your political and/or activist engagements?
- Apart from mainstream magazines and newspapers, what kind of journalism were you reading? Please list titles.
- Please describe your interest or involvement with various political, social or countercultural publications. In what ways did this interest influence your own practice?
- Describe your impressions of the new graphic innovations attending these publications.

We envision that these responses will be integrated throughout the book as individual block texts, rather than appearing as a monolithic whole. The rationale behind this editorial and design decision is to give form to the diversity of voices included, so as to suggest the range of opinions (and their motivations) around such media innovations.

The intention behind "What We Were Reading" has nothing to do with nostalgia for a period too often romanticized as "The Age of the Heroic Guerrilla." What makes this survey especially pressing for contemporary audiences—and what recommends it to a place in Power to the People—is the widespread and erroneous notion that design categorically services corporate interests and is wholly complicit with the logic of capital Spectacle. This cross-section of perspectives from figures engaged with this material is meant to dramatize the sense of possibility these publications afforded in the creation of a counter-public sphere.

A Tentative List of Prospective Respondents:

Michael Asher, Judy Baca, Amalia Mesa Bains, John Baldessari, AA Bronson, Benjamin Buchloh, T.J. Clark, Tom Crow, Ed Fella, Charles Gaines, Dan Graham, Steven Heller, Nancy Holt, Rosalind Krauss, Lucy Lippard, Chip Lord, Kerry James Marshall, Betye Saar, Alan Sekula, Carolee Schneemann, Martha Rosler, Yvonne Rainer, Ed Ruscha, Sally Stein, and Anthony Vidler.

Similar Books on the Market

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Merz to Emigre and Beyond: Avant-Garde Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century, Phaidon Press, (June 25, 2003).

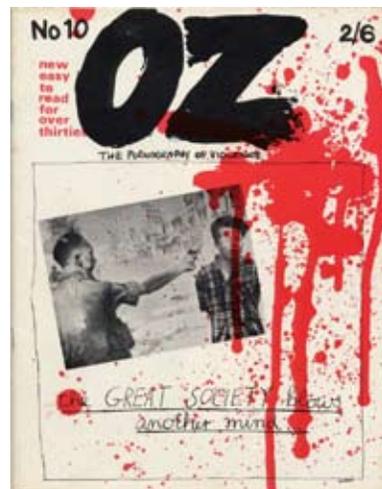
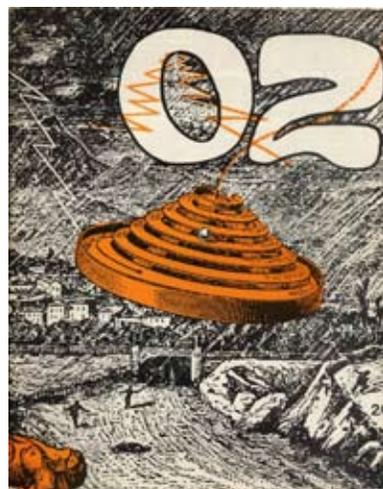
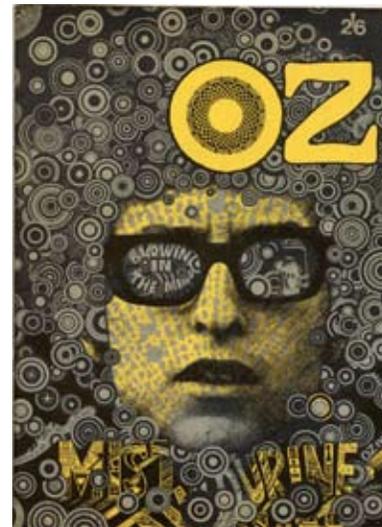
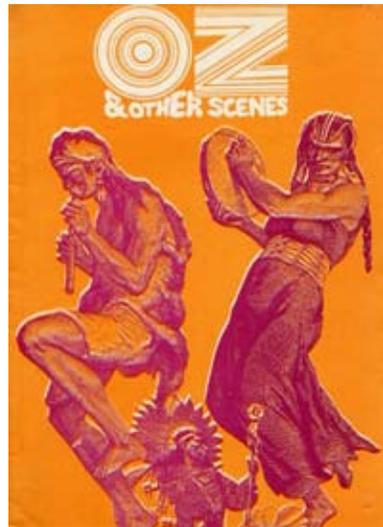
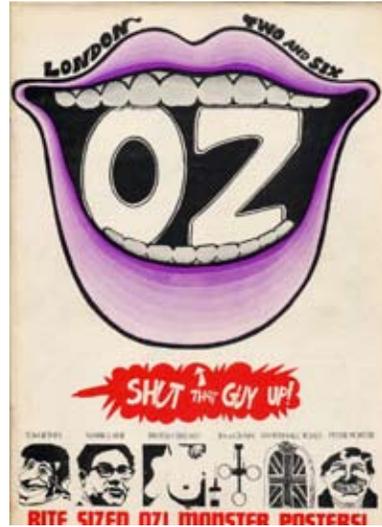
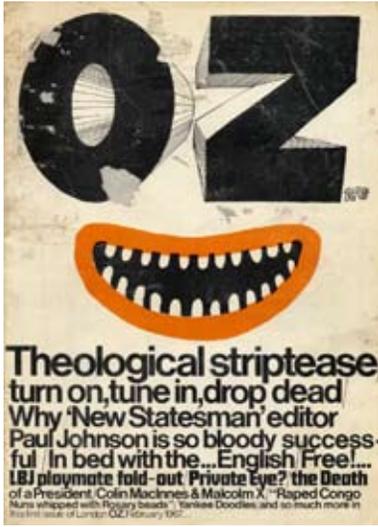
200 Trips from the Counterculture. Graphics and Stories from the Underground Press Syndicate, Jean-François Bizot, Thames & Hudson, (2007).

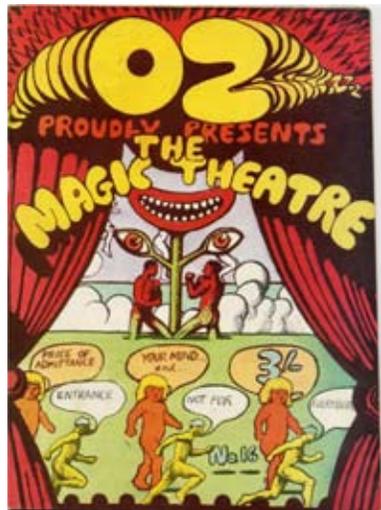
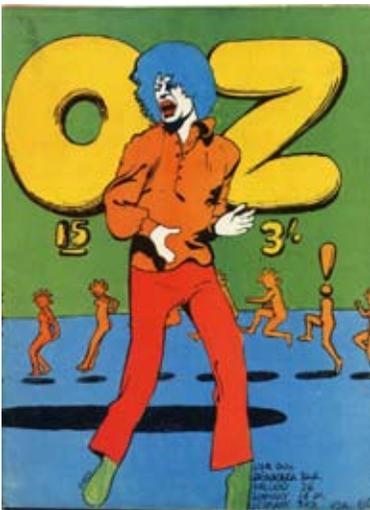
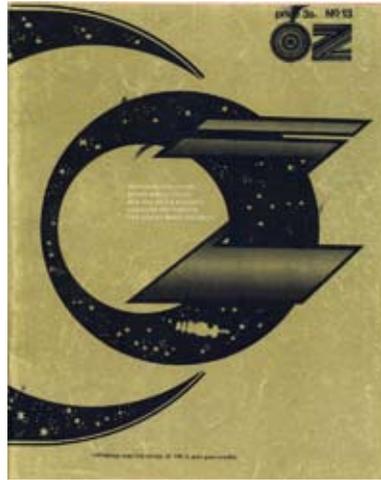
The Art of Rock: Posters from Presley to Punk, Abbeville Press; 1st ed edition

