

UPPER

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WE JUST HAVE TOO MUCH TALENT

Welcome to issue 4 of Uppror. It's a bumper two cover issue, mainly because we couldn't decide who should be on it this time. We just have too much talent in this issue. Tribes or Anika? Which one did you download? Hang on, the PDF is free! Why not keep both?

Tribes are the latest underground sensation to hit London. Snapped up by Island Records, Tribes are about to release their debut album, check them out before you miss the boat. Their penchant for anarchy and playing loud is quite infectious.

Anika is a very intelligent and creative lady; her music is confrontational and thought provoking. She has been collaborating with Portishead founder Geoff Barrow and her sound has been described as dark and trashy. Not afraid to speak her mind, Anika probably wouldn't agree. But that is what makes her so exciting!

Also featured in this issue are polymath and indie rapper sensation Akira the Don; radical Danish pop artist Kristian Hornsleth; Jean Paul Gaultier as you never seen him before and some exclusive pictures of Amy Winehouse.

Check out our regular look at what's going on in London and NYC and find out how singer Chris Field had his first encounter with legendary author Hunter S. Thompson.

By the way, if you are a photographer, why not email us some of your work. We are always on the lookout for new talent and your work might end up gracing the hallowed pages of Uppror. Email your work to info@uppror.com and we'll get back to you.

Till next time...Keep it Uppror!

Jon Cowen

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ANIKA

by Liam Stephenson

When you meet Anika you have an eerie sense that you shouldn't mess with this tall, blonde, complicated, moody, intense and very political lady. She's not scared of speaking her mind and she doesn't care if she upsets or offends. And I'm pretty sure these are the bonding characteristics and musical vision that attracted Geoff Barrow to choose her to work with his band Beak. The result of this collaboration was the self titled debut album Anika: tender and dark; monosyllabic and hunting; a trashy punk-funk sound with a dose of German and Bristol souls.

How did you first come about meeting Geoff Barrow and working with Beak?

When I first met Geoff and the Beak guys, I didn't know who they were. I hadn't managed to find the band on Myspace. We had three sessions and Geoff gave me a Beak cd, and then I looked them up, and was like, 'Ah no! It's Geoff from Portishead.' I was kind of embarrassed, I didn't realize because he's such a laid back bloke. What appeals to me about him was his slow rebellion against the industry in a way and that he wanted to do things slightly differently, and then in terms of Beak, they're such good musicians, and they take their time with their music. It's almost so minimalist but at the same time it's so detailed.





WHEN I STARTED IN MUSIC

I WANTED TO TAKE RISKS,

PROVOKE AND ALMOST

PISS PEOPLE OFF

Is it important for you that your music has to convey political messages?

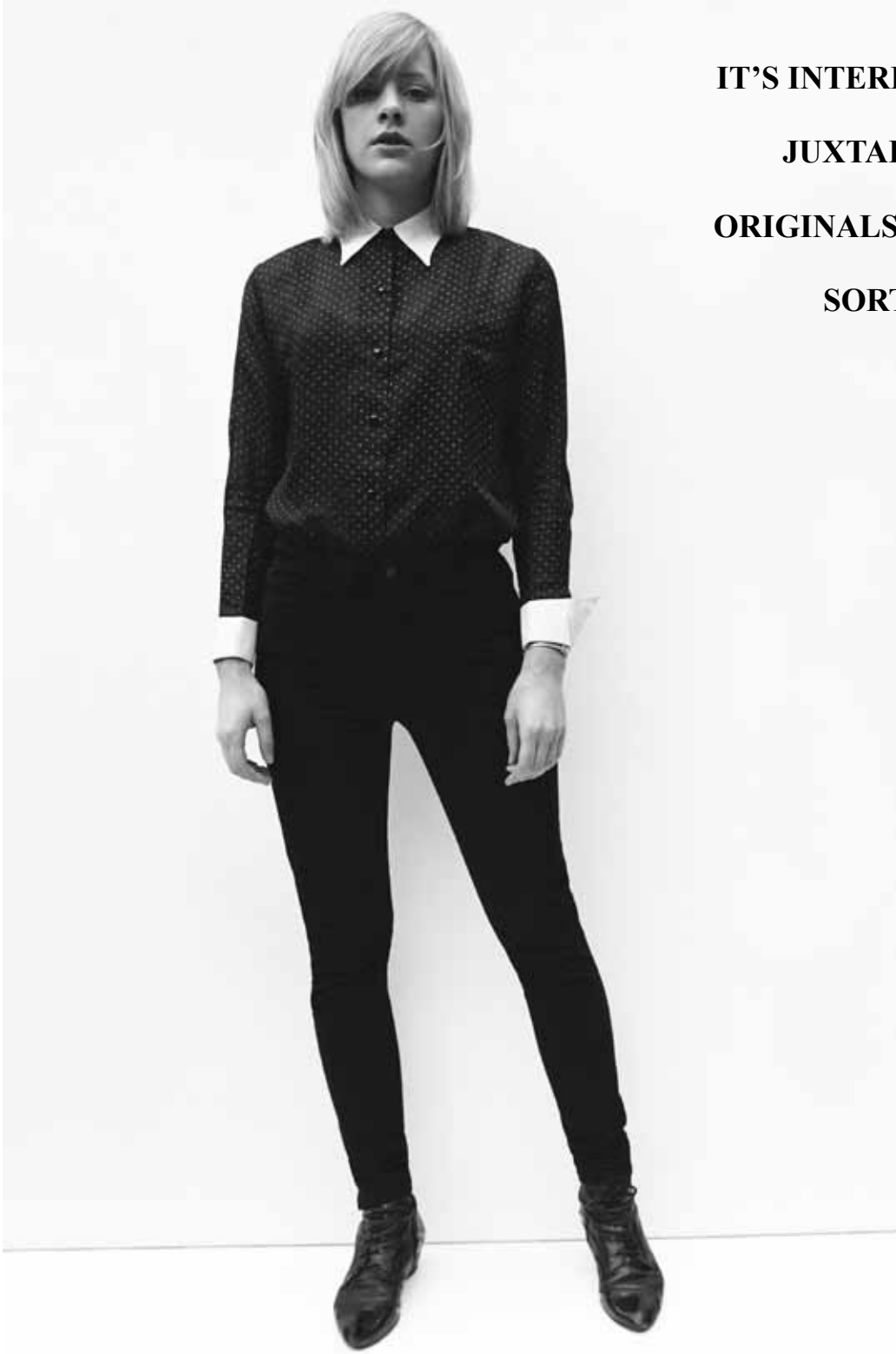
Definitely! That was the whole point for me. Even though lots of people find my voice offensive and the strong opinions I have towards the music industry, I wanted to do something slightly different. We were just coming out of the X Factor generation where everyone was just judged on their voice and their appearance. But what about what they want to say? I felt that bands were forced almost to fit a mould. We just wanted to be a bit more raw.

Do you think the music industry is looking for far too much perfection from their artists?

I think so. Music should be used for a lot of purposes, in the same way as art. If you look at a lot of artistic movements, it wasn't just how well they could draw, it was more about the meaning, the statement. They weren't perfecting reality. I hate this kind of advert music; you hear some songs and they sound almost as if they were actually written for the advert. When I started in music, I wanted to take risks, provoke and almost piss people off, and show them how it could be done differently.

How did you come to choose which cover songs you wanted to do for your album?

We recorded it in quite a short time, so how we used to do it was to go away spend the night on Youtube, just to try to find songs we could mess up - for different reasons. For instance yang yang (Yoko Ono), it's actually quite a political song, but I really like languages and chose it because I just liked the way it sounded. Bob Dylan's Masters Of War was important because it's still so relevant now, it shows how you can write a political song that is



IT'S INTERESTING TO HAVE THE
JUXTAPOSITIONS WITH THE
ORIGINALS. THEY TURNED INTO
SORT OF STALKER SONGS

directly relevant to the listener, not so in a U2 way where it sounds a million miles away. And then there are the 60's songs, like Terry (Lynn Ripley), a sweet love song, that we really just messed up. It's interesting to have the juxtapositions with the originals. They turned into sort of stalker songs.

How does the live experience differ from the making of the album?

I suppose it's developed quite a lot because we recorded the album so soon after we met. We just followed our instincts on the record; there wasn't any direction really. We didn't think we were going to release it, so there was no pressure. I think Geoff once said to me, 'Just don't practice.'

If people didn't quite get the record, usually when they come and see us live they know straight away what's going on.

It's also a slightly different line-up to how it is on the record. Geoff is not there because he has other commitments, but there are still two of the guys from Beak; then there's a drummer and a lady from Egypt who plays keyboard, guitar and does vocals. She has wide influences in terms of music, and the drummer's probably more of a rocker. It's such an eccentric band, an eccentric set up. We all work together, and even with the two new people, it's interesting to get their opinion. I welcome everyone's input.



Tell us more about your djing experiences. Do you get the same experience as djing?

