



David King Publications 1977–2019

SAN FRANCISCO CENTER FOR THE BOOK presents the first-ever survey of artist and graphic designer David King's small press publications, zines, ephemera, and early design projects.

David King Publications 1977–2019 is on view from Oct. 25–Dec. 22, 2024 at San Francisco Center for the Book.

Opening reception: Friday, October 25, 2024: 6–8 pm
Exhibition dates: October 25–December 22, 2024
Curators: Luca Antonucci and Matt Borruso

San Francisco Center for the Book
375 Rhode Island Street, San Francisco, California 94103
415.565.0545 www.sfcbook.org
Hours: Wednesdays–Sundays 10 am–5 pm
Free and open to the public

DAVID KING (1948–2019) was an English artist, graphic designer, and musician best known for designing the Crass symbol. His many varied projects encompassed drawing, photography, sculpture, film, video, radio plays, and more. King was a core member of the New York no wave band Arsenal, and later the San Francisco post-punk bands Sleeping Dogs and Brain Rust. He generated hundreds of flyers for these bands and others during the period of 1977–1988, as well as creating logos, brand identities, and posters for nightclubs like Danceteria, Pravda, and the Peppermint Lounge in New York and the I-Beam in San Francisco.

In the 1980s King made dozens of photocopied and offset zines that often accompanied his music projects. In the early 2000s he began self-publishing highly idiosyncratic short-run books with subjects ranging from his photographs of J.G. Ballard's home to rock formations seen in early Western films. In the later 2000s several books on his graphic design and photography were released through Colpa Press, &Pens, and Gingko Press.

This exhibition and the accompanying book, *David King Publications 1977–2019* (co-published by Colpa Press and San Francisco Center for the Book), are supported in part by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

For further information or press photographs, please contact Jennie Hinchcliff, Director of Exhibitions and Artistic Programs: exhibitions@sfcbook.org

DAVID KING was born in 1945 in Ilford, Essex, England. At 16 he enrolled at South East Essex Technical College in Dagenham to study graphic design. After graduating in 1967, King spent the next ten years working for a succession of London advertising agencies, first as a graphic designer and later as an art director.

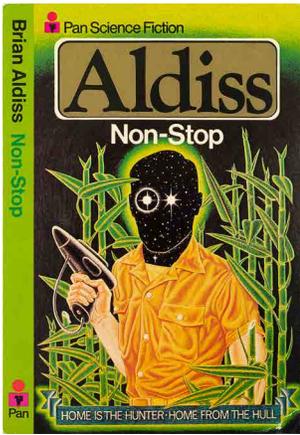
In the late 1970s he left the advertising world to live at Dial House, the open-door home founded by college friends Jeremy Ratter (aka Penny Rimbaud) and Gee Vaucher. There King designed a symbol for Rimbaud's 1977 pamphlet *Christ's Reality Asylum*. This symbol—which we now know as the Crass symbol—was first spray-painted on this homemade pamphlet via a hand-cut stencil King made. Later that year it was adopted by the newly formed band Crass.

In the fall of 1977 King moved to New York where he worked as freelance illustrator, creating work for Danceteria, the Museum of Modern Art, *The New York Times*, Pop Front and many others. There he also began drumming for the no wave band Arsenal with Charlie Nash and Dione King. In 1980 the band moved to San Francisco, changing their name first to Sleeping Dogs and later to Brain Rust. In addition to music, in San Francisco King pursued design projects and returned to school, receiving his BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1992.

King's work has been exhibited at the Serpentine Gallery, the Hayward Gallery, and the Horse Hospital in London and the Lab, Park Life, and Adobe Books in San Francisco. His films have been screened at Artists' Television Access, San Francisco; the Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; and Millennium and Tier 3, New York. Early performance works include contributions to EXIT at the Roundhouse in London, and EXIT with Anthony McCall in North Weald, both part of ICES, 1972. Sleeping Dogs' music has been released by Crass Records and Brain Rust's by Vinyl Communications. In addition, numerous books have been published on King's work including *Scrapbook*, *Still*, and *Journey* by Colpa Press; *Secret Origins of the Crass Symbol* published by &Pens Press; and *David King Stencils: Past, Present and Crass!* published by Gingko, Kill Yr Idols.

