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Strategies of a Counter-Culture

Oz Magazine and the Techniques of the Joke

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This paper revisits the exported creative work of Australian editors Martin Sharp and author Richard Neville and their magazine—Oz. Established in Sydney on April Fool’s Day in 1963 as a satirical magazine, its founders would become known, or rather infamous, for being charged on two occasions for obscenity violations. In 1967 a London version was created, where it garnered a new status as being the publication for enlightened hippies.

The exported version of the magazine was formed around the premise of Neville’s 1970 counter-cultural treatise, Play Power, which proselytizes a world order based upon the “politics of play.” This new way of life, or lifestyle, expounded a return to play that transforms the nature of work, sex, and recreation. This alternative, ludic ideology was supported by the magazine’s original cartoonish yet sexually explicit imagery which would not only establish the magazine as a major player in the growing international Underground Press movement; it would create a novel, powerful method to counter and critique the existing hegemonic culture by promoting an exciting and fun alternative vision.

This paper explores three potent sites within the magazine that demonstrate the manner in which the editors were able to counter the status quo through the process of joke making: a modernist building, the medium of the poster, and a magic theatre. These sites are poignant moments that coincide with a shift within architecture culture, where the built environment was beginning to be “read” as a text. The emergence of this structuralist evaluation occurs throughout the pages of Oz, suggesting an alternative origin to post-modern approaches in architecture that arose as a consequence of the relationship between the magazine page and the creation of alternative environments to counter conservative hegemonic culture.



Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X-197X, the editors, authors, and architects from that moment professed that *Oz* magazine was a model they attempted to imitate. Robin Middleton, editor of *Architectural Design (AD)* claimed that there was a “graphic convergence,” which emanated from “a certain graphic style of the period that we were both in tune with, like other London-based publications such as *Oz*, *IT* and *FUCK*.”¹ The accomplished graphic designer Pearce Marchbank, working as Art Director at *AD* in 1968, was told by the magazine’s editors to create the page layouts according to those seen in *Oz*.² Peter Murray inherited the position of Art Director at *AD* after Marchbank, and claimed to have known two of the founding editors of *Oz*, Neville and Sharp, explaining that, “All those alternative magazines were a part of the scene.”³

These stories and recollections demonstrate that architects and designers were very much in tune with the Underground Press, and attempted to re-appropriate the look of a cool, hip magazine for their own publications. But what drew architects to the aesthetic form of *Oz*, so much so that they wanted to re-create it? What, exactly, was the “graphic convergence” and “certain graphic style” that Middleton has claimed of this moment? It seems what these architects considered merely as a style was in fact a type of methodology imbedded with ideological underpinnings inherent to the counter-culture and specific to *Oz*. Through the visual art of Sharp and the socio-political proclamations of Neville, a new means of counter-cultural expression is channelled through the vibrant printed surfaces of the transformative medium of the Underground magazine. Unlike previous magazines, *Oz* expanded the notion of what a magazine could be by including other artefacts that contributed to creating a total environment conducive to the psychedelic effects of hash and LSD. Such artefacts included such things as game boards, stickers, and posters into the design of the publication. This total experience was reinforced by the content, which discussed other topics that would contribute to creating alternative, sensory-driven environments that encompassed hallucinogenic drugs, music, and light shows. By examining the development of *Oz* magazine, this paper attempts to unearth the key strategies employed by Neville and Sharp—the politics of joke and play—and will suggest that this visual and rhetorical editorial strategy led to a original approach in creating a different type of space based on a new set of cultural values; a new tactic that was absorbed by architectural culture at that moment.

1. Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley, et al., *Clip, Stamp, Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X – 197X* (Barcelona: Actar, 2010), 115.

2. Colomina and Buckley, et al., *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 115. Marchbank is perhaps best known as the main designer of the magazine *Time Out*. During the *Oz* obscenity trials in London, Marchbank became designer and co-editor of *Oz* while the previous editors were in jail. He would go on to design two more *Oz* issues. See <http://www.pearcemarchbank.com/Magazines/oz.html> (accessed February 15 2013).

