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Glen E. Friedman

MASH's Gabe Morford

The Mountain Goats

Richard Gilligan

Mark Foster

PWBC

I'm Free
Take Me

Declaration Of Intent

Photo Sam Ashley



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EYES & EARS

Our pick of what you should see and hear this month, err hence the title

PWBC

Looking for the best booze and drugs fixated novels out there? Look no further

GLEN E. FRIEDMAN

Along with having brought skateboarding to the fore with his legendary images of the Dogtown era, he's also taken the most iconic pictures of some of our favourite bands. GEF talks us through his singular vision and attitude towards photography and what it's like snapping Fugazi for twenty years

HARK: REVIEWS

Album reviews minus the often-undeserved hype

HARK: THE MOUNTAIN GOATS

John Darnielle used to be a nurse, looks a little like Trent Reznor and writes lyrics so good he's like some sort of song writing Yoda. What a guy!

CITY GUIDE: MANCHESTER

London? Paris? Tokyo? Nope, it's Manchester

PORTFOLIO: RICHARD GILLIGAN

It's not quite the science of sleep, but it's damn close. Dublin's Richard Gilligan casts his lens over a series of potential nocturnal nirvanas. Or the places where we try to sleep in other words

FIX ME

Fixed-gear bikes, function or fashion? Leading 'fixie' videographer Gabe Morford pitches in. Now you decide

ARTISANS: MARC FOSTER

Calling your board brand 'Heroin' may not seem like a great idea, but it's ten years not out, so there you go. Boss man and illustrator 'Fos' talks shop

OBJECTS OF DESIRE: THE CHECKED SHIRT

Nothing quite says 'move out of the way' like a man with a hired axe running for the bus

CROSSWORD

Something to peruse on the throne instead of that thumbed copy of Heat

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FACTORY

Eyes And Ears



JENSEN CAN PAINT TOO?

Blueprint rider Nick Jensen is unveiling his dreamy paintings to a critical public as part of a group exhibition exploring the plethora of different ways we can view this wonderful world we live in. Titled 'Welcome To Everywhere', Nick's work will be hanging alongside that of Richard Gilligan, Oliver Dorman, Suzanne Moxhay and Christopher May. The show is at Craze, Portobello Rd, London and runs from the 7th of February for just two weeks. Tap nickjensen.co.uk or thisisgetme.com for further details.

BARRY MCGEE

San Franciscan graffiti 'legend in his lunchtime' Barry McGee, aka Twist, makes a pit stop in the North East at the Baltic, Gateshead for the next few months with his mixed media exhibition 'They Don't Make This Anymore!'. Comprising installations along with his much sought after hand-drawn characters the show mixes old work with new and runs until the end of April. Check balticmill.com for opening times etcetera.

RAT FANS

If you ever needed any further cause to indulge your inner rodent then Chinese New Year could be it, as 2008 is the year of the rat. Kicking off on the 7th of February the lunar-calendar based celebrations come to a firecracker-flinging climax on the 22nd with events planned for the entire duration nationwide.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

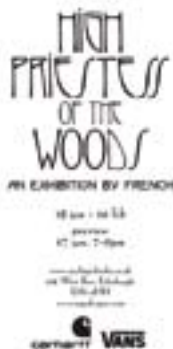
If hardcore punk is the soundtrack to your lovely little life then you will definitely want to exchange money for a paper square with the words Gallows, Fucked Up, Set Your Goals and SSS on it as they are all on tour together from the 15th to the 29th February up and down the UK. Feel free to shout obscenities at our pal and SSS front man Foxy if you can. He loves it.

HORSE POWER

We love Band Of Horses and we think the feeling may actually be two way. Mutual appreciation aside they're over here for a brief visit between the 21st and the 25th of February and you'd be a fool not to, at the very least, attempt to get a ticket for one of their shows.



Photo Colin Davison



FRENCH UP NORTH

Having finished up designing the artwork for Uniqlo bags of all things, pen and ink illustrator of the moment French exhibits yet another series of new finely-drawn works, this time in Edinburgh. Entitled 'The High Priestess Of The Woods' the show runs at: Analogue Books, West Bow Edinburgh until the 16th of February. Call 0131 220 0601 for details, or type; analoguebooks.co.uk and tapedcopies.com



JESUS-U-MENTARY

Holy sweet Jesus, I'm scared. I've seen the dark and deranged potential of the human mind. It's all on display in the documentary 'Jesus Camp'. You know the evangelical Christians in the US talking about Intelligent Design and the biblical sized punishment that awaits anyone who has an abortion? Well, here you get to see how they treat their kids. Strap on your crash helmet and head for the hills to hide; here's one disturbed bunch of grownups with some strange ideas on how to make the world a better place. Centre stage is Becky F, a healthily obese woman who will gladly talk to you in tongues. She's a children's minister at the evangelical Christian summer camp 'Kids on Fire' in Devil's Lake, North Dakota, where kids come to hang out with Jesus and pray for their souls. Cue a lot of crying and praying kids along with a little girl praying to a bowling ball, a power point presentation being blessed by a gang of loopy pensioners and a cardboard cut-out of George W Bush being worshipped by a truckload of toddlers. Really you couldn't make it up.

Feeling more like a film than a documentary, the 'characters' are as good as any of the tortured cinematic protagonists created by the almighty Coen Brothers, just more frightening. There's no witty voiceover hitting home the points and facts you will be talking about down the pub later, and apart from a bit of text explaining the premise, there's nothing directly telling you what the deal is. I know Christians who most likely will find some of the freakiest scenes strong, inspiring and beautiful, which is a credit to the directors Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady. Let there be no doubt, it's easy to see which side of the fence they're on. They understand just how crazy these people are, and how to make the most of the potential humour that lies in showing their delusional ways. And frankly, I'm amazed at how they got some of the shots. The directors obviously possess some pretty worthy sweet-talking skills. Showing these fanatics for what they are without passing too much judgment, it is at its core, very entertaining stuff. Good job. The only thing I'm left wondering is what the hell Jesus would've thought about it?

Per Steiner Nielsen

Jesus Camp is currently available on DVD from Magnolia Pictures

Palace Waywards Book Club

Here at P.W.B.C H.Q we'll be the first to come out and admit it: skateboarding is the Best Thing Ever and books are a load of boring old piss by comparison. If it's ever a toss-up between practicing kickflips with your mates in a wind-blown car park or staying at home and reading the complete works of Marcel Proust, then our advice will always veer heavily kickflipwards. Because you could get hit by a bus tomorrow, and skateboarding - as you've probably already figured out - is the absolute best way a young person can spend their time and that's that. It's the life of the fucking soul, frankly.

HOWEVER: this ALL NEW and EYEBLEEDINGLY EXCITING new books column is here to promote reading, which we hereby confidently announce is the Second Best Thing In The Whole World After Skateboarding. You can't skate all the time, and so from now on, on the rainy days, and on the cold winter nights, we ORDER you to follow our ABSOLUTELY INFALLIBLE guide to the best books going and just read your shitting head off, basically. Set your X-Box on fire and smash up your telly with a bat: knocking that stuff on the head and reading a load of dead good novels instead will improve your life something ridiculous, we pwomise.

Grim druggy booze-soaked squalor is of course one of the P.W.B.C's most dearly cherished special interests, so to kick things off this month we're sticking with what we know and offering up a handful of our very favourite squalor-ridden works of fiction. Go to your local bookshop, or to the library, or on the interpipe or whatever, get hold of something off this here list and then jam it all up in your eyeballs and reap the rewards. DO IT NOW OR FACE OUR DEADLY WRATH.

"Junkies have no interest in sex and they have no interest in other people except as suppliers of junk. They go around looking younger for a few days. Then they need more"
William Burroughs



Venus Drive by Sam Lipsyte (2000)

Savage and tragically under-worshipped short story collection by a young American writer whose lack of international literary mega-stardom actually just pisses us right off. If we had our way, the Statue of Liberty would be knocked into the East River and replaced by a giant concrete replica of a grinning Lipsyte giving the world a double thumbs up. Most of the stories in his first effort here are centred around a gloriously pathetic gaggle of Generation-X New York/New Jersey drug addicts, junkie strippers and spirit-crushing bullied-fat-kid-at-summer-camp-suicide-tragedies. File under; BEST SHIT EVER. (Note: ACTUALLY file under 'L' For 'Lipsyte'. Let's not fuck about too much here).



Anything by Raymond Carver

You might as well just get 'Where I'm Calling From', the collected stories. A lot of them are pretty similar fare; depressed Middle-American middle-aged man seeks another soul-sapping and utterly meaningless job, mainly using the tried-and-tested method of loafing about the house smoking and drinking away the pain of a miserable marriage from a whiskey bottle hidden behind a cushion on the sofa. Maybe he goes fishing, or to the store/bar/diner. Maybe not. Either way; he's glum and pissed out of his face, just the way we like it.

