

FAMRE

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SEPTEMBER 2011



WE BARBARIANS
ELENi KALORKOTI
THE RAPTURE
THE TWELVES
MARK SHEARWOOD
TROLL HUNTER
INTERVIEWS
30 MINUTES OR LESS
THE SKIN I LIVE IN

ECHO BY MIDNIGHT

BEC LORRIMER SHOOTS THE
STUNNING ANJA KONSTANTINOVA

It's fun to moan. Curb Your Enthusiasm.



I've never watched *Seinfeld*. I've heard that it's fantastic, and a heap of my friends are massive fans, but I've never felt the urge to delve back and power through the somewhat epic 180 episodes. Don't get me wrong, it's not the daunting number of seasons that's holding me back, nor that it would take up a fairly substantial portion of my already threadbare free-time, for a period of several months (I waste enough of the week on crappy US TV to swap in a good show with ease), I can't quite put my finger on it; I'm just not massively bothered about sitting down the watch the show.

Perhaps for that reason I'd never really seen *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, developed off the back of an hour-long HBO special with *Seinfeld* co-creator Larry David. You probably don't need

me to run through the premise, but just in case, the show essentially just follows a fictionalised version of David as he goes about his business. That's about it. And it's wonderful.

It wasn't until earlier this summer that I'd ever thought about working my way through *Curb*. I'd seen the odd episode, largely on late night TV, but I never quite got the humour, then after stumbling upon seasons one, four and seven (an odd mix, for sure), and with the usual slow summer months before the fall, I decided to give them a go.

Watching someone moan, splutter and find problems with never-ending faux pas and social convention shouldn't be entertaining, but there's just something about the writing on *Curb* that gets you. So cleverly does it highlight a theme or topic and have

David berate others or get himself caught in loops before doubling back at the end of each episode to tie up the storyline how you never expected; the star, and writer, deserves great credit for keeping up such a high quality of entertainment for what are now eight great seasons.

It's rare that anything ever really happens in an episode, which makes it so effortless to watch, it's like everyday life, only the show is so witty and humorous, you'd have never thought the mundane could be so wonderful you can't take your eyes off it.

For much of the TV-loving audience, this certainly won't be news, but for the rest, take Larry into your heart, you'll never want to let him go.

Sam Bathe
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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ARTWORK BY
CESAR MORENO

SEPT. 2011

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**CURB YOUR ENTHUSIASM
SEASON 8**



DRIVE



PINKBERRY IN LONDON



ANJA KONSTANTINOVA



DRIBBBLE



LIMBO



**WE BARBARIANS'
NEW MERCH STORE**



STORY DELI



KILL LIST



**THE PRICE OF
MOUNTAIN PEACHES**

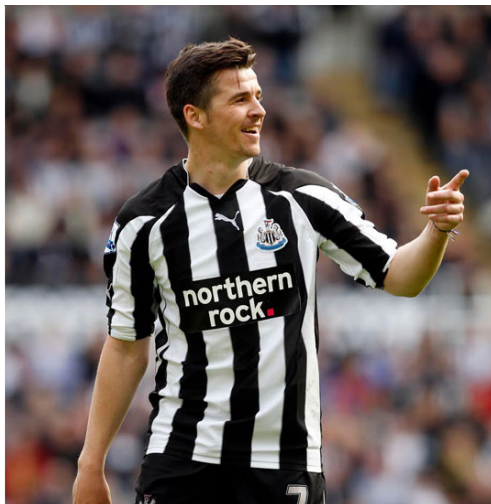


**SUMMER AS AN
ARSENAL FAN**



**MISSING WE BARBARIANS'
UPCOMING US TOUR**

**HA-
TE**



JOEY BARTON



**NEARING THE END OF
CURB SEASON 8**



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ALBUM REVIEWS



Things are shifting. We Barbarians.

WORDS SAM BATHE
PHOTOGRAPHY MATT WIGNALL



It's been a busy year for We Barbarians, one that sees the now Brooklyn-based three-piece sitting on the verge of real success and picking up hype from even the furthest corners of the blogosphere.

Making the big move in the spring, at the turn of the year, Dave Quon, Derek Van Heule and Nathan Warrentin were sitting pretty in their Long Beach home, but uprooting to the Big Apple was the sort of decision that's shaken things up in We Barbarians' world.