I'm not really a particularly superstar DJ. The reason I do it is because I really enjoy music, so I'm more a selector as opposed to a technician, you know. I used to DJ in Cardiff when I was a promoter. But I was taught to DJ by my brother when I was really young. He taught me to mix Hip Hop and things like that. I'm really careful with my records, because I really value them. I've got some amazing, weird, quirky records that I enjoy playing. Plus it helps people understand where my music project fits because there's kind of a lot of influences there in a way... I play bits of ESG, Liquid Liquid, but then some punk, some Kleenex, but then a lot of new music too.

Being foremost a singer-songwriter, didn't it feel weird not to use your own songs?

The reason we didn't want to use too many of my own songs on the first record is because people wouldn't have a clue what we were doing. But there are two originals on the first album. I'm more of a writer anyway, I've written since I was really young. I'm just deciding how many of my political ones I want to release. Normally they play on irony, they're not overtly trying to tell the listener what they should think, they're just mainly saying you should think in terms of question what normal is.

IT WOULD BE NICE
TO SEE A BIT MORE
INTERACTION
BETWEEN
MUSIC AND ART

Where do you get your influences from?

I read loads.I really enjoy all sorts of books, and I've never studied English Literature, so it's always been reading more for my own personal interest, or I guess, personal growth. If I ever see anything that I enjoy I'll write it down. But I'm hugely influenced by the news as well; I read the Economist a lot. I've always written just weird stories about people as well, so if I come across eccentrics I might write a song about them. I'm more of an observer, so I find it fascinating to come across eccentrics.

Do you think politics and music can and should work hand in hand?

It would be nice to bring even more political content into the music. Especially now there's a need for it; people have obvious issues with politics but they don't know how to express it. We see more in terms of protest in the past year or so, there was nothing really before. It will be interesting to see if music reflects that - that social need for some kind of platform for political disgruntlement.



What do you think about all the protests happening at the moment?

It's encouraging to see that people are at least questioning the status quo. They weren't doing that for so long in music or politics. People were unhappy and they'd just go down the pub and complain, and that would be it. Things are changing now, it's good to see.

The song Masters Of War by Bob Dylan is highly politically charged and deals about the Cold War. Why did you include this song on your album?

I think it's good because it brings it up to date. The song was written however many years ago, but the arguments are still valid now. The arguments Dylan bring forward are very valid and quite intelligent.

How do you feel about the constant comparisons with Nico?

I suppose when people see something new, they need to try and understand it, and so to understand it they need to put it into some kind of pre-packaged package. So I suppose that's the nearest they could find because I'm half German, blonde and tall. But I think they're the only similarities really. I don't think we're particularly similar, we've both come from different backgrounds, with different experiences. She was definitely a troubled individual and had her own experiences to sing about, but I've got my own as well.

If Andy Warhol was around now, do you think he'd be interested in working with you?

I don't know... Hopefully there will be a new Andy Warhol. It would be nice to see a bit more interaction between music and art again.

New York.

Goodbye June

by Tommy James



It's 99 degrees Fahrenheit in New York and the city is one gigantic block of hot concrete. Across the East River, the waterfronts of Brooklyn look more like downtown Miami every summer but for the artist, the guitarist or the blatantly hip it beats the grime of the city subways and the heavy breathing of gridlocked trucks blocking the avenues and cross streets in every direction. I try to leave Manhattan to the tourists this

time of year; consequently I took on a DJ residency right here in Brooklyn. Berry Park, a converted industrial building two streets from the river with a club level sound system and a rooftop bar facing west towards the East River. From here the uninterrupted view of the most famous skyline on the planet serves to remind us of the thousand reasons you gave it all up and moved to this god forsaken city in the first place.

In the cavernous downstairs bar amongst the bearded hipsters and tattooed echo boomers, there are rude boy types, Latinos, faux punk rockers and a group of skinny Russian models. I saw a Rabbi (who gave me the thumbs up for playing Love Will Tear Us Apart), some gothic Japanese girls, even a midget Messi look-alike and it's only Saturday afternoon. In fact it's post the Manchester United v Barcelona match, which had just been projected live across a black and white 70 foot mural



TJ's Summer 2011 playlist

Gil Scott Heron - New York City

Pete Shelley - Homosapien (dub)

Adele - Rumour Has It

Stranglers - Peaches

Santigold ft. Karen O - Go

X-Ray Spex - Identity

The Black Angels – Bad Vibrations

Generation X - Wild Dub

My Morning Jacket – You Wanna Freak Out

Freaks of Desire – Fire

Human League - The Sound of the Crowd

Band of Horses – Laredo

Joy Division - Transmission

The Pierces - You'll Be Mine

LYN – Goodbye June



“...last call for drinks, bar's closing down... Sun's out, where are we going for breakfast?”

Carlito Brigante (Carlito's Way, 1993)

inside the venue. By 1:30pm there's hardly any standing room left and I'm up in the DJ booth - not a dry patch of clothing left on my skin - it's all the rising body heat from the tribes gathered in here today: Argentineans, Brazilians, Mexicans, Italians, a lot of Americans and of course the British; packed under this one roof to experience the sporting spectacle of the year. There's no taunting, no aggression, just an atmosphere of passion and excitement and right here in the heart of sunny Brooklyn. By halftime the expats in red and white shirts look worried and nervous, but it's not because the Brits are outnumbered. United, as we know, were about to take a right royal thrashing from the Spanish. The Stone Roses, New Order, every northern English anthem I could possibly muster packed into

15 minutes couldn't boost our spirits enough to somehow change the final outcome in our favour. Either way this was great football, a great day and a slice of Europe embraced by new young migrants and New Yorkers together. Consequently when the Cup had been won, I was playing Barcelona loud and ready to open up the field; salsa, ska, punk, rock, electronic, reggae, dub step, anything and everything as the celebration spread out onto the street and into the night. This evening had just begun - I'd be mixing for the next seven hours, turning tables, changing genres and switching the tempo from the sweltering DJ booth above a sea of ever changing faces. The diversity of youth culture, demographic and ethnicity blend together as one creative energy. Darkness falls and

the crowd changes again, sharper in attitude and slicker in dress code. Bang on cue, with Personal Jesus (The Stargate Mix) spinning off my CDs, the dancers of Backspace stride in. Sparkling and radiant like avant-garde superstars, the room lifts at the sight of this strange cacophony of car crash glamour and drag. Originally from Ohio, they DJ and host nightly around the venues of underground New York. Their performances - a sensory overload with meticulous choreography - are both shocking and wildly entertaining. Be it in a nightclub or on the subway, their extravagant characters capture the attention of the city that's seen it all. Director, Krystal Something-Something is a Leigh Bowery for the millennials - Backspace, like a futuristic New York Dolls at a Warhol installation

somewhere in Berlin - hilarious and frightening. It's just like Klaus Nomi never left the building.

Back in the DJ booth it's getting late and my volume levels are in the red. The crowd is growing thin and soon security will be edging out the long weekenders, the one-night standers and the serial stragglers. Summer just began and LYN's Goodbye June gently closes the night like a slow breeze in the dark. Brooklyn takes a deep breath while insomniac big brother Manhattan watches out across the river with a half closed eye...

Exactly... Until next time . . .

Tommy James



AKIRA THE DON

Rapper, singer, producer, comic book artist, DJ, prolific podcaster, and ‘musical alchemist’, make way for Akira the Don. Comedian and writer Danny Robins spends an afternoon with the Hackney-dwelling polymath.

It is very sunny. The sky is almost as bright as the peroxide-yellow locks of the man I am interviewing. Whilst he has been perhaps better known as a producer of late, Akira the Don, the first British rapper to be signed to Interscope Records, label of Dr Dre, Eminem and 50 Cent, is back with not one but two new albums. But right now, it’s all about turf. Artificial turf, to be precise.

We are sitting in the garden of photographer Ian Davies, who will shortly be insisting that Akira spits grapes at his camera, and we have just noticed that the grass is fake. This has prompted a conversation about the relative merits of artificial lawns, a subject Akira the Don seems to know a lot about. In fact Akira seems to know a lot about, well, a lot. His

brain works at Google-speed and his passions are manifold. A recent blog on his website was devoted to his collection of photos of snowflakes, and, in the time we spend together, our conversation ranges from Alabama hip hop groups to Robert Crumb comics to air guitar competitions to the relative merits of tigers and lions (tigers win paws-down, we decide).

Born Adam Narkiewicz, he was raised in rural North Wales, an environment that he feels had just as much of an effect on him as Dre’s Compton or Biggie’s Brooklyn.

“A lot of rappers I know tend to have urban backgrounds. They come from cities, whereas I spent most of my very littleness in a village. I had beautiful landscape. I could see as

far as the eye could see. Whereas a lot of people could only see buildings. I’m told that affects the way you think. The fact that I could see very far meant I could think very far.”

So, is his oeuvre the opposite of urban music? Could he be considered a rural rapper?

“I don’t know. I think maybe Jehst is rural.”

“And Bubba Sparkxxx I guess?”

“Yeah, a mate of mine used to manage him. There’s actually a whole country rap thing going on now that he should be getting props for. There’s people coming from Alabama and surrounding areas making really incredible music. Some

of my favourite music right now is from that part of the world. It's this country rap shit that melodically has lots of soft rock, Lynard Skynardy references."

