

SOMA

The Design Issue



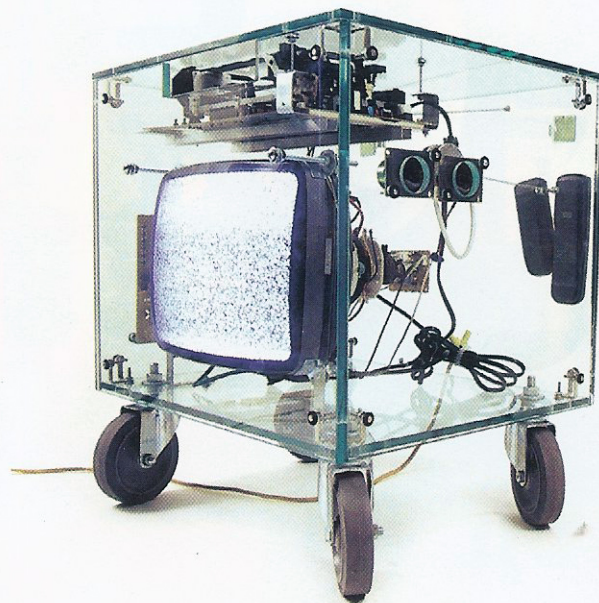
PETER SAVILLE: PRINCE OF MANCHESTER
MIKE MILLS CHASES LONELINESS
DREAMING WITH MICHEL GONDRY

NEIL YOUNG FOLLOWS THE MOON
CLOWNING WITH GARETH PUGH
THE PLAYFUL VISIONS OF FRONT DESIGN



Volume 20.6 August 2006 USA \$3.50

Canada \$4.50 England £3.00 Japan ¥1000



ARTS CORPORATION

You know the story. If you haven't actually lived it, you've seen it in the movies a million times. Two co-workers have to share desk space. First a stapler drifts over, then papers and a notepad. The familiar slow invasion of personal space. Now, imagine if you could just stick out your foot and nudge the whole wall over a little. Welcome to the world of Mike Latham, director of Arts Corporation.

Ensnconed in an urban-chic Manhattan studio, Arts Corporation is a multimedia laboratory aimed at exploring "the intersection of architectural design, art and technology." But it seems that what they're mostly interested in is freedom. Their moveable wall is called a vitrine – a glass storage space on wheels that allows for the constant reconfiguration of open spaces. The shelves are adjustable, as are the contents. So if you're tired of the color or texture of your walls, you can just switch out the objects in them.

But why stop at the wall? Arts Corporation has also created entire

self-contained vitrine rooms with the same scalable flexibility. Throw a mattress on top and you have a guest bed and office in one.

There's another type of freedom operating in Latham's world, one that's a little more complex. The exhibition of expensive one-of-a-kind art objects – sometimes with useful qualities – is the cornerstone of Arts Corporations' work. They focus on freeing us from the opacity of technology, and glass is their favorite tool. The inner workings of a television set are exposed in a glass table. Another long, low glass table has a schizophrenic life as both a bed and an exposed mp3 player, fully geared to encode records, cassettes and other outdated musical formats.

Ultimately, the collective would like to see its ideas applied to larger architectural spaces. While they've done traditional work, they're not afraid to take bold conceptual leaps. For starters, how would you like to live in a tower of the Williamsburg Bridge? **HANNAH EAVES**