Once a ferocious alcoholic, Carver quit boozing for the last eleven years of his life, then went and karked-it after getting terminal lung cancer. Moral of story: if you're going to quit booze, quit fags too. Or just keep on drinking and smoking incessantly like a big old pissed-up chimney until you die young and beautiful like all the greats. By the way: Carver's poetry is really good too. So, um, read that as well? Oh go on.



Junky by William Burroughs (1953)

Man this book is a hoot. Smack-literature demi-god Burroughs pulp-fictionalizes the early years of the hopeless addiction to heroin that dogged him for the rest of his life. Junky positively overflows with mouth-wateringly vivid descriptions of spiking oneself full of brown and falling about in a stupor, forging morphine prescriptions for sketchy quacks, dealing weed and speed and heroin and bumming Mexican rent boys. Remind you of anyone? That's right; P.W.B.C's very own Danny Brady! Just kidding. He doesn't do any of those things. He does love this book though. Taking heroin is a huge mistake, by the way. We advise you never ever to do it if you want to carry on skateboarding (which you definitely should) and not become a lying scab-ridden no-mates shitbag.



Boxy An Star by Daren King (1999)

Wowzers we forgot how much we LOVE this amazing novel. It sounds completely mental and it is. Set in a not-too-distant English future and narrated by Bole, a fourth-generation pill-head whose predecessors have taken so much ecstasy (as do he and his girlfriend Star, like all the time) that his brain is a spongy mush and his entire grip on reality is constantly beamed through a wobbly spangled e-kaleidoscope. The whole thing's written in the weirdly stilted kiddy-language that's all that Bole can muster and it's beautiful and hilarious and frightening and sad. The style is so good that we're going to have to quote a bit of it here just to give you a taster. This is how it starts: "We me an Star are under the pill bag. The pill bag is a jumbo big bag an is massive an full up of pills. We like it loads. It feels nice on us..It is white an is massive an full up of pills. An we are full up of pills aint we Star." It's basically 250 pages of that. And it's so good that it makes us want to puke up rainbows and weep like beaten kids.



The End of Alice by A. M. Homes (1996)

This novel is an ultra-harrowing sort of 1990s response to Nabokov's Lolita (which is one of the BEST BOOKS EVER, by the way). In a series of deeply disturbing letters, a jailed American child-murdering paedophile communicates with a curious suburban college girl who's also kiddy-fiddling a pubescent boy-child. Incest, rough prison buggery, shooting cocktails of drugs into the tongue and physically nauseating descriptions of frenzied sex-murder abound. Not cheery but absolutely, painfully brilliant. (Mind-Boggling Note: A. M. Homes' most recent novel This Book Will Change Your Life was nominated for Richard and Judy's Book Club. It's a little bit more daytime TV-friendly, that one).

So there it is. Read and report. Pretty, pretty please.

Stuart Hammond

Glen E. Friedman



Resolutely independent in every, and any sense of the word, Glen E. Friedman has over the past twenty so years almost single-handedly opened the world's eyes to the birth of modern skateboarding, and its ears to the now legendary protagonists of the musical worlds of punk and hip-hop. But he's not exactly one to rest on his photographic laurels. Still, as you'd expect, doing his own thing on his own terms, his latest project focuses upon the heavens and the inherently impermanent world of clouds, rather than earthly bodies.

Corresponding tit for tat for a good few months, Glen was at the very apex of our list of potential interview victims and we're as pleased as a very pleased thing indeed that he now gives us an insight into all those iconic Dogtown shots, what it's like snapping Fugazi for two decades and why clouds are his new photographic obsession.

Interview: David Hopkins

When and/or what started you thinking about bringing all your photos of Fugazi together? Was it arbitrarily prompted by the impending 20th anniversary of their first show, or had you been thinking of collating your vast array images of the band anyway?

I think the 20th anniversary thing looming was part of it, but also, like with most of my other books, really I didn't want all of these great images to just sit in my files for no one but my self to appreciate. This is a band that is so loved and respected by myself and so many others, I thought it would just be a great thing to get out there. And most importantly hopefully to inspire.

Of all the bands you've shot, you always kept coming back to Fugazi. What was it about them that made you want to continue to capture and chart their performances over the last twenty years so voraciously? And I know you didn't shoot every gig you went to, but what made you feel you had to document all those shows?

It was fun! And they were always so photogenic. I love taking great photos, composing, capturing just perfectly those moments, fractions of time, in an artistic way. It was exciting to me. And to further inspire others with the images ultimately is always my goal. **Do you think that, if for example Black Flag or Bad Brains had stuck around you may have built the same relationship with them or wanted to chart their live performances in a similar way?**

Well actually I do have a pretty good archive of shots of both of those bands, and I had pretty good relationships with both of them, particularly Black Flag, I was very close with them for several years and still remain friendly with some members. But the period of time those bands' live performance and current music inspired me was a much shorter period of time than Fugazi. Fugazi kept their same high level constantly over the entire time they played and recorded. Those other groups, as much as I LOVED them and am still inspired by their early records to this day, had a much shorter crucial period of inspiration as far as I was



concerned, so I only shot them during that time.

I've read that you had very specific methods and aims in mind when you shot Fugazi, like relying on natural light as opposed to using flash and trying to get the whole band into the frame on live shots. Can you briefly talk us through why you put such restrictions on yourself and what some of the problems were that you encountered working this way.

Well I thought that the whole band deserved to be in the frame together, I was hearing all of them, and none of them were more important than the other, in fact neither was the audience any less important, so why not try to fit them all in the frame together in an interesting way? It was a challenge I made for myself to also more accurately portray the entire moment. Now that's not to say there were not intense moments that I would not want to catch close up of particular individuals, but getting it all in there at once was just a cool challenge to tell the story in a more democratic way.

You've mentioned on occasion about your frugal use of film when shooting pictures, live or otherwise, was this always an underlying facet of your working life? And is it based purely on the desire not to waste film if you can avoid it, or does it serve as a means of focusing your attention? I know Ian mentions in interviews about you spending as much time looking at them without shooting as you did actually releasing the shutter.

Well I am totally anti-waste with anything that's for

sure! The other points you mentioned are totally accurate as well, focusing intensely in the moment, the correct moments is much more specific when you're not just clicking away like a fool hoping that by chance or default you get that one good shot. I'm not that into random acts, I want to be on top of it and get it on purpose. It focuses the intensity and meaning to me much more.

It seems like a stupid question, but did the band ever question your interest in them?

That's a funny one. But although none of them were egomaniacal in any way, I think as with myself, when people show interest in what you are doing it's more of a sign of respect and appreciation in the hard work they do from a peer, that's usually cool.

Or to put it another way, though obviously you'd forged a close relationship with Fugazi, for such a seemingly humble and self-assured band they must have wondered what it was you found in them that was so interesting. For example I read a quote from Guy Picciotto where he said, "Sometimes I find it funny that people find us photogenic at all because, unlike a band like the Beatles who had a different look every six months, I look at our book and I'm like, 'Hey look, we're wearing the same T-shirts for 16 years!' And no one has a moustache."

Well obviously I didn't shoot them because of their style or fashion sense! They were photogenic because they were active and emotional, they gave it everything at every show and I couldn't just stand there and let it drift into the air and the consciousness of only those



Opposite:

Paul Constantineau 1976 from Fuck You Heroes

Top:

Fugazi from Keep Your Eyes Open

Above:

Beastie Boys 1992

On Fugazi - "They were photogenic because they were active and emotional, they gave it everything at every show and I couldn't just stand there and let it drift into the air and the consciousness of only those in the room"



in the room. In fact even those in the room did not have the perspective I did, so it was my responsibility to share that through my lens, my perspective, and I would compose it to be beautiful to show it the way I saw it, get it?

And related to that, was it often difficult or uncomfortable to shoot group portraits of the band? As for me at least in many of the shots they look either uncomfortable or unswervingly conscious of the process?

Indeed some time they were uncomfortable, in those photos I put in the book, usually you wouldn't see those moments, but this was to cover twenty years, so I wanted to show a bit of the totally candid serious and funny moments as well. I mean, sometimes it may have been uncomfortable for a moment and if stayed like that for over a moment I would ask everyone to move on or we'd just stop for the day. I never want people to be uncomfortable when I shoot them, or if they are, in order to get the perfect shot, I don't want them in any uncomfortable way for more than they want to be. Some people understand that working with an artist there are times we have to suffer for our art.

Trite to ask I know, but for whatever reason do you have a favorite Fugazi image, or set of images from a particular tour, that somehow stands above the rest?

Not really, but we did get some cool shots that day around DC when I shot them in front of the Canadian embassy and around town that day, one of those shots

became the back cover image on Repeater.

