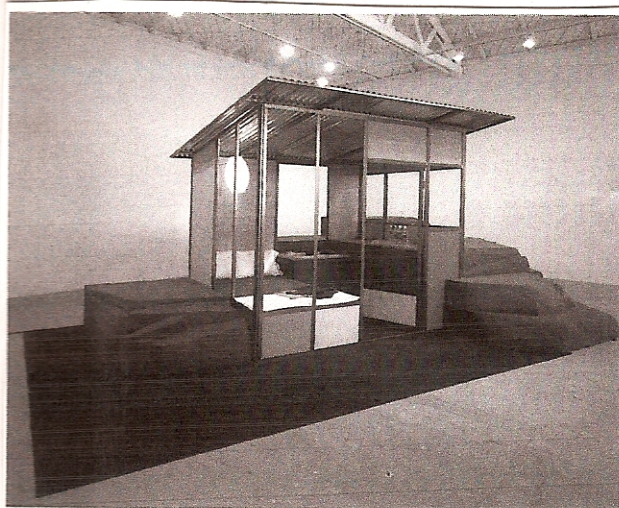


REGEN PROJECTS

Miles, Christopher, "Andrea Zittel," *ArtForum*, March 2005, pp. 243-4, ill.

ARTFORUM



Andrea Zittel, *A-Z Homestead Unit from A-Z West, with Rough Furniture*, 2001–2004, powder-coated steel, corrugated metal, birch paneling, paint, polyurethane, foam, fleece, felted wool, fabric, metal, and plastic, 25' 8" x 15' 3" x 8' 10".

LOS ANGELES

ANDREA ZITTEL REGEN PROJECTS

This exhibition paired a prototype for a sculpture or design project by Andrea Zittel with *Sufficient Self*, 2004, a Power-Point presentation of images accompanied by the artist's casually written comments chronicling her life and work at A-Z West, her expanded cabin and surrounding property on the edge of the Mojave Desert town of Joshua Tree. Over the past few years, Zittel has transformed this site into a base for ongoing experimentation with the development and alteration of products for living, including transportation, shelter, clothing, furniture, storage, food, and utensils. Alongside this visual diary, which was presented on a wall-hung flat-screen monitor, was *A-Z Homestead Unit from A-Z West, with Rough Furniture*, 2001–2004, a functional model for a small, shed-like, quickly erectable, steel-and-plywood shelter equipped with a few basic comforts and necessities: camping stove, sleeping surface, pillows, blanket, and one of Zittel's trademark felted-alpaca-wool dresses.

The pairing recalled Zittel's installation at last year's Whitney Biennial, in which she showed the same slide show along with *Rough Desk*, 2004, a workstation also developed and used at A-Z West.

These two presentations of her work both revealed and resolved Zittel's basic bind since the early '90s. Sometimes visually compelling, sometimes less so; sometimes successful, sometimes not; sometimes seeming to break new ground and propose a fundamental rethinking of our needs and desires, possessions and accommodations, at other times appearing merely to indulge their maker's wayward curiosity, Zittel's objects and environments often depend heavily on a prior knowledge of their backstory. Once that story is provided, her products tend to become mere byproducts, simple souvenirs.

With *Sufficient Self*, Zittel succeeds in converting the backstory into the work itself, and the result is intriguing. It's a combination character study, idiosyncratic autobiography, frontier adventure tale, sci-fi movie, and interdisciplinary documentary, in which Zittel presents herself as artist, citizen, tinkerer, visionary, control freak, renegade, and glam queen. We watch and read as she and her cohorts engage in activities from the laborious and mundane (acquiring water when a delivery truck breaks down and making clothing by hand) to the ingenious and fun (converting

a galvanized trough into a hot tub by lighting a fire beneath it while being careful not to burn their toes). We also see Zittel's stylishly uniformed "hiking club" take sunset outings to curious sites, and witness her experiments with new inventions. No doubt the posse works hard and doesn't mind being caught in candid moments, but they also know how to play, pose, and look good.

Part of the satisfaction of Zittel's diary is that of observing a maverick at work, designing and modifying her life as she goes and revealing herself as the heir to a range of ancestors including the Bauhaus, Joseph Beuys, Buckminster Fuller, Mary Miss, and Alice Aycock—as well as to a host of unsung hippies, squatters, and outsiders of all kinds. Another pleasure is the magnetic personality of Zittel, whose combination of earnest determination, skillful storytelling, and stylistic flair generates a mystique that adds Davy Crockett, Mad Max, and Barbarella to the mix. Just as Beuys gave us a myth that keeps on giving and Mad Max spawned a trilogy, Zittel seems more than ready for *Sufficient Self, Part 2*.

—Christopher Miles