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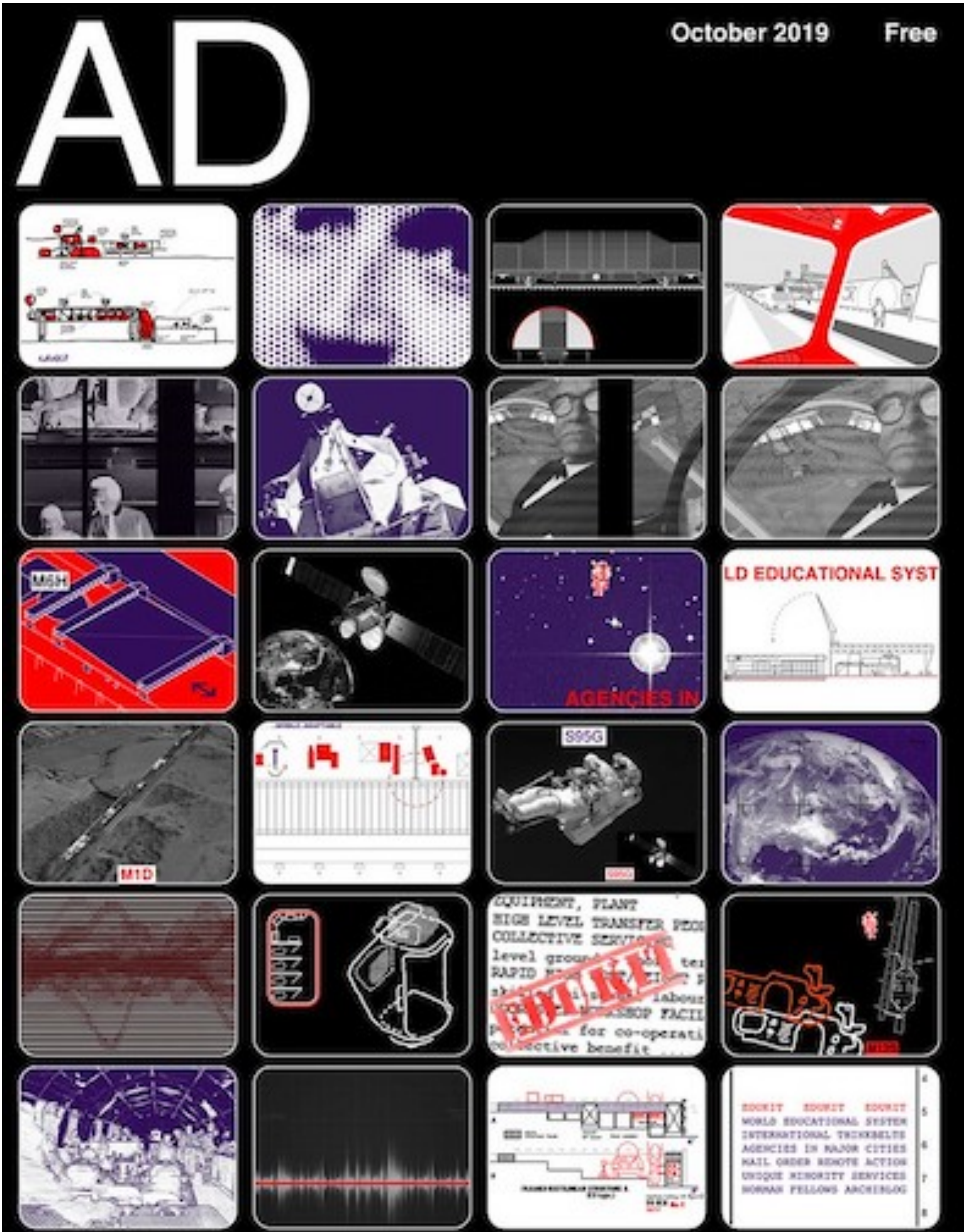
Anticipatory Design



• 'Fantasia" designed by Norman Fellows

Contents

[hide]

- 1 What do we know?
- 2 Why do we care?
- 3 What can we do?
- 4 References
- 5 Related articles on Designing Buildings

What do we know?