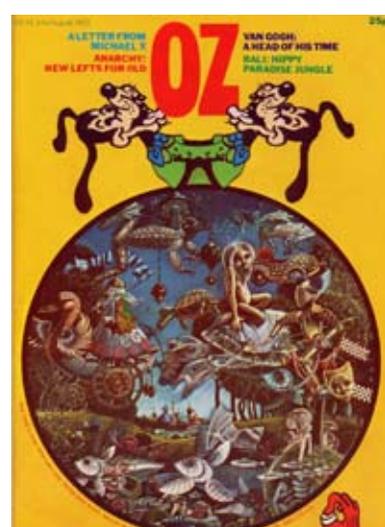
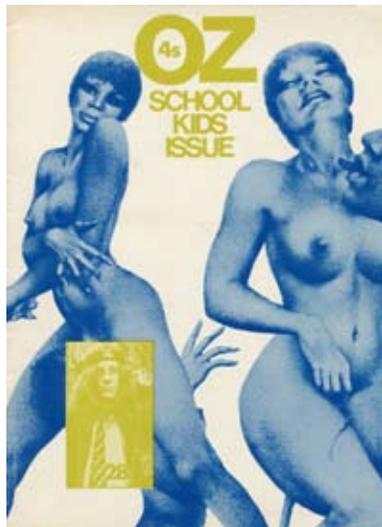
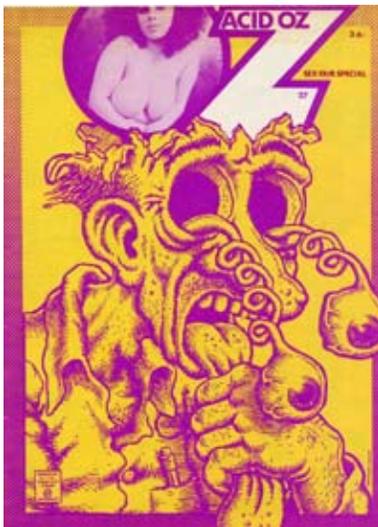
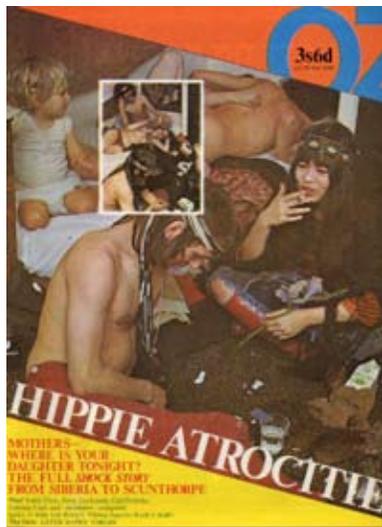
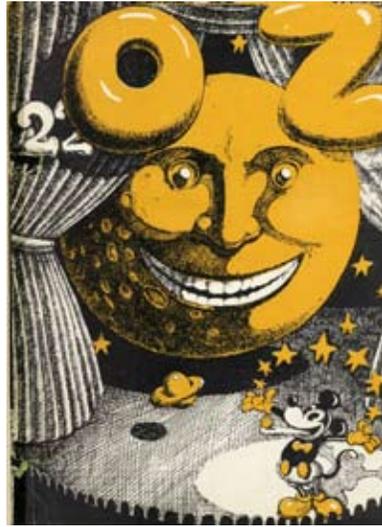
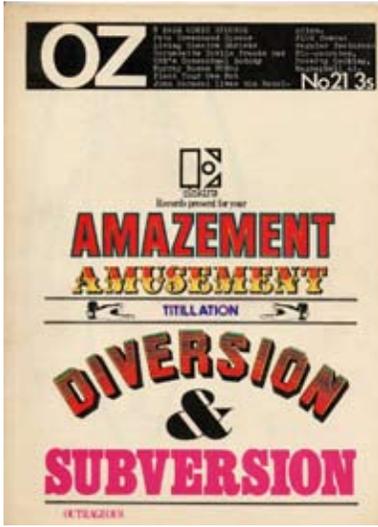
Art of Modern Rock: The Poster Explosion, Chronicle Books

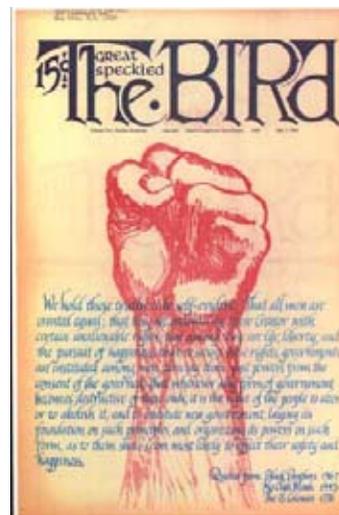
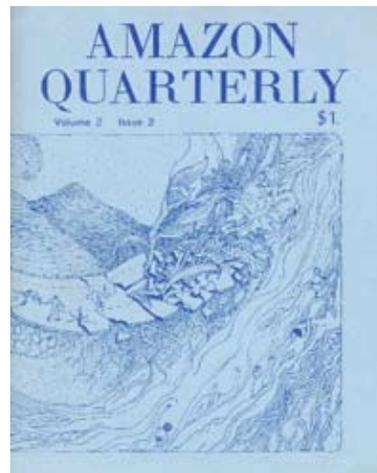
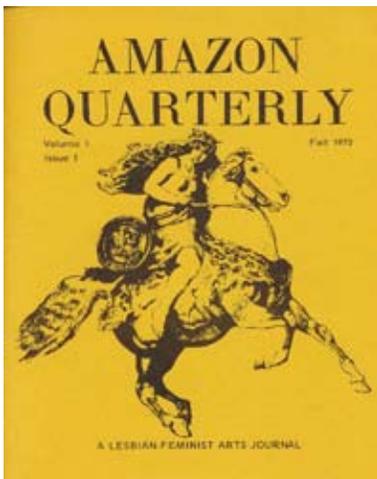
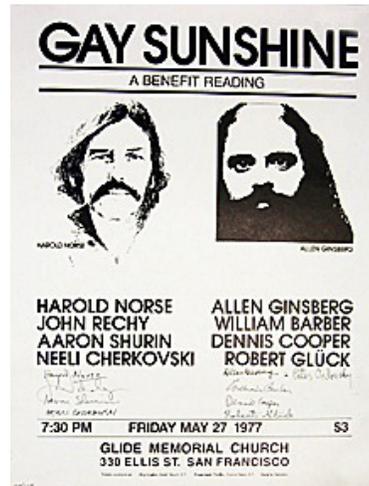
Uncovering the Sixties: The Life and Times of the Underground Press, Abe Peck, (1985). (out of print)

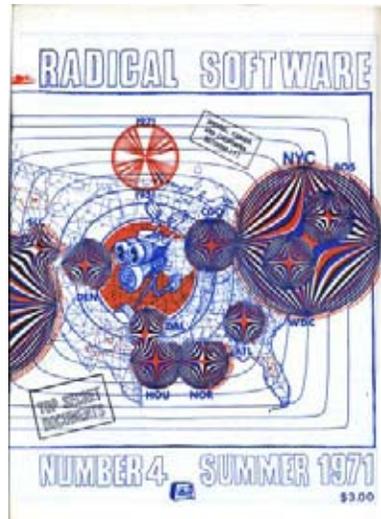
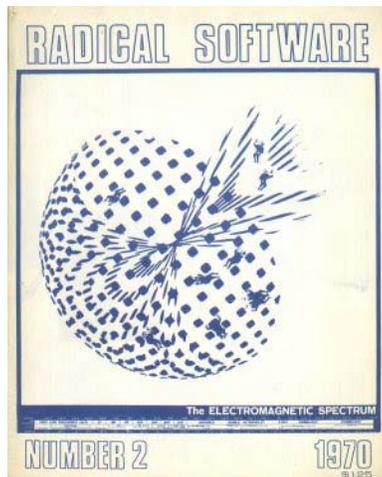
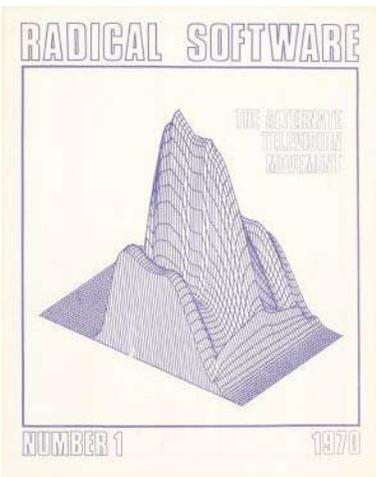
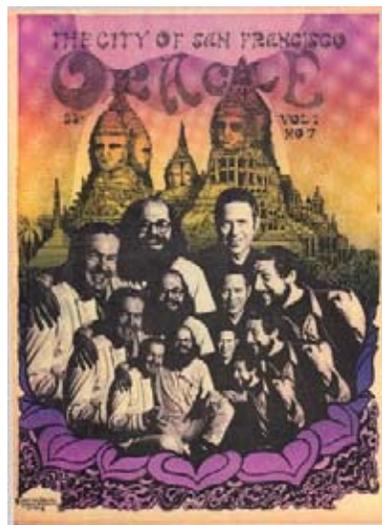
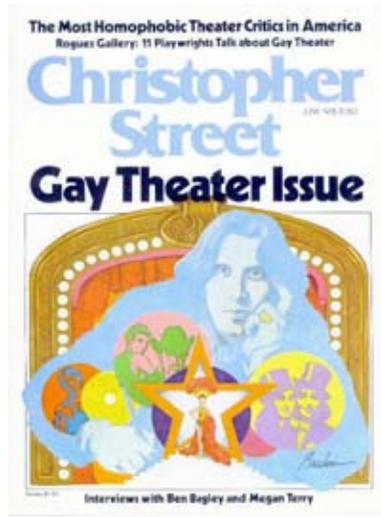
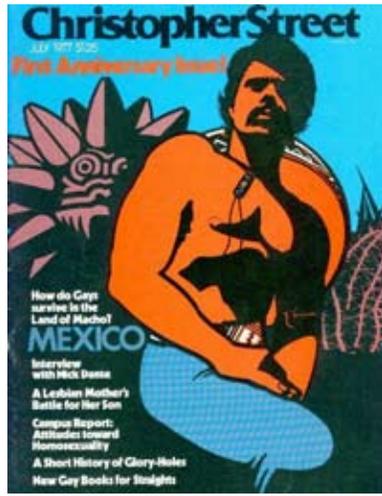
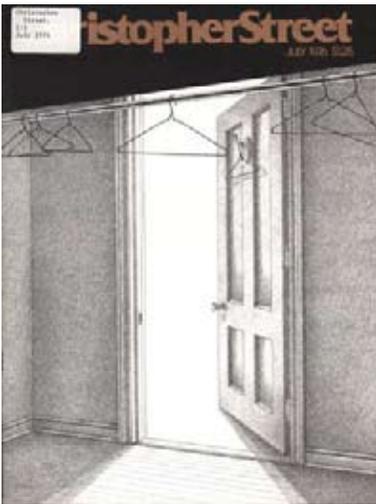
The Underground Press in America, Robert J. Glessing, (1970). (out of print)

