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Giant Robot

Beijing Calling, Manpurse Mania, Ai Yamaguchi

Stephen Chow, Japanese Devils, Dogtown Girl, Fight Club, Make-Out Club

ISSUE 26
CULTURAL EVOLUTION
26
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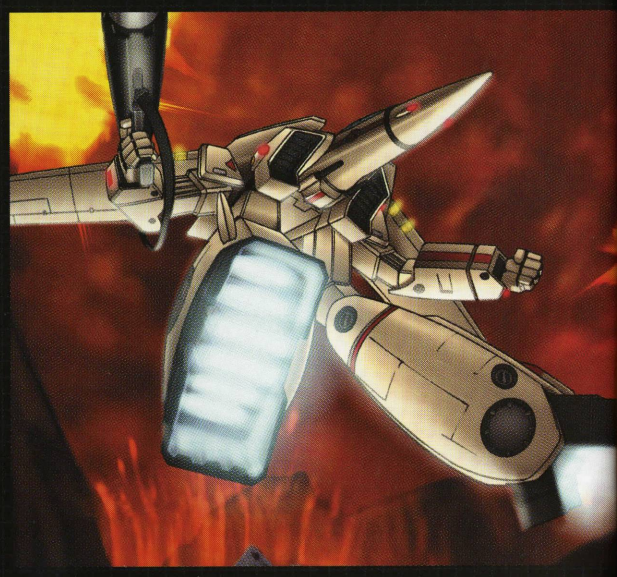
CHANGE INTO A WARRIOR.

TO SAVE HUMANKIND, YOU
MUST CHANGE INTO A HERO.



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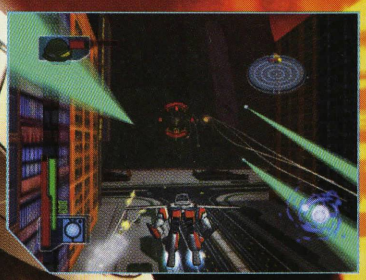

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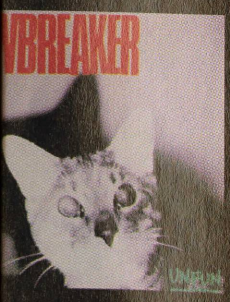

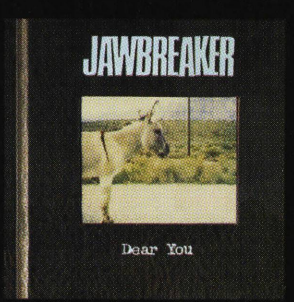

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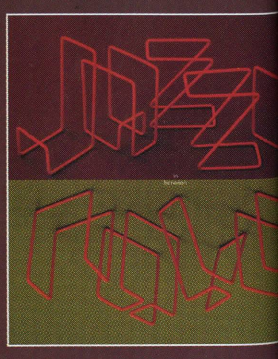

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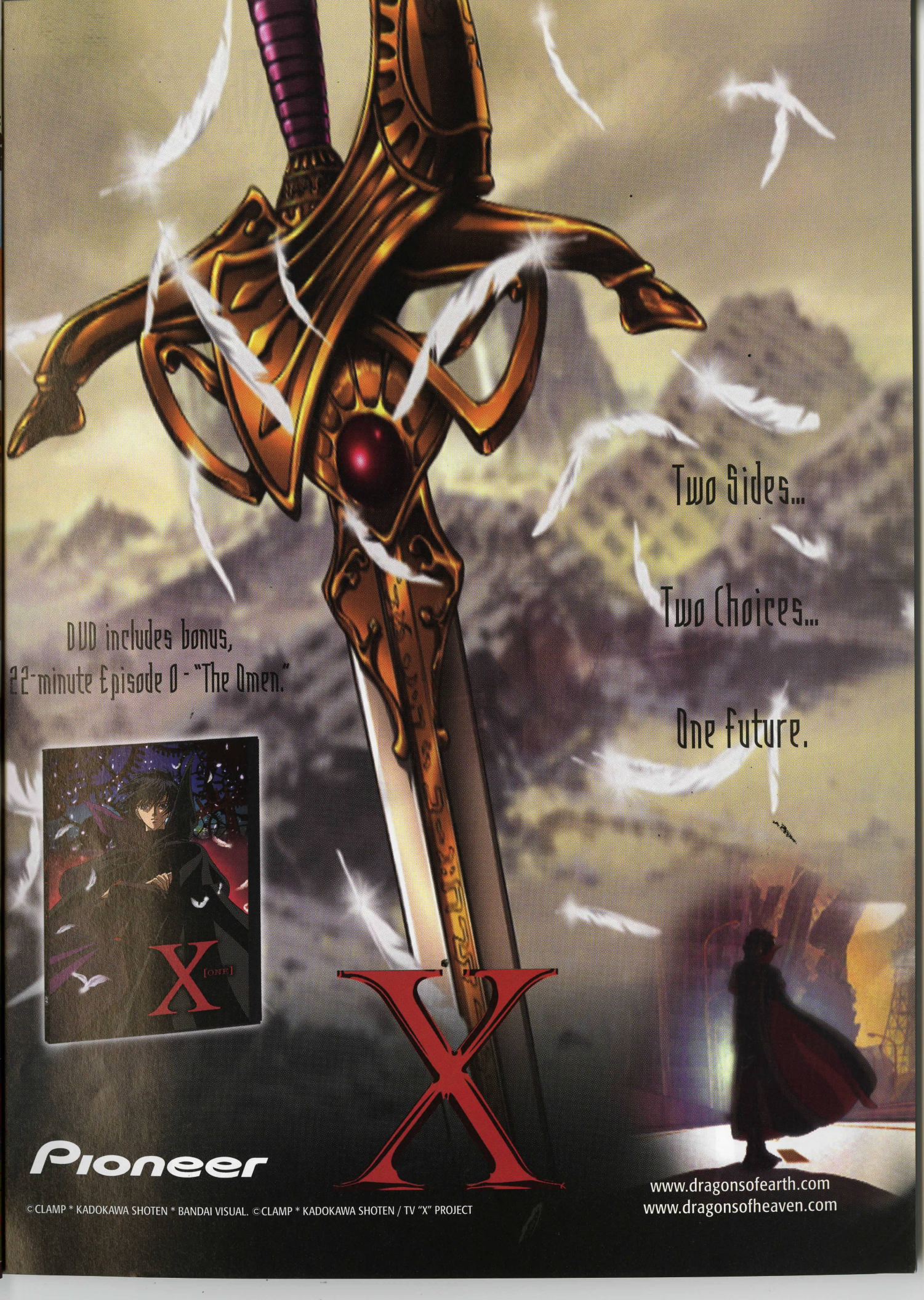
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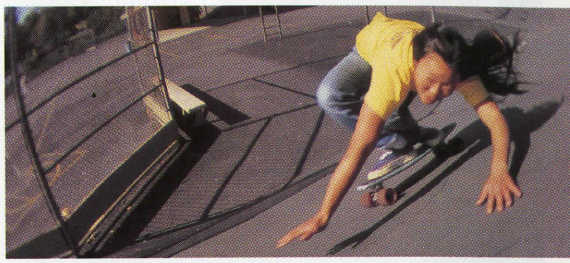

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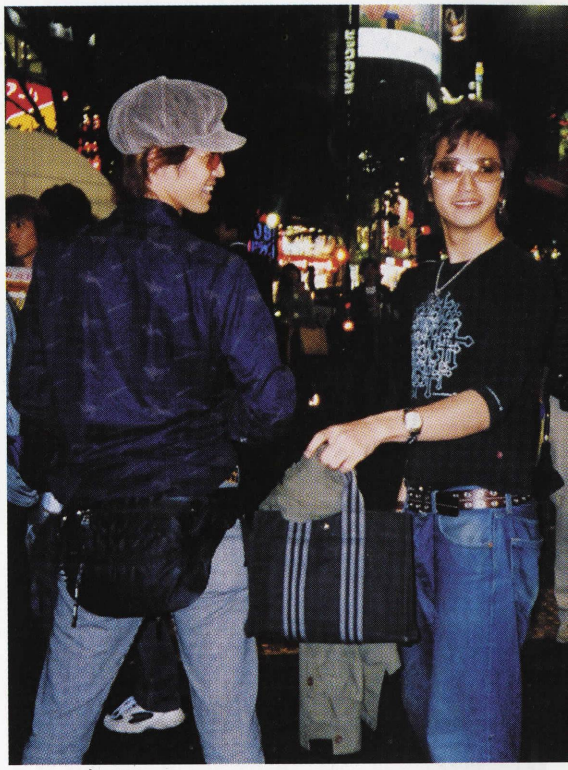

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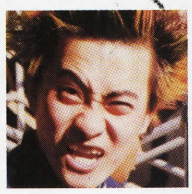

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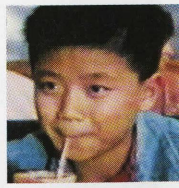

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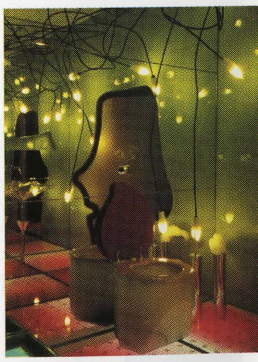

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adrian tomine

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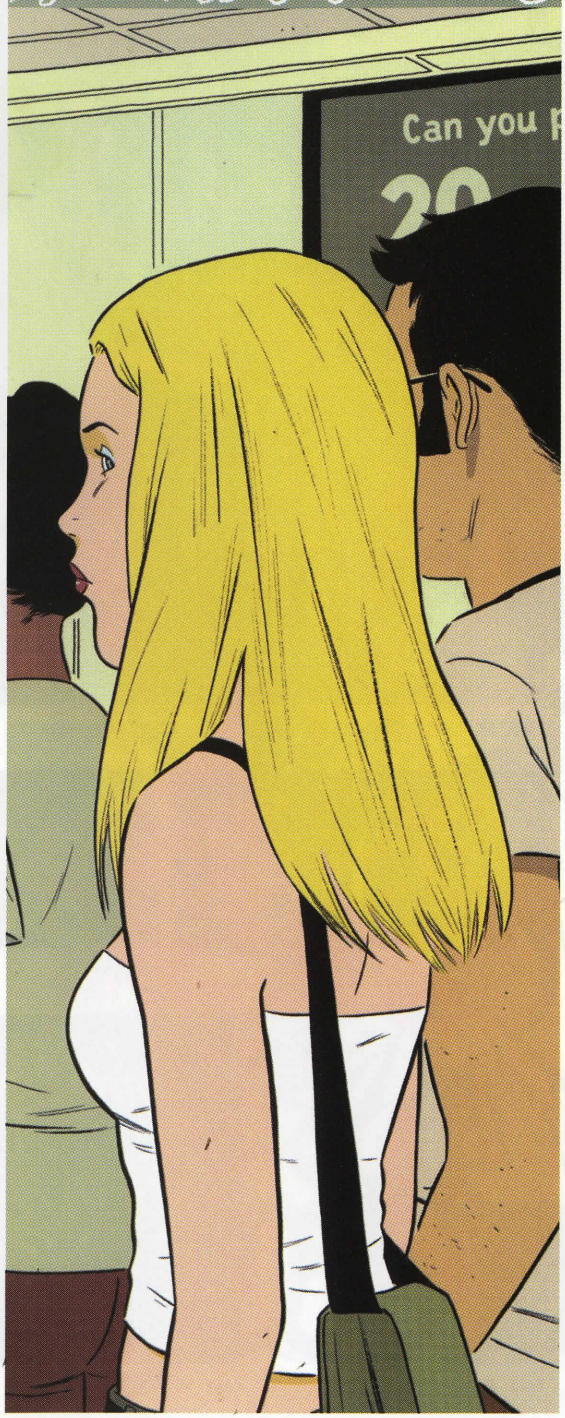

+ PIC BY PRYOR PRACZUKOWSKI

LAUNCH

Back in the '80s, hardcore Christians began sticking chrome Jesus fish on the backs of thei Buicks. It wasn't long before nonbelievers started placing stubby-limbed Darwin fish on thei vehicles as a rebuttal. Now, creationists are getting in the last word with a "Truth" fish eatin up the evolved Darwin fish. Ironically, the creationists' denial of evolution has become a example of it.

Mutation, adaptation, extinction–evolution isn't exclusive to fossilized tree trunks and petrifie turds. It occurs in everyday life as people change their outlooks, alter their actions, and grow. W evolve, and so does culture.

This issue features individuals and movements that push culture forward. Cover artist A Yamaguchi uses her art to revisit the ordeals of young women in the Edo period as well as i modern Japan, while Chinese bands like Brain Failure, 69, and Anarchy Jerks use punk rock t challenge the status quo in Beijing. Stephen Chow is the comic genius behind *Shaolin Soccer*–a martial-arts sports move that will blow your mind. And Peggy Oki was one of the Z-Boys, th baddest skate gang of the '70s that is largely responsible for skateboarding's rebellious attitud today. Meanwhile, manpurses and certain new furniture designs may seem weird now, but s does everything that's ahead of the curve.

There's more. We've also included fight clubs in Japan, make-out clubs in Vietnam, a vide game pioneer, Margaret Cho, and a Canadian teen idol. And then there are Sleater-Kinne and Cornershop, two bands that fight The Man with every song on every record. (We try t do that, too.)

Back to the fish, what you believe in is your business. The important thing is that you main- tain a curious outlook, keep an open mind, and allow yourself to grow. Anything less–from a individual, a magazine, or society–leads to sure extinction.

GIANT ROBOT FOUNDATION

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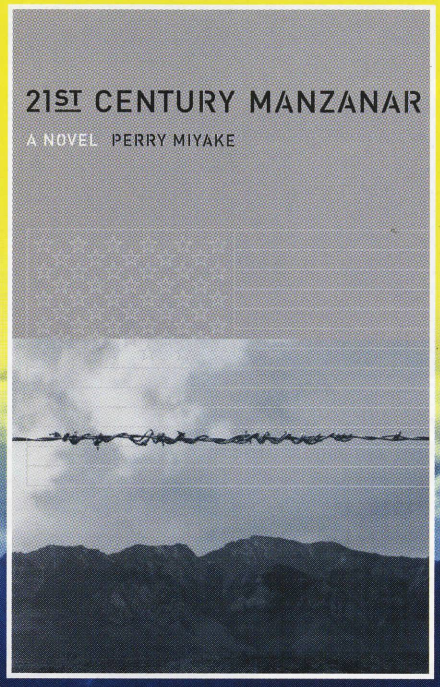

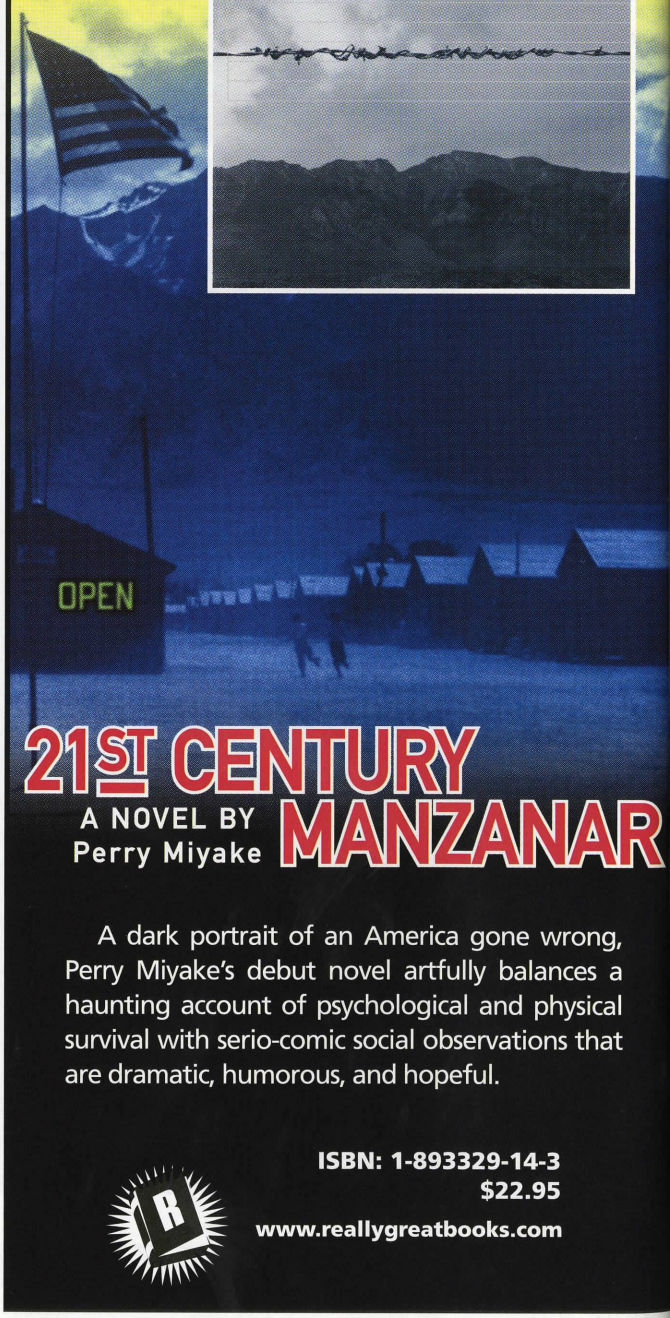

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ERIC'S 10

. **Kozyndan Art Show.** Yeah, I know our store is small, but we actually pulled off an art show. Ve sold original paintings, canvas prints, and paper prints. Next up is the Ai Yamaguchi exhiition, scheduled to open on September 14.

. **The Power of Bill.** So we go to a World Cup game at some place called Palm Tree. We've never een there before, and it's filled with drunken Korean fans. A girl and two guys recognized Bill rom the store, his finger nail, and as Bill Bear. Then, to top it off, someone made a crocheted oll of him! (See below.)

. **Visual Communications Film Fest and Los Angeles International Film Fest.** It was cool seeng my cousin Mike and his ladyfriend, Eugenia, star in *Charlotte Sometimes*, a film that neither e nor I made. Too bad I missed the *Biggie and Tupac* and human beatbox documentaries.

. **Red Devils.** Not the fireworks company, but the Korean soccer team and the fans in L.A. No other eam (except maybe Mexico) could have filled Staples Center with 21,000 people at 4 a.m. for a ronze-medal game.

. **Button Sets.** In between issues, it's always fun to make shirt designs and other new products. The est part is trying to figure out how to package them. We'll see what's next.

. **Rats.** One big one came back. This time, we went to the poison. The poor dude ate a box and a alf, then keeled over somewhere in the kitchen where I could smell it. My dad immediately homed n on the dishwasher, looked underneath, and found it.

. **Cool Things.** The Beat Happening box set, *Cometbus* book, IDN stuff, *Harvest, Mass Appeal,* and *Relax.* Making it into Courtney Booker's dissertation, *Writing a Wrong,* that's 700-plus pages. If you ctually see this, you've dug deep.

. **Used but Not Abused.** My new old Redline MXII, Pac Man glassware, early '80s sumo program rom UCLA, flat file cabinet for prints, Japanese folding chairs from the '60s, good condition Pumas yeah, whatever, I don't care), *Relax* magazine collection, Adidas soccer shirt, and old-school parkastyle jacket (too bad it's summer).

. **GR Softball.** Continuing down the road to glory. I'm batting over .500 with only singles–not one double, triple, or homer. Third base has been another story. It's not the mitt this time; I got a new one.

10. Greg from Safe & Save Market. So what does Safe & Save mean anyway? Greg, "the Mayor of Sawtelle," takes good care of us while we're on deadline by giving us bruised fruit and energy drinks. Want to know more about Greg and the workings of Sawtelle? Check him out at gregs.blogspot.com.

MARTIN'S 10

1. Steroid Free. At the beginning of the last Giant Robot softball season, I learned how to hit a ball. On the last game of this season, I hit my first home run.

2. Soyrizo. The food of the future can be found in potato taquitos from Trader Joe's or on the breakfast menu with eggs at Eatwell. Too bad the food truck in Venice doesn't use it.

3. Igloo Store Opening. Located next to the new Math Lab, it's where San Diego folks can buy some cool gear. Money Mark played at the opening party and we received some snazzy tote bags (not purses).

4. Giant Robot Modifications. In one afternoon, I discovered that one friend got a Giant Robot Army tattoo and another customized his surfboard with a GR Bruce Made Tapes logo. Is anyone else doing this sort of thing?

5. Henry's Natural Foods Market in Orange County and San Diego. It's like a huge Trader Joe's with a jumbo-sized organic produce section.

6. Cool Shows: Dengue Fever, The Promise Ring, The Weakerthans, The Fucking Champs, Cornershop, Money Mark, Eastern Youth, Guided by Voices, The Pattern.

7. Time Out for Fun. That means running laps around the Silver Lake reservoir, skateboarding at the Bronson Park ditch, and playing our nightly Giant Robot Scrabble challenge.

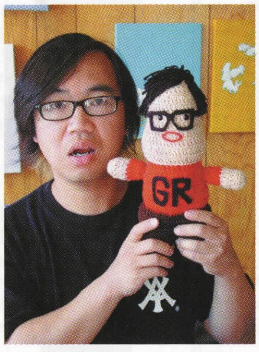
8. Box Sets in Rotation: *The Jam at the BBC,* Trojan Records' *Mod Reggae,* and Johnny Cash's *Love God Murder.* Damn, my CD player just broke! At least my record player still works. I just received the first two installments of my Honey Bear Records Singles Club booty, by J Church and Hard Skins.

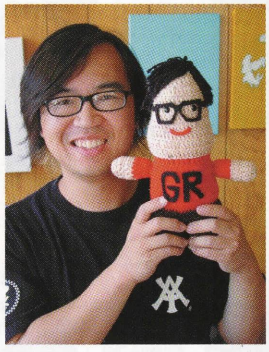
9. Thrift Score. I bought a nice blue pleather jacket from Goodwill. Too bad it's summertime. Until then, at least I can wear my crazy promo Amsterdam flip-flops from Airwalk.

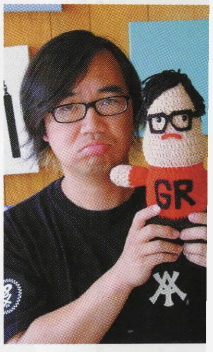
10. More Live Bootleg CD-Rs. I've received recordings of Nirvana at Jabberjaw, Redd Kross at the John Anson Ford Theater, and tons of shows by The Clash from all over the place. Thanks, John and Jeff!

LITTLE BILL

No one at Giant Robot receives adulation like Bill does. People make pilgrimages to the Giant Robot Store to take photos of him and get his autograph. Fans buy him snacks, send him portraits, and name their pets after him. But the ultimate tribute may be this doll, which was hand knit by Sarah Han. Is it a religious totem, chew toy, or voodoo doll? It's all of that and more; it's Bill.







YOSHINO, EASTERN YOUTH
BEST THINGS ABOUT HOKKAIDO

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2. Good, cold weather
3. Powdery snow
4. Shirakaba tree (in Hokkaido only)
5. Tasty food

GEOFF MCFETRIDGE, DESIGNER
WHY HE'S IN RELAX MAG SO OFTEN

1. Simian references
2. Sasquatch champion (Don't even step!)
3. Mutual blind embrace of camouflage
4. Mike Mills makes movies now
5. Knows Spike Jonze

CLAUDINE KO, WRITER FOR JANE AND GR
REASONS WHY HER ARTICLES ARE LATE

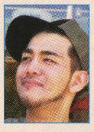
1. "We're on deadline, you wouldn't get it."
2. "My eye hurts."
3. "I missed the train."
4. "The museum was closed."
5. "My friends wouldn't let me go."

SHARI SAKAHARA, EBAY POWER SELLER
THRIFT SCORES SHE'S SOLD

1. Diesel jeans
2. Prada skirt
3. Benetton messenger bag
4. Nike Air Max shoes
5. Band and DJ equipment T-shirts

MASAFUMI ISOBE, HUSKING BEE
FAVORITE SINGERS

1. Tamio Okuda (Puffy's songwriter)
2. Hiroji Miyamoto (Elephant Kashimashi)
3. Björk
4. Scott Reynolds (ALL)
5. Milo Aukerman (The Descendents)



LEONA HIRAMOTO, HUSKING BEE
FAVORITE DRUMMERS

1. Topper Headon (The Clash)
2. Keith Moon (The Who)
3. Makoto Takahashi (BOø)
4. Ringo Starr (Ringo's All-Star Band)
5. Keith (ARB)

ADAM PFALER, J CHURCH
BEST "DRUMMER FACE"

1. The guy from *Metallica Drummer*
2. Rober Downey, Jr. in *Tuff Turf*
3. Mary Stuart Masterson in *Some Kind of Wonderful*
4. Julia Roberts in *Satisfaction*
5. Ed Begley, Jr. in *This is Spinal Tap*

JULIETTE TORREZ, LAST GASP DISTRIBUTION
FIVE BOOKS TO TAKE TO YOUR GRAVE

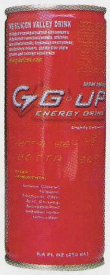
1. John Nichols, *The Magic Journey*
2. *Pierre et Gilles*
3. *Anima Mundi: Art of Mark Ryden*
4. John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*
5. Any *Love & Rockets* collection by Los Bros. Hernandez

KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA, PART-TIME BOUNCER
HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICT IN BARS

1. Kimura arm bar
2. Take the person down and put your arm behind his or her neck
3. Say, "I saw your friends go outside"
4. Buy the person a drink if he or she will leave
5. Say, "I can't hear you. Let's go outside"

ENERGY DRINKS

G Up (China)

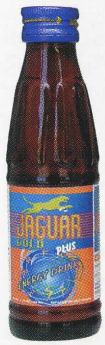


Manufacturer: East West Pharmaceuticals
Slogan: "The Silicon Valley Drink"
Serving: 259 ml **Calories:** 220
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, trimethylxanthine, inositol
Intended Drinkers: Burned-out or laid-off dot-com workers
Flavor/Effects: Is this why Silicon Valley almost fell into the ocean? The first foul sip will fry your taste buds like the strongest concoction of prune juice, tin can, and grandma's yellowing closet. This might wake you up, but I'd rather drink armpit sweat from a sumo wrestler. - en

Super Lion Energy Drink (Malaysia)

Manufacturer: Super Coffeemix Manufacturing
Slogan: "New super power"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 200
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, glucuronolactone, caffeine
Intended Drinkers: Siegfried and Roy
Flavor/Effects: The small can is chuggable, but its syrupy consistency and sweet aftertaste remind me of cold medicine. It's kind of bogus. All it does is load you with carbs and sugar. Maybe because it's made in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, the Tijuana of Asia? It worked, though. I batted 2-for-3 and felt strong as a flea. - en

Jaguar Gold Plus (Indonesia)



Manufacturer: Ultra Prima Abadi
Slogan: Golden shower of power
Serving: 150 ml **Calories:** 138
Active Ingredient(s): Sorbitol, inositol, taurine, caffeine
Intended Drinkers: Olympians, miners, and mentors
Flavor/Effects: This is supposed to contain apple and black currant, but it tastes more like Vick's cough syrup without the alcohol after-breath. Really though, it's just drinking a big question mark. Maybe Jaguar is what makes Indonesians the world's finest at credit card fraud? Maybe this drink is just another one of their jokes on me? - en

Yunker D Herbal Supplement Drink with Vitamins (Japan)

Manufacturer: Sato Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "Promotes general well being"
Serving: 50 ml **Calories:** 50
Active Ingredient(s): Amomum xanthioides wall seed, castor oil, royal jelly
Intended Drinkers: Tiger Balm sniffers
Flavor/Effects: This $7 drink comes with a tiny straw! The first sip tastes like strong ginger ale with a dirt flavor, but there's a little alcohol aftertaste, too. The ingredient list is so long, I think it's just a container full of chemicals. - en

Sparkling Yunker (Japan)

Manufacturer: Sato Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "Turn on the Energy!"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 105
Active Ingredient(s): St. John's wort, royal jelly, guarana seed, German chamomile
Intended Drinkers: Skate posers and designers who are stuck in the '80s
Flavor/Effects: This drink tastes like tin can: metallic, bitter, and medicinal. The deranged Rat Fink-style dragon on a skateboard makes this a weird and phony extreme drink. It tastes too bad to be cool and it has no side effects. - en

Lipovitan EB3 (Japan)

Manufacturer: Tashio Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "Sharpen your edge"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 110
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, caffeine, royal jelly, nicotinamide
Intended Drinkers: Ice skaters, hockey players, and straight edgers
Flavor/Effects: EB3 could be a Scrabble tile, a Bingo spot, or maybe a subliminal calling, since I play third base. This drink has that weird plum medicine flavor and the carbonation will give you burps. But the bubbles are important since this would taste like smelly ass without them. - en

Lipovitan (Japan)

Manufacturer: Tashio Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "B-Energized!"
Serving: 100 ml **Calories:** 64
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, royal extract, anhydrous caffeine, ginseng root
Intended Drinkers: Cheerleaders, game show hosts, and battery-mascot bunnies
Flavor/Effects: Good things come in small packages, and I can't decide if this is one of them. The flavor is highly medicinal with a gross, bitter aftertaste, but it did make me warm-faced and hyper. - mw

Z (Japan)

Manufacturer: Calpis
Slogan: It's also a steak sauce!
Serving: 110 ml **Calories:** 57
Active Ingredient(s): Nicotinic, vitamins E, C, B12
Intended Drinkers: Fans of Zorro, Z-Man, Mazinga, and old Datsuns
Flavor/Effects: The label plays up the amino acid Arginine which is supposed to promote sexual functions through neurotransmitters. The black bottle looks gross and it's freaky that I have to put my lips on it, but, hey, it's me who'll become the black bottle in 15 minutes. I'm lucky to be sitting behind a desk! - en

Fibe Mini Plus Beta Carotene Drink (Japan)

Manufacturer: Ootsuka Drink
Slogan: "Every day healthy"
Serving: 100 ml **Calories:** 40
Active Ingredient(s): Beta carotene
Intended Drinkers: Burrowing rodents and people with poor eyesight
Flavor/Effects: This is something like Orange Metamucil. Yes, I used to drink it, and this gives me flashbacks. The label advertises beta carotene, and you're supposed to drink it daily! The tiny drink doesn't taste like carrot, only like Orange Tang! I have no idea where the energy is supposed to come from. If it doesn't taste like shit, is it going to work? - en

Dekavita C (Japan)

Manufacturer: Suntory
Slogan: Thanks to modern chemistry, fruits are now optional.
Serving: 210 ml **Calories:** 100
Active Ingredient(s): Vitamin C
Intended Drinkers: Pirates, sailors, decathletes
Flavor/Effects: Does the "deka" refer to metrics, which no one in America understands? This dry, grapefruit-flavored carbonated liquid comes in a dark bottle and has a slightly bitter taste. Maybe that's the energy charge? It's made by the Suntory beer company, so maybe I'll just sit back and get red-faced. - en

C1000 Jelly Food Lemon (Japan)

Manufacturer: Takeda Food
Slogan: Suck lemons like an astronaut!
Serving: 150 g **Calories:** 100
Active Ingredient(s): Vitamins C, B1, and B2
Intended Drinkers: I.V. fetishists and Ralph Nader
Flavor/Effects: Because it's all lemon pulp and sugar, drinking this is like eating paste! It's a shame because I was thirsty, and all I got was a liquid meal in a bag. But does it do anything? I performed decently, going 1-for-1 with 2 walks, and played third just all right. - en

Energy in Body Charge (Japan)

Manufacturer: Weider
Slogan: "A special drink to supply carbohydrates equivalent to a rice ball"
Serving: 180 g **Calories:** 70
Active Ingredient(s): Calcium lactage
Intended Drinkers: "Busy people and athletes as they get ready for work or competition"
Flavor/Effects: It's thick, pulpy agar-agar with a citrus taste. It's filled with energy-loaded carbs, but doesn't eating food just make you more tired? Perhaps it's the high fructose corn syrup that gives the "body charge." - en

eing too busy to eat balanced meals, working long hours, and participating in "extreme" sports are only some of the reasons why many people reach ast the water bottle and grab an energy drink. But did you know that Red Bull comes from Thailand and that Bacchus has been sold in Korea since 963? We tested these drinks and others under working conditions at the Giant Robot Factory and on the field at Giant Robot softball games to find t what works, what gives you a buzz, and what tastes disgusting.

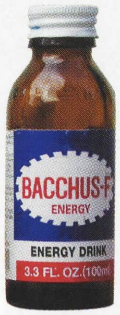
Vitamin Salad (Japan)

Manufacturer: Better Plus
Slogan: Suck your salad!
Serving: 150 g **Calories:** 100
Active Ingredient(s): Calcium lactate, vitamins B1, B2, C
Intended Drinkers: Dieters who think salad bars are too fattening
Flavor/Effects: Why not? I need to eat a more balanced diet because my shit's been rocky lately. But there is no salad in here. The only natural ingredient is the lemon juice, which gives it a tart flavor. If it doesn't taste medicinal, it's hard to believe that even an I.V. bag of jelly will do anything. - en

M150 (Thailand)

Manufacturer: It's in Thai!
Slogan: "Leadership, Heroism"
Serving: 150 ml **Calories:** ?
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, caffeine
Intended Drinkers: Cowardly leaders and heroic followers
Flavor/Effects: This stuff is so thick, it's like syrup for making Red Bull! This non-carbonated drink does the opposite of quenching your thirst by coating your mouth with its prune juice concentrate consistency and flavor. However, it did its job by allowing me to play ball on a nearly empty stomach. - mw

Bacchus-F Energy Drink (Korea)

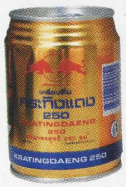


Manufacturer: Dong-A Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "Respecting for life since 1963"
Serving: 100 ml **Calories:** 60
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, royal jelly, guarana extract
Intended Drinkers: People into wine, harp music, and group sex
Flavor/Effects: The Asian drink looks more like medicine than the American version, but the non-carbonated, plum-flavored stuff goes down smooth. It's not so thick that it goes down gross, and I felt tingly and good throughout a long softball practice. - mw

C1000 Vitamin Bottle Physical Drink (Japan)

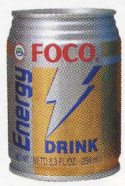
Manufacturer: Takeda Food
Slogan: The other silver bullet
Serving: 500 ml **Calories:** 185
Active Ingredient(s): Vitamins A, B1, B6, C, D, E
Intended Drinkers: Olivia Newton-John, people with large bladders
Flavor/Effects: The carbonation and lemon-lime flavor are fine, but there's no way anything medicinal would come in such huge quantity. I think it's just a big, glorified soda. After drinking it, my energy was lacking. My pitches were falling short, although I did hit a pretty sweet double. - mw

Kratingdaeng (Thailand)



Manufacturer: TC Pharmaceuticals
Slogan: aka Red Bull
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 50
Active Ingredient(s): It's in Thai!
Intended Drinkers: Bullfighters, film festival attendees, confused stockbrokers
Flavor/Effects: Thai Red Bull is squatty and yellow, while the American one is pale and tall. Is that racist? Drink-wise, the Thai version is a little more syrupy than the American version, but that makes it better, not grosser. This stuff is so potent it actually gave me the jitters. Is there a sugary cereal I can pour this over? - mw

Foco Energy Drink (Thailand)



Manufacturer: Thai Agri Foods Public Company
Slogan: "Supreme Quality by Thai Agri Foods"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 160
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, vitamin B12, caffeine
Intended Drinkers: Fans of Captain Marvel, the Greatest American Hero, and the San Diego Chargers
Flavor/Effects: The can is reminiscent of Jolt! Cola, but it really just tastes like the other plum-type energy drinks from Thailand. It didn't give me a burst of energy, but it did allow me to skip lunch. - mw

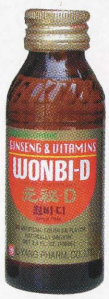
White Shark Energy Drinnk (Thailand)

Manufacturer: Osotspa
Slogan: "Shark replaces the energy which you burn up during intensive mental activity or during physical exercise"
Serving: 150 ml **Calories:** 90
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, vitamins B6, B12
Intended Drinkers: Pool hustlers, poker players, and Running Rebels
Flavor/Effects: This sweet and medicinal light syrup tasted like Dimetapp and made my face tingle. Because I didn't pitch and was stranded on base twice, the White Shark kept me up all night. - mw

El Sol (Korea)

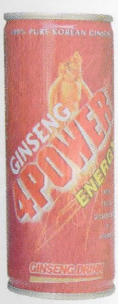
Manufacturer: Lotte
Slogan: "Pura Energia"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 110
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, caffeine
Intended Drinkers: Los hombres del futbol
Flavor/Effects: Although there's no apple listed in the ingredients, it tastes a lot like Martinelli's Sparkling Cider. It didn't taste like medicine at all, but it powered me through what might have been my best pitching game ever and I hit 3-for-3, suggesting that the benefits are both mental and physical. - mw

Wonbi-D Energy Drink (Korea)



Manufacturer: Il-Yang Pharmaceutical
Slogan: "Since 1948"
Serving: 100 ml **Calories:** 52
Active Ingredient(s): Ginseng, honey
Intended Drinkers: Drunken masters and new agers
Flavor/Effects: I'm not a big fan of ginseng flavor. Maybe that means I already have too much yang? This stuff is sickeningly sweet with that bitter root aftertaste that old people seem to like a lot. There were no actual grains in the drink, but my mouth still felt chalky afterward. - mw

Ginseng 4Power (Korea)

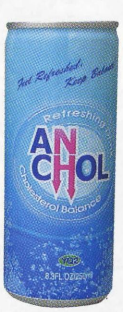


Manufacturer: 4Power Inc.
Slogan: "Enjoy and feel the power of ginseng"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 110
Active Ingredient(s): Ground fresh ginseng, red ginseng extract
Intended Drinkers: Go players, golf addicts, and baby makers
Flavor/Effects: It tastes like a sweeter version of my mom's old soup. I like the bits and pieces of ginseng, too, even though they irritate my sore throat. It doesn't give a caffeine rush or sugar high like the other drinks, but it's refreshing. I like it. - bp

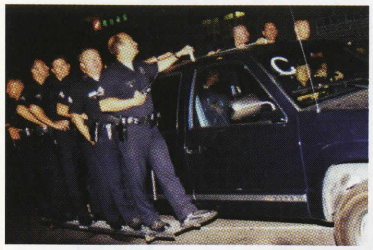
Eisenryu Drink (Japan)

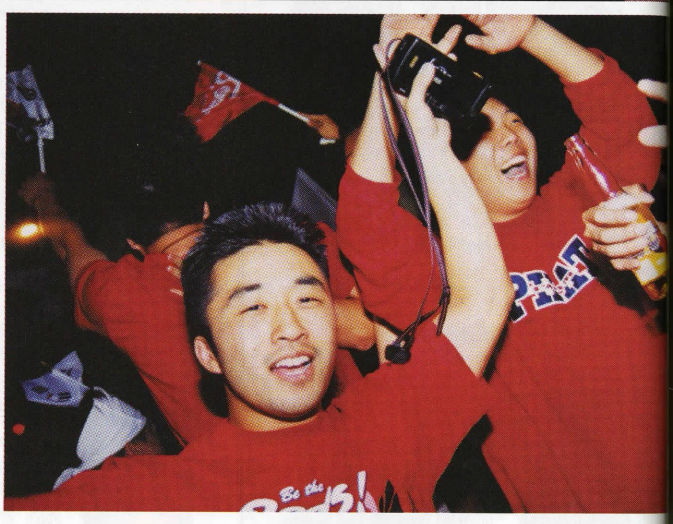
Manufacturer: Central Trading Company
Slogan: "Healthy Drink"
Serving: 100 ml **Calories:** 30
Active Ingredien t(s): None
Intended Drinkers: People who can read Chinese or Japanese characters, or those who just like dragon designs
Flavor/Effects: How do they make water, glucose, salt, sugar, and acid taste like medicine? There are no vitamins, new-age additives, or anything that would give you a boost. The only energy this will give you is the shudder you get when drinking this foul concoction. - mw

Anchol (Korea)



Manufacturer: Celltechs
Slogan: "Feel Refreshed, Keep Balance!"
Serving: 250 ml **Calories:** 80
Active Ingredient(s): Taurine, quillaja, yugga, green tea
Intended Drinkers: Aerobics queens and spa sloths
Flavor/Effects: Anchol tastes like a cola that's so carbonated, you can only recognize the aftertaste. It doesn't taste great (and it tastes even worse as it warms), but it works. Even with no caffeine, it powered me well past midnight on an evening when I ate so much I could hardly breathe. - mw





RED DEVILS

It was 2 a.m. in downtown Los Angeles. Law enforcement one hundred strong in riot gear, news camera crews, and onlookers watched as drunken teens decked out in red took to the streets. Korean-American soccer fans clogged intersections in lowered cars, brandishing scarlet bandannas to celebrate Team Korea's narrow 5-3 victory over Spain in a white-knuckled overtime shootout.

The cohost country shocked the world, itself, and Vegas odds-makers by becoming the first Asian soccer team to advance so far in the 72-year history of the World Cup. Koreans crowded onto the Daewoo bandwagon, donning the now-famous red T-shirts worn by the Korean soccer diehards known as the Red Devils.

With over 200,000 Koreans, Los Angeles has the highest concentration of the ethnic group outside of Asia. Many of the city's Korean Americans cashed in on bragging rights by gathering at an abandoned parking lot at Olympic and Alexandria for the games, which aired at 2 or 4 a.m. PST. By the time Korea upset the Spaniards early Saturday morning, the lot was packed with five thousand red shirts, many of them women who showed up just to drool over star player Jung Hwan Ahn's flowing locks.

The following Tuesday's semifinals match attracted the same crowd, but unfortunately, Germany shattered the Korean team's hopes with a single goal. The German goaltender bore a striking resemblance to X-Men foe Sabretooth.

Korea still had a shot at the bronze medal in its match against Turkey, scheduled for 4 a.m. the following Saturday. This time, fans in L.A. were given access to Staples Center, home of the Lakers. The 20 thousand free tickets were gobbled up, leaving thousands of people stranded in the parking lot. Inside the arena, Korean pop singers from Roo'Ra and Tashannie made appearances, UCLA's Korean Club rabble-roused the futbol fanatics into a frenzy, and the crowd charged right into the game roaring fight anthems–and then Turkey scored a no-nonsense goal in the first several seconds of the game.

The Turks took the game easily, 3-2, and I think they handed Team Korea their goals just to avoid getting beat down upon exiting the stadium. Nonetheless, the Los Angeles crowd celebrated for hours after the game–far from ashamed by Korea's stellar performance in the 2002 World Cup.