An etymology of the term ‘anticipatory design’ found its earliest recorded occurrence in the 'Annual Discourse to the RIBA' delivered by Buckminster Fuller in which he defined his work, namely:—

"comprehensive anticipatory design science" Fuller, 1958, 'Experimental Probing of Architectural Initiative' [1]

The next occurrence was found in a talk in which Buckminster Fuller referred to:— "comprehensive anticipatory design science architects" Fuller, 1959, 'The Comprehensive Man' [2]

Thus we know from his talk that Buckminster Fuller recommended a way for architects to involve themselves: "There is an effective strategy open to the architects. Whereas doctors deal with the interior organisms of man, architects deal with the exterior organisms of man. Architects might join with one another to carry on their work in laboratories as do doctors in anticipatory medicine. Architects might solve design problems of world-resource use before people get into resource troubles. Architects might thus join forces, as do scientists, with the integrity of inter-self accrediting of the respective abilities of each individual on the team. Architects might begin the laboratory pooling of their resource capabilities at the university level." Fuller, ib.

An interview of Cedric Price was conducted in which he defined his work, namely: "anticipatory design" Price, in Fellows, N., 1993a, 'Transcript - Interview of Cedric Price' [3]

However, the same etymology also found the first recorded occurrence of the term 'anticipatory design' made by Cedric Price, namely: "Only when Agadir and Aberfan are recognised as likely events will the necessary legislation and management enable 'disaster' planning to afford sufficient anticipatory design effort and product." Price, 1970, 'Cedric Price Supplement No. 1' [4]

Thus we know: that the work of Buckminster Fuller and Cedric Price are related.

Why do we care?

The way in which the work of Buckminster Fuller and Cedric Price are related sparked a follow-up interview of Cedric Price in which he was asked: "Are ("comprehensive anticipatory design science" and "anticipatory design") synonymous or are there important differences?" Fellows, N., 1996, 'Transcript - Interview of Cedric Price (3)' [5]

Cedric Price replied: "I think the most important difference is the 'anticipatory design' - which is my word (sic) - and 'anticipatory design science'. The difference between that is that I am assuming that there is a science involved with various aspects of anticipatory design but my assumption is therefore narrowing it down to relation to systems or products that result from such design. So mine is a narrowing of Bucky's. That's the main point. The comprehensive is as good as you make it. You know we both agree it should be comprehensive. I think that my concept of comprehensive would be limited through lack of comprehensivity (sic) in the Bucky phraseology. [...] Bucky's was fuller but he was - I mean it was more comprehensive but he was interested in a design science. I was assuming there is a design science and just evidencing it in actual objects or systems." Price, 1996, in Fellows, N., ib.

Thus there are important differences between Fuller and Price's work.

The important differences quoted verbatim above indicate that Cedric Price identified the need to define his own work and proposed a solution to himself in which he matched his ordering - i.e. 'anticipatory design' - against Buckminster Fuller's ordering - i.e. 'comprehensive anticipatory design science'.

