

## Come Together: The Rise of Cooperative Art and Design

by Francesco Spampinato. Princeton Architectural Press, December 2014. 256 p. ill. ISBN 9781616892685 (pbk.), \$35.00

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Come Together: The Rise of Cooperative Art and Design offers a collection of interviews with forty contemporary artists' collectives. In the book's introduction, Spampinato places contemporary collectivism amid the diverse spectrum of socially engaged artistic practice, informed and aided by today's globally-connected, media-saturated environment. In examining the work of the groups featured herein, he identifies several key commonalities and concerns.

Today's artist collectives are multi-disciplinary, blurring the lines between visual art, performance, design, and other fields. Their work is realized through multi-directional and multilayered engagement: whether via shared connections and identity among members of the group, audience and community participation, interaction with spaces and surroundings, or by

appropriation of media, marketing, and protest tactics.

The collectives featured in Come Together were formed in the mid-1990s to late 2000s and almost all remain active. Each group receives its own short chapter, which starts off with a listing of members, the collective's website and publications (when applicable), a brief introduction by the author, and other pertinent details. A sampling of creative activities are also listed for each group, which may include community projects, internet art, clothing, merchandising, publishing, performance, urban interventions, and more. These activities are not discrete nor the lists exhaustive, but they do serve to underscore the multidisciplinary nature of collective work.

The interview questions asked by Spampinato are the same for each group, and aim to explore motivations for collective work, membership and roles within the group, individual versus anonymous identities, links between artistic methods and messages, and audience identification and participation, among other issues. Though the interviews read as questionnaires rather than conversations, the repetition of the questions enables the reader to readily compare how practices among the groups converge and diverge. And the artists' words are certainly the highlight of this book, with responses ranging from direct to elusive, thoughtful to playful.

The text of each chapter is accompanied by a sampling of images in varying sizes, from an eighth of a page to two-page spreads. Some of the images are too small for close study, but when taken as a whole, they visually summarize each collective's identity and output and entice one to explore further via the websites and sources listed.

While much has been written about contemporary collective art, and collaborative and participatory art more generally (whether made by individuals, duos, or groups), these works tend to take the form of scholarly monograph, essay collection, or exhibition catalog. *Come Together* breaks new ground by emphasizing the artists' own words in an accessible format. It is a highly recommended, inspirational resource for any academic or public library serving creative populations, and an entry point for college-level students wishing to explore collective practices.