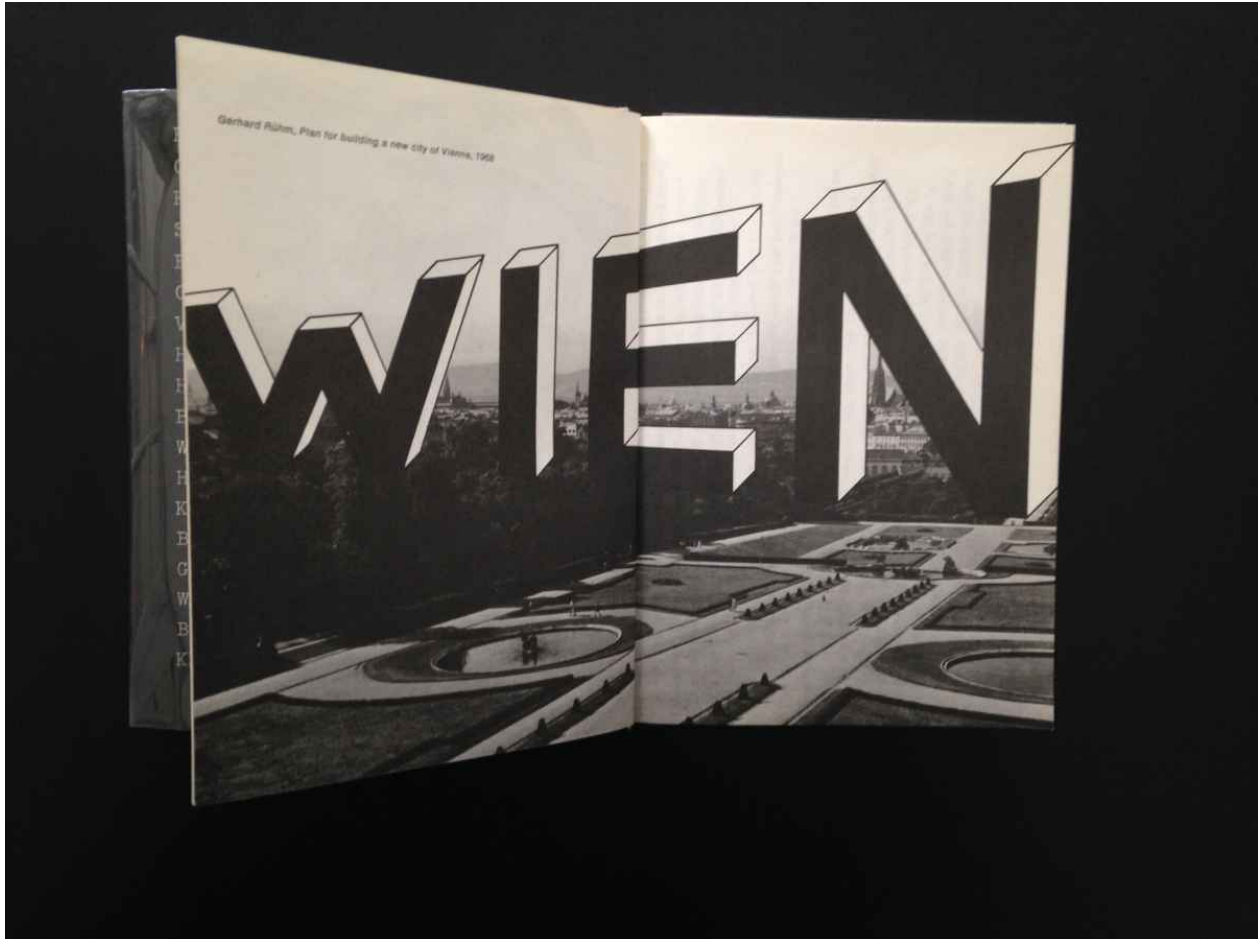


# BOOK CLUB: FANTASTIC ARCHITECTURE

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The only biannual Magazine for Architectural Entertainment



By Tiffany Lambert

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Architecture gets a little imaginative breathing room with the republished *Fantastic Architecture*. An exact facsimile of the original book, this 194-page work of visual and textual architectural provocations was compiled by two artists, Wolf Vostell and Dick Higgins. It first appeared in 1969 in German under the title *Pop Architektur*, before being reprinted a year later by the Higgins-owned Something Else Press under its current title. Higgins, a co-founder of the “intermedia” (a term he coined) Fluxus movement in the early 1960s, begins the book with a call to action to “restore a spirit of aesthetic research to architecture.” The collaborative, experimental, and open-minded ethos of the introduction sets the stage for many of the themes that follow in 14 numbered “Captions” (rather than classic chapters) that read like mini-manifestos, each printed on vellum sheets. A series of contributions from then-practicing architects, including Hans Hollein and Buckminster Fuller, as well as artists — among them John Cage, Robert Filliou, and Michael Heizer — form the core of the book. Claes Oldenburg, for example, is represented by his 1967 proposals for the colossal Wing-Nut Monument for Stockholm and equally huge Thames Balls for London. Another highlight

is *House of Dust* (also 1967), a poetry project by Alison Knowles and James Tenney in which they used a Siemens System 4004 computer to produce stanzas describing a house that were generated with changing words from a finite vocabulary list. In the context of today's seemingly limitless availability of digital tools in contemporary design, *Fantastic Architecture* takes us back to the avant-garde of ideas.

Taken from PIN-UP 18, Spring Summer 2015.