- Bobby Kim

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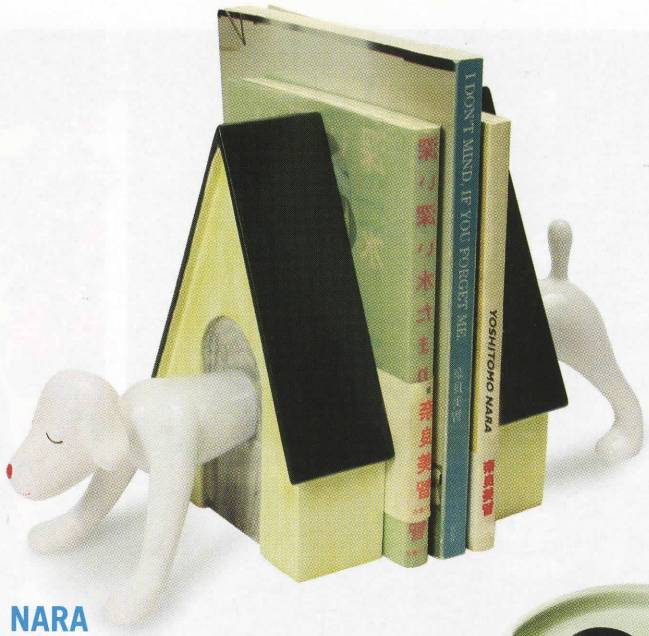
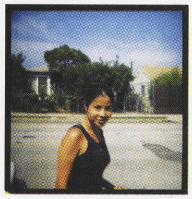


MORE NARA

The artist whom we voted "Most Prolific in Bookmaking" is also becoming an ace merchandiser. First, he's releasing a set of bookends based on a sculpture titled *Dog from Your Childhood*. About 8" tall, they are halves of a dog standing through his house! Next, Nara is releasing a cool ashtray. When Nara paints, he smokes, so he had to come out with one of these. Called *Too Young to Die*, it's 10" across and 1" deep. For nonsmokers, it will work as a tabletop candy dish.



POLGAROID

The Holga is a $20 plastic camera that sho funky, out-of-focus images on 120mm film. T Polga is its Japanese mutant twin. The idea, think, is to have the Polaroid back so you can t out what lighting will be like for your Holga. Th means you're carrying two cameras. So far, t camera has proven to be a fun toy, but it's a expensive at $299.

BITCHARG

It's said that in life, no one has control over anything. Not anymore. The first time you navigate a BitCharG remote-control car on your hardwood floor, you'll feel control right away. One 45-second charge via the AA battery-packed controller will give you three minutes of power. Models of the Hot Wheels-sized cars include a Nissan Skyline GT-R, Mitsubishi Lancer, Mazda RX-7, Subaru Impreza, and more! In addition, controllers have four frequency settings, so you can have races with up to three friends. Next time you take a dump on a test or get yelled at by your boss, bring out the BitCharG and drive.

Devil Robots 4.16%, Flag 8.33%, Cute 14.58%

BE@RBRICK

Packed randomly, kind of like baseball card these stupid little Kubrick bears are addictiv Series 3 (still available at press time) contai bears with animal prints, jelly colors, scienc fiction themes, horror movie outfits, and oth designs. There's a 4 percent chance of getting bear designed by Devilrobots. Only a heartles scum would sell a Be@rbrick, but the rarest o commands up to $70 on eBay! Next comes Seri 4, which is reported to contain a limited-editio Kubrick bear designed by KAWS.

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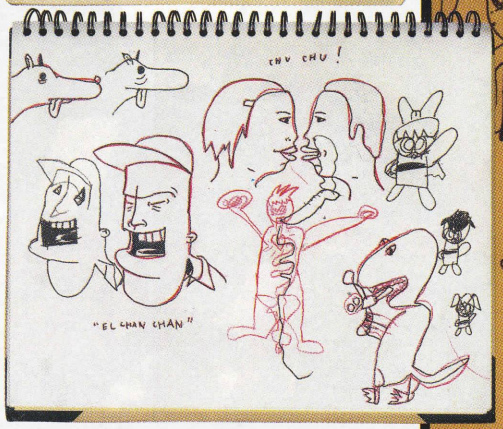
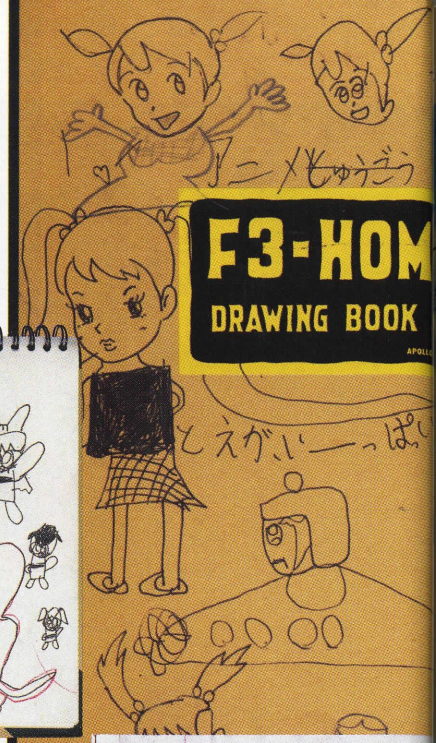
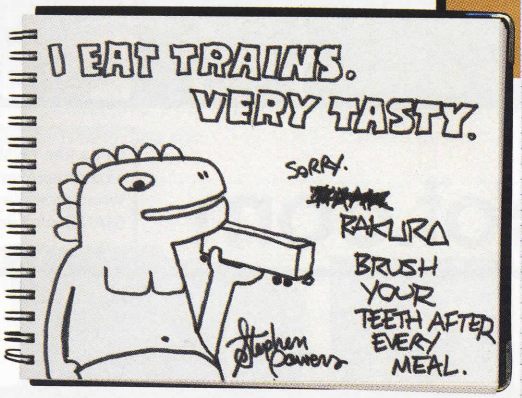


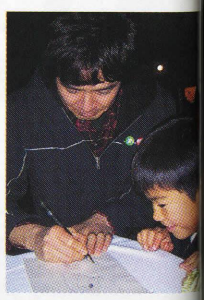




ALL-STAR SCRIBBLE JAM

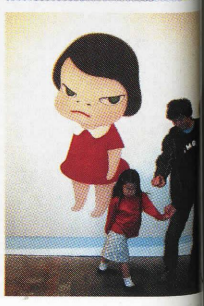
At the Superflat art show opening in Los Angeles, Yoshitomo Nara sits by a table full of cocktails, drawing pictures with a little boy who has brought along a pen and some paper. Months later, the same kid is seen with a sketchbook at WK Interact's show at the Annex Gallery in L.A.'s Chinatown. Most recently, outside the Igloo store's grand opening in San Diego, the enigmatic child is spotted drawing with Money Mark on a sidewalk planter.

Attending art shows with his father, Yoshi, and his sister, Akira, Rakuro Kawasaki gets to meet some of today's best artists. He has traveled to San Francisco to see Barry McGee and flown to Japan to check out Nara's latest work. And as a result of his father's T-shirt business, Rakuro has also sat in on meetings with Michael Leon, WK Interact, Steven Powers, and Ryan McGinness. To keep her child away from chain-snorting hipsters guzzling vodka Red Bulls, Rakuro's mom always packs sketchbooks. The results are pages of drawings, as well as some "collaborations."



"I used to worry that the artists would be insulted if he drew on top of their art," says Yoshi. "But Nara and Barry McGee welcomed it. They love kids."

Rakuro freely works with other artists' sketches, and his style has evolved accordingly. Early pages show lines and mazes, but his newer scrawls contain elements of Takashi Murakami, Mr., and Chiho. His work is still rudimentary, as you'd expect a kid's drawings to be, but the experiences reflected in it are remarkable. Scribbling with big-name artists is something that no grown-up would do–we're just too cool.



Rakuro is on a strictly first-name basis with the artists. Ryan McGinness is just Ryan. Barry McGee is plain Barry. When I ask Rakuro about his favorite artists, he mentions Nara first, then Picasso. But when I ask him what he likes about Picasso, he says he doesn't know his art–he just knows that he's good. After we talk for a few minutes, art takes a back seat. Rakuro leaves his sketchbook on the table, grabs his Razor scooter, and enjoys the remainder of a nice Saturday afternoon.

+ BY ERIC NAKAMURA

BOOK COLLECTOR

Anthem

There are two covers, one with a Blonde Redhead photo. In this case, Evan Hecox's line-drawn style stands out. Everything feels good and looks good, and the mag is developing into something major. The B&W pages aren't distracting, and complement the color pages. The Hecox-illustrated travel story on Japan is amazing. It's on heavy kraft-paper stock with three-color images of fish, lanterns, and streets. It's idyllic and quiet.

Araki

We received a 32-page sample of this titanic photo book that will retail at $1250. It's worth it if you like images of naked hookers, geishas eating watermelon, pregnant women, and plants! Standing about 20 inches tall and 14 inches wide, each photo looks like a frameable print. Araki says that this book is his epithet for his first 60 years. He claims it contains everything, so there must be some super-gross images in there.

Arkitip 13

I have number 280 of 1000, and this issue has Mark Gonzales art on the cover along with a Gonz mobile. *Arkitip* is on a quest to bring art to the kids and I think they're doing a great job. Each issue is a collectible art piece for $15, and it's a good deal. My favorite part is the random photos from the *Arkitip* office, and Shep Fairey and the French Space Invader guy have nice spreads, but what gets me the most are the creative and cool ads.

Barry McGee

With about 300 pages of Barry McGee's art and photographs, this book will overload you like a Japanese convenience store. Each page is insane with faces, trees, branches, bottles, and murals. There's so much of his work in this book that you'll need more than one sitting to see it all. You might spend more time on this than you would a thick novel. It will probably be out of print by the time you read this.

Drunken Master 6

GR adman Kiyoshi, who started this full-size zine as a smaller staple-and-fold, holds on to comics while others are turning to art. One cartoon illustrates an old letter he wrote about wrestling, kogals, and Japan. Why is it in there? The funniest parts are the interviews where Kiyoshi makes fun of New Found Glory and Built to Spill. But the gem is a letter from Kiyoshi's grandmother. She disses him harshly!

Hong Kong Comics

This big square book collects hundreds of images and covers from the last 100 years of Hong Kong comics. It probably has more than you'd ever want to know about the subject, but I can't say that I'd want it on my coffee table. But if you're a comic collector or fan, or even if you're an artist who wants to have tons of Asian comic covers in one place, then go no further–this is your book. There's even an intro article that puts everything in context.

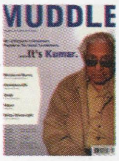
IdN 49

This HK-based magazine is tough to find but worth seeking out. This issue has Yoshitomo Nara cover art with a measly little article but nice photos of his sketchbook. There's also WK Interact (who's finally getting some accolades for his streaky wall murals in NYC), Chinese-American artist Rostarr, and GR cover artist Geoff McFetridge. I'm only mentioning the stars in the issue, but there are many, many other artists and designers you'll love.

Mass Appeal 15

One of the highlights of this issue is the "My Old-School Adidas" article, a primer to the shoe company that includes its illustrious history and images of custom sneakers that are probably selling for serious dough at NYC's RiteFoot. The next cool thing? Stitches. Not the band, but mug shots of folks with some nasty gashes. They should have called me–I got seven stitches near my eye from jumping face first from a sofa onto a table!

Muddle 19



Kumar played the Indian groundskeeper in *Rushmore*, the knuckleheaded safecracker in *Bottle Rocket*, and the stabbing butler in *The Royal Tenenbaums*. Now he's on the cover of this magazine! But instead of being a straight-up interview, the article is a personal journal. I want to know more about the man, but for now this is what you get. There's also a Q&A with Hammer where the writer talks about his parachute pants falling to his ankles.

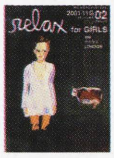
Neomonomu 4

This edition has a different name because everything is monochrome! Each signature is a different Pantone color, including the cover. With each issue of the $1 *Neomu*, you get so much that it's hard to believe Deanne Cheuk would make this book to lose money–all proceeds are given to charity. Some people make things just to do something cool, and that includes Deanne. One day, I'll be bold enough to contribute something. Until then, I'm just a fan.

No. 5

If you liked Taiyo Matsumoto's *Black and White* comics, check out *No. 5*. His latest work to be translated into English takes place in a futuristic desert setting, where international peace-keeping forces are out to stop a rogue asshole. The images and worlds Taiyo creates are shocking, unique, and interesting. The art resembles a sketchbook, but that's his style–sloppy lines that look clean. If you're an artist, Matsumoto's work will inspire you.

Relax for Girls 02

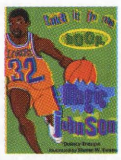


At first I thought this wasn't as good as *Relax*, but now I'm thinking it might be better. You don't see the same names over and over (well, maybe a little), but you do get more fashion, larger photos, and many people's collections. I liked the coffee mugs and the shopping bags. If you're a Japanese magazine junkie, *Relax for Girls* is a necessary evil. It might be less cute than *No No* or *Cutie*, but it's filled with substance. It's hard to find, so good luck.

Sound Collector Audio Review

Sound Collector is filled with interesting music that most people don't know about. The tabloid-sized *Audio Review* part is about music that's a little more common–not necessarily rare, but hopefully really good. The Summer 2002 issue has one-page reviews of Blood, Sweat & Tears, Curtis Mayfield, and Rocket from the Crypt! Priced at $2.95 with great Dave Flattum cover art, this is a great resource for music nerds.

Take it to the Hoop Magic Johnson



In this tribute to Magic, Quincy Troupe writes in poetic flow that only someone like Kool Keith or Isaac Hayes could speak. Troupe calls Magic the "juju man," "sho-nuff shaman," and "sho-nuff spaceman." Imagine going to the playground and calling someone that! Shane W. Evans' raw art style is like sketchbook pens and computer coloring. It's fun, cool, and meant for ages 5 to 9. Check out the Kareem and Worthy cameos.

Think Twice

This small booklet made by an HK designer is spiral bound and punched through the pages with a concentric diecut that reads "www." It's meant to help you keep track of the cool URLs that you find and try to remember, but forget. The back of the booklet has a few pages for e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, and addresses. Want to be the king or queen of style? Yeah, I thought so. Then buy two.

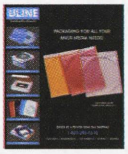
Tokion

"The Disobedients" issue is a testament to how strong and popular graphics are these days. It's like a catalog of interviews with cool contemporary artists. They've had some backlash–this seems to be the all-encompassing issue, so everyone who's not in it is pissed–but it's selling out everywhere. It even has a pull-out poster of a family tree that includes everyone's names with lines showing how they're related. The only thing I don't understand is the cover!

Tribeca Film Festival

This festival was born out of the 9-11 tragedy. Its catalog is a heavy square book filled with film write-ups that should not be thrown away. Documentaries include *Chiefs* (about an Indian reservation's high school basketball team) and *The Specimen* (about no-holds-barred fighter Mark Kerr). Films about New York include *Manhattan* and *On the Waterfront*. This is a cool catalog and reference.

ULINE



This catalog of shipping supplies includes plastic bags, boxes, cases, labels, and more. Just when you think it's boring, you'll see something like cool storage techniques, custom packing tape, boxes of all sizes, shrink-wrapping machines, or a hydraulic forklift. This catalog helped me visualize cool ways to package things, and maybe it'll help you with your projects.

Vice Vol. 9, No. 2

This has a nice cover with a topless tribal woman holding a sloth with a big grin on its furry face. Who wouldn't grin? Inside is the infamous "Guide to All Races" article. Japanese are rated the highest because of their smart men and hot women. Koreans are the lowest because of war-related stuff. Indians are screwed because they get sunburned unlike Africans, who don't, and so on. It's fucked-up but funny.

While You Were Sleeping 18

Shepard Fairey designed the cover logo, which is a real stunner. Too bad the Gene Simmons interview stinks, the ESPO/Stephen Powers article is just okay (although his art rules), and the Japanese band Puffy never has anything exciting to say (see our past issues with Ami and Yumi). When I finally I get to the Mötley Crüe article, it's about a fucking cover band! Okay, so I'm a little defeated by WYWS, but the cover does rock.

You Cannot Be Serious

McEnroe smoked pot, and he has probably whiffed as many lines as he has clay court shots! This book spans Super Brat's life from the time he first picked up a racket to his beyond-shitty job as a game show host. He talks a lot about matches and locker room moments with Connors, Borg, Gerulaitis, Vilas, and others. He also talks shit about his ex-wife, Tatum O'Neal, and describes how he hooked up with Patty Smyth. Get this if you're a fan.

A mandolin is neither a toy nor a musical in ment. Don't be a ding-dong and cut yourself!

THAI PAPAYA SALAD

Som-Tum is a refreshing papaya salad that's available at any decent Thai restaurant. It's cold, crunchy, and tart, but slightly sweet at the same time. Many think that a papaya salad is a dessert, but Som-Tum is actually a veggie salad. The unripe green papayas are like a cucumber or cabbage heart. In Thailand, the dish is often served along with chicken or meat, but it can stand alone as a light lunch.

Most supermarkets sell Hawaiian or Mexican green papayas for $2.99 per pound. They feel hard and unripe, and when you slice them open, they're bright orange with black seeds. This is the wrong kind. After driving from health food stores to fancy markets, we found that the best place to go is straight to the source–Thai markets. At $.79 per pound, their green papayas are the right ones. They are misshapen, ugly, and wrinkled like Jolly Green Giant's sack, but inside the meat is white with white seeds.

To make the 2"-3" strings of papaya, you'll need a kitchen tool called a mandolin. We purchased a plastic one for $27, although the higher-end mandolins can cost more than $100. We also bought a smaller hand tool for $8 at the Thai market. Both worked well. If you think you've got Ginsu skills, you can use a knife to julienne the papaya instead.

When ordering at a restaurant, try it mild, since even one Thai chili is too hot for most people. Our recipe comes from Bai Yook restaurant in the Hillcrest area of San Diego. They always make mild Som-Tum with a tart and simple flavor, and it's excellent. The recipe is simple enough for anyone to make. Feel free to improvise, as we were told that "the receipe is just a starting point."

INGREDIENTS

3 small green papayas
2 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp fish sauce
2 Tbsp lime juice
1-2 Thai chili peppers
1/8 cup unsalted roasted peanuts
1 tomato
6 string beans

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Shred or julienne as much papaya as you want to eat. The problem with papayas is their random size–a single papaya can be as large as a watermelon. Usually three smallish sized papayas (think large mango size) will be enough for two or three people.

2. Add chopped green and red Thai chili pers, sliced tomatoes, and chopped s beans. Mix together with chopped unsa roasted peanuts and serve cold.

TIPS

1. Because there's no cooking involved, it's to alter the proportion of sugar, salt, lime j and fish sauce. And because the papayas stringy, it's easy to taste pieces until you ge flavor you want.

2. We left out the green beans and toma since Bai Yook customers sometimes usu leave the veggies behind and eat only the f Some restaurants add dried shrimp to crea more fishy flavor.

3. If you can't find green papayas, be creat Some Thai folks use green apple or cucumb

Bai Yook, 1260 University Avenue, San Diego
619-296-2700

all new seven inch coming this fall
all new seven inch coming this fall
all new seven inch coming this fall
all new seven inch coming this fall
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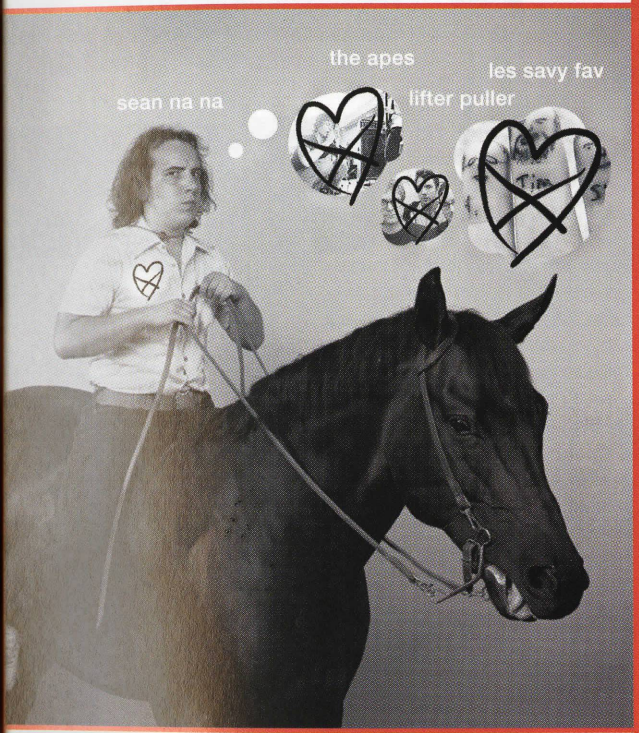
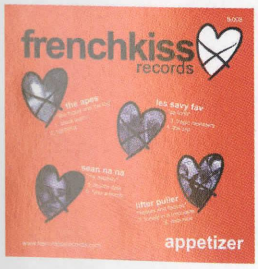
ENON

And for those who want just a taste of Frenchkiss.





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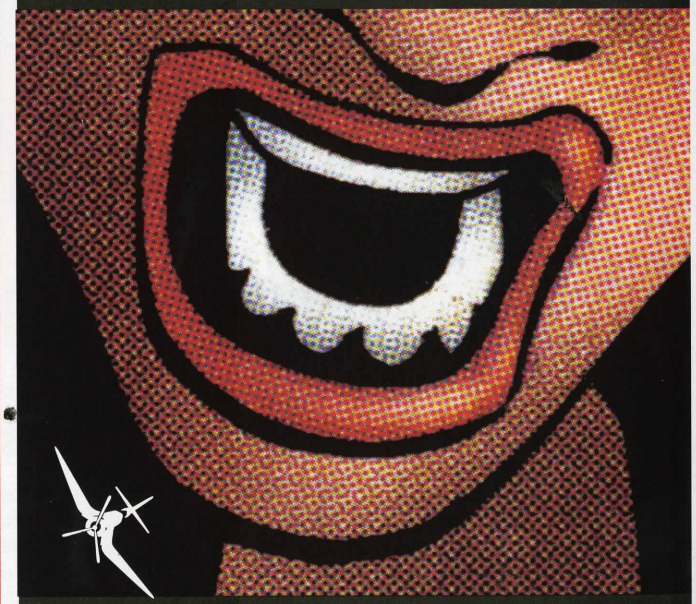

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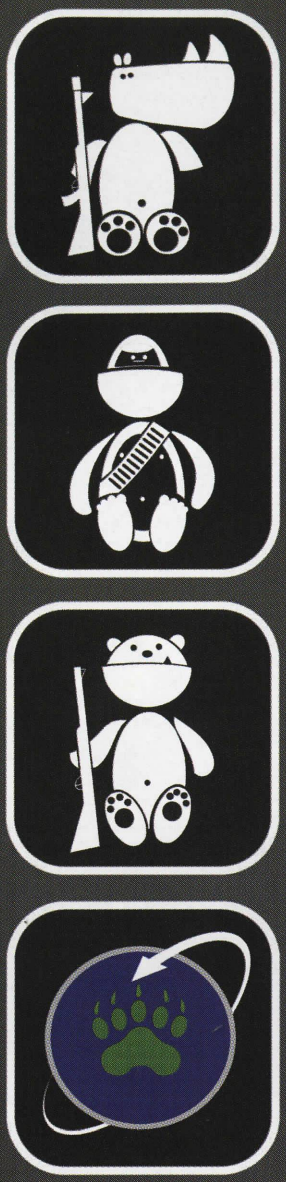

sci-fi flavored art

t-shirts
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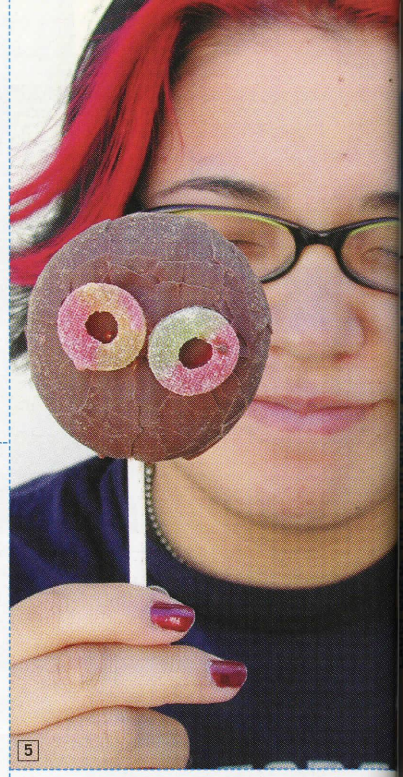

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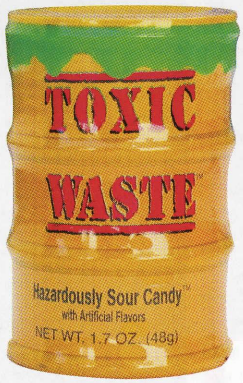

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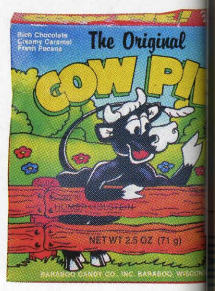


9

SWEET THINGS

The All Candy Expo is all treat and no trick. Once a year in Chicago, 480 candy manufacturers gather from around the world, putting their wares on display to convince everyone from mom-and-pop shops to huge supermarket chains to stock their sweets. Here is a sampling of what we found:

1. **Whackables Candy Liquid Lunch** (Generation Foods Too, USA)
2. **Junk Mouth Candy Spray** (Generation Foods Too, USA)
3. **Candymatch** (Felföldi Potpourri Kft., Hungary)
4. **Betty Chocolate Candy** (Roseville Corp., Macedonia)
5. **Robotin Paleta de Malvavisco** (de la Rosa, Mexico)
6. **Tire Tread Licorice** (Tundra Trading Inc., Finland)
7. **Toxic Waste Hazardously Sour Candy** (Family Sweets Candy Co., Pakis
8. **Bleeding Bones** (Felföldi Potpourri Kft., Hungary)
9. **The Original Cow Pie!** (Baraboo Candy Co., USA)

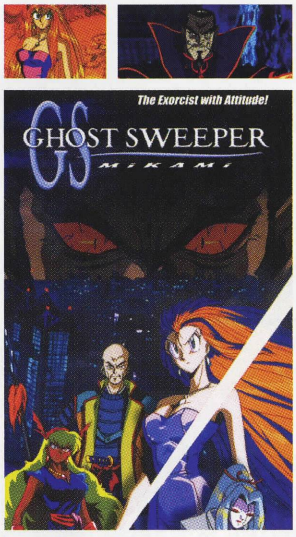
- Corina Fastwolf

To read about more candy, send $2 and a .60 stamp to Sugar Needle Zine, PO Box 300152, Mpls, MN 55403

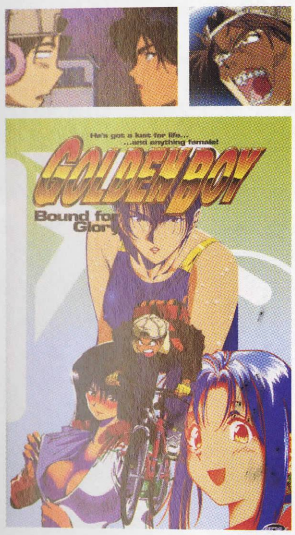
ANIME PERVERSION

Burgess Meredith and Caesar Romero were great playing The Penguin and The Joker in the *Batman* television show from the '60s, but it was Frank Gorshin's Riddler that freaking brought its rogue's gallery of villains to life. Watching him spazz out, I'd be thinking, "What the hell?" You'll be doing the same thing with this anime. Excel is the heroic schoolgirl from another world who gets killed in the first five minutes, is brought back to life to assassinate a manga artist, and then ends up becoming a ground traffic controller. Making fun of Martian princesses, cute-but-deadly aliens, androgynous prisoners in iron masks, and just about every other stock character and plot device in anime, *Excel* is intentionally strange and very funny–kind of like Gorshin's Riddler. [ADV] bp

Ghostsweeper: Mikami (VHS)



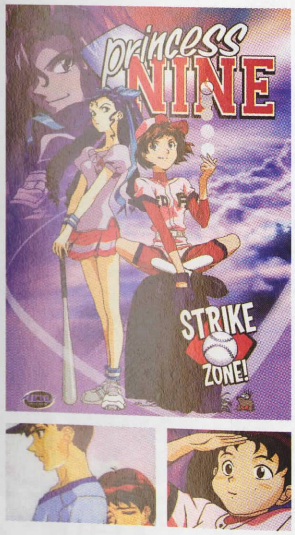
People seem to really like these ghost-busting misfits, but this sexy and humorous series is lacking in the sex, humor, and adventure categories. *Buffy* this is not. Well, at least Mikami, the main character, wears a low-cut, high-hemmed leather dress. An exorcist with attitude, in this episode she and her weird friends hunt down Nosferatu with an oversized lance given to her by a spiritual samurai. If they fail, the reincarnated vampire will turn the city into mindless zombies and usher in a second Dark Age! However, she doesn't really need to search for the undead jerk since he's also looking for her. And, conveniently, they meet at the end of the movie so she can stab him in the heart. Oops, did I spoil the ending? Probably not. [Manga] bp



In the television show *Kung Fu*, David Carradine played Kwai Chang Caine, a man who wandered the earth and used his slow-motion kung fu to help people. In *Golden Boy*, Kintaro Oe is a pervert who wanders the earth on his bicycle, using his questionable intellect to help people and meet fine ladies. Golden Boy kicks Caine's ass. Going from job to job, Kintaro usually becomes obsessed with well-endowed females, such as a conveniently wet Olympic swimmer and a woman who gets off on motorcycles. One episode is a meta-story about Kintaro working at an anime company. The stories are surprisingly clever and, unlike most high school otaku fantasies, Kintaro doesn't always get the girl. It's also clear that, despite being a lech, he's really a good guy. [ADV] bp

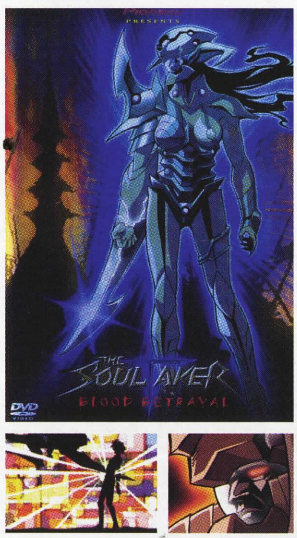
The Irresponsible Captain Tylor (DVD)

These "sidestories" feature 'roid-filled guys, the glistening sweat of young fighter pilots, and wind blowing through the hair of a brain-frozen prince. Where are the big-knockered girls flashing their underwear? If that's what you want, watch something else. The eponymous Captain Tylor never makes an appearance in these five high-end episodes, which instead follow the Soyokaze crew after it has been dispersed at the end of a war. Some of the plots involve dumb jocks who are asked to test assault battle armor, a wingman with *Top Gun* problems, behind-the-scenes intelligentsia, and a demoted captain. Drama is maxed-out as couples embrace under a light snowfall, buddies slap buttocks in friendship, and a silhouetted hero walks away from an explosion. [Right Stuf International] en



The pitcher throws a mean curve ball. The third baseman uses his rage to hit the ball all over the field. Is that Martin and Eric and the Giant Robot softball team? No, it's Ryo and Hizumi, starters for the Princesses of Kisaragi Women's Senior High School. This is the fourth installment of the series and, although you can sense the inevitable *Bad News Bears*-style ending, the interaction and character-building between the players is great as each episode teaches *After-School Special* lessons with melodrama that can only happen in anime. What is Ryo's dark secret? Will Yoko and Kanako return to the team? This series is meant for kids, but I am seriously gripped by the drama. I'd watch these girls play ball even if I didn't have to write anime reviews. [ADV] bp

The Soultaker: Blood Betrayal (DVD)



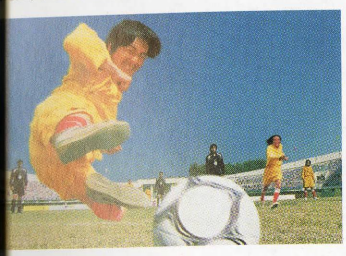
Episodes 7-9 of this stylish and dark series start off with nurse zombies in short skirts throwing thermometers and syringes with deadly accuracy. Once the fetishists have been hooked, the desolate plot unfolds. Kyosuke, a shape-shifting, soul-stealing mutant, has a lot of issues to sort out when he reunites with his birth mother and twin sister–especially since they are pretty hot. After some moody melodrama, the tension is resolved in spectacular sessions of ass kicking. The animation is simple and stark, with mind-blowing monologues and impressively brutal fights. The sleek, cyber-style mutations are *Evangelion*-esque and the stained-glass effects, shadowy figures, and fountains of blood are like a Frank Miller comic come to life. [Pioneer] mw

KING OF COMEDY

++ BY MARTIN WONG & ERIC NAKAMURA

phen Chow teaches Hong Kong sports fans the CA dance in *Shaolin Soccer*.

Ever wonder if Shaolin monks wear anything under their robes?



ephen Chow is about to unleash his Mighty eel Leg on the soccer ball.

I BELIEVE KUNG FU CAN BE ADAPTED TO ANY OTHER THING YOU WANT TO DO. BECAUSE ONCE YOU GET IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION AND ARE FLEXIBLE, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, WHETHER IT'S SOCCER OR BASKETBALL, WHATEVER.

ong Kong actor Stephen Chow has the verbal dexterity of Denis Leary, conceptual reach of Ben Stiller, physical skills of Jim Carrey, and everyman peal of Adam Sandler. He has also been in more great movies than all of em combined. Starring in films like *Fight Back to School*, *All for the Winner*, e *Magnificent Scoundrels*, *King of Beggars*, *Royal Tramp*, *From Beijing with ve*, *Love on Delivery*, and *God of Cookery*, Chow is the number-one comic tor in Hong Kong. His latest film, *Shaolin Soccer*, shows what happens when wn-on-their-luck monks apply iron head, mighty steel leg, no-hands-holding, d other martial arts techniques on the field. It's weird, cool, and funny as ll. The film will be Chow's first to be dubbed and given mainstream distribion in the United States.

R: Your first movie, *Final Justice*, was a drama. How did you make the transion to comedies?

C: Before that movie, I was in a TV series. It was a comedy. And right before e TV series, I was in a children's program as a host. You don't do comedy in ildren's programs, but the way I perform is a little bit special and different om the others. It's funny; people watch and laugh. That's what I saw at that me. I asked, "Why do you laugh?" "You're funny!" "Really?" I just lked to the kids, and sometimes people told me I was rude to them, t at the same time it was funny. Comedy started to build up from at moment. Sometimes you try different ways to do things. At the d, you go the right way. The right way for me is as a comedian. ctually, I enjoy making people laugh. Why not? It's wonderful. verybody laughs. Laughing is the key to solving many problems.

R: Have you ever met any of the little kids that you were rude to?

C: You mean do they get revenge? Yes, it happens. I was rude to em in the program, they grow up, and they come to me and say, 'm the one." They say, "I cried, do you remember?" I'm a human eing. I'm not a god. I'm not a perfect person.

R: That's like in *God of Cookery*, where your character was arrogant d then became humble. What inspired that film's plot?

C: I met a beggar on the street. The beggar looked really bad and eeded help, so I went to him to try to give him money. The reaction the beggar surprised me. He held the money and was stuck for a w moments without words. I was wondering, "You want more?" or mething else. Suddenly, he started crying. He gave me back the money, turned around, and went away. That made me think, "What is the background of the man, to be walking on the street homeless, not want money, and be crying. There's a story behind him." So I started thinking that he was somebody before. That's a good experience to start a story.

GR: What about *A Chinese Odyssey*, your two-part movie about the Monkey King? What inspired that?

SC: That was a great story from a very famous novel of China.

GR: Was it difficult to put together?

SC: The original version of *Journey to the West* is complicated. It's absolutely fantasy. But the movie that I made is not the original story, not even part of it. I took the characters–the monkey, the pig, the monk, and everyone–and made a totally different story. That [original] one is impossible to make, especially in 1995. Now we have computer graphics and everything, but at that time, maybe Spielberg was the only one who could complete the whole job. But me, I wasn't able to do that. I changed it to a love story. There were so many different opinions about that movie; maybe it wasn't the one they expected. The result of the movie was not quite good. When it came out, I heard a lot of voices of disappointment from the movie and the box office. It's amazing after five years, in 2000, the Monkey King is good in China. Every young man talks about the Monkey King and its dialogue. I don't know why they are crazy about the dialogue. That's something I don't understand.

GR: How did you start working with Ng Man Dat, who played Piggy in *A Chinese Odyssey* and Coach Golden Leg in *Shaolin Soccer*? He's been in most of your movies.

SC: He's really funny and a genius. When I was in TV comedy, we both were in TVB, a famous company in Hong Kong. This was more than 10 years ago. That's the first time we met, on my first TV series. I still remember he was concentrating on a script when I first met him–only one page and about three [lines]. He was reading the dialogue for so many hours. I asked him, "Why only three for you and you spend so much time to prepare?" He said that's the reason: He only has three. He has to be special, and he has to find a way to speak differently from any other actor. That impressed me a lot–the manner of the actor.

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 78>

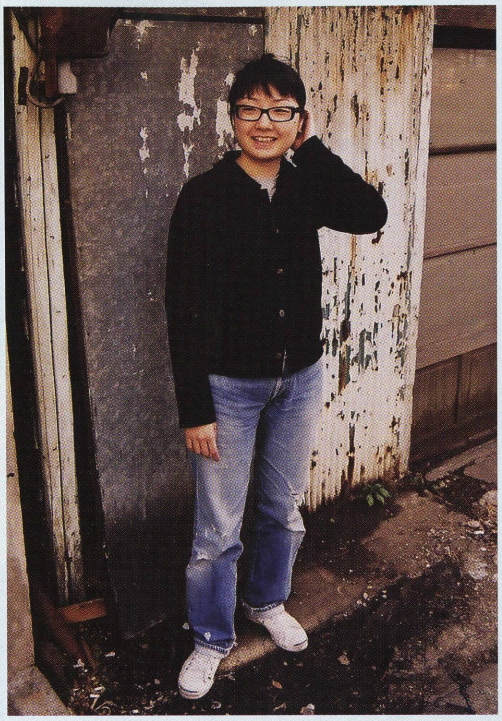
+ ART COURTESY OF NINYU WORKS

NEW TRADITIONALIST

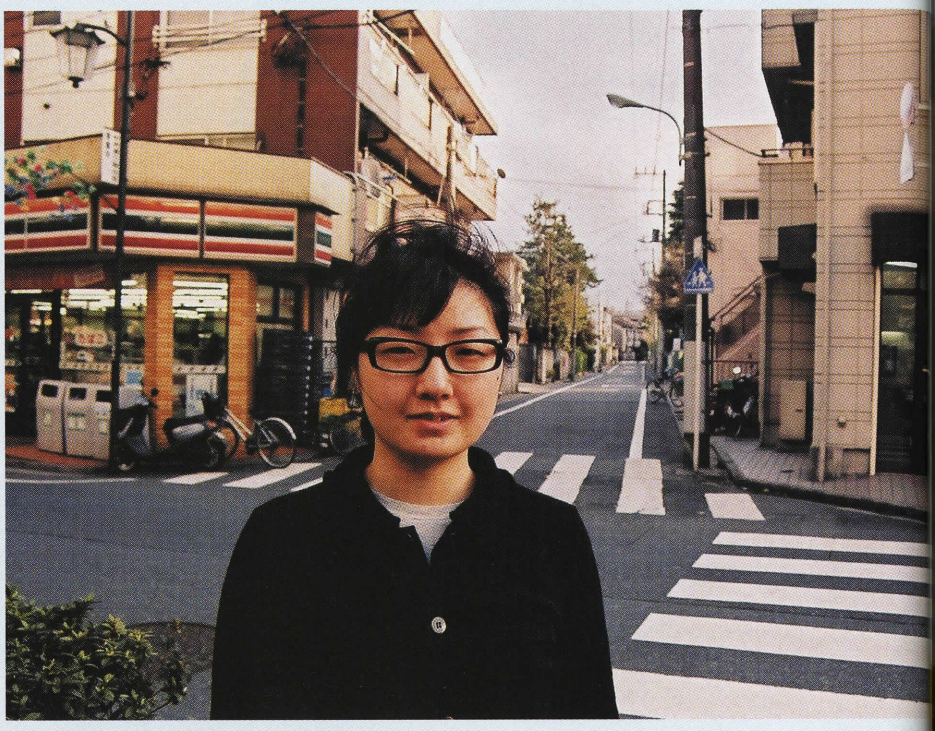
+ WORDS AND PIX BY GABRIEL RITTER

Previous spread left: *Golden Cloud*, 1999 / Acrylic colors, wooden pan blanket / 234 x 167 x 28 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

Previous spread right: *Parting in the Morning*, 1999 / Acrylic colors, w cotton, blanket / 234 x 167 x 28 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works



Ai Yamaguchi picks the paint chips out of her hair.



After a full day of painting, nothing beats an ice-cold Slurpee.

To Edo, 2000 / Acrylic colors, wooden panel, cotton, blanket / 234 x 167 x 28 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

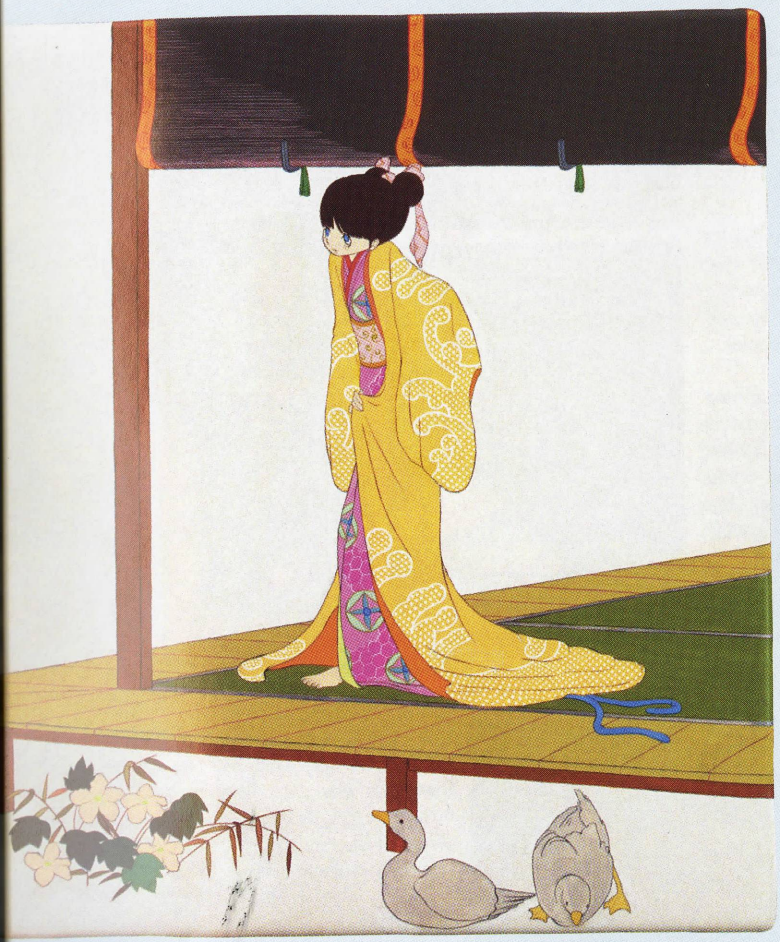
Tokyo painter Ai Yamaguchi kick-started her career by working for modern art Takashi Murakami at his Hiropon Factory. Today, the 25-year-old artist has g indie. Ai's upcoming show at the Giant Robot Store this summer will be her first exhibition in the United States.

