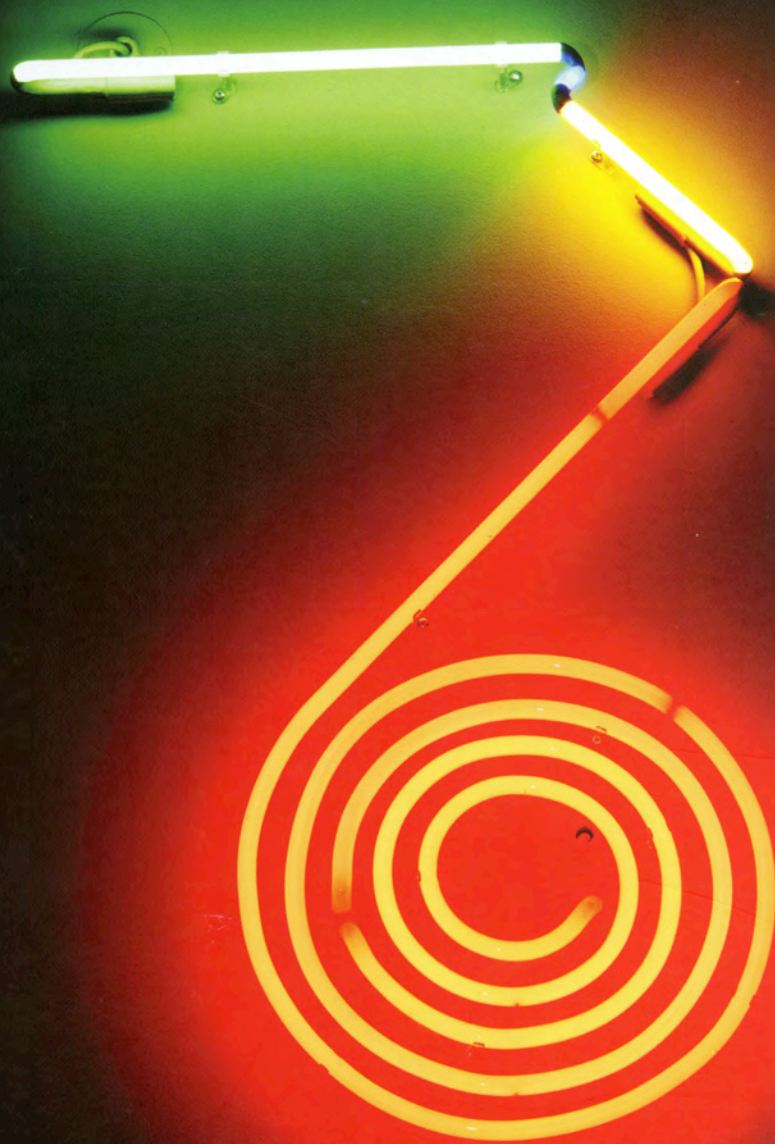


cmagazine I3I

Contemporary Art & Criticism Autumn 2016



Experimental Pedagogies

Theaster Gates—Candice Hopkins—Carlos Motta
Artists Newsstand—Pedagogies of Looking—MFA Questionnaire
Art School Supplement—Fluxus & Curriculum Reform
Black Mountain College—Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige
Chroma Lives—Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun
Richard Ibghy & Marilou Lemmens



\$9.00 — Display until December

The Days of Living Chroma by Erin Alexa Freedman and Lili Huston-Herterich essay by Andy Fabo

To paraphrase Tim Jocelyn's opening sentence of his 1983 piece for the premiere issue of *C Magazine*, in which he reflects on the exhibition staged by Toronto collective ChromaZone, of which he and I were both members: We knew *Chromaliving* would be memorable but we didn't realize how memorable until we saw the decades pass, our extravaganza in the Colonnade continuing to make cyclical, spectral reappearances, haunting the collective memories of our friends and associates in the Toronto art world.