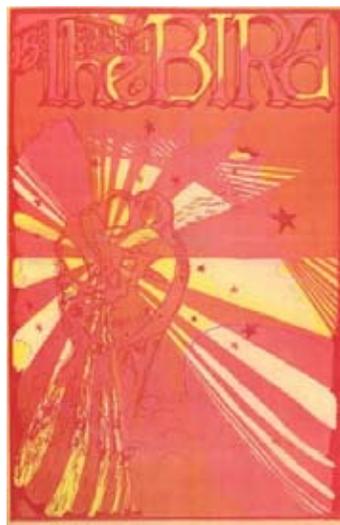
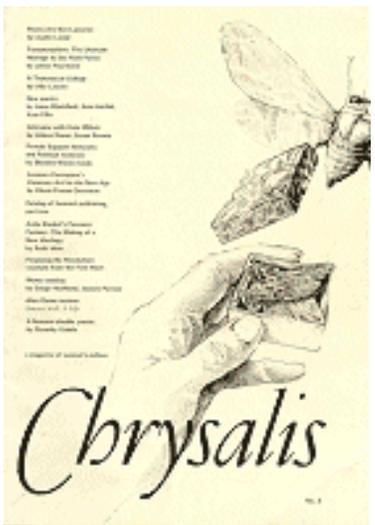
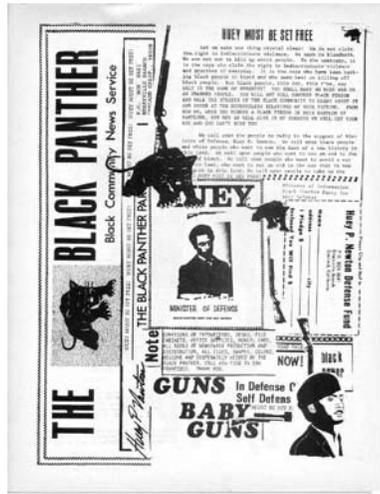
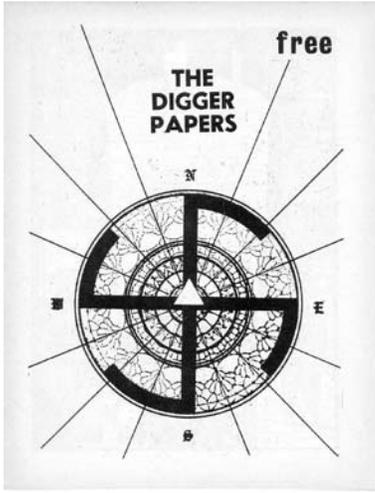


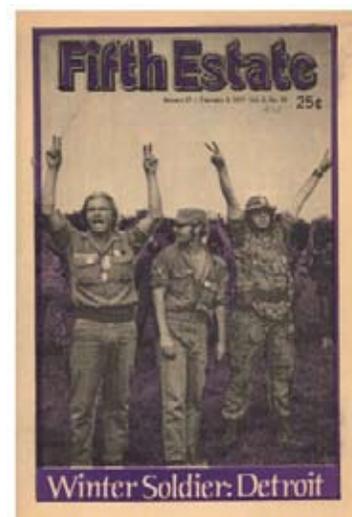
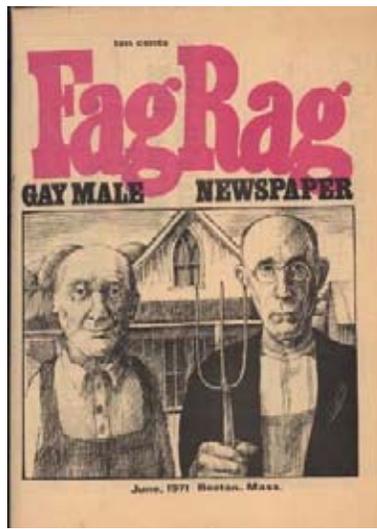
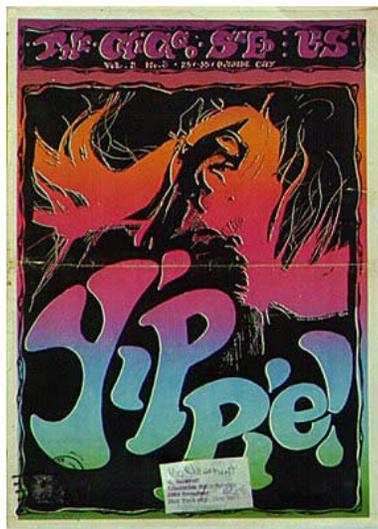
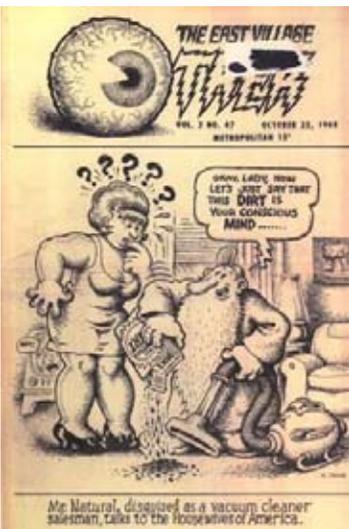
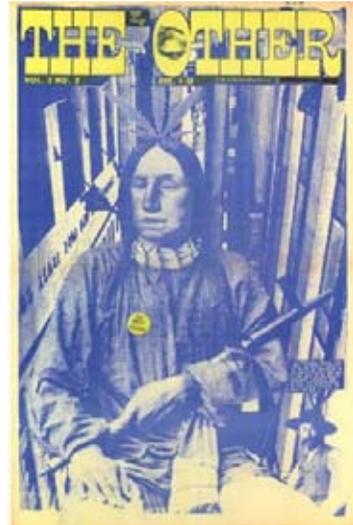
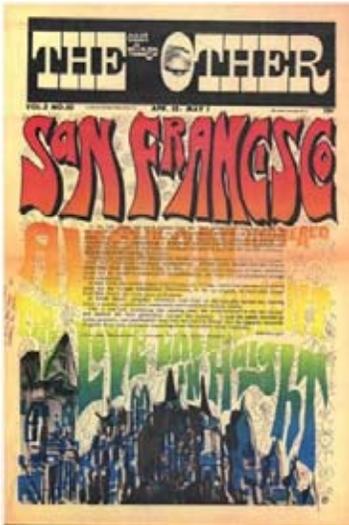


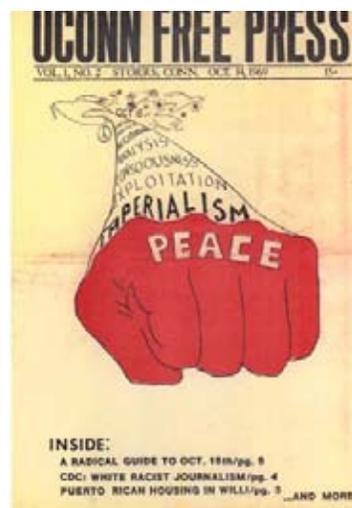
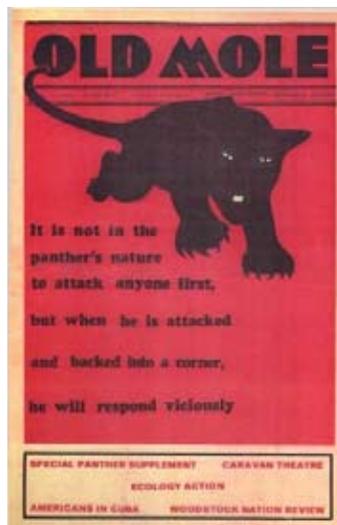
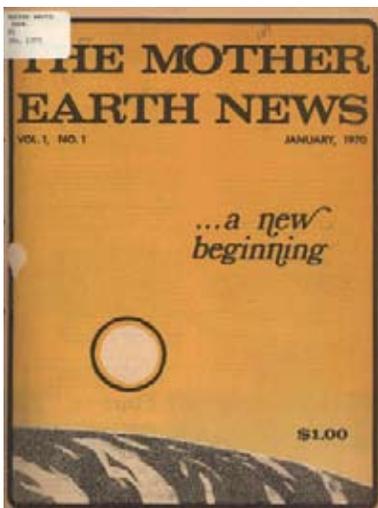
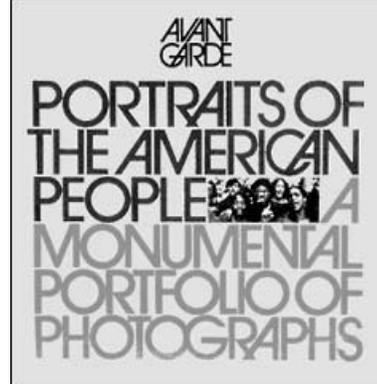
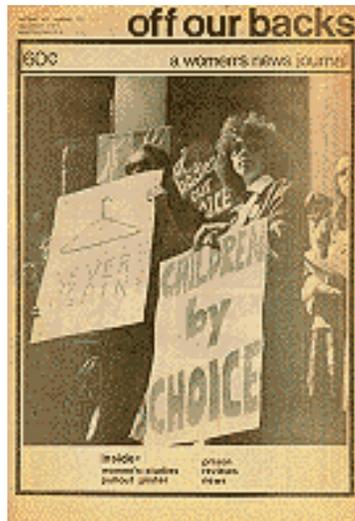
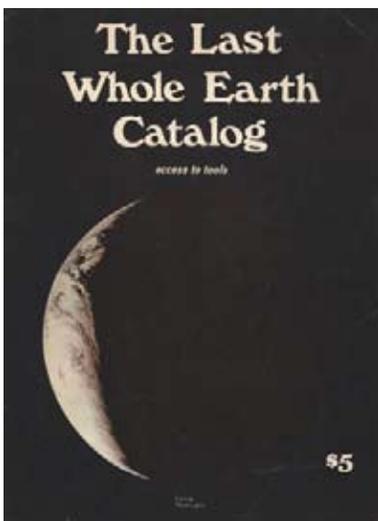
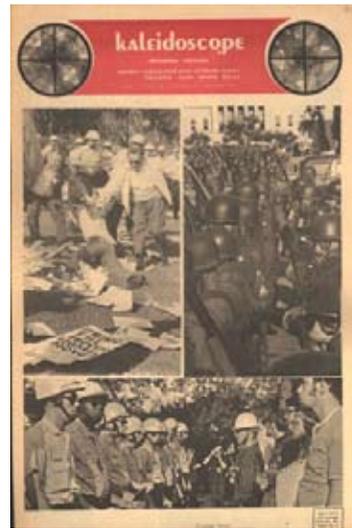


