

Zap: Masters of Psychedelic Art, 1965-74

May 12 – June 25, 2011

Reception: May 12, 6 – 8 pm

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to present *Zap: Masters of Psychedelic Art, 1965-74*, curated by Gary Panter and Chris Byrne. The exhibition will include works by the seven artists from the original *Zap* lineup: **Robert Crumb, Victor Moscoso, Rick Griffin, S. Clay Wilson, Gilbert Shelton, Spain Rodriguez** and **Robert Williams**. The focus of the show is the early days of *Zap*, when these artists began their visionary deconstruction of the comic book with remarkable innovations in storytelling and drawing. An accompanying catalogue is being published by the gallery.

On February 25th, 1968, Robert Crumb could be seen peddling a strange new kind of comic book out of a baby carriage on the corner of Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco, the epicenter of the hippie phenomenon then circling the globe. *Zap* was the cartoon extension of all the other social experiments and art forms feeding off each other at the time, including rock concerts, light shows, psychedelic posters and acid tests. *Zap* tested the legal boundaries of free expression by indulging in outrageous fantasy and imaginative violence in its dope-induced yarns. The hippie readers may have come to the magazine for validation of their anti-war, anti-pollution, pro-drug, back-to-nature values, but *Zap* dared to critique and satirize the messy cultural and social work-in-progress as well – from the underground's canned and militant "us versus them" to the more troubling and existential "are we them?" – the satirical finger was now simultaneously pointed outward and inward, making the audience and authors legitimate targets.

Robert Crumb moved to San Francisco from Philadelphia in 1967. Among his contributions to *Zap* were "Keep on Truckin'" and "Mr. Natural Encounters Flakey Foont". He also created the comic strip "Fritz the Cat" which was later adapted to film in 1972 and 1974. Most recently he completed a word-for-word comic book adaptation of *The Book of Genesis*. Robert Williams is an accomplished painter as well as the founder of *Juxtapoz Magazine*. His work was included in the 2010 Whitney Biennial. Rick Griffin – the only deceased artist in the group – is most widely recognized for his long association with the Grateful Dead, for whom he completed several album covers, posters and logos. Victor Moscoso studied at The Cooper Union and at Yale under Josef Albers, employing Albers' color theories in his optically vibrant counterculture posters. S. Clay Wilson, Gilbert Shelton and Spain Rodriguez all had previous association with underground comix such as *East Village Other*, *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* and *Captain Piss Gums and Perverted Pirates*.

Zap Comix remains the best known anthology of its kind, and it continues today (number 15 at last count). Every few years a new issue is published when the artists have completed enough material.

Gary Panter is an illustrator, painter, designer and part-time musician. He made his mark in the '80s as head set designer for *Pee Wee's Playhouse*, a job which brought his jagged art and surreal cartoon ideas into the homes of America and earned him three Emmy Awards. Chris Byrne is an independent curator. He is the former chairman of the board of the American Visionary Art Museum and, in 2008, co-founded the Dallas Art Fair. This past fall, he organized the exhibition *Peter Saul: 50 Years of Painting* at Haunch of Venison in New York.