"We all grew up in California and have always been drawn to the idea of living on the opposite coast," explains Quon. "For a few reasons, it just felt like the appropriate time to leave California and go east for a change of pace. As a band, we draw a lot of inspiration from where we are based. Every time we have toured through New York, we felt momentum and a strong sense of culture that we really admired. So, we decided to move to Brooklyn to see how it would affect our lives and mindset as a band. A few months into our move, it's interesting to experience first-hand how choosing to put yourself in a different environment really does affect the art you produce and how you think about it."

Certainly, it's all paid off. Writing and recording around the clock in their new surroundings, they're on the eve of releasing new EP *Headspace*, a slight departure on their older work, and undoubtedly the most exciting set of tracks in their history.

Once tracklisted as a

four-song release, they've now bolstered the EP with a wonderful cover of David Byrne/Brian Eno's *Strange Overtones*. "While religiously listening to *Everything That Happens Will Happen Today*, we were drawn to the rhythms and melodies on the album. *Strange Overtones* was a standout track and struck a certain chord with us," Quon continues. "During our writing process, the song continued to inspire us so it seemed fitting to try and tackle it. The idea of life experience, change and how getting old add this interesting overtone to how you look at things."

It's closer to home, however, that draw the real highlights. Their own tracks *Headspace* and *The Wait Is Over* open up the EP, boasting the soaring guitar, pounding bass and relentless percussion the band have really made their own alongside a new rougher tone. Flowing further into *Stroke By Stroke* and *Chambray*, the five-track record has momentum at its core and will suck you in before you know it. And performing live they're somehow even more captivating.

Set for a nationwide tour in November, with dates already selling well, stunning shows with Passion Pit and Tokyo Police Club have done nothing but good for their burgeoning reputation. The only problem right now, is that after all of this recent activity we have to wait until early next year, and their second full-length, for more from the massively talented band. *New EP Headspace is out August 30th*





People have to grow up. You can try and hide it all you like, but it's pretty much confirmed that it's the way things have to go.

The New York music scene would beg to differ. The Strokes, back in 2001, seemed ageless. But if you catch a moment where Julian Casablancas takes off his ever-growing-in-size sunglasses, you can see him maturing. It was with their third album that, for better or worse, they gave up on remaining kids and began to mature. The Rapture too held off growing up for as long as they possibly could.

With each of their releases they appeared to inject even more youth into its sound. *Echoes*, their second LP, developed on from their debut but with stronger musicianship and a more focused approach they somehow developed something more chaotic overall, like a group of very talented kids being allowed to stomp all over every instrument in a studio. When they followed it up with *Pieces Of People We Love*, the first single showcased some impressive roller-skating moves. But if a carefree attitude shoots out of the speakers, it

doesn't mean they haven't been honing their craft.

The Rapture have that rare skill of making maturity sound youthful and, essentially, it's their biggest strength.

While all the rest of the post-punk/dance-punk/art-rock scene either tried to find a way of growing up gracefully or conceal aging for as long as possible, The Rapture went a different route. But on their forthcoming album, *In The Grace Of Your Love*, have they finally started to show their age?

Opener *Sail Away*, led as always by Luke Jenner's falsetto-wail, soaks itself in gospel synthesizers and tingling open hi-hats. And if that sounds like maturity in the making, it almost is.

They're not the overgrown kids they were a few years back, but at the same time, they're far from growing up. The track ends with a rumbling of voices and laughing at a party. Then *Miss You*

drops in with a fuzzy bassline and handclaps. It's clear that The Rapture are going to find a comfortable place in the sound of youth once again. They're not living in the past, or trying to conceal how strong a group of songwriters they've become. *In The Grace Of Your Love* is developed enough to confirm that this is a band to stick with, but

full of enough energy to soundtrack a new generation of music lovers.

In The Grace Of Your Love is out September 5th

THEY'RE NOT THE OVER-GROWN KIDS THEY WERE A FEW YEARS BACK, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY'RE FAR FROM GROWING UP.

Twisting the aces.

The Magician.

WORDS SAM BATHE



I'd heard whispers of DJ/producer/artist duo Aeroplane splitting up (or more slimming down to just the one member) a long time ago but it wasn't until a Diesel party at the start of June, and Vito De Luca standing up on stage on his own, that it really sunk in.

Aeroplane were genuinely brilliant. Alongside partner-in-crime Stephen Fasano, the pair turned in some of the best remixes you'll ever hear and a couple of the best DJ sets of my life. Although I'd been ignoring the facts for some time, it was actually June last year the split became official.