Thirty years later, Erin Freedman and Lili Huston-Herterich approached me, Rae Johnson and Oliver Girling about the possibility of mounting *Chroma Lives*, an exhibition that would revisit the original *Chromaliving* show and its aesthetic arc while illuminating crucial differences between the two shows' respective decades. *Chroma Lives* mutated as a concept frequently over the months it took to develop – at one point it would have been a twinned mega-exhibition in the soon-to-be-vacant Honest Ed's discount department store. Its owner, David Mirvish, generously met with Erin and Lili but the space had been promised out before its final demolition. *Quel dommage!*

Freedman and Huston-Herterich's *Chroma Lives* eventually became a condensed display of artworks ensconced in one of the showrooms for the posh Yorkville Plaza condominiums currently in development, creating a skewed symmetry between the venues of the two exhibitions. *Chromaliving* was created in the depths of a recession that had decimated the carriage trade along Bloor Street. Creeds, a swank competitor of Holt Renfrew, had closed, as had the "junior miss" department store, Harridge's, in the space that would host our show. Most of the stores in the complex were empty and I don't think the owners could have imagined that one day Cartier and Prada would grace their edifice. Because of the recession of the early '80s, space was expansive rather than expensive. Relatively poor artists could afford relatively large spaces for studios in this era and the 10,000 square feet that we installed in was reflective of the economic conditions of the time. Erin and Lili mounted *Chroma Lives* in a real estate boom, when condos are popping up like mushrooms, scores of artists are losing their studios in the overheated market and Torontonians are living in ever-smaller spaces. Squeezing an exhibition with a large vision into a confined space seemed appropriate in the marking of current conditions and inhabiting an operational condo showroom on Avenue Road seemed as unexpected and subversive as our appropriating a gigantic retail space on Bloor Street in 1983. Both sites evoked the multi-faceted ironies of their socio-economic contexts.

Similarly, it seemed right that the only artist from the original show in this reimagined mutant of an exhibition was Tim himself, with 35 young artists in various stages of emergence. Tim would have been excited to be in their company and I think he would have felt deeply connected to almost all of their work. When Erin and Lili first described their intentions, one possibility they cited was to rhyme Will Munro's work, life and career with Tim's and that interested me greatly. Beyond the connections between the two sweet, charming men – the foundation of textiles in their works, their intuitive and deeply ingrained understanding of the semiotics of apparel, their overt sociability that made them catalysts of their generations – it gave me a revelation about the crucial role that queer artists had played in Toronto as hosts/hostesses, impresarios, catalysts and nurturers of new and often misunderstood talent. Besides Tim and Will, I'm also thinking of David Buchan, Andrew Harwood, Keith Cole, Allyson Mitchell,

Kim Fullerton, and General Idea – almost all of whom have or did have distinctly social practices that were relational long before Bourriaud came along to coin the term.

Chromaliving created such a stir in Toronto that autumn of 1983 that there seemed to be immediate aftereffects. Esther Shipman, who had attended the Ontario College of Art with a number of the artists who participated in the exhibition, was inspired to leave a career in retail and become an architecture and design curator, initiating VIRTU, an annual exhibition of the best of Canadian design that ran from 1985 to 2000. Loris Calzolari, a designer in our show who had studied with Ettore Sottsass in Milan, mounted an international exhibition at Queen's Quay Terminal called *Phoenix* (1984), citing the DIY spirit of *Chromaliving* as his inspiration. The accompanying book that he published with curator Christina Ritchie remains a collector's item and an important record of design during the Memphis era.

Beyond these confirmed examples, I believe there were numerous less tangible influences of *Chromaliving*. Greenbergian modernism was invested in maintaining the gap between life and art. Robert Rauschenberg famously spoke of working in the gap between the two, which he believed to be the locus of adventure and creativity in artmaking. ChromaZone wanted it all: to work on both sides of the gap *and* in the space between them. This was characterized as being punk and anarchistic by some, and lacking rigour and intellect by others. ChromaZone had already made a declaration for all the unclaimed, outré territories, and *Chromaliving* was a further granting of permission to ourselves to defy categories, let loose, and indulge in affect, transgression and fun.