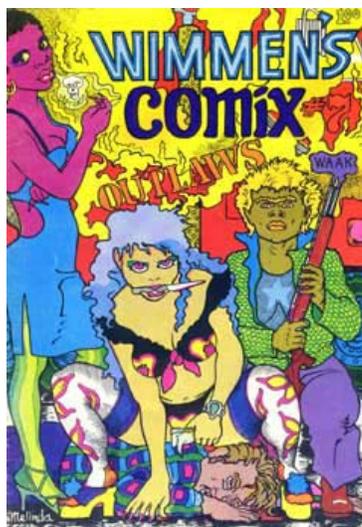
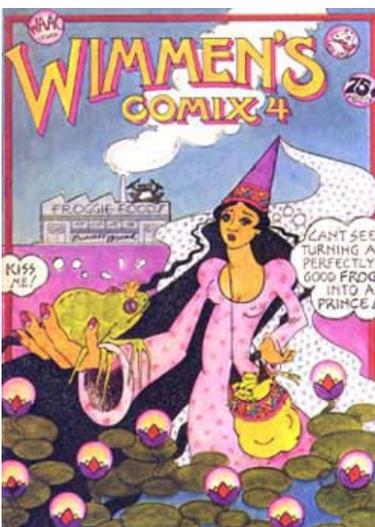
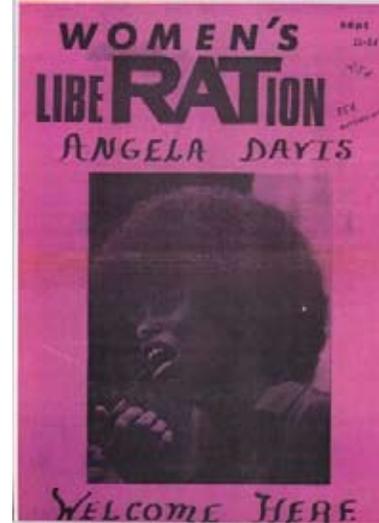
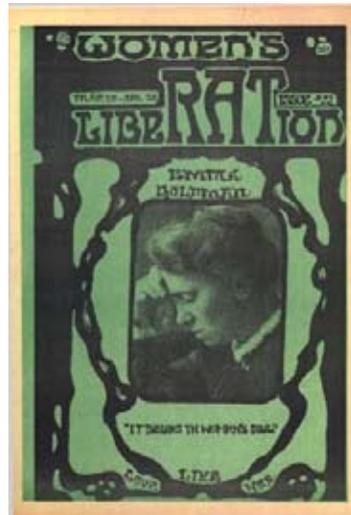
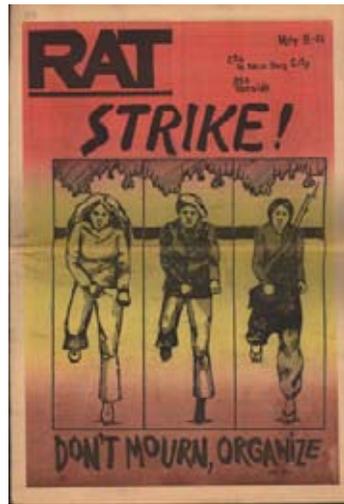
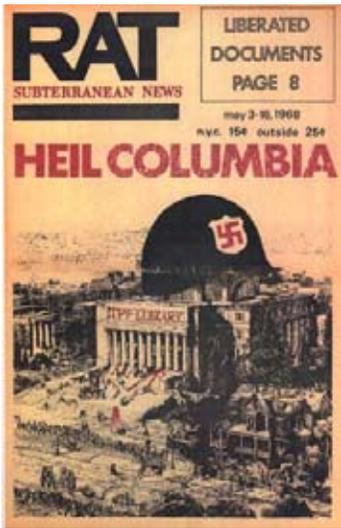


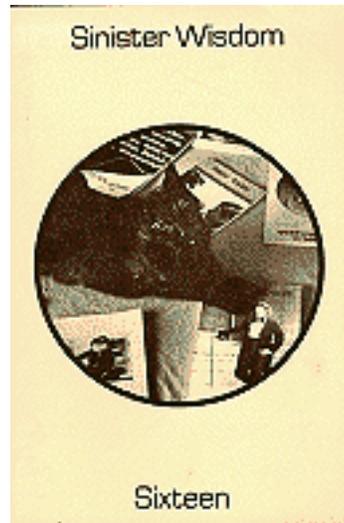
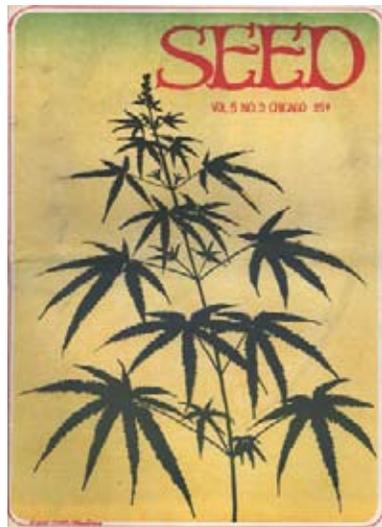
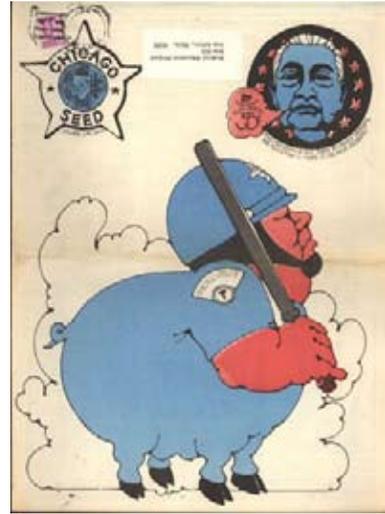
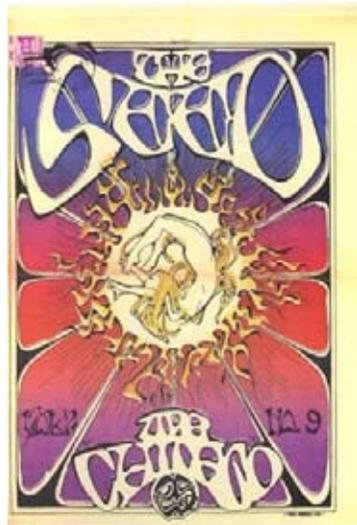
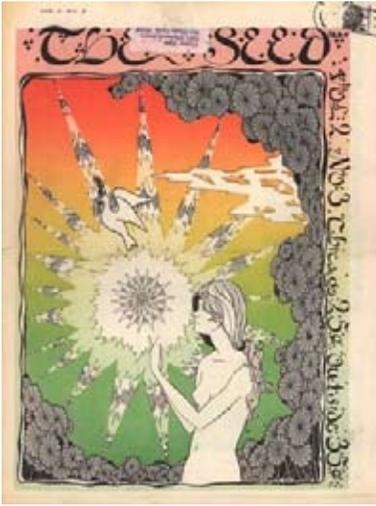