David King's death in 2019 has not diminished a growing interest in his work. Archiving his studio output continues, gradually revealing a fuller picture of his life and legacy.





Page 1, left to right:
Flyer for *I Beam*, 1980s
Photocopy, 8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)

Brain Rust flyer, 1980s
Photocopy, 8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)

Suburbs of Hell, 1980s
Photocopy, slide bound, 38 pages,
8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)

David King, first year at art school, 1964

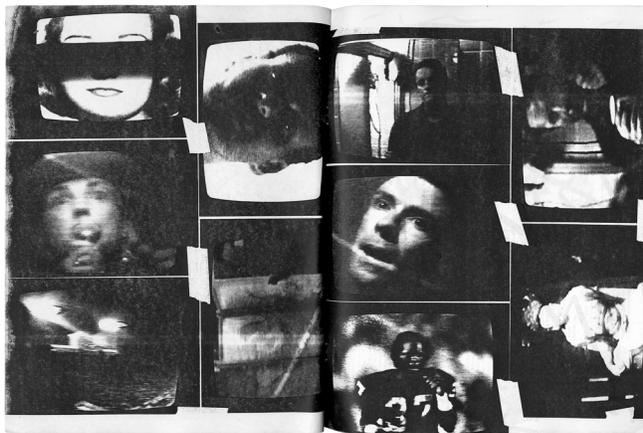
Left: *Non-Stop* by Brian Aldiss,
cover art by David King, Pan Books, 1977
Mass market paperback, 204 pages,
4.25 x 7 in. (10.8 x 17.8 cm)

Interior spread, *Sleeping Dogs #1*, 1983
Offset, staple bound, 24 pages,
8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)



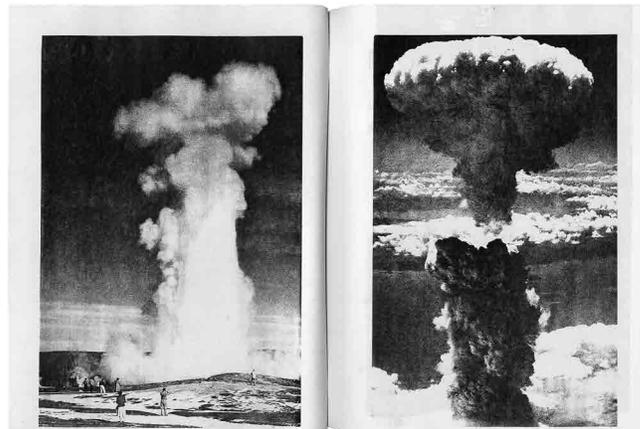
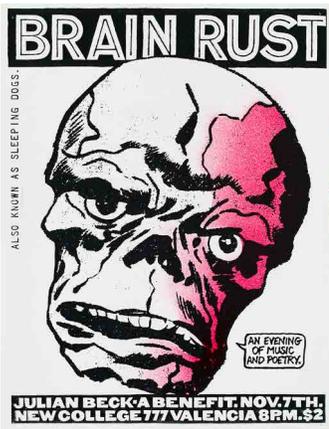
Department of the Ulterior, 2000s
Prototype, never realized,
24 pages, 11.25 x 8.75 in.
(28.6 x 22.2 cm)

The Somnambulists, Homage to California, Most Books, 2008
Apple print-on-demand
digital press, perfect bound,
38 pages, 11.25 x 8.75 in.
(28.6 x 22.2 cm)



Don't Believe Them, promo zine for
Sleeping Dogs: Don't Believe Them,
a video by Steve Bull, 1984
Photocopy, side stapled, 6 pages,
8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)

New, Improved?, 2011
Hand cut stencil with spray paint,
11 x 14 in. (27.9 x 35.6 cm)



Flyer for *Brain Rust at the New College*,
San Francisco, November 7, 1985
Photocopy with spray paint, 8.5 x 11 in.
(21.6 x 27.9 cm)

*Dead Men's Clothes as
Too Many Zombies*, 1984/85
Photocopy, side stapled, 14 pages,
8.5 x 11 in. (21.6 x 27.9 cm)