In Toronto, there were three megashows initiated by artist collectives in the early '80s: *YYZ Monumenta* (1982), *Chromaliving* (1983) and *The New City of Sculpture* (1984), a collaboration between Mercer Union and YYZ. In several accounts of the '80s in the immediate aftermath of that decade, *Chromaliving* went unmentioned. Perhaps because it was so unclassifiable as an event and exhibition, I was quite prepared for it to evaporate into the ether of the past. Sybil Goldstein, however, was not so prepared for it to go gently into that mist and doggedly archived it as best she could for the CCCA Canadian Art database.

I still encounter strangers who tell me how mind-blowing *Chromaliving* was to them at the time, and how it made them re-envison the possibilities of public art. Vera Frenkel once recounted to me that when she worked with the Artangel Trust in London to mount *This is Your Messiah Speaking* on the Piccadilly Circus Spectacolor Board in 1990–91, founder Roger Took told her that seeing *Chromaliving* is what gave him the impetus to create Artangel, which continues to produce the most extraordinary public artworks in Britain and internationally. Tim, one of the dearest loves of my life, would be gratified to know that all the blood, sweat and tears that we put into *Chromaliving* was well worth it because it lives on in so many unexpected ways.

Andy Fabo is an artist, art critic, independent curator and art educator. He was a co-founder of ChromaZone and a pioneer of queer art in Canada with his solo exhibition at A Space in 1979. In 2005 he had a retrospective of 30 years of his work in painting, drawing, collage, video and digital art at MOCCA in Toronto.

Chroma Lives is an exhibition and archive project by design historian Erin Alexa Freedman and artist Lili Huston-Herterich. The exhibition was mounted in June 2016 at Camroost Felcorp's Yorkville Plaza Sales Centre in Toronto, and was used to host oral history interviews on the 1983 exhibition *Chromaliving*. In 2017 *Chroma Lives* will culminate with an online archival database of these oral histories. The project was originally commissioned by Dutch arts organization If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution as a part of their Performance-In-Residence program for Edition VI - Event and Duration (2015 - 2016).

CHROMALIVING—



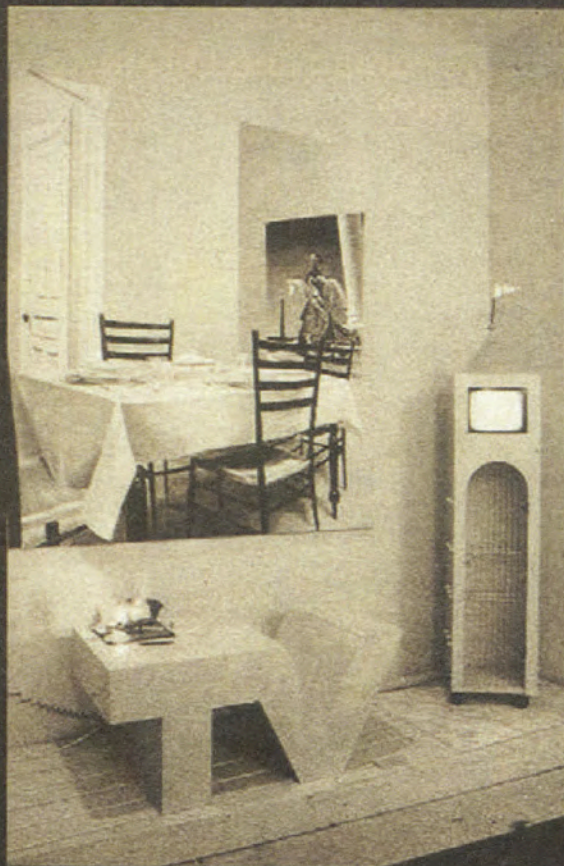
MARK HARMAN, Screen

We knew Chromaliving would be big, but we didn't know how big until we saw the 10,000 sq. ft. of the old Harridge's department store in the Colonnade.

Harridge's was donated to ChromaZone for Chromaliving by Revenue Properties after several other corporate landowners rejected our proposals for the temporary use of empty retail space. We wanted retail space in the downtown Bloor St. neighbourhood so that the show would be more accessible, both geographically and contextually, to a broader public than Queen St. We succeeded in this — the attendance, 8,000 in three weeks, was unprecedented.