Moving onto technicalities, just how arduous a process was it collating, selecting, re-printing and proofing the images in Keep Your Eyes Open?

Arduous? Well I've been seeing these images for years, but when it came down to the final edit and layouts it took me about 6 months I guess, before proofing, and this is like my sixth or seventh book, so you know it could have taken much longer, but I had a pretty good idea of the direction I wanted to go in all along for the most part...I think it went pretty smooth actually (even if a few typos did end up in the first edition copies)

When you started shooting band pictures did you draw any influence from other photographers from the 60's and 70's or was it a blank slate in terms of your approach/ideas as how to document the bands you were into?

Well I can't remember any photographers names in general, but I had a good sense of what I did like most in others photos and a lot of my own aesthetic, so I just combined all of that and came up with my own thing which I respect very much thank you. C.R. Stecyk III was obviously an influence though.

Can you take us through some of your photographic heroes past and present that have inspired you in any way, shape or form?

I have not been inspired by any photographers, only the subjects and the cultures, my own eye is my artistic inspiration.

I know you've talked about it before, but if you could indulge me, and talk us through the work that you did for Action Now and how the magazine was instrumental in bringing bands into skater's consciousnesses. It's a connection that's incorrectly attributed to Thrasher.

That's interesting that you would bring that up, very insightful of you! Well of course Action Now was mostly a skateboarding magazine and certainly the 1st to include serious articles about music and music reviews, but then also unfortunately watered down pieces on other alternative sports, in order to try and attract advertising for a glossy magazine that could no longer be supported by the skateboard industry alone, which was in a horrible state. Fact is if there was not an Action Now magazine there never would have been a Thrasher. A few people in the industry were fed up with not having their own magazine for skateboarding alone, and honestly I think they wanted some more control over the industry publication, so they ended up starting their own, it was just a glorified fanzine with great skate shop distribution when it started.

But back to the question, YES it was "SkateBoarder's Action Now" that broke a lot of bands into American culture through record reviews I asked Pushead to do for the magazine, and through features they did on music where I practically had to force them to cover radical punk music that the older editors didn't really understand at first. With hundreds of thousands of readers at first these hard core bands were getting exposure to a wider audience like no other punk bands



in the US had ever before. It was cool to be a part of that spreading of the culture, to all the far corners that skaters were existing in, even if it was during a time of a major downturn in the interest of skateboarding (which is somewhat unimaginable today).

Talk us through your Recognize book and what on earth moved you to start taking photographs of clouds?

Well that's a really loaded question I can go on and on, and I think I just went too far with the previous question, so let me try to contain myself a bit to answer a bit more succinctly. Clouds are 100% universal on this planet, and absolutely beautiful and unique, every single one of them! Not one image could ever be exactly duplicated ever after the moment had passed that the shot was taken. I wanted to bring it all back to a base, to help people RECOGNIZE beauty and an aesthetic that I think has been lost in much of the culture these days. I want people to learn to see again, and not accept bullshit photography or scribbles as fine art! This book was a way for me to make a statement, my attempt at realigning the artistic aesthetic of a generation by bringing them back to something so primitive and perfectly universal that it could not be denied and would hopefully inspire.

Have you been tempted to shoot any skate photos recently? And do you still keep in touch with what's going on?

Sure, once a true skater, always a true skater, even if I don't ride that often anymore. But, do I read all the skate mags these days and know all the top

riders or new tricks? Hell no. Do I thumb through a magazine every once in a while? Yes. Do I keep in touch with my old skate friends from when we were all just teenagers? Yes, no doubt. Just this week Steve Olson (SkateBoarder of the year 1978) talked to me about possibly shooting a shot of him and his son Alexander at a drainage ditch next week, that sounds somewhat tempting, so we might actually do that, but really I haven't shot a skate photo that I can remember in at least five years. I'm a style person, not a trick person, and skating today is so well covered by the video format and the too many photographers and too many magazines, there's no reason for me to still cover it that I can see, that's for the next generation of photographers.

And finally what does 2008 have in store for Glen E. Friedman?

I will mostly be concentrating on raising my son who was just born. An artistic collaboration or two, and the usual promotion of my books and those cultures I am interested in, to help inspire rebellion until we live in a more perfect world.

'Keep Your Eyes Open - The Fugazi Photographs Of Glen. Friedman' 'Recognize'

'The Idealist - In My Eyes Twenty Years' and 'Fuck You Heroes' are all available now

www.burningflags.com



Opposite:

Run DMC 1985

Top:

Fugazi Washington DC, August 1997 from Keep Your Eyes Open

Above:

Chuck D. and Flavor Flav from Public Enemy 1987

"I have not been inspired by any photographers, only the subjects and the cultures, my own eye is my artistic inspiration"



Kid Harpoon – The Second E.P

As the literal title tells you, this is the second mid-length release from London's Kid Harpoon and you may suppose it's aimed at filling the Harpoon-shaped musical void while he finishes off his debut album. Which it does, but it also stands, metaphorically speaking, on it's own two feet as an accomplished piece of work. Reminiscent of a more vocally possessed Pete Doherty mixed with an upbeat Billy Bragg, if such a beast actually existed, his voice is commanding, emotive and the lyrics are steeped in social commentary rather than just that slushy romance stuff. Which we like, and you should too. Can't wait for the album. The truth. myspace.com/kidharpoon



The Cave Singers – Invitation Songs

Yes it's yet more folk for you folks, but trust me when I say that the debut album from Seattle's Cave Singers all but barged its way in here, in a lo-fi sensitive, shuffling way of course, and I just couldn't refuse. Conjuring aural images of Fleetwood Mac backing a youthful Dylan, singing for his organic supper outside a rain drenched bivouac made from twigs, this is as comfortable to listen to first time around as it is three weeks in. And on this form it's easy to see why rootsy, rustic Americana on a whole has experienced such a resurgence. Erring more towards pop than the likes of Espers and Six Organs it's well worth leaving your buffalo-hide tepee to get hold of. Excellent. myspace.com/thecavesingers



Saviours – Into Abaddon

As their grandiose name suggests Oakland, California's Saviours are a welcome and much needed liberation of ours ears from false and sub-standard metal, but they achieve this noble purpose by essentially re-interpreting the past rather than coming even within ten foot of creating a shimmering, new metallic future. Working from a frighteningly similar playbook to the one used by their East coast cousins Early Man, basically this is 'Killers' era Iron Maiden quite possibly fronted by a Lemsip-lubricated Lemmy. Either that, or just 'Killers' era Iron Maiden. Which isn't exactly a bad thing. Paddle out onto the latest homage to the new wave of British heavy metal. myspace.com/saviours666



Earth – The Bees Made Honey In The Lion's Skull

Let's set this journalistic stall out good and early. We love Earth, we love their records, we love their hair, we love their artwork, their whole kit and kaboodle, so you can go ahead and assume that we are going to be rating their latest release fairly highly. And you'd be right. Featuring jazz guitar maestro Bill Frisell on a couple of tracks and touring bassist Don McGreevy throughout, it's arguably their influence that has tweaked the instrumental musings of the band in a slightly jazzier, moderately less droning direction. Spiritually inclined and hypnotic as ever, if you haven't experienced the colossal sound of Earth then this is your perfect entry point. Epic. myspace.com/earthofficial



Cat Power – Jukebox

If like me your enduring image of Chan revolves around that infamous photo she's not too happy about, of her with her pants unbuttoned, it may be difficult to see past that and acknowledge a singer who's at the absolute zenith of her game. Ok, well not that difficult. A covers album featuring her husky interpretations of songs by the likes of Sinatra, Janis Joplin, Dylan, Billie Holiday and Joni Mitchell, along with two of her own compositions, as with any good cover it's her ability to make someone else's songs sound completely like her own, which sets her, and this, her second stab at this increasingly popular stop-gap format, apart. And that's no small potatoes when you're covering 'New York' by ol' blues eyes. myspace.com/catpower



Danava – Unonou

Having very clearly re-defined what the words f—king cosmic should encompass on their debut offering, Danava have continued their unfathomable journey through musical space and time on their latest seven-song album. Sounding like a vacuum packed version of the complete canon of classic rock, gatefold sleeves and all, bouncing around the boot of the Mars rover driven by John Carpenter, singer Dusty Sparkles and co are frankly operating on a different plain from the rest of us. Confounding, unremittingly and unapologetically odd, and with the 80's keyboard even more prominent this time around it'll take a few spins to even start to get used to, but it's well worth your perseverance. I mean they even have a song called 'The Emerald Snow Of Sleep', get involved. myspace.com/danava

The Mountain Goats

While the basic ingredients of bass, acoustic guitar and vocals remain all but unchanged The Mountain Goats upcoming offering ‘Heretic Pride’ is once again lyrically, and indeed musically, a step forward, and possibly to the side, from both their supposed breakthrough album, the painfully semi-autobiographical ‘The Sunset Tree’ and its stellar younger brother, 2006’s ‘The Lonely Tree. Catching up with the single least singer/songwriter-esque human being on any planet at the back end of last year, John Darnielle talked us through nursing, wanting to be Ozzy Osbourne, indestructible life forms and the unparalleled joys of contemporary dance.