So what of Fasano? In the run up to Aeroplane's debut album, *We Can't Fly*, De Luca talked of being in the studio alone while Fasano was busy on other projects, and pleasantly some of his material is now finding the light of day, amid the birth of his new moniker, The Magician.

In the months since Aeroplane's break-up, Fasano has largely skated under the surface, but with a few releases now upon us and a couple of

tours under his belt, The Magician's name is now starting to build too.

As Aeroplane did, the start of getting The Magician out there has been with remixes and mix tapes. Working on Lykke Li's *I Follow Rivers* has done him no harm, boasting the same Balearic electro beats we've come to expect, though some 14 'Magic Tapes' are certainly the highlight to date. All available for free download, the 50 minute mixes are all so effortless it's pretty obvious Fasano has brought across his impeccable track choice from the Aeroplane days.

Original material though still

holds true in Fasano's heart, and there are some very interesting projects on the horizon. First up with Yuksek (!!);

entitled Peter & The Magician, the pair have put out a short but very sweet EP on Kitsuné; three lively and very dance-floor-friendly tracks.

Stephen Fasano had seven good years with Vito De Luca as Aeroplane, but there's little doubt he's revelling in a newfound freedom and platform for expression. There's an EP coming – so keep

your eyes out for that – and make sure to catch him live, The Magician puts on quite a show.

THERE'S AN EP COMING – SO KEEP YOUR EYES OUT FOR THAT – AND MAKE SURE TO CATCH HIM LIVE. THE MAGICIAN PUTS ON QUITE A SHOW.



If Dev Hynes concentrated on one project for more than five minutes, he'd probably be one of the biggest names in music right now.

A member of Test Icicles before they broke up in 2006, his follow-up solo project, Lightspeed Champion bore two albums and two EPs. Debut *Falling Off The Lavender Bridge* was widely praised, but by the time *Life Is Sweet! Nice To Meet You* hit stores in early 2010, he seemed to already be loosing interest.

Now Dev is onto a new moniker, Blood Orange, and perhaps for the time being at least, under this name, he's here to stay.

While still producing music for others on the side (Florence And The Machine, Basement Jaxx and more have been privy to his talents), Hynes seems at home as Blood Orange. Finding a new more upbeat style, faster tempo and much freer aesthetic, upon releasing *Coastal Grooves* in early August, he's a man fully back in his flow.

Inspired by a slew of '80s themes and a glam arrogance so delightfully underplayed, Hynes has always been a master musician but here more than ever he's been able to channel his tal-

ents as one. Crafting cohesive multi-layered guitar in-amongst a powerful basslines or percussion, there's an elegance and control often missing in indie outputs of this sort.

After the final EP under the name Lightspeed Champion, however, we almost didn't hear any more from the music impresario.

"After *Bye Bye*, I never wanted to release another record again! But then Domino [Records] heard some of the stuff I had for *Coastal Grooves*, liked it, and convinced me to put it out," he explains.

The new nature of his sound likely comes from the new surroundings Hynes has thrown himself into. Jumping ship from the UK to move to Brooklyn a little over three years ago, with a lot of the music (often written in his bedroom and never intended for release) inspired by long walks in New York

and LA and trying to be content. And an album without despair is certainly a good move for Hynes.

Though his output as Lightspeed Champion was utterly brilliant at times, stick on the two LPs back-to-back and by the end there's every chance you'll be feeling more than a

little depressed.

There was talk of Hynes not touring as Blood Orange akin to a lack of dates towards the end of his previous project, but thankfully a very limited handful of performances have appeared on the horizon. Maybe that means he'll be sticking

with Blood Orange for a little while longer – we sure hope so – but given a collaboration with Grizzly Bear's Chris Taylor that's already in the offing, so we're not going to count our chickens just yet.

Debut Coastal Grooves is out now



"AFTER 'BYE BYE', I NEVER WANTED TO RELEASE ANOTHER RECORD AGAIN!"



THE DRUMS PORTAMENTO

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 5

The Drums built their name almost entirely off single *Let's Go Surfing*. The spikey, high-octane and addictive single was everywhere you looked early summer in 2010, but when their self-titled album eventually hit, they quickly came undone, as the other 11 tracks lacked anything like the same enthusiasm.

Returning a year later with *Portamento*, they've learnt to channel their upbeat jitter a little better; with rumours the band were close to a break up in June over artistic direction, the extra discussion, and perhaps a little friction, has seemingly paid off.