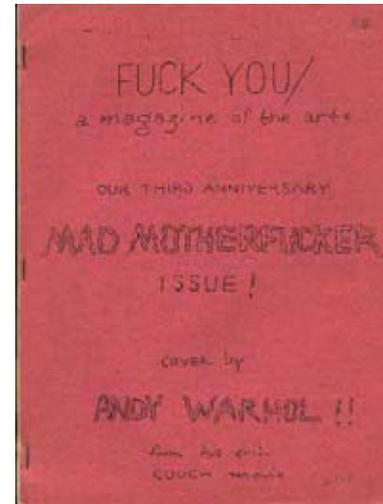
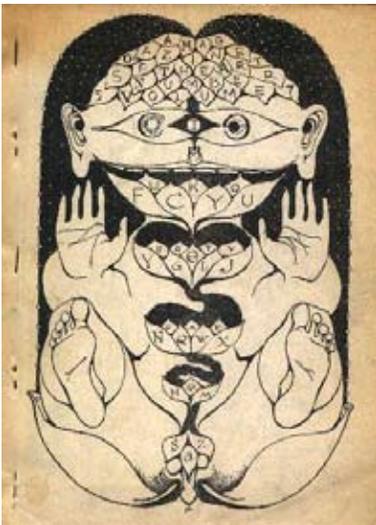
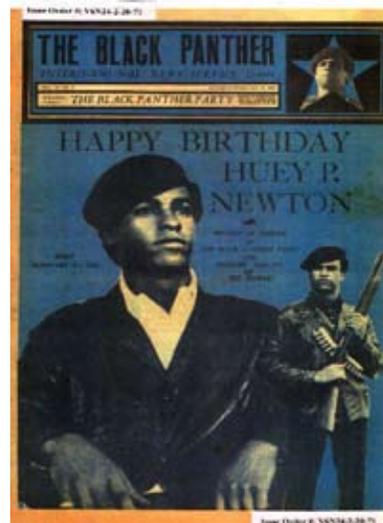
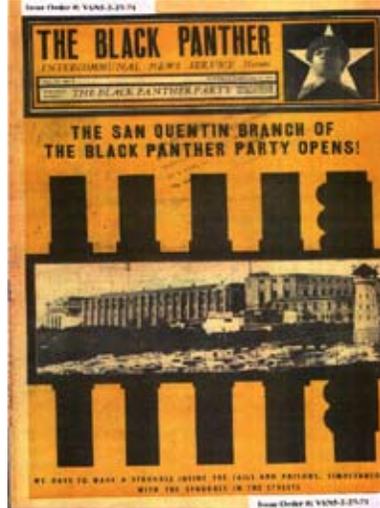
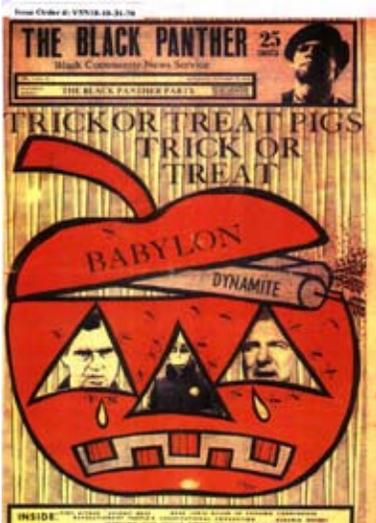
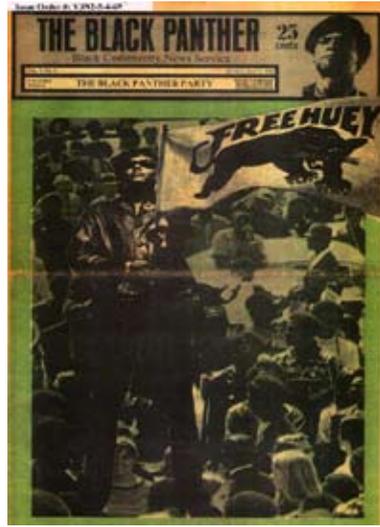
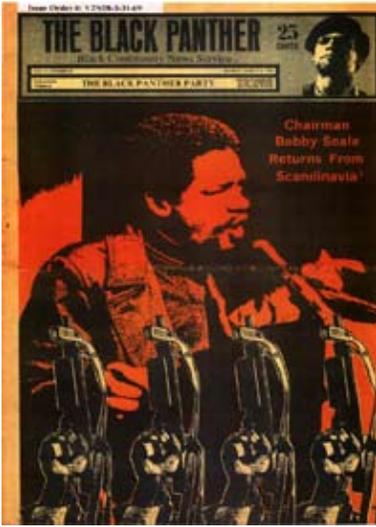








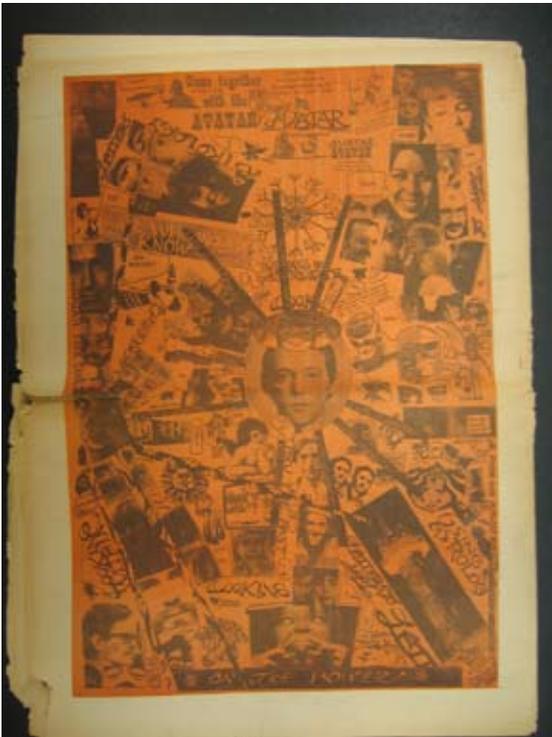
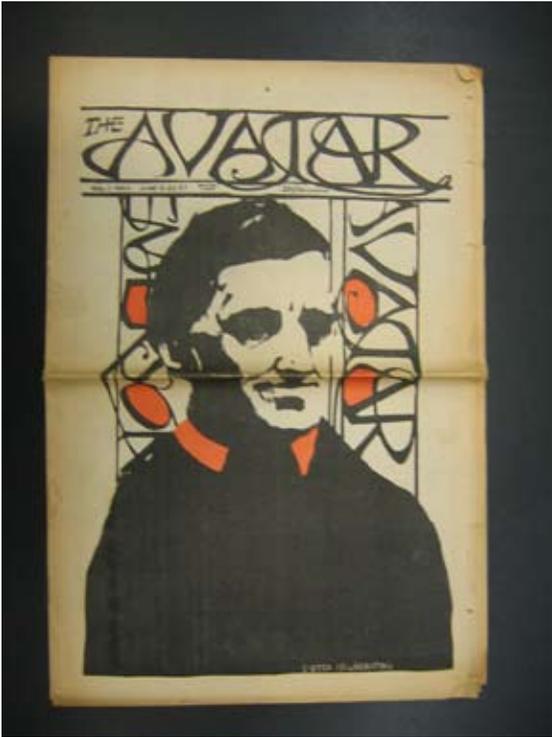




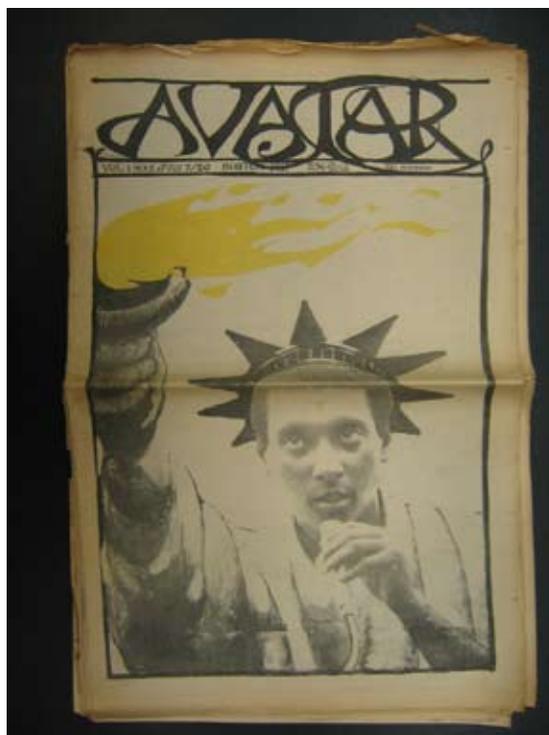
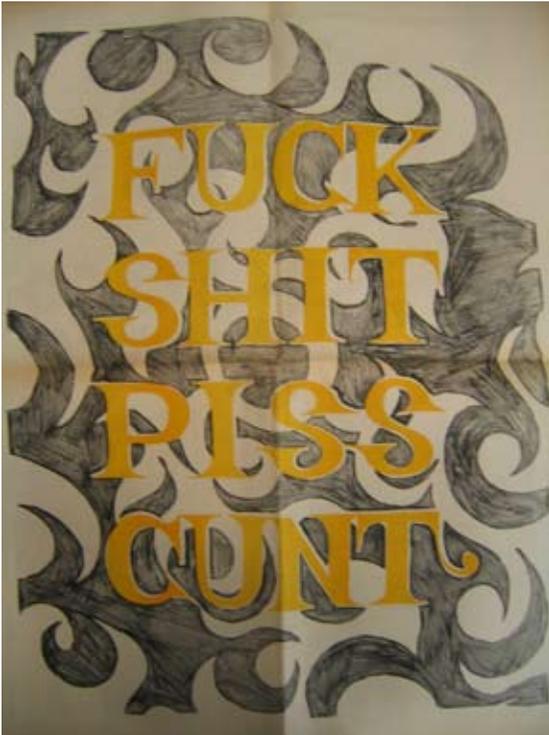
May 3, 2007

Power of the People: The Graphic Design of Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974.
Book Proposal

Appendix: grab shots from the holdings of Archives & Special Collections at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut.