3. Colomina and Buckley, et al., *Clip, Stamp, Fold*, 422.

Pee & Owe

While *Oz* is usually remembered as a magazine which helped establish the counterculture and served as a guide to hippie life in the swinging London of the late 1960s, it originated in Sydney as a publication that satirized Australian and British politics and culture. Its founding editors: Neville, Sharp, and Richard Walsh, were young Australians who held the same common interest of starting a magazine. The magazine's first glimmer of notoriety and controversy arose with the February 1964 issue, *Oz* 6. At this time the circulation of the magazine in Australia reached 40,000.⁴ It is with this issue where we not only see a critique of modernist art and architecture within the urban setting of inner Sydney, but we also witness an early example of how these editors employed verbal and visual punditry to counter and critique the Establishment, symbolized within the form of a post war high modernist building.

4. Nigel Fountain, *Underground: London Alternative Press 1966-1974* (London: Routledge, 1988), 11.

Figure 1. (L) Cover of *Oz* Sydney featuring fountain sculpture by Tom Bass, issue no. 6, February 1964.

Figure 2. (R) A recently completed P & O Building at 55 Hunter Street, Sydney. Architects Fowell, Manfield, Jarvis & MacLurcan, 1964. (Illustration credit NSW State Library)

The magazine cover featured an image of Neville and two other young men standing in front a Tom Bass fountain sculpture installed at the base of the P & O Shipping Line Building designed by the architects Fowell, Manfield, Jarvis & MacLurcan. A month earlier the right-wing Prime Minister Menzies officially opened the recently completed building to much fan fare before an audience of businessmen. The three men in the cover photo appear to be literally “taking a piss” into the recessed wall fountain located along the sidewalk within the heart of Sydney’s



business district (fig. 1). This somewhat shocking image is accompanied by the caption: “On the corner of Hunter and Castlereagh Streets, Sydney, the P & O Shipping Line has completed its contribution to the Australian Ugliness . . . To alleviate the severe drabness of its sandstone façade, sculptor Tom Bass had set an attractive bronze urinal in the wall for the convenience of passers-by. This is no ordinary urinal. It has a continual flushing system and basins handily set at different heights. There is a nominal charge, of course, but don’t worry, there is no need to pay immediately. Just P & O.”

Unfortunately it was this humorous cover photo and caption that landed the editors in court on obscenity charges. They were initially convicted but the decision was ultimately overturned on appeal. Much attention has been given to the obscenity trials, the challenge to the boundaries of decency, and the subject of free speech in Australia, however what seems to be overlooked was the significant manner in which *Oz* was able to critique the conservative hegemonic society, and the intellectual and cultural implications of this gesture.

The first line of the caption refers to Robin Boyd’s canonical treatise, *The Australian Ugliness*.⁵ A best-selling book published in 1960, the editors would have been familiar with it, and Sharp, who attended the first year of the Architecture program at Sydney University in 1961 through the urging of his father, would have known the text. The high Modernist P & O building did not exemplify Boyd’s concept of “Featurism,” nevertheless a noteworthy critique of the building and the fountain were made on many fronts despite the editors’ inapt reference to Boyd’s text.

5. Robin Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness* (Melbourne: Hawthorne Press, 1960)

They employed both rhetorical and visual tactics that Freud described in his analysis of joke-making which includes the technics of condensation, displacement, and juxtaposition.⁶ At work in the *Oz* 6 Sydney cover are two types of puns, which, Freud claims are created through the use of pre-existing forms that are given new meaning according to their connection to other forms. The visual pun is created by the re-appropriation of the familiar, here, a fountain, which is replaced with another use—a very public urinal. This pun is also created by juxtaposition and taking what is usually a very banal but semi-private scene—men peeing before a urinal—and transforming it into a public display by placing the activity along the streets of Sydney. The third important principle of the organization of jokes employed here is

6. Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious* (London: Penguin Books, [1905], 1960).

the verbal pun of P & O. This is the name of the owners of the building, the Pacific & Orient Shipping Company, shortened to simply P & O. However in this instance language is manipulated to contain the more scatological meaning of “pee and owe,” which is further reinforced by the cover image.

Most important is that fact that in order for these editors to make both visual and rhetorical jokes, they were first required to envision the scene as a text. Rather than viewing the building and fountain solely in terms of the Modernist ethos of form and function advocated by Boyd and other modern architects, the editors had “read,” or rather “mis-read” the built environment, and instead misappropriated the function of the fountain for that of a urinal. This act in itself can be considered a very anti-, or rather, post-modern way of viewing architecture.

