In 1976 the British art journal *Studio International* conducted a survey of contemporary art magazines to see what could be revealed about their inner workings and motivations.

How do art magazines perceive themselves today? Are the questions that were posed 30 years ago still relevant in 2006? To find out, *frieze* asked 31 publications to respond to the *Studio International* questionnaire. Introduction by Richard Cork, the editor behind the original survey.
When I edited the Studio International issue on art magazines in 1976, upheaval was everywhere. Diehard defenders of painting's supremacy were still angrily opposed to the radical new developments transforming all our ideas about what art might be. Later, looking back on this tumultuous decade, I gave my book of writings on art in the 1970s the title Everything Seemed Possible. It was a hugely exciting period, driven in most areas by the desire to open up, demystify and enlarge our awareness of art in all its manifestations. Magazines, I believed, needed to question themselves more closely and become more willing to reveal how and why they operated. So I was delighted when so many of them responded to Studio's questionnaire, casting off secrecy and disclosing a great deal about their owners, income sources, conditions of work, overall aims, anxieties and hopes for the future.

Thirty years on, the art scene is far less fiercely divided. Most of the magazines who have replied to frieze seem committed to openness in their response to new art. More and more national barriers are being demolished: Art in America proudly claim that 'we've become global' and are now 'paying a lot of attention to Asia - especially China'. But some magazines remain unapologetic about their concentration on particular geographical territories. Art & Australia admits that its 'main focus is on Australian art', and Artnexus declares that 'we cover Latin and Latin American artists wherever they are.' As for Revue Blaue, they deal with 'Africa and all the preconceived ideas people have of the continent', while Springerin's scope comprises 'the art-worlds of former Eastern Europe as well as so-called marginal or Third World territories'.

Few want to be confined in scope to a single country or continent. Nor do they identify themselves with a particular direction in art. Springerin 'tries to focus on art production that is socially and politically relevant'. But far more typical is Border Crossing's belief in keeping 'the magazine open to every new development while remaining vigilant not to embrace trends and currency for the sake of novelty'. Amen to that, and yet Metropolis M is perhaps more frank about the inevitability of bias by admitting that 'maybe every magazine is partisan and maybe every magazine tries to rise above it'.

What about the influence of regular advertisers and the market? Art Review confesses that it is 'less than my sales people like, more than the editors want'. But most magazines do not regard this influence as a problem. Some are small-circulation, non-profit concerns, and rejoice in their editorial independence. The price to be paid, though, hits staff and contributors alike. Fug pays nobody; 'till now, people write for free'. But as I read through these submissions, an alarming picture emerges of low pay even if you write for a big magazine. Art Press' print run is $30,000, and yet they pay wretchedly (between 17 and 20 euros for one typed page). As a critic myself, I ended up wondering how anyone without a salary or a trust fund could possibly afford to write for art magazines at all.

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These are the questions asked by Studio International in 1976 in their 'Survey of Contemporary Art Magazines':

1. Who owns you, and to what extent are the owner's artistic/financial/political interests reflected in your magazine?
2. What are your sources of income, and do they give you a profit or a loss?
3. How many members of staff do you employ?
4. How many copies of each issue do you print, what is the cover price and what is the average budget per issue?
5. What is your scale of payment for writers?
6. How important is the physical 'look' of your magazine - the quality of paper, number of illustrations, standard of design etc?
7. What audience do you aim at, and would you be content to communicate only with a specialised 'art' audience?
8. Which is your first priority - art criticism or art information?
9. Are you international or national in your scope, and why?
10. Do you support a partisan area of art activity, or remain open to every new development?
11. Are you happy about the influence that art magazines exert on the development of contemporary art?
12. To what extent do you consider your magazine is shaped by (a) your regular advertisers and (b) the power of the market?
I believe that no critic can compete with the
eye of gallery owners Larry Gagosian, Nicholas
Logsdaill, Jay Jopling, Charles Saatchi,
Maureen Paley or Gavin Brown."