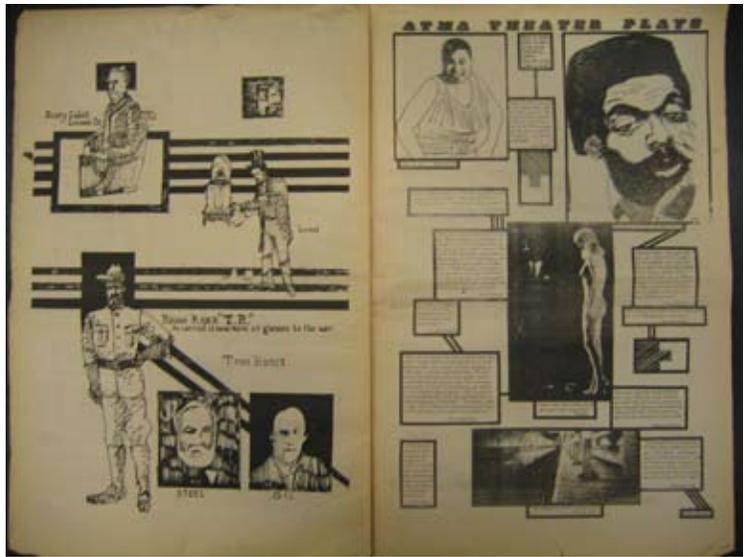
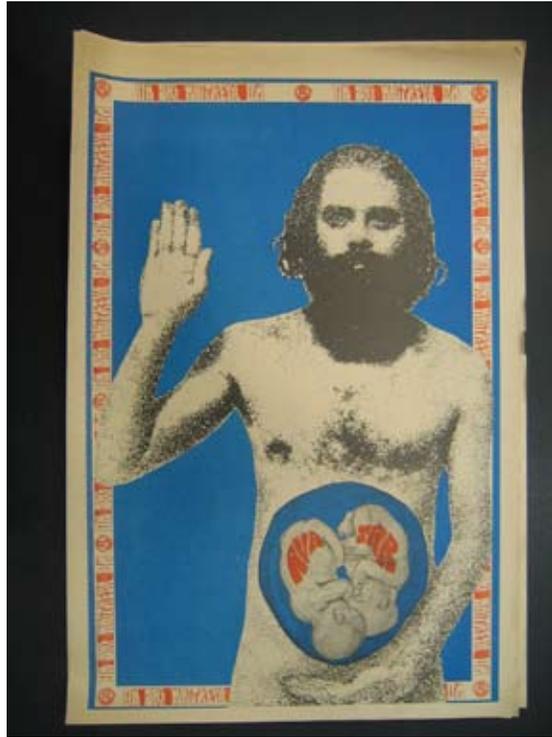
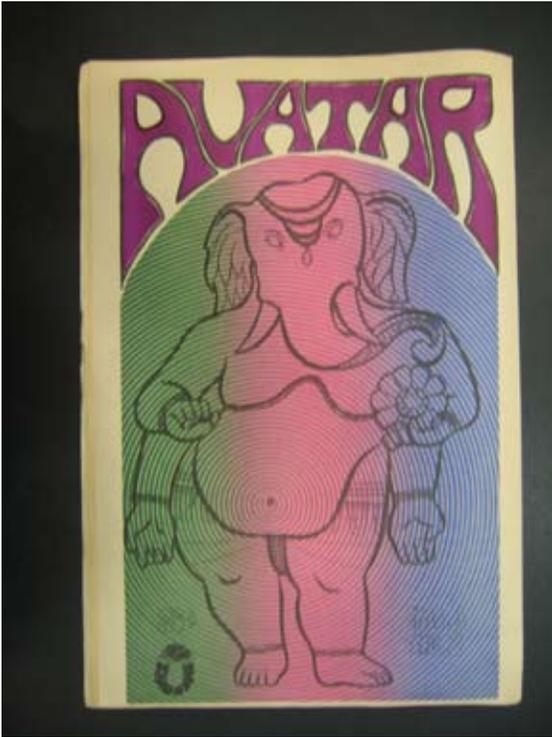
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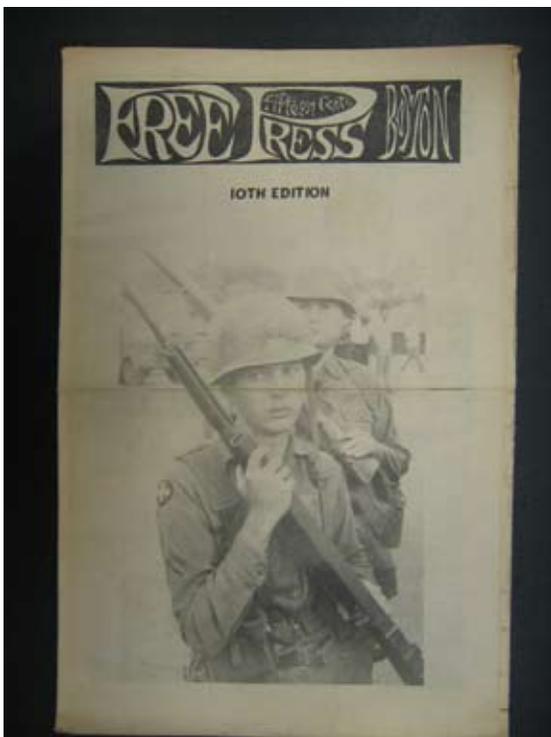
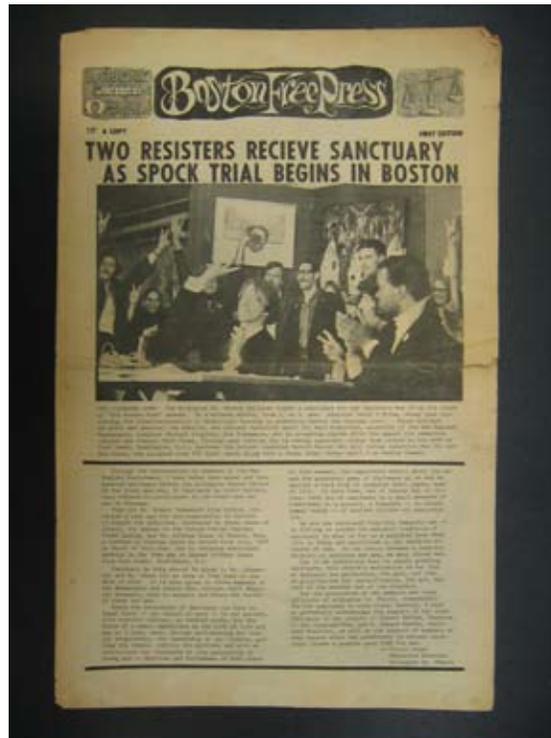
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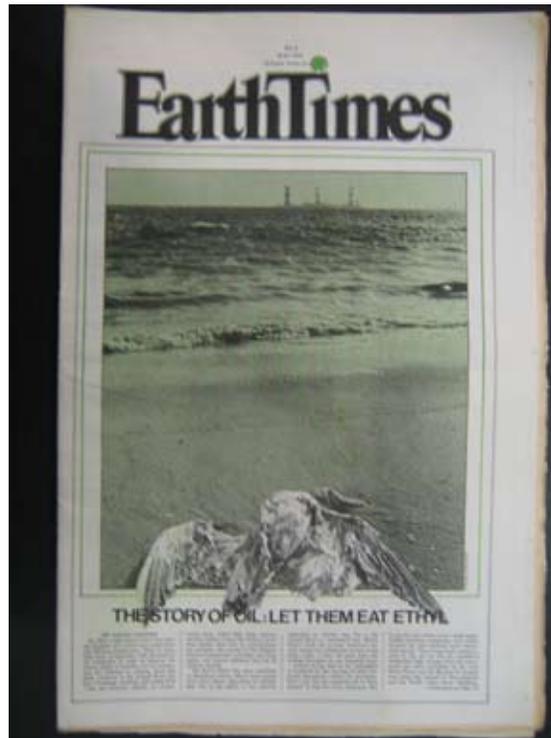
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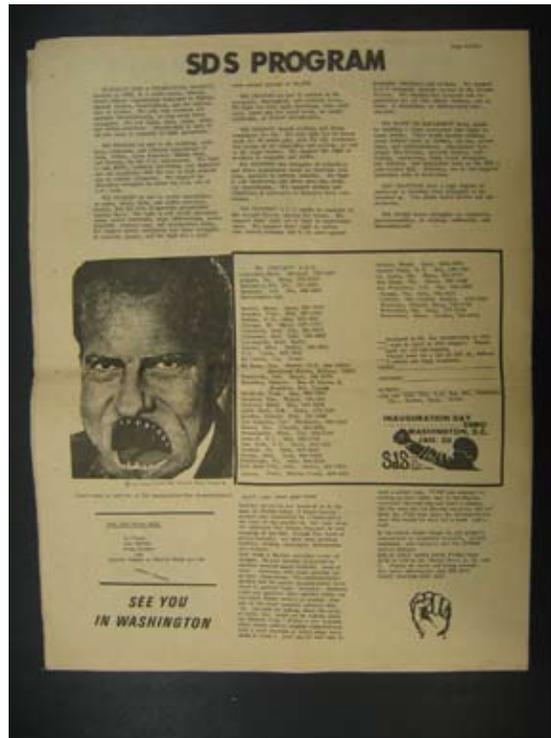