We also knew that the physical space we secured would largely determine the shape of the show. By the time the Harridge's site was confirmed in late September, less than a month remained before our scheduled opening on Oct. 19th. Decisions had to be made and acted on immediately. Marty Kohn & Chris Radigan designed a layout and floorplan, and we mobilized a superb team of volunteers from among the 150 artists committed to the show. The floorplan proposed a long open passage from front to back, with the windows onto Bloor at one end and tall mirrors at the other. This became the grand promenade around which the rest of the space was organized into a series of rooms, some already existing, others defined by temporary walls. Artists occupied or were assigned various spaces and set to work transforming closets, offices, and changing rooms into deserts, boudoirs and bomb shelters.

Chromaliving was originally conceived as a series of room settings of artist-made furniture. However the variety of odd, enclosed spaces in the store invited the creation of installations by individual artists as well as large collaborative room settings. Video and performance on the "living" theme seemed a natural extension, and the show filled out in unexpected ways. Once we got started, a momentum was established which mobilized increasing amounts of energy and overcame



JOANNE TOD, *Self Portrait of a Prostitute* LORIS LALZOLARI, TV

TONY WILSON, *Work to Rule*

PAUL OBERST & P. J. TAYLOR, TV Table



FAST WURMS, *Detail of Father Brebeufs Dream State*





Tim Jocelyn, *Easel Jacket*, 1983 (detail)



Oliver Husain, *Can we talk about the elegance in the room*, 2016 (detail)

SETTLING ACCOUNTS

BY TIM JOCELYN



ELINOR GALBRAITH & JOHN SCOTT, Dress from the Bunny Boudoir



ANDY FABO, Alarming Eve



TIM JOCELYN, Florentine Dress

obstacles of time and money (our original funding from the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council, was for a show half the size of the eventual exhibition).

Carla Garnet assumed the awesome task of co-ordinating 150 artists, dozens of installations, hundreds of works of art, gallery owners, insurance companies, donors of materials, the construction crew, the drivers, and everyone else who became involved.

Construction was co-ordinated by Elinor Galbraith, who oversaw the acquisition of building materials, delegated jobs, and built walls when she wasn't painstakingly installing the pleated draperies for the Bunny Boudoir.

A multi-colored paint donation from C.I.L. was applied liberally throughout, wherever a mural wasn't in progress. Of these the first and finest was Tony Wilson's *Work to Rule*, spanning the central archway; his twin monumental figures greeted us with heroic gestures when we entered the site to work. It took three arduous weeks installing the show.

Somewhere along the line it became evident that we were creating an astonishing environment and an artistic event unprecedented in Toronto. Artist after artist rose to the challenge of transformation, and as the construction debris was cleared away, what emerged was a wildly diverse but weirdly harmonious organism.

Chromaliving proved that there is a wealth of art – besides painting – being made in Toronto, and that the renewed commitment to the art object takes a multitude of different forms, from the crudely-constructed to the finely-crafted. Combining recent and older work, established artists with newcomers, clothing, furniture and ceramic design with painting sculpture, video, performance and installation, the show revealed unexpected coincidences between these varied elements. Ultimately, Chromaliving was about bringing art to life – and about what can happen when 150 artists occupy a department store.

