



The Inflatable Moment: Pneumatics and Protest in '68

Marc Dessauce

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To a group of architecture students at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in the turbulent year 1968, the idea of the inflatable held a promise of mobility, movement, energy, and escape. Seeking to overturn the inertia and oppression that they believed characterized mainstream architecture, the Utopie group (as they called themselves) designed a series of pneumatic buildings, furniture, and environments, all heavily influenced by American military structures and comic books as well as by the work of Buckminster Fuller, Henri Lefebvre, Jean Baudrillard, and London's Archigram. Though Utopie architects Jean Aubert, Jean-Paul Jungmann, and Antoine Stinco were unable to realize their dream of a society literally built on air, their fanciful, exuberant, witty, and highly detailed drawings remain some of the most extraordinary in modern architecture. The Inflatable Moment documents this fascinating intersection of architectural, social, and political history, as it presents a complete, annotated catalog of the designs of the Utopie architects alongside similar structures from the period. Essays on the pneumatic phenomenon and the intellectual history of the Utopie group are supplemented by reflections by the three architects, each written especially for this book.

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