



Glamour Is Theft: A User's Guide to General Idea: 1969-1978

Philip Monk

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From its origins in the mail art movement through to its “destruction” of *The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion* in 1977, the Canadian collective General Idea constructed a comprehensive body of work as a performative fiction. *Glamour Is Theft* examines this “pageantry of camp parody” through the logic of its mythic system. The book reconstructs this system from statements that were dispersed and disguised within General Idea’s work and writing as a whole, including the publication *FILE Magazine*. In General Idea’s system, there is one concept: Glamour; one operation: reversibility; one technique: cut-up; one strategy: theft; one tactic: camouflage. Following the collective’s strategies, the book in turn mimics the language of structuralist and semiological publications of the 1970s while also considering the influences of Roland Barthes, William Burroughs, Guy Debord, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Marshall McLuhan on General Idea’s work.

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