GR: Your work seems heavily influenced by traditional Japanese culture, but characters are portrayed in a more contemporary, anime style. Why is that?
AY: Well, I don't feel it's a contemporary style. I've been drawing girls since I was li and it's been one of my hobbies. The style I use for the face developed two or three y ago. During that time I was influenced by works by other artists, including Tak Murakami, and eventually I developed my own style. It's not necessarily a contempo style, but a style I'm happy with... something that developed naturally. But in regar the traditional aspects of my work, like hairstyle and clothing from the Edo pe (1600-1868), I thought it would be interesting if my characters wore old-fashio clothes. And this is what you see now.

GR: One of your series is titled *Kamuro*. Could you explain what that means?
AY: The word kamuro means "shaved head" in Japanese. The girls I paint are from end of the Edo period, when young girls worked at bathhouses. These young girls to cut their hair very short, and because of this, they were called kamuro. Their a ranged from as young as 8 to the oldest being around 13. And in that environm the girls' ranking would increase as they got older, and in the end they would re the highest rank, oiran, and were considered very attractive. The girls I paint around the same age, so in order to emphasize this similarity in age, I titled my e bition *Kamuro*.

GR: Does that mean kamuro are the same as child courtesans?
AY: No, kamuro are not really prostitutes. They are just young attendants for the hig ranking oiran. It's only in my imagination that kamuro become courtesans.

ERE'S A TOTAL OF NINE CHARACTERS IN A NARRATIVE I'VE REATED. THEY WERE ALL SOLD BY THEIR MOTHERS WHEN THEY ERE TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEIR MOTHERS WOULD AVE THEM AND WHY THEY HAVE TO SLEEP WITH MEN THEY ON'T KNOW.



Waiting... Far Away, 1999 / Acrylic colors, wooden panel, cotton, blanket / 350 x 200 x 35 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

The Sunshine, 2001 / Acrylic colors, wooden panel, cotton, blanket / 750 x 530 x 35 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

Okyo Is Waiting, 1998 / Acrylic colors, wooden panel, cotton, blanket / 300 x 300 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

R: So what draws you to this subject matter?

Y: I saw a ukiyo-e [Japanese woodblock print] postcard hat sparked my interest. I thought the colors, shapes, and tyle were very interesting. I decided to work on a piece hat incorporated the ukiyo-e style and my own original haracters. Then Murakami saw my work and liked it, at which point I was asked to join his studio, Hiropon Factory. nce there, he advised me to study more on this topic of oung courtesans in the Edo period. At first I wasn't that nterested in the subject, but I continued to research it ith Murakami's encouragement. I became increasingly nterested in it, especially kamuro. And even now my work ontinues to be influenced by this subject.

GR: How do you feel toward the girls in your work?

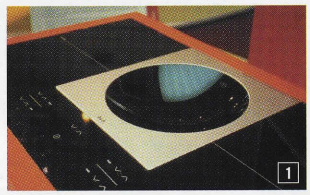
AY: I care for the girls like I care for my cat–the same way ou'd care for something very close to you. Because I love hem so much, I want to depict them how I see fit. Some nay consider this egotistic. My characters also represent a ort of psychological complex I have. Manipulating these

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 86>

MILAN FURNITURE SHOW

+ WORDS AND PIX BY KEN MORI

Milan is the design center of Italy and, at times, the whole world. At this year's Salone del Mobile Furniture Faire, there was no historical design revolution, but there were new items to see and original ideas to consider.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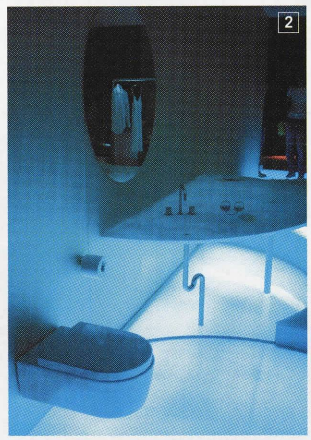
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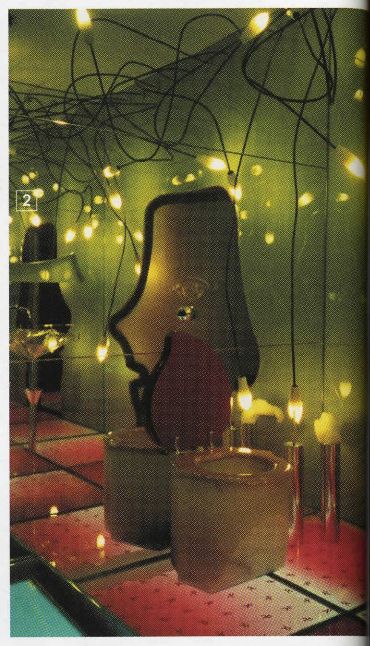
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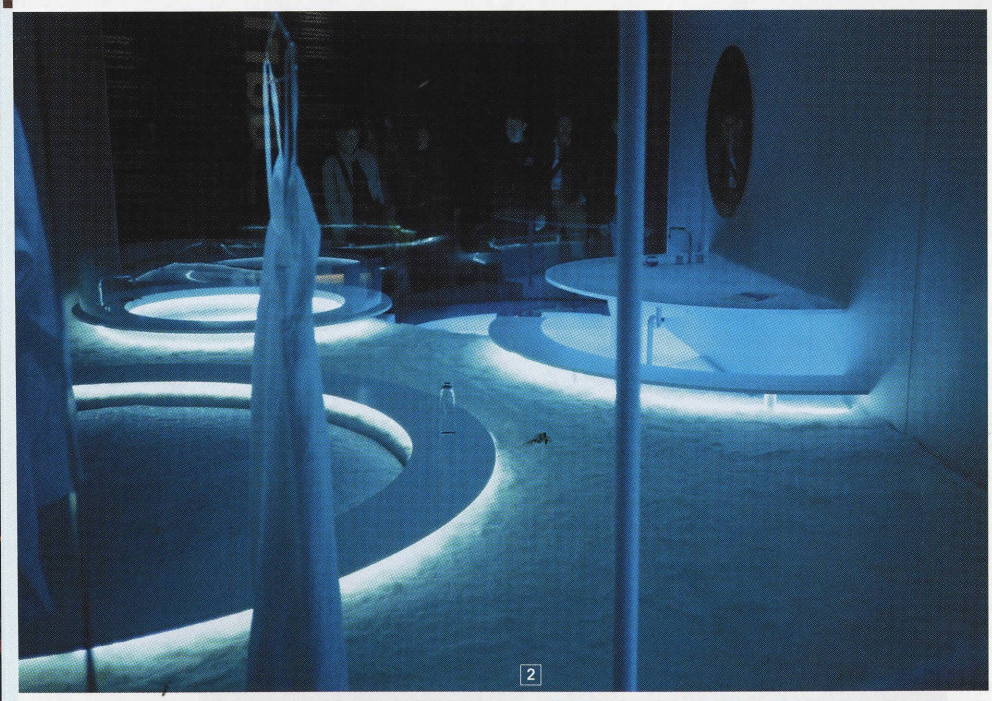
THE FURNITURE FAIRE

I received some tips on which halls to visit and that helped a lot. Otherwise, I might've been wandering around the Louis XVI chair replica section for three days. The Faire had displays from many of the big shots in the design world, as well as a Salone Satellite dedicated to independent designers, students, and small companies.

1. Kitchens - This year, kitchens were featured instead of lighting. It was amazing to see the sheer number of companies that produce high-end, Lamborghini-level cabinet monoliths. Huge 4 x 12-foot marble-topped islands were commonplace. The countertop burner with a giant built-in wok was cool, but how do you lift it and toss your stir-fry in the air? It's hard to believe that there are enough wealthy customers to keep all these companies in business.

2. Hotel Concepts - Several designers were commissioned to design conceptual hotel rooms for specific cities. The only limitation seemed to be standard hotel room dimensions (24.6 x 14.1 feet).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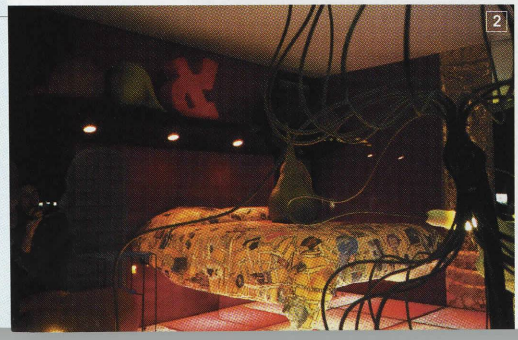
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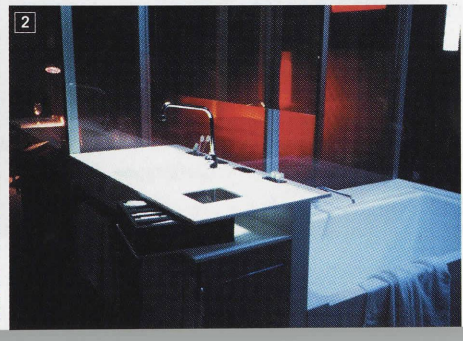
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The results ranged from realistic, ready-to-pro solutions to very blue-sky, fine art-like installat Highlights were Gaetano Pesce's Moscow room, Ito's New York room (which served as a refuge t events of September 11), and Jean Novelle's unk and lived-in Tokyo room.

OFF-SITE

The Interni little red book was the bible for all o extracurricular Salone del Mobile events and happen Most parties and openings occurred during the begi of the week. In a lot of ways, these venues were more esting than the show itself because they were s throughout the city. There was no way a person check out everything in seven days. Nevertheless, it f one to visit different parts of Milan.

3. Tokujin Yoshioka/Driade - Yoshioka's roto-molded, propylene outdoor furniture by Driade exemplified pop. His line of chairs debuted along with Phi Starck's new line of chairs. Both displays were in courtyards among piles of raw white polypropylene lets that, when groomed in large heaps, resembled snow. Even the sound of snow was accurate; the p had a satisfying crunch when walked upon. It was raining, which added to the wet snow effect.

The forms were reminiscent of sixties pop art f ture, but had crisp lines which added defini These pieces weren't just the generic amorphic b that you see everywhere. Yoshioka's chairs molded in white and orange. I guess orange is the new black.

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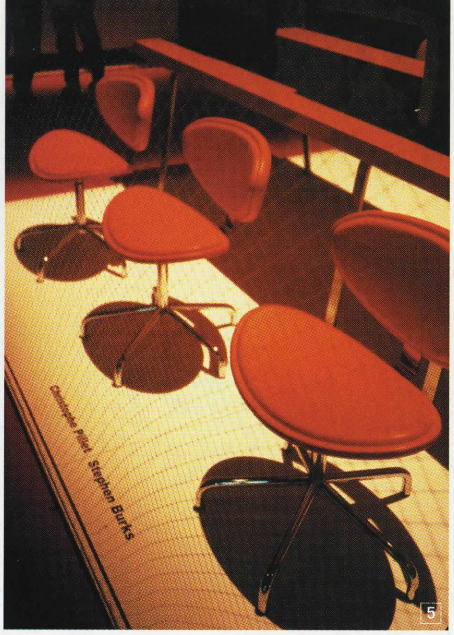

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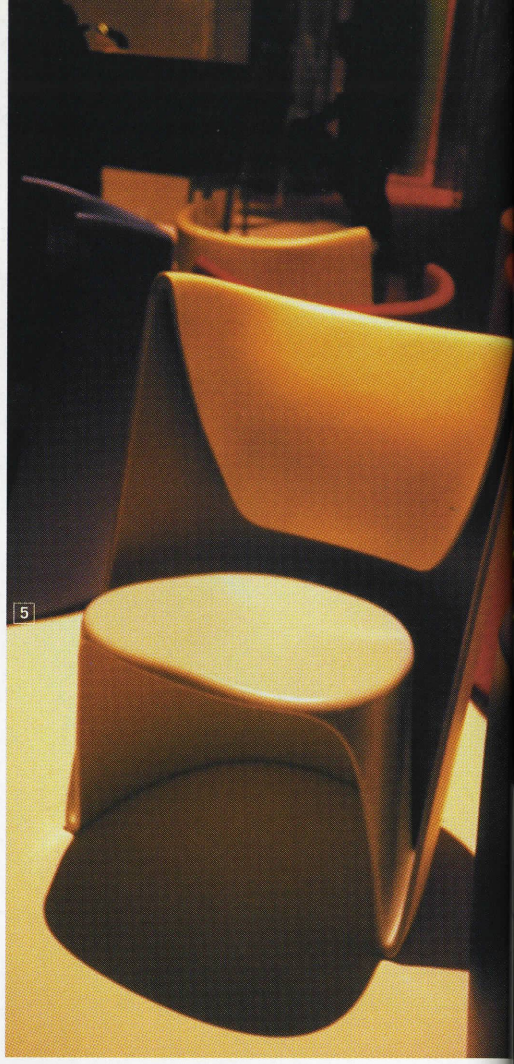
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4. Serralunga - Serralunga displayed giant roto-molded vessels with integrated auger bases that allowed them to be screwed into the earth.

5. Cappellini - The pieces were displayed either like concept show cars on rotating turntables, or piled on top of each other behind plastic netting. There must have been a concept I missed. The Ron Arad "nino rota/none rota" chairs were my favorite: roto-molded, closed tubes with indented ends that produce two chairs when cut in half. It's always cool to economize material without waste, and this did just that. The chairs were two-toned in color scheme. The insides of the tubes were different in color than the outsides.

I bought a Cappellini CD because it included small plastic models of furniture. I was a bit disappointed that the actual models didn't reflect the cover and I can't say that I like all the tunes, but I do like that Royksopp number.

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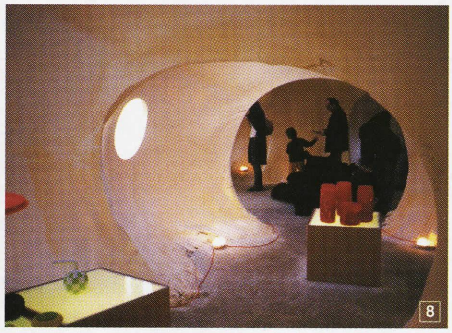
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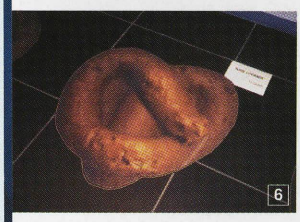
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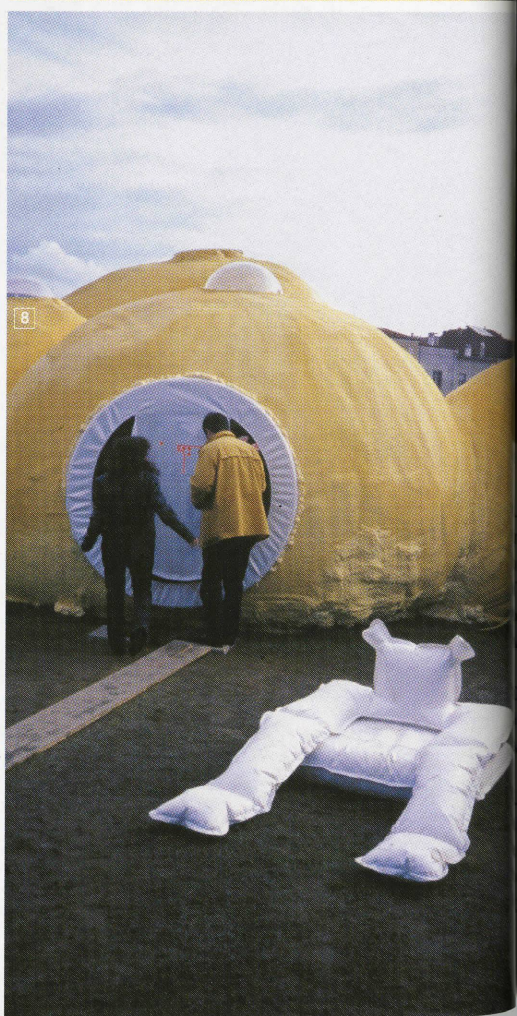
6. Shitdesign - Shitdesign was like Slamdance to the mainstream scene's Sundance. Check out the ironic dog turd welcome mat. A lot of pieces had either scat or dog themes.

7. Hiro-Hiko Kamiya - In a French exhibition, Japanese designer Hiro-Hiko Kamiya displayed a large, segmented, soft tube resembling an intestine. The concept was that it could act as a long pillow or be rolled up into a low lounge chair or stool.

8. Foam Dome - Another cool installation was the foam dome structure. It was created by inflating a huge weather balloon, spraying expandable urethane foam all over it, and then popping the balloon and cutting holes for doors and windows. Little kids loved this joint. I'm not sure if this was presented by a store, but there were various pieces of furniture and objects inside.

9. Hotel Droog - Irony and wit are trademarks of Droog Design, which rented out a small one-star hotel to display its latest collection. Each room presented a different piece, and most were not for sale. Highlights included a bulletproof sleeping bag, a river-rock footrest, shirt-hanger lamps, and a photo of a chair on a panel that was actually a chair when unfolded. The catalog was a mock blank passport which was stamped at each room.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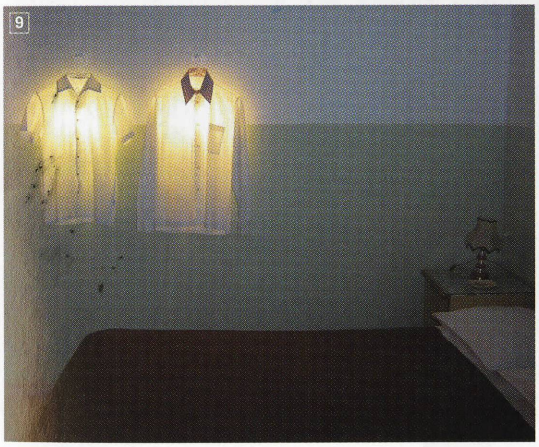
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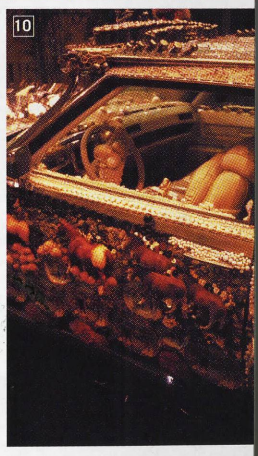
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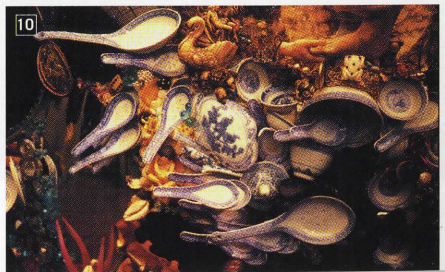
1 PIX COURTESY OF DROOG DESIGN

0. Ingo Maurer - World-renowned lighting designer Ingo Maurer presented new light- g concepts and reworked pieces in an off-site gallery. In the foyer of the gallery was custom car art piece designed specifically for the show by David Best from California. his sculpture was covered with virtually everything imaginable, and the objects (ele- hants, fish, horses, skulls, Chinese place settings, traffic lights, buttons, and so on) ere so dense that the Cadillac was difficult to identify.

he cool experimental piece by Maurer was a table that had a glass surface with a thin film water on top. The effect was quite magical when you placed objects on it. A colored light as transmitted through the table's edges to make the bottoms of the objects glow.

1. Conceptual Pieces around the City - There were freestanding pieces relating to the ow scattered throughout the city. One example was the freestanding all-in-one bathtub, ower, and sink unit by Klein & Dytham Architecture. The form consisted of a single sheet clear plastic covered in pockets of blue Technogel that resembled giant rubber ducky l caps. The soft gel complied to the human body more so than typical hard tile.

So, no revolutionary design movement this year–like the Memphis movement 20 years ago–but to be immersed in a city with so much design can only inspire. (Even the subway trash cans have been carefully designed to be un-trashy, colorful and functional.) Good design may not be as ingrained or appreciated in the United States as it is in Europe, but when there are Philippe Starck displays at your local Target you know that it is making inroads.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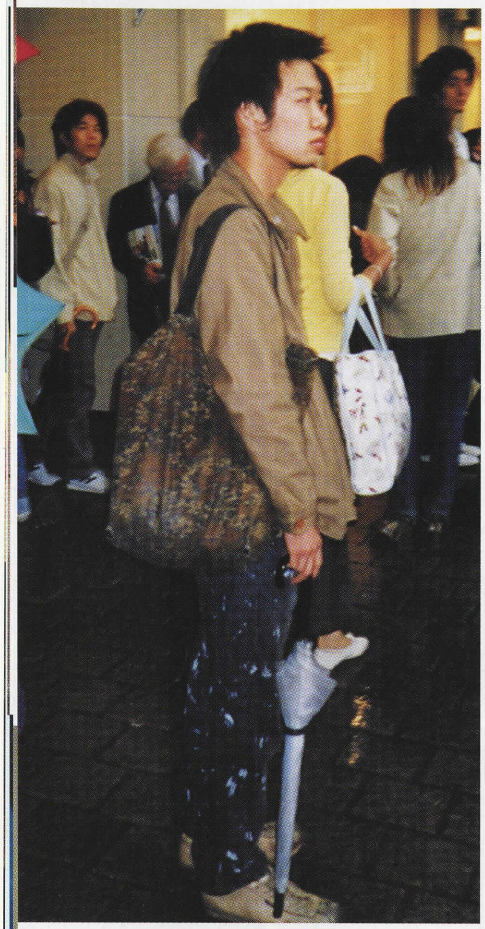
+ PHOTOS BY CARMINA OCAMPO

MANPURSE MANIA

+ BY ERIC NAKAMURA

IN AMERICA, GUYS WALK LIKE BIGFOOT, SWINGI THEIR ARMS WHILE CARRYING THEIR GEAR BACKPACKS OR MESSENGER BAGS. BUT IN JAPA YOU SEE MANPURSES EVERYWHERE.



Some of the plumper manpurse styles resemble gigantic human organs.

Mixing the Louis Vuitton manpurse with a plaid jacket and Chuck Taylors suggests, "I have money but I don't give a fuck."

Bleachie shows off his bling-bling manpurse and accessorized fanny pack.

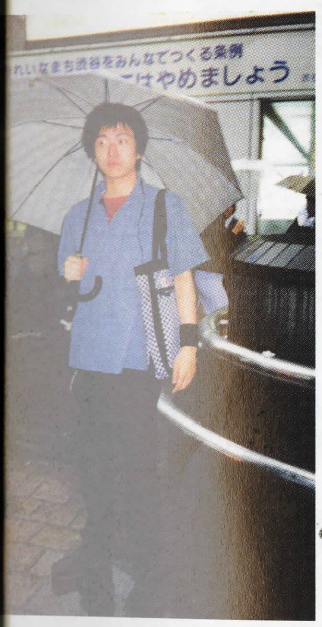
This tourist just picked the wrong souvenir. Back in the United States, no one will understand his manpurse.

Recently, several Japanese kids gathered in front of a neon-lit v store in West L.A. to peek between the movie posters at Kazu Ishii, the left-handed pitcher from the Land of the Rising Sun. When Dodger rookie walked out and stopped to sign autographs for the s crowd, Bill and I couldn't help but notice the shiny black purse in hands. We deduced that he was holding it for his girlfriend or wife. as he shuffled his cell phone and wallet in and out of the bag, we ized that one of the fiercest hurlers in Major League Baseball owns operates a manpurse.

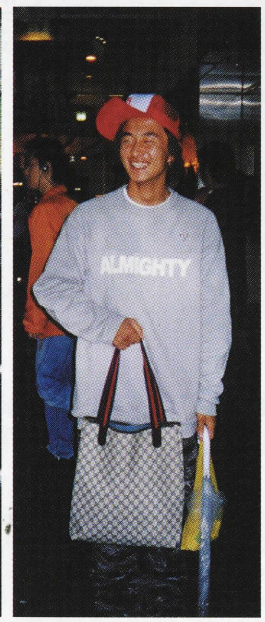
The next day we told our friend Kiyoshi about Ishii's accessory, an immediately blurted, "Oh, a Japanese manpurse?" Our ears perked our jaws dropped. A Japanese manpurse?

A manpurse is hard to define. Does it have handles? Ishii's did. Can it like a toiletry bag, meant to be tucked under an armpit? Do totes, f bags, or messenger bags count? Does it matter how you hold it? The (which applies to all things, including the three M's–mandals, mul and manpurses) is that if there's a question about whether it is or is then it is. Yes, that nice Tumi case that stores your Palm Pilot, Chapst glasses case, breath mints, and condoms is, indeed, a manpurse.

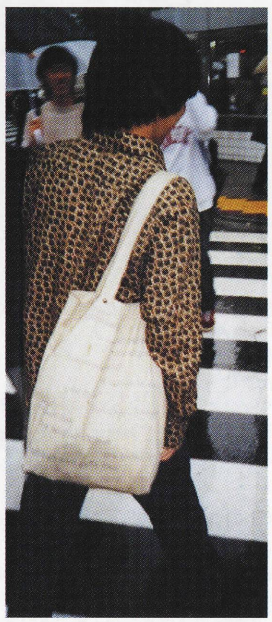
Japan and Europe, the battle of manpurse
rsus fanny pack is waged daily.



he versatile checkered manpurse can be worn
ith retro diner, race car, and rude boy styles.



Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen has a
signature manpurse in Japan.



Manpurse or tote bag? When in
doubt, it's a manpurse.

N JAPAN, A MOD MIGHT HOLD A TWO-TONE CHECKERBOARD PURSE TO IATCH HIS VESPA, A PUNKER MIGHT CARRY ONE WITH SKULLS AND ROSSBONES, AND A RAVER MIGHT HAVE ONE THAT LOOKS STUPID.

IANPURSE COUNTRY

n America, guys walk like Bigfoot, swinging their arms while carrying their gear in backpacks r messenger bags. But in Japan, you see manpurses everywhere, either held in hand or slung ver a shoulder.

lanpurses were common in Japan until 15 years ago, when a movement called "American Casual" wept the nation. The kaban-handled bags, once carried by almost every junior high school boy, were eplaced by backpacks. The the tide changed again. Kotaro, owner of the Far East Connections book-tore in Los Angeles, explains that 5 years ago, half the male population in Japan wore backpacks nd the other half carried handbags. Today, it's 100 percent manpurses. But when the Japanese ome to America, they switch to backpacks. "Backpacks are more popular," says Kotaro. "They know 's shameful not to do American style in America."

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 83>

The manpurse opens new avenues of nonverbal communication for males.

HOLD YOUR PURSE LIKE A MAN

Attitude, personality, and confidence play a role in how one holds a manpurse. Just as old-school headbangers pose with their guitars or basketball players slam their signature dunks, manpurse carriers clutch their packages in a variety of ways.

I LOVE MY MANPURSE

Holding your manpurse in front of you, as if you're shifting gears, is handy. It provides easy access to your hair gel, cell phone, and mochi balls, and allows you to use it in self-defense like nunchakus. One who holds a manpurse in front is uncompromising, uninhibited, and confident. His body language shouts, "I'm a man and I'm proud to carry a manpurse!" This is how Ishii holds his manpurse.

I AM ONE WITH MYSELF

Holding a manpurse at one's side, as if it were a casual girl's purse, is the most feminine technique. Swinging alongside the body, it makes little visual impact. The holder is comfortable enough with his manpurse, but he may be sensitive, coy, and unwilling to discuss it with others. As a weapon, it's a little slow on the draw. However, it can crack an attacker's nuts with a swift uppercut motion.

THE MANPURSE IS MY TOOL

Wearing a manpurse on the shoulder is popular with over-achieving multitaskers since it frees both hands to hold a cell phone, PDA, or bagel. The chance of being purse-snatched is low, but the pickpocketing quotient is high. A manpurse worn on the shoulder is useless as a weapon, and any person who wears it that way is probably the helpless type who will defend himself by holding onto the bag tighter.

OVER THE SHOULDER

Some hold the manpurse handles over a shoulder as a preppie would handle a sportscoat. Such a man is either a huge wimp or a style fiend. He shows no pride in his purse, walking around with his elbow in erect position, the back of his hand on his shoulder, and his middle finger pointed at the sky. This technique is susceptible to theft and attack from behind, but can unload an over-the-top, skull-crushing blast.

++ PIX BY GLEN E. FRIEDMAN & SCOTT GIBSON

DOGTOWN GIRL

+ BY MARTIN WONG

(top) Peggy prepares to meet fans and stalkers at the *Dogtown: The Legend of the Z-Boys* book signing at Hennessy + Ingalls in Santa Monica.

(right) Peggy flies low and avoids the radar at Kenter Canyon Elementary School, 1976.

Tonight the hips, rails, half pipes, and street obstacles at the Vans Skatepark in Orange, California, have been marked off with yellow tape. Tables have been set up with bowls of snack food. On a temporary stage, roadies are tuning up instruments for Suicidal Tendencies, but the real action is at the kidney-shaped bowl where skateboarding legends like Tony Alva, Steve Alba, and Omar Hassan are ripping up the coping in honor of the *Dogtown and Z-Boys* documentary premiere.

"Skateboarding is so popular now and it definitely has a culture around it," Peggy Oki tells me as we enter the huge indoor facility, which is packed with pro skaters, industry people, and fans from the past and present. Alluding to the movie, the only female Z-Boy explains, "These are the roots. Skateboarding didn't begin with us, but the radical style and attitude did."

Peggy, who always seems to be smiling, grabs a handful of M&M's and tells me that she was approached by members of the Zephyr surf shop's skateboarding team to become a Z-Boy in 1974 when they spotted her skating on Bicknell Hill in Santa Monica. "I had no thought of being on a team, but I went over to the Zephyr shop and checked it out," she remembers. "They asked me and I said, 'Okay.'"

THE Z-BOYS

Although the Santa Barbara-based artist and surfer makes it seem like becoming a Z-Boy was no big deal, it's not like just anybody could join. It required high quantities of toughness and style. *SkateBoarder* magazine described the West Los Angeles crew (Dogtown is the area where Venice, Santa Monica, and Mar Vista meet) as "more like a street gang than a skate team."

"There weren't any other girls on the team," she says, "but I have been a tomboy all my life. Even when I was 9 or 10, I used to get into rock fights. So I didn't get intimidated. I felt like one of the guys. They were doing all these things and so was I. As far as falling, getting scraped up, or bruised–that sort of thing never bothered me. So they probably saw that I wasn't some little foo-foo girl. That brought me the respect to be a part of their group."

Back then, Peggy would meet the other Z-Boys (which included the likes of Alva, Jay Adams, Shogo Kubo, and *Dogtown* filmmaker Stacy Peralta) a few days a week at Jeff Ho's Zephyr surf shop. Skip Engblom, who handled store business while Jeff was shaping boards, would send them off to Kenter Elementary or Revere Middle School to ride the banked edges of the playground, pushing each other in terms of speed, style, and power.

"THESE ARE THE ROOTS. SKATEBOARDING DIDN'T BEGIN W US, BUT THE RADICAL STYLE AND ATTITUDE DID."

"I feel really nostalgic about having been on the team with all these guys and all the and adventures we had skating together, going to these places, jumping the fence Kenter, and hanging out at Berento," says Peggy. "It was so much fun."

Expressing that she feels weird about knowing only the "old people" at the *Dogtown* p Peggy walks around the skatepark's rails and ramps, seeking, meeting, and hugging members of the Z-Boys who have been gathering in Los Angeles to celebrate the relea Peralta's award-winning film, as well as the coffee-table book of vintage photos by Gle Friedman and articles by C.R. Stecyk III. By the soda machines, she introduces me to Dawson, who was a skateboarder and a graphic designer for Zephyr. After the original Z- dissolved, Dawson followed Peralta to G&S Skateboards and, eventually, Powell-Pe Skateboards, helping to create the street design style that became mainstream. At the of a gigantic rail, we find Shogo Kubo, who is raising a family in Hawaii and who also a new limited-edition skateboard deck that bears his name.

Peggy says she was closest to Jay Adams, whose stepfather would drive them to cont Adams was the youngest Z-Boy, and she was the oldest–a positive and stabilizing forc the free-spirited 14-year-old skating protégé. Busted for drug-related charges in Ha Adams isn't allowed to attend the premiere festivities for parole reasons, but Peggy says ing his stepfather for the first time in decades at the movie premiere was a tearful surp

As Peggy introduces me to other Dogtown skaters, I feel like I'm at a class reunion the students who ditched school to surf and skate. But while the valedictorians prob went on to take mundane jobs and wear suits, the Z-Boys changed the face of sk boarding, music, fashion, and culture.

<PHOTO BY GLEN E. FRIEDMAN>

OGTOWN DISCIPLES

MACKAYE, FUGAZI

Has the *Dogtown* movie affected your view of skateboarding at all?

For me, that was my era–exactly that time. The only thing that's weird or different for me is actually see- all the people move. For us, we studied the pictures so hardcore, but we never saw them move. There's e stuff in the motion picture–scenes of them riding–where I know the spot, the move, and everything. To it in motion really affects me. But does it change the way I think about skateboarding? Nah. I'm not a nos- ic guy at all.

What do you think the story has for non-skateboarders?

I'm not really sure. I assume to some degree it'll give some people a little bit of the context, but maybe it will e them some peek into the intensity. One thing about skateboarding is that people on the outside back then it as a weird hobby. But for the people who did it, they were not messing around. They were not fucking und. They were for real. This was their lives, you know?

VE CABALLERO, SKATE LEGEND

Was the *Dogtown* movie what you expected?

I didn't go into the movie with any preconceptions. I never do! That ruins any film. I just wanted to know story and to hear what they were thinking at the time. It's exactly what I would have imagined. They were doing it for fun. When it got big, people wanted a part of them and the team went their separate ways. a natural course that I've come to accept. It's happened in all eras to other groups of skaters that followed, I still see it happening.

What was it like skating for Stacy Peralta in the Bones Brigade?

I was fortunate to have met Stacy. He helped guide my career and gave me the opportunity to show the world teboarding and how we can all be a part of something great if we are dedicated and just skate because we love it–no matter what we get out of it. I might have been in the right place at the right time, but Stacy had a vision for a team. He saw potential in me and my skating. He was a good judge of people's personalities, and he could pick talent. He's a great friend and I love him to death! I owe my whole career to him. Without him I would not be where I am now in skating!

RAY BARBEE, PRO SKATER

GR: Do you think the *Dogtown* movie will change the way kids skate today?

RB: I hope they will see the importance of style and creativity. Maybe it will inspire them to try different stuff... In the movie, these guys show up at the contests and no one saw that way of skating before, drawing inspiration from a guy who was different in his approach to surfing–Larry Bertelman. I always knew about Bertelman from the trick the "Bert slide," but I didn't even know his first name. When I started skating, a lot of that was new to me. You have to take time to do the research unless you're with the older guys, whom I was fortunate enough to skate with. You have to know the history, and this movie brings it to you.

GR: What do you think the story has for non-skateboarders?

RB: It gives them a little insight into the culture, especially at that time, how those guys were just going for it. They weren't afraid to try new things. Another thing I like about the movie is the brotherhood, the whole tight crew. When I grew up we had a crew. That's something that will always be in skateboarding.

Shogo Kubo skates over photographer Glen E. Frie shadow at the Krypo Bowl, 1978.

Z-PEOPLE

SHOGO KUBO, Z-BOY

GR: How did you feel after seeing the movie?
SK: I've been living in Hawaii since 1988. I'm married and have two kids. My son will be 14 and my daughter will be 12 this year, and I'm just living a happy married life. It brings back so many memories. First of all, Stacy did such an excellent job of making the film. It tells the story correctly and it's a real good movie. Maybe I shouldn't say this, but when I watch it, it brings tears to my eyes. It's very well made.

GR: What do you think non-skaters can get out of the story?
SK: I hope they learn that skating now is what we created, so to speak. We were pioneers of the skating that they're doing right now–the older tricks and all that. I hope people learn that, obviously, but when we were skating we were just having fun. We were just skating, man.

GR: Are there things in your life today that you can trace back to being a Z-Boy in Dogtown?
SK: I learned that you have to be confident in yourself to live in this world. I was aggressive when I was a kid in Dogtown. You learn it's not like, "Fuck you, everybody!" and all that. You respect people and you treat people how you want to be treated, too. But you have to have confidence in yourself.

GR: Is that something non-skaters would get out of the story?
SK: Yeah. Don't be too cocky. I don't want people to take it the wrong way.

GR: Did you get double suspicion being a skateboarder and Asian?
SK: Definitely! Back in the 1970s, Asians didn't have long hair and we didn't skateboard. So I got the worst from my own kind. My parents and family were forgiving, but other Asians would look at me like, "Damn!"

GR: Can you compare surfing and skating? Are they different states of mind for you?
SK: It's pretty similar. You try to express yourself. In surfing you wait for a wave and the wave is moving. You can't plan what you're going to do because every wave is different. Skateboarding is stationary, but back then I never really planned all my moves. I just skated.

JEFF HO, ZEPHYR SURF SHOP CO-OWNER AND BOARD SHAPER

GR: Tell me a little bit about the Zephyr skate team.
JH: The team was larger than what was depicted in the film. There w guys. Cris Dawson was one of the senior guys not in the photo. He wa a graphic designer. Tommy Waller, Dennis Harney, Donnie Oham–those skaters. A few are still surfing in Hawaii today. I see them all the ti these guys have photos in the film, but you don't see them. Then there's Cahill, who has a sad story. The movie couldn't fit everything in, but the was a lot bigger and certainly there were a lot more surfing members, Tavares brothers, whose dad shot a lot of the surf footage. It was a f huge team.

GR: It is cool that the Z-Boys were so diverse.
JH: When I was growing up, surfing was a white-boy deal. I grew up '60s and graduated in '67. I had friends from the inner city, from B Hills, Crenshaw, and Watts. I had friends who were black guys. When rolling with these guys, all people could think about was the Watts R course some of these guys were militant. We'd get hassled at Malibu. no joke. Now you will find that Marty Grimes and younger skaters w black and Hispanic are more prevalent.

GR: You have a reputation as a radical board designer and store Where did your independent outlook come from?
JH: I don't fucking know. But ever since I was a young kid–I got invo surfing at 14–I'd look at the boards and be into building them. I latchkey kid. I remember watching *Our Gang*, then ripping apart roller and making my own skateboards, scooters, and cars. I was a kid who this weird shit, and this carried on my whole life.

"OTHER GIRLS WERE WEARING SHORT SKIRTS AND CUTE SHORTS. SOME WERE BAREFOOT. I SKATED DIFFERENTLY–JUST LIKE THE GUYS SKATED DIFFERENTLY THAN THE OTHER GUYS. WE WERE PRETTY ROWDY AND RADICAL. WHO'D THINK THAT WOULD CARRY OVER INTO CURRENT SKATE CULTURE?"

L MAR, 1974

he documentary, Peralta presents the 1974 Del Mar skateboard contest, held y months after the Z-Boys came together, as the team's defining moment. Old tage shows the other skate teams doing pirouettes, handstands, daffies, and er elegant (but goofy) freestyle tricks from the '60s. Then the skaters from gtown are shown revolutionizing the sport with their all-out, high-speed, slashing e inspired by progressive surfers like Larry Bertelman, who stayed low, made rad- cut-backs, and touched the waves with his hands.

is was the first big event and it was the first time we were seen," remembers ggy, who started skating when her brother cut her a board in wood shop at school. her girls were wearing short skirts and cute shorts. Some were barefoot. I skated ferently–just like the guys skated differently than the other guys. We were pretty dy and radical. Who'd think that would carry over into current skate culture?"

e contest marked a turning point for the sport and the team. The new outlaw style e a burst of energy to the skateboarding world, which was benefiting from the oduction of polyurethane wheels. And as the sport's exposure and business grew onentially, the team started going to more contests.

e did contests because that's what we were supposed to do when we were spon- ed," says Peggy, who competed in Santa Barbara and at the Los Angeles Sports na and appeared in the movie *Go for It* with Jay Adams before hanging up her s. Skateboarding was becoming more popular and more commercial. It was also coming less fun. Sitting around and waiting for a turn and then dealing with clue- s, corrupt, or political judges was not what skateboarding was all about for Peggy.

The free spirit of skateboarding is present at the Vans Skatepark pool, where pros from the '70s and '80s push each other to skate harder, go faster, and fly higher with the only measurements and rewards being style and fun. Steve Caballero, Duane Peters, Dave Reuler, and Eric Brittain stamp their boards in approval by the pool's lip as Brian Patch pulls off huge rocket airs. In addition to the professional and amateur skaters who directly followed in the Z-Boys spirit, there are others in attendance, such as Ian Mackaye, who fed off the energy and applied it to other forms, like music.

THE DEEP END

Peggy had already stopped skating when the original Zephyr skate team started to break up in pursuit of individual sponsorships. "By then, I was tired of contests and wasn't skating as much," she explains. "I was older than the other Z-Boys, and I went to school to study biology at Santa Barbara. I didn't hear talk about this person getting an offer for this much money or that person getting an offer for that much money."

Stacy Peralta and Paul Constantineau joined G&S Skateboards, Bob Biniak and Jay Adams rode for Logan Earth Skis, and Wentzle Ruml IV became the poster boy for Rector. Fed up with making money for other people, Tony Alva started his own skateboard company.

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 84>

ggy goes back to the bowl at Skater's Point Santa Barbara, 2002.

