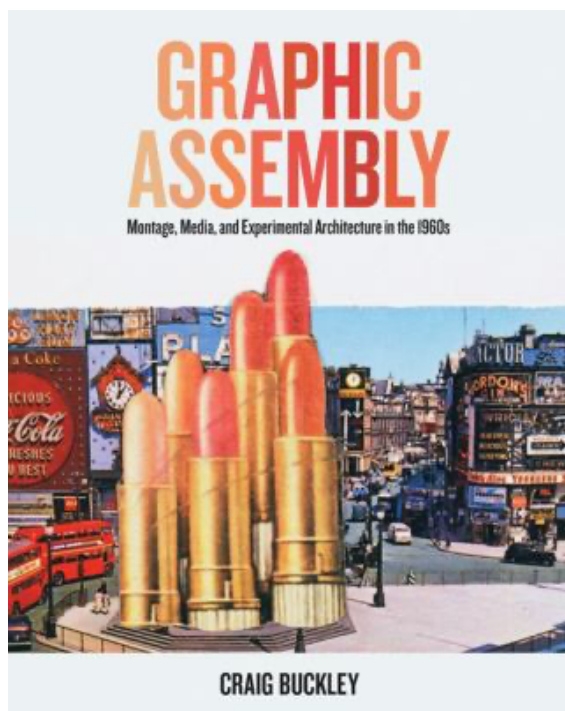


Graphic Assembly: Montage, Media, and Experimental Architecture in the 1960s

by Craig Buckley. University of Minnesota Press, February 2019. 400p. ill. ISBN 9781517901615 (h/c), \$34.95.

Reviewed May 2019 Danielle Reay, Digital Scholarship Technology Manager, Drew University Library, dreay@drew.edu



The persistence of montage as a crucial design principle figures centrally in Craig Buckley's *Graphic Assembly: Montage, Media and Experimental Architecture in the 1960s*. In linking the history of industrial mechanized processes with new graphic conceptualizations of space and design, Buckley outlines how architects and experimental studios of the 1960s and 1970s played with material and its variability. With an eye towards techniques enabled by then-emerging areas of print culture, such as offset lithography, Buckley also notes that today's seamless capacity to assemble images via different computational strategies is no less significant.

With this more expansive view of montage, assemblage, and collage, the book moves past the more widely examined periods of interwar montage to "the long 60s." This is done by reference to turn-of-the-century precedents of competition renderings and exploring ideological distinctions between practitioners of these techniques. Chapters on Reyner Banham, Archigram, Hans Hollein, Utopie, and Superstudio illustrate how each of these architects or groups used montage, assemblage, and collage as an extension of, or rebuttal to, visual rhetoric traditions. The author also suggests that montage might be reframed not only as a strategy for putting together disparate graphic elements but also examined for its capacity to disassemble. The emphasis on dismantling, strategic reuse, and deliberate ways of taking apart foregrounds disassembly as a conceptual apparatus in its own right.

Montage in architecture may be having something of a moment. The 2018 publication of Martino Stierli's book *Montage and the Metropolis* treads similar but distinct scholarly territory. While Stierli emphasizes photomontage, experiments with spatial relationships, and the visuality of space with chapters on Mies van der Rohe and Rem Koolhaas, Buckley questions what compositional elements or techniques might be borrowed from disciplines outside of architecture and how these acts of appropriation clarify montage through "envisioning." Taken together, they offer a way to rethink the representation of space through architectural imagery and how architecture's digital turn can sometimes mask these significant graphic techniques and activities of technological assembly.

The writing is crisp and academic with a rich appendix that appends a meticulously researched text. The images themselves, including forty-seven color plates, are particularly illuminating. While there are reproductions from well-known architectural texts and periodicals covering experimental architecture such as Casabella and *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, the images sourced from archives and private collections are new and surprising. This book would be particularly useful for those interested in historical avant-gardes, print culture, architectural imagery, and media theory.