Talking to this charming part-Brummie, part-Welsh indie rapper with the Kurt Cobain hair, it's hard to see how he ever ended up even on the radar of Interscope, let alone signed to them. When I look at him, I do not see a labelmate to Will Smith; Mary J Blige and 50 Cent. And, yes, that is a compliment. Akira's break, came when an A&R man from the label heard his demo whilst having a haircut in a New York salon and, before he knew it, Akira was being flown to LA to meet label head Jimmy Iovine. The irony is, just a month before this happened, he had written an article advising his fellow musicians to avoid major label deals at all costs.

"I wrote an article about why major recording deals were pointless in this day and age and how it was essentially just like a massive bank loan with loads of advisors telling you how to spend your money, which seemed silly. And then I went over to America and signed to the biggest major label in the world and all the stuff I'd said turned out to be true."

So, why didn't he follow his own advice? Was it just impossible to say no?

"I just thought, why not try this ridiculous thing. There's all these people here giving you steak and telling you you're a genius and that they're going to put you in the studio with Dr Dre and Snoop Dogg. Obviously you're going to do that.

"Did it blow your mind?"

"Yeah, kind of. It was a glorious adventure. It was really fun and I met loads of amazing people and did loads of insane stuff which would fill many books and one day will when I

run out of vocal chords."

It feels like some strange twisted dream, or a satirical strip from one of the comic books he writes, that the restless and independent spirit that is Akira the Don might have sat on balcony, overlooking LA, eating ice cream with Jimmy Iovine, mentor on American Idol and the man behind Lady Gaga and Enrique Iglesias, but Iovine was a fan, even telling Akira that he felt the young British rapper had fundamentally 'changed music'.

"I was thinking about this yesterday on my bike. He asked me up on his balcony and you can see all of LA. He's got these little minions who've got funny little uniforms, who I didn't notice at first. I was talking to him – he's got his little sunglasses and baseball cap and polo neck and, he says, 'You've totally changed music. We knew the change in music was going to come from the UK, we've been waiting for it, we saw The Streets but that wasn't quite the thing, but now here you are and it's changed everything.' And then he says, 'You know what you should sample? Beck.' And he clicked his fingers and suddenly a guy appears from nowhere, disappears for half a second, then comes back with a Beck album."

"I thought you were going to say he came back with Beck."

"No, but that would have been awesome. Then he clicks again. 'You want ice cream?' and the guy goes to get some ice cream."

Akira shakes his head, still amused by this glimpse into the madness of the court of King Iovine. Surprisingly, during his short stint in America, thanks to Iovine's trust in him, he was given a massive amount of creative freedom compared to most Interscope artists. The label bought him a home studio and he came up with the songs that would form his first album, When We Were Young, then recorded them



IT FEELS LIKE SOME STRANGE TWISTED DREAM OR A SATIRICAL STRIP FROM ONE OF THE COMIC BOOKS

HE WRITES

with producer Danny Saber (of U2 and Black Grape fame). Interscope initially liked the things they heard, such as the bouncy pop of Oh (What a Glorious Thing), which made it onto the soundtrack of the Uma Thurman film My Super Ex-Girlfriend. But the relationship then soured. It was the meeting where he debuted his controversial song, Thanks For All The Aids, his now legendary swipe at the Catholic Church and Bob Geldof, that was the beginning of the end.

"Everyone in the room's faces just dropped, apart from Jimmy Iovine – he was like 'It's cool'. The head of A&R is like, 'What the fuck is he saying? He can't say that.' And Jimmy was like 'Oh it's fine, he'll be able to explain it'. At the end of that meeting he goes, "Get him in the studio with Will.i.am, get him in the studio with Swizz Beatz, he can make some hits. Get him in the studio with Danger Mouse, get a few hits, he'll be fine.' But none of that stuff happened and that was that."

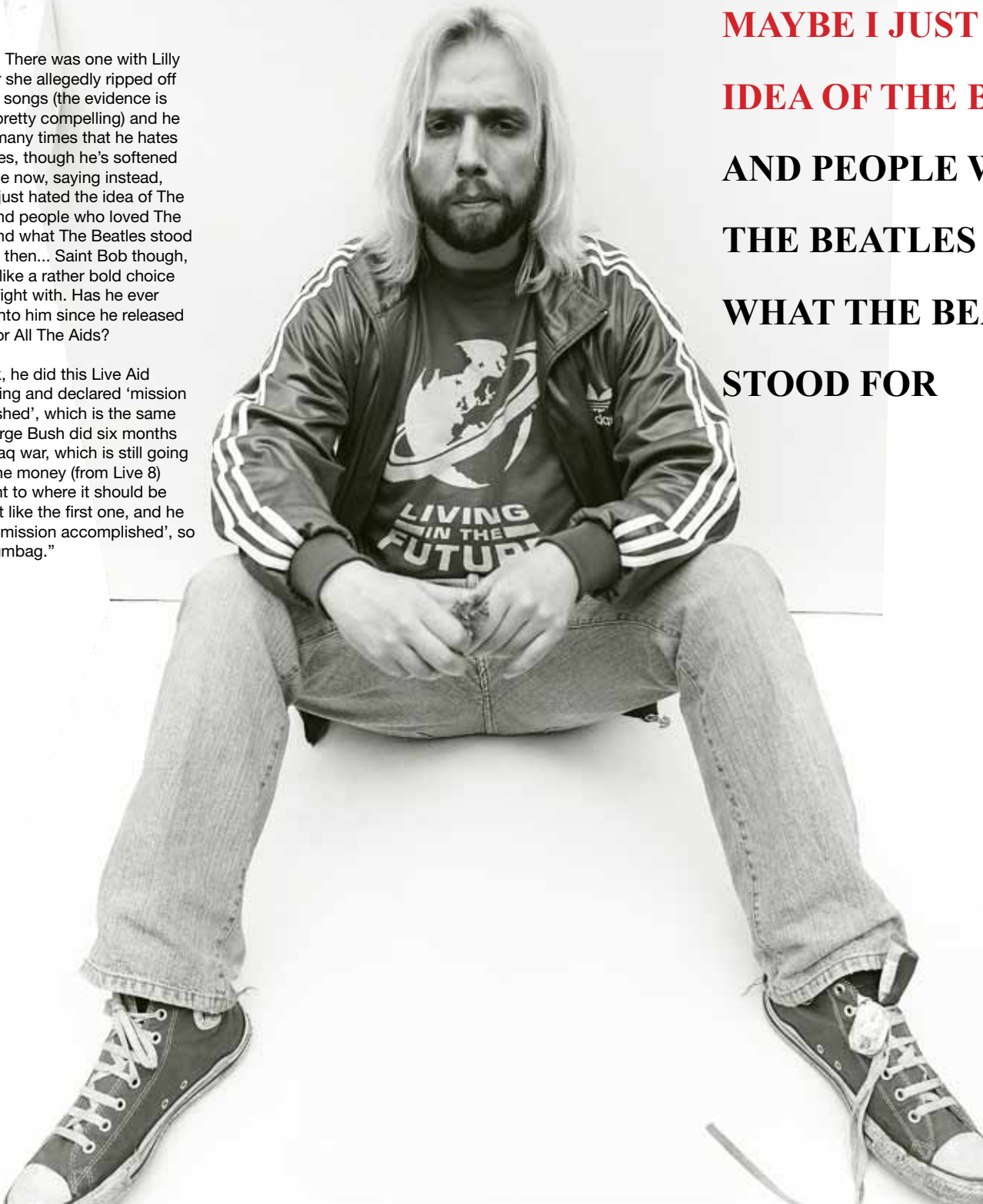
I can't help wondering if recording a song like Thanks For All The Aids was a deliberate attempt to get himself out of a deal that he didn't feel comfortable with. Did he really think Interscope would release it?"

"I had no idea what they would do. I knew they'd done stuff with Tupac that was potentially controversial. I knew that they had Busta Rhymes on their label at the time, who'd recorded three albums for them, none of which they'd put out so he was recording a fourth. All I knew was that I would do what I wanted to do and what I'd promised to do and I loved Thanks For All the Aids. It's still one of my most popular songs. Everybody loves that song, even if they don't necessarily agree with it."

It's certainly a room-splitter of a song. It lays into Bob Geldof for his 'mission accomplished' statement after Live 8. Akira, like any rapper worth his salt, has had his fair share

of ‘beefs’. There was one with Lilly Allen after she allegedly ripped off one of his songs (the evidence is certainly pretty compelling) and he has said many times that he hates The Beatles, though he’s softened that stance now, saying instead, “Maybe I just hated the idea of The Beatles and people who loved The Beatles and what The Beatles stood for.” Okay then... Saint Bob though, does feel like a rather bold choice to pick a fight with. Has he ever bumped into him since he released Thanks For All The Aids?

“No. Look, he did this Live Aid bullshit thing and declared ‘mission accomplished’, which is the same thing George Bush did six months into the Iraq war, which is still going on. Half the money (from Live 8) never went to where it should be going, just like the first one, and he declared ‘mission accomplished’, so he’s a scumbag.”