Oz London: the Downundergrounders

Oz Sydney continued publishing until 1970, however in 1966 Neville and Sharp left Australia and set out to explore London via the “pot trail” through Cambodia, Thailand, and Nepal. Once in London and reunited with his author and girlfriend Louise Ferrier, Neville was forced to follow through on a rumour of a new London edition of *Oz*.⁷ One of the major differences between the Sydney *Oz* and the London edition was the fact that the magazine went underground, meaning that it became a major participant in the most powerful force of the counter-culture, the Underground Press Syndicate. More than simply a means of dissent, the Underground Press offered a fresh, fun and exciting vision of a possible world of nascent liberal values in which to counter the existing conservative society. To counter something also implies critique, and the way in which *Oz* attempted to attack the Establishment was by making fun of it through the use of humour, satire, and wit. However its success can also be attributed to the way they presented an alternative vision of another type of lifestyle based on fun and play.

Similar to the organization of jokes, where success lies not necessarily in the subject but in the form of the joke within a specific context, *Oz* London quickly earned its success through its form rather than its content. In London, *Oz* was one of many Underground publications and one of its major competitors, the *International Times* (known simply as *IT*), came out with its

7. Lousie Ferrier is on the cover of *Oz* magazine issues no. 8, 17 with fellow Australian expat and textile designer Jenny Kee.



inaugural issue a few months before *Oz*. However as Marchbank notes, it was the design and form of *Oz* which distinguished itself. He writes, “when [issue 2 of] *Oz* came out, which was printed in litho and designed by Martin Sharp on white cartridge paper with beautiful thick black ink and bright red ink and a huge pair of lips on the front, it was like the sun had come out.”⁸ Compared to *IT*, the subject matter was very similar, although *IT* reported more local and community news. Neville was able to recruit a higher calibre of writer for feature articles which did not exist in most Underground publications. Writers included noted Australian expats from the Sydney Push such as feminist author Germaine Greer, novelist Clive James, and the art critic Robert Hughes. Nevertheless it was Sharp’s graphic style that set the magazine apart from others, as Marchbank provided the analogy of *Oz* and other Underground publications, “It was like the first time you hear stereo as opposed to AM radio. You could see the possibilities of print. *IT* was content, whereas *Oz* was form.”⁸

8. Jonathan Green, *Days In the Life* (London: Heinemann, 1988), 152.

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Along with the feature articles garnered by Neville, the magazine included the syndicated Underground columns of “Dr. Hip-ocrates” and “Other Scenes” by John Wilcock. With every issue the editors attempted to redefine the boundaries of what a magazine could be and how it could provide its readers with the requisite tools and accoutrement of hippie counter-culture, which entailed creating a total sensory environment of cool visuals and sounds in which to “get one’s groove on.” The ideological basis that drove such novel inventions was premised upon the idea of fun and play. For example, issue 2 featured a poster/calendar with a cartoon of the “Toad of White Hall”; issue 3 contained protest postcards; issue 4 included a double-sided gold quadruple cover/poster by Underground graphic designer Michael English accompanied by an insert of punch-out tarot cards designed by Sharp. Issue 11 included a set of stickers which invited the reader to decorate a red cover illustrated with the scribbly cartoons and sketches by Sharp. It was even rumoured that issue 3 contained a page with acid dropped onto one of its corners, and, if ingested, could be enjoyed by its readers. *Oz* 12 contained a fold-out style poster format that presented a collection of cartoons, game boards, and even recipes for Brownies Cockaigne and Gingerbread tea cake, both requiring the requisite ingredient of hashes.

Set and Setting

The posters included in the issues of *Oz* magazine are some of Sharp's most noted pieces of artwork. Greer claimed in a recent article that "if you want[ed] to know what the '60s were like? Then look at Martin Sharp's work."¹⁰ Of specific note is Sharp's portrait of Jimi Hendrix which was a poster included in issue 15, October 1968 (fig. 3). The image was based on a photograph by Linda Eastman (soon to be Linda McCartney), however it also appears to have been indirectly influenced by a comic strip. An album cover by Sharp for the band Mighty Baby shows striking similarities in form, and in method, to Jackson Pollack's splash paintings. The lion on the cover was based on a comic strip by Hogarth from the 1940s depicting Numa, the lion attacked by Ape-Man.¹¹ Such images would be built up upon each other through the layering, copying, and collaging of different mediums. As Greer recalls of the Hendrix poster, "I have a memory ... of going into the studio [Sharp] shared with Eric

10. Germaine Greer, "Want to Know What the 60s Were Like? Then Look at Martin Sharp's Work?" *Guardian*, 22 November 2009.