OTO BY SCOTT GIBSON>

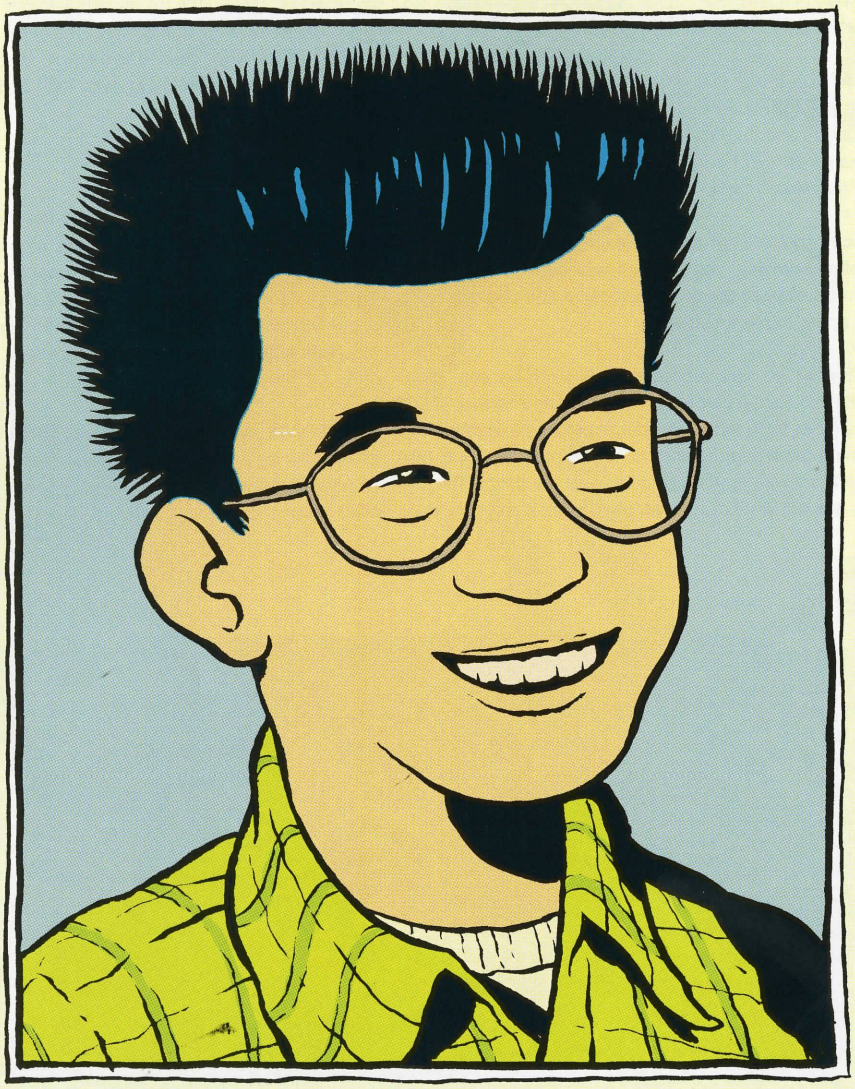
+ ILLUSTRATION BY JORDAN CRANE

GROWING UP DEGRASSI

+ BY DANNY SMITH

)exter

"Do I have one??"

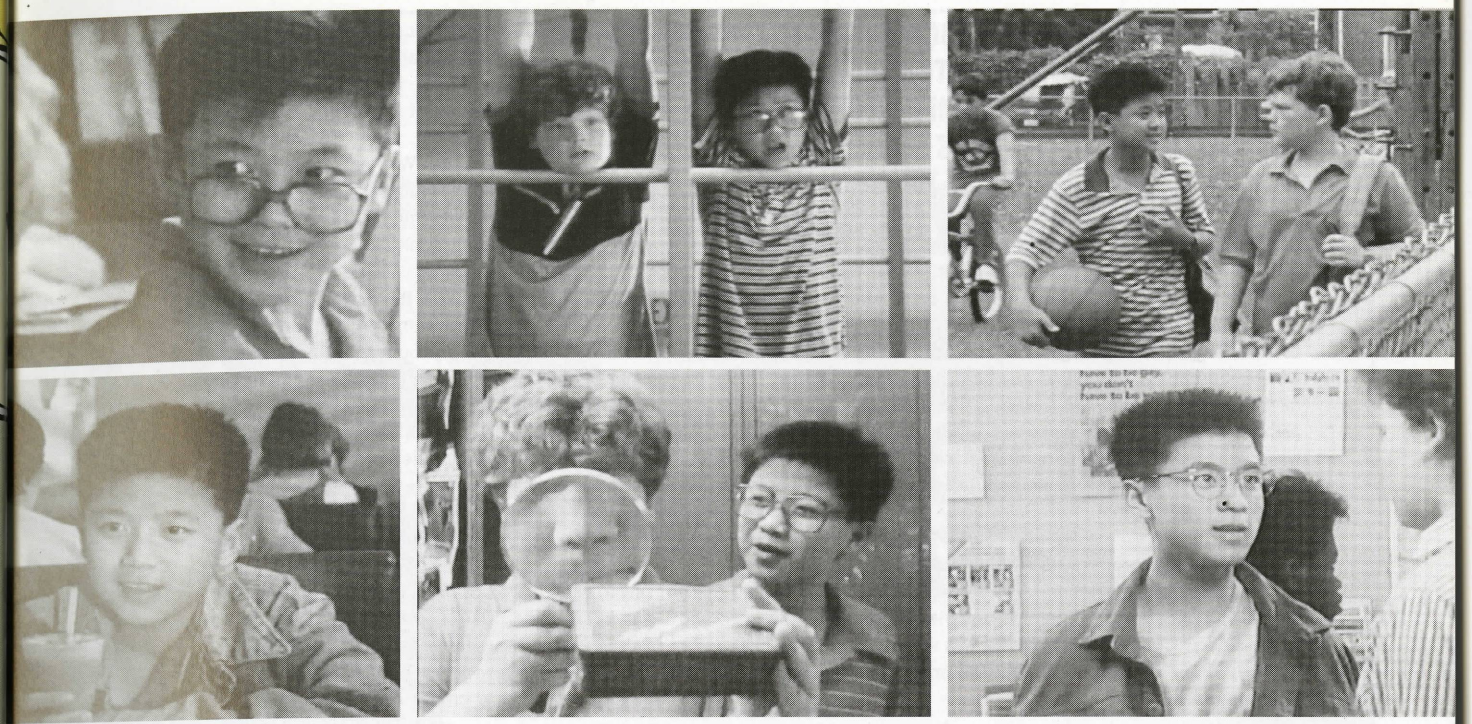


Yick Yu

"Hey broomhead!!"

n

en!"



hough they were pals throughout the *DeGrassi* saga, k seemed to get fed up with Arthur's whining.

I'LL GO TO A BAR AND IT'S, "HOLY SHIT! YOU'RE THAT GUY FROM DEGRASSI!" SOMETIMES I'LL GET, "OH MY GOD! I GREW UP WITH YOU!" OR, "I HAD THE BIGGEST CRUSH ON YOU!" THEY'RE ALWAYS SURPRISED WHEN THEY SEE ME BECAUSE THEY STILL PICTURE ME BEING 5'1" AND 12.

irst airing in 1986 as *Kids of DeGrassi Street*, then later as *DeGrassi Junior High*, *DeGrassi High* was the Canadian show that every little Canuck loved and ery hip American kid watched on PBS. Here was a program where a mohawked girl knocked up, students got hammered at school dances, and a "straight" girl had sbian dreams about her teacher. Even the nerdy boys enjoyed nights of debauch- at the local strip joint! Everyone smoked weed and stole condoms when they eren't cheating on math tests.

course, *DeGrassi* also covered more serious topics like abortion, HIV, anorexia, phys- l abuse, and suicide, but each episode didn't have the singular "very special" theme at lame network shows boast. One episode of *DeGrassi* featured someone's parents tting killed while another character stole a porno tape called *Swamp Sex Robot*. at's great TV.

uck Saysanasy played the mulleted nerd Yick Yu. As the series progressed, e bespectacled runt grew into a full-blown drug addict. I don't know about u, but I don't remember Screech rolling up fatties with the gang on *Saved by e Bell*.

R: Is it true that Aaron Spelling modeled *Beverly Hills 90210* after *DeGrassi*?
S: Yes. I think it was our third season in. Aaron Spelling came up and said he nted to buy the series, but he wanted total creative control and everything. ne of our producers said no because she wanted to keep control of the show. bout a year later, *90210* pops up. I think that was cool that she kept it, ecause they would have recast the whole show.

R: Why would they have done that? To put the Hollywood gloss on the show?
S: Exactly. Out of all the actors on *DeGrassi*, I was the only one with experi- nce. I think they had recruited people with flyers in schools. They didn't want ds with acting experience; they wanted natural kids. We even went as far as not wear makeup on the show. They wanted it all to be the real thing, to be elievable. That was the integrity of the show. Not everybody was a pretty face.

R: How old were you when you started the series?
S: I was 12 years old. My first acting gig was a movie called *The Peanut Butter olution*. I did the movie, and about six months later, a producer was casting r *DeGrassi*. I didn't have an agent, so she called the *The Peanut Butter Solution*'s production company and they gave her my home number. She called my house and asked if I was interested in auditioning. I was really nervous. They had a workshop set up and there were about 40 kids and every two weeks somebody got kicked out. Through that process of elimination, I ended up making it.

GR: You have eight brothers and sisters. Were they jealous because you were the big star of the family?
SS: No way, man! If anything, when I was a teenager, my family kept my head straight. I'd come home from a week of being surrounded by screaming fans while doing publicity and say, "Hey, everyone! I'm home!" and they'd say, "Yeah, great. Go do the dishes."

GR: You are originally from Laos. Do you go back often?
SS: Two years ago I went back for the first time in 21 years.

GR: What was it like?
SS: Surreal, man. My dad, two of my brothers, and a sister moved back about 10 years ago because they have a business there. It was strange to see my family living in this third-world country where there are open sewers and the streets aren't paved. But at least they have all the amenities, and all of my dad's friends are there. Also, he hates the weather in Canada, so he was happy to move back.

GR: Do you keep in touch with any members of the *DeGrassi* cast or crew today?
SS: Pat [the fedora-wearing Joey Jeremiah] is my best friend. I see Stefan [Snake] all the time.

GR: Yick had trouble asking girls on dates. Was it easy for you to get girls in real life?
SS: Oh yeah! I was nothing like my character when I was a kid. I was the most outgoing guy. People ask me, "Were you nerdy?" and I'm like, "No, I was always with the cool kids." But being on the show definitely helped my dating experiences.

A LOT OF VIEWERS WERE SHOCKED, BUT IT KIND OF WENT WITH THE WHOLE "REAL," GRITTY THING ABOUT THE SERIES, AND TO HAVE IT END THAT WAY SEEMED RIGHT. THE ONLY FEEDBACK I GOT WAS POSITIVE. FRIENDS WERE LIKE, "OH, MAN! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID 'FUCK' ON TV!"

GR: Were there any on-set romances?
SS: We all experimented with each other. We all fooled around with each other when we went to cast parties and stuff. The twins dated Michael Carry, who played Simon.

GR: Didn't your character get caught masturbating in one episode?
SS: Masturbating? No. Some guy kept having wet dreams. Everyone thought it was me having the wet dreams, but it wasn't, it was Arthur. People got it mixed up because, being Arthur's best friend, Yick called up a radio sex doctor and asked if it was normal and she was like, "Yeah, it's totally normal for kids to be having wet dreams." Everyone remembers it like, "Yeah, it was you who was in the phone booth talking about having wet dreams!" It wasn't me!

GR: Tell us about your craziest fan encounter.
SS: One night, when I was 15, I was riding the subway home and this girl saw me and just started hyperventilating. Literally. Her friend was taking pictures, and I was like, "You'd better sit down, you're gonna die!" It was surreal. People are just strange. When we were older, near the end of the series, I was signing girls' breasts.

GR: How did your parents react to Yick's evolution from geek to party animal?
SS: Honestly, my parents never watched the show. They didn't really speak English. I mean, they would watch it and be like, "Yeah, whatever." But they knew it was acting. They'd seen me in a lot of stuff. When I was 16, I really wanted to get my ear pierced. My parents are old-people Chinese and they were like, "No." But I was really good friends with the head writer. I said to him, "We're changing the character. Can you make it so that he gets a piercing?" Lo and behold, the next season we're back and Yick gets an earring!

GR: Were the producers open to the kids' suggestions about the scripts and plots?
SS: Yeah, the producers and directors were really open to that kind of thing.

GR: The show dealt with some pretty crazy issues. Was there any behind-the-scenes drug use or abortions or anything?
SS: We were definitely around a lot of that stuff. We were introduced to alcohol and drugs early on through all of the industry parties that we'd go to. But I think that we were all good, straightforward kids. Sure, we'd smoke a joint every once in a while, but it's not like we were doing rails in the bathroom.

GR: What was your real-life school experience like? Were you a celebrity on campus?
SS: Yeah. It was strange. When I first did *The Peanut Butter Solution* I was in grade five. I finished that in the summer, and the first day of grade six everybody in the school knew my name. I ended up dating a girl in grade eight when I was in grade six. And then when I went into grade nine, there were 1,600 kids in the school and everyone knew my name. I'd be walking down the halls, first couple days of school, looking for my class, and it's, "Hey, Siluck!" "Siluck, what's up?" and I'm like, "Who the hell are you? Where's the science class?"

GR: In one episode, Yick gets his hands on a porno. Had you ever seen porn at that point in your life?
SS: I was 14 at that point. Yeah, I did! I was traveling by then, so I'd be in hotel rooms going, "Oh, cool! Porn!" When we did the show, because we were tackling so many topics, we were exposed to a lot of stuff even though a lot of us hadn't dealt with it yet in our own, real lives. Safe sex had been an issue pretty much since the show started; when I started having s was ingrained in me because I knew all of the co quences. Nobody has a drug problem from the s believe it or not! After *DeGrassi* finished, we did *DeGrassi Talks* documentary and I hosted the episode. We went across the country and interviewed and I would see what would happen to them when the heavily into drugs and drinking and I was like, "Dan don't wanna be in that guy's shoes!"

GR: Was the *School's Out* made-for-TV movie a sad e rience considering it was the end of the series?
SS: We partied, man! It was our last hurrah! It was fifth year, and we were pretty tired of it. We wanted to while we were ahead instead of running the show into ground. Also, a lot of us were getting other job offers doing other gigs between seasons.

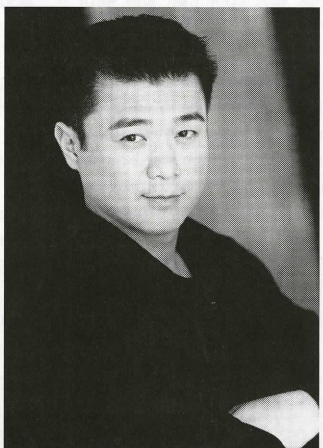
GR: Was *School's Out* the first time anyone said th word on prime-time Canadian television?
SS: Yes. The cast was stoked when it got okayed by CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]. A lot of vie were shocked, but it kind of went with the whole "r gritty thing about the series, and to have it end that seemed right. The only feedback I got was positive. Friends were like, "Oh, m can't believe you said 'fuck' on TV! That is so cool that you did that!"

GR: The series won countless awards, including a couple of International Em and many Geminis (Canada's equivalent to an Emmy). What were those shows
SS: Those were a lot of fun. It was cool to meet other Canadian actors like the in the Hall or Mike Myers. The first time we won was for the first multicultura award the Geminis ever gave out, and the whole cast was there. We represente different languages. We all got up on stage and said "thank you" in our native guages. There were so many of us in the auditorium, in the green room, all ove place! Then we went out and partied. The awards shows were fun. I mean, af few years it got to the point of, "Oh, okay. We won again," but they were cool.

GR: Do people still recognize you in public?
SS: I'll go to a bar and it's, "Holy shit! You're that guy from *DeGrassi*!" Somet I'll get, "Oh my God! I grew up with you!" or, "I had the biggest crush on y They're always surprised when they see me because they still picture me being and 12. One night I went to a bar, and there were these two police officers loo in our direction. For about 20 minutes, this one police officer was staring at Eyeballing me! I was like, "What the hell!?" I wasn't really worried. I mean, never done anything criminal, so I just kept drinking my beer. Finally, the cop co over to me and he says, "Okay, I just recognized where you're from. You're *DeGrassi*. I thought you were someone on our Top Ten Most Wanted list." I tu around, being the smartass that I am, and said, "It's okay. We all look alike!"

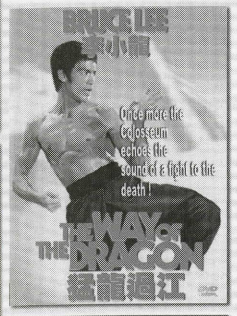
GR: When you look at the episodes now, what goes through your mind?
SS: I don't watch them. I can't stand watching myself! I swear to God. I'm "Look at my hair! What the hell was I thinking!?" I mean, I know it's the '80s, I that it's a character and all, but damn! Every time a rerun comes on and I'm friends, I'm like, "Nope! Change the channel!"

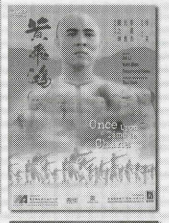
GR: And now you're involved with *DeGrassi: The Next Generation*?
SS: Last year I was the kids' coordinator; this year I'm an assistant directo also still be doing the kids' coordinator t but I'll be under the DGC [Director's Gu Canada]. Stefan from the old series is al the project with me.

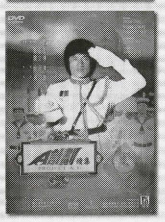


GR: Any plans to get back into acting?
SS: I just got an agent a week ago. I'm starting to come back into it. Being back set, I've found, I'm getting the drive back creative juices I lost while bartendin British Columbia have kicked back in.

GR: Any final words for the Yick obsessed
SS: "Yick obsessed"?







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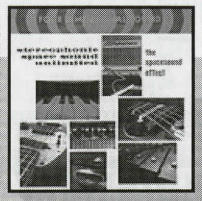

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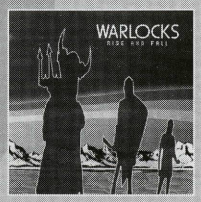

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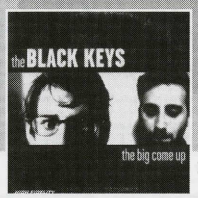

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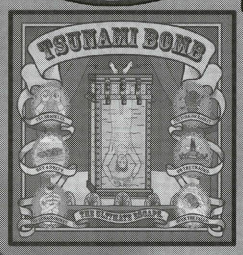

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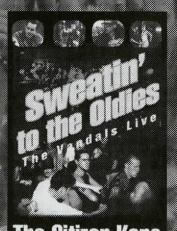

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Bratmobile

Girls Get Busy

On the first cut, Bratmobile sings, "We don't need your 'sophistication'/We just make the things we like." Even so, it's obvious that the band has been busy improving its chops. While the trio once relied on pure energy to launch Riot Grrrl topics into the stratosphere (and that was pretty awesome), the music now has new direction, multiple layers, and a new-wave undercurrent. In "Shut Your Face," Alison Wolfe proclaims that "girls are dying while men are lying" over OMD-style keyboards. "United We Don't!" attacks corporate bandwagon patriots with lyrics like, "I saw you turn in one week/Into a flag-waving freak." Drummer Molly Neumann gets to unleash her vocals in "Pagan Baby," too! This is Bratmobile's most focused, powerful, and effective work by far. [Lookout!] mw

Daedelus

Invention

From the cover, I was expecting to hear snare drums from a Civil War march. What I got was a rare mix of brains and musical wizardry. Each song is a composition, mixing in noises tweaked from what at times sounds like toy instruments and kids' albums, but Daedelus cuts them together like a beat producer. His combination of musical loops and beats will mess with your mind. Some of the songs seem familiar, like I'd heard them on television when I was a child, kind of like what Nobukazu Takemura would do. Daedelus even squeezes in a track with local rapper Busdriver. If I had psionics I would tell you what every song means. A Shambling Mound it is not, but something that Yoda would dig, yes it is. [Plug Research] en

Dillinger Four

Situationalist Comedy

The guys in Dillinger Four once told me that everybody claims to be "punk" for street credibility, from gangsta rappers to country singers to head bangers. I agree, and D4 is the measure by which all bands should measure their punk rockness. With an unbeatable one-two punch of a vocal team (one low and gravelly, the other high and nasal) and an explosion of guitars and drums, nobody combines power, brains, and fun like they do. Catharsis, reflection, and action collide in this nonstop barrage of songs like "All Rise for the Rational Anthem" and "D4: Putting the 'F' Back in 'Art.'" And is that Dr. Frank singing about the exploitation of rebellion in "New Punk Fashions for the Spring Formal"? Next time you want to do something punk, ask yourself, "WWD4D?" [Fat Wreck Chords] mw

The Fucking Champs

V

You know what to expect from this power trio: heavy-yet-beautiful, guitar-faced metal with long locks of hair. The magic is these indie rockers do it better than the true, ugly, hair-curled, tight-black-jeans-with-no-ass idiots in Saigon Kick, Dangerous Toys, and L.A. Guns did at the Whisky a Go-Go in the '80s. The Fucking Champs don't even need vocals to prove their worth; they sing with their instruments. With nothing but two rippin' guitars and a mighty drum set, the CD is a symphony of short, hard-rockin' cuts that will one day make this a perfect infomercial soundtrack. The Fucking Champs go right up there with other monsters of rock who name their albums after numbers, including Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, and Queen. [Drag City] en

The Get Up Kids

On a Wire

Can we call them The Get Up *Men* yet? The Get Up *Adults*? I've been a fan of the band for a while now, digging its uppity melodies and heart-wrenching lyrics, but the new album shows light years of growth. I'm sure the production by Scott Litt–who also handled R.E.M. and The Replacements at crucial moments in their respective evolutions–didn't hurt. The first song, "Overdue," is like mid-period Placemats with country jangles, deep strums, and repentant lyrics; the second song, "Stay Gone," shifts gears into Squeeze-like smoothness. You'll hear other elements merge throughout the CD, but it's still The Get Up Kids all the way, with the same songwriting skills, honest charm, and relentless energy–just better and more advanced in every way. [Vagrant/Heroes & Villains] mw

Gogogo Airheart

EXITHEUXA

Mixing the mutant folk of early David Bowie, garage glam of the Velvet Underground, and quivering soul of The Make-Up, Gogogo Airheart's songs radiate nervous energy like a leaky nuclear power plant, emanating an untamed glow that shifts in the wind and infects everyone it touches. The scratchy vocals stand out over the raw and understated melodies, and the lyrics are all about people power ("You've got so many years left in your life/Don't you believe it's over now") and moral fortitude ("Let them talk about all the things that they all want but they can't have…/As to what they say, 'Fuck 'em!'"). Unique sound or worthy vision is usually all you need to make a band click, but when you have both you get an explosion. [Gold Standard Laboratories] mw

The Kills

Black Rooster EP

Taking turns belting out their respective female and male vocals, The Kills members VV and Hotel produce raw, sweaty, fuzzed-out blues rock that's up there with Jon Spencer and the Laughing Hyenas. The first cut, "Cat Claw," tackles the Donnas-like theme of sexual swagger with Joan Jett's nerve and Maria McKee's twang. The second song, "Black Rooster (Fuck and Fight)," comes across like a *Darklands*-era Jesus and Mary Chain on moonshine. The remaining three songs are equally raw and powerful, including a live version of "Dropout Boogie" to prove the duo delivers the goods onstage. The energy that The Kills generate so naturally blows away most bands with twice as many members. [Dim Mak] mw

The Spanish Harlem Orchestra

S/T

What makes the The Spanish Harlem Orchestra different from what's playing on the Spanish radio stations? Could it be the ace packaging, or is it the fact that the musicians are from New York City? The liner notes state that this is the Buena Vista Social Club of Spanish Harlem. I think the biggest difference between the two groups is that The Spanish Harlem Orchestra has the chill-out method down. These guys can go crazy when they want to, but know better than to bust the wild salsa sounds nonstop. Some of the music sounds like the intro to *Sex and the City*, which must be a big diss to these guys, but oh well. The album is solid through 10 songs. If you want one salsa album, this has got to be it. [Ropeadope] en

Tender Trap

Film Molecules

Most of Marine Research (which was most of Heavenly, which was most of Talulah Gosh) is back in a slightly more electronic format with warm beats, tones, and melodies. Some interesting deviations include the funny new wave male back-up vocals in "That Girl" and haunting, echoing warbles in "Son of Dorian Gray," but it's the mixture of Amelia Fletcher's effortlessly sweet vocals and sharper-than-nails feminist lyrics that prevail. Imagine the go-go beats of Stereolab, sweetness of Tiger Trap, attitude of Bikini Kill, and lyricism of Elvis Costello and you're on the right track. This smart, scathing, and beautiful pop from England will put sugar in your ears, ideas in your head, and a dagger in your heart. [K Records] mw

Various Artists

RadioZilla! 2002 Sampler

This is the "Crooning Divas & Go-Go Girls" CD. We didn't donate money, but Ann Arbor's WCBN sent it to us anyway. The music is from an all-Asian show called "RadioZilla." This might be the best thing in the CD review pile, and it comes with a tiny song-list booklet inside a lucky red envelope. It's got Peanuts, who were made famous in the *Mothra* movie; Misora Hibari, the queen of Japanese drinking songs; and even Theresa Teng! Wouldn't Midori Tanakai's cover of Annette Funicello's "Pineapple Princess" sound great at your next ska dance party? It's too bad you can't buy this collection of cool songs by Asian female artists from the '50s, '60s, and '70s. The CD-R bootleg was probably a fund-raising premium. [WCBN] en

MORE MUSIC

Aden
Topsiders

Aden is pop–kind of like Versus, but softer and cuter. *Topsiders*, which serves as proof of the members' excellent musical skills and their mediocre taste in shoes, is varied, deep, unpredictable, simple, and likeable. If you like Paul Simon, XTC, and Heavenly, you might like this. Acoustic and electric instruments, sharp lyrics, and clear vocals make it good for marshmallow roasting. And if that isn't enough for you, check out the nice Mark Robinson graphics in the booklet. [Teenbeat] en

¡All Time Quarterback!
Updates

This re-release from 1999 will excite some people more than the new records will. Ben Gibbard, who fronts Death Cab for Cutie, is in on this lo-fi side-project, which sounds a lot better than most bands that are doing it for real. Maybe it's his familiar voice or maybe it's the charming parts recorded live onto a Walkman. Some songs are just a singer and a ukulele! The budget MPEG video is really cool, too. Seeing Gibbard wander around London looking at pornos is funny. [Barsuk Records] en

American Analog Set
S/T

These guys have been around for a while and they're still playing their mellow brand of indie electronic rock, kind of like their labelmates Japancakes. The music is dreamy in that drum-and-bass electronic way, only now they're using slower, more "regular" beats. The vocals are mellow and the music is a simple bedroom drone. American Analog Set's best songs are ones that are so electronic and thick with noise that the contrasting vocals are showcased. Does that make any sense? [Tigerstyle] en

The Ataris
Anywhere But Here...

Like *Close Encounters*, *Star Wars*, or *E.T.*, this work has been remixed, remastered, and enhanced for today. Originally recorded in 1997, when head Atari Kris Roe ditched Indiana for California to become a pop punk star, the order of songs has changed slightly and the production has improved significantly. With solid bass supplied by Sugarcult's Marko 72 and punishing drums meted out by Lagwagon's Derrick Plourde, Roe's supersonic melodies and punk lyrics about failed romance sound brand-new all over again. [Kung Fu Records] mw

Beachwood Sparks
Make the Cowboy Robots Cry

The Sparks' supremely dreamy country songs with soft vocals, jangling guitars, and layers of echoes remind me of a hung over Country Bear Jamboree. Their seven-minute epic "Drinks Water" is like a distant echo of "Watering Ground" by The Meat Puppets. Things get mellower and weirder with "Hibernation" and "Ponce de Leon Blues" (featuring Mia Doi Todd), but the last three songs will get you back on your horse. Check out the booklet's fanciful illustration of psychedelic cacti, tripped-out lizards, and cowboy robot by Jim Woodring! [Sub Pop] mw

Jim Black
Splay

If you had this release in your hand, you'd know why we reviewed it: Nara art! Yes, his work is on the cover, on the CD, and in the booklet that's built into the packaging. The Nara sketches are on lined paper and they're reproduced beautifully. As for the music, Jim Black is an instrumental band. Black is the drummer, but the music is actually led by the tenor sax player, Chris Speed. Most of the songs are rockin'–kind of like The Fucking Champs lite. Instead of metal, Jim Black has the jazz influence. [Winter & Winter] en

Cato Salsa Experience
A Good Tip for a Good Time

2002 might mark the millisecond when '60s garage-influenced guitar rock broke. The Hives, The White Stripes, and who else? Maybe Cato Salsa Experience. With long sideburns, a mean groovy guitar, funky mod keyboards, and vocals that rival a Southern Baptist preacher, this band might be the next to make it. And even if they don't break out, they still made a pretty cool album that's filled with soul, sweat, and stink. Check out their sounds if you're digging on the new wave of keyboard groovin' rock 'n' roll. [Emperor Norton] en

The Chevelles
Girl God

The Chevelle sedan was designed by Chevrolet to appeal to the female market during the '60s. This Australian band probably reaches a female market, too. It seeps *Third Eye*-era Redd Kross-influenced pop rock with Jeff McDonald-style vocals and buzzing guitars hooked up to a tangle of effects pedals. Steve McDonald produced two of the songs, "C'mon Everybody" and "Angelina Jolie," but every song channels the killer melodies from the '70s. [Zip] mw

The Chinkees
Searching for a Brighter Future

Just when I thought they went back to their day jobs of doing laundry or waiting tables, The Chinkees are back. Lyrically, the songs are more reflective and less sloganeering than before. Musically, the once-spastic sound is warmed up with some Hammond organ. The result is a simmering batch of political rock steady peppered with second-generation ska. For starters, "Market Place" is a tricky attack on wage slavery and "Can You Get Me Out of Here" is an enlightening account of immigration. Definitely worth picking up. [Asian Man Records] mw

Christiansen
Forensics Brothers and Sisters!

Loaded with shredding guitars, thumping bass, pounding drums, and pensive vocals, this six-song EP sounds a lot like Pete Shelley singing for Fugazi. The lyrics to the last cut, "The Era of Murder by Simulation," state that "music flows like power, language, and theory," and it's true. The songs are loaded with energy and ideas. "Jhazz Never Spelled So Good" pays tribute to the power of pure music, while "Portable Museums" portrays people who become custodians of antiquated thoughts. The high quality of rock is undeniable. [Revelation] mw

The Chubbies
New Wave Boyfriends

On this concept album, Jeannette Chubbie writes pop songs about different guys she went to high school with in 1984. The booklet has yearbook photos of students with A Flock of Seagulls haircuts, as well as their handwritten messages to the singer that generally go something like "Have a great summer and stay sweet." In return, she writes songs with lyrics like, "Your hand should be in my jeans" and "Betcha never got an F/Wanna give your first one yet." Her twentieth high school reunion should be very interesting. [Sympathy for the Record Industry] mw

Cordelia's Dad
What It Is

Sometimes known as King Lear, Cordelia's Dad sounds kind of like *Fables*-era R.E.M. There are a few extra wrinkles to make things interesting, like the balance of male and female vocals and some insane whistling, but the best part has to be the Tuvan throat singing dueling with a tuba in "Five Way Flashlight." Both rattle the bottom end, but only the Tuvan singer can whistle at the same time. Production geeks will enjoy comparing the first half of the CD to the second half, which was recorded by Shellac master Steve Albini. [Kimchee Records] mw

Cursive/Eastern Youth
8 Teeth to Eat You

The kids must eat Cursive up. The first song is weird and operatic. There's a girl and a guy singing a break-up conversation, kind of like the Human League with a cello! I'm glad Eastern Youth is on this split. Because the lyrics are in Japanese, you end up paying more attention to the hard and grinding instrumentals and song structure. They're so good, they fill out the split CD. I hope the kids check them out, too, because they're gods on stage. I'll admit it; I only listen to the Eastern Youth side. [Better Looking Records] en

Dando Lee Petersson...
Dead or Anything

Peter, Paul & Mary; Emerson, Lake & Palmer; Crosby, Stills & Nash; Simon & Garfunkel; Damon & Naomi; Wilson Phillips; The Captain & Tenille... They couldn't think of band names, and neither could Evan Dando, Ben Lee, Tom Petersson, and Jason Schwartzman. You can tell that the Lemonhead and Noise Addict wrote this pair of songs because of the advanced melodies and bittersweet lyrics. It's harder to detect elements of Cheap Trick or Phantom Planet, but the star power is obvious. Luddites lose out because this pop perfection is only available online! [Trifekta] mw

Deerhoof
Reveille

This is interesting rock filled with toy whistles, lo-fi keyboards, and noise. It's pop, rock, and different, and the vocals, by a Japanese girl named Satomi Matsuzaki, make it all work. Some songs are cute, but most are just unusual in the way that some Japanese noise bands go at it. But Deerhoof isn't crazy punk; it's abstract. Some songs are a minute of weird sounds, and others are closer to regular songs. It's music that kids in a mental asylum might make–either super genius or really off the mark. Whatever you think, I like it. [Kill Rock Stars] en

Division of Laura Lee
Black City

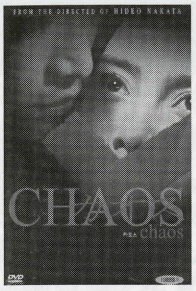
With surfy drums, garage guitars, and dirty vocals, Division of Laura Lee is the latest Swedish import to stake out a piece of the rock landscape. DOLL takes the basics of heavy rock established by The Stooges ("Need to Get Some"), T. Rex ("Wild and Crazy"), and Joy Division ("Trapped In"), and adds bone-crushing production value and some ass-moving psychedelic freak-outs. Even when played at moderate volume, the sleazy keyboards, grinding beats, and sweaty technique will grab you by the earholes and shake you down like a bully. [Epitaph] mw

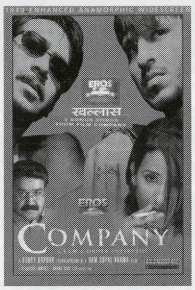
Dogtown and Z-Boys
O.G. Motion Picture Soundtrack

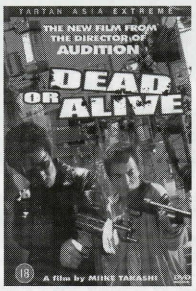
In the '70s, the Z-Boys were carving up pools and listening to a heavy stew of rock including the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Iggy and the Stooges, T. Rex, Alice Cooper, and ZZ Top. If you saw the *Dogtown and Z-Boys* documentary or bought Glen E. Friedman's book of vintage Dogtown photos, you know what I'm talking about. Tony Alva's airs, Jay Adams' Bert slides, and Shogo Kugo's pool grinds were the ultimate combination of skateboarding style and power, and these songs will help you remember that. There's nothing wrong with classic rock when it doesn't suck. [Enjoy Records] mw

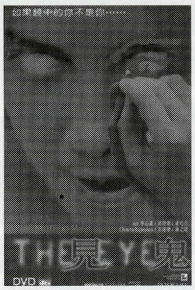
The Dukes of Hamburg
Some Folks

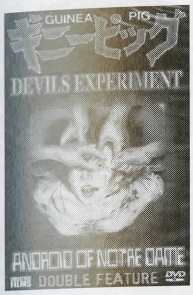
Hamburg is famous for its version of the Big Mac, but it's also home to some of the world's best garage rock. Case in point: The Dukes of Hamburg, featuring the emotional vocals of Russel Quan from The Mummies. Wearing matching vests, black-rimmed glasses, and Joey Ramone haircuts, The Dukes cover 14 gems of R&B and early rock 'n' roll, like "Women," "Greensleeves," and "Slow Down" with raw sparseness, capping the set with a furious version of "Hey Joe." Also, the liner notes in German will crack you up, although I'm not sure why. [Gearhead] mw

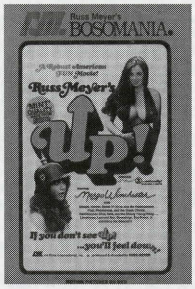












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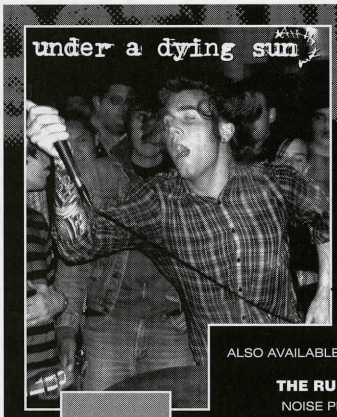

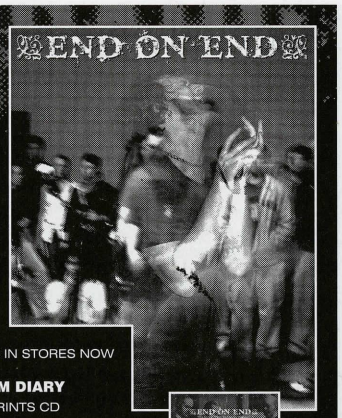

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MORE MUSIC

Exit... Stage Left

The String Quartet Tribute to Rush

These fools are lucky I'm a Rush fan, because when I hear their string-a-lings sabotaging the great songs of Rush, I picture four guys who look like ZZ Top with fiddles under their necks. As fans, are they supposed to mess with the band like this or are they just supposed to appreciate it? I'm not sure, but they do deserve credit for being professional, serious, and dilligent. At least they didn't go past *Moving Pictures*. It's hard to take this seriously when you know they're making violin and cello faces during the solos on "YYZ." [Vitamin] en

The Fartz

Injustice

The Fartz shoot off topics such as "Rich White American," "Apathy Is the Enemy," and "God Fearing Christians" like projectile vomit–full of acid, velocity, and disgust. The lyrics are impossible to understand, but the work is dedicated to 9-11: "We are all victims of our collective leaders' ongoing stupidity and inability just to get along. As usual, the innocent pay the price for this ignorance cleverly disguised as patriotism..." You get the idea. This thrashy political punk will sharpen your mohawk. [Alternative Tentacles] mw

The Flaming Lips

Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots

I read somewhere that The Flaming Lips met some woman in Japan who was really cool or something, and they did a song for her. But then I also read that they're friends with Yoshimi Pwee of the Boredoms, who's on Part II of *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*. This song is noisy and powerful. Part I is a slow pop song that's video friendly. I've never been a fan of The Lips, but this album is diverse, poppish, electronic, and cool. It's weird how they went from radio hits to noisy instrumentals, but I guess they're rockin' on Warner Bros.' dime. [Warner Bros] en

The Flipsides

Clever One

Sabrina Stewart sings deceptively melodic and sweet punk songs that are actually harsh thrashings of the neighborhood, the upper class, and particular dudes. With a thumping punk guitar attack, she sings, "I'll kick you to the ground if you don't trip/And I won't pick you up when you're falling." Perfectly crunchy execution and references to *Star Trek* ("Make it so..."), Shakespeare ("Get me to a nunnery..."), and baseball ("I'm pitching to myself...") help set The Flipsides apart from other punks. [Pink & Black] mw

Friction

Hours of Operation

This double CD collects the Chicago trio's discography of songs recorded between 1991 and 1994. If you're familiar with early '90s punk, the band's sound combines the rough vocals of Phleg Camp, melody of middle-era Jawbreaker, and occasional jazzy interludes like Fuel. Living out west, I totally missed them, but this collection is a great crash course, with a ripping live cover of Joan Jett's "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" and a harrowing take on the theme from *Happy Days* thrown in for good measure. [Polyvinyl] mw

From Monument to Masses

*****

On the booklet art, these Pinoy musicians from Oakland place themselves alongside revolutionaries like Chairman Mao, Angela Davis, and Yuri Kochiama. Musically, they play indie stylings that flirt with post-rock, applying dynamic guitars, cool bass lines, and solid drumming to back up samples from the likes of Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. It's pretty cool for your bedroom or vegan coffee shop, but I wish there were some incendiary lyrics to give the politics shape and present a specific agenda. Still, it's ideal for organizing, plotting, or just relaxing. [Dim Mak] mw

Girls Against Boys

You Can't Fight What You Can't See

GVSB emerged from the ashes of Washington, D.C.'s proto-emo legends Soulside in the early '90s, playing grinding indie rock anchored by Scott McCloud's sleazy vocals, Eli Janney's atmospheric keyboards, and killer grooves by Johnny Temple and Alexis Fleisig. Their latest work is dark and heavy, full of gasping, rasping vocals and a mood so thick you can hardly breath. By the time the payoff comes along–the beautifully sparse "Let It Breathe," which is about taking limos to booze heaven–you'll feel like you're a deep-sea diver reaching the surface. [Jade Tree] mw

The Hangmen

We've Got Blood on the Toes of Our Boots

With the grind of Johnny Thunders, melody of The Undertones, and twang of old Rolling Stones, The Hangmen have been playing supreme drunk rock in America's scummiest dives for at least 15 years. Pulling together some of their best non-hits, including "Kiss from You" and "Rotten Sunday" (which was on the Scream compilation that introduced Jane's Addiction to the world), this live CD goes right between *David Live* and *Get Your Ya-Ya's Out*. [Acetate] mw

Heart Attack

The Last War 1980-1984

With an average age of 13, Heart Attack was like an East Coast version of Redd Kross. The band opened for The Misfits, GBH, Bad Brains, and the Dead Kennedys, and members went on to form The Mob and The Possessed. This CD compiles 26 tracks from demos and EPs, and it's cool how the band evolves from "Everybody Wants to Rock and Roll" to "Toxic Lullabye." The music matures, too, as the musicians hit puberty and become more coordinated. It's like a history of NYHC, going from trashy punk to thrashy hardcore. [Broken Rekids] mw

Hot Snakes

Suicide Invoice

This is album number two for the originators of the melodic instrumental mayhem and screeching vocals that a lot of lesser bands are trying to achieve. The sound comes from previous collaborations by Rick Fork and John Reis, who were in Pitchfork and Drive Like Jehu, and these two still do it the best. Hot Snakes continue Jehu's brand of rock–maybe a wee bit softer with guitars that sound a little like Rocket from the Crypt. The music is fierce and you get 12 songs. Hopefully, we'll get a tour, too. [Swami] en

The Icicles

Pure Sugar EP

Pure sugar is right. The Icicles utilize indie girl vocals, alternately jangling and surf guitars, Casio keyboards, and occasional handclaps, trumpet, and cello to make the cutest pop in recent memory. Delivered straight with no traces of sarcasm or irony, songs like "Skater Boyfriend" and "Polyester Dress" will sweeten your cereal and mellow your coffee, but won't attract ants to your picnic. Fans of Heavenly, Aislers Set, and The Softies will consume this quartet's new songs in gulps. [Drive-In Records] mw

Jazzanova

In Between

Jazzanova is a six-producer collective that has its fingers on the mellow, retro, jazz, hip hop, Brazilian, and lounge sounds. It's not hardcore or tough; it's the opposite, meant for suburbans, urbans with their pulse on the suburbs, and people over 30. I'd guess that the Jazzanova folks wear 1" ties with their suits, Paul Smith sunglasses, and man-purses. If you want to chill with a martini and listen to some soothing songs with male and female vocals, then this is perfect for you–kind of like Thievery Corporation with its retro new style and sound. [Ropeadope] en

John Wilkes Kissing Booth

A Threat in the Broadcast

Don Knotts Overdrive, Sandy Duncan's Eye, The Abe Lincoln Story, The Bruce Lee Band, Jodie Foster's Army, The Jean-Paul Sartre Experience, and The Mr. T Experience are a few of the bands that incorporate a famous person in their names. And then there are some who go further by making puns with celebrities' names, like John Cougar Concentration Camp, Buckminster Fuzeboard, and The Brian Jonestown Massacre. Now here's The John Wilkes Kissing Booth, with relentlessly textured music and a singer who sounds a lot like ED fROMOHIO. [Velvet Blue Music] mw