Interview: David Hopkins
Photo: Sam Ashley



Let’s start at the very, very beginning with a blatantly obvious, but much overlooked question, why did you begin making music? Was it just a whim or was there a nobler purpose behind it?

I hear you. I wasn’t writing for anybody I was just trying to amuse myself. I was working as a nurse and making good money, was single, my rent was nearly free, living on the grounds of the hospital where I worked in employee housing, in a room about this size. You know, I had extra money there was a music shop down the street, you wander in and you have extra money in your pocket, and I bought a guitar. I was writing poetry, which I’ve done all my life and it’s interesting, if you asked a person why they started writing poetry, you wouldn’t. Poets are just expected to write poetry, whether or not you expect to make something of it. That’s all I was doing, and I just set a couple of them to music for the hell of it, just to see if it would sound good. I liked it, so I sorta transitioned out from poems to songs. My friends told me that this guy Dennis who had a label, was putting stuff out. I’d just made a little mock-up thing of the stuff I’d been doing at gigs and called it The Mountain Goats so I handed it to him and said, ‘hey Dennis check this out’. And he printed it up and released it! [laughing]. That was the first tape. I would play an open mike at the college I was going to and people responded really well and people seemed to like it. So, what drives me is not the need to express myself, it’s the fact that there’s some people that seem to enjoy what I do and so I enjoy doing that for them. I was long past wanting to be famous. I was happy in my nursing job, I was going to go on to get a more advanced nursing license.

It’s interesting because quite a few musicians have some grand aim from when they’re thirteen years old, they want to be Ozzy Osbourne or...

No I did too! Everybody does, but I was pragmatic at that point. I don’t er, I won’t say I’m like the great paragon of uncompromising character, ha-ha. I’ve just had my picture taken, and I don’t like having my picture taken. But it always seemed to me that if you decide to be famous you’re probably not going to get to do it on your own terms. Whereas other jobs at least everything’s laid out in front of you so you know what’ll be expected of you and you get to stay home all year long. **It’s really interesting how musicians and artists differ in what drove them to start creating and what continues to drive them. For many it’s just because and for others it’s some sort of cathartic experience that allows them to channel this stuff from inside.**

Life’s long you know what I mean? You just never do know, I didn’t really start doing anything seriously with this stuff until I was twenty-seven. And it was only because people were saying ‘when are you coming here’, and I was, ‘are you crazy? It’s a long ways away’. ‘Well no, no, no we’ll pay for your flight’. ‘What? Well I guess I’ll be there’. So yes, it was just a question of being open to what people seemed to want me to do. **And you mentioned you’d been writing from an early age?**

I’ve been writing since I was six years old. I got a typewriter for my seventh birthday. **So why did you become a nurse rather than following an academic path into literature?**

Well, nursing was a quicker way of getting a foothold in the world you know? The thing with literature in the US you’ve got to do four years undergrad, two years Masters and at least four Phd. I didn’t want to put off life that long. I did at one point have intentions to get on a Phd programme, but this got in the way. Deciding to follow that kind of path means you just spend your twenties with no money at all [laughing]. Many people are very good at applying for grants, but I find the whole process very suicide inducing. Getting student loans once a year at college, I’d just want to die, I didn’t want to wait, begging for this cheque. Whereas nursing is a useful job, I always felt that if you’re able to do this then you should probably be doing this. There’s always call for it, it’s stable, that’s what I wanted, to establish myself.

Talk me through your song writing process Well if I write a song and I don’t like where its going and I haven’t got a version of it by the end of the day, then fuck it you know? If I’m working on a song on Monday and I haven’t got somewhere with it by Tuesday then chances are I’ll just torpedo it. To hell with it, there’s going to be other songs. But back then, way, way, back in the day if I didn’t have a version recorded into the boom box that I considered release-able then I wouldn’t use it. I have many, many tapes of multiple takes of songs that didn’t wind up pleasing me. Because I’ve always figured, I guess some people must think you only have limited number of songs in you, but I don’t look at it that way. I think if this is what you do, then I’ll probably just keep doing it and hopefully get better at it, I think.

That’s the weird thing about rock and roll is people always think somebody lost their thing. And that’d be

the only creative field in the world where that would be considered the norm. You expect when I tell you here’s Hardy, these are his late poems, you’re probably going to think all that cumulative experience over the last twenty years of his life, they’re going to be really reticent. And the same is true of novelists, you expect their last novel to be something really big. But with music, people you expect their first album to be... and it tends to be true. The Violent Femmes, their first album is the one that you think about, the rest of them may interest you or not, but the first one that’s the thing. It’s true for so many bands and it’s weird, but I think that’s probably a self-fulfilling prophecy thing. People focus too much on the early vitality of something, I’m more interested in developed craft. **It’s often inevitable as bands typically have worked on the songs for their debut album for years and years before, toured them...**

The line is that you have your whole life to write your first album and a year to write your second one [chuckling]. So, early on no one was listening or no one was supposed to be listening, there was no intention of that, so I was just writing to amuse myself. Now I’m aware of what I’m writing, the struggle there is, you hear it with a lot people who get famous too fast, that then by their third album they’re trying to write something ‘weighty’, they’re trying to ‘say something’, fuck that! You should be having fun with the writing and not think you’re such a badass that you’re actually gonna...

Second-guess the audience You can’t do that. Doomed right?

When you set out to implicitly ‘say something’ you often end up saying nothing of any importance

Well yes, it’s not philosophy, it’s songs right. A song to me should tell a little story or sketch, if it doesn’t want to be a narrative song, which should sort of evoke a feeling, a small job. Now then, we the listeners, do big things with those little things. But the song is not the big thing, the big thing is what happens inside the listener’s brain, so the song for me is just a little wedge in the door. I think songwriters get big headed in thinking, ‘yes I made that happen’, it’s like no, you did something that was good enough to allow somebody else to do interesting work with it.

I found it a little odd that advance copies of the album comes with a comic book which explains the ideas or themes behind each song

That’s why it’s not in the record. It’s just for press people. Press people always want explanations and they’d put something in there anyway so I had this idea to have Jeffrey Lewis do these comics and stuff. I’d never put that in the record because I want people to have free reign with the songs. You now? ‘Yes here’s a song that I wrote about an unfortunate experience in a hotel room’ [talking in a comedic deep voice]. With a song, or poem and to some extent a novel, it’s just an outlining of possibilities of creative work that’s being done by the reader.

As outlined in Roland Barthes’ ‘The Death Of The Author’

Yes, I think Barthes goes a little far, the author does have a job, but it’s closer to washing dishes or nursing, than it is to speaking like God from some mountain saying, ‘here’s my thing’. But then again God doesn’t do that either, the bible is a pretty open text.

With lyric writing are you working on things all the time?

No, I actually break or you end up writing the same thing over and over again. The way it happens with albums now is I’ll just be writing songs and I’ll go through periods where it doesn’t seem to be going anywhere. I’ll write ten/twenty songs and not seeming to find anything that really grabs me and then a year ago this month I think it was, I wrote ‘Michael Myers Resplendent’ the last song on the record. And I felt, mmm there’s something in there and I gave it away on my website, a demo of it. It’s happened four albums in a row now where you hit that one song or sometimes two or three in the space of a week and you go, ‘oh yeah I’m here now’. It’s like finding a current. It’s very processed, it’s not me going, ‘and now I’ll write about this’, one song sort of opens the way for the next one. They seem to run forwards and backwards it seems like I’ll know more about this song once I’ve write the two that come after that one.

And do you start from scratch in terms of themes and subjects for songs or are you always noting down random words or events as you come across them? On the latest album for example, how on earth did the song ‘Autoclave’ come together?

I’ll tell you the story about the song. I was in a hotel room in Alaska and it was minus 39 outside, so I’m inside reading the newspaper. I’d had since 2003 some luck trying to write in hotel rooms as you run out of uses for the TV and the Internet so you just end up fucking around on the guitar. So I was reading in the newspaper about this life form that exists near sea vents at the bottom of the sea, these volcanic vents, that not only can survive being put in an autoclave, which is what they use to sterilise medical instruments, but thrives, it starts to breed. These temperatures are supposed to kill every life form in the universe, so that’s pretty interesting. So I held that in my head for a minute went down to the bar and got a local beer, it was real good. I came back to my room and started messing around with different tunings on the guitar and improvising lyrics out loud, which is often how I start writing, and I just felt I’d hit something.