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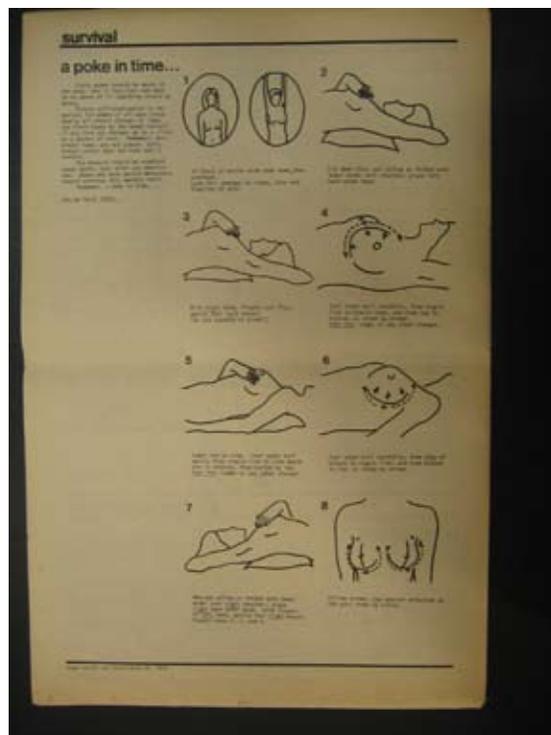
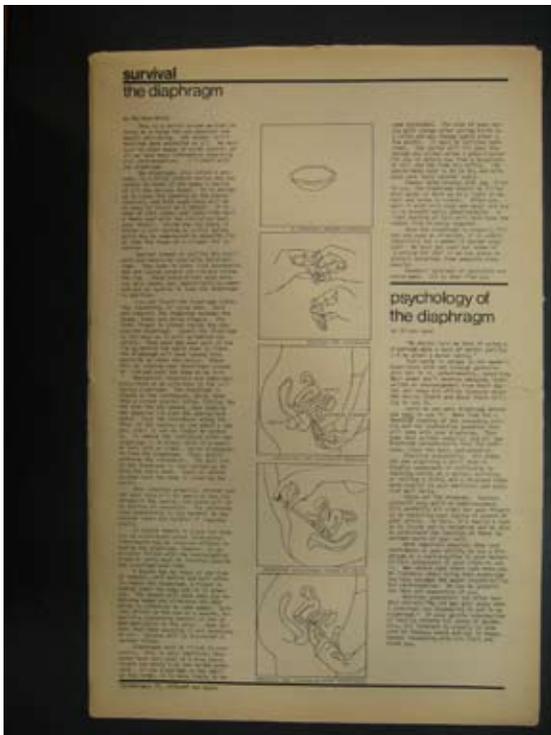
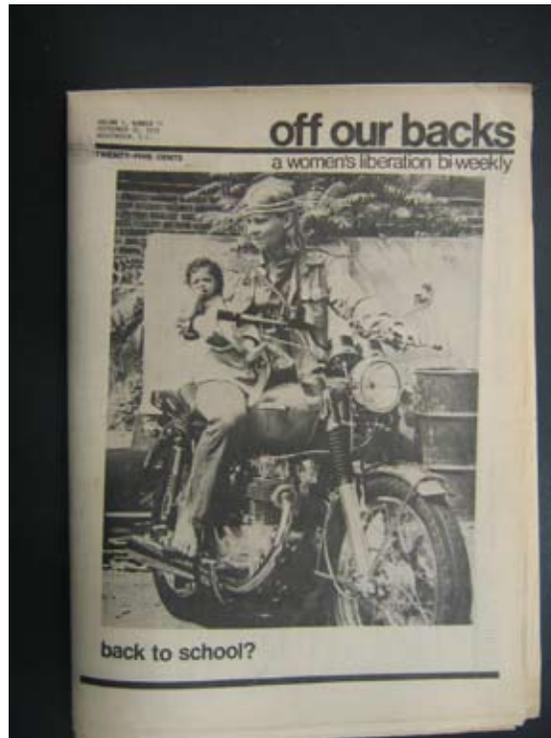
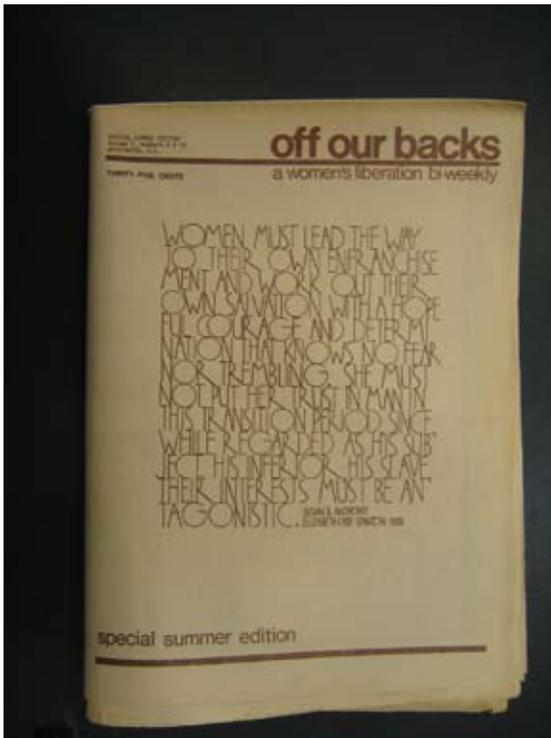
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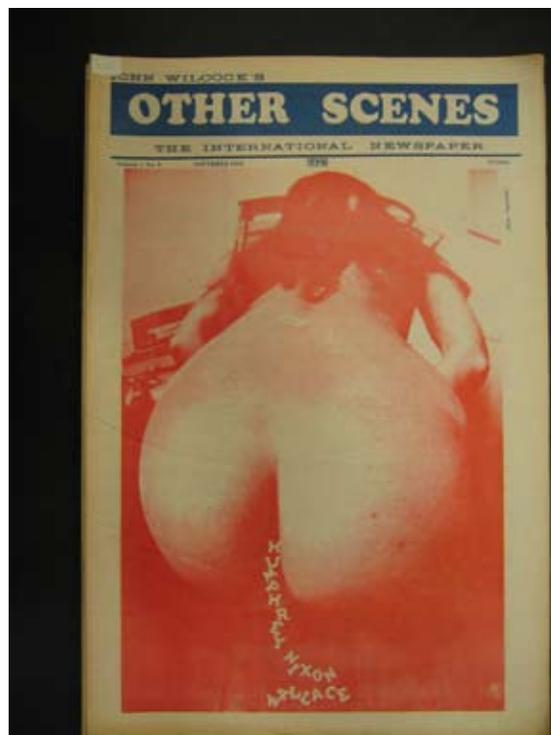
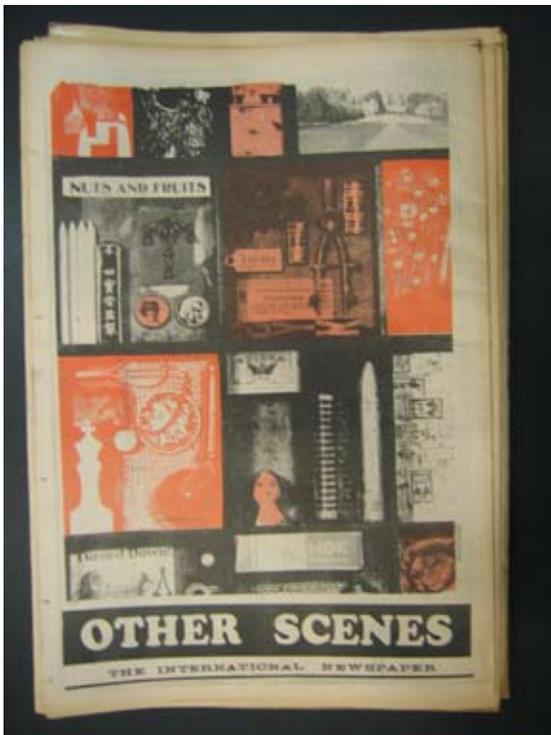
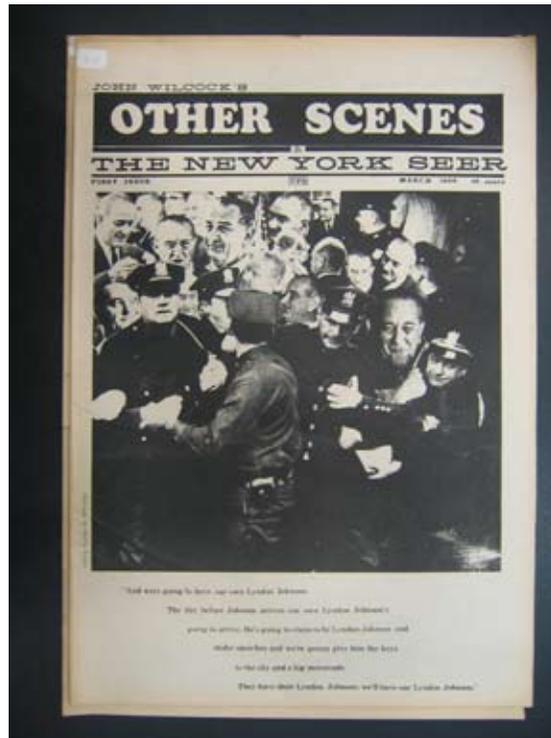
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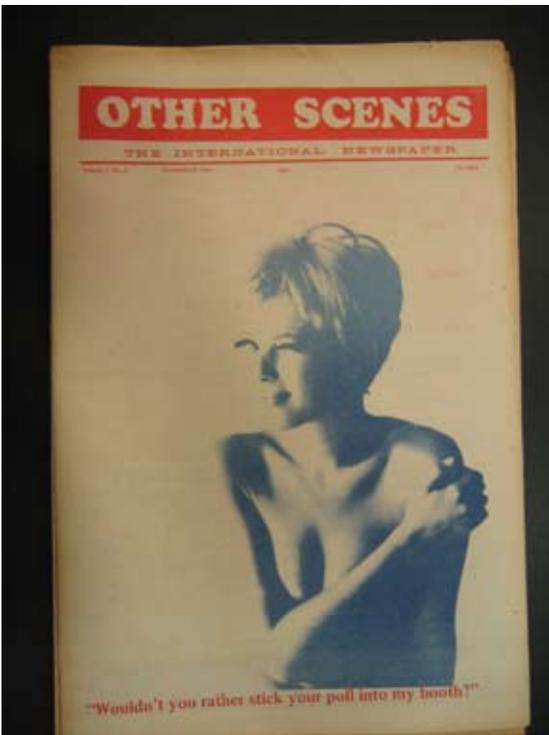