Calvin Johnson

What Was Me

Singer-songwriters usually put me to sleep, but these 10 songs are completely arresting. Calvin Johnson, the Daniel Johnston-meets-Darth Vader voice for Beat Happening, Halo Benders, and Dub Narcotic Sound System, has finally recorded a solo album and his vocals have never sounded this refined. The lighter songs are like Jonathan Richman with their wit and heart, but the darker ones veer into Johnny Cash territory. Calvin is no wimpy coffeehouse scop or campfire singer–he's an indie rock deity baring his soul. [K Records] mw

Jason Loewenstein

At Sixes and Sevens

In Sebadoh, Jason Loewenstein was the bad cop to Lou Barlow's good cop. It must have sucked playing shows and having everyone waiting for the ex-Dinosaur Jr. member's songs. On his first solo CD, Loewenstein writes, plays, produces, and engineers everything, endowing off-kilter Kinks-type melodies with Sonic Youth cruising speed, then mixing in a train wreck of a jazz number and also some metal riffs for kicks. Most solo records are introspective, but this one will rip a new hole in your head before relinquishing some sensitive and pretty pop. [Sub Pop] mw

Looper

The Snare

Stuart David's Looper was once an innocent-sounding pop band that was inches stylistically from Belle & Sebastian. David is their bass player. Now the band's sound has mutated to a creepier and more mysterious style. It sounds more like dance music than anything else. No longer does David play indie-rock songs where he talks or reads from letters. The new, low-voiced style is just plain weird, and the best song is the last cut, which sounds like it's from their first album. [Mute] en

Los Dryheavers

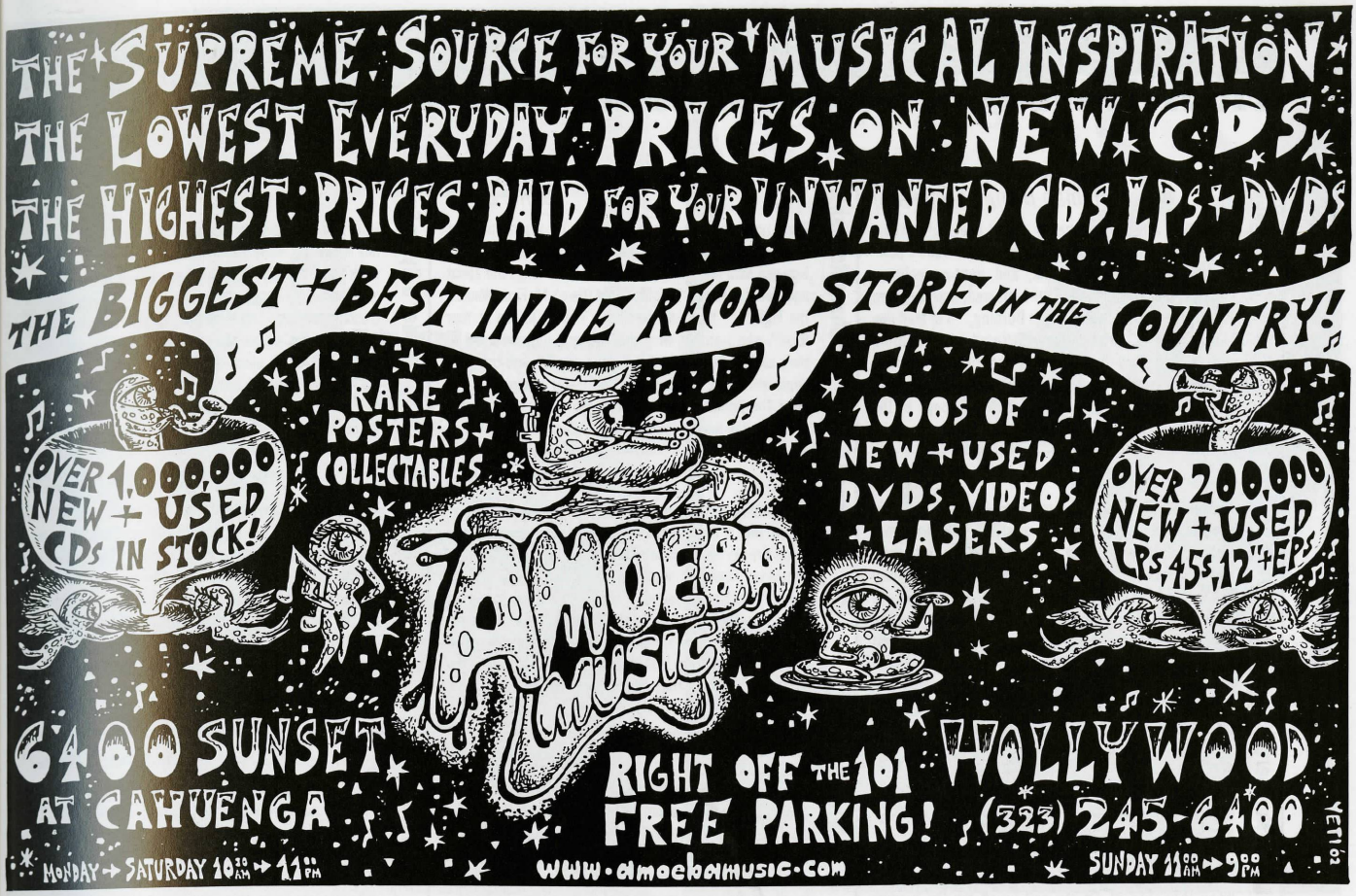
S/T

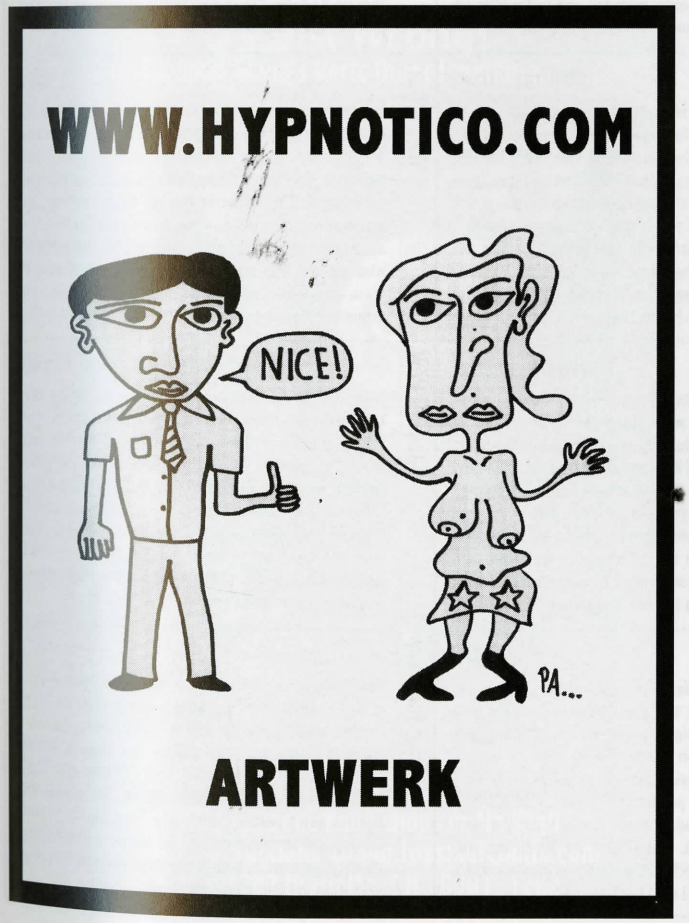
From Watsonville, the agri-town in Northern California where I have tons of family members, Los Dryheavers play punk rock with Latin images, song titles, and band name. Really, it sounds old-school, American, and strong, and half of the songs are in Spanish. But Watsonville? I still can't believe a punk rock band is from the home of Martinelli's Sparkling Cider. This is the town that was overwhelmed with happiness when Kmart opened. Maybe Los Dryheavers buy their cerveza there. [Pandacide] en

Maserati

The Language of Cities

Maserati was the coolest car in the '80s and now it's the name of a band. The musicians from Athens, Georgia, have a nice instrumental vibe, and the funniest description is from their label's site, which describes the sound as "U2 from the mid-'80s." I can picture The Edge looking serious and trying to make sure that his delay pedal is working while he's plucking individual notes in "Where the Streets Have No Name." Maserati is perfect for instrumental post-rock fans, but watch out–a couple songs rock hard in that Swervedriver way. [Kindercore] en





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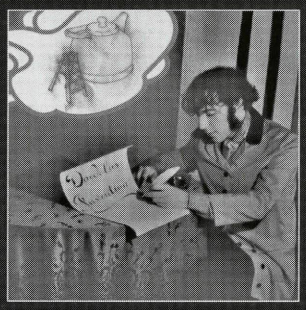

Daedelus

"Invention"

Lush romantic soundscapes splintered into hyperactive breaks one moment and head nodding hip hop the next. Featuring freestyle MC, Busdriver from L.A.'s renown Project Blowed Crew and Global Phlowtations MC Sach

John Tejada

"Daydreams in Cold Weather"

Widely recognized both here and abroad as a producer of Techno, John Tejada transcends the easy limitations of genre and style.

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MORE MUSIC

The MC5 — *Human Being Lawnmower*

This CD is a heavy and heady mix of live stuff, studio outtakes, and LP cuts that demonstrate the band's powers of hard rock, heavy funk, and right-on politics. Imagine the long-haired, bell-bottomed, pot smokers singing songs like "Motor City Is Burning," "I'm Mad like Eldrige Cleaver," and "American Ruse" while wearing clothes that they looted during the riots in Detroit! There's no "Kick Out the Jams," but the legendary band does kick out the James with a medley of songs by the Godfather of Soul. [Total Energy/Bomp!] mw

Mull Historical Society — *Loss*

The lyrics book, which features a dog wearing a wig, is more colorful and glossy than most magazines on your coffee table. The sparkling guitars, shimmery keyboards, and lush background vocals benefit from the ace production, but the vocals are the main attraction. The lyrics are mostly warm and funny ("She's watching *Xanadu*/She says she can't love you"), although there are repeated "Hamburger Hell" lyrics in a pro-animal rights song and an anti-development song. I think that's cool; irony and wit are useless without a point. [XL/Beggars Group] mw

Numbers — *Life*

Like Walt Disney's brain, new wave lives on. Numbers combine Devo-style staccato instruments with cold male and female vocals filling out a static-filled, fuzzed-out, garage-style void. Numbers have no soul, but they can still help you learn a hundred new variations of the robot. When they sing, "I am the end user/I am the product chooser" in "We Like Having These Things," you can invent new dances like Swiping the Credit Card, Punching in the ATM, and Breaking Out the Wallet. Great fun for all ages. [Tigerbeat] mw

Original Sinners — *S/T*

It's shocking to hear Exene Cervenka harmonize with another female singer instead of John Doe, but other elements of her new band aren't so different: the punkabilly kick, country twang, and poetic lyrics. "Once I took a little trip/I was wearin' my best Freudian slip," sings Cervenka in "River City." Her vocals sound stronger and louder than ever, not too far from what she was doing with X on *More Fun in the New World*. The CD's mood is dark, but it's far from dismal because the approach is fresh and energy is high with two or three guitars leading the way. [Nitro] mw

The Pupils — *S/T*

The cover of the lyrics book makes this duo look like mad monks, but they're really just dueling guitarists playing songs about people power. "All the People" provides a plucky start that's all-acoustic, humanist, and folky. Things get more Billy Bragg-like on the second song, "Fountain Flame," which might be about the potential of one's voice or breath or perhaps life in general. "It's Good to Have Met You" will help you see the worth of other people in your life. The Pupils are not about studying and taking tests; they are about seeing things clearly. [Dischord] mw

Ruins — *1986-1992*

I once helped translate a radio interview with these noise musicians and it's great that they have a greatest hits CD. I was a big fan of their sound before I just got sick of it. Drummer Yoshida Tatsuya improvises vocals on some of the songs, and he plays with only a bassist. Imagine a slower Melt Banana with male vocals. To make music like The Ruins, you have to be twisted, chemically imbalanced, or have a genetic disorder or two. Looking back, I wonder how I could have been such a huge fan, even though I think they're cool [Skin Graft] en

Sahara Hotnights — *Jennie Bomb*

Their name sounds like an episode of *Vega$*, but the Sweden-based Sahara Hotnights are more like a cross between Joan Jett and the Scorpions. Most songs are about how hard they rock–"Alright Alright (Here's My First, Where's the Fight?)," "Keep Up the Speed," and "On Top of Your Road"–and I almost wish they weren't quite as good so their songs would be ironic. Instead, the 20-year-old girls' super-slick rock anthems are full-metal swagger. If you liked The Donnas covering Judas Priest, these rock goddesses in the making will slay you. [Jetset] mw

Signer — *Low Light Dreams*

Wow, it's been too long since I've heard pretty, atmospheric music like Labradford and many others from the great Kranky record label. This kind of post-rock is hard to review. There are some vocals on the album, but it's mostly electronic sounds. The song titles somehow don't exactly match up to the compositions. It's complex, but seemingly simple. It's arty and not new agey. The liner notes state that "the music was written in low light," and I think that added to its emotion and vibe. [Carpark] en

Silkworm — *Italian Platinum*

Starting off with a bone-crushing take on country rock (replete with a tobacco-spitting guitar solo), this CD has the brains of a hybrid-fuel vehicle and drive of a V-8 muscle car. Extended guitar intros, sensitive keyboard parts, female backup vocals, and arena-sized spaces for hand clapping lend an epic feel to the songs, and add a satiric edge to the lyrics. Like ppondaegi, the silkworm larvae that's sold on the streets of Korea like freshly roasted nuts, it's crunchy, powerful, and just a little bit funny. [Touch & Go] mw

Sonic Youth — *Murray Street*

Sonic Youth curated and played the headlining slot at UCLA's three-day All Tomorrow's Parties music festival. At the show, the band stuck to its guns and rocked the new music. After not knowing most of the set and seeing an unexpected new fifth member (musician and producer Jim O'Rourke on guitar) I was a little disappointed. Should I expect them not to change? It's hard to think that this, the second album in a trilogy about Lower Manhattan, will capture the indie rock imagination like *Goo* and *100% did* , but they're still my heroes. [Geffen] en

The Stereo — *Rewind + Record*

This is full-on rock with the vocal flexing of Journey, guitar power of Cheap Trick, and keyboard tinkling of Foreigner. It opens with an ode to the fans–and I can't tell if the band is really that popular or if it is supposed to be ironic. The Stereo definitely aims higher than most indie bands because the songs don't merely target heartsick loners; they also appeal to jocks ("Tell Your Football Dad No") and popular kids ("No cell phone/Those were our better days/I'd die to be there today/In 1984 it seems so far away"). Expect to see The Stereo on *Behind the Music* in 10 years. [Fueled by Ramen] mw

Stereophonic Space Sound — *S/T*

If this CD isn't a reissue I just got gaffled. This sounds original, old, groovy, and cool. If I were standing on a beach with some big-bosomed women wearing '50s bikinis, I'd have an overwhelming urge to bust a dance. The groove would just get to me. Actually, no, I wouldn't, but I can picture this music in an old flick where big-hipped ladies shake 'em. It's got the word "space" in the title, and I think Jet Sound Inc. was involved in the project, but really it's more surfy and a little mod. [Dionysis] en

Under a Dying Sun — *S/T*

From Half Moon Bay, the Northern California beach community where big wave surfer Mark Fu perished, comes this punk band. With the idealism of peace punk and raw vocals of screamo, the songs are energetic and powerful, utilizing crashing melodies and tormented vocals. Fortunately, lyrics and liner notes explain the purpose of selected cuts. "Until It's Given Back" is about releasing one's self from the slavery of daily routines and "Every Stitch Is a Reminder" describes the power people have to make their own destinies. It's positively unyielding. [Substandard] mw

Various Artists — *Hopelessly Devoted to You Vol. 4*

You can't even buy a falafel for four bucks, but for that price you get 18 hot punk cuts (10 unreleased) on this bargain-priced showcase. For starters, there's Gilman St.-era punk from Samian, Common Rider, and Jeff Ott of Fifteen fame. Then there's the hybrid new wave/Riot Grrrl rock by the Selby Tigers, Mensa rock by The Weakerthans, and straight-up hardcore by Thrice. And what the heck do you call Atom and His Package? There are plenty of great bands to support, you MP3-ripping scene parasites, and this will help you find some. [Hopeless/Sub City] mw

Various Artists — *Sample This, Too!*

Punk's not dead, and it might not even be dying. This full-on punk sampler has a lot of huge bands on it: The Bouncing Souls, NOFX, Rancid, Anti-Flag, Manic Hispanic, Leatherface, and Youth Brigade. The surprises come from the less popular groups. The Pistol Grip's rousing "Victoria" will make you swing your toque over your head and move to Vancouver, The Forgotten's "Respect & Lies" will inspire you to chant "motherfucker" like a soccer hooligan, and Filthy Thieving Bastards' "The Killing Kind" will have you drinking your beer thick and warm. [BYO Records] mw

Weird War — *S/T*

The Make-Up's Ian Svenonius and Michelle Mae team up with Neil Michael Hagerty to make '70s music with psychedelic guitars, hippie keyboards, tribal drums, and Svenonius' screeching, gasping falsetto. The lyrics aren't as overtly political as Svenonius' previous bands. Instead, the messages are more personal and funny, possibly from the same era as the musical cues: "Don't kiss me on the mouth when you can kiss me anywhere else" and "Ass, gas, or grass–nobody rides for free." It's freaky, funky, and fine listening with dueling banjos and flute jams! [Drag City] mw

Wussom*Pow — *Deep Blue Hearts and Solid Hands*

With delicate but distinct female vocals, humming guitars, and layers of acoustic percussion, this San Francisco band sometimes reminds me of Velocity Girl, Unrest, or Codeine. "Twenty-Four" sounds like an Astrud Gilberto song sung in English, while "Kitchen" is like a Stereolab drone translated into an epic road trip soundtrack. Refined, ornate, and full of nervous energy, this indie-pop band is flexible but not flimsy, going from wispy pop to fuzzed-out shoe-gazer epics without deteriorating into a schizophrenic mess. [Omnibus] mw

Young and Sexy — *S/T*

How could you not look for a photo of the band with a name like that? I was expecting a bunch of barely legal children wearing Speedos and buttcrack floss; instead, I got some Canadians in their late twenties wearing denim. The melancholy lead singers, Paul Pittman and Lucy Brain, are harmonized and introspective. The guitars are right-on with a mellow, country vibe. They play songs that are pop and somewhat catchy, yet classical and professional. If you want to hear pretty songs and you love your mom, then get this album. [Mint] en

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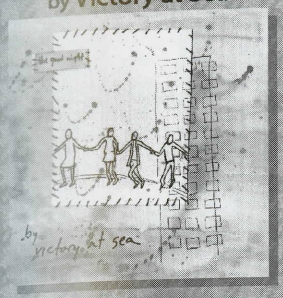

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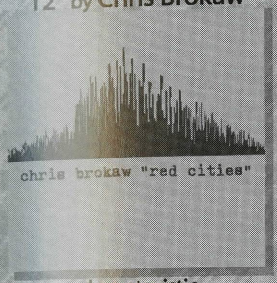

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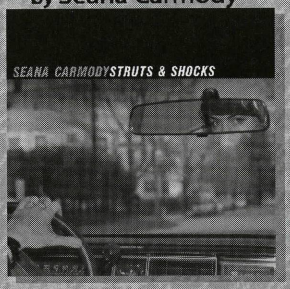

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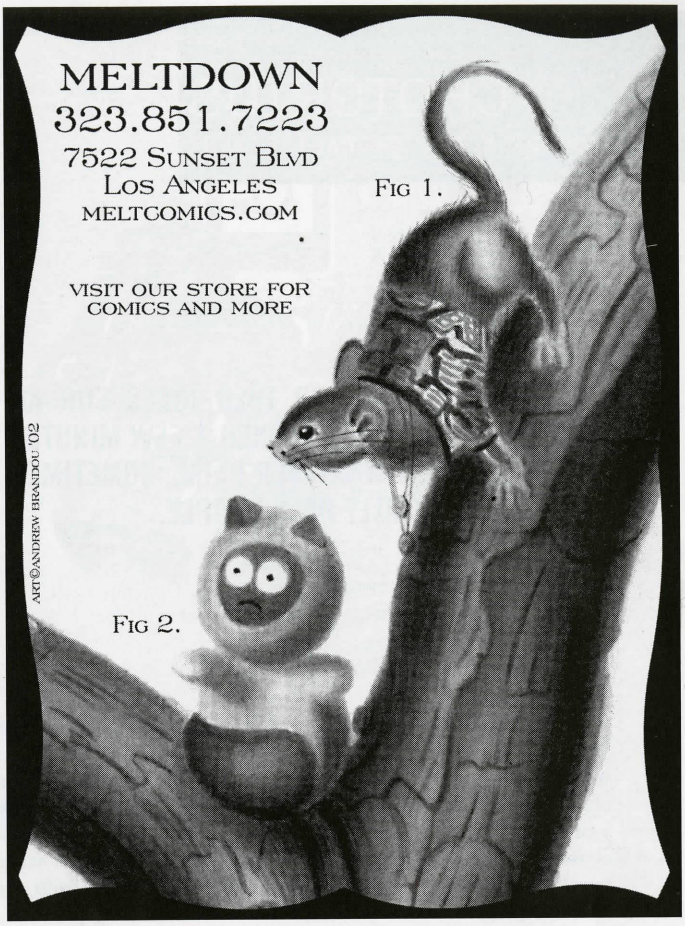

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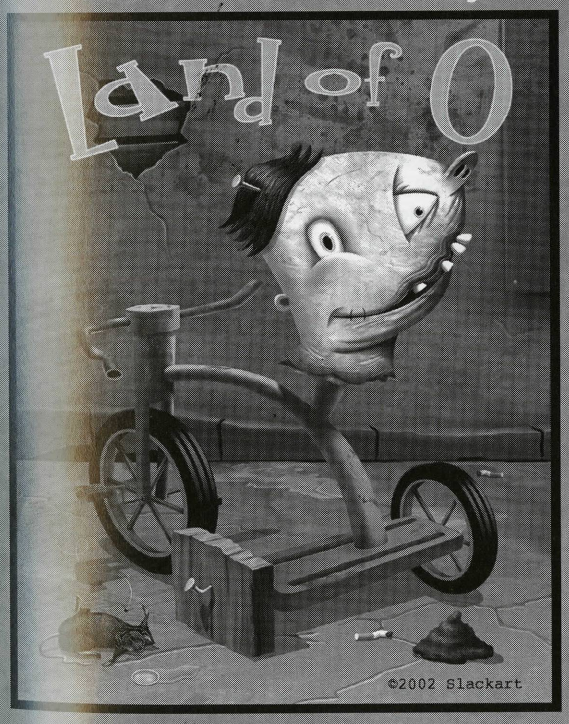

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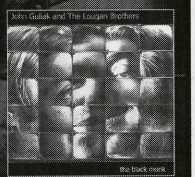
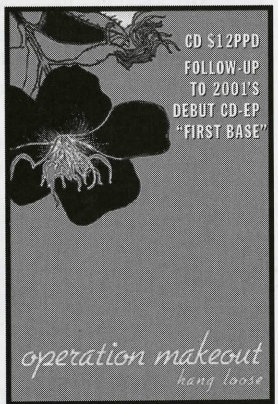


A mainstay in Western Canada's roots community since making Vancouver his home via the Prairies and Victoria, John Guliak invited several of his friends — Carolyn Mark, Tolan McNeil, Garth Johnson, Linda McRae, David P. Smith, Keith Rose and others — to help create The Black Monk, his debut album. With John's velvet-smooth cigarettes-and-cognac voice front and centre, The Black Monk is the perfect complement to Carolyn Mark's latest, Terrible Hostess. CD $12ppd



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CHOTORIUS

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Margaret Cho has taken more trips than most airline pilots.

AFTER I'VE SPOKEN AND TOLD JOKES FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF, I'VE EARNED A FEW MINUTES WHERE I CAN SAY WHATEVER I LIKE. SOMETIMES MY MESSAGES REALLY HELP PEOPLE.

Comedy concert movies haven't been huge at the box office since the '80s, when Eddie Murphy released *Raw* and *Delirious*. Maybe this is because everyone just watches stand-up on cable now. But Margaret Cho has been doing her part to bring fans of comedy back to the movie theaters. Last year, she released *I'm the One That I Want*, a cathartic monologue that details her unsavory experiences with Hollywood racism and abuse of various drugs. In *The Notorious C.H.O.*, she examines her favorite subject matters–her parents and the gay, lesbian, and straight worlds–with equal parts wit, trash talk, and purpose.

GR: Can you compare *The Notorious C.H.O.* to *I'm the One That I Want*? Did you prepare for your latest concert film differently?
MC: The last show was really telling a story about racism in Hollywood. This one is about anything and everything. It's a bunch of jokes I get to tell consecutively.

GR: It was cool seeing your parents in the movie's intro. Did you give them any tips or coaching before they were interviewed?
MC: No, but they were so funny. They came to the premiere last Thursday. My dad stood up and everyone was clapping for him, and then he pulled out of his jacket a big World Cup Korea banner: "South Korea!" It was in San Francisco in at big gay and lesbian film festival.

GR: So are you extra full of Korean pride now?
MC: I was like all proud, and if anyone talks to me I'll turn around and hold up a huge South Korean World Cup towel. It was a towel, which is so awesome. My dad's so punk rock.

GR: Most people hate seeing pictures of themselves or hearing their voices on answering machines. What goes through your mind when you watch concert footage of yourself?
MC: I feel like I'm such a whiner and I'm so dissatisfied, but then I have to watch it from a producer's standpoint also. So it's weird. There are a couple of conflicting views, but it's hard for me to watch it because I feel stupid. I want to be critical, then I say, "Oh, I guess it's okay."

GR: Do you think friends and family members act differently or are they extra-careful around you for fear of becoming the butt of jokes?
MC: No, I don't think so. Nobody really gives a shit. Plus it almost never makes it in the way they think it would.

GR: Do people try to be outrageous to get into your material?
MC: I think that might happen. People always say, "Oh, I bet I'm going to end up in your act." Why? Why do they say that?

GR: Since cutting back on substance abuse, is it harder to find funny things in your life that inspire jokes?
MC: Things are less funny, but also things are disproportionately more funny. Like something will strike me as so hilarious, but something that's supposed to be funny won't make me laugh at all. Whe I did drugs, especially hallucinogenics, everything wa funny. That's why I liked doing stuff like acid. You jus laugh uncontrollably.

GR: A lot of your older material is about how fucked u things were. Are you happier now?
MC: Yeah, I think I am. I was happy then, too, sometime but I'm super-happy now. I'm adult now. I'm all grown u and my life is really different. I live in Glendale and ever thing's all good. It's just a slow jam.

GR: What's different about being grown up?
MC: I go to bed early, as opposed to not going to bed a all. I have a calmness about things. There's not such a urgency to do things or get there. I just don't care. I'm more patient now. If something's present and I want it, can wait for it. I have kind of a quietness that I never had I'm really satisfied.

GR: When was the last time you faced a really toug audience?
MC: When I was writing this show in Edinburgh Scotland. I was there for the Fringe Festival a year ago. was really hard. Nobody knew who I was and I was starting over there People were really shocked.

GR: Do you think they just didn't understand your American accent?
MC: No, I think it was more like they just don't have the same vie of women or see the same kind of issues as they relate to minorities It was hard, but it was good in the end. It made me really look fo what was good in the material.

GR: After all the jokes, there's an empowering message at the end o *The Notorious C.H.O.* What is the relationship between being humor ous and making a point?
MC: It comes out of a lot of the political speaking I was doing, an wanting to unite the political side of my career with the entertainmen side, and feeling like I could do both. After I've spoken and told joke for an hour and a half, I've earned a few minutes where I can say what ever I like. Sometimes my messages really help people. Sometimes they just go, "Oh, what's that supposed to mean?" Then I tell another joke and it's over so it really doesn't matter. But I feel it's importan for people to hear it–especially young people who are struggling with identity. It really helps.

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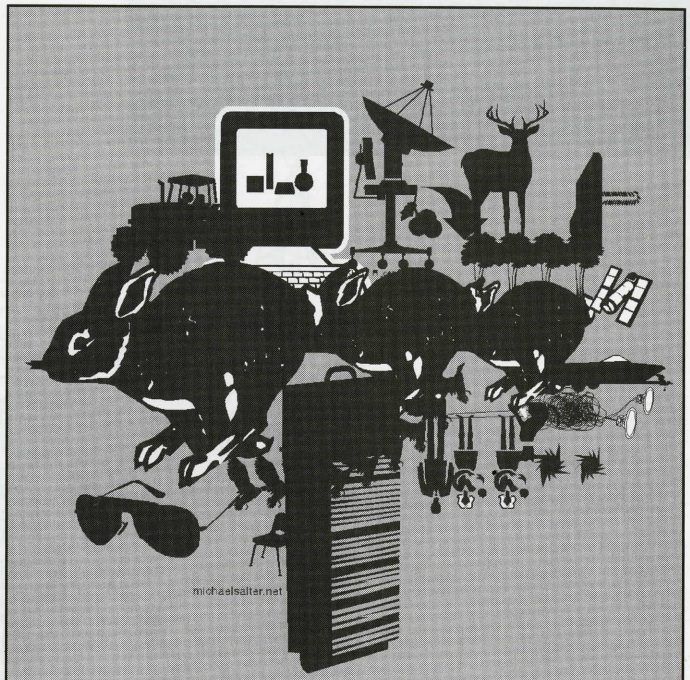

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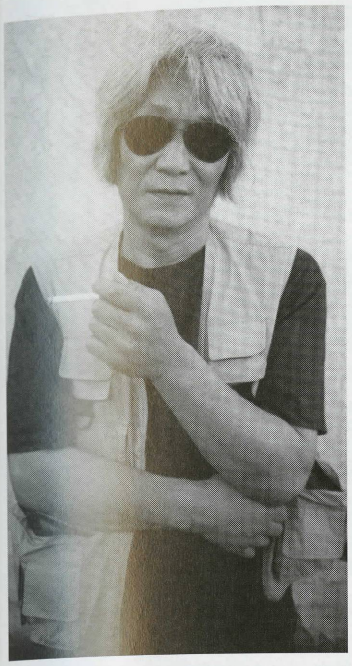
++ ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID CHOE, PIC BY ERIC NAKAMURA

JAPANESE DEVILS

+ BY MARTIN WONG



Minoru Matsui wears old-fashioned geta sandals made of wood.

AFTER MAKING THIS FILM, I FEEL THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE VERY WEAK. EVERYBODY HAS A DARK SIDE. ANYONE PUT IN AN EXTREME SITUATION LIKE WAR MIGHT ACT LIKE THE PEOPLE I INTERVIEWED. IT'S PART OF THE HUMAN CONDITION THAT WE NEED TO FACE.

Check out that 80-year-old guy on the bullet train. He seems like a nice person, and you'd never think of him as an arsonist, murderer, or rapist–until he starts telling his story. Minoru Matsui's film, *Riben Guizi,* documents interviews with 14 men who served in China as members of Japan's Imperial Army during World War II. Their dark pasts are undetectable in their harmless appearances.

In Matsui's 160-minute film, literally translated as "Japanese Devils," elderly veterans recall bayoneting live Chinese POWs for practice, conducting vivisection on unanesthetized soldiers for demonstration purposes, gang-raping women while superiors looked the other way, and burning and burying people alive. One interviewee remembers stringing up a Chinese POW by the wrists, starting a blaze under him, lighting his penis on fire, and then using him as bayonet practice for his troops when he refused to die. Another veteran has nightmares about throwing a Chinese woman down a well after she resisted being raped, watching her four-year-old daughter jump in after her, and then tossing a grenade at them.

The Chinese called Japan's occupation of Manchuria the "Three Alls Campaign," for kill all, burn all, and loot all, but Japanese propaganda-spewing newspapers ensured that most people in Japan had no idea what was really going on. Filmed with no frills on a self-financed budget of $150,000, Matsui's documentary allows veterans to tell audiences what really happened.

GR: What was your goal when you began planning *Riben Guizi*? Now that it's done, do you feel like you reached it?
MM: If you are a victim of war, it's easy to talk about it. But if you are an oppressor, it isn't. Because the 14 people interviewed were more than 80 years old, my goal was to capture their experiences before they died, and I achieved that. Since the film was completed last year, two of them have passed on.

GR: Did you have to coax answers out of the interviewees?
MM: All of them gave lectures and wrote articles about their war experiences for their local communities. I wanted to capture that on film so that other people could see their testimonials. So I wrote them letters saying this would be the last chance to document such important material for the next generation. When I called, I was worried they would decline, but all 14 agreed. I had a few opportunities to meet them after the screenings. Because so many young people have seen the film, they were glad to have been interviewed. They wanted to speak out against war because they have children and families.

GR: Has there been opposition to the film? Have you made enemies among Japan's right wing?
MM: When I was filming the movie, I was worried about the possibility of the right wing destroying it, but no such thing has happened. One right wing person I talked to said that it's what they did, so it doesn't matter which side you're on. Most Japanese people want to be more international, and free speech is an important part of that.

GR: Are people in Japan shocked when they find out what the Imperial Army did?
MM: Many say they didn't know details about the war, and all of them agree that we mustn't do it again. The 14 people interviewed were not crazy or mad. They were regular people who were driven to extreme acts by the situation. Anybody could be like that. This movie asks viewers what they would do in the situation. There's no answer, but we need to address the horrors of war.

GR: Was it difficult for the soldiers to return to normal life at home in Japan?
MM: Most of the people couldn't work for about 10 years when they came back from China. They were called communists or labeled Reds so they couldn't get jobs. Also, to tell people what they did was taboo. I didn't put this information in the movie because the theme of the movie is about what they did in the war. I didn't want the audience to feel sorry for them; the dangers of war are more important.

GR: The film's style is very raw, with little archival footage, graphics, or camera tricks. Besides the interview footage, there are only newspaper headlines and maps. Can you explain your movie's style?
MM: First, in Japan there is not much old footage, so the film clips would have been repetitive. Second, the movie was self-financed, so I didn't have a large budget. And it might be hard for Americans to understand, but the headlines emphasized a pro-war tone. Also, I tried to keep the film very simple to let the 14 interviewees speak for themselves. I didn't add opinions or judgments. It's up to the audience to interpret what they say.

GR: What have you learned from making this film? Have the interviews taught you about humanity?
MM: After making this film, I feel that human beings are very weak. Everybody has a dark side. Anyone put in an extreme situation like war might act like the people I interviewed. It's part of the human condition that we need to face. We need to know about our weaknesses. Some people just talk about being kind, but we need to face the darkness, too.

+ ILLUSTRATION BY KOZYNDAN

MAKE-OUT CLUB

+ WORDS AND PIX BY AMIT GILBOA

Dark coffee houses are so shady that customers are practically invisible.

LIKE GOING TO A DRIVE-IN IN THE UNITED STATES OR CHECKING INTO A LOVE HOTEL IN JAPAN, VISITING A DARK COFFEE HOUSE IN VIETNAM IS A MIX OF ROMANCE AND AWKWARDNESS, EXCITEMENT AND TAWDRINESS.

Millions of American teenagers might recommend a guy's wheels as a prime make-out location for young couples. But even a cramped VW Beetle offers more privacy than the scooters and small motorbikes that most Vietnamese use for transportation.

Since most singles in Vietnam live with their parents, bringing a guy or girl back to your pad means introducing him or her to your family and any distant relatives hanging around, not to mention nosy neighbors who delight in spreading the news that so-and-so had a friend in the house and they kept the door closed.

So if you're a Vietnamese couple looking for some private space to grope some private parts, what can you do? Head to a café.

Café-going is well established all over Vietnam, but if you're looking to suck on more than a latte, you'll have to find a special kind of café called a caphe den mo–literally, dim light coffee. These dark coffee shops are set up for the purpose of giving you and your honey some time alone.

Three things separate the dim light cafés from their run-of-the-mill counterparts: darkness, privacy, and price. As their name and their function implies, dim light cafés are dark inside. Different cafés have different shades of black, ranging from a dusky dimness to a darkness so murky that you literally cannot see your hand in front of your eyes.

Privacy is assured by low-tech but highly effective methods. None of the seats face each other, and partitions of vine-entwined wooden grates or sections of wall jut out to protect snuggling couples from prying eyes in case the darkness isn't enough.

Finally, prices at these places are about twice as high as in regular cafés. After all, once a couple sits down and makes the first order, waiters are hardly going to cruise around and interrupt the "conversations" to get additional drink orders.

"Dark coffees" are always busy; visit just about any of them and you'll hear the unmistakable sounds of whispers, clothes rustling, and lips smacking. Sunday seems to be National Libido Day in Vietnam, and the cafés can get so crowded that awkward lines of couples form as they wait for a seat.

The cafés are popular because premarital sex is so utterly taboo in Vietnam. The consequences of going all the way can be devastating for a Vietnamese woman. Many Vietnamese men refuse to marry a woman who is not a virgin–even if he is the only man she has slept with. Fooling around with a guy is not something to fool around with.

Hence the cafés. A woman who brings her man to a slightly dim café, for example, is making it plain that they are just going to kiss. If the heat of the moment tempts them to go further, the dim light of the café acts as a sort of surrogate father, protecting daddy's little girl from the consequences of passion. As the couple visits dimmer and dimmer cafés, the flames of passion get higher and higher, but the woman remains safe from going farther than she wants to.

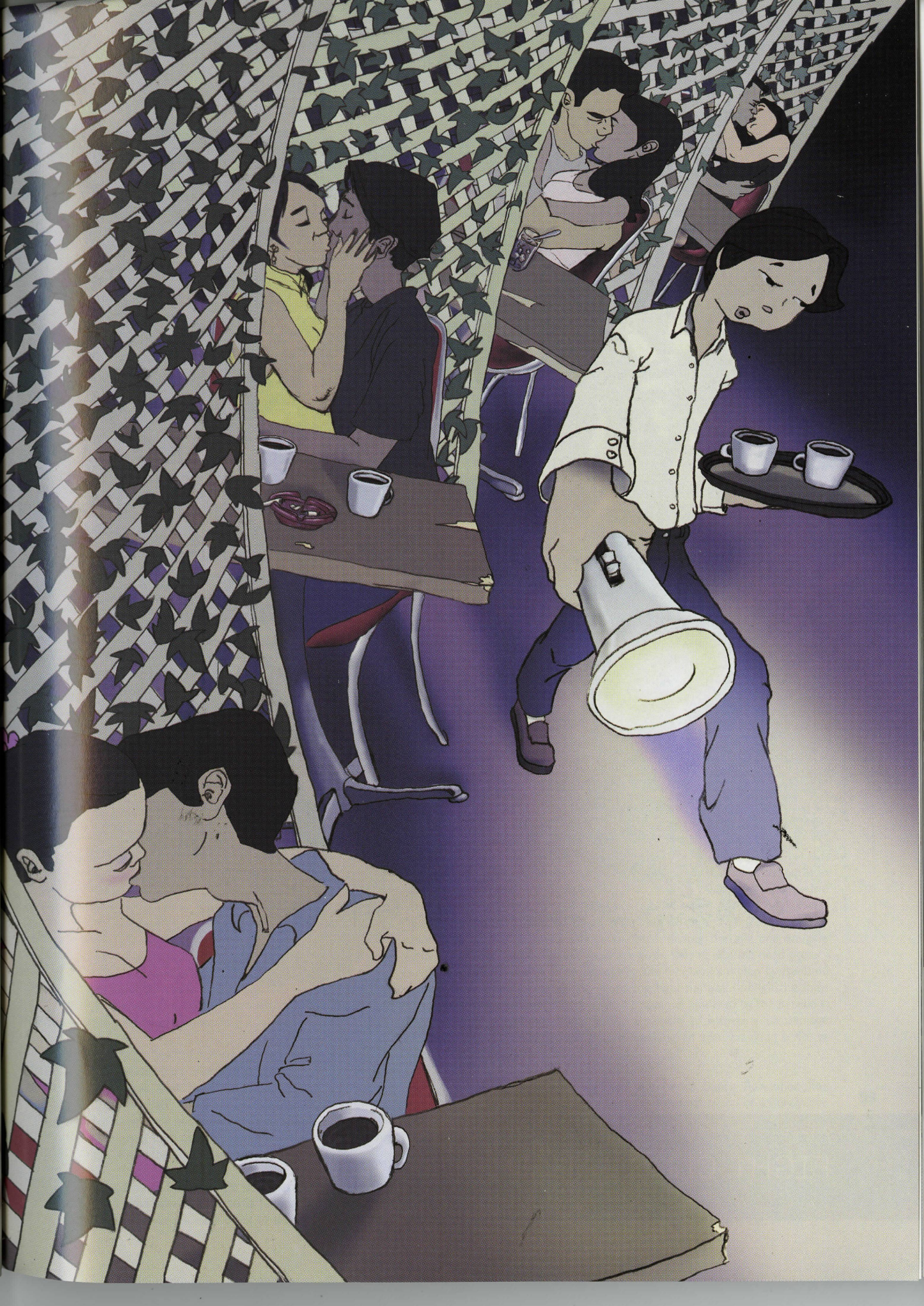
But some cafés are so dark and private that going all the way is actually easier than ordering an espresso. In these pitch-black coffee shops, the aim is not protecting virginity, but rather protecting reputations. Traditional Vietnamese thinking on sexuality holds that a man and a woman who have been in a room together unchaperoned have compromised themselves. In the words of Bui Ngo Duong, a 30-year-old teacher, "Of course if they are in a room together, they will do it. Why wouldn't they? Whether or not they did it, we have to assume that they did." Going to a pitch-black coffee shop allows an unmarried couple to mess around while looking nice. The message to the world is, "Sure, we may have fooled around a bit, but it's not like we went to a hotel."

Like going to a drive-in in the United States or checking into a love hotel in Japan, visiting a dark coffee house in Vietnam is a mix of romance and awkwardness, excitement and tawdriness. My own visit was to a semi-dark café (partner's choice) in the Dim Light District of Thanh Da on the eastern edge of Ho Chi Minh City. The low-slung chairs were comfortable enough, and the vista–a wide expanse of Mekong–was suitably romantic. Orders placed, drinks in front of us, my special friend and I soon got down to the business at hand–and it wasn't sampling the joe.

Was it awkward making out in earshot of several other couples? A bit at first, but they were doing the same thing. The fact is, it didn't take long at all before the entire world shrank down to consist of nothing but my friend and me in our beach chairs along the Mekong.

While it's certainly more convenient to invite a partner back to your pad, sharing dark coffee does add a certain level of excitement. For one thing, there are no missed signals. Many people go to the cinema just to watch a film and sometimes people go back to someone else's apartment just for a drink, but nobody goes to a dark café because they're hankering for a cuppa. It's a sacred space devoted to intimacy. Another aspect is that, although devoted to privacy, a café is still a public space. There is a certain element of exhibitionism in making out in a coffee shop, even if the other couples are doing the same thing.

But such considerations are secondary for most patrons. Having dark coffee is simply the best option for intimacy. For unmarried couples, dark cafés are the venue of choice to explore what society denies them. Whether it's some cautious necking in dim light or heavy lovemaking in pitch darkness, dark coffees balance societal pressures with pervasive human desire. In Vietnam, love blooms with dark coffee.



+ ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID CHOE

FIGHT CLUB JAPAN

+ BY BOBBY KIM

MOST OF THE FIGHTERS SHOW UP TO GET RESPECT, RELIEVE STRESS, OR TRY TO BREAK INTO THE PROFESSIONAL FIGHTING CIRCUIT. OTHERS JUST WANT TO RAGE. THEY'RE ALL AMATEURS, UNATHLETIC AND GAWKY, AND MOST HAVE LITTLE TO NO EXPERIENCE IN THE ART OF ASS KICKING.

On a weekend night in the heart of Osaka, nomadic herds of sloshed businessmen are out in full stupor, scouring the streets for hostess bars and soaplands. The seedy dives are inundated with prim suits awkwardly attached to drunken red faces and glazed stares.

Café Studio Cell Block is wedged deep in the Minami Horie district, an up-and-coming area that caters to younger crowds. To distinguish itself from surrounding bars and clubs, Café Studio Cell Block began organizing underground fights not long ago, spreading the message solely by word of mouth. There was no regular schedule, so you never knew when a fistfight would erupt. Handfuls of cash were wagered, ties were loosened, and blood flew.

Word has spread quickly, especially among businessmen looking for a new outlet to vent their frustrations. The bar is now the down-low hot spot, attracting flocks of testosterone-addled customers ready to throw some elbows, make money through gambling, or revel in watching grown men pummel each other.

Due to the fights' popularity, the bar owners have been forced to structure the late-night melees with a heavy-duty ring and timed rounds. The overall effect is somewhat mollified, but the loosely organized bar fights still remain an extraordinary sight.

There is a referee, but he doesn't seem to have any concept of rules. Competitors are barely compensated for their blood baths. The bar coughs up a scant prize package for the winner, despite his bodily sacrifice for the patrons' amusement. Most of the fighters show up to get respect, relieve stress, or try to break into the professional fighting circuit. Others just want to rage. They're all amateurs, unathletic and gawky, and most have little or no experience in the art of ass kicking.

It's Sunday night and we're stopped at the door by a ratty punk who looks like he fell face-first into a vat of jacks. After notifying the manager upstairs, he directs us to the smoky bar. To the average bar-goer, this place sucks. It's boring, the jukebox is stocked with second-rate trance, and the crowd is full of coarse males and cracked-out Twiggys. Supposedly, the entire operation is run by the local Yakuza chapter.

The manager, Kenji, is dressed from head to toe in black with dark shades and spiky hair. He's pretty intimidating for a short stick-figure guy. He guides us to the back of the club where a six-foot-high ring is situated. A mosh pit of sorts stretches around the ring like a moat as the audience trickles into the tight, hazy quarters. A bunch of huge bouncers in really small shirts round out the room.

As the competitors warm up in a run-down dance studio on the floor directly above us, the evening's festivities begin with some lackluster Tae Kwon Do exhibitions. A couple of twirly-bird kicks and arm spinners whip the restless crowd into a frenzy. Then, without an official announcement, a flashy light show, or butt-flossing ring girls, the real fighters head to the ring from opposite corners of the room. One has taken the elevator down; the other, the stairs.

The first fight is a full-on Tae Kwon Do bout between two ordinary Joes. I don't understand how this match is judged, and don't really care. I came to see guys smack each other in the mouth, not fidget around with some martial artsy maneuvers. They get in some painfully sweet kicks, but most of the attendees just want to see a good beatdown.

Finally, the streetfighters storm the stage. One of these guys is using the tussle to measure his worth as a fighter, with the dream of climbing the ranks of professional fighting. The other guy just wants to hurt someone. The opponents are clad in minimal protective headgear and shinguards, a modification that draws groans from the inebriated onlookers who, like me, were expecting fractured skulls and busted ankles. Later, I find out it's because they're trained in Pancrase, a martial art that melds punching, kicking, and wrestling, and requires the sissy pads.

The three rounds are only three minutes each, but that's long enough for the fighters to score some deep blows. The bell strikes, and the opponents tackle each other in slipshod manner. They topple against the ropes and spill onto the mat. Whatever strategy and technique goes into Pancrase is apparently forsaken as the two lock up and roll around the ring like a human tumbleweed. The fighters hurl fists whenever they see an opening, but are usually rewarded for their offensive moves with a knee or heel to the pelvis. After three rounds of Fight Club Twister, it dawns on me that the Japanese fans actually appreciate the strategies and nuances of ground fighting.

The final bout is comprised of higher-level fighters who choose to battle in the upright position. Both are Japanese, of medium build, and hungry. One uses Brazilian jujitsu to complement his raw, free-form fighting maneuvers. He deftly snags his opponent into contorted leg locks, and utilizes the mat as a backstop for his opponent's cranium–force-feeding the guy one knuckle sandwich after another. Like the Pancrase guys, they're wearing head protection, but not much seems to be protecting the recipient's melon by the time the beating is over. The ref finally stops the fight halfway through the third round. The victim wobbles off the mat, his balance hindered by the baseball-sized swelling underneath his brow. We are lucky to witness such damage because fighters usually tap out before breaking an arm, cracking a rib, or blowing out a kneecap.

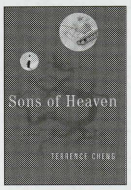
Landing somewhere between *Bloodsport* and Dance Dance Revolution, the exhibition didn't live up to my ideal Hollywood dramatization of an organized street fight. But it was a memorable experience–and I'm not the only one who's taken notice. Several "cells" have reportedly sprouted around the Osaka area, and a few more have been reported around the Aichi Prefecture.

The Japanese government has stated that rapidly declining birth rates are sending the nation's population toward extinction. The fight clubs probably don't help the situation, but at least they'll strengthen the gene pool.

+ PRINT EDITOR: PETE LEE

IN PRINT

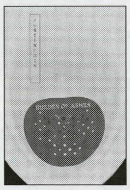
Terrence Cheng



Sons of Heaven

One of the protagonists of this richly written novel is the young man who leapt in front of the tanks at Tiananmen Square. Other main characters are his brother and Deng Xiaopeng! Playing with perspective, Cheng negotiates their voices with complete precision. This brave debut is amazing–lush with detail and brimming with brilliance. [William Morrow, 312 pp] pl

Justin Chin



Burden of Ashes

Fiction writer, poet, and performer Justin Chin continues to delight his audiences with graphically gorgeous images juxtaposed with shadows, light, and truth. It's shocking but subtle. It's beautiful, but you probably won't want to hang it up at your mom's house. If you have absolutely no idea what I'm talking about, you need this book of dynamically rich wordplay. [Alyson Books, 224 pp] pl

Aaron Cometbus

Despite Everything: A Cometbus Omnibus

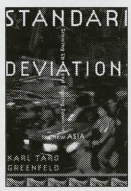
I'm partial to Aaron's writing over the contributions, comics, and interviews, but this compilation has it all. It takes you through eye-opening walking and Greyhound tours around the country, punk rock adventures, and his relationships, which always get blended in. You'll shed an occasional tear, but most of all you'll feel his nostalgia and his punk rockness. [Last Gap, 608 pp] en

Sheila Cornelius et al.

New Chinese Cinema

Exciting and quick, Cornelius takes the reader on a nice ride through many contemporary favorites–*Farewell My Concubine, Raise the Red Lantern*, and more. Cornelius analyzes how the politics of China are mirrored on film, allegorically or metaphorically. This vibrantly written reference will make a nice addition to your other books on Chinese cinema. [Wallflower, 134 pp] pl

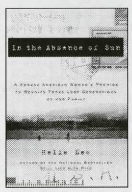
Karl Taro Greenfeld



Standard Deviations

Greenfeld's hybrid memoir and travelogue is brutally raunchy, while sensually rich with local color. There's sex and drugs, and Greenfeld does a bit of rockin' and rollin' along the way, too. It's crisp and challenging like a piece of wilted lettuce just brought back to life with water from who-knows-where. These vivid stories are exciting and transcendent. [Villard Books, 272 pp] pl

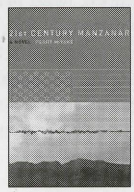
Helie Lee



In the Absence of Sun

If you've read *Still Life with Rice*, you must pick up this harrowing sequel. Lee and her father venture to North Korea to retrieve her uncle and fulfill a promise to her grandmother. What happens, you'll have to discover on your own. Extremely well-crafted and beautifully told, this true story reads like a novel with each of the heroes still around to tell the tale. [Harmony Books, 352 pp] pl

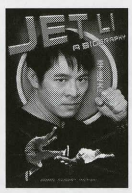
Perry Miyake



21st Century Manzanar

This debut novel by playwright Perry Miyake constructs a haunting view of Los Angeles in a World War III atmosphere that brings back horrific images of WWII. At the same time, Miyake appropriates these images in a dynamic critique of present-day L.A. This novel will make you think and it will make you appreciate life and the power of words. [Really Great Books, 396 pp] pl

James Robert Parish



Jet Li: A Biography

Loaded with 30 color and black-and-white photographs, this biography sheds a lot of light on the well-protected private life of the crossover action film star from *Once Upon a Time in China* and *Romeo Must Die*. Written sharply and concisely, the syntax and diction reflect Li's moves and films–fast, quick, exhilarating, and entertaining. [Thunder's Mouth Press, 210 pp] pl

PARASITE MUSEUM

+ WORDS & PIC BY MELANIE PHIPPS

Years ago, my friend visited the Parasitological Museum in Meguro on a junior high school field trip. She described it as "a creepy old Japanese house filled with worms as big as snakes!" I had visions of a four-foot-tall, chronically hunched, octogenarian guide leading me through dingy tatami rooms lined with archaic tanks of python-sized worms floating in crusty, yellow formaldehyde.

But, like most of Tokyo, Dr. Kamegai Satoru's collection of parasites has been overhauled since the days when my friend visited it in her Sailor Moon school uniform. The museum, which first opened in 1953, has been relocated to the modern and extremely sterile office-style building in Meguro that I investigated.

The first floor contains only a few dry and dull-looking parasites in addition to a map of Japan that lights up the locations of particular parasites when you press the corresponding button. It was reassuring to learn that Tokyo is merely exposed to Gnathostomiasis spinigerum, otherwise known as "creeping disease." The second floor is a little more satisfyingly gruesome, with photographs of deformed human hosts and the python of my visions–an 8.8-meter-long tapeworm removed from the intestine of a man. Unfortunately, the brochure is entirely in Japanese, but the parasite key rings and postcards in the souvenir corner more than make up for the lack of factual information.

The museum appears to attract mostly youths and couples. The only people I saw were sweaty young school boys pressing their sticky fingers against the display cases and giggling couples taking endless photographs of the legendary tapeworm.

So what I thought would be an adventurous chapter of an Edogawa Rampo story turned out to be a 30-minute gawk at some dried worms and fish that grow in human livers. The museum was interesting and a little unsettling, and it generally made me feel queasy and shivery–a nice change from having those same responses to Shibuya girls, salarymen and combini food every day.

+ BY GR STAFF

ROBOTMATL

CATCH THE FEVER

Just read the Letters page in issue 25. Reader Gregg Tavares' letter really bothered me: (1) It was disturbing to see a person make such an effort to dissect your 88 list. What was the point? Arguing for argument's sake? (2) The tone of his letter was a bit unsettling. Something not quite kosher about it. (3) He pats himself on the back for being so knowledgeable. So you're a traveled man, Gregg. So what? (4) He pats you on the back after lashing out about Asians needing to think like Americans so we can "go a long ways toward making America a better place." His letter was kinda like giving someone a flower basket full of bees. Nice Trojan horse, Gregg.

I find this typical of some non-Asians and Asiaphiles (is that a word?). They're eager to embrace certain parts of Asian culture that spark their interests (fetishes). But when there is any mention of Asians actually asserting themselves, they are uncomfortable and sometimes raise a fuss. Is it so bad recognizing the Yeti as Asian? It was meant as humor anyways, right? Is it so bad being proud of this factoid? Are we un-American because of that? Chill out. Just because we make note of certain Asian facts, persons, or milestones doesn't mean we're on a Yellow Power kick. There's nothing wrong with celebrating one's identity and recognizing things Asian. We're still Americans. Are you gonna tear into a Scottish American for acknowledging the Loch Ness monster is Scottish? Final word: If you don't want your feelings hurt by Asian Americans, don't read magazines geared towards things Asian and Asian-American.
Johnny R.

EARLY THANKSGIVING

The new issue was a fun read... I didn't know Van Halen was part Asian. Is their mom a quarter Japanese or Chinese or something?
D'Angelo

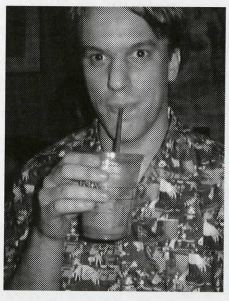
Thanks for representing Asians and Asian pop culture in such a cool, non-exploitative way! I love the magazine and the store. Both are thoroughly entertaining and I look forward to seeing what other things you've got going. I sure wish GR was around when I was in elementary school.
Teresa Chang

I've been a reader since issue 12 and I wanted to give GR much thanks. Thanks for putting Money Mark and Margaret Cho on the cover. Thanks for the Food and Sex issues. Thanks for not taking ad dollars from Corporate America. Thanks for "88 Things You Should Know." (And for folks who don't know, well, now you know.) Thanks for not wasting ink on import car shows, gangsta rap, and APEX. Thanks for meeting deadlines by surviving on ramen and not wasting $10 million like *A. Magazine*.
Jeff Hron

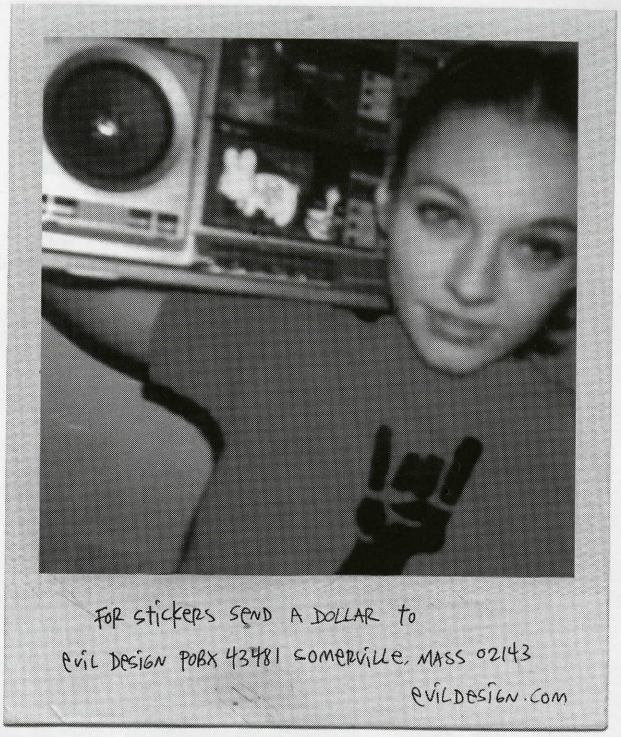
SHOP PROPS

I've utilized your Sawtelle store for the killer "Mystified" McGee shirt, Domokun stickers, an *Optic Nerve* shirt, and a few comics. The store is great. The wood paneling is classic and the selection is curated well. It really conveys the sensibility of your mag. Last time we were in there, there were these cool handmade stuffed animals. Love 'em, though they are out of our price range. Consumerism may be the downfall of mankind, but as long as the GR store is open I'm happy to contribute.
Justin Goldwater

DEATH OF A ROBOT



On June 1, 2002, a member of the Giant Robot online community was slain in Korea. Shagwerks (who also went by his first name, Damon) was a frequent Giant Robot Lounge visitor who earned "Senior Robot" status with 671 posts. Born in 1972 and working as a translator in Korea, he brought a different perspective to the Lounge. Damon was happy-go-lucky kid—and he seemed to have his share of getting lucky. Investigation of his murder is still under way, and he will be missed in the real and virtual worlds. A memorial thread can be reached at www.giantrobot.com/forums/showthread.php3?threadid=9199



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+ PIX COURTESY OF RYAN MCGINNESS

DREAM GARDENERS

+ BY ERIC NAKAMURA

I LIKE TO THINK OF THE GARDEN AS THE BEGINNING OF LIFE, WHERE THE FIRST SPROUTING IS THE SIGN OF THE FIRST FORM OF LIFE AND ALL LIFE FORMS EXTEND THEMSELVES FROM THERE.

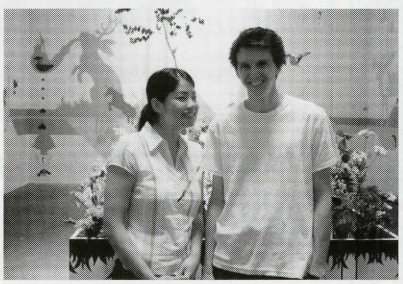
Ryan McGinness is a well-known graphic designer whose work shows up in books, on T-shirts, and on skateboard decks. But he is also a conceptual artist. Ryan's latest show is a collaboration with Julia Chiang, a sculptor who works with found objects as well as her own free-form art. *Dream Garden* opened in July at New York City's Deitch Projects.

GR: Why is your collaboration called *Dream Garden*?
JC: We've attempted to create an environment where "all of our dreams come true." I think the combination of the imagery and form really brings these elements to life, so it's no longer just in one's imagination.
RM: I initially proposed *In for a Quick Garden*, which I saw on Led Zeppelin's manager's T-shirt in the background of a fuzzy black-and-white photo during the band's *Behind the Music* on VH1. But then Jeffrey [Deitch] suggested the more straightforward *Dream Garden*. I thought that his suggestion was a lot like destiny.

GR: Can you explain the show's concept?
RM: We really wanted to create a personal yet accessible environment that reflected some of our basic themes: artificially growing love with organic and artificial materials; reality vs. fabricated and wishful memories; coming to terms with a surreal and absurd subconscious in everyday life; and presenting the fractal-influenced concept of worlds within worlds.
JC: I like to think of the garden as the beginning of life, where the first sprouting is the sign of the first form of life and all life forms extend themselves from there. In our environment, everything is connected and each form is extended into an "other." It becomes a garden that can give life to anything.

GR: What is the relationship between the drawings and the sculpture?
RM: We both wanted to create another world–or rather, our own worlds based on memories, dreams, and the subconscious, but each using our own language. The flat graphics is the language I know, and Julia communicates well with objects.
JC: We both had a strong interest in working together on creating an environment that was based on the past–whether it was from memories or childhood fantasies. In a way, I consider Ryan's paintings as environments for my objects to inhabit.

GR: How do the icons relate to the lush plant life?
RM: The idea of representing something not only from one dimension–third–in another–second–but also romanticizing and idealizing that representation is a theme that runs throughout the installation. Presenting three-dimensional symbols of things in conjunction with the real things themselves–planting fake flowers in the real dirt and grass–further complicates this contrast.
JC: Ryan's icons mimic the familiarity of a symbol, referring to something that is real. The contrast of icons or forms that are clearly artificial–plastic horses, fake flowers, hearts–growing out of or inhabiting a real environment of lush plant life is our effort to bring this *Dream Garden* to life.



GR: Is there meaning behind the relationships between each animal and its surroundings in *Dream Garden*?
JC: Definitely. I am obsessed in ways with animals and symbols that represent an ideal love. My interest lies mainly in where these ideals come from and where the fantasy of a "true love" comes from–if there even is a source. I think it comes back to this combination of nature and artificiality, where without reality there is no need to dream and fantasize.

GR: What are your opinions on the current interest in graphic design? It seems to be considered art these days.
RM: I believe, as of late, there has been a lot of naive confusion about the difference between art and design. It really is quite simple: The design industry is a services-based industry, and the art industry is a commodities-based industry. That's it. End of discussion.

GR: You have a pop culture side going on with skateboards, T-shirts, and so on. Then you have a hardcore art school side. Is this dichotomy something you recognize and care about or something you don't think about?
RM: I believe every great artist has self-consciously recognized the historical and contemporary context of his work. I want to create work which exists on all ends of the culture scale. I believe that a lot of "art" is boring and inaccessible and that a lot of "pop culture" stuff is just plain dumb and insulting. I am trying to bridge that gap.

GR: Julia, are you interested in promoting your art in pop culture arenas? It seems like there's a world of graphic art that's involved in skateboarding, advertising, and so on. Can sculpture go there, too?
JC: Definitely. I make things to share with people, so the more people that see it and experience it, the better. It's funny because I grew up in that world of skating and snowboarding, and you are constantly being immersed in imagery of all kinds. Maybe because I saw everyone doing their thing with design, I kind of went the other way, wanting to make things. I think sculpture is just a fancy word for an object, and in terms of objects, how beautiful is a newly made ramp or halfpipe? Generally these functional objects aren't viewed as art, but that's changing too–look at that bowl that was just shown at *Documenta*. I think of skating and advertisements as elements in everyday life, and I definitely think that there is room for sculpture. I guess it depends on how you define sculpture, but I can see it as a giveaway at a skate demo or as a full-on public project.

+ ILLUSTRATIONS BY RODNEY A. GREENBLAT

MATSUURA THE RAPPER

+ WORDS & PIC BY ERIC NAKAMURA

I LOVE HIP HOP, BUT THE WAY TO PRONOUNCE THE WORDS, AND HOW THEY CONNECT THE TRACKS AND THE VOICES TOGETHER–IT'S KIND OF THE DESIGN OF THE TIMES.

The Apple][+ computer from the early '80s had 48k (not megs) RAM, five-inch floppy external drives, and a hard drive that stored less information than your cell phone. For Masaya Matsuura, it was an early catalyst for his vision of integrating media. He composed music on cassette for the old Kaleidoscope program, a silent psychedelic color wheel that came with the computer. He later formed an electronic pop band called Psys (pronounced "size"), which released 10 albums, and then combined his skills to make one of the most influential music games ever–Parappa the Rapper. The youthful 41-year-old visionary video game guru sits in his hotel room with *The Simpsons* on the tube.

Masaya Matsuura's Parappa the Rapper has a bigger posse than Snoop Dog or Lil' Bow Wow.

GR: How did you get your start in music?
MM: I was not good at communicating with friends in my childhood. I loved to play alone sometimes, so I realized that I loved to listen to music and play simple instruments. One day I asked my mother for the opportunity to learn the piano. I got addicted to piano music.

GR: Why did you play alone?
MM: Kids like to play outside. I'm not so good at things physical. Many Japanese kids start baseball at 10 years old, but I'm a lefty. No one taught me to hold a bat with my left hand. Everyone told me to use the righty style backwards. That doesn't work. The glove can't fit on my right hand. These kinds of impossibilities didn't help me to play with friends. So I felt distanced.

GR: When did you start a band?
MM: I promised my mother that when I went to junior high, I would quit piano lessons. The school that I went to had a nice brass band, so I joined them. I had musical skills so they let me in, but I was assigned to the percussion. It required hard lessons using a metal stick, beating a disk for more than an hour to a metronome. It was torture. Suddenly other friends played guitars and bass and other types of rock music, so I joined many bands as a drummer.

GR: You played in a group that has 10 albums.
MM: At university, the biggest influence I had was a friend who was a musician for more than two decades. He taught me how to be a great musician. For instance, a musician has to create music like a conversation. We worked together for a few years, and we did a post-production studio. We were kind of a poor studio, so we had to earn money to keep the studio. That kind of experience made me tough as a musician. I started to create my own music. That was the start of my band. We debuted on Sony in 1984.

GR: How did you get into games?
MM: During my band period, I felt frustrated. That's because I love live shows, but I don't love to do live shows. I did computer composing style, so it's much further from the band style. Maybe the music could be much more of a living thing? I really wanted to get back that kind of sense for everybody. The interactive style would be the best way to express this sense. So I started development of our game. We never focused as a game; we aimed at just interactive music.

GR: How did you come up with Parappa the Rapper?
MM: I already knew the concept of the tool. No music fan cares if the Britney Spears sound comes from a manufacturer's synthesizer or software; everyone focuses on the sense of the music–not the tool. Consumers want to listen to the music. Creators need a tool. These kinds of differences are very important. For example, the kids who have an interest in music–maybe the parents will give them a simple musical toy. It has a pad and maybe a duck sound or chicken sound. I think that is good, but that doesn't reach to music directly. I wanted to make a much more music-oriented toy, so it's kind of a tool but much more fun. Already I decided to use rap, because rap is interesting material for everybody. Rap is meaning, human, rhythm, and sound–various aspects. The instrument sound is subtle and abstract. So rap was my focus, but our platform was PlayStation and that required graphics so I thought some characters on the screen would be good to play with. I found the character designer, Rodney, and I asked him to do the design of the characters. At the start of the development, Rodney wasn't so positive to do this project because he didn't like rap music so much.

GR: Did you like rap?
MM: I'm not simply a fan of hip hop. Of course, I love hip hop, but the way to pronounce the words, and how they connect the tracks and the voices together–it's kind of the design of the times. This kind of design makes me feel very interested. It's a little different than listening to normal types of music.

GR: How did you choose the opposite, hard rock, for the sequel?
MM: After Parappa, I thought this way of thought would match to different types of music. The first one was rock music. Maybe you can easily imagine the old-style rock music, where a guitarist and vocalist do a call and response. That was the original idea. With words and languages, it's easier to do a call and response, but a guitarist and singer can communicate by playing instruments and singing like a regular conversation. It was hard because at first I wrote the phrase for the singer, and the guitarist played the phrase after the singer's track was recorded. It doesn't sound like a conversation. It's not live improvising; it's too easy for the guitarist to play along with a melody. So we found it was not good. We did the opposite style: We gave a track to the guitarist, he played what he liked, and we chopped it into small pieces and shuffled it and made a style.

GR: Did you write all of the music?
MM: Always I write, but not the lyrics.

<CONTINUED ON PAGE 78>

©RG/IP/SCP/SVW/CX

UmJammerLammy

Cathy Pillar

Captain Fussenpepper

Lammy

Teriyaki Yoko

Chief Puddle

Rammy

Katy on bass

Mar-san

Paul Chuck

PaRappaTheRapper 2

Matt

Paula

Parappa's Dad

Sunny's Dad

Groober

Gaster

Shrimp

Burger Master Beard

Hair Octopus (after)

Lost Alien

Pinto and Uee

Moosesha

Noodle Master

Hair Octopus (before)

Guru Ant

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+ PIC COURTESY OF SLEATER-KINNEY

SLEATER-KINNEY

+ BY ERIC NAKAMURA

WE DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO STAY FRIENDS. THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING. THE MUSIC STEMS FROM THERE.

Carrie Brownstein, Corin Tucker, and Janet Weiss still want to be your Joey Ramone.

Some people refer to Sleater-Kinney as the best band in the world. It's a big title to live up to but, as close friends first and band members second, their chemistry is unequaled and their potential is limitless. *One Beat*, the band's sixth and latest album, showcases a more sophisticated brand of punk rock than previous works–complete with keyboards, horns, male backing vocals, and even a theremin. However, the foundation remains Corin Tucker's distinct and high-pitched vocals, Carrie Brownstein's ripping guitars, and Janet Weiss's effortless drums. Waiting for Corin and Carrie to arrive for practice at her Portland home's basement, Janet broke from her schedule to talk about the Sleater-Kinney bond as friends and workmates.

GR: What are you doing now?
JW: Interviews, but we have practice in 20 minutes.

GR: I didn't realize that you were on hiatus for all of 2001.
JW: I'm in another band [Quasi], and we made a record and did some touring. I was busy with that during the Sleater-Kinney time off. There was a whole year when we didn't get together and play. That was self-imposed. Corin had a baby, so she was doing a lot more than us during that time.

GR: Was there burnout?
JW: I don't know if that's the right word, but we were definitely ready for time away from the band to re-energize. You have to remind yourself what's important about life and important about playing music. The time away made us appreciate each other, the band, and the special relationship we have.

GR: How do you define success?
JW: Doing exactly what we want to do, getting along, liking each other, and keeping total control over the music and what's related to it.

GR: How do you describe your new music?
JW: It's more collaborative. It's always been collaborative, but this is the most. We had more time to work on these songs. Carrie moved to Portland, so we had relaxed practices where we

could work on ideas, hang out, and walk down the street and get coffee. The state of things was really good during the writing process. I think that helped to encourage collaboration.

GR: Does playing on bigger stages affect how you write songs?
JW: We've always been conscious of the live set. Playing live is a big focus of the band; we do consider it sometimes. This is the only record that we can play every song live, and probably will.

GR: When you drum, you don't have "drummer's face." What are you thinking about?
JW: I hope not; I hate that face. I'm thinking about playing. On a good night, I'm not thinking about anything. Thinking is detrimental to a live show. Usually I'm thinking about playing something cool, throwing in something improvisational that's not scripted. I'm trying to make the experience a unique one–not playing the exact same thing as the record, to add a spontaneous feel. I think I weeded out my drummer face a long time ago.

GR: Corin and Carrie are a little younger than you. How do you all get along musically?
JW: They are more musically mature than most their age. They require someone to have their shit together. They write super fast; they have this dialogue that's totally fluent. For someone less experienced, it's hard to keep up. Like the flow in practice–even though they are younger, I'm still challenged musically.

GR: Does the age difference affect you on tour?
JW: We're all really good friends. There's no age thing. Corin has a baby, and that forces you to grow up real quick. They're mature girls. I'm a little immature.

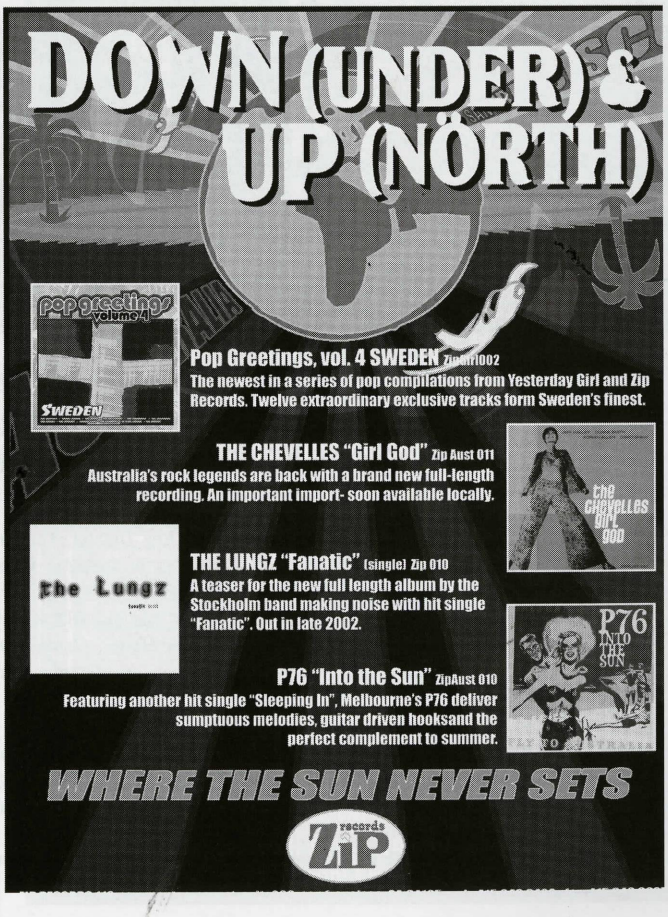
GR: I know Riot Grrrl is an old term, but does it still apply to Sleater-Kinney?
JW: I would consider myself an appreciator. Corin was most involved in the movement. I think the band was born out of that time and still retains a lot of the ideals. We try to retain the spirit. I wasn't as involved in it. I listened to the records and appreciated what they said. I think it's important not to leave behind important things like feminist politics.

GR: What do you think about dude bands these days?
JW: We don't spin the same circles. We don't do European festivals. We don't enjoy that kind of music. I think the only thing we can do is present an alternative to that. That's the point of being in those [mainstream] magazines. If there were a bunch of other good female bands in those magazines in a respectful way, it wouldn't feel as important to get out there and present an alternative for kids. As of now, it's all dudes.

GR: I thought there would now be more bands like yours than like Limp Bizkit after the early '90s music scene.
JW: I think a lot of it has to do with aggression. When you're a teenager, it's important to listen to music that your parents wouldn't listen to. It might convey the aggressions you have. The guys tap into that, and they've made the record companies money. So it encourages more.

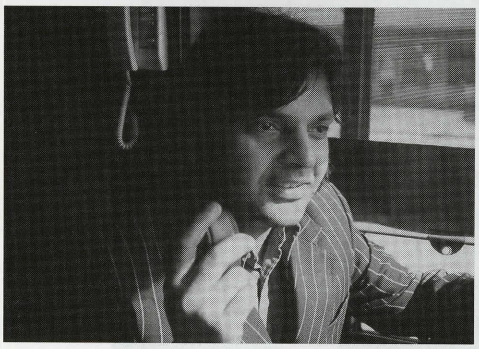
GR: What do you think about being played on commercial radio?
JW: I don't think there's any chance we're going to get on it, but I think they'd ghettoize us on a specialty show like "1 a.m. Northwest Rock." It falls into the category of mainstream press. For me I can't decide. Maybe it's better not to be mixed into this crap at all. Maybe there's not really the chance that some kid is going to hear it and respond, and maybe it can't really reach people in that fashion. The positive side is maybe there's going to be a handful of people who don't have access to the underground channels who'll hear it, and it'll mean more to them than all the Korn songs they've heard. That's what you hope for. I'm not sure how that plays out in reality.

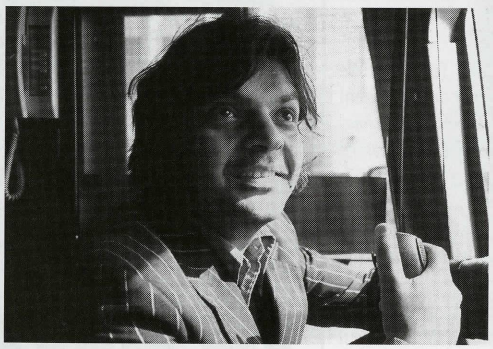
GR: Does the band have long-term plans?
JW: We go record by record. We do everything we can to stay friends. That's the most important thing. The music stems from there. We made this record we're proud of, and we're excited to play live. We're still having fun and we'd stop if we weren't. With the baby, things are different. It's like we're starting over, learning how to do this again.



CORNERSHOP

+ WORDS & PIX BY MARTIN WONG





WHEN WE STARTED MAKING MUSIC, IT WAS UNHEARD OF FOR ASIANS TO BE ON A STAGE IF IT WASN'T WITHIN A RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT. AND TO BE SINGING IN ENGLISH AND ALSO TO BE HOLDING GUITARS WAS SACRILEGE.

Lounging in Cornershop's tour bus outside the El Rey Theater, Tjinder Singh prefaces and punctuates each answer with time for thought. Clearly, he prefers to let his indie-rock hybrid of Britpop and Indian melodies do the talking. While the London-based writer, producer, singer, and guitarist is quiet and caustic in conversation, his band's long-awaited new album, *Handcream for a Generation*, is a fervent and funky mix of sparkling grooves, hypnotic beats, and revolutionary ideas.

GR: What's it like being back on the road after four years? Has anything changed?
TS: A lot of things have changed within the industry, and a lot of things have gone for the worse in terms of major labels–which we're not on–taking a change in directorship. That has had an effect with even small labels. We're on an independent, but it feels like we're on a major label sometimes because the procedures are the same.

GR: You've always been on a smaller label, right?
TS: We started in the same town where we were studying for our degrees with the label we've always been on, Wiija records. We got to work right from scratch. We've had to work harder in England than we have in any other country because they don't like the Paki.

GR: But it's the Asian aspects that define the band and set it apart. Can you explain the appeal of the Indian musical elements to someone who might not understand them?
TS: People get into the melodies whether they know them or not. With Punjabi, obviously they wouldn't know it, but it's melodies they get into, and music. So there's quite a lot of different factors as to why people might want to get into it–whether it's the politics, the independence, or the use of different sounds within different tracks.

GR: Have there been any other bands combining the types of sounds that you use?
TS: Well, I don't think there has been anyone. When we first started out, we were with the Riot Grrrl movement in England. We were the only all-male band to be a part of that. Really, those were the groups we had an affinity with in terms of politics, in terms of approach, attitude, and references to music. Those bands only lasted two years or a year. So we've found ourselves on our own.

GR: To what do you attribute your continued energy, interest, and excitement toward music?
TS: I have to prove a point. I think we're not going to be a band that's big until the year 2015, when people realize what they've lost.

GR: People don't appreciate Cornershop now?
TS: Not as much as they should, no. When a group like us starts out, people just say "politics" and stop after that. But they don't realize we like music, we buy music, and we know what music's about. We like the way that we've got control over everything we do, and the way that we do it is very specific. They might stop with politics but we used The Automator [producer Dan Nakamura] as early as 1994 in Clinton [the side project of Singh and Cornershop partner Ben Ayres]. We've made a lot of clever moves and worked with the right people from the start.

GR: Does Cornershop get a good response from Asian people in England? Do they recognize your band's accomplishments?
TS: We get a healthy response. I think the biggest thing in the Asian community seems to be the avenues that have been opened up–not that they'd want to go into music–but in whatever field they want, and that's good. When we started making music, it was unheard of for Asians to be on a stage if it wasn't within a religious environment. And to be singing in English and also to be holding guitars was sacrilege. So, really, we can't all of a sudden turn around and say, "Yeah, we really want a lot of Asians to be into us," because that's not been the way it's evolved.

GR: What about that Asian Underground scene in England that followed you?
TS: We got ripped off by scenes like the Asian Underground. Obviously, we don't care for scenes. The only reason why I mentioned the Riot Grrrl movement is because it's the only way to define it, given the passage of time. But the logos were nicked, the ideas were nicked, the things that were on the independent label were then being ripped off by the major labels. That's how these things are done. That's unfortunate for us, but it's also good for us because people know we've been ripped off.

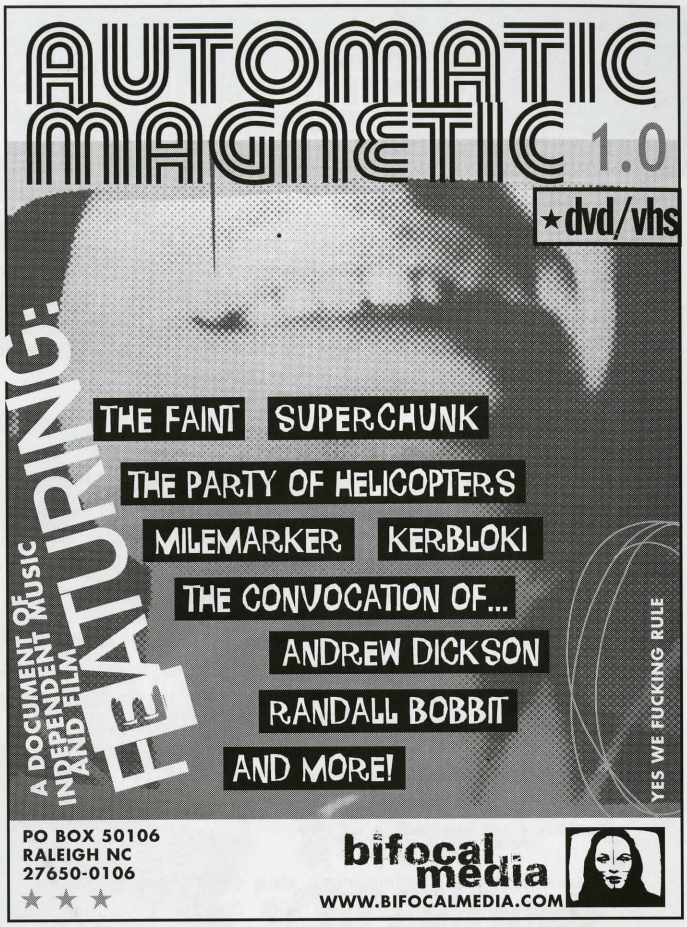
GR: The underground is always the originator of new ideas.
TS: The proper underground, but if you say you're in an underground and you're on major labels, then you're talking shit.

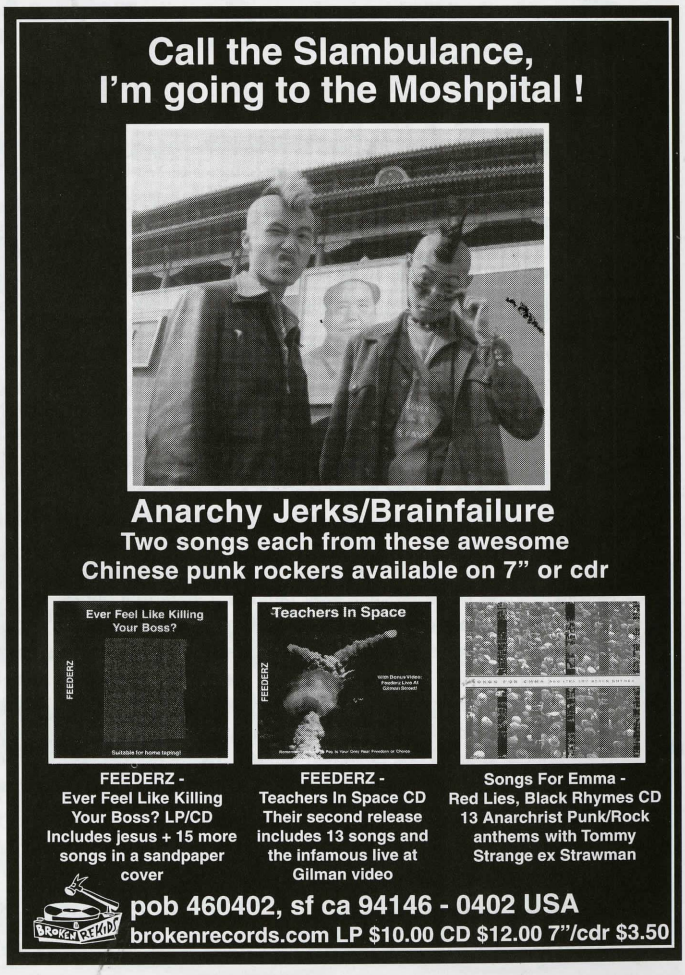
GR: Many Asian people in America don't seem to care about Asian things. Do you ever get that feeling about England?
TS: No, I don't, because we do have enough Asians on board. Then again, I never really think about that. If I thought about it, then I wouldn't do anything. If you didn't start off with them and they're on board now, that's great. If anyone's on board then it's very good. And if they change their minds, that's even better. Not with glee or malice–it's just good that people change their minds, and a lot of people have done that.

GR: Do you see your music changing the world outside the dance floor, like in your song about "people power in the disco hour"?
TS: You know, really I just try to do a different track every time. So I don't really think about that. I just want to make sure it's interesting to me and therefore interesting to other people. I don't really worry about how people see it.

GR: Are you as stoked about music now as you were when you started?
TS: I've never really been stoked with music. It's my lack of stoking that actually led me into the industry, because I thought that A&Rs were making bad decisions for the public and that I could do it better.