I don’t know whether it’s accurate but you’re portrayed as the type of person who pours over reams and reams of notebooks filled with song ideas etc

I’ll show you what I do. The thing I do now is I write down titles [pulling out a palm-sized note pad]. Teachers have always told me since I was kid to carry a notebook and I used to always resent being told how to be a writer. And I never did, but I get object fetish crushes and I ran across these in a store, nifty, tiny little notebooks. Anything that occurs to me as a title it’ll go in here, that one’s on the album, and that one too [pointing out titles]. I started writing lyrics in this thing as well which forced me to be economical, because if I have to turn the page it’s going to make the demo harder to do.

I wanted to ask you which writers, lyricists you’re particularly interested in and/or admire Christine Fellows...I think that in the last few years she’s the person that’s made a record that any songwriter who heard it would say, ‘oh here’s someone raising the bar!’ Not in terms of song structures, but

just in terms of writing songs that seem so complete in themselves and they’re just so heartbreaking. This album called ‘Paper Anniversary’ is fucking incredible. So she’s a big one right now, but then again I listened to a lot of Amy Grant this year. I listed to the two Grants this year, Amy Grant and Eddy Grant this year, actually ‘Lovecraft In Brooklyn’ started life as a song called ‘Eddy Grant’s T-shirt’.

Do you get chance to go and see many gigs these days?

No. That would involve leaving the house and hanging around with people [laughing]. I’m kinda embarrassed that I mostly go out when I find a friend’s band who’s coming through, then I’ll go out I don’t want to be a dick you know. But I went to a lot of dance performances this summer and I loved that, because if I go to a show the stage is where I work, so I have a different experience of the whole venue, it’s hard for me to just be a participant. When I went to these dance performance I was a spectator, I can’t dance! I know a little bit about it, but I’m in that sort of bliss of watching something somebody’s mastered about which I know nothing. I don’t know why more people aren’t into modern dance, I guess people think it’s pretentious, but all you have to do is suspend judgement for ten minutes and it’ll completely soak you up.

So closing this out, what does 2008 hold for you? Extensive touring?

Yep, loads of touring, the album comes out February 18th and I’m off until that week technically, but I’ll probably have a ton of stuff to do, I’ve just submitted by book to the publisher. 33 and third, those little books about albums? I wrote one about Black Sabbath’s Master Of Reality. We’ll be going through corrections on that and hopefully trying to arrange some readings here and there. I’m pretty happy with it, it came out pretty dark, it’s a fictionalised piece of criticism. I was writing it all summer, it was like digging a tunnel through mud it was really something.

This was your first piece of commissioned writing?

I’d written articles and stuff, but I’d never written a book. I never expected to either so it was kind of exciting, submitting my manuscript was a big thing because the first thing I wanted to be as soon as I understood what jobs were was an author. Going to the publisher and handing it over was like, ‘fucking ay’. I wanted to go back to my six year old self with his typewriter and go ‘dude, dude, look, check it out’. It was awesome, and I think that’ll be out at some point in the spring. So I’ll be keeping busy, I believe in keeping busy. I mean I believe in fucking lazy ass artists staying home until they have a record to promote and doing nothing [laughing].

www.themountangoats.net

Heretic Pride is out February 18th

“the song is not the big thing, the big thing is what happens inside the listener’s brain, so the song for me is just a little wedge in the door”

Marc 'Fos' Foster

With his artwork adorning his own Heroin and Landscape brand boards, amongst a plethora of others, emblazoned on Emerica shoes and most recently dripping off of Altamont clothes, Marc Foster, aka Fos, is graphic design's very own Little Mr. Ubiquity. Seriously, if you've ever stepped foot in a skateboard shop, flicked through a skate mag or even just passed a gang of skaters on the street, chances are you will have surreptitiously absorbed something drawn by Fos. So with that in mind, we caught up with the man of the moment in his South London home to talk work, work, and more work, his relatively humble beginnings and how best to piss off a nation of parents.

Interview: David Hopkins

This shouldn't be too much like 'This Is Your Life', but if we begin with what it was that started you off drawing seriously. I'd guess it was on your road to university?

I don't know, people ask me this and I say I've always drawn as long as I remember. My mum sent me sketchbooks from when I was like four years old and I want to do a thing with them for Altamont, a repeat pattern. We were actually going to do an Olly Todd board, when he was on Landscape, of all these little drawings that I'd done of all these little figures. It progressed from there, me doing drawings and it was like, 'this is Darth Vader he's fighting The Incredible Hulk'. There was a black blob and then this green blob, just me writing stories about super heroes and stuff. So...nothing's really changed.

Nothing has really changed

I've always done drawings, I've always just done that. So when did it become serious?

But the stuff you did at university was very different

See I think art education in this country is terrible. I got a D in GCSE Art at school because they don't push you in the right direction. I've always been creative and wanted to do it, but they'd be like, 'ah, you're drawing zombies and things like that, so we're going to give you this mark, because it's not this, or it's not that'. So it's really weird, I realised that art education tries to pigeonhole you and if you're a creative person it doesn't necessarily work for you. They want to go, 'ooh well that's not art, that's illustration, or, you're a fine artist so you have to just be on the dole and pay and then you'll get to struggle', or you can do embroidery or sculpture. Why can't I do all of that? Why can't I paint one day and then the next day make skate videos or the next day I could

Left:
Take me back

Right:
Spirits



do graphic design and design shoes, or shirts, or skateboards or something like that. I think they have a hard time at art school because a lot of people just doss around and it's easy for the teachers to really not feel any real sense of worth in what they're doing. But I think they feel if they push somebody in a certain way into a certain field and that person has become successful in that field then they feel like they've done their job. I don't feel it should be like that.

I asked as it seems odd for you to bother going to art school for exactly the reasons you've mentioned, you surely would've known it wasn't suited to you.

They were like, 'you're an illustrator, because you can draw, you can do artwork', but you don't paint in a way like normal painters, classical in a way like Renoir, so we're sending you on an illustration course. I was at Blackpool for a year doing gnarly illustrations, like photos. Drawing birds of prey so they looked better than the photos, because in scientific illustration, which is what I was doing, you learn to draw. You go in at nine, you finish at nine at night and you just work for the whole day, and you draw, and draw, and draw. I can draw anything, like I'm not intimidated to draw now and that was really good. It was a really good thing to do for a year, but after I came out of that I'm like, 'bullshit, I don't want to draw biscuit tin covers' you know what I mean?

Bulldogs sitting around a card table

Exactly, I can do any of that, but I thought it was bullshit, that course and the tutors and stuff. What's weird is I ended up doing a design course. All I wanted to do was illustration at Manchester University, that's all I wanted to do, but I applied and didn't get in so I went to Blackpool for year. Did the year, applied again, didn't get in, and came to London. I got in at

Goldsmith's because there were places on the course. The way I came to London is so weird. My mum's like, 'you've got a letter from this place it's for a design course'. I'd applied as I'd heard of it and my mum was like, which is so out of character, said, 'if you want I'll come to the interview with you'. I didn't think it was worth going as my portfolio was just pure illustration, it's not design. I ended up getting in, going to Goldsmith's and just making the most of it. Doing whatever I wanted and then trying to post-rationalize it, trying to justify later, that it does fit the brief, because...

I'm sure it helped you in some way

I made the most of it, I was never, 'I f—king hate this I'm going to quit', I'd be like, 'right, I'm going to learn to use the computer, I'm going to live in London for three years and not get a job, I'm going to learn how to talk to girls at University'.

Life skills

That's it. Bunking it into to town everyday to skate Southbank. If it wasn't for that I'd be working in a frozen pizza factory in Haslingden.

It seems like there's always been Heroin boards around, but there obviously hasn't

Ten year's this year. Insane isn't it? I started in 1998 as kind of a joke, to see what'd happen. And then it was like, 'whoah, people like it'

In a way it's a classic company in that it divides opinion, people either totally love it or utterly hate it

Well it's called Heroin right? From the outset, it's going to piss people off. I love punk rock and that pissed so many people off. The establishment at the time were up in arms about The Sex Pistols who set out to piss people off and they did, and I think that was really good. The fact that it's called Heroin, so many mums around the country are going to be so pissed off,

T-Shirt:

Altamont Optic

Decks (L to R):

Landscape, Soy Panday CMYK

Heroin, Tapes

Heroin, Fos Paisley



but they're meant to be pissed off, so it works perfectly. If you're over forty years old and you live in a two up two down house and you have a nice car, it's supposed to piss you off, it's designed to piss you off! Right, if you're seventeen year's old and you live and breathe skateboarding then you'll understand it, it's not about drugs or any of that shit.