MAYBE I JUST HATED THE IDEA OF THE BEATLES AND PEOPLE WHO LOVED THE BEATLES AND WHAT THE BEATLES STOOD FOR

It’s hard to imagine 50 Cent having a pop at Bob or having such strong views on the subject of African aid. Maybe that’s why he stayed signed to Interscope and Akira didn’t. Akira used the money he got from the Uma Thurman film soundtrack to buy himself out of his deal and got his debut album released on the Something In Construction label to great acclaim.

So, was the whole experience with Interscope a learning experience for him? Did he emerge harder, better, stronger?

“Everything is a learning experience, but that was an amazing one because I’d been very much a student of the culture as long as I can remember since I was a very tiny thing, and so to actually go and do that stuff and live that stuff and ride in the limos and meet the people and go to the parties and sit in a restaurant next to Lou Reed, and to watch people spending tens of thousands of pounds on restaurants and stupid shit and all that stuff that I thought about the music industry that turned out to be true. I got to see all of that and a lot of that stuff’s gone now, a lot of those people have been sacked, a lot of those departments have been shut down, so I managed to see what was potentially the last gasp of the decadent American music recording industry, and the British one as well.”

Was it ultimately a positive experience?

“All experiences are positive. Even negative experiences are positive.”

“Tupac Shakur would probably argue with that.”

“I don’t know if he would, but he’s in no position to argue, because he’s hiding on Mars or whatever he’s doing. “

Living In The Future is a compilation of the best of the many songs he has been posting on his website on an almost daily basis for the last five years, and The Life Equation is a brand new studio album which he’s worked on with producer Stephen Hague, whose previous clients include The Pet Shop Boys, New Order and Blur. It features collaborations with, amongst others, Gruff Rhys of Super Furry Animals and up and coming British female rapper Envy.

So, what’s with releasing two albums at once? Isn’t he worried the great British public might suffer Akira-overload?

“It was important I did Living In The Future because, while I’ve released about thirty nine records via my website in the last five years, I hadn’t put any of that into the legal realm and it dawned on me that not everybody in the world goes to my website. A lot of people do, but not everybody goes there every day and downloads everything I do. So I thought it would be a good idea to do a compendium.”



OH GOD, LOADS, BEANO, DANDY,
WHIZZER AND CHIPS, THEN MARVEL
COMICS. AND DEADLINE – I DON’T
KNOW IF YOU REMEMBER THAT?
IT’S WHERE JAMIE HEWLETT

STARTED

Of course, this compilation is only the best of the legally-clearable stuff. Some Akira gems like his Marina and the Diamonds-sampling I Am Not a Robot, another collaboration with Envy, fell foul of music copyright laws and you’ll have to just find them on YouTube instead. There’s a sample on the recent single, Jamie, though, that sounds strangely reminiscent of Guns N’ Roses’s Sweet Child O’ Mine.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” he deadpans. “I’m pretty sure it’s different notes. On a musicology level, it is actually different.”

Panic over, no money has been handed over to Mr Rose. Speaking of Axl, isn’t it a bit of a Guns R’ Roses thing to do to release two albums at once? Is there any sense that one of the albums is more important to him or are they both equal siblings?

“I think they’re the same person at different stages of their life. Think of it that way. The Life Equation is the culmination of all that stuff. It was a Goliath endeavour. Me and Steven Hague spent a lot of time and energy into making it as perfect a thing as we could. So there’s definitely a lot of energy gone into it; there will be a lot of energy directed towards it. It’s

definitely very important to me, but if you see me live, you’ll see songs from everything. You’ll see whatever songs I think will work best in the context of whatever that show is at that point, so depending on what the venue is or what the day is or what the weather’s like.”

So, when Akira’s not making music or gigging, how does he fill the other eighteen hours a day that he claims he works? If you check out his website you’ll see he’s also a very accomplished comic book artist. Strips such as ‘The Terrible Tale of Corey Haim’ and a very amusing rendition of a zombie Serge Gainsbourg – including a great moment when he manages to projectile vomit whilst saying ‘Sacr   Bleurghhhh!’ – show that Akira is indeed a Don of many talents.

Are comic books as close to his heart as his music?

“I had two things. I liked comics and I liked music primarily and that was pretty much what I liked most in the world when I was very very small. So, I tried to do stuff in those areas. Sometimes you can make a song and sometimes you can draw a thing for the song and then sometimes you can add a cartoon to that and then you have the whole thing.”

So, is he like the old all-rounders of the past, who would play professional cricket in the summer

and professional football in the winter, a man equally at home in both disciplines?

“Comics is going to be a thing I do a lot more of in the future. I’m very much in my infancy with comics. I’m a lot more competent musically now, cos I’ve spent a lot more time doing that. So I’ve got lots and lots to learn comics-wise. I’ve just finished reading Safe Area Gora  zde (a graphic novel about the Bosnian War by Joe Sacco) – an incredible masterwork and you look at something like that and the silly little doodles you do and you realise how much work you need to do. He’s taken a vast and very difficult subject and put it across in an incredible way.”

“What were your comic book influences growing up?”

“Oh God, loads, Beano, Dandy, Whizzer and Chips, then Marvel Comics. And Deadline – I don’t know if you remember that? It’s where Jamie Hewlett started. It was a comic and music magazine – underground comics and alternative music, and stuff like Milk and Cheese by Evan Dorkin, which was about a really angry block of cheese and carton of milk who were alcoholics and beat people up in a righteous fashion.”

I want to know if, like me, he keeps a notebook on him at all times to keep track of his ideas.

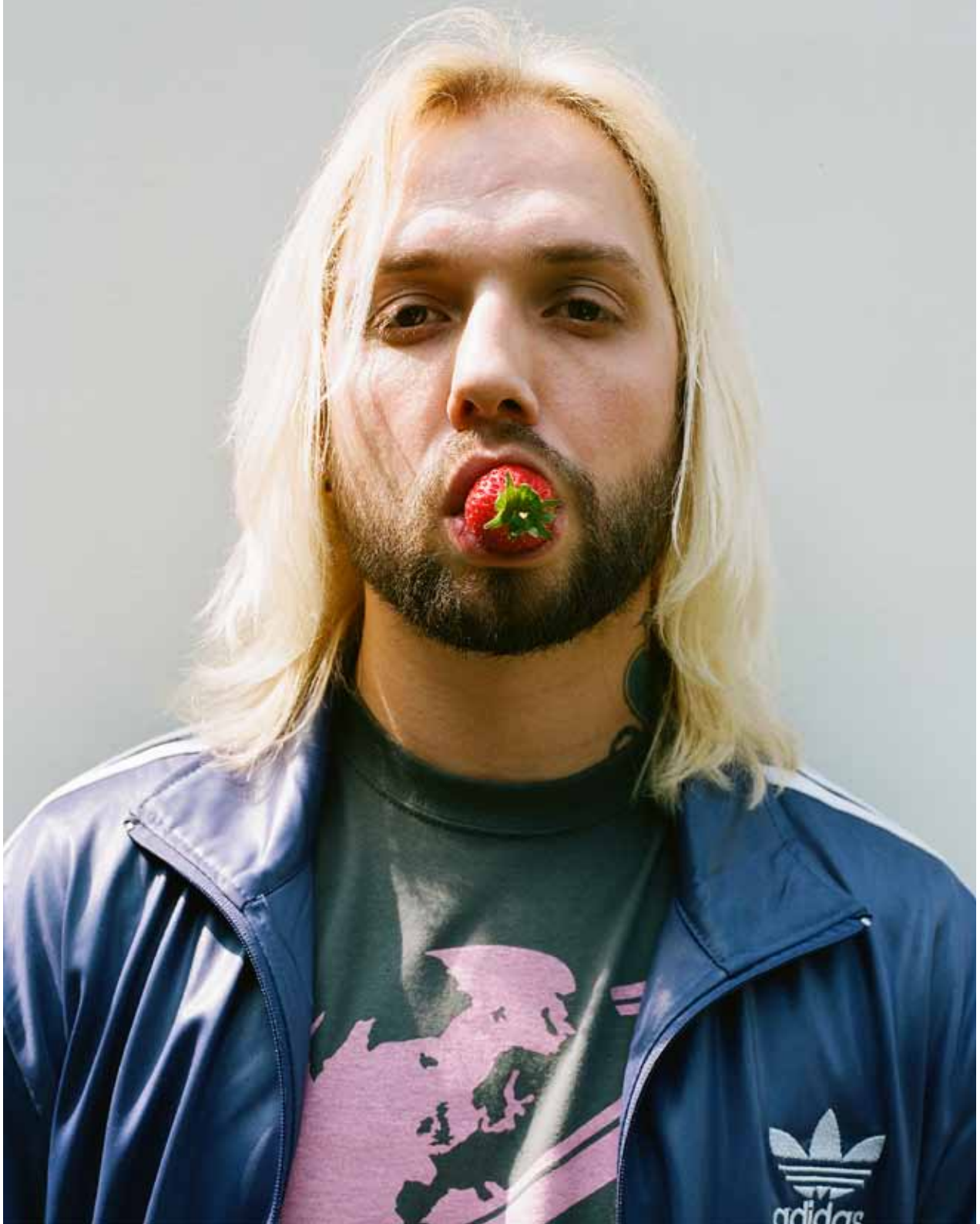
“I actually used to be really crap at that but recently I have started making notes. I have a little note thing in my telecommunications device.”