11. John Coulthart, "Homepage," <http://www.johncoulthart.com/feuilleton/2009/09/27/design-as-virus-11-burnehogarth/> (accessed January 24, 2013).

Figure 3. Poster of Jimi Hendrix by Martin Sharp. From *Oz* 15, Oct. 1968. Cover of album *Mighty Baby*, 1969 by Martin Sharp. Hogarth comic strip picturing Numa the Lion attacked by Ape-Man, circa 1940s.



Clapton, and seeing a full-length study of Jimi Hendrix that he was painting in vibrant acrylics, on the back of several layers of Perspex film. That image of Jimi holding the Fender in his left hand, with his right holding the pick flung out parallel to the guitar neck, while a multi-coloured explosion begins at the strings and streams to the four edges of the picture, is an ikon [sic] of 1967.”¹²

12. Greer, “Want to Know?”

The collaged nature of Sharp’s visual strategies are based on his interest, from childhood, in comic strips and cartoons. So there is a definite nod to the Pop origins of his work, however by the time he migrated to London, the witty and ironic nature of the comic influence melded with the drug-induced psychedelic culture. His unique style can be attributed, to taking images of popular culture and re-working them through his cartoonish technique of drawing, characterized by extremely over-rendered pieces with manic scribbling and doodling. Sharp’s work brought together a combination of methods implemented to collage a series of images drawn from a variety of sources.

This characteristic approach can be seen in Sharp’s tribute poster for Bob Dylan titled “Mister Tambourine Man,” which first appeared as the cover of *Oz* 7, October-November 1967.¹³ This canonical poster has the song title and the modified lyrics of “Blowing in the Mind” in the lens of Dylan’s sunglasses written in Sharp’s characteristic font reminiscent of a schoolboy’s doodling in his notebook and was printed on metal-coated paper, adding another psychedelic effect.

13. The Big O Poster Company was established by a member of the London *Oz* magazine staff, Peter Ledebor, who, after witnessing the popularity of *Oz* magazine issues containing posters, saw an opportunity to expand into the business of simply making posters for the counter-culture crowd.



Figure 4. (L) *Blowing in the Mind. Mister Tambourine Man* Poster by Martin Sharp, Big O Posters, 1967, Screenprint in red and black on gold foil paper.

Figure 5. (R) “If I Could Turn You On....” Graphic from *Oz* 9, (Feb. 1968) by Martin Sharp.

The graphic “If I Could Turn You On” by Sharp in the February, 1968 issue of *Oz* 9 (fig. 5), contains the signature doodles, ink blotches, and scratchings of Sharp’s cartoons. At the centre of the composition is a window framing a view to a colonnade reminiscent of a mosque, a type of architectural feature Sharp may have encountered during his travels through Asia en route to London. Layers of space appear to exist between the framed window and the colonnade. The shutters of the window appear to be opening as if they are entering through a threshold into the forehead of a person’s mind. This visual is reinforced by the two eyes that ‘sprout’ from a giant plant—a common element reappearing in Sharp’s work inspired by his travels in Cambodia. It was in Angkor Wat, under the hallucinogenic haze of pot when the two Australians first fully experienced the effects of marijuana, and where Sharp was inspired by the large trees sprouting from the huge, 10-foot head sculptures. Spiralling from the centre of the window, or “mind” of the figure, is the quote “If I could turn you on; If I could drive you out of your wretched mind; If I could tell you I would let you know” repeated three times.¹⁴ This is a quote from the 1967 book *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* by the controversial Scottish psychologist R. D. Laing, who was a pioneer in experimenting with LSD within psychiatry. In this text he challenges the idea of normalcy in a modern world and claimed people should not be diagnosed as being mad, since modern society was insane.