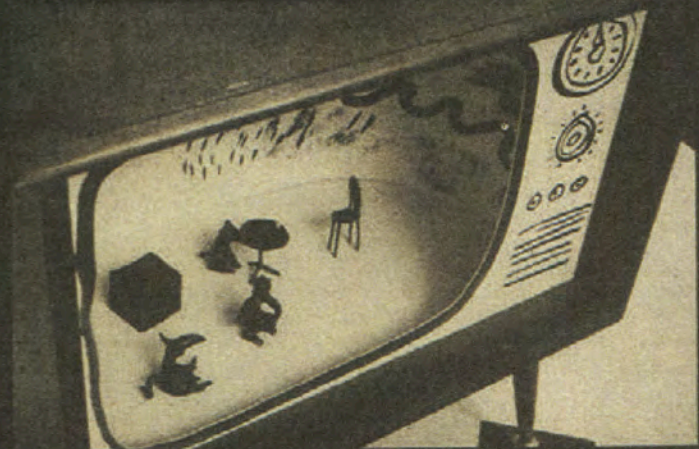




The Chromaliving Boutique

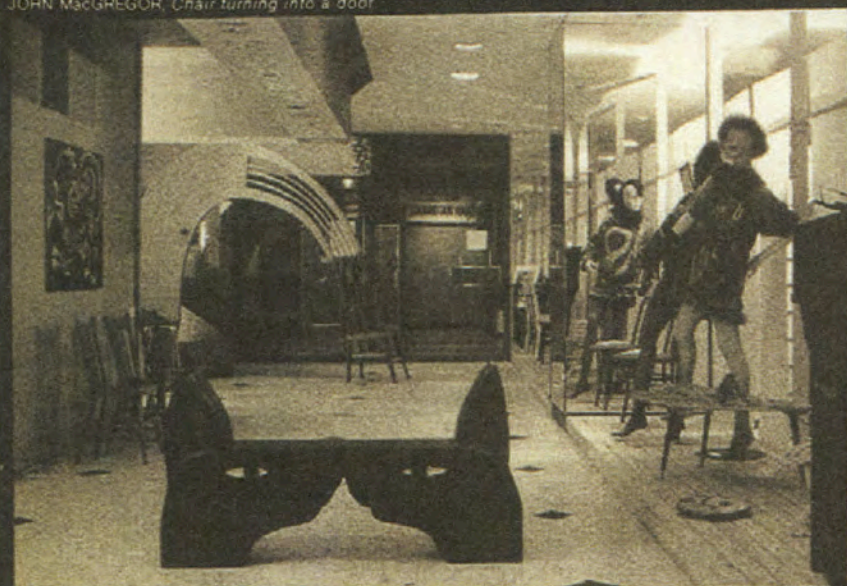


OLIVER GIRLING & NATALIE O.



CHRISTOPHER DUNNING, TV set

JOHN MacGREGOR, Chair turning into a door



ROBERT BOWERS, Days of Love

TERESA NOVAES, Sweaters



JANIS BOWLEY & BILL DUKE, Fons Juventutis

WARREN O.