So how did you approach creating the newer brand Landscape? While it's not exactly the hip-hop version of Heroin it is very different, and you'd never see any of the Heroin artwork on a Landscape board, you'd never see a French graphic on there etc

Heroin's just like the darkest corners of my mind, it can be just out there. I can do anything on a Heroin board, anything, I could write one word on a Heroin board and it'd work as a graphic. But Landscape was more of a challenge as it might not have worked. Doing clean graphics that appeal on a different level, it's a challenge having another thing. Can I design a clean logo people can relate to, but that is still interesting?

So do you think the work you've done for the Altamont clothing brand is roughly in the middle of the two?

That's a good question, it's clothing so it's different, but I'd say it was closer to Heroin.

Really?

Mmm...yes, I think so, just the feeling of my drawings and a lot of the handwriting in the background. I think the people who saw my work and wanted me to do the Altamont stuff had seen the Heroin site and hadn't necessarily seen the Landscape stuff.

Do you ever think you're spreading yourself a little thin with the volume of commissions you've been working on? Meaning, you can see the 'paisley sperm' motif on a shoe, clothes,

and boards all from different companies.

I know where you're coming from...

In a way it's a little like writing a review and then selling it to various different magazines. You understand what I'm getting at?

There's a few ways I could answer this. I could be like, 'I don't know what you mean, everything I do is amazing, so there's no problem. But I'm not going to answer it like that, as much as my girlfriend might think I would. I'm going to say...as an artist you work and work and work to get yourself to a level where your work is recognized. For example, you get a designer like Louis Vuitton or someone like that, and their pattern is on things across the board and they'll collaborate with people etc. I try rather than it being, 'oh that's used that for that, that's for that', I try and keep some sort of sense of familiarity. It's kind of a language in graphic design, I want my stuff to be recognizable.

Which artists or graphics outside of your own stimulate you the most?

Erm...I always liked Toy Machine. I always though the ads were super good and they didn't look like anything else out there. Ed's got a really good sense of humour and doesn't take it too seriously and he's always been good at designing skateboards. Like there's a board with just a massive set of glasses for a graphic, that's amazing. Yeah I really like what he does, when he's not drawing willies. Or taking photos of boy's willies. I really like Anti-Hero, especially in the early days with Chris Johansson.

What about with reference to the work for Altamont? Are there any clothing brands or labels that you've drawn influences from?

With that...we go out and try and look at what other clothing companies have done, but I try not to take too

much of that onboard. A lot of the times I just sit here and just think, 'what would look cool on a shirt?' It's good to be in London as you've got lots of stimulation, and lots of things inspire me. Drinking coffee, listening to Tom Waits and reading Japanese comic books and things like that, it's kind of mixed up, but it's fun doing stuff for Altamont. Coming up with new stuff every time that doesn't look like everything else. It's a challenge and it's be like, 'we need ten t-shirts done in two weeks' and I'll just sit here sketching up ideas.

So with so much on your plate do you find that the bulk of your doodlings and sketches somehow find their way into commercial projects or do have stuff that you do that's just for the hell of it.

Yeah...[dumping thirty odd books on the table taken from the nearest of the several teetering black towers of sketchbooks to hand] I've got sketchbooks full of that shit. If I got fired tomorrow and lost all these companies I wouldn't stop drawing I'd have more time on my hands, you know what I mean? If I don't have a sketchbook with me at all times I get really nervous, just weird.

heroin skateboarding.com
landscapeskateboards.com
altamontapparel.com

"The fact that it's called Heroin, so many mums around the country are going to be so pissed off, but they're meant to be pissed off"

Portfolio: Richard Gilligan



Untitled No.1

Based in Dublin and combining the odd bit of skateboard photography work with commercial commissions and fashion shoots for magazines such as Mongrel, amongst others, Richard Gilligan has recently embarked on a documentary project, tentatively entitled 'Insomnia.' Borne out of a six month dalliance with the actual affliction, unable to sleep he began taking photos of his room during the twilight hours in order to occupy his sleepless time. Still a work in progress, and now aided by friends, acquaintances, and friends of friends who just can't seem to nod off, we're proud to bring you an early look at this drowsy, but fascinating work.

Showing as part of the group exhibition 'Welcome To Everywhere' at Craze, Portobello Rd, London from the 7th of February onwards, you can view the whole spectrum of Richard's work online at: richgilligan.com



Untitled No.2



Untitled No.3



Untitled No.4



Untitled No.5



Untitled No.6

Gabe Morford Fix Me

Riding a brakeless bike, with no freewheel and one gear may not sound exactly, or indeed anything, like a commuting option on Britain's densely packed and increasingly hazardous roads, but in spite of the inherent dangers fixed-gear bikes are becoming more and more visible on our roads. Initially the preserve of bike messengers and professional cyclists, 'fixies' have now found their way under the backsides of all manner of fashionable types and as a result are often derided as a fickle fashion accessory, rightly or wrongly. Our opinion? Well we're all for weaving through traffic full pelt on the way to Aldi with little hope of stopping, but the whole playing cards in your spokes thing is a little bit too 'cool guy' for us, sorry it just is. But you may love it, and in order for you to make your mind up we've enlisted professional help.

As San Francisco's premiere 'skate' photographer and filmer Gabe Morford has been responsible for some of the greatest images to surface out of one of skateboarding's 'super cities'. Not content with that, he recently made the smooth transition between two opposing worlds, in swapping four wheels for two. Which is no mean feat in itself when you consider it's a move many regard as akin to walking out on the Sicilian family business and/or the Hell's Angel Xmas party. The result of this difficult move is the fixed gear bike film MASH. Filmed in collaboration with Mike Martin it has pushed the interest in this newly formed inner city subculture ever skyward.

Interview by Percy Dean

Have you always ridden bikes? And what are your earliest, bike associated memories.

My brother and I both had skateboards before we had bikes, not that we could really ride them. We would push around on our knees or butt board down the sidewalk. The first bike I ever had was a Christmas present and it was stolen from the side of our house two days after I got it. I know it was this kid Ronnie Johnson, but we never found the bike.

What was the catalyst that intensified your interest in fixed gear bikes?

I was riding road bikes (geared bike) and my friend Rob Welsh, who was riding a fixed gear bike told me as soon as I rode a fixed geared bike I wouldn't ride anything else. So I tried it and fell in love with it. It was like learning how to roll on a skateboard for the first time. It's awkward to control at first and hard to stop, but those challenges make it exciting.

Is your board starting to gather dust? Or is there enough room in your life for two loves?

No not really. The bike is a lot less impact than skating, so than can be nice. I used to be able to skate a lot more, when I would go out shooting skate photos, I skated when the guys warmed up, but now there is less warm up time cause these guys rip so hard. So getting on the bike after shooting all day is really refreshing. I don't think these bikes are an alternative for skating, but riding is defiantly a healthy alternative for a lot of other bullshit.

SF can't be classed as too friendly a city for bikes with no gears, how did your lungs and legs handle those first few forays on the hills?

At first your fitness is the last thing you worry about, it's cars and going down hills are your first hurdles.

I guess it's as stupid as trying to define 'why skateboarding', but fuck it I'll ask anyway. Why fixed gear as opposed to a normal bike set-up?

It's fun. It's a similar feeling to bombing hill on a skateboard. You have to control your speed and find lines to avoid situations. It's not the most efficient bike for a lot of things, but you make do.

Is it true that California legislation bans the use of bicycles with no brakes and is the law ever enforced or have you figured ways around it?

I don't think that is a big issue in San Francisco, having lights at night and running lights and stop signs is more of an issue.

What's your take on its newfound popularity, I guess it's comparable to skateboarding's rise and fall

I think you can trace its growth to the growth of communication. These bikes have been around for along time, but unless you were riding them or knew someone riding them, they were underground. Now you can look on the Internet and 'fixie' your life away.

Is there opposition/elitism to this new growth within the established fixed gear community? And is acceptance gained from time served or is the community a generally welcoming one to the newcomer?

I'm not an official, but in my opinion there wasn't really a fixed gear community. There has been a messenger community where really this kind of riding comes from and I think they had their guards up. Now there are more non-messengers on track bikes than messengers. I think the biggest fixed gear community is online, and who knows what there thinking. Fixed gear stuff outside of the messenger world is pretty green, so you get all types of people. I don't think there has been a sort of code established in this whole scene. Like skating has its sort of unspoken rules where you basically don't be kook!

When did you realize you could actually be making a film about all this? How was the process of collecting content/footage compared to that of making a skateboard film or shooting for a mag?

My partner in this, Mike Martin who is also a photographer, started taping some of his friends for fun, then he started to make a 'sponsor me' style tape to send out to help some of these guys get to some of the messenger races outside of SF. I heard about this and told Mike I would like to help. I was already riding and thought I could add something to it.

So we got more serious about everything and started making a piece that would showcase these riders and there different styles, show San Francisco as a fun city to ride these bikes and hopefully make people want to jam around.