14. R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* (London: Penguin, 1967).

While the posters may seem like a nice supplement contributing the overall experience of reading *Oz*, those created by Sharp and other psychedelic artists served a very specific purpose for another type of experience. These posters were not advertising an event or product, as one might see for the promotion of a concert or light show; they were intended for interior, domestic spaces. And while the posters contained the bright, vivid colours reminiscent of an drug-induced trip, their significance lies in the fact that they were tools or instruments intended to assist *Oz* readers in creating what LSD advocate Timothy Leary described as “set and setting.”

In his book *The Psychedelic Experience*, Leary notes that the mind-set and the setting of a person experiencing LSD were important factors contributing to the comprehension of the new realities of inner space and “expanded consciousness.” He writes, “[T]he drug dose does not produce the transcendent experience. It merely acts as a chemical key—it opens the mind,



frees the nervous system of its ordinary patterns and structures. The nature of the experience depends almost entirely on set and setting.” While “set” described taking an inventory of one’s individual emotions and mood, “setting” denoted the physical environment, and included such factors as “the weather, the room’s atmosphere.”¹⁵ Both Neville and Sharp were familiar with LSD, as Neville wrote about how he unwittingly had ingested the drug by drinking some tea offered to him by Sharp at his London apartment.¹⁶ Sharp even designed the cover of another book by Leary, *The Politics of Ecstasy*. The *Oz* posters, supplemented with hallucinogenics, were intricately rendered surfaces of the magazine page that performed as vehicles of self-discovery; a visual refuge in the case of a bad trip, and as potential windows to an alternative, interior space of the sub-conscious mind.

15. Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, and Richard Alpert. *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (London: Academic Press, 1964).

16. Richard Neville. *Hippie, Hippie, Shake. The Dreams, the Trips, the Trials, the Love-ins, the Screw-ups, the Sixties* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1995).

Magic Theatre: Price of admittance, your mind . . .

In Neville’s second book chronicling his adventures during 1960s London, *Hippie, Hippie, Shake*, he described how Sharp, high on hash, announced that he would create an entire issue of *Oz*. The issue became a visual journey dedicated to creating satirical commentary on the contemporary moment and an exploration of the unconscious mind through the implementation of Freud’s third mode of joke making – juxtaposition.

Oz 16, named the “Magic Theatre” issue, refers to a metaphorical place in Herman Hesse’s 1924 novel *Steppenwolf*, where the main character, Harry Haller, or Steppenwolf, is transformed after



Figure 7. Double page spread from Martin Sharp’s Magic Theatre issue of *Oz* 16, Nov. 1968.

he encountered a “magic theatre” which allowed him to relive, observe and edit moments from his past, and, as a result, explore the latent fears and desires of his unconscious mind. Once in the theatre Steppenwolf was given a “potion” which would permit him to understand “the world of your own soul that you seek. Only within yourself exists that other reality for which you long.” Steppenwolf is then made to look at his own reflection in a mirror and forced to accept his two natures of man and wolf. Paolo, his guide, then urges him to laugh at himself, and only then is Steppenwolf finally liberated. Paolo claims, “Now, true humour begins when a man ceases to take himself seriously.”

On the cover illustration, Sharp has placed, within a series of cartoon dialogue bubbles, a line from Hesse’s novel where it describes the location of the Magic Theatre as “Anarchist Evening at the Magic Theatre, For Madmen Only, Price of Admission Your Mind” (fig. 6). The cover composition is designed as a theatre stage, with large swaths of red curtains framing both the front and back cover. In the foreground are cartoon versions of Eadweard Muybridge’s running figures. These characters are present at the bottom of almost every page throughout the entire issue, providing another layer of meaning through a type of Dadaist narrative in the form of comic strip dialogue bubbles. In the centre of the cover composition are two men boxing, again taken from a still from the motion study photography. They frame the reappearance of the gigantic plant containing eyes and Sharp’s iconic smiley mouth with large red lips. (The same red-lipped mouth appears in many of Sharp’s work, such as the cover of *Oz* 2).