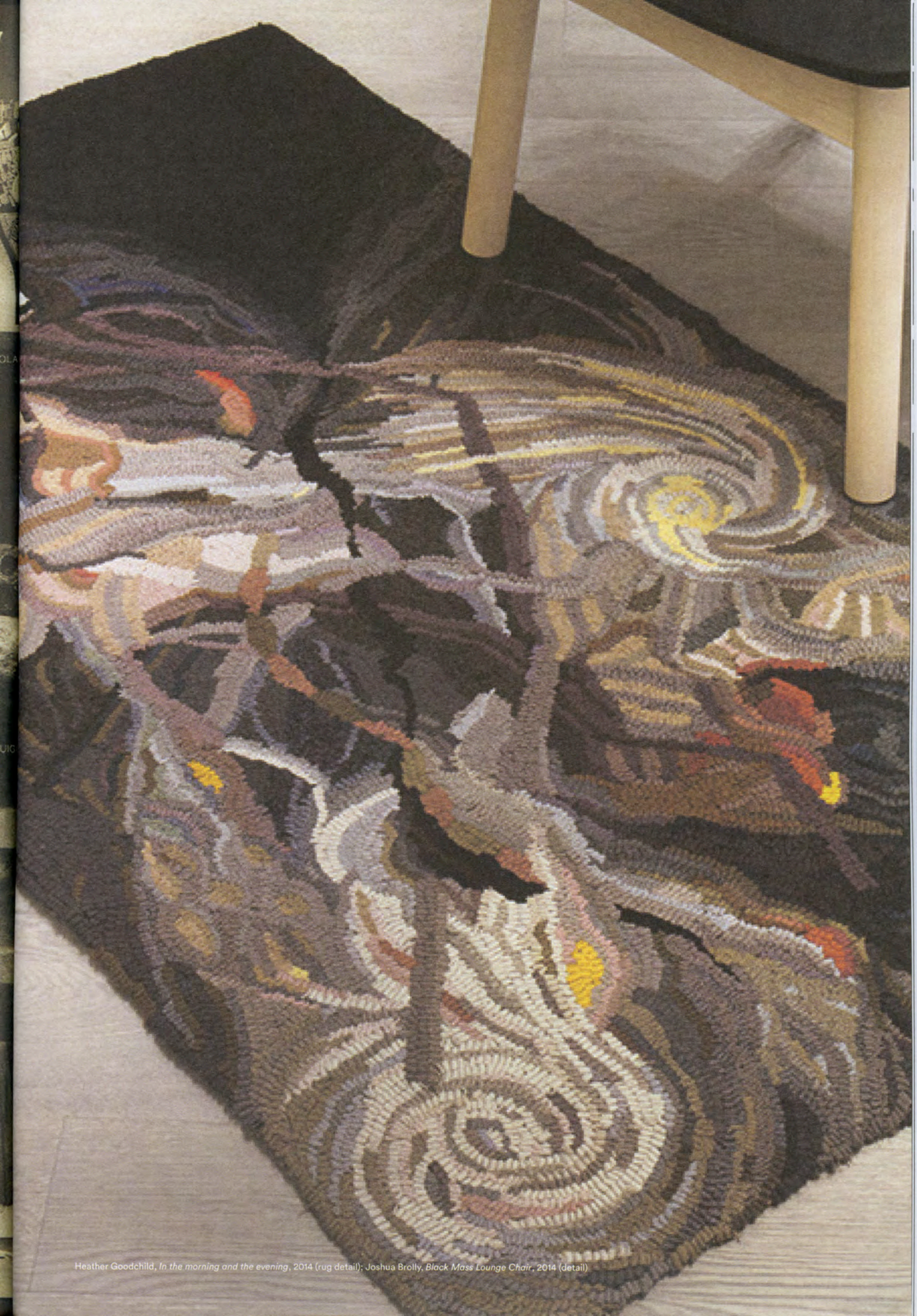
LEE DICKSON, Beaded Dress



JUDITH SCHWARZ



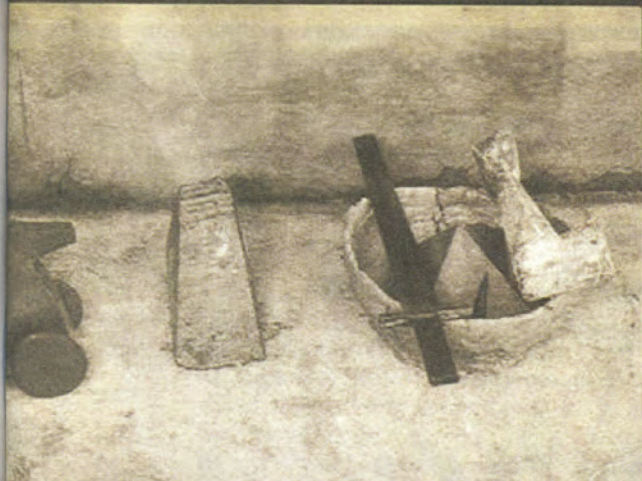
TANYA MASS, Wooden Chair



Heather Goodchild, *In the morning and the evening*, 2014 (rug detail); Joshua Broly, *Black Mass Lounge Chair*, 2014 (detail)



Connor Crawford, *Unlifted Background 8 (Cracked Wall)*, 2016 (detail)



ROBERT WEINS, *Untitled*

MARIE, *Night Light/Tunnel Vision*; OLIVER GIRLING, *Router Screen*; PHILLIP BARKER,



IHOR HOLUBIZKY, *Granite Place Mat*; DEBORAH MCCARTHY, *Tables*



MATT HARLEY, *Painted Fur Stole*

Chromaliving Promenade with ALLAN GLICKSMAN's *Archway Mural*



EVAN PENNY, *Janet*