GR: Is yours a slow-burn approach to changing the music industry?
TS: No, it's not slow burn. It's quick burn because I'm not in the industry to be working within the industry. I'm in the industry to do anything but work within the industry.





BEIJING CALLING

+ WORDS & PIX BY ANNA SOPHIE LOEWENBERG

"WHEN PEOPLE SEE ME IN THE STREET, THEY RARELY BELIEVE I'M CHINESE," GREEN-HAIRED GAO YANG TELLS ME LATER. "WHEN THEY ASK ME WHERE I'M FROM, I JUST SAY MARS."

I moved from California to the People's Republic of China to learn Chinese, teach English, and find out what was really going on in Beijing. What I found was a new brand of cultural revolution that changed the youth of Asia's most populous, ancient, and often controversial nation–the birth of punk rock in China.

ANGEL BAR, 1996

Within weeks of arriving in China, I pick my way through a dirty alley past a vegetable market, karaoke bars, and massage parlors. That's when I see three rude young men playing their first disjointed, unrehearsed set in front of the Hawaiian tiki-room facade at Angel Bar. The band's name is 69–a number drummer Gao Yang later tells me is both the most tumultuous year of the Cultural Revolution and a sexual position. They guzzle beer and curse in Beijing gutter slang during their original and fast-paced set until the bar manager kicks them out. I think their sound is great, but even the Chinese rocker crowd hasn't heard of punk, which would soon be transliterated in Mandarin as peng ke.

"When people see me in the street, they rarely believe I'm Chinese," green-haired Gao Yang tells me later. "When they ask me where I'm from, I just say Mars."

We become friends, trading music while 69 sharpens its set, combining witty political lyrics with Cultural Revolution melodies on speed. The guys in 69 also teach me gutter slang, making mine the dirtiest foreign female mouth in the PRC.

STORM BAR, 1997

In 1997, 69 is joined by some local kids from around Beijing who start a NOFX-influenced band, Reflector, and a Rancid-influenced band, Brain Failure, singing songs like "Anarchy in the PRC." In 1998, a lanky kid enters the Storm Bar wearing a T-shirt that reads "God is gua." God is a melon? Eventually, Shen Yue explains that he meant to write "God is gay," and starts the Oi!-influenced band Anarchy Boys, singing "Our Minds Have Been Eaten by the Dogs."

A handful of guys including Gao Yang, Guo Feng, Yejing Jing, Li Peng, Tian Yue, and Xiao Rong were establishing themselves as the musical power behind China's first punk bands, starting at Angel Bar, then Club X, Here and Now, Storm, and Scream Club (which is located in the same alley as Angel Bar). Sharing one guitar, they play to Chinese businessmen, empty chairs, and anyone who will listen until the manager kicks them offstage.

Getting to know these kids and their families, I learn that punks like Gao Yang are part of the first generation of Chinese since the 1949 Communist Revolution that doesn't have its future clearly mapped out. They are coming of age at the same time that China is coming of age in the world economy. They were born in the wake of Deng Xiaoping's reforms and the 1979 one-child policy. The 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre occurred while they were young children, occupying a mythical and terrifying place in their consciousness. Mao and Cultural Revolution iconography compete for cultural power with the Sex Pistols, *Pulp Fiction*, and Levi's 501s. Most of the Beijing punks I meet come from broken homes, are high school dropouts, and aren't afraid to say "Cao!" (Fuck it!) to conservative Chinese society. "Our music is simple, but we have to be smart about our lyrics and influence other young people because as individual Chinese, we don't have any power," says Liang Wei, lead singer of 69.

BUS BAR, 1998

I write a scene report for *Maximum Rocknroll*, and produce China's first punk 7" record, *Long Live Punk*, with French indie label Tiananmen '89 Records. Other foreign kids from Europe and America, who grew up in the punk scenes in their own countries, bring their do-it-yourself ethic. Texas-born Web designer David O'Dell promotes shows and plays for Underbaby and later, Brain Failure.

In the spring of 1998, Italian student Tina Pedone jump-starts China's first bilingual punk zine, *Building Up*. We organize the zine at the Bus Bar–a hangout built by Beijing kid Liu Gang using three abandoned buses.

Liang Wei, the singer for 69, adapts Cultural Revolution propaganda posters and phrases for the cover. Li Peng, who rarely writes lyrics in favor of playing guitar, contributes a torn page from his address book that he calls "Punk Diary." Li writes, "Name: Punk; Address: Wherever I can crash; Business Tel. No.: Impossible; Telex No.: That's a dream!; Medical Card Number: Wait to die when sick; Other Important Numbers: 69." Like other Beijing punks, Li Peng lives off the RMB 40-80 (US$5-10) he makes playing in bars.

SCREAM CLUB, 1998

On a dank summer night Liang Wei is celebrating his 23rd birthday, and the guys from 69, Reflector, Underbaby, Brain Failure, and Anarchy Boys are restless and ready to play at Scream Club. They are decked-out in leather and chains, grabbing skateboards and leaning against the front of the club where everyone is drinking Yanjing beer, eating sunflower seeds, and placing bets on whether the chicks in tonight's newcomer band will be pretty. Me? I'm ready to catch a girl punk band–something I've never seen in China.

Anarchy Boys singer Shen Yue invited Wang Yue's band to play at Scream when he met her at a pirated-CD stall earlier that week. The club, built to accommodate 50-some patrons, is a sold-out sweatbox of Chinese boys by the time the three girls make it inside. It reeks of piss and stale beer. The band hesitates until Shen hollers, "Well, are you going to play or not?"

Wang Yue's face is powdered vampire white and her short hair is spiked. She borrows a guitar from Brain Failure and climbs on the cramped stage with her high school girlfriends Yang Fan and Yi Li Na. Kids are shouting encouraging phrases like "Tai niubi le!" (Totally cow-pussy!) at the girls, which means "You're awesome!" in Beijing slang. They stand between dilapidated amplifiers, a drum set held together by tape, and ink drawings of a classical waterfall painting and Kurt Cobain–both by club owner Lu Bo.

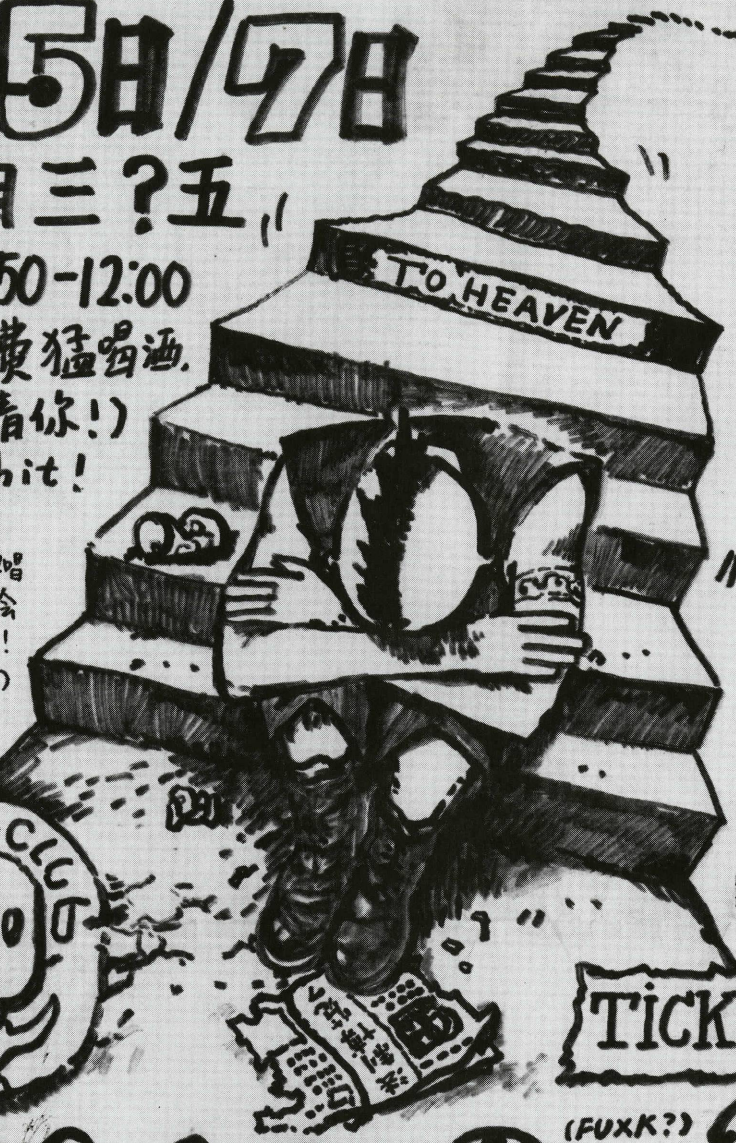
"We don't have very many songs," Wang says softly into the microphone. But that's an overstatement because they don't have *any* songs. I watch from the front row as the girls start with a simple exchange of shaky power chords. Then Wang Yue cranks her mouth open and starts screaming. Some of the guys leave and others start laughing, but Wang doesn't stop until three songs later when she announces, "We are Hang on the Box."

"I didn't really have any idea what I was going to play," Wang admits afterward. "I just got onstage and started doing what I imagined a punk would do."

Like most Chinese teenagers studying for college entrance exams, 19-year-old Wang hadn't heard of punk rock before she came to Scream. "I had never been to a punk club and I didn't actually know how to play guitar," she says. "But when I got to the show, I was completely shocked. I thought this group of young people going crazy was totally niubi. I had never seen anything like it."

8月5日/7日
星期三?五
晚上9:50-12:00
你可以免费猛喝酒.
(只要有人请你!)
Shit! Shit!

*本店需求民谣弹唱歌手(1-2人),有会说的请来联系!(每项每人约50元)



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母即下:沈月
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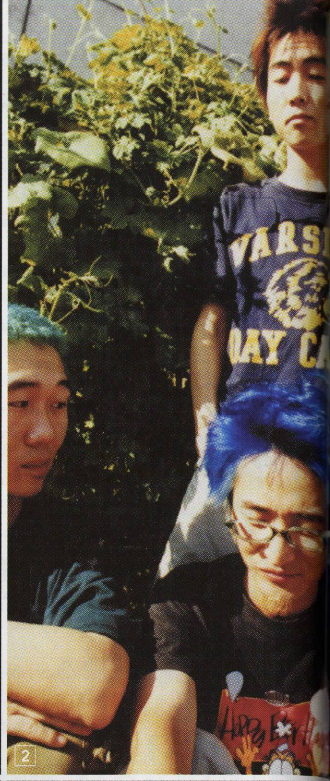
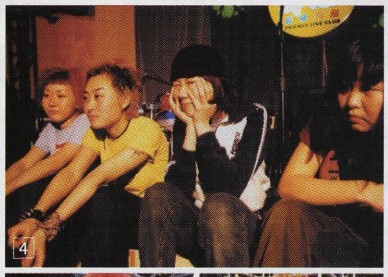
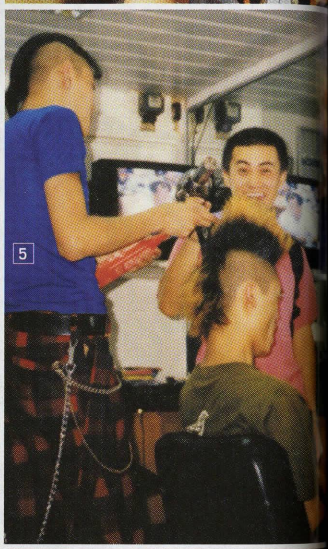
[嚎叫俱乐部]演出系列之~"别再逼我了!"
[SCREAM-CLUB] THE LIVE SERIES ~ "DON'T FORCE ME! FUKK!"

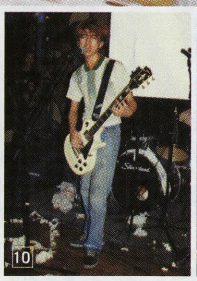
8月5日/脑泡/69/A-BOY and man.
SCREAM-CLUB ↔ "反光镜"乐队
8月7日/无信仰宝贝/梦魇/体液
Never Mind! This is a Cazzy Show!

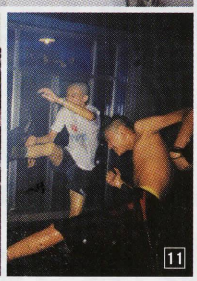
地址如上图.你乘375到语言学院南门下车,然后向西走第一个路口左拐就到.
SCREAM-CLUB致力倡导前卫文化.有相关事宜请68582288呼7127.

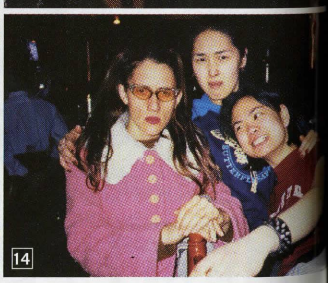












1. Xiao Rong sings for Brain Failure at Scream, 1999.

2. Reflector: Guo Feng, Tian Jianhua, Ye Jingying.

3. Shen Yue, Tu Qiang, Liu Weimin, Anna Sophie Loewenberg, and Xiao Rong eat cake with chopsticks at the crash pad on Anna Sophie's birthday, 1998.

4. Hang on the Box: Shen Jing, Wang Yue, Yang Fan, Yi Lina, 2000.

5. "Just let us borrow your hair dryer!" Shen Yue and Li Peng fix up Xiao Rong's mohawk in a Scream Club alley salon before a show, 1998.

6. Wang Yue is an extra on the set of the Levi's commercial, 2000.

7. Li Peng stars in the Levi's commercial, 2000.

8. A Hong Kong brother, Gao Yang, Shen Yue, and Xiao Rong on vacation in Yangshuo, 1998.

9. Anarchy Boys: Wan Ming, Tian Yue, Shen Yue, and Li Peng wear "Wuliao Jundui" and "Beijing Punx" T-shirts, 1999.

10. Gao Wei, singer of Underbaby, Gao Yang's older brother, and the grandaddy of Chinese punk, at Sunflower Club, 1997.

11. Song Ning and Shen Yue splash in a rainstorm during a Scream show, 1999.

12. Li Peng and Xiao Rong "fei gao le," 1997.

13. Xiao Rong and Tu Qiang are still in high school, but they spend their weekends at the Here and Now Bar, 1997.

14. Anna Sophie, Li Jiayi, and Sabay at Friend's Live Club, 2000.

15. Tian Jianhua, Gao Yang, Shen Yue, Tian Yue, Ye Jingying, and Guo Feng chill at the punk crash pad, 1998.

16. Guo Feng gives Li Peng a barbed-wire anklet tattoo at the crash pad, 1998.

17. Sabay speaks the international language, 2000.

18. Beijing kid Li Yong sits in the courtyard of a used-clothing shop he opens with Gao Yang, 2000.

19. Anna Sophie Loewenberg, Xiao Rong, and Shen Yue watch the sunrise after an all-night rave on the Great Wall of China, 1998.

20. Bieniu: Anna Sophie Loewenberg, Qiu Zubing, and Sabay play on Halloween, 1999.

21. Members of Swedish band International Noise Conspiracy talk to Shen Yue outside of Scream Club during their China tour, 1999.

22. Xiao Rong poses with Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen), 1998.

23. Sabay sings, "You're my definition of testosterone," 1999.

24. Wang Yue poses under Chairman Mao at Guanghuamen recording studio, 2000.

25. Underbaby's Gao Wei on guitar, 1996.

26. Hang on the Box: Wang Yue, Shen Jing, Yang Fan, Yi Lina, 2000.

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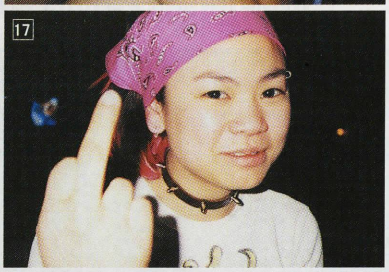
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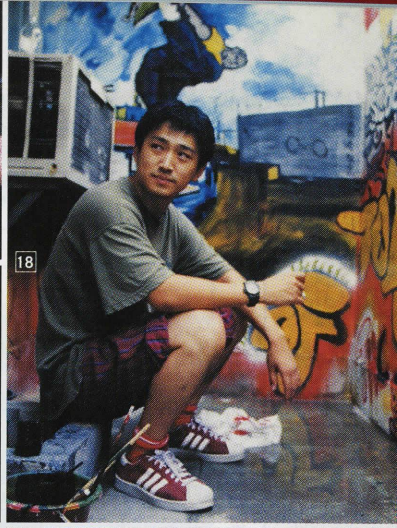
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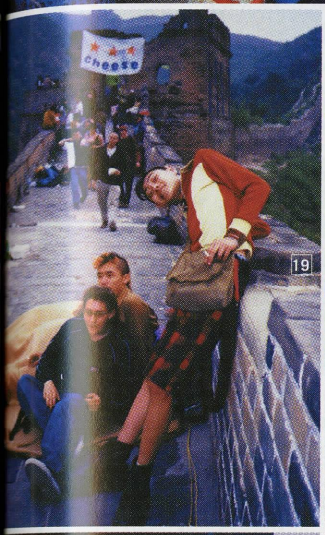
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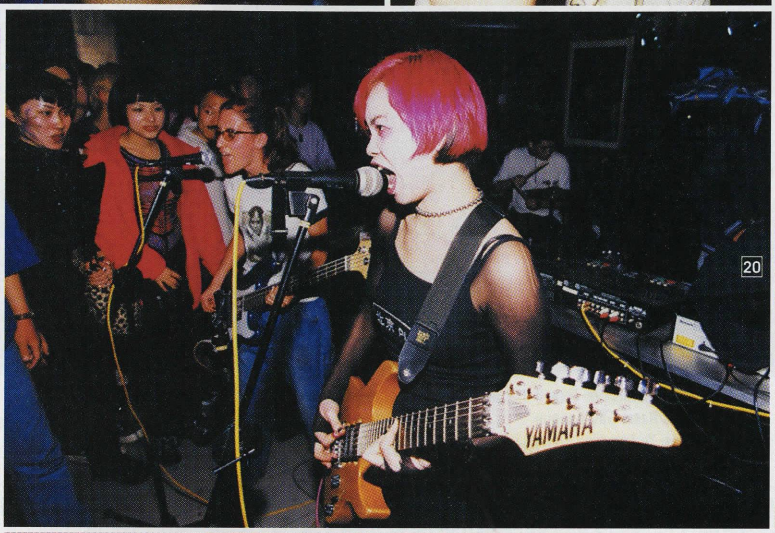
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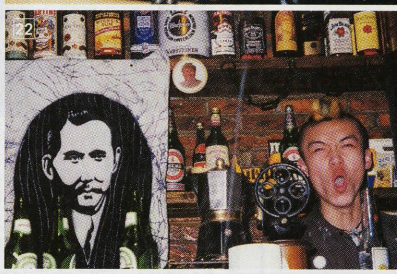
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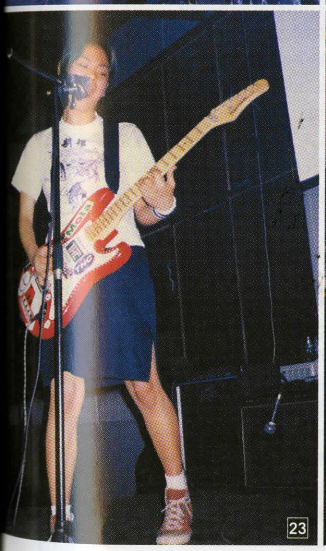
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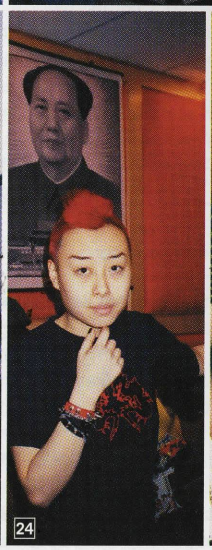
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PUNK CRASH PAD, 1998

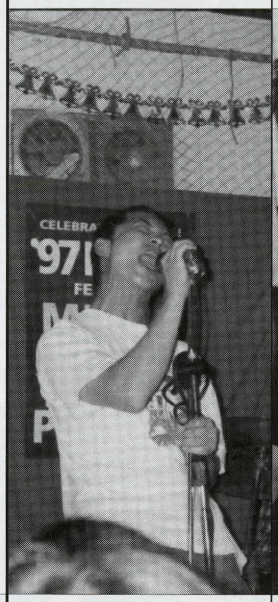
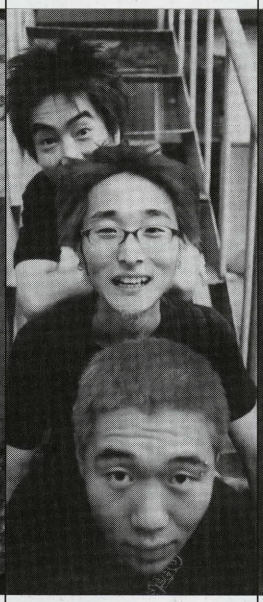
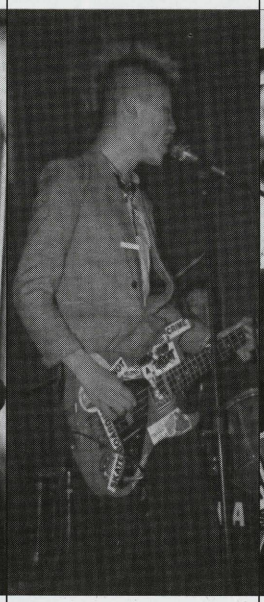
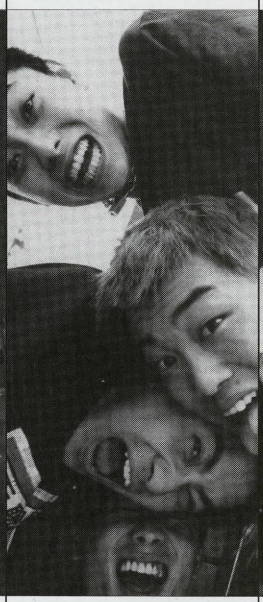
Our one-bedroom tenement has no stove, hot water, or telephone, but it is where we make T-shirts, stickers, zines, flyers, and disseminating phrases such as "Xiang Shui Wan Sui" (No gods, no masters) to the Chinese public. Instead of waiting for the authorities to censor his lyrics, Shen Yue records China's first do-it-yourself punk demo for the Anarchy Boys with the rest of us singing backup on a two-track for about RMB 80 (US$10). The bottom of the cassette reads "fei mai pin" (free sample) so Shen won't be accused of selling underground political music. Shen sells the "free sample" at shows for RMB 10 (US$1.25) and it isn't long before Brain Failure and Reflector are recording their own demos and doing the same thing.

Despite political lyrics and grass-roots organizing, bands face little government interference. Shen Yue posts Anarchy Boys flyers freely around Beijing's University District and punks are more concerned about drug busts in nightclubs than government restrictions at shows.

Most bands share one guitar. There aren't any cool skateboard or band stickers in Beijing, so Xiao Rong and Li Peng of Brain Failure decorate the communal guitar with cutouts from OB tampons and Derby cigarette boxes. Mohawks, ska, and studded belts haven't yet hit Beijing, so the Ramones are still the ultimate punk rock heroes. Kids sport long stringy hair, tight jeans, and Chinese-made Converse knockoffs. Reflector guitarist Guo Feng administers homemade tattoos and piercings for anyone who dares.

On Halloween, Xiao Rong plays a Brain Failure set dressed as a wounded soldier on the Long March, wearing his father's Mao suit and bandages made of toilet paper

THE FIRST WAVE OF CHINESE PUNK

Band	69 (Liu Shi Jiu), est. 1996	Reflector (Fan Guang Jing), est. 1997	Brain Failure (Nao Zhuo), est. 1997	Anarchy Boys (Wu Zheng Fu Zhu Yi Nan Hai), est. 1998	Hang on the Box (Gua Zai Hezi Shang), est. 1998
					
Founders	**Vocals:** Liang Wei **Guitar:** Li Peng **Bass:** Tian Yue **Drums:** Gao Yang	**Vocals/Guitar:** Guo Feng **Vocals/Bass:** Tian Jianhua **Drums:** Ye Jingying	**Vocals/Guitar:** Xiao Rong **Bass:** Tu Qiang **Drums:** Li Peng	**Vocals:** Shen Yue **Guitar:** Li Peng **Bass:** Wan Ming **Drums:** Tian Yue	**Vocals:** Wang Yue **Guitar:** Yang Fan **Bass:** Yi Lina **Drums:** Shen Jing
Influences	Rage Against the Machine, Sex Pistols	NOFX, Propagandhi, Lagwagon	Ramones, New York Dolls, Rancid, Descendents, Specials, Operation Ivy	Hard Skins, Suicide Machines, Oi!	Bikini Kill, Roxy Music
Fuel	Beer	Weed and sunflower seeds	Mutton testicles and onion pancakes	Speed and spicy noodles	Ecstacy and Korean BBQ
Look	Chinese army and navy wear, shaggy hair, chain wallets	Blue hair, skater shorts, Vans shoes	Converse high-tops, sport coats, mohawks, Mao badges	Shaved heads, suspenders, plaid bondage pants, Doc Martens, studded belts and wristbands	Pink hair, tight Levis, dog collars
Motto	"Cao ni da ye" I'll fuck your grandfather	"Wo fei gao le" I'm so high	"Guo yi gua'r" Suck my dick	"Qu ni ma" Fuck your mother	"Xi sun'r" Play with grandsons (Pick up on guys)
Hit Lyrics	**One Generation** We can be like our fathers and hide away But we can also be more brave than our fathers When our fathers were children They said hope was just like the red sun We can also walk down this revolutionary road This generation	**Scream Club** I always want to go To this happy place It's called Scream Club After every show There are cute girls waiting You can talk with them about anything Everybody come sing Mosh, laugh, fuck shit up!	**Anarchy in the P.R.C.** Our country doesn't have traffic laws Our country doesn't have a common language Our country doesn't have heroes Our country doesn't have Premiere Li Peng Our citizens don't know what money is Our citizens never went to school Our citizens don't know what hardship is We will never again shout: "Socialism is great!" Anarchy in the PRC	**Our Rights Have Been Eaten by the Dogs** You rob us of our dignity But we can't speak out Because we don't want to live the rest of our lives in prison China is close to robbed blind by you China is close to ruined by you Wait until you finally understand The movement already will have begun.	**Asshole, I'm Not Your Baby** Are you ready? Are you ready? Rape you Rape you Are you ready? Are you ready? I'm a real girl Asshole, I'm not your baby
Contributions	Made first punk T-shirts, used traditional Chinese and military instruments	Brought new-school sound, made fan ("anti-") stickers	Brought old-school punk sound, attracted most fans, inspired most bands	Made the "Scream Oi! to your life" sticker, produced China's first do-it-yourself demo tape	Brought feminist perspective, dedicated "Stupid Cunt Punks" to macho guys at Scream
Where Are They Now?	Members retreated to outskirts of Beijing and can be found in jails, hospitals, mental institutions, or other bands	Played with Anti-Flag in California in 2001; returned to Beijing; broke up when the singer dedicated his ears to the prog rock band Yes	Released split-7" record with Anarchy Boys on Broken Rekids in 2002; Xiao Rong re-formed with new members Wang Jian (guitar), Shi Xudong (bass), and Xu Lin (drums); toured Japan	Released split-7" record with Brain Failure on Broken Rekids in 2002	Signed with Japanese label Benten Records; toured Japan in 2001; currently recording new album

around his head. Punk kids are raiding their parents' closets for Mao buttons, Red Guard armbands, and other Cultural Revolution paraphernalia.

FORBIDDEN CITY, 1998

An Asian television station announces that it is looking for Chinese musicians for a film shoot at the Forbidden City. Xiao Rong from Brain Failure and Shen Yue from Anarchy Boys show up with spiked mohawks and dog chains. It turns out that the shoot is a promotional video for Hong Kong's Channel V music television station. Standing in Tiananmen Square, I watch with other Beijing punks while Xiao and Shen pose under Chairman Mao's portrait, surrounded by curious onlookers and local news stations. In return for this commercial footage, the station offers to buy the two mainland punks dinner.

Suddenly, there are more TV cameras than kids in the pit at Scream Club, and Xiao is writing "Anarchy" on Shen's chest for the *South China Morning Post*, *Newsweek*, and *Details* magazine.

SCREAM CLUB, 1999

I start my own girl-fronted band when Xiao Rong introduces me to Cambodian-born Australian guitarist Sabay Lore. Qiu Zubing, a Beijing guy who helped start Scream Club, plays drums, and I play bass. Our band, Bieniu (Awkward), debuts at Scream to a slam-dancing crowd and the kids send our microphones flying. That year we play with Hang on the Box, Brain Failure, Anarchy Boys, and a new generation of punk bands like February 30 and Nizi (Bad Child). A growing legion of Chinese kids and foreign students flocks to the shows while Sabay and I sing, "You think you're macho? Fuck you!"

Brain Failure guitarist Xiao Rong calls our restless group of outcasts the "Wuliao Jundui" (Bored Army). The name becomes a brand for China's first four punk bands when their eponymous 1999 compilation album is released by Jingwen Records and widely distributed in China. On the album, Xiao Rong sings: "In this boring city/We only have our bored friends/In our boring playground/This is our secret place/It is only because you have never felt freedom/So you can't see it/Oh! This is our happiness/Scream! Crazy pogo rock 'n' roll!"

BEIJING FILM STUDIO, 2000

By 2000, London advertising agency Bartle, Bogle, Hegarty comes to Beijing to film a commercial for Levi Strauss and Co. The concept is "underground" youth in "developing" countries wearing Levi's. After a nasty competition between Brain Failure and 69, the company chooses Brain Failure to film a music video for the commercial. The rest of the Wuliao Jundui play "Beijing punk" extras.

The commercial never airs, but Xiao Rong, Li Peng, and Gao Yang of Brain Failure come away with US$5,000 dollars each and free Levi's samples. Needless to say, the members of Brain Failure no longer share a communal guitar because most members buy brand new Gibsons. Soon after the rivalry over the commercial, 69 falls apart. Xiao Rong goes on to write a new song for Brain Failure called "I Don't Want To Be a Poor Punk."

SHEN YUE'S MOM'S PLACE, 2002

After returning to the United States in 2000, I visit Shen Yue, who has moved back into his mom's place. The old Scream Club sign, his photo shoots with Xiao Rong, and a wall full of Wuliao Jundui stickers decorate his bedroom.

"Don't you know? I'm into electronic music now," he says, laughing.

Ever since yao tou wan (Ecstacy, or "the head-shaking pill") hit Beijing, many punks stopped making music at Scream and started popping pills to the electronic sounds at Club Vogue. However, the "PUNX" tattoo Guo Feng gave Shen in 1998 still bleeds through the skin of his knuckles.

PUNKS LIKE GAO YANG ARE PART OF THE FIRST GENERATION OF CHINESE SINCE THE 1949 COMMUNIST REVOLUTION THAT DOESN'T HAVE ITS FUTURE CLEARLY MAPPED OUT. THEY ARE COMING OF AGE AT THE SAME TIME THAT CHINA IS COMING OF AGE IN THE WORLD ECONOMY.

"We can get a lot of cool foreign music now," he says, offering to take me to a new pirated-CD shop.

While I am looking over the English translation for the latest Anarchy Boys demo, a student from Beijing People's University calls, inviting them to play at an open-air concert in mid-May. Anarchy Boys guitarist Li Peng comes over and Shen tells him about the concert.

"How much money?" Li asks.

"No money, but it is in front of thousands of kids and we're doing it."

"Oh, fuck," Li says.

"They made us promise not to do anything outrageous or political," Shen adds excitedly. "So we'll go there and just stick it to 'em!"

Heading for the CD shop, a few minutes from Shen's house, I walk past the old spots where it all started: Scream Club, Angel Bar, the dirty alley. The entire block has been flattened to make way for the new Fourth Ring Road superhighway. Local punk bands have moved across town to the Get Lucky Bar. I do find Shen's favorite CD shop standing where Scream used to be, so I rest assured that a new generation of Beijing youth is busy interpreting the latest buzz in foreign music.

MIDI SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 2002

A few days before the concert, I telephone Wang Yue to see if she will be going. "Why would I want to go to that stupid-fucking-cunt concert?" is her answer.

She laments, "When you are young, you don't worry about anything. You are very open. Even though the bands now might be better than they were before, they are always concerned with what everyone thinks about them. That is so lame."

Brain Failure is headlining the three-day outdoor rock festival on the new campus of the Beijing MIDI School of Modern Music. When Xiao Rong started Brain Failure in 1997, he postulated, "If the movement grows, and we have a big huge concert and everybody's hair is green... that could become dangerous."

Not everybody at the concert has green hair, but hundreds of excited Chinese teenagers are screaming "peng ke" and doing the pogo. Meanwhile, strapping rock star Xiao Rong flaunts leopard-print hair and a Suicidal Tendencies cap, singing "Fucking Disco."

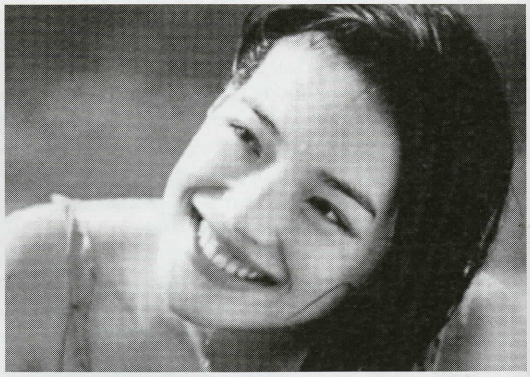
Brain Failure plays with over 40 heavy metal, rock, ska-punk, and folk bands including Twisted Machine, AK 47, Confucius Says, and Wild Children under a red sign that reads Xiang Laodong Zhe Zhi Jing (Salute the workers). The concert is free, so there are plenty of workers in attendance, including farmers from the surrounding area, migrant laborers selling boiled eggs and kebobs, and a Sham 69-style Beijing punk kid sporting a hand-painted rendition of Chairman Mao with a mohawk on the back of his leather jacket.

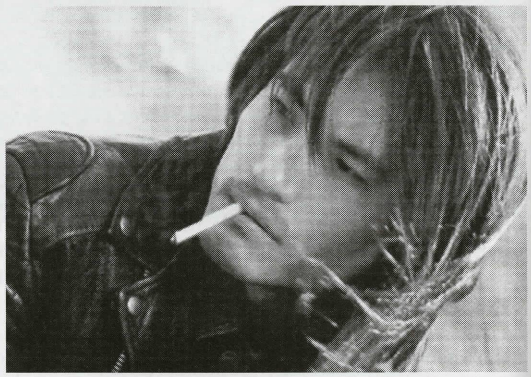
Shen Jing, current drummer for Hang on the Box (which is still the only all-girl punk band in China), goes to the concert to see Brain Failure play. "I just hope that the new bands become better than we were," she says. Shen–whose favorite musical influence these days is Chuck Berry–has complaints about the concert as well, though, saying, "Chinese people are way too fucking quiet. Right now they need to get crazy!"

+ PIX COURTESY OF DANIEL WU

CHINESE ROCKS

+ BY DANIEL WU





Daniel Wu, Shu Kei, and Gen Le were the only actors in *Beijing Rocks!* who weren't in bands. They were also the only ones who weren't forced to dye their hair or wear funny hats.

IN '86 I WATCHED LITTLE KIDS WITH RED CHEEKS PERFORM COMMUNIST PARTY SONGS ONSTAGE FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS. IN 2000, I MOSHED AROUND IN A DARK AND STANK LITTLE CLUB WITH RED-HAIRED KIDS TO A HARDCORE BAND SCREAMING A MANDARIN PUNK ROCK TUNE.

In the past century, China has undergone some serious and crazy shit: the end of a dynasty, warlords, the short introduction of democracy that was quickly overthrown by Mao's communist regime, the Cultural Revolution... The list goes on and on. Through it all, China has been resilient and kept its ass moving–sometimes backward, but constantly moving nonetheless.

In late 2000, I spent two months in China filming a movie called *Beijing Rocks!* It is set in the underground music scene, which I had heard about but never seen. The alternative youth culture was extremely up-to-date and even ahead of the times, but paradoxically innocent, raw, and unexposed to the rest of the world. It was my fourth trip to Beijing in 20-something years.

BEIJING THEN

My first trip was in '78. Because I was only four years old, I hardly remember shit. I went back again in '86, when my parents were invited by the Communist government to give lectures about what overseas Chinese were doing. Party members and government officials basically babysat us throughout our trip. They totally kissed our asses, throwing elaborate banquets. Everyone was wearing the tong zi comrade outfit. Coca-Cola was only available in five-star hotels. Elsewhere, you had to drink government-issued "cola" that tasted like carbonated dirt. A gift of a carton of American Marlboros or a pair of Levi's got you super-special treatment.

In '95 I made a solo trip to China to train with the Beijing Wushu Team. I had been competing in wushu for many years but decided to check out the big leagues where Jet Li came from. I got my ass kicked, but I did get to hang out with people my age and see what it was really like to be young in China without Big Brother hanging around.

By the mid-'90s, you could buy a Coke from a street vendor on any corner. Few were still wearing the comrade outfit. Nobody wanted smokes or jeans; it was all Nikes and Roller Blades. The free-market economy had just opened and people were looking for ways to make some cash. I remember taking a bunch of the wushu guys to the newly opened Hard Rock Café. It was overpriced and cheesy–like any other Hard Rock around the world–but these guys had never seen anything like that before. They ate, drank, and danced the night away.

BEIJING NOW

During my previous visits I could see China taking slow but steady steps toward modernization. But amid this "progress" was an undercurrent that went against the flow. In 2000, I was introduced to a new generation of Beijingers and their "fuck off, we don't care what anyone thinks" attitude. Too young to remember the student riots of '89 and too brash to care, these rebels are indifferent to politics or economics, yet they are very aware of how the system works and how to get away with anything. They would rather spend the night smoking joints or doing E in an underground club with a German DJ spinning trance than waste time talking to me, an American-born Hong Kong actor.

Beijing Rocks! tells the story of several "misplaced youths" as seen through the eyes of a bored, rich, not-so-popular Hong Kong pop star played by yours truly. My first night in Beijing I was offered cocaine and a ton of other drugs at a raging disco. I hung out with kids who looked way more cyber than anybody I've ever seen in Japan. I talked to a girl with dyed blonde hair wearing an ultra-raver, pink furry jacket made out of teddy bear material. Tong zi outfit, R.I.P.

During filming, I was in constant contact with rockers, punks, metal heads, hip-hoppers, mods, and goths–all the genres you can think of, but Beijing style. The kids could speak intelligently and articulately about the shit they were into. Once I sat in a dumpling restaurant for three hours just talking about music with some rockers. The conversation was an analysis of performance-based musicians, beginning with Hong Kong pop star and ex-Beijinger Faye Wong and ending somewhere near Megadeth and Marilyn Manson. They were trying to see if they could work these ideas into their own performances. They all thought that Faye Wong was already way out and uncool.

A lot of these rocker kids came from professional music schools set up by Big Brother. They had studied classical, jazz, and traditional Chinese music, but took off to Beijing to become rock stars. Why is Beijing the rock capital of China? For hundreds of years, famous artisans, poets, and musicians were called to the country's capital to perform for the emperor, so maybe it's that same artistic tradition that attracts the new breed.

Others in the music circle ranged from very intellectual art school dropouts to simple kids who just wanted to rock. Most of them had run away from home to get into the Beijing scene. Some held jobs, but just about all of them were ass-broke. The few who had money came from rich families and were the offspring of powerful officials. They tended to be the wildest of the bunch. Regardless of their background, they gravitated to the same town, forming a community and vigorously searching for ways to express themselves.

BEHIND THE MUSIC

Of the 20 films I've made so far in my career, *Beijing Rocks!* was the most fun. I'd worked with the director/writer team of Mabel Cheung and Alex Law (*City of Glass* and *The Soong Sisters*) before, and I like collaborating with them. And then there was our cinematographer, Peter Pau–the man, the shit, the Oscar-winning badass (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*)–who was the admiral on the set.

With the exception of the three leads (Shu Kei, Gen Le, and me), the actors in the film are all rockers. Jamming onstage with them reminded me of my high school days in Northern California, hanging out at Gilman and jamming with the band Guy Smiley. While shooting *Beijing Rocks!*, I spent most of my free time with these musicians. The music they played was creative, innovative, and just plain good–much better than the Cantopop shit that I can't seem to escape in Hong Kong.

To prepare for *Beijing Rocks!*, Gen Le rented videotapes of *Headbanger's Ball* and studied the works of Kip Winger and Sebastian Bach.

The music in the movie is good, too, but a bit outdated. It ranges from grunge to arena rock. I fought hard to get one of the movie band member's songs on the soundtrack, but in the end I was defeated.

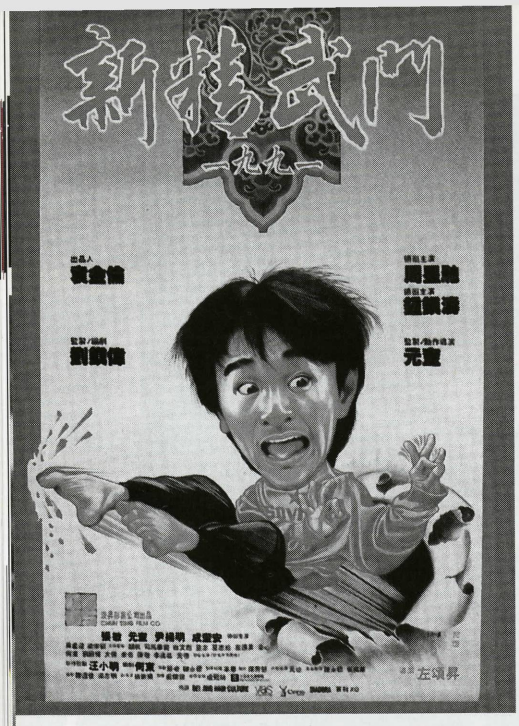
My only problem filming was that it was so fucking cold. The movie takes place during the summer, but we began filming just as winter was settling in. Beijing is goddamn cold in winter. We wore T-shirts and had sweat sprayed on us when it was about 2 degrees Celsius. Sometimes our teeth chattered so much we couldn't speak our lines. Eventually, the local crew supplied us with shots of Er Kwa Tou, a 112 proof distilled alcohol made out of some real evil shit that burns going down. By the end of the trip, I actually liked the stuff.

ACTION REACTION

Beijing Rocks! could have really rocked, but it mostly just rolls along. Movies tend to be a glossy version of real life. That's not to say the film is bad. It touches on issues of modern versus traditional, the relationship between China and Hong Kong, and so on. But it could have been much grittier and more raw–more like my real experiences hanging out with the rockers who acted in the movie.