Drawing comparisons to the likes of Beach Fossils, *Portamento* is more of an 'album'; they're more focussed, driven and on the whole, this LP sounds a lot more cohesive. The 12 tracks aren't perfect but they push boundaries in a different direction, and it's pleasing to see this sort of music given a chance on a bigger scale than many of their peers. **SB**

★★★★★



KITSUNÉ TABLOID BY THE TWELVES

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 5

Though they dropped the ball a little in backing Is Tropical as their main hope for 2011, taste-makers Kitsuné never seem to put a foot wrong with their wonderful compilations. Giving air time to the next and best in electro on their *Maison* releases, it's actually the more sporadic *Tabloid* mixes that are the real jewel in their crown, never failing to impress.

Mixed and curated by the most exciting DJs, producers or bands around today, if there was anyone we'd have hoped to be given the reigns right now, it was The Twelves, and our dream has come true.

Airing new remixes of bands including Metric, Munk, Two Door Cinema Club and French Horn Rebellion Vs. Database and blending in further tracks from Twin Shadow, Zombi, The Juan Maclean and Siriusmo, you'll struggle to find a better collection of front foot electro all year. Clocking in at a massively 24 tracks, it's fairly epic in length too. **TM**

★★★★★



IN THE GRACE OF YOUR LOVE THE RAPTURE

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 5

A full five years since *Pieces Of The People We Love*, The Rapture have been away from the game for far too long, and boy have we missed them. Rejuvenated, reinvigorated and with a new album in their back pocket, it is certainly good to have them back.

Returning to DFA, *In The Grace Of Your Love* all but loses the saxophone so prominent in The Rapture's sound to date, but its soul still remains, and as ever, funk is front and centre in the New York band's new material, just channelled perhaps a little differently.

Miss You could have slotted into their aforementioned third album, while the silky *Never Die Again* is another highlight, although overall the LP really struggles to match the excellent, and first single, *How Deep Is Your Love*. A party anthem through and through, this album is worth it just for that track, but as the other 10 struggled to stand up against it, *In The Grace Of Your Love* leaves a slightly sour taste in your mouth. **SB**

★★★★★



WE BARBARIANS HEADSPACE

RELEASED AUGUST 30

For bands set to do big things after the turn of the next year, around late summer you'll often see numerous EPs released to showcase their talents. Offering a tease of things to come, the samplers set your tongues wagging in anticipation, but usually struggle to sound cohesive and well-rounded in themselves.

2012 is set to be huge for We Barbarians, but landing on your doorstep right now is their *Headspace* EP. Five unrelenting tracks that will leave you gasping for more, the EP offers more creativity, boundless energy and passion for making music that outstrips most full-lengths put out of late; it's impressive to say the least.

Laden with effortless hooks, We Barbarians' brand of rhythmic indie-rock draws you in from the word go; across the pounding *Headspace*, smoother and utterly devourable *The Wait Is Over* and call-to-arms *Chambray*, very rarely do EPs come along this good. These guys' next LP is going to be something really special. **TM**

★★★★★



FILM



PREVIEWS



TROLL HUNTER
INTERVIEWS



REVIEWS



DVD AND
BLU-RAY
REVIEWS

THE IDES OF MARCH

RELEASED OCTOBER 7 (USA) OCTOBER 28 (UK)

There are a few ensemble dramas in the works at present, but George Clooney's political drama *The Ides Of March* looks among the most exciting. Based on the 2008 play *Farragut North* by Beau Willimon, the film will consider similar themes of power and influence.

Clooney is a Hollywood star whose film choices have actually become *more* interesting as his career has moved on; here, he directs and stars. The last time he directed and starred in a political drama it was *Good Night, And Good Luck*, which was both a critical and commercial success, earning him an Oscar nomination for Best Director.

