For Art Giveaway, Which Artist Obliged?

Psssst: want to get a art work by Rirkrit Tiravanija completely free?

This is not a con. All you have to do is buy the June/July copy of Art in America. When I opened mine — call me old-fashioned, but as a writer I actually look at magazines from front to back, page by page — the first word of this gift came in the Editor’s Letter by my friend Lindsay Pollock. She explained that she was harking back to a 41-year-old project, when her predecessors commissioned artists to create removable original graphics that were bound into the magazine.

That was an interesting idea.

Now, it may be a bit of a gimmick, yes, but so what? As Lindsay recounts the “ask” in her letter, Tiravanija wasn’t hard to persuade. He created two works, one of which is in each magazine. Do you have to look for it? Yes, but it’s not really hard to notice if you know it’s there (here, reading sequentially turned out to be a good thing: I wonder how many other people may have torn it out without looking at it).

There was a bit of a difference from last time. The commission didn’t involve money, Lindsay revealed in answer to my questions:

We didn’t reward Rirkirt for the project—other than by spreading his work and message to our readers—but we felt the project is in keeping with his deeply held desire to disseminate his art and messages beyond wealthy art collectors. At his last show at Gavin Brown, $20 t-shirts emblazoned with his slogans were for sale. …

…this is just part of our effort to bring more artists and artist voices into the magazine. You may have noticed artist Ellen Gallagher wrote a feature story in the same issue?

Faye Hirsch also writes a feature on Tiravanija in the issue (illustrated with a slide show, from which I have swiped on picture to post here), partly about his Untitled 2008-2011 (the map of the land of feeling) I-III, which is 3 feet high and 84 feet long.

Considering how fleeting much of his art work is, I wondered to Lindsay if AinA’s little freebie, though unsigned, would have a value some day… she didn’t reply. It’s serving its purpose now.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Art in America

Tags: Art in America, Faye Hirsch, Lindsay Pollock, Rirkrit Tiravanija

I must be old-fashioned also because as a subscriber to several art publications this is what I do, I look at the magazine from cover to cover, sometimes in reverse from back to front. I have my copy of an original