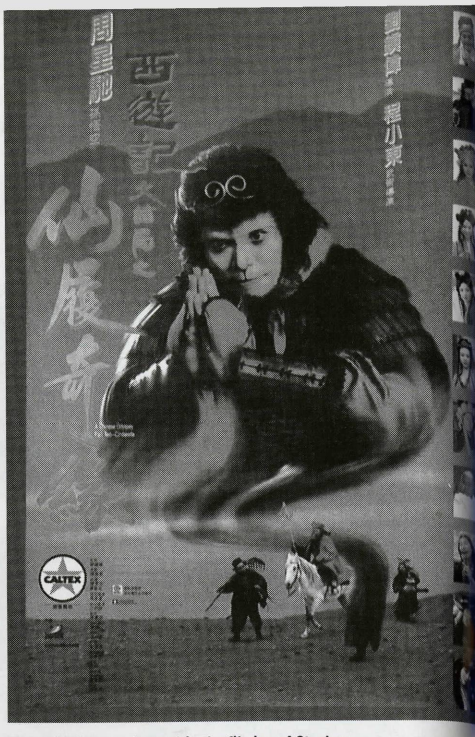
Modern Beijing is very different from what CNN shows to the world. Most of the fuckers in the mainstream media are too old to know what is truly going on, especially when it comes to youth culture. In '86 I watched little kids with red cheeks perform Communist party songs onstage for foreign tourists. In 2000, I moshed around in a dark and stank little club with red-haired kids to a hardcore band screaming a Mandarin punk rock tune. Some of these punkers were probably the same cherubs I saw 15 years before!

To witness drastic change in such a short period of time was completely shocking, but after getting to know some of the rockers, I began to understand. Much like the whacked-out Japanese youth culture of the '80s and '90s, the Beijing rockers' rebellion is a direct result of many years of repression. But they aren't fighting politically in the same way their older brothers and sisters did back in '89; they're just looking for a unique voice in a country of one billion.



Fist of Fury 1991 is the best movie with a palindromic year in the title ever.

Pissing exploding beef balls are Stephen Chow's secret weapon in *God of Cookery.*



No animals were harmed in the filming of Stephen Chow's adaptation of *Journey to the West.*

<CHOW: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25>

GR: Do you hang out with him outside of the films?
SC: We're friends. We're more like partners.

GR: There's another guy in a lot of your movies who's always picking his nose and wearing women's clothes.
SC: You like him? Or you like her? He seemed to disappear in certain movies, but suddenly he came back in *Shaolin Soccer*. He's in the beginning of, I think, *King of Beggars*. We were looking for an ugly woman to play the role, but it was hard to find such a character. At that time, Mr. Lee was not even in the business. He just walked around and came and visited, so I asked him if he wanted to play her, and he said, "Oh yeah, why not? Let's do it." He was funny and everyone liked him. That was something that people remembered. So I asked him, "Why don't you do it again and again?"

GR: Do you like to work with friends?
SC: Yeah. Those people aren't professional actors. It's more fresh as a director to work with new faces and a new generation.

GR: *Shaolin Soccer* has a lot of new actors. Where do you find them?
SC: They all came automatically. Some are stars from my company and some of them are my friends. Some were introduced to me. The goalkeeper, the Bruce Lee guy, was supposed to be the dancing instructor in the movie because there's a dancing scene. Finally, because his face makes you think about Bruce Lee, I tried to get a role for him. I asked, "Why don't you play a goalkeeper who looks like Bruce Lee with the yellow jacket?"

GR: Did you make up that role just for him?
SC: Yeah. Different people have their own characters and they inspire me to think more.

GR: Was it hard to act with all the computer-generated effects?
SC: It's difficult, but funny. It's a new experience for us to work with a CG company. You use the combination of action, tradition, wire, and everything, and also the CG. It's more difficult. You spend more time and more money, but the important thing is you're creating something new for the audience. I think the result is quite good.

GR: Did you train for the soccer scenes?
SC: For *Shaolin Soccer*? No, actually I do kung fu everyday because it's one of my loves. Kung fu and no other special training. I believe kung fu can be adapted to any other thing you want to do. Because once you get in good physical condition and are flexible, you can do anything, whether it's soccer or basketball, whatever.

GR: One theme of *Shaolin Soccer* is how kung fu can be used for anything. So you really mean that?
SC: The spirit of kung fu means to try your best and never give up.

GR: How did you get into kung fu?
SC: It's hard to say, but one of the main reasons was Bruce Lee, my idol.

GR: So did you already want to make films when you were a little kid?
SC: At the beginning, I tell you the truth, I wanted to be a lifeguard. I was crazy about swimming. "Is there a job where I can swim all the time?" Then I got into kung fu. I changed my mind; I thought I could be a kung fu instructor. Then when I became a young man, I stopped this imagination because I knew that life is hard. I had to work hard, I had to study, and I had to pass examinations and get a job, like everybody did.

GR: Now that you direct and produce as well as act, do you enjoy these other aspects of filmmaking?
SC: Yes, I enjoy every part. It's hard work, but I enjoy it. I have to say I enjoy acting, but as a director it's more fresh for me. When you build up a movie from a script you talk and talk and talk. Most of that is bullshit, but I enjoy the process because I like to talk with different people. I like to think about questions. At the moment I'm more like a director than an actor, but it's necessary for me to act because of the marketing.

GR: You often seem to play underdogs. Is there a message you try to give through your movies?
SC: It's always the same meaning: Try your best. Even when you're nobody, you still try your best, and someday you'll become someone. That's exactly what I feel and think. That's my own experience.

GR: How have you managed to stay on top of the Hong Kong film industry for so long?
SC: On top? [laughs] I don't think I'm on top. Honestly, to be famous is wonderful, but most importantly, how do you keep doing good things? That's more important and difficult. To maintain the good standard in every movie is really difficult. It's hard work.

Robotrix Amy Yip and *Hard-Boiled* Teresa Mo co-star with Stephen Chow in *The Magnificent Scoundrels*.

GR: Is it very important to you that *Shaolin Soccer* does well in America?
SC: It's so important to me. You can take a look at *God of Cookery* and *Shaolin Soccer*. What I'm trying to do is make something for everyone. Everyone eats and likes food every day. Soccer and kung fu are known in the whole world. So you can see my purpose is not only to succeed in the local market. It goes further. Can I really make it? It had a good result in Japan and Korea, and it's going to be released in Europe–like France and Italy–and America, the biggest market in the world. All I can say is it's a good spot to be in. You need to wait for the result; you don't know how much acceptance will be there.

GR: What are you working on now?
SC: There are two stories that I'm developing. One is action and not combined with a sport. It's about combat martial arts. The other is a comedy. I prefer to direct more than act on that project. Also, the sequel to *Shaolin Soccer*.

GR: Do you have time to do things besides make movies?
SC: I travel a lot when I'm free. But it's hard to stay free. Even when I'm on a holiday, the element is on my mind. No matter what, I see and listen, and that can turn into to a movie.

GR: Are you funny when you're not acting?
SC: I don't think I'm a funny man–not at all. Seriously. What I hear is, "How come you're not the one in the movie? Why are you so quiet? Give me a joke." Actually, the real Stephen is not like in the movies. I'm more like a quiet person. Fortunately, I enjoy observing people. That makes me a comedian. Every time I find something funny in normal life, I put it in a movie. And that's a secret.

RENTER'S DELIGHT

***All for the Winner* (1990)** - Chow was such a hit spoofing *God of Gamblers* in his first starring role that he was cast in the *God of Gamblers II*.

Fist of Fury 1991 - This kung fu parody allowed Chow to emulate his hero, Bruce Lee. The sequel, *Fist of Fury 1991 II*, came out in 1992.

***Fight Back to School* (1991)** - Kind of like a funnier version of *21 Jump Street*, this was Hong Kong's highest-grossing film at the time, inspiring two sequels.

***Royal Tramp I & II* (1992)** - The two-part adaptation of Louis Cha's *The Deer and the Cauldron* martial-arts novels balanced comedy with incredible action.

***Justice My Foot!* (1992)** - Chow earned the best actor award at the Pacific Film Festival for his role in this period piece co-starring Anita Mui.

***Love on Delivery* (1994)** - In this romantic comedy co-starring Christy Chung, Chow plays tribute to *The Terminator*, Ultraman, and Garfield.

***From Beijing with Love* (1994)** - The James Bond parody co-starred Anita Yuen and spawned a semi-sequel, *Forbidden City Cop*, in 1996.

***A Chinese Odyssey I & II* (1995)** - Chow played the Monkey King in this two-part treatment of the classic *Journey to the West* novel.

***The God of Cookery* (1996)** - Chow wrote, directed, produced, and starred in this combination of the *God of Gamblers* movies and *Iron Chef* TV show.

***Shaolin Soccer* (2001)** - Starring as a Shaolin monk who uses his Mighty Steel Leg technique on the soccer field, Chow broke the Hong Kong box office record.

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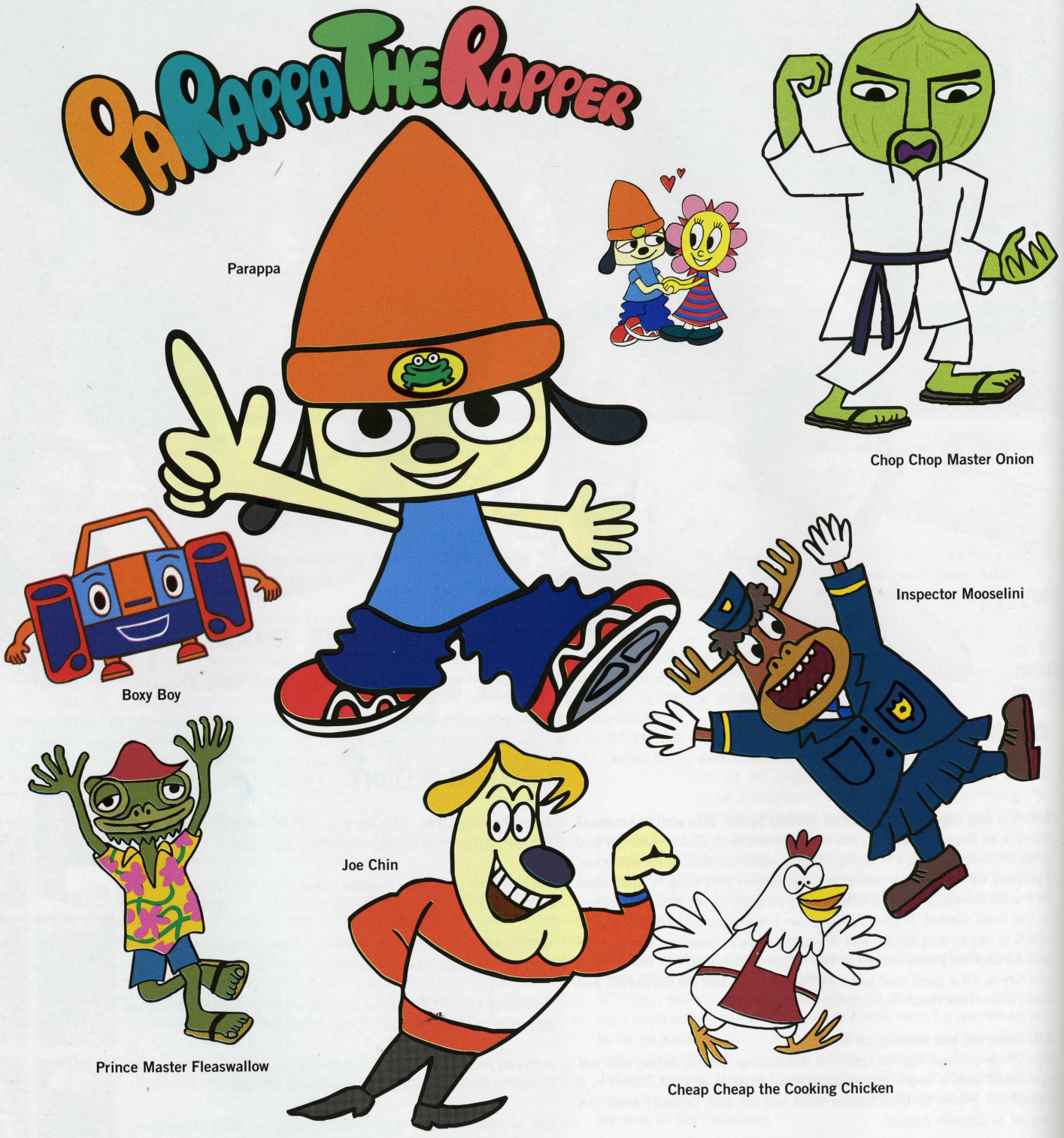

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<PARAPPA: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 65>

GR: Who was the intended audience?
MM: I wasn't focusing on any particular ages, but Japanese music business focuses on 15- to 20-year-olds. I was tired of focusing on this area. Parappa was much wider than this range. Maybe in Japan, my game is accepted from a very wide range of people. But maybe the States are a little different. Maybe people think our game is for kids.

GR: Is that because most American people like violent games?
MM: Yes, that's right. I love to play my game for myself as a virtual child. I don't want to be a smart, thoughtful guy to play a game. I want to be simple.

GR: Do you think musicians would be better at your games than most people?
MM: One musician is very good at it; the other isn't very good. This comes from the background of their music. The good game player is good at playing with a music

I RESPECT GRAND THEFT AUTO, BECAUSE GTA IS NOT SIMPLY A VIOLENCE GAME. GTA ALLOWS A PLAYER TO DO ANYTHING. THESE KINDS OF FREE THINGS ARE VERY IMPORTANT FOR A GAME DEVELOPER.

score, and the other one who isn't good is a more improvised musician–like jazz musician. Of course, many are good at reading music scores, but this is the difference.

GR: I heard in America they aren't releasing your new games.
MM: Recently, we released Viburibbon. It's not released in the States. It's the same style of game as Parappa, but you can exchange any audio CD. The system analyzes audio in real time. If the audio changes something, the game makes some object. Then you have to press and clear the object. It was made by an American programmer in my company; he figured out how to watch CD audio in the PlayStation during the development of Um Jammer Lammy. He figured how to analyze the audio. But unfortunately it was released in Europe and Japan only.

GR: I read that you don't like violent games.
MM: I respect Grand Theft Auto, because GTA is not simply a violence game. GTA allows a player to do anything. These kinds of free things are very important for a game developer. I think violence is a very simple feeling for everybody, so if a game developer uses violence as a theme it's very easy to make a game. Violence is something bad for everybody. Violence is addictive, like smoking. So if they use this kind of sense, the game goes very easy. It requires no creation. Regular violent games are really simple; I don't like these. The creator has to think about what is creation, and not stand on an easy background.

GR: Do you play them?
MM: Yeah, I play them. To be a good violence game player, it requires a switch in the brain. So it's just a game. This kind of background is required for everyone, I think.

GR: The games aren't bad then?
MM: If shooting guns and blood splat feelings are good, it's good programming but it's not a good creation. Just the simulation of real shooting doesn't require any creative sense. If you see three or four violent movies, that's enough, and you can just copy.

GR: Do you think it's easy for non-Japanese to get the sense of humor in your games?
MM: It's hard to calibrate the sense of humor between the different countries. That means various kinds of people feel various kinds of senses from my game, and they make variations of the sense. I think it's important to control these kinds of things by myself. But the misunderstanding leads me to a new sense: I want to know how people understand my projects. A session with various kinds of instrument players requires this kind of thing. I always focus on the game player and myself, and the other players also, like a music session.

GR: Do you like characters a lot? Japan has so many.
MM: It's a little too much. Many designers focus on designing characters, but very few can design the character and environment together. Rodney [Greenblat, who designed the characters for Parappa] is good at thinking about both. It's easy to work with him. The only difficulty is how we achieve an understanding with each other over the background differences. Maybe he imagined rap differently? But he's the designer. He has to decide what kind of background the game will have.

GR: How long do you think you can keep going?
MM: A normal businessman in Japan will quit when he is 55 years old. Of course, I chose this kind of creative job because I don't have to quit. So maybe I will keep going until the end of my life.

GR: You want to design games for the rest of your life?
MM: The theme of my creation is much more clear now than in the

RAPPIN' RODNEY GREENBLAT

GR: In the beginning, how did you feel about working on Parappa?
RG: When I was first presented the project by Matsuura and his team, I thought it was interesting and fun but very messed-up at the same time. It was not that I did not like rap music, but that I felt my happy, colorful suburban Candyland style did not fit with an urban rap feeling. Matsuura explained in his enigmatic way that the Japanese audience for rap was totally different from the U.S. audience. He was right, and right in thinking my style would be very popular in Japan. My experience with rap was from MTV where, in 1995, gangsta style was at its height. To me, drug abuse, sexism, and violence were a big part of rap music, and I couldn't imagine my characters expressing any of that. Matsuura's idea was actually very fun, and had nothing to do with what was happening on MTV. Still, I knew eventually the game would get to the U.S. market, and no one would understand it. Even more weird, the songs and dialog in the game would be in English, so most Japanese gamers wouldn't even understand it. No one on Matsuura's team cared about any of my concerns or fears, so I decided it didn't really matter and I should just help them make something really fun and weird.

GR: Was it easy to make Parappa into a dog? Why a dog?
RG: Matsuura and the writer presented me with a rough idea of what the personality of the main character would be. I just automatically imagined him as a dog–faithful, ever hopeful, energetic, always wanting to please. A dog fit well into the group of already existing characters I designed for Sony Creative Products: Sunny the flower, Katy the cat, and PJ the bear.

GR: Were you happy with the gear they made related to the game, like dolls and so on?
RG: All the licensed material is created by Sony Creative Products, the company in Japan that I work with every day. I have approval rights over all the products they make using my images, meaning I get to see the designs before they are manufactured, and check them. The only real problem is that SCP is a Japan-only company, so there is almost no distribution of my hundreds of products outside Japan.

GR: Do you have an opinion on how Sony should have marketed the games in America?
RG: My U.S. marketing concept was to go for an "underground comic" kind of marketing angle. The game is really quirky and funny, with really odd, catchy music. I would have gone for the same audience as *The Simpsons*. The U.S. marketing people at Sony had no intention of listening to my ideas. They decided Parappa was for little kids, Lammy was for teeny-boppers, and Parappa 2 was for hip hop kids. You could see the dollar signs in their decisions, but it just has not worked.

GR: What have you been doing lately?
RG: I have been working on a 20-minute animated children's film coming out in Japan in October. It features my original character, Thunder Bunny, and is full of super high-quality 3-D animation by Yuichi Ito, the famous Japanese animator. The great part is that I was able to write the story myself and do the concept storyboards. This is much closer to a pure Rodney creation. It is so cute!

Rodney's work and stuff can be seen at http://www.whimsyload.com.

I'm looking for a Japanese Girlfriend (red circle). One of our most popular wacky Japanese T-shirts ever, it gets the message across to any Japanese females who happen to see it. It's written in *kanji*, so virtually all Asians can read and understand your bizarre message.

You must be 20 Years Old to Purchase Tobacco and Alcohol. In Japan, the legal age for buying beer and tobacco is 20. In Japanese convenience stores, they have cute little characters who enforce this rule. We've put these wacky guys on a 100% cotton parody T-shirt for you!

I want to be Japanese. A simple message, captured in a T-shirt. For all those who secretly wish they were born Japanese, this shirt is certain to get you lots of attention when you least expect it. Show your otaku spirit! All shirts are US sizes, and printed in the USA!

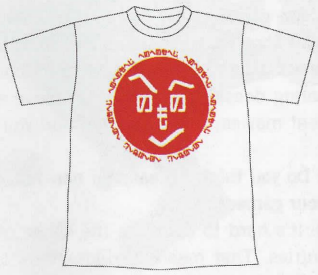
Completely Confident in my Sexual Power. For those who want to boast of their sexual prowess, we recommend our newest wacky T-shirt. Pronounced *Zetsurin Power*, it implies absolute confidence in one's manly abilities. With this shirt on, there's no telling what could happen.

Your Mother has a Protruding Navel. Roughly equivalent to "Your mother wears army boots," this famous Japanese insult (*Omae no kaachan wa debeso*) is known to all Japanese. A completely wacky Japanese T-shirt for you—enjoy the puzzled looks you get from Japanese people everywhere!

Hen na Gaijin. For whatever reason, one of the first phrases a foreigner in Japan learns is *Hen na gaijin* ("I'm a strange foreigner"). We put the phrase on a wacky T-shirt just for you! Available in a choice of colors, like most of our wacky Japanese T-shirts.

Dirty American Devil. During World War II, the derogatory Japanese word for Americans and Europeans was *kichiku beihei*, translatable as "Dirty American Devil." We thought it would make a great esoteric slogan, so we put it on an original T-shirt!

Philosophy of Hentai. A bizarre Japanese message, this is recommended for fans of all things *hentai*, a word which covers all adult anime, manga and Japanese love simulation games. May you attain enlightenment with this wacky T-shirt.



Hiragana Man. Virtually all Japanese know this doodle face, made out of meaningless *hiragana* characters. The official name is *Heno heno moheji*. It's guaranteed to get a reaction out of *nihonjin*, and it's even safe to wear in front of potential Japanese in-laws.

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JAPANESE MUSIC BUSINESS FOCUSES ON 15- TO 20-YEAR-OLDS. I WAS TIRED OF FOCUSING ON THIS AREA. PARAPPA WAS MUCH WIDER THAN THIS RANGE. MAYBE IN JAPAN, MY GAME IS ACCEPTED FROM A VERY WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE.

past. I'm much more excited to fight for this theme. I can't say it correctly, but I almost found the theme I have to try to fight for. So this is a very big thing for me. And this includes sometimes game, sometimes music, or sometimes speech. This theme makes me excited. Recently, we started something a little different. I'm focusing on a new feeling from the visual and sound and interactions. Music games were new then, and they required timing and skill. I'm focusing on another new thing.

GR: Are games supposed to be an escape from reality? Like coming back from work and forgetting your day?
MM: I think that the future of games has big possibilities–like some virtual world just for fun. Also, that will be in the network environment. If someone wants to achieve something in this virtual world, maybe it's possible. This will be in the near future. Network is the basic background.

GR: My parents don't play games. When will they get involved?
MM: I think it will be soon. Maybe it's part of my theme? Parappa hit a wider target than my music career. We have to think about people who are older, and how will they get along with the current high-tech game systems. It's a good theme. It's tough. We are going to do this.

GR: Do you worry about addiction?
MM: Parappa requires intense attention, but it's music. Three minutes later, it's gone, so you can stop. But shooting games are more addicting. You can shoot for 20 hours. I always care about how long the action has to be sequenced. If the same stimulus is done too long, maybe it's getting a little mad in the brain. So the game is very sophisticated, integrated action. If you shoot, the blood will spurt. Then you know you killed. This loop comes many times. This might break some functions of the brain, but it creates a new function in the brain. So these kinds of differences–before playing and after–makes something different. This has good things and bad things. So addiction is okay, but during the game, some cool-down situations are required.

GR: Are they getting the right things out of the game? It's like reading a book really fast or slow.
MM: In the book case, both ways are okay. There's no integrated stimulus. It's character reading. The brain recognizes the text and meaning, but the game is integrated stimulus. In normal life, this kind of integrated stimulus doesn't come out. This is why games are important for us. It's similar to techno music. Before the sequencer came out, no one listened to beats. After techno, everyone listens to very sophisticated and calculated music. It was a new experience for everybody. Sometimes games don't have the variations, so it's different. Some games don't have choices. If the stimulus is too strong, then the user can't choose.

GR: How often do you see a game that excites you?
MM: Almost never. Almost 95 percent of games don't.

GR: What do you see that excites you?
MM: If a game has something new that's important. There are no examples recently. But some people focus on A.I. technologies, or some other people focus on multi-model expressions. These kinds of things impact me.

GR: What do you do for fun when you're not making games?
MM: Recently, I am addicted to reading books. I never read for the last 40 years. I just started. The books are about language, the brain, the recognition sciences... I am learning how the language comes out. It is a mysterious thing, and language is connected with how our brain works. These kinds of things are mysterious.

<MANPURSE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35>

A MULTITUDE OF MANPURSES

The design of a bag reflects the owner's tastes. In Japan, a mod might hold a two-tone checkerboard purse to match his Vespa, a punker might carry one with skulls and crossbones, and a raver might have one that looks stupid. Accordingly, more conservative men may hold something that resembles a soft briefcase.

Label whores in Japan sport Gucci and Louis Vuitton, but Porter is the brand of choice for the higher-end manpurse connoisseur. Almost any department store clerk will point you in the right direction; prices range from $100 to $140.

Most department stores dedicate at least half a floor to manpurses, which range from borderline flight bags to hardcore feminine sacks. Manpurses are also available at hipster boutiques like A Bathing Ape.

COMING TO AMERICA

Manpurses are considered abnormal in America, but companies like Coach and Tumi make a "clutch" that's somewhat like a single-loop handled toiletry sack. Monica from the Tumi store in Santa Monica says, "Japanese people do buy the clutch bag as well as Americans." Todd at Barneys in Beverly Hills laughs when I ask him about manpurses. "They're like totes," he explains, "but some are 'purse-y.' You'll know when you see them." Calls to Louis Vuitton and Coach are useless; the clerks who aren't familiar with the concept think I'm talking about messenger bags.

"Manpurse" might not be a Scrabble word just yet, but it has been the butt of jokes on *Friends* and *Seinfeld*. "It's dasai," says Kotaro. "Weird, dumb, and not cool. It's feminine, it doesn't make sense, it's kind of odd." Todd from Barneys agrees. "I've heard people ask for it as a manpurse, but it's joking," he says.

In contrast, Ishii is comfortable enough to go public with his accessory. When a *Los Angeles Times* beat writer said that the patent-leather black purse was unintimidating, Ishii replied, "Then I'll carry two purses."

MANPURSE PRIDE

Our run-in with Ishii came full-circle when Bill asked a vacationing friend to bring back a manpurse from Japan. In anticipation of his new lifestyle aid, he began to say things like, "If I had my manpurse, I wouldn't have forgotten my nail clippers and lotion."

Today, Bill carries a $100 Porter bag, and he isn't afraid to call it a manpurse. "I've been feeling really comfortable with it," he reports, "but I realize I'm putting a lot of junk in it already."

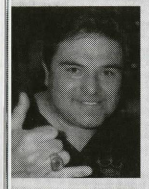
Will Bill ask his friends to hold it for him when his hands are full? Is he going to take it with him on vacation? Will he start a trend? Whatever happens, Bill is already filling his manpurse with his wallet, cell phone, and keys. He concludes, "If I don't have it, where am I going to put everything?"

Never ask what's in a man's purse.

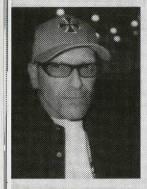
THEY WERE THERE

RENE CARRASCO, PEPSI-COLA SKATEBOARD TEAM CAPTAIN, 1977-1981

GR: What was your involvement in skating back in the Dogtown days?
RC: I was captain of the Pepsi-Cola skateboard team from 1977 to 1981. I did over 2000 demos. My brothers and I are featured in the book *Skate Legends: 150 of the Greatest Skateboarders,* on page 63. We're the Flying Carrasco Brothers: Rene, Richy, and David. I was devastated back in '81 when they started bulldozing skateparks. A lot of people felt like has-beens. Now they're being appreciated like Duke Kahanamoku in surfing. Now we're being regarded as legends for what we did. Now there's a history to the sport.



GR: How did your skating compare to the Dogtown style?
RC: What we were doing was a lot different. We did a lot of freestyle, handstands, obstacle courses, slalom racing, downhill, pool riding, skyhooks... My brothers and I were noted for skyhook riding with the attachments to the boards. My brother is a world champ of 360s, undefeated since 1978, 142-1/2 revolutions, certified by the *Guinness Book of World Records.*



GR: Even Rodney Mullen can't do that?
RC: Rodney's still hot, I respect him, but you can see the Carrasco Brothers in the book *Skate Legends and the Concrete Wave* by Michael Brook.

GR: What did you think when you first saw the Dogtown team? Were they really that different?
RC: Basically, surfing was the root of all skateboarding. I don't take away from Dogtown, but in Garden Grove we were doing stuff and San Diego had guys doing stuff. People were doing stuff in Badlands and Upland, but the Z-Boys were the ones who had the cameras. Rabbit Kekai did an article for legendarysurfers.com. Guys rode the Pipeline back in the '40s. Whoever has the cameras gets the spoils, but I don't take away anything from them. I rode for Tony Alva's skate company. I did demos with him. I went to his wedding reception. I was even in the same scene with him in the movie *Skateboard.* He's a great skater, a good guy, but there's a guy who needs more credit–Ray Flores. They should talk more about him; he's a real big part of Dogtown.

RAY FLORES, DOGTOWN DOCUMENTER

GR: So you've seen the movie a few times by now?
RF: Actually, several minutes of the movie is footage that I took back in 1976. I used to go around with my 8mm camera and shoot Tony, Shogo, and Jim. So most of the actual pool footage of Gonzales's pool and the Dogbowl is footage that I shot back in the day. We used to go skateboarding and watch it afterward on a little sheet in the living room. Then all of a sudden Stacy calls me one day and says, "Hey, Ray, I'd really like to use the footage," and all of a sudden it's on the big screen. It's unbelievable.

GR: What does the story of the Z-Boys have for people who don't skate?
RF: It will send chills down your back even if you've never ridden a skateboard before. You see right away the colors, the style, and the whole vibe of the movie is so different than what it's like now. It's really authentic. The whole movie is real footage, a real story, and a supernatural thing that really happened.

Tony Alva, Arthur Lake, and Jay Adams do their versions of The Bird. Squawk!

GR: How have those days affected you personally? What ideals from them have carried over to now?
RF: Skateboarding has always been skateboarding just like God has always been God. So it's always been good. It's never been bad. It just seems like it's getting better. The people that really deserve the recognition for what they accomplished and what they brought to the sport and made the sport–people like Tony who never stopped skateboarding–those people deserve all the recognition for sure.

GRANT BRITTAIN, SKATEBOARD PHOTOGRAPHER

GR: What did you think of the *Dogtown* movie?
GB: It made me appreciate that era a lot more. I was around back then; I was at the Del Mar contest. I didn't shoot back then. I was running a surf shop and selling skateboards. That was 1975 and I was just a guy in the crowd. When we saw the Z-Boys come down, we were surfers, so that was the way we skated–totally inspired by Larry Bertelman–and it really caught us. I didn't know there was that much footage back then. I'm amazed at how many photos and how much footage there is.

GR: It seems like the culture has trickled up into the mainstream since then.
GB: Skateboarding died before, and it could die again. Me and those guys lasted through all the deaths. It didn't really die; it just moved to a different place. I kind of like it when it's dead. It's too crowded. There are people you've never seen before, and they want a piece of skateboarding. If they really appreciate skateboarding for what it is, that's great. But if they just want a piece of it, to use it like any new trend to make money or whatever, we want them to leave.

GR: What else do you shoot, and how does skateboarding stand out?
GB: I'm a photographer–not just a skate photographer. I started off as a skate photographer, but I shoot landscapes, portraits, everything. When I look at landscapes, I feel really tranquil, and there are moments in skateboarding when I feel tranquil, too. It's those beautiful moments–especially when you get the photos back–and you've worked with the light, you've captured a moment, and a piece of someone's life. It's totally heavy.

<DOGTOWN: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39>

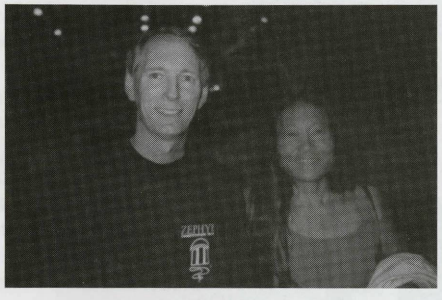
Peggy missed out on the rivalries that developed from the split up of the Z-Boys, as well as the fame and other trappings that came with the commercialization of skateboarding. Tony Alva gained rock star status and partied with groupies at the Riot House, where Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath hung out. In a recent interview with *Juice* magazine, Jay Adams expresses remorse over his experiences with a murder rap, substance abuse, and drug trafficking. Peggy doesn't remember drugs as part of her Z-Boys experience, perhaps because the team was younger and less wealthy in its formative years.

Although the Z-Boys were heading in different directions, they still skateboarded together–especially in pools. Some of the most intense sessions took place at the Dog Bowl, in the Brentwood backyard of a kid with a terminal disease whose parents let him invite skaters into their pool. But like their ill patron, it couldn't last forever.

Peggy stopped skating well before skateboarding's popularity peaked in the late '70s, but she says that her days in Dogtown have made a lasting impression on her–just as they have on the other Z-Boys: "When I see the guys now, we still have the same personalities. We're still pretty rowdy. I'm adamant about what's happening to the environment. Maybe instead of jumping over fences, I'm speaking out for the environment at protests." Currently, Peggy is a hardcore surfer who paints nature-related postcards and is an organizer and activist for whales, dolphins, and other environmental causes.

Z-Boys with their toys circa 1974. Left to right: Tony Alva, Shogo Kubu, Jay Adams, Peggy Oki, Wentzle Ruml IV, and Jeff Ho.

Peggy Oki and Jeff Ho were interviewed by a Japanese TV crew at the Vans Skatepark party.



Cris Dawson wears an O.G.-style Zephyr Productions T-shirt, while Peggy stands on a step to look taller.

The Super 8 films of Ray Flores are now being shown on big screens across America.

"WHEN I SEE THE GUYS NOW, WE STILL HAVE THE SAME PERSONALITIES. WE'RE STILL PRETTY ROWDY. I'M ADAMANT ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE ENVIRONMENT. MAYBE INSTEAD OF JUMPING OVER FENCES, I'M SPEAKING OUT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AT PROTESTS."

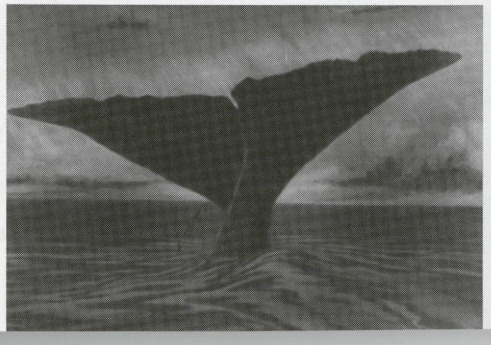
As skaters grab handfuls of food, Suicidal Tendencies packs up its gear, and guests are shuttled toward the skatepark's entrance, we intercept Ray Flores, who shot and contributed a lot of the documentary's vintage skate footage. He currently runs a modern furniture and skate shop in Venice and says, "Every time I get an e-mail from Peggy, it's like getting a message from an angel."

BACK TO THE BOWL

A few days after the party at the Vans Skatepark, Peggy tells me that she's been pool riding every day at Skater's Point in Santa Barbara. She's been hooked up with shoes from Vans (which produced the movie) and a board from Rookie (a skateboard company run by female skaters). Skating at a park is new to Peggy–when she was a Z-Boy, it was so early in the rebirth of the sport that there weren't any skateparks–but she's having a blast. After two weeks of morning sessions, she's reaching the coping.

Later on, I tell skateboard legend Steve Caballero how thrilled Peggy was to have met him at the Dogtown party. "I'm stoked that she's back into skating," he says. "Once a skater, always a skater. It's in our blood and there's no denying it!"

More or less. One week later, Peggy lets me know that she broke her wrist while skating. Although the doctor says the injury is a "7 out of 10," she stays positive and can't wait to skate again. Peggy relaxes and says, "Whenever I'd see someone skating–now it's stuff we weren't doing then because skateboarding has progressed so much, getting into ramps and skateparks and street skating–I think, 'Man, I skated way back then, and isn't it funny that I was on the Zephyr team and nobody would know it?'"



<YAMAGUCHI: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29>

***Enokinoko*, 2000 / Acrylic colors, cutting board / 400 x 211 x 24 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works**

young girls in various scenes allows me to overcome those same personal issues. That's why these characters are so important to me, but at the same time I also want to keep them for myself. It's almost as if I want to keep everything about them within me.

GR: When did you first learn about these child courtesans?
AY: I learned about them five years ago, when I was 20. This was when Murakami suggested that I study more about them.

GR: Your girls don't seem very happy.
AY: There's a total of nine characters in the narrative I've created. They were all sold by their mothers when they were too young to understand why their mothers would leave them and why they have to sleep with men they don't know. Their faces don't express the same type of dissatisfaction that typical children have with their parents, like, "Why don't my parents understand?" Instead, it's confusion with their abandonment and living in the bathhouses. It's a very childlike way of thinking. That's why they look dispassionate. Another reason is the characters are very close to me. Even though they look very detached or sad, I envision them looking only at me. They use their cold stare to ignore their customers, but at the same time this draws both the customer and the viewer closer, filling them with intrigue. The girls' expressions also reflect emotions that are kept inside me.

I CARE FOR THE GIRLS LIKE I CARE FOR MY CAT–THE SAME WAY YOU'D CARE FOR SOMETHING VERY CLOSE TO YOU. BECAUSE I LOVE THEM SO MUCH, I WANT TO DEPICT THEM HOW I SEE FIT.

GR: Why do you only paint girls?
AY: Well, one reason is because I am a girl. But it's also to help overcome my psychological complexes. Sometimes I like to wonder what it would've been like if I were one of those girls.

GR: Where do you find inspiration for your paintings?
AY: There are too many to even think about. For example, magazines, TV, any type of visual aid, you know? I hate reading books, but I like to look at the individual letters and their shapes. When I look at the characters [of the Japanese alphabet] there's a spark, and images start to flow through my mind. I also like watching silly, stupid shows on TV. It's not only the media that helps me, but I also look at ukiyo-e and Japanese paintings, especially the works of Uemura Shoen. I don't understand any of the history behind her work, but her colors and lines are really beautiful. Words also influence me a lot, especially classical Japanese poems. Like the composition of each character and the way it occupies space... It's difficult to explain.

GR: Do you watch a lot of anime?
AY: No, I'm not that interested in anime, although people tend to categorize my work with anime. I've never really been into comics, but recently my co-workers here at Ninyu Works introduced me to anime and manga. I don't feel that animation and comics influence my work, but lots of people say they do. Maybe I'm wrong? [laughs] What interests me about comics is the story. It's not that I'm an otaku or anything. I don't know every little detail like otaku do. I like love stories, where the main character is girlie and shy and always confused about which guy she likes.

GR: A lot of people say your girls look similar to the animation of Osamu Tezuka and the movie *Metropolis*.
AY: I get that a lot. But to tell you the truth, *Metropolis* is the first film I've seen by Tezuka. Really.

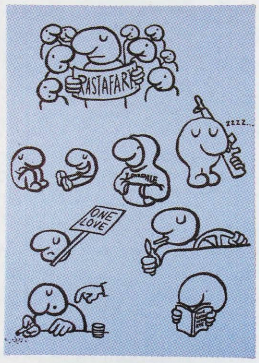
GR: I read that you attended the textile department at your art college. Has that helped you create the detailed and intricate patterns your characters wear?
AY: I think it has helped me somewhat. When I was in school, I was making obi [sashes for kimono] and I really hated it. But it helps me when I'm designing the patterns for my characters' kimonos. Each pattern has a specific meaning, and because of my training it's much easier for me to understand. I really hated school.

GR: Many of your paintings are done on cotton. Is this a traditional Japanese technique?
AY: No. In Japan it's traditional to paint on silk. I prefer cotton because of the tight weave, which lets me paint with more detail. Plus, silk is expensive. The cotton I use is cheap because it comes from bed sheets. I cover that with gesso and polish it to make a smooth painting surface.

GR: Your paintings are primarily about early modern Japan. What do you think of Japan today?
AY: That's a difficult question. I don't know how this really affects me personally, but I don't like the younger generation because they're dirty. Their Japanese is really filthy. For instance, some high school girl called the house by mistake, and I couldn't understand a single word she was saying. I think Japan as a country is not doing so well, either. I'm pretty sure most people think things are strange right now.

+ GR STAFF

OTAKU STRUGGLE



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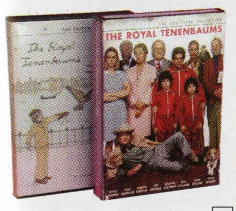

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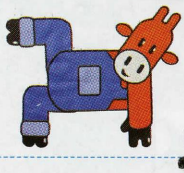


2

1. Metal "Player" Ring from Gumball Machine ($.25) - To be a player, you have to spend like one: There's only one or two per machine.

2. Winney etimecapsule Toy ($3) - These will be released in the fall in Japan.

3. *The Royal Tenenbaums* DVD ($30) - Get a copy of the hand-drawn floor plan of the mansion in the flick and other extras.

4. Kozyndan Print ($30) - Even if you missed their art show, you can still get a print.

5. Mark Gonzalez Deck by Krooked ($50) - The Gonz celebrates his new company by revisiting his first pro graphic.

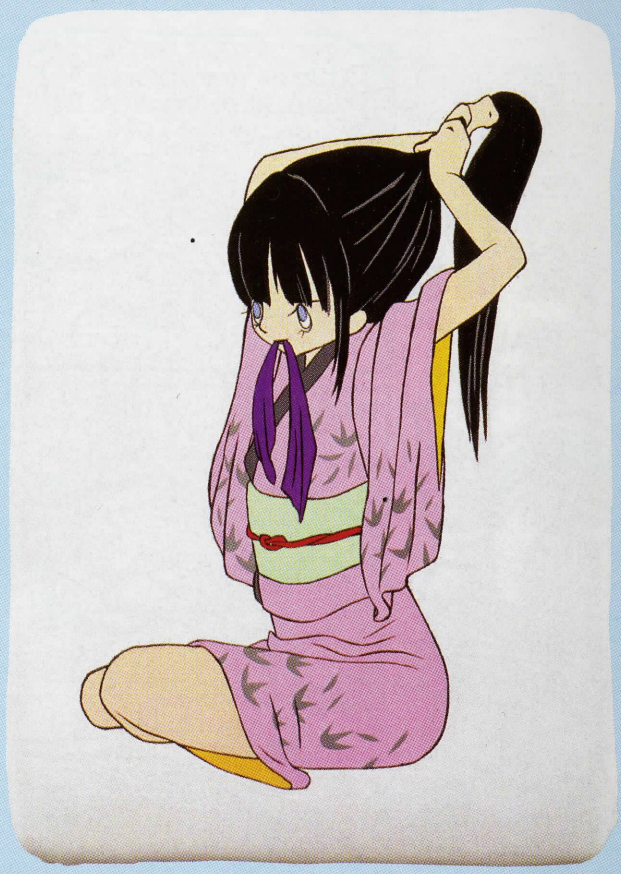
6. Pizzicato 5 Book ($?) - This is the Tokyo band's bible. If you're one of the fans left, then this is for you.

7. Philippe Starck Watch by Fossil ($95) - If you can't find a cool Japanese watch, get this one.

8. Porter Manpurse from Japan ($100) - The true man carries his gear in a purse.

9. Geoff McFetridge Screen Print on Canvas ($150-400) - Only available through Geoff, Giant Robot, or his Parco show in Japan.

10. Sinn Space Watch ($2500) - Bell&Ross for us, but it's Sinn everywhere else. This watch went into space.



Summer Songs, 2000 / Acrylic colors, wooden panel, cotton, blanket / 160 x 230 mm / © Ai Yamaguchi, Ninyu Works

ai yamaguchi

september 14-november 2

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