He has gathered an extremely impressive cast for this project, including promising young actress Evan Rachel Wood (who has already impressed in various projects) and the ever-reliable likes of Paul Giamatti, Marisa Tomei and Philip Seymour Hoffman. Add to those names the deservedly rising star that is Ryan Gosling – whose career is blossoming nicely – and you have a very intriguing package. The media campaign for the film has been good so far too – a poster featuring Clooney's and Gosling's faces proves particularly effective – and everything currently points toward success. For Gosling, this wraps up a prolific and successful 2011. *Crazy, Stupid, Love* is currently charming audiences in the US and *Drive*, the well-received Cannes thriller, is also on the way. Clooney, meanwhile, refuses to be predictable and could have another big hit on his hands. **MR**







NEW YEAR'S EVE

RELEASED DECEMBER 9

Garry Marshall's romantic ensemble *Valentine's Day* last year made a lot of money despite being ridiculed by most critics. *New Year's Eve* is a spiritual successor to that film (make of that what you will) and features a similarly expansive cast. Whether more spiritual sequels based on other popular public holidays will follow is yet to be confirmed; *Halloween*, perhaps?

Actors such as Jessica Biel, Bradley Cooper and Ashton Kutcher are

returning but will play different roles. Take a deep breath, for the cast also includes: Robert De Niro, Josh Duhamel, Carla Gugino, Sarah Jessica Parker, Sienna Miller, Michelle Pfeiffer, Hilary Swank, Halle Berry, Katherine Heigl, Jon Bon Jovi, Ice Cube and Greg Kinnear. There are others too. You get the idea. Meg Ryan plays a taxi driver.

There isn't a huge amount more to say, other than that it takes the intertwining, multiple-protagonists route

of its predecessor and other films such as *Love, Actually*. Those excited by the prospect of a *Valentine's Day* sequel will be clamouring for this, and it'll probably make a lot of money. We should stay our critical barbs for the time being – at least until the film is actually out – but ensemble casting doesn't by default make for a successful picture. It would be pleasing though if Garry Marshall ended up delivering a film which trumps his last attempt. **MR**





THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

RELEASED DECEMBER 14, 2012

The Hobbit is a project which has been variously rumoured, planned and (finally) in production for a long time. It's hard to believe that, by the time part one (*An Unexpected Journey*) comes out next year, it'll have been nine years since *Return Of The King* hauled in a boat load of Oscars despite being the weakest of *Rings* trilogy.

Since then various things have happened. Peter Jackson's name has been linked to the project in various creative roles; as a producer and now, finally, as director. Guillermo del Toro, having been appointed as a widely popular successor to Jackson, has been forced to concentrate on other projects due in part to time constraints. Some of his ideas though will still be incor-

porated into Jackson's production. Perhaps most significantly, what was originally one film has now expanded into two. This is a popular trend at present, particularly with franchises that have plenty of money to be rung out of them. It feels almost sacrilegious to be cynical about a project so many people (including us) have been anticipating, but how can a children's book of around 300 pages run to two feature-length films without seeming overcooked, when the entire *Lord of the Rings* trilogy was contained in three (admittedly long) films? We can only hope that the 'filler material' lives up to the legacy at stake here.

What we are guaranteed, at least, is Ian McKellen returning to his iconic

and much-loved role as Gandalf and Andy Serkis (who is also second unit director) reprising his role as Gollum. Martin Freeman is playing protagonist Bilbo Baggins (after scheduling conflicts with the BBC's *Sherlock* were resolved) and his co-star in that show – Benedict Cumberbatch – has been confirmed as the voice of the dragon Smaug. There isn't room here to name-check the extensive list of actors playing Bilbo's many dwarf companions, but the headline signing is probably Richard Armitage as dwarf leader Thorin Oakenshield. Unnecessary film-splitting aside, this has got to be one of the most anticipated blockbusters of next year. It's in 3-D of course. Feel free to shrug, sigh, or both. **MR**



THE THING

RELEASED OCTOBER 14 (USA) DECEMBER 2 (UK)

The Thing isn't strictly speaking a reboot of, but a prequel to, John Carpenter's brilliant 1982 horror of the same name. That said, from watching the trailer (which has finally emerged after months of delays/waiting), you'd be forgiven for thinking it was indeed a reboot or remake. So it's a prequel, but the fundamental setup is basically identical to that of John Carpenter's film, meaning that although it *isn't* a remake, it certainly ends up looking like one. This creates a pleasing sense of nostalgia but also a worryingly familiar feeling of repetition.

Director Matthijs van Heijningen Jr.'s (*Red Rain*) film takes place three days before the events of the 1982 film, and chronicles how the titular shape-shifting beastie, having been recovered from the ice by scientists, proceeds to run amok in a remote research facility, imitating them one by one with gruesome results. Those who have seen the '82 film will recognise this formula.

