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 | EXPANDING THE DESIGN CONVERSATION

Orgies and Polka Dots

by STEVEN HELLER on JUNE 1, 2012

Last week I wrote about Yayoi Kusama for [The Atlantic's website](#). This week I learned that Specific Object and David Platzker have mounted "[Screw You.](#)," an exhibition "that shines a light on the intercourse of counter culture publishing, tabloid pornography and the art world which formed a union during the creatively fertile years of the late 1960s and early 1970s," Platzker says. "Screw You." will be on view at Susan Inglett Gallery from May 31 to July 13, 2012.



"Screw You." draws its title and inspiration from the tabloid *Screw: The Sex Review*, which I art directed in 1968–69 and 1971–73.

Platzker writes: "Initially as a sly means to justify prurient sexual content, *Screw* and like-minded publications included literary and fine art to skirt the censors. While not a particularly successful subterfuge, as the editors were prosecuted repeatedly throughout the early years, the juxtaposition made for titillating journalism. Nestling porn and fine art side by side between the sheets, content ranged from spreads of large breasted women illuminating such erudite articles as 'The Art of Buying Dirty Books' to centerfolds conceived by and featuring artist Yayoi Kusama."

Issues of *Screw* throughout the late 1960s and the early 1970s included contributors from the realm of visual culture such as Dan Graham, Andy Warhol, John Lennon, and Yoko Ono. It set journalistic standards for countercultural publications by addressing issues such as freedom of speech, while simultaneously raising pornographic standards of imagery.

Kusama's own tabloid, *Kusama Presents an Orgy of Nudity, Love, Sex Beauty* played to the strengths of the genre, while contemporaneous periodicals such as *New York Review of Sex and Politics* (which I co-published in 1969) favored a merging of literature and art in addition to its sexual content.

"Screw You." unsheathes the sex periodicals of the late 1960s and '70s, "rescuing them from the literal and metaphorical trash bin to sit side by side with the original art and films that filled the page and informed an era. These publications open a window onto an enlightened generation and the art and influences which gave rise to the counterculture."

The exhibition will be on view at Susan Inglett Gallery, at 522 West 24th Street.