

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
June 1992

PROJECTS: STEPHEN KRONINGER

July 2 - August 9, 1992

As part of its ongoing **PROJECTS** series, The Museum of Modern Art presents an exhibition of works that portray political, social, and cultural subjects by the American illustrator and satirist Stephen Kroninger. Organized by Christopher Mount, curatorial assistant, Department of Architecture and Design, **PROJECTS: STEPHEN KRONINGER** includes a selection of approximately eighty photcollages which appeared in major newspapers and magazines during the past decade. The exhibition is on view from July 2 to August 9, 1992.

The exhibition shows examples of Kroninger's original collages constructed from magazine and newspaper cutouts, alongside the published versions which appeared in such publications as *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Esquire*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The Progressive*. Kroninger's career began in 1981, coinciding with the onset of the politically conservative Reagan and Bush eras. Since that time he has generated hundreds of illustrations ranging from stinging political commentaries to whimsical caricatures of movie actors and rock stars.

Many of the works point to the contradictions between politicians' words and actions, the bankrupt promises of certain economic and social policies, the dangers of governmental intervention in the arts, and the problems that threaten world health and the environment. In the brochure accompanying the exhibition, Mr. Mount writes, "The primary role of Kroninger's collages is to challenge what television and print news present as truth and fact by transforming reality. They are analogous to the brief sound bites popular with politicians. However, in these designs the image has been distorted to reveal another truth, this one

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as the artist perceives it."

Kroninger's work has both an edge and a sense of playfulness. He achieves this by working very quickly, almost instinctively, "drawing" with his scissors. For example, in a satire of John Tower's unsuccessful confirmation to the position of Secretary of Defense, the artist incorporated clippings from *Newsweek* (Tower's face), *Time* (Bush's face), *Vogue* (lips), *U.S. World and News Report* (Bush's podium), *Playboy* (breasts), *GQ* (hands), newsprint (Tower's suit), and the champagne glass from a Mumms advertisement.

Kroninger's use of photcollage represents the popularization of a technique that historically was used by the avant-garde for subversive and defiant purposes. He also acknowledges the German Dadaists, Surrealism, American print advertising, and popular culture as sources for his inspiration. In particular, John Heartfield's work serves as the model for Kroninger's biting critiques.

Stephen Kroninger was born in Orefield, Pennsylvania, in 1957 and attended Kutztown University in Berk's County. He moved to New York in 1979 and began his career in illustration two years later. In addition to his work with the print media, his illustrations have also been exhibited in various group shows, published in books, and commissioned for record covers.

The **PROJECTS** series is made possible by generous grants from the Lannan Foundation, The Bohlen Foundation, and The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art. Next in the series is **PROJECTS: ERIKA ROTHENBERG** (July 11 - August 25, 1992) and **PROJECTS: SUZANNE LAFONT** (October 2 - November 15, 1992).

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No. 44

For further information or photographic materials, contact Helen Bennett, the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9756.