How was filming one-handed on a bike with no brakes, on some of the steepest city centre hills in the world?

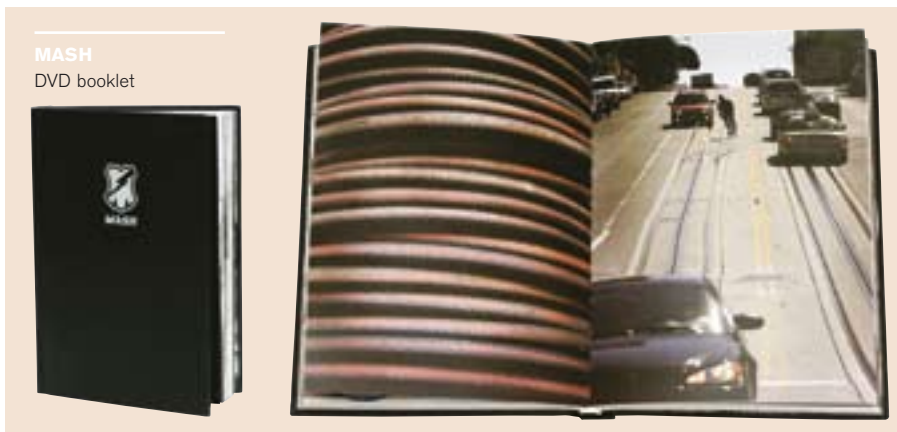
For a lot of the hills stuff I skated with a big board. It's a nine-inch board with 90mm wheels. It's fast and it's super heavy. He also used a scooter, with a driver and a camera operator. The bike is better for flat fast stuff and you just get used to keeping your subject framed up.

You showed MASH at a bike film festival in Japan. How was the reception?

Japan was a lot of fun and this time we were able to bring the whole crew of seventeen riders out there thanks to Lowtex, our premiere sponsor. The reception was great, we rode with everyone to the theater then they threw races and stuff after the premier. There was tons of energy. We would love to do something out there [in the UK], but we don't have a budget for anything, so it's hard. I want to do more event type stuff in the spring to get people together.

www.mashsf.com

"At first your fitness is the last thing you worry about, it's cars and going down hills are your first hurdles"



City Guide Manchester

As a child I struggled here. From out of town I never felt at home. The gloom that had descended of the city in the late eighties/early nineties was heavy and although shouldered well by its inhabitants did give truthful meaning to the phrase “it’s grim up north” and life to the famous Ewan Mc’Coll song written about Salford, ‘Dirty Old Town’.

In 1996 the gloom was blown off and replaced by terror as the largest bomb to ever be detonated on British soil ripped through the city centre. The IRA took the blame and the insurance companies paid up an estimated £400 million to rebuild and redevelop the city centre. Now 11 years on, with the development still in full swing, ‘the bomb’ is often looked at as ‘the best thing to happen to the city’ and Manchester itself is a different place altogether.

The city is undoubtedly one of the best places to skate in the UK, two good parks within walking distance of each other and a city centre small enough to skate across, packed with spots. In the week it can be a bit of a struggle, there’s been a bylaw in existence since 2000 banning skateboarding and threatening a £500 fine, but this to our knowledge has never been enforced. If you’re busted; as always, be nice, that way you don’t piss off guards and blow out spots for others.

As with everywhere, watch yourself. City centres can quickly turn from playgrounds to battlefields, but in saying that number of random muggings in northern cities are nothing compared to those of the south. The Chav’s up here don’t really care, unless you give em’ cause too.

Just get here and see it all for yourselves. We promise Manchester will leave you with a stack of memories any other city in the UK will find it hard to shift.

By Percy Dean

“Manchester...the belly and guts of the Nation”
From ‘The Road to Wigan Pier’ by George Orwell



EAT:

1. Rustica

A more than trustworthy sandwich bar at the top of the street up from Note skateboard shop. Try the unbeatable Moroccan Lamb on Ciabatta’s and life-saving early morning bacon butties



2. The Koffee Pot

This replacement for the original city centre greasy spoon was at first met with mixed reviews, but we’re getting used to it now. Posh breakfasts, but still half the price of a London Café. There are different specials everyday, take the Corned Beef Hash with red cabbage and a cup of tea to power you up for the day!



3. This & That

Forget Rusholme and the curry mile, the chance of you finding a good one in that maelstrom of neon and popadoms is non-existent. Stay in town and hit up one

of the three Indian cafes in the Northern Quarter. This & That hidden down a side alley, only a hundred yards or so from Cast skateboard shop, is one of the best. It combines cheapness with good quality in a low-key environment. Try skating after you have handled a Keema with Roti’s. Forget it, time to head to the bars

DRINK:

4. Night & Day

This world-renowned venue/café kills it, funnily enough both night and day. It’s one of those real bars where you know there will be a headache coming before you have your first drink. Check the sight for listings and secret gigs.

nightnday.org

5. Common

Straight up drinking hole, opposite Projekts skateboard store. Evenings in the week tend to be a little more reserved than Friday or Saturday. Heat it up and look at some of the ever-changing wall murals (The Harmony’s Dave Dixon has contributed to the latest coverings) before moving into the city.

aplacecalledcommon.co.uk

LOOK:

6. Cornerhouse

The mainstay of Manchester’s visual arts, there are 3 floors of Gallery space, an art house Cinema, magazine shop and café. The Café ain’t up too much and the exhibitions can be a little hit and miss, but if you’re rained out it is still probably the best place that side of town to while away an hour or so.

cornerhouse.org

7. The Whitworth Art Gallery

Half a mile out of town from the Oxford Rd banks and more than worth a look if you find yourself out in that side of the city. Check the exhibitions on their site first at: whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

8. Urbis

More interactive, for visitors to the city, which we guess you are? The odd decent exhibit will pop up from time to time, keep your ears and eyes open. It’s free anyway so well worth a wander.

urbis.org.uk

Salford Lads Club

Kind of a mission to find, but is any walk too far for a bit of ‘Moz’ history? Stephen Wright’s famous photo made it to the sleeve of The Smiths 1986 album ‘The Queen Is Dead’ and the rest is history. It’s only a twenty-minute skate out of town from the Deansgate area, but a taxi should get you there for about £3. Get your photo taken for old times sake, ‘No, no I want to be Moz you can be Johnny Marr!’ If you are lucky you might even make it into the Smiths room, adorned with messages from fans and various pieces of interesting memorabilia.

NIGHT:



9. Contort Yourself, Roadhouse

This fortnightly ‘pumpathon’ will do more than clear your sinuses and is hosted by long-time Manchester skaters Eastbourne Ben and Gez. I can’t bring myself to use phrases like ‘Dark Disco’ and ‘Avant Dance’ despite what it says on their Myspace page. Just get down there coz it goes off every single time.

myspace.com/contortyourself

5th Avenue

Every town has one, and this is Manchester’s. The fail-safe good night out spot. Cheap booze, old favourites and wall-to-wall crews. Get there early to avoid the queues. But make sure you get your fake ID’s sorted cause they are renowned for being tight with that shit.

LISTEN:

The good music stores in the city are each within a two-minute walk of each other. Go to:

10. Vinyl Exchange for the largest selection of second hand tunes in the city, a little overpriced, but the choice covers that fact well. Over the road is;

11. Piccadilly records, opened in 1978 this heavily stocked independent is more than worth perusing. There are at least 3 or 4 other stores within a minute’s walk from either of those two and not all of them are packed with Stone Roses posters or Smiths re-issues either.

SHOP:

12. Cast

If your lucky and cool, you could chat it out with Felix the proprietor and get the heads up on secret evening sessions on the store micro mini. If you’re not and you don’t, you will be watching it through the shutters like the rest of town.

castonline.co.uk

13. Projekts

The main protagonists hounding council representatives, pushing for new parks and opposing the bylaws banning skateboarding in the city. They run the Pumpcage, fill their shop with hot product and locate some prime gallery space ‘out the back’. Check their site for a city spot map.

projektsmcr.com

14. Note

Two floors of pure skate love, and more paint than you could run outta there with! Make sure you pop in when Harmony’s Joe Gavin is ‘gripping up’ and brighten his day. noteshop.co.uk

SKATE:

15. Central Skatepark

Manchester’s new kid on the block seems to be settling in well. New street course, perfect mini and outside concrete including Jersey barrier. Finish the day here with a beer. centralskatepark.co.uk

Sessions:

Mon/Fri 1pm - 3pm/ 3pm - 9pm

Sat/Sun 11am - 2pm/ 2pm - 5pm/ 3pm - 8pm

Fees: £10 membership/ £5 per session (Day Membership £3)

16. Projekts “The Pumpcage” Skatepark

Every street prowler in the city frequents this place. Low key flowing street course, small mini, good hip etc etc. Warm up with a pump before taking it to the streets.

projektsmcr.com

Mon/Fri: 3pm - 8pm

Sat: 12pm - 7pm

Sun: 12pm - 5pm

Holiday opening Hours:

Mon/Fri: 1pm - 8pm

Sat: 12pm - 7pm

Sun: 12pm - 5pm

Fees: £2 per day or £30 for 6 months

MEET:



Urbis

Situated in the Cathedral Gardens is the ultimate warm up spot. Check the skyline till you see the glass shark’s fin that is Urbis (built as a giant exhibition centre to urban life). Wander away from the main building till you find the three-tiered, curved manual pad, usually

swathed in Goths. Someone will turn up sooner or later and point you in the direction you want to go.