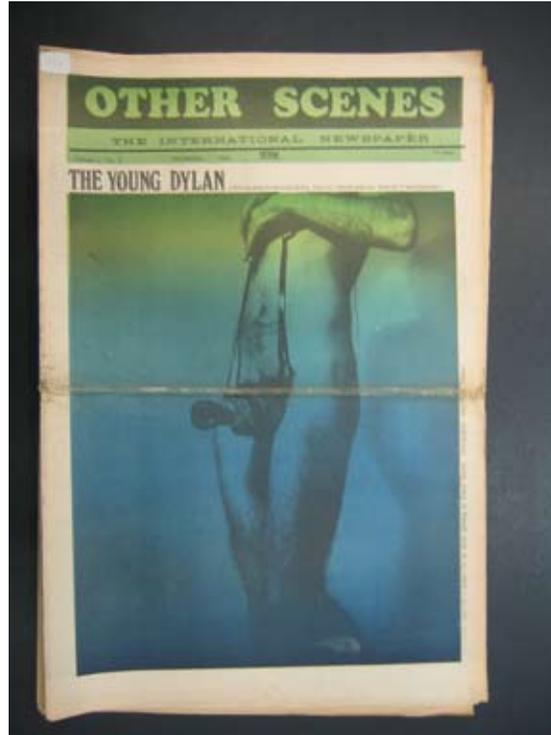
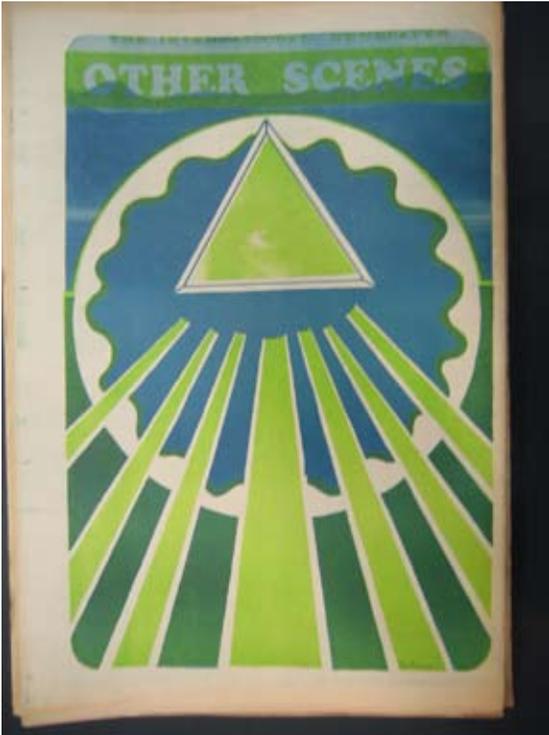
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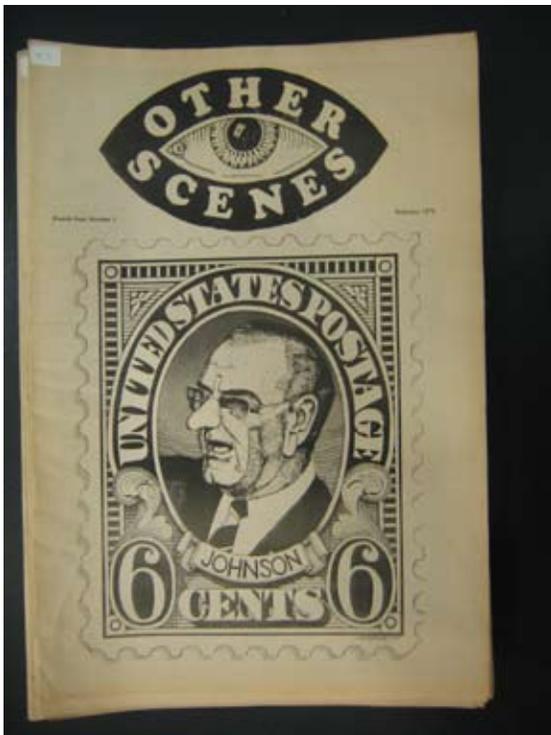
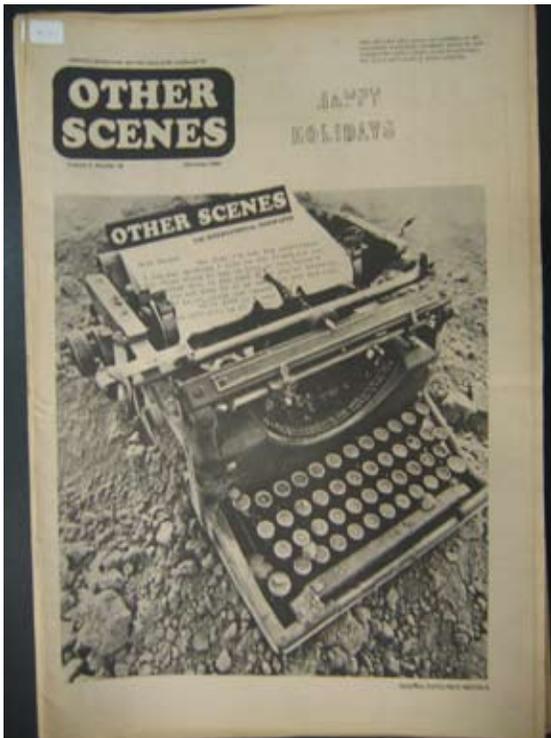
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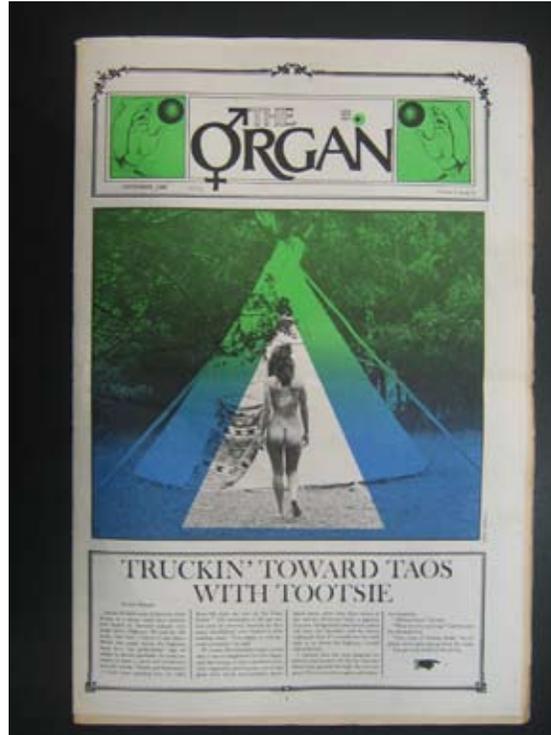
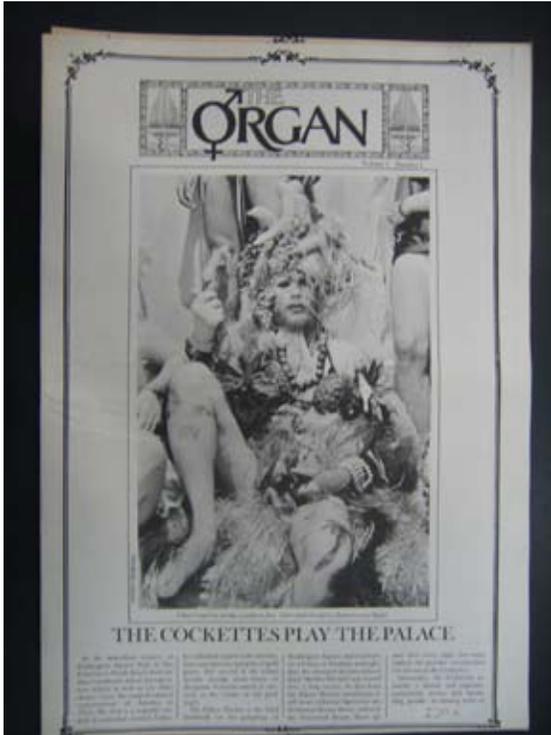
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