Histories of Photography in Illustrated Magazines (New York, 7-9 Apr 16)

Apr 7–09, 2016
Deadline: Dec 31, 2015

Andrés Mario Zervigón

Print Matters: Histories of Photography in Illustrated Magazines

New York Public Library and Rutgers University
Keynote talks: April 7 at Rutgers, New Brunswick
Workshop: April 8-9, New York Public Library

Convened by:
The Developing Room at the Center for Cultural Analysis, Rutgers University; the New York Public Library; and the Department of Art and Art History, Hunter College

Between 1910 and 1970, the vast majority of photographs printed and consumed around the world appeared on the pages of illustrated magazines. These pictures rarely surfaced as autonomous entities, set off from their paginated context as the sort of discrete objects that generally figured in our standard histories of photography. Instead they were presented in carefully edited sequences, set cheek-by-jowl against other photographic series, and placed into the integrated company of text and graphic work. Unlike the single prints from which it was heavily drawn, the illustrated magazine was a broadly expansive and alluring amalgam that regularly arrived on private doorsteps and local kiosks before spilling into the everyday lives of consumers of goods and politics. As the Internet does today, the illustrated magazine significantly defined a global visual knowledge of the world.

Despite such potent omnipresence, however, we have yet to devise a method for studying this plentitude of mass-printed matter that foregrounded the photograph so powerfully. At our workshop Print Matters, we encourage participants to address this lacuna by exploring a fundamental question: how do we isolate and define the illustrated periodical as an object of research? In approaching this question, we hope to encourage studies that explore the magazine as a physical object and, in turn, a complex cultural artifact firmly embedded in any one location and time.

Related questions we seek to address are:
- What sort of relationship between image, text and graphic design typifies the mass-circulated illustrated periodical?
- Who determined this relationship and toward what end was it devised?
- What technologies and distribution systems made the magazine possible?
- What existing aspects of related formats (such as the photographic print, newspaper, book, pho-

to album, postcard, telephone and even cinema) were used to create this new hybrid form? How did any one of these aspects change in the process of meeting another on or near the mass-printed page? What role did photography play in determining the magazine's content and shape?
- What sort of temporal and local conditions encouraged, challenged and otherwise shaped this hybridization? What do those differences say about the experience of modernity in that particular time and place?
- From where did the material assembled into a magazine come (particularly the photographs), and to what degree was this selection based on availability, audience interest, or technological conditions?
- How did we even study this sprawling material, which can include hundreds of issues in any one run, and may be difficult to assemble and preserve?
- How do we preserve and document the illustrated magazine as an artifact?
- Can this research on illustrated magazines shed any new light on the understanding of digital media?

It is in addressing these questions that we hope to stimulate new thinking about the magazine as a cultural object. We ultimately wish to explore how the illustrated magazine took shape as a rich ecosystem of multi-media representation, and provided an important transactional frame where artists, authors, advertisers and readers coalesced into communities not just through printed text, graphic work and image, but also, and most especially, through photography. Our workshop particularly seeks discussion of illustrated periodicals from areas of the world where the format thrived but has, until now, received limited scholarly attention. These regions include Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle-East, South Asia, East Asia and Latin America.

To participate, please submit
- an abstract of no more than 300 words for a 20-minute workshop presentation
- and a one-to-two-page CV

to Antonella Pelizzari and Andrés Zervigón at the following addresses:
apelizza@hunter.cuny.edu
zervigon@rutgers.edu

Reference:
CFP: Histories of Photography in Illustrated Magazines (New York, 7-9 Apr 16). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 20, 2015 (accessed Nov 18, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/11306>.