GET THERE:

Fly: The 2nd busiest airport in the UK outside London, is a feeble scratch at an accolade, but you can fly to Manchester Airport from more or less anywhere in the world. Get the number 43 bus into the city centre. Trains and taxis all take 20/40 minutes to get into the city. Take your pick.

Train: Wherever you come from the three Manchester stations are all more than central. The likely hood is that you will be spewed out into 17. Piccadilly (Victoria and Deansgate seem to take on the more regional routes). As with all trains in the UK book in advance for cheap deals or you would be better off spending the money on a flight!

Bus: Yeah we are on the Megabus route map, so with a little forethought you are not going to be more than a few quid out of pocket. The bus routes to Manchester, Britain’s second capital, run into the hundreds, just get on one, you will end up here sooner or later. Remember the city is walkable from edge to edge, so you won’t need transport once you’re here! megabus.com/uk/

STAY:

There are numerous cheap hotels spotted around the city Travelodges etc. There is a big new Youth Hostel down by the canals, located in the Castlefield area; yha.org.uk If your under 18 its only £16 a night with breakfast. More central (in more or less perfect position) is 18. Hatters Hostel hattersgroup.com If you are really struggling, go to Urbis or one of the shops to introduce your self. Don’t be cocky and you will have more than a 50% chance of someone hooking you up for an evening or two. This is the north and people are friendly up here!

“Manchester’s got everything except a beach”

Ian Brown



Objects Of Desire

Left:

PENFIELD
'Chatham' Shirt
£45.00
penfieldusa.com

Right:

MATIX
'Natural Born' Shirt
£45.00
matixeuropa.com



Left:

INSIGHT
'Pervert' Shirt
£45.00
insight51.com

Right:

WESC
'Darcy' Shirt
£54.99
wesc.co.uk



Left:

FOURSTAR
'Taff' Shirt
£45.00
fourstarclothing.com

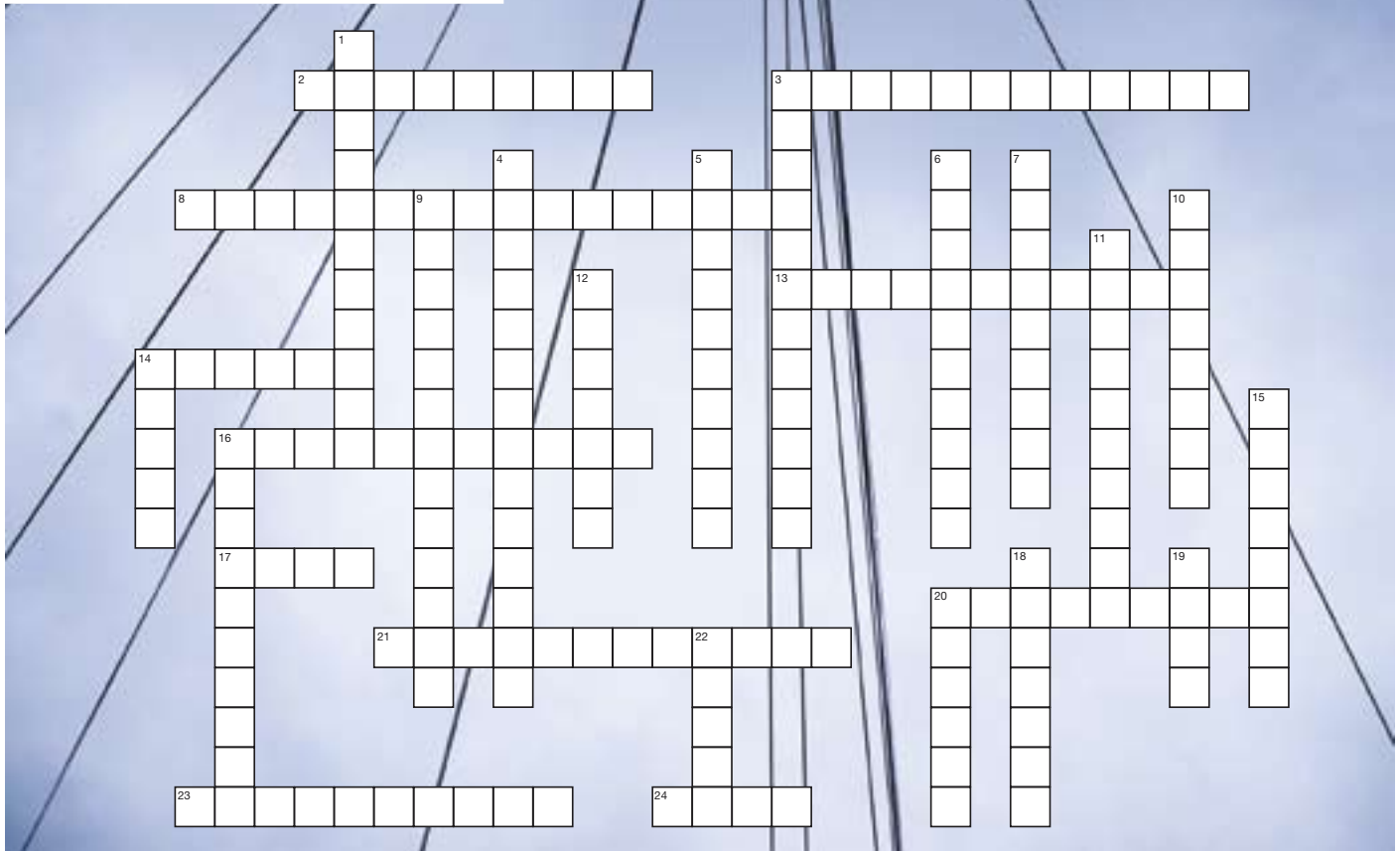
Right:

CARHARTT
'Woody' Shirt
£55.00
carhartt-streetwear.com



PHOTOGRAPHY: SAM ASHLEY

Crossword



ACROSS

- 2** Timepiece obsessed Public Enemy man (5,4)
- 3** Kurt Russell's eye patch wearing character in John Carpenter's film 'Escape From New York' (5,7)
- 8** He's the boss (5,11)
- 13** John Lennon's killer (4,7)
- 14** Capital city of the Czech Republic (6)
- 16** Crime thriller starring DiCaprio and Damon which finally snagged Martin Scorsese a well overdue Oscar (3,8)
- 17** Currency Of Thailand (4)
- 20** Apple's inspirational CEO (5,4)
- 21** Frighteningly potent 35% cough-syrup-like liqueur, whose name in German means 'master hunter' (12)
- 23** Famously known as The Man In Black (6,4)
- 24** Cat Power's real first name, yes she wasn't in fact christened 'Cat' (4)

DOWN

- 1** Feverishly anticipated monster movie created by the producer of Lost (11)
- 2** Director of Dead Man's Shoes and This Is England (5,7)
- 4** David Cronenberg's current leading man of choice (5,9)
- 5** Tragically true to his words, Biggie was... (5,2,3)
- 6** Werner Herzog Vietnam POW film (6,4)
- 7** Wu Tang Clan's latest album and a welcome return to form (1,8)
- 9** Author of The Golden Compass (6,7)
- 10** We chomp far too many of these on Shrove Tuesday (8)
- 11** Resolutely quirky Bob Dylan biopic directed by Todd Haynes (2,3,5)
- 12** She was a Pixie, but now she's once again a Breeder (3,4)
- 14** Animation company which brought us Toy Story and most recently Ratatouille (5)
- 15** Boozy author of Ham On Rye, Factotum and Barfly (8)
- 16** Norway's self-proclaimed denim-clad deathpunks (9)
- 18** Paul Auster's literary trilogy was based here (3,4)
- 19** Flightless bird which became extinct in the 17th Century (4)
- 20** Family Guy's scheming toddler who comes complete with a posh English accent (6)

Next Issue

Former professional skateboarder Florian Böhm talks us through his Wait For Walk photo project And Jay Ryan & Diana Sudyka fill us in on putting together their incredible band flyers and beautiful illustrative work And that's just for starters Issue 2 available mid-March



49th St 6th Ave by Florian Böhm