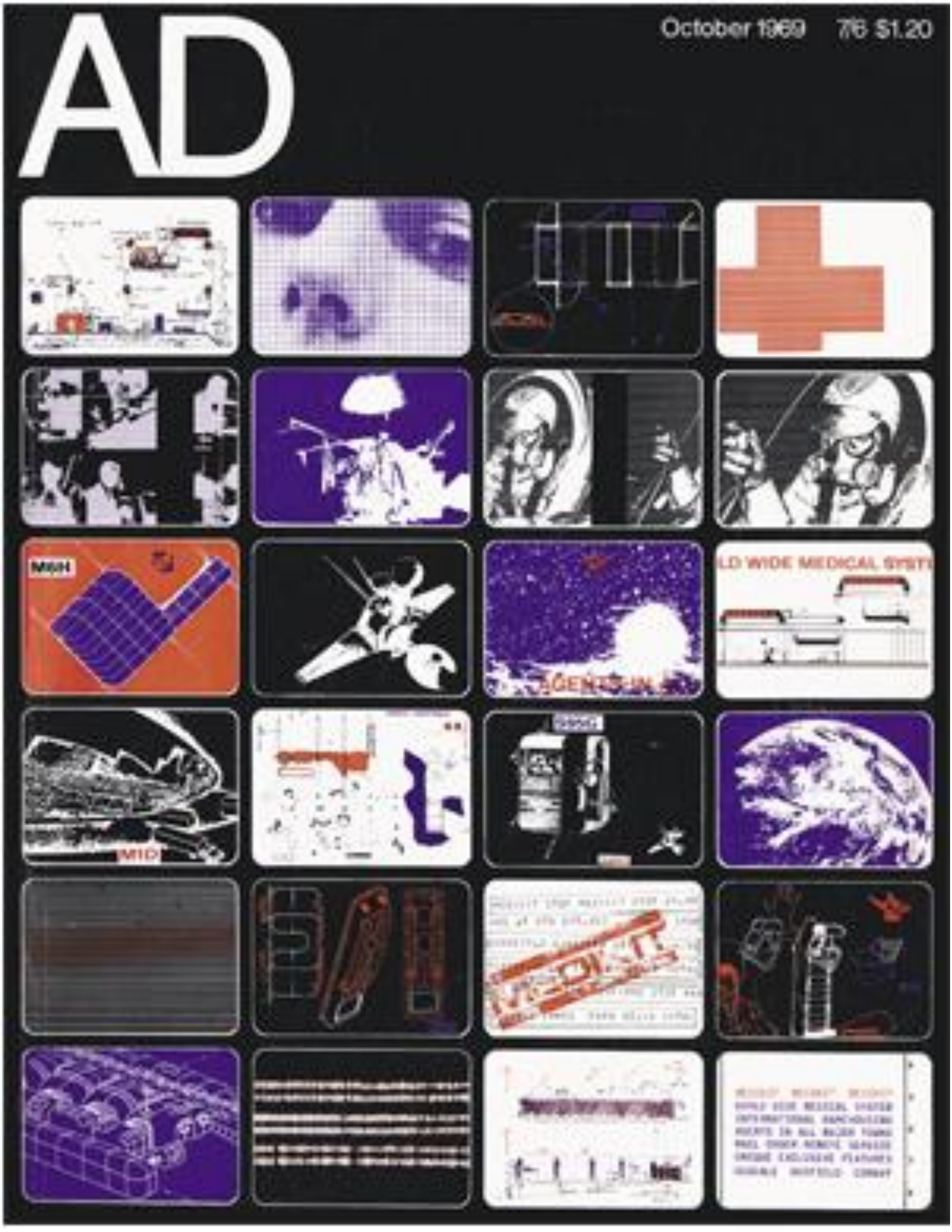
Thus this article is based on the major premise: that in order to define his own work Cedric Price matched his ordering against Buckminster Fuller's.

However, much of Cedric Price's early work on anticipatory was published in an influential architectural 'design science' monthly, namely, Architectural Design (AD). Thus the minor premise of this article is: that Cedric Price's ordering is linked with AD.

What can we do?

If we can accept both premises then we can draw the conclusion: that Buckminster Fuller's ordering (CADS) is associated with AD.

The AD in the conclusion refers to the international journal Architectural Design edited by Monica Pidgeon from 1946 until 1975. However, the magazine has also been described as: "this influential architectural 'design science' monthly" Marchbank, P. [6]



Thus we can fill the gap left by Pidgeon when she left Architectural Design with Anticipatory Design or AD for short.

This topic is continued in the following articles on Designing Buildings:—

- AD: A great little mag!
- Anticipatory Design
- Archiblog's Ordering
- ATOM: A generating system designed by Cedric Price
- Bucky's Ordering
- Cedric Price
- City Cluster, City of London
- City Cluster, Kit of Parts

- Co-operative Housing
- Disaster Planning
- Disaster Planning: North Staffs
- Disaster Planning: School Buildings
- DOMESTIKIT: World-Wide Dwelling Service
- Dukeries Thinkbelt
- EDUKIT: World Educational System
- Generator
- Housing Research by Cedric Price
- Norman Fellows
- Potteries Thinkbelt
- The Commons
- The Commons: Manhattan
- The Shed

This article was written by Norman Fellows and is a revision of an outline published on the AD website at:—

https://anticipatorydesign.wordpress.com/

References

Fuller, R. B. (1963) Ideas and Integrities, New York, Collier [1] [2]

Fellows, N. (1993) Transcript – Interview of Cedric Price, Google Drive [3]

Price, C. (1970) Cedric Price Supplement No. 1, AD/10/70 [4]

Fellows, N. (1996) 'Transcript – Interview of Cedric Price (3) – Extract 1', Google Drive [5]

Marchbank, P. (2021) Magazines: Architectural Design (AD), pearcemarchbank.com [6]

Related articles on Designing Buildings

- Buckminster Fuller.

--Archiblog 10:36, 8 Sep 2022 (BST)