Does this material need retreading? Do we really *need* to see how the creature ended up at the facility in Carpenter's picture? One of the great aspects of that film was the suggestion that the creature had done all of this before off screen – that a brutal game of cat and mouse was re-running itself as the thing struggled to survive in its new harsh environment. Unfortunately, to me, as a huge fan of Carpenter's film, the overt familiarity of the scenario – including the general aesthetic and the paranoid sense of dread – just feel too recycled to be genuinely exciting.

That said, I *want* the film to be good. I won't judge it before I've seen it. New leads Mary Elizabeth Winstead (*Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*) and Joel Edgerton (*Animal Kingdom*) should make for compelling protagonists (the '82 film was controversially devoid of female cast members) and the overall look and feel of the project feels about right. Fingers crossed this doesn't turn out to be a lazy, unimaginative cash-in. **MR**





TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 16 (UK) NOVEMBER 18 (USA)

John le Carré's well-loved novel is being translated to the big-screen by Swedish director Tomas Alfredson, who made his name internationally a few years ago with *Let The Right One In*, a great little coming-of-age horror film with satisfying depth. He's now turned his attention to the crime thriller genre, and he's assembled a quite formidable cast and crew.

The cast-list includes an outstanding line-up of Brit actors currently at the height of their powers. Gary Oldman stars as George Smiley, who is forced out of retirement to help flush out a Russian agent. Alongside him are Colin Firth, fresh from his success at the Oscar's earlier in the year, Mark Strong (who seems ubiquitous at present), the rising star that is Tom Hardy and many other reliable names including Toby Jones and Stephen Graham. Oh, and John Hurt, too, in case that wasn't enough for you.

It would be easy to presume, given the mighty cast, that the film will be brilliant, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. Sure, the trailer establishes a very noir-ish feeling that is satisfying, and it looks sufficiently portentous and smart, but it's also not giving too much away, which is the way it should be. This stands to be a big winter success if all the elements fall into place. **MR**





THE MUPPETS

RELEASED DECEMBER 14, 2012

The Muppets are back, ladies and gentlemen, and in the hands of James Bobin, who amongst other things is the co-creator of *Flight Of The Conchords*, as well as writing and directing on *Da Ali G Show*. The storyline, such as it matters, revolves around the discovery of oil beneath the Muppet Theatre, attracting the attentions of Chris Cooper's antagonist oil barren. This prompts the film's two main human characters Gary and Mary (Jason Segel and Amy Adams) to reunite the Muppets in order to stage a theatre-saving telethon.

That's the basic setup, but it's really just an excuse to bring these beloved characters back to the big screen. Nobody is claiming that story doesn't matter, but if the quality of the writing is there, the audience should be so wrapped up in the characters that some narrative frailties won't be enough to derail it. *The Muppets* trailer caught me off guard slightly. The last Muppets film to be fully released in cinemas was the disappointing 1999 effort *Muppets From Space*, and in the years since then I had forgotten how lovable these critters are. The trailer

put a childlike smile on my face, and I'm hoping the finished article can do the same, while simultaneously bringing the characters to a new generation.

I'm clearly not the only one harbouring an affection for Jim Henson's creations, as half of Hollywood has turned out to put in cameo appearances. The confirmed list includes current sensations such as Selena Gomez and Katy Perry, but also a wealth of acting talent including everybody from Ben Stiller and Ricky Gervais to Alan Arkin, Billy Crystal and George Clooney. Even Lady Gaga's in it. **MR**





INTERVIEW WITH

**ANDRÉ
ØVREDAAL
& GLENN
ERLAND
TOSTERUUD**

DIRECTOR AND STAR OF *TROLL HUNTER*

WORDS BY ANDREW SIMPSON

T*roll Hunter*, the debut feature from Norwegian director André Øvredal, is released on 9 September on the back of some rave reviews and hit screenings on the festival circuit. Following a group of media students who accidentally discover the existence of trolls while filming an exposé about bear poaching in Norway, the film sees its heroes taken into the land of the supposedly mythical beasts by the last remaining troll hunter (a fantastically droll performance by comedian Otto Jespersen). In a clever comic twist Jespersen's character is so sick of the government bureaucrats that are trying to keep trolls a secret that he decides to blow the whistle, taking the young reporters on an adventure that features genuinely scary CGI monsters as well as some very funny real world interpretations of famous tales of trolls lurking under bridges and craving Christian blood. It is seriously good fun, and perfectly utilises the often tiresome fake-documentary format. André Øvredal and star Glen Erland Tosterud, installed in a London hotel room to talk about the film on the eve of its UK release, are excited

that the film has gone down so well outside of its home country, and claim it is because of the unique twist it puts on a familiar genre, and particularly the way it plays its outlandish premise completely straight.