Consisting of 48 pages of collage work, the issue featured a vast array of characters, ranging from John Lennon and Yoko Ono to Nixon, Buddha, and Hitler. Images were sourced from newspaper clippings and comic strips to Victoriana and Surrealist paintings (fig. 7). Neville described the pages as “textured with multi levels of meaning” derived through a process of associative juxtaposition.¹⁷

17. Neville, *Hippie, Hippie, Shake*, 42-43.

Robert Hughes christened the Magic Theatre issue as the “greatest achievement of the entire British Underground Press.” He defended Sharp’s work from its critics in a full-page letter to the editor appearing in the following issue. He began his retort by citing the ironical nature of Sharp’s detractors, a group that seemed to proclaim itself as avant-garde, but was quick to criticize “a mode of presenting images which has been central





Figure 7. Double page spread of Martin Sharp's Magic Theatre issue of *Oz* 16, November 1968.

to modern art since John Hartfield and Max Ernst Only its application to a magazine, in the extended form that Sharp has given it, is new"¹⁸ Hughes pointed out that it was ironic that these same critics, who echoed the usual comments regarding the "instantaneous communication across the global village" and the "death of the written word" was the same group that was hostile to Sharp's attempt to apply a similar idea in the form of a magazine, "If you have difficulty with Sharp's narrative collage what problems will you not have with Paolozzi's 'Moon Strips Empire News?' I suspect that the complainers are the sort of people who will parrot the belief that a wired up discotheque is an information-processing centre, while thinking that a college is not." Hughes concluded his letter by citing Sharp's issue as "one of the richest banks of images that has ever appeared in a magazine."¹⁹

18. Robert Hughes. "Letter to the Editor," *Oz* 17 (December 1968).

19. Hughes, "Letter to the Editor."

Hughes mentions that the form of the magazine was perhaps a flawed medium for Sharp's collage work, however a closer look at how *Oz* was produced at that time unveils an interesting explanation for this choice. The counter-culture, according to Neville in *Play Power*, came about as a result of new technologies. In turn these new technologies assist people in envisioning and creating a new total environment filled with novel experiences. He writes:

Counter-culture is a brain child of the new technology. Light shows require sophisticated electronic equipment, from adjustable stroboscopes to multi-injector projectors finely synchronized with the rhythms of rock and roll. And just as

20. Richard Neville. *Play Power. Exploring the International Underground* (London: Cape, 1970), 63.

rock depends on a group, so products of the new culture are symbiotic; they work better all together. The most memorable experiences underground are when you connect to the music, to the light show, happening and movie simultaneously, while being stoned and fucking at the same time—swathed in stereo headphones, of course.²⁰

21. Neville, *Hippie, Hippie, Shake*, 42-43.

However what these new technologies give priority to, as Neville's above quote demonstrates, is the action of collage and assemblage—a configuration of overlapping events, sensations, and visuals occurring at the same time. New advances in printing technology, in the form of lithography, fostered a new way of assembling the magazine through the simplified process of cutting and pasting. Beginning with *Sydney Oz* 12 of Aug. 1964, the editors began to use offset lithography, which was based on photography to duplicate the pasted-up pages. Neville claimed that "*Oz* going offset" was like "Dylan going electric" since it afforded Sharp and the rest of the editorial staff greater creative freedom in composing text with images along with greater speed in the paste-up process.²¹ The act of assembling an issue enabled by the new technology of lithography was not unlike the assemblage of a collage; it was inevitable that this new process would have an effect on both the visual aspect and content of the magazine.

Collage allowed *Oz* to adapt to the processes of the Underground Press Syndicate, which in itself can be seen as a type of collaged text of interchangeable columns, articles, and images, exchanged within an international network. Most importantly, it was the form of collage that enabled Sharp and Neville to set-up their countercultural strategies of the joke. The technics of condensation, displacement, and juxtaposition, which occur in the visual and verbal puns of *Oz*, could only have come about through the use of collage.

But perhaps its influences went further, and the "graphic convergence" that Middleton claimed was not limited to the design of architectural journals and underground magazines. What if the "graphic convergence" occurred between magazine page and the built environment, creating what we understand today as postmodern architecture?

The controversial P & O *Oz* cover introduced a post-modernist, structuralist approach by interpreting an urban site and building as a text to be read. Not unlike the characteristic emphasis on



surface of postmodern architecture, Sharp's posters were able to create an environment through the application of his highly rendered and collaged posters. And his Magical Theatre issue used the architectural typology of the theatre as a metaphorical model and instrument of psychological analysis to reveal that humour was key to a liberated self. Most interestingly, this issue used a technique integral to postmodern design – the method of collage—in order to develop the essential characteristic of postmodern architecture—the joke.