“You don’t have a Moleskine notebook then? You’ve got to rock a Moleskine.”

“Jay Electronica has a Moleskine. I used to just have a lot of beermats. I used to write stuff on peeled-off

beermats. I'm actually considering starting an event called National Beermat Comic Book Day, where everybody goes into a pub and draws a comic on the back of a beermat. Everyone does one panel then you could join them all together to make a massive comic."

Good ideas like this flow out of the Don. I'm glad we're filming this because if I was taking notes, I'd already have filled two Moleskines by now, and they're not cheap, as Jay Electronica will know. We've only been talking for half an hour and we've covered about a zillion topics (though not necessarily the ones I planned to talk about before the interview). Does he ever relax and switch his mind off? The answer seems to be no, as even kicking back, relaxing and playing a computer game can end up becoming the research process for a song. If you haven't seen the video for Lord I Miss Red Dead Redemption, his 'love song' to the Western-set computer game from the makers of Grand Theft Auto, get on YouTube now. It features him playing the game standing up and in a mirror so that it could be projected onto a screen behind him whilst he sang live. It's no mean feat, but what



DOES HE EVER RELAX AND SWITCH HIS MIND OFF? THE ANSWER SEEMS TO BE NO

inspired this gaming paen? "I work very hard, and I don't spend a lot of time playing computers games or whatever but somehow I got sucked into Red Dead Redemption, mainly because my girl did and she doesn't normally play computer games at all, but she got Red Dead Redemption and we played it together and it was an amazing and beautiful and moving and fully engaging experience on every level. We got right close to the end and then she moved the X Box while it was still spinning and it did this thing where you get a scratchy line around the disc and you can't play it, so that was that. But I was finding, wandering around, that I was actually genuinely missing this computer game and the world of the computer game and I would do things like look up in the sky and I would see a bird and my instinct would be to shoot the bird because that's what I would do within the game. I was in the shower and a little 'Lord I Miss Red Dead Redemption' refrain came in my head and I sang it to myself then I got out the shower and wrote the song."

I've read that Akira has two stuffed toy tigers in his house. Me too! Spooky.

"It's actually one and a half now. One lost his body. I used to have three but one ended up in Spain."

"It happens. I've got stuffed ones and carved wooden ones. The tiger is a majestic animal, a good role model. Do you take that into your life? Are you a tiger?"

"There's the tiger versus lion argument. I think the lion is a great animal but there is something incredible and mercurial about the tiger and his power and his grace."

"His stripes as well."

"Tiger doesn't care. Tiger's just it."

"There are loads of great songs about tigers. Tiger Feet, Eye of the Tiger..."

"I've got a recording of me singing that aged 2."

I like Akira. I liked him already, but our shared love of tigers has really sealed it. Together, we make a list of all the tiger-based songs we can think of and then try to think of songs about lions and only come up

with Bob Marley's Iron Lion Zion and The Lion Sleeps Tonight. We're not so impressed. The lion in that song is sleeping, not fighting and being cool like a tiger.

Akira laughs, "Lazy lion, snoring in the corner while the tiger fucks his wife."

I've just realised who Akira reminds me of – with his boundless energy and his mind that leaps from one thing to another at dizzying speeds– it's Tigger from Winnie the Pooh. If I had to define Akira it would be as a cooler, more musically-gifted and definitely less annoying version of Tigger. I want to see that quote on his next album cover, which, judging with the regularity this man puts out albums, should be pretty soon.

www.akirathedon.com

I had just finished playing an improv set with some local island musicians and we went to the bar for a drink and smoke. At the time I liked Jack Daniels; it was sweet and went down easy. My mind was shattered after just getting out of a long term relationship with a California girl. She always smelled like the beach and hash.

WHERE ARE ALL THE INDIANS?

Nothing came of it and I believe everyone at this point knew who he was in the bar. I noticed everyone whispering to one another; Hunter could have got away with murder. Everyone just would pretend it didn't happen.

www.chris-field.com
Check out his latest album Steel Tiger released by Warmgun Records.



PAUL Gaultier

PARIS. November 1991. It's raining. The man who dressed in skirts, gave a new dimension to rubber and PVC and put the sex back into haute couture arrives on time at Studio Ruchon. He's 40 years old and looks better than he did at 24; his hair is dyed blond and cut in a severe US Marine style. He's wearing motorcycle boots, leather trousers and the distinctive blue striped t-shirt. His PR person is quick to butt in and say that he has only two hours available and no more.

Five hours later Gaultier is still in the studio; his chauffeur is still waiting outside and he was in no hurry to leave at the annoyance of his PR person. He's enjoying himself. He talks and laughs incessantly. He likes the Polaroid test-shots, declaring: "At last something new!"

JEAN-PAUL GAULTIER

Originally intent on producing a single eight-foot high photomontage, Ian Davies found himself with too much useable material to fit into a single piece of art work. So he opted instead for four smaller photomontages. He wanted the viewer to look at the different areas of each, seeing not one but three dimensions – “stylist photographs”. Hence the eyelashes symbolise Gaultier’s feminine side; the wig a childlike energy; the poked-out tongue his unique and droll self-mockery; and last but not least the eyeball in his mouth and ear confirms the bizarre craziness of it all.

“His face has this fun side element to it; he likes to absorb all creative things, and I associated some elements of that in the portraits of him,” recalls Ian Davies. “I also wanted to give him a surrealist image by using accessories the way he does on his shows, to reflect his personality and character rather than the fashionable side of him. It really did work well on him.”





**JEAN
PAUL**

GAUL *Gaultier* **TIER**

Ian Davies never really had a plan to photograph Jean Paul Gaultier. But when SKIN TWO magazine invited him to exhibit a piece of work for the SKIN TWO gallery at their Rubber Ball charity event, his first and spontaneous choice was this man he admire tremendously.

“The first time I met Jean Paul Gaultier was in Kensington Market, September 1991. I remember running after him to show him my portfolio. I was stunned by his politeness and charismas – he was just such a charming person.”

However getting him in front of the camera was another matter. It was also around the time Gaultier had designed the iconic corset for Madonna's Blond Ambitious Tour; he was scarily popular around the world; he was in overdrive with a busy itinerary of fashion shows in Milan, Los Angeles and Paris, and was at the same time preparing his Men and Women collection for the following

JEAN GAUL

Intellect

PAUL TIER

February 1993. The photoshoot had therefore to be put back and back and the location changed from London to Paris. A week before the Rubber Ball event took place a date was at last finalised and only on the understanding of being allowed just two hours to photograph the busy designer. Thankfully for Ian Davies he had this genius of designer on his side all the way – encouraging and very helpful. “I was even more gobsmacked when he turned up at the event and opened the presentation of the photographs. He’s one in a million.”





TRIBES

It's been an eventful and frenzied year for this four-piece band from Camden.

by Liam Stephenson

They've gone from relative obscurity to being touted as one of the best new Indie-Rock bands around. Indeed you can't walk around London without seeing girls wearing Tribes t-shirts or posters plastered in every corner of each street. But being pigeonholed from grunge to American sounding the band are not impressed and want to shake off this kind of 'lazy journalism' and prove with their first EP We Were Children that they can grip their audience with their own talent, lyrics and style of music. And with Island Records giving them total creative control and the notorious Mike Crossey producing their album – this ambitious lot know they can't go wrong.

Tribes are made up of Johnny Lloyd (vocals/guitar), Dan White (guitarist), Jim Cratchley (bassist) and Miguel Demelo (drummer).

There's a big buzz around you guys at the moment, how do you find all that?

Jim: It is a little bit weird, but you don't notice it so much when you're at home. It's more when you're out of town, trying to win over more fans.

Dan: It's all been a steady progress, we haven't made like a massive leap. But seeing our posters up around London promoting a single, it's not



WE LIKED REM AND PAVEMENT, THOSE KIND OF BANDS. BUT WE LOVE PULP AND BLUR AS WELL... AND LED ZEPPELIN

weird so much, it kind of feels like we're ready to deal with that now.

Does it help to be with a record label like Island Records?

Miguel: It's a great platform for us.

Dan: We did set out to sign with Island from the start; that was the dream.

Jim: Yeah, we're really pleased to be with them. They let us get on with it, which is a really important thing.

Mike Crossey has produced records for a number of top British bands like Blood Red Shoes, Arctic Monkeys, Foals, to name just a few. How was it like working with him?

Jim: It was great. It took us six weeks, it was up in Liverpool. Quite an intense six weeks, but really, really worth it.

Johnny: Fantastic guy! Crossey sees things the same way we do – it was a family like environment.

So would you say you had creative control over the album?

Johnny: Yeah, yeah... there was barely any discussion over what was going to be on the record, or in what order. The label had faith in us, so that's I guess why they just let us get on with it.

And now you're touring up and down the country.

Johnny: Lots of gigs all over the country. It's definitely an Island Records mentality, which is great.



**WE JUST WANTED TO GET
EVERYONE DOWN IN CAMDEN,
HAVE SOME CHAOS**



We're just getting a new van now actually. Can't wait!