FAN THE FIRE: How did *Troll Hunter* come about?

ANDRÉ ØVREDAL: It was my idea. I thought of the idea and then I presented that idea to our producer, and he loved it so much that we agreed to write the script. So I wrote the script, and we funded the movie partly with a distributor and partly with the Norwegian government. That's how it was created. And through casting I was lucky enough to find Glenn.

GLENN ERLAND TOSTERUD: When I heard about the project I was extremely excited because I really liked the idea that it was supposed to be a documentary, or mockumentary, and of course it was extremely important that it feels real and it feels authentic, it can't seem acted, so for me that was a great experience.

FTF: How did you come up with the concept?

AØ: It comes from wanting to put the Norwegian heritage on screen in a way that hasn't been done in a long time, or ever before even. A lot of our films are social realist films about, in my opinion smaller subjects, and I wanted to put some of our culture on screen in a different way. And I love the trolls! I thought they were great fun when I was a kid, and thinking of this older Indiana Jones type of character, grumpy government worker who's tired of his job hunting huge trolls it was just a fun idea, and I realised when I came up with it that this is the movie I want to make, this is what I wanted to do it as my first film.

FTF: One of the reasons it works so well is that it's treated in such a matter of fact way, centring on this worker who is sick of his job and government bureaucrats, as well as hunting trolls. Why did you want to go down that route rather than making it a straightforward monster movie?

AØ: I think that just comes from the way I see films. I'm not that crazy about a pure out and out monster movie where people are being chased around by something. I think that can get quite one dimensional. So I wanted to make something that related to our society in some way, rather than the survival movie. Also, I wanted to play with the humour of the fairytales, with the Christian blood and the troll under the bridge, and try to play around with these ideas, because they're so much fun!

FTF: Why the fake documentary style?

AØ: There are a couple of aspects to having made it like a documentary that led me to it, and the first is that of course it's possible to do a big monster movie if you do it as a documentary, even if you do it on a medium scale budget. To shoot coverage, you don't have to shoot those big angles, and you can make it frightening right there with that one camera. And that's the second aspect of it, that you are really in the moment, it's really in your face. Also it adds to the humour, because if you have everybody talking seri-

“I’M NOT THAT CRAZY ABOUT A PURE OUT AND OUT MONSTER MOVIE WHERE PEOPLE ARE BEING CHASED AROUND BY SOMETHING. I THINK THAT CAN GET QUITE ONE DIMENSIONAL.”



“IT’S POSSIBLE TO DO A BIG MONSTER MOVIE IF YOU DO IT AS A DOCUMENTARY, EVEN IF YOU DO IT ON A MEDIUM SCALE BUDGET. TO SHOOT COVERAGE, YOU DON’T HAVE TO SHOOT THOSE BIG ANGLES, AND YOU CAN MAKE IT FRIGHTENING RIGHT THERE WITH THAT ONE CAMERA. AND THAT’S THE SECOND ASPECT OF IT, THAT YOU ARE REALLY IN THE MOMENT, IT’S REALLY IN YOUR FACE.”

ously about trolls, which is kind of absurd, the notion that there are trolls out there, then it all becomes funnier somehow. It becomes ludicrous.

FTF: What was it like as an actor to work in that style?

GET: Well for its a bit like being reporter somehow, and for me that was really interesting because you have to make it really authentic all the time. We did make it authentic, and that made it really fresh, because he [André] wanted to us to do it in each take in a different way for it to be really authentic, so that was a great way to work.

FTF: So you got to improvise?

GET: Yes, a lot. The script was there, and we would talk about the scene, and there’s a clear ending to the scene. Our words can be different every time, but still the scene is the same.

FTF: The film has received a lot of attention in the past few months, and is about to get a big release. Why do you think it has been so popular?

AØ: I think for Norwegians the film played so well because it plays with familiarity. We know all this stuff and it’s twisted in the movie. But I think that for everybody else outside Norway it’s exotic, yet a lot of the themes in the film are universal. So a lot of people can relate to it, but I do think that that exotic nature of the film is important.

GET: I think it is something fresh, and yes exotic, because a lot of films these days are the same, you can’t tell between them. This is quirky, funny, scary, and a documentary all at the same time. I think this makes it something that people really like.