Giancarlo Politi, Flash Art

Cabinet Magazine
COUNTRY USA
FOUNDED 2000
EDITOR Sina Najafi

1 Cabinet is a non-profit publication.
Being a non-profit comes with its own set of
economic difficulties, but it allows the editors
to have total control of editorial policy.
2 About 45% from subscriptions and
newsstand income; 40% is from grants given
by government organizations and private
foundations; 5% from private donations;
and 5% is from commissioned artist limited
editions. Advertising income is negligible. We
have a balanced budget every year.
3 We have a staff of about four. Our staff is
almost exclusively part-time.
4 We printed 11,500 copies of our most
recent issue. The cover price is US$10 (£7
in the UK). The average budget for each quar-
terly is US$150,000 ($200,000 for printing,
$15,500 for staffing, $6,000 for writers fees,
$11,500 for other costs).
5 We pay honorariums of $150-$350 to
writers and artists.
6 The physical look is crucial and is
assigned a disproportionate percentage of
the budget.
7 Cabinet's expansive notion of culture
means that its 'implied reader' is not a
specialist in anything but is rather an
omnivorous generalist. One of the organizing
principles of the magazine is to break down
specializations and niches. The magazine
would be a failure if its only readers were art
specialists.
8 We do not report on art events or pub-
lish reviews. We also avoid art criticism in
the sense of the long essay on a specific artist,
movement, or 'scene'. We prefer to com-
mission artist projects, and to present material
that we think can be a sourcebook for ideas
for the wide range of worldly interests that
artists bring to their practices today.
9 We are international in scope because
we are for a culture of curiosity that by defi-
nition is not limited by national boundaries.
10 We are open
11 We are happy when art magazines
contribute to the development of contempo-
rary art by expanding the repertoire of ideas
available to artists (a type of influence that
was more prevalent when this questionnaire
was first formulated). We are unhappy when
art magazines participate in the mecha-
nisms that obscure what is at stake in art-making
by promoting definitions of success that discour-age
risk-taking.
12 Our regular advertisers, if we had any,
would certainly have no influence on our con-
tent. Given our non-profit status, we live in a
'false economy' whereby we use one hand to
beg for money and the other to rule our tiny
fiefdom with absolute authority.
Sina Najafi, Editor-in-Chief

Flash Art
COUNTRY Italy
FOUNDED 1967
EDITORS Giancarlo Politi, Helena Kontova

1 Helena Kontova and myself are the
publishers and editors of Flash Art. The con-
tent has always been discussed and agreed
with the editorial team which consists of
young art critics who are very different to
us. Our contributors across the world also
have a key role and we give careful consid-
eration to their proposals. Kontova and I
are part of an extremely diverse mul-
ticultural team. Now after 40 years of manag-
ing the magazine (the first ten myself and
the subsequent 30 with Kontova), a second
generation is appearing on the scene; that
of our daughter Gina Politi, who seems to
be following with particular interest and
innovative spirit all that has to do with Flash
Art in the third millennium. This will be
an extremely problematic handover in an era
that is witnessing strong competition with
the Internet.
2 Flash Art has always existed thanks to
the market; that is to say thanks to adver-
tising (70%) and to sales (30%). We are
extremely proud to affirm that over the past
40 years, we have never received any public
funds. Not even a penny from the govern-
ment and institutions. Our readers and our
loyal customers worldwide have always been
our sponsors. Flash Art is a very dynamic
magazine that over the years has made good
profits and has allowed us to live and travel
across the world.
3 Our publishing house, the Giancarlo
Politi Editore, produces two magazines, Flash
Art International and Flash Art Italia (we are
now about to start Flash Art Russia) and also
Art Diary International and Art Diary Italia as
well as some books and catalogues. Our team
consists of around 25 people.
4 Flash Art International has a print-run of
40,000 copies (30,000 for the US and 10,000
copies for the UK and Germany) while Flash
Art Italia has a print-run of 35,000 copies.
The price of Flash Art International is $7. There
is no monthly budget (even though on aver-
age we spend over $50,000 per issue only on
the printing) as the pagination of each issue
depends on the number of pages of advertising
sold.
5 From $50 for a short review up to $400
for a feature article.
6 Our points of reference have always been
Time and Newsweek magazines; out of
the great respect we have for our readers, we
privilege clear and legible information. In
40 years, we have never fallen into the trap
of trendy and illegible design. Flash Art has
always been an 'anti-design' magazine at the
service of readers and clients.
7 Art professionals and art lovers.
Flash Art is directed at the most attentive.

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