Miguel: It has such big history: it belongs to no other than The Brian Jonestown Massacre!

Jim says: We're gonna spray-paint it with some crazy colours.

You seem to have lots of American influences. Do you see yourselves as a British band?

Johnny: Absolutely! I think lyrically what we do is really British, but you can't help being influenced by other bands as well. I think when you first start writing at sixteen, you try to better others songs in a way. But then you get older, get your own ideas, get your own sound. But we liked REM and Pavement, those kind of bands. But we love Pulp and Blur as well... and Led Zeppelin.

Jim: Definitely Led Zeppelin.

You played to a packed out Camden High Street from a shop roof for your music video We Were Children? How did the idea come about?

Johnny: It was Dan's idea; a friend of his directed it.

Dan: It was a stressful day, put it that way. Anything could've happened. We didn't have long to get it done. There was a lot of disruption, but it



went all right, we just wanted to get everyone down in Camden and have some chaos.

I remember a friend got me to go to a gig of yours a while ago. I enjoyed it, but then I was pretty frustrated at how difficult it was to find any of your stuff online. Do you not think having that online presence is essential?

Johnny: Yeah, we found it was word of mouth with a lot of people. That's how we wanted it. I mean, we do have a MySpace now and a Facebook, but it's still all about the live shows.

Jim: I think the most important thing for us as a band is to just concentrate on playing our music and rehearsing, a lot of people in bands can get carried away with the whole online MySpace marketing stuff.

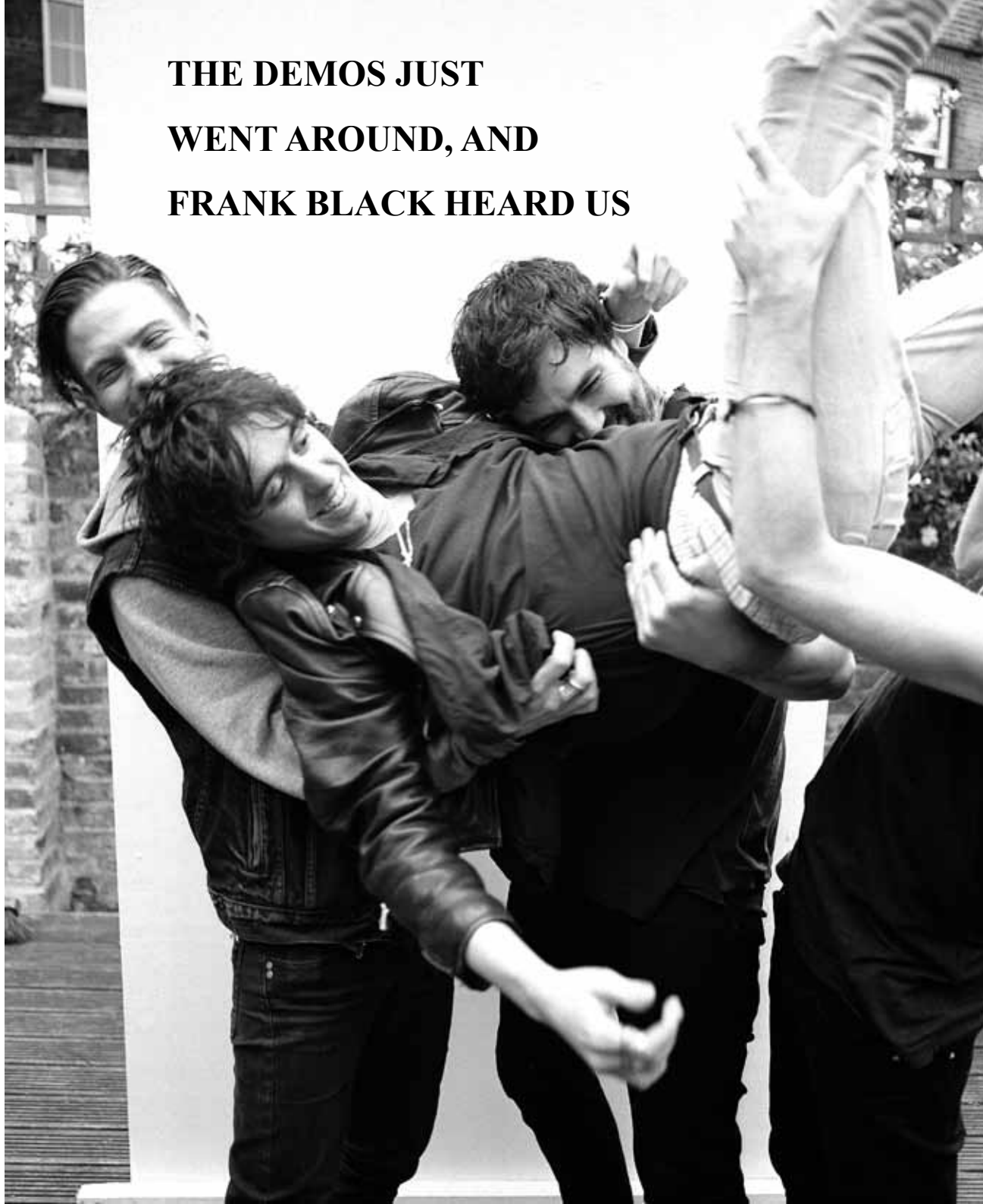
Johnny: We're not very active online. We're probably going to get shouted at!

I noticed Luke Pritchard from The Kooks raved about you guys on Twitter a while ago...

Johnny: We're good friends with them. They've been really great to us. There are a few bands that've helped us out like Mystery Jets and Pixies of course.

You supported Pixies really early on, didn't you?

Johnny: Yeah, it was after just our sixth gig. The demos just went around and Frank Black heard us, we ended up getting to play with them. It was great- we're all really big fans of them.



THE DEMOS JUST WENT AROUND, AND FRANK BLACK HEARD US



Did you have a drink with Frank afterwards?

Johnny: No, he doesn't drink, but we had a good chat with him.

What was it like to suddenly play to such a huge crowd? How did they take to you?

Dan: If they didn't like us, we would've known about it.

Johnny: We thought we were going to get bottles thrown at us! But nothing like that happened. You know, you go from playing small venues with just your friends there, and then you're in front of that many people, trying hard to get a reaction from them, but it went really well.

As for Mystery Jets, I hear you hadn't even met them before they went and did a cover of We Were Children on the radio?

Johnny: No, we hadn't. Blaine sent us an email asking if he could do it, and so I sent him the music along. And it was great. We owe a lot to those guys; they really helped give us a break. We respect them so much for it.

Do you see yourselves very much as a Camden band?

Johnny: It's kind of important to have somewhere where you're from, especially when you first start playing. I mean we like playing in Camden, and the people there have got behind us a lot; everything we've achieved is down to those early shows really.

Miguel: There's some really good stuff coming out in Camden: The Supernovas, Bones. It's a great



**THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING
IN CAMDEN. YOU CAN PLAY LOUDER,
MORE RAW...**



place to be.

Johnny: There's a definite revival going on.

Dan: There's definitely something in Camden. You can play louder, more raw. There's lots of energy about the place. Good time to be in Camden when starting a band.

You tend to record your songs on eight-track demos, don't you?

Johnny: Yeah, at home... It's just a quick easy way to do it, and we wanted to get songs out there as soon as possible. We've never really been into a vibe of really high production recording.

Dan: I think the demos are a really important part of the story of our band, like Johnny's homemade demos getting played around Camden. It was our demos that got us where we are.

Johnny: We referred to it even when we were doing the album; that we wanted that kind of dirty sound. Hopefully at some point we'll put a record out with them all on; a back catalogue that we'll try and release.



We just wanna make good music; we don't want it be about the drugs or anything like that.

Are you bemused by the way some people try to dissect your lyrics or looking far too deep in your songs?

Johnny: Yes! Some girl came up to me when we were in Oxford once, really highly educated, talking about Homer's Odyssey and other stuff. I had no idea what she was going on about. Then she said 'Did you get this from Dante's Inferno?' What the fuck's all that about? You just write the lyrics, don't you? It sounds really pretentious to go into it in great detail.

After the interview, Dan takes a phone call from another journalist who had forgotten to ask a question in their previous phone call. "What are the five things you have to take to a festival?" They all joke around throwing crazy suggestions; a



WE'RE GONNA SPRAY-PAINT IT SOME CRAZY COLOURS

frisbee the most normal choice. It's clear that the band are the best of friends; Johnny and Jim met at school where they played football together, and as there's a football in the garden, where the interview is taking place, they head the ball to each other; their record is fifty. They get to around thirty before they give up. As they head off to pick up their new tour bus, they can't wait to feel, and even smell, the personal drive, the psychedelia and creative madness of The Brian Jonestown Massacre's spirit - which hopefully will help them through the relentless tours and summer festivals to come.

www.tribesband.com



“FUCK YOU ART LOVERS”



Meet Kristian Von Hornsleth, notorious artist who channels the true spirit of punk rock. He wants to mess with your concept of art, and he wants you to remember his name in the process. Hornsleth is famous for being controversial, for digesting media and spewing it back out as graffiti, sometimes painted on motorbikes or mixed with the odd Uzi submachine gun. Hornsleth, himself, is very much a focal point for his own work. He's not shy and he's not to be messed with! Check out Denmark's latest controversial artist.

What reactions do you wish to create in people that go and see your work?

I hope my work creates smiles, reflection and tears, just like Hollywood movies. And the more I think of it, the more I wish the viewer enjoys the ride all the way and follows me back to my basic starting point in the corner of total confusion.

I am hoping to mirror some of the existential challenges we face in these post-post-modern spoilt, Western super society and wonderful times of ours. I wish to share with the audience the rush and rash of anarchy that I feel in being a victim of these times. I want to share the comical angst I feel when society is pushing us “until wrong feels right”, as Iggy Pop sings in some song I seem to remember.

Has art become too commercial and why?

No, art cannot be too commercial. It's maybe the approach that can seem commercial. There is not enough money in the world to pay for great art.

What you probably refer to is the decorative pseudo art, which has fooled gullible wealthy people for centuries, by clever fancy art dealers. This is also why I, many years ago, came up with the slogan, “Fuck You Art Lovers”, meaning: “Caveat emptor”, meaning something like: “Buyer beware!”

Why do we always read in the papers about how much this and this artist has sold for, why don't we read about the theme and subject matter?

Why do people always say they have this and this name artist's work, when it might be more fun to hear about an art work that expresses this or that?

On the other hand, one could claim the more commercial the art world

**PUSHING US “UNTIL
WRONG FEELS RIGHT”
AS IGGY POP SINGS IN
SOME SONG I SEEM TO
REMEMBER**



gets the more money the artist have to play with. Collection of art as such has become a growing middle class activity, and this has brought more cash into art, and that has also created more possibilities for art in general, and the question is always: Whether all this new art is interesting or a shallow fashion in lifestyle activity?

Does someone need to be a struggling artist to create great art or is it OK that they can be millionaires?

Again, I think the media sometimes confuse awareness and exposure of art with financial success. The struggling is always firstly about getting the content of the work right, I mean right in relation to art history and oneself.

Then the next step is the struggle to get it communicated to art lovers. The whole financial side is artistically uninteresting; it's just a luxurious parallel track and research funds when it works! I think the right question could be: Do you like Picasso better if you knew he was poor? It's almost tautological.

And yes it is OK for anyone to be a millionaire from their art, it does not affect the art itself - good art will always be good and vice versa.

Your work questions fame and publicity; how do these subjects sit in the art industry these days?

Fame and publicity is a goal for some and a tool for others. I think art and fame live two separate lives that sometimes can benefit from each other. A lot of bad artists have managed to get good fame, and many great artists probably never were seen.

Your surname ‘Hornsleth’ is a very prominent part of your work. Is bringing yourself centre stage, a reaction to fame, or something else?



Very good, not bad for an old punk rocker! The good old opposite psychology trick. Is there anything else but marketing? Do we have time for the actual product? Are we famous for being famous or maybe famous for actually being able to do something?

It's an unfair correlation, but in sports there is something to measure - number one is number one. And number one is better. In art there is no clear scale, so there has to be a great amount of bullshit factor there. The job is simply to separate the small miracles from the still bigger noise of indifference.

My name in the middle of most of my work began as a conceptual idea about inviting the viewer to take just this discourse with himself about what comes first, the content or the promotion. It was a clear point for me to investigate the dilemma of the viewer as he looked at my work. I was almost obsessed with the idea to wake people up and to go for content and not sedate yourself in decorative pseudo art and pollute the great and fragile feeling you actually can get from looking at great art.

I later became a victim of my own point and now the Hornsleth name

has become a trademark, and I see myself actively using the dilemma of the 'brand' by jumping in and out between ultra commercial and ultra non commercial art projects.

What are your views on the Turner prize and do awards matter?

I would love to get an award, but on the other hand awards are mostly tools for certain wealthy groups or art historians to justify and institutionalise what they think is important and carry the torch of truth through art history.

The problem is that there are not many other well functioning art evaluation systems. It is like democracy, it is the least annoying system. It's a patchwork, and that's the point I guess.

Dogmatic art evaluation principles did not work in the USSR or for the Nazis, it became boring and tame if art has a controlled political purpose directed by people outside art.

The dilemma of art evaluation is also one of the main virtues of art. This is maybe best explained by comparing art to design. It seems that good art is always raising questions and design gives answers. Art is best when it manages to question and

ART IS BEST WHEN
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almost destroy earlier ways to think in art. Art is best when, like science, builds on earlier experiences and negates all previous art by showing true originality.

Awards are great for the right projects, and yes, there is still a content quality issue to be discussed in art, beyond the stupidity of 'taste issues'.

Your favourite piece and why?

My favourite piece is my next one. It sounds cliché like. But it's true. The next one is called "The Buy My Vote Project", and it's about buying poor UK people's rights to vote. 100 poor participators sign a contract and are paid a certain amount of money. Then they are portrayed in paintings, and whoever buys the painting, owns the rights to this poor person's future votes.

Do you feel the need to shock and be controversial in order to be noticed?

Yes, the chock is the vitamin of acknowledgement, but it is also only a tool. Think of acupuncture - the needles provokes its surroundings in the skin and wakes the cells up to respond. The same thing with art - through stimulation we can get new

ideas. Though the controversialist approach is not always about death and porn, it also works for extreme beauty. Remember art is the last step before terrorism.

Can too much controversy back fire (your fellow countryman Lars von Trier and his Hitler comments) or does it always work (Lars got a lot of publicity anyway and great reviews for his new film)?

Yes, but then it branches into stupidity. Was it not Stockhausen who called 9/11 a great work? A very unnecessary and insensitive remark. We must remember that art is and will always be the intellectual cousin of entertainment, and that is still only entertainment and not food production in a third world country. I guess Trier is now caught in this stupidity-mess for a long time to come. At the end of the day I'm not sure that his remark sold more movie tickets...

I saw your motorbike design at Copenhagen Airport. Where did your idea for this piece come from?

The Ducati idea came from an art dealer, who asked if I could paint his bike. And I took the challenge. At first I only did it for the pr and the



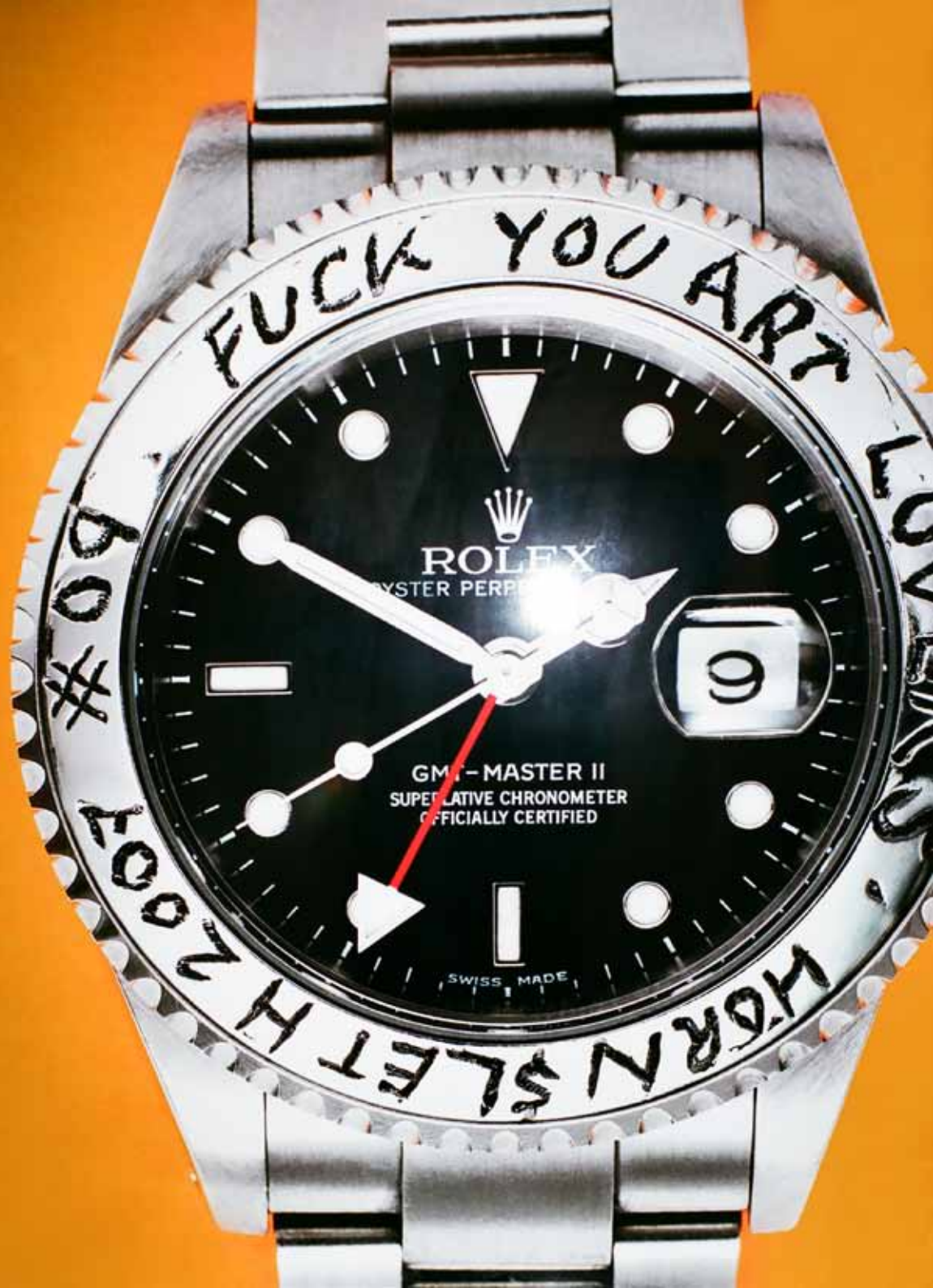
money. But then I really enjoy testing my work in non artistic areas to explore new contradictions. And that is great fun. Lately I painted a classical Morgan 4/4, which also came out as a very strange and interesting clash of intentions.

You like to use a lot of aerosol in your work, do you like graffiti? How much does graffiti influence your work?

Not much. I do aerosol because of the fantastic speed you can work and rework the canvas. And I love the gloss and 'cheapness' to it, and that it is not considered as 'art'. This gives me a chance to invoke a pure new missile of art into our society's complacent art thinking. As a matter of fact I find graffiti very snobby and conservative, they never allow new things in; It's like jazz, a bunch of geeks insisting on doing everything as we always do them! Some of the best graffiti I have ever seen was in Brazil in a poor area where they did it with paint and brushes, and that enlarged their options greatly.

"F.Y.A.L. Gun" and "F.Y.A.L. Rolex #9" remind me of Marcel Duchamp. Is he an influence on your work?

Hell yes! I am always playing with the idea to taking the found object further into the present day contemporary culture. I hope it's a bit like when David Lynch makes movies like Lost Highway. After this non linear strange film broadened the path of mainstream, the public got slightly more used to other ways to do movies without being called radical-non profit-experimental. We can all thank Duchamp for showing us that art is not only about decorative interior decorations but also can be pure poetic thought patterns demonstrated in actions and combination of objects and politics. But it is clearly not working fully for the art market, yet.



You have a great eye for colour have you ever thought or have you ever been involved in fashion design?

Thank you, that's very nice of you to say, though I am uncomfortable with good critique. I think of one of my big heroes, Max Ernst, who is said to have had seven parallel careers, so I'm still hoping to meet people that would collaborate with me in fashion. Fashion is interesting because it involves radical decadence, political signals, sex and huge financial schemes at the same time. Just like I thought art would be.

Are all the visuals you use for your work your own or someone else? If so, how do you manage to get all these artists to 'lend' you their work?

I just take what I need, like the big stupid ugly city advertisements that rapes my attention, wherever I walk, and without asking me. I can't walk around with closed eyes, can I? They take my view I take it back.

But yes, lately half of my work has been self-generating, meaning that I made the 'original first move' myself, and then I approached it as if it was an estranged element and then I 'Hornsleth' it.

The actual legal side is a grey zone according to experts, no lawyer will really bet on a judge in court saying you can't do a one off collage painting. Say no to Braque and Picasso and endless works of appropriation? Of course there are limits, and they appear when you do prints in editions, with many copies of the same 'appropriated' image. Then it's stealing. What is fair? I don't know. Ask the Chinese. Teacher! Leave them Kids Alone!

www.hornsleth.com



LONDON SHOULD GO TO REHAB

by Jon Cowen

I remember, way back in issue one of Uppror, I had talked about my love for London, about how it would always be my home, and that you take London with you wherever you go.

Fast-forward a few issues of Uppror, and the streets of London are awash with riots and looters, and it made me wonder if I still loved this city. Could a city change so much that I no longer wanted to be here? Was I actually ashamed and embarrassed of this place? Felt that way...

Let's rewind a bit; before the riots in London, the news of Amy Winehouse sadly passing away was another low for London. In Camden, Amy's home town, fans held a vigil outside her home; shocked that someone so young and talented could have self-destructed so dramatically. Amy had the world at her feet, what went wrong?

Is there juxtaposition between Amy and the rioters on the streets? I think maybe there could be. In my view, the rioters and Amy's death, both have links to depression.



Many kids grow up these days addicted to wanting to be famous, addicted to owning expensive things, but find themselves living in poverty and often in dysfunctional and abusive families. The rioters (not all but some) decided to express their feelings by trashing their local high streets and hungrily take what they deemed to be their due. Most would say there are better ways to protest, but if you grow up on an estate where abuse and poverty are rife, your idea of how to get noticed is quite different from someone who grows up in middle class suburbia.

Amy, on the other hand, had been addicted, too a few things, including to a dysfunctional relationship. Her hit album Back To Black soundtracks it quite explicit. Also, and I'm guessing here, most likely addicted to fame, or, the feeling of being wanted that fame provides. The recent failed tour, where she was booed off stage, could have sent her on a downward spiral of depression. I'm sure she was surrounded by good support, with people who cared about her, but winding up in some alien country, feeling the lowest she had probably ever felt, couldn't have been a helpful experience.

London, as a whole, needs to have a long hard look at ourselves. Since the recession our city has become more divided, but what do we do?

Maybe, take a leaf out of the Swedes book. Sweden have had similar protests (not nearly as big,

but similar) from Iraqi youth living in the poorer Rosengård district of Malmö. The protesting youth would set buildings on fire and then attack the fire brigade when they would arrive to put the fire out. It would be quite easy to put this down to purely criminal behaviour. But the Swedish government has also combated this behaviour by spending on education, youth activities and infrastructure in the area.

This is what the government in the UK should do. Knock down these concrete jungle estates and make newer friendlier living areas; invest in youth projects and education, and build up the self-esteem of the underclass. The future for everyone in London will improve if we bring the great social divide together.

I fear the government will never see what their spending cuts have done to the bottom layer of society. Social spending should be increased not taken away, as it was an uphill battle even before they pulled back on spending. I doubt these riots would have happened if the politicians thought less about filling the coffers, and the 2012 Olympics, and more about giving the next generation of talent a fighting chance.

London needs to go to rehab and I'm sure Amy, this time, would say yes rather than no.



SHE'S A ONE OFF

by Ian Davies

On June 27th 2008, London celebrated the 90th Birthday for Nelson Mandela in Hyde Park. I was asked by Vanity Fair to photograph a series of portraits of the artists that would be appearing for the event. I was allowed to set up a mini studio area backstage and when the opportunity came, I would be able to get the chance to photograph the musicians and actors, as they finished onstage.

The one person I was the most interested to meet and photograph that was performing was Amy Winehouse. In the lead up to the event there was speculation that due to her health she was possibly not going to perform, and from what I also understood was around the time in a clinic getting medical treatment for her addictions.

Thankfully for me and everyone else Amy did perform at the event and I think probably due to this treatment was looking stunning and completely in charge.

Her first appearance from the dressing room caused chaos and even in a tightly secured backstage area it was difficult to meet her. Eventually we did speak and I showed her some samples of my work - just to reassure her. Her kind yet direct words for my portrait of Liam Gallagher were, 'God, you made him look attractive!' - I took it as a compliment.

Amy, surrounded by bodyguards, helpers and her management was going to appear on stage a couple of times during the evening. So making the right decision as to what time to get the ok for the studio shots was playing a lot on my mind, as I didn't think I would get long, if at all, the time needed.

At one point while her styling team were preparing her, I started to shoot some documentary photographs - I think the fact that we had met briefly and I had took the time to talk to her rather than go in all guns blazing had indicated that I was not wanting to be part of the circus that was happening around her.

Amy Winehouse that night preformed the coolest show in front of a global audience, by about a 20 mile distance from the rest of the performances. All the hysteria and attention that I witnessed, the 50th Golden Globes and numerous other awards - I could fully understand she was a one off.

The finale to the whole event had just finished and everyone who had preformed on stage with Amy leading the singing was leaving the stage area. This time a mini buggy had been arranged to drive her from the stage to the dressing room area - and once again with the army of security Amy approached the main section - this time I asked would she allow now for the shots. She literally jumped out of the car and straight into my set and without a second thought just kicked off with a wild set of poses. It lasted for 20 seconds - I think, or so it felt - before a group of security practically lifted her out of the set and ushered her away to her dressing room.

That night, in my view, I came into contact with one of the greatest British music artists for over 30 years. I didn't think it would be the only time. On hearing about Amy's death on the afternoon of 23rd July - I immediately felt like I did on hearing about John Lennon passing away in December 1980, a strange sense of loss.



CREDITS

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For a full listing of Anika's forthcoming tour of the USA

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Extract from Chris Field's forthcoming book

BUY THE TICKET TAKE THE RIDE

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Amy Winehouse

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Photographs by: Ian Davies

Nelson Mandela 90th Birthday celebrations

Hyde Park, London 27th June 2008

Uppror Videos:

Anika, Tribes & Akira The Don

Interview with Anika and

Tribes by Liam Stephenson

Interview with Akira The Don

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