FTF: One of the major plot points of the film is that the government know about the existence of trolls, and want to keep it a secret from the public. Wouldn’t *Troll Hunter* be the perfect way to stop the truth coming out if trolls actually existed, by making it into a big joke?

GET: [pretending to look around shiftily] We don’t want to talk about that! *Troll Hunter is out September 9th*





30 MINUTES OR LESS

DIRECTED BY RUBEN FLEISCHER STARRING JESSE EISENBERG, DANNY MCBRIDE, AZIZ ANSARI, NICK SWARDSON, MICHAEL PEÑA, FRED WARD & DILSHAD VADSARIA

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) OCTOBER 16 (UK)

With a box office smash (2009's *Zombieland*) under his belt and another starring role for the now Oscar-nominated Jesse Eisenberg, Ruben Fleischer's *30 Minutes Or Less* hits with a lot more expectation than the aforementioned zombie-comedy, and the problem of matching it.

About two wannabee criminals (McBride, Swardson) who kidnap a pizza delivery guy (Eisenberg) and strap a bomb to his chest to force him to rob a bank, Dwayne and Travis' plan is part of a wider scheme to knock off one of their rich fathers, but when a hitman

(Peña) gets involved too, the three-way ordeal quickly gets a little messy.

With the opening sequence soundtracked by The Hives, *30 Minutes Or Less* is instantly infused with a sense of energy and adrenaline, but as the mix-match tone flows through, based off a script from first-time screenwriter Michael Diliberti, it's un-doings unfortunately often show.

Said not to have been based on the case of pizza delivery man Brian Douglas Wells, though the plot and wider elements are remarkably similar, certainly too close for there to have not been a direct inspiration, the script is laboured, which even despite Fleischer's intensive style of direction, holds the movie back.

30 Minutes Or Less is very funny, and possesses a lot of the right ingredients, but just feels like it's lacking something. Though the laughs come thick and fast, they're more than a little disjointed, and on the whole the narrative feels shallow as you don't invest in the bromance bonds.

Instead, the film becomes a vehicle for the director and actors to

present themselves. Fleischer's style is again massively appealing, just hopefully next time he'll have a better screenplay to work with. Eisenberg is good, quick to the draw, though not of the level he put in on *The Social Network*, and Danny McBride too is entertaining, although he might want to be careful of his next few steps as he's been playing an awful lot of foul-mouthed dumb oafs of late.

The film was talked up as being the making of Aziz Ansari on the big screen, and as the pizza boy's best friend, drafted in to help, he's fantastic. Forever snappy and sharp, it's he and Nick Swardson – as McBride's partner-in-crime – that steal the film, while as a hitman with an inferiority complex, Peña is very funny too.

Always unlikely to repeat the breakout success of *Zombieland*, *30 Minutes Or Less* attempts but lacks the wit and surprise of the director's last film, and the human element too, but it's still an entertaining film, and remains one of the better comedies in a generally disappointing year. **SB**

★★★★★



FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS

DIRECTED BY WILL GLUCK **STARRING** JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, MILA KUNIS, PATRICIA CLARKSON, JENNA ELFMAN, BRYAN GREENBERG, RICHARD JENKINS & WOODY HARRELSON

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) SEPTEMBER 9 (UK)

If you're into comedies about best friends who sleep together, you've hit the jackpot in 2011. After Ivan Reitman's *No Strings Attached* back in February and the current NBC TV series of the same name as this movie, created by the writers of *(500) Days Of Summer*, now it's Will Gluck's *Friends With Benefits*' time in the limelight.

When two friends (Timberlake, Kunis) tell themselves it's OK to sleep together and keep all of the complicated stuff on the side, it's all too soon before they have to start lying that they don't harbour any deeper feelings, and what started out as a bit of harmless, physical fun, quickly threatens to derail their entire relationship, even just as friends.

From the trailers and marketing material, you're sold *Friends With*

Benefits as a raunchy R-rated comedy, but while that's what to expect for the opening 30 minutes, from there on in it quickly becomes a bog-standard rom-com. The first act is quite patently aimed at guys, filled with sex scenes, a frequently near-naked (body double for) Mila Kunis, jock humour and mocking of typical chick-flick clichés, while in acts two and three it becomes more predictable in each of the ideals it has just berated, and not in a clever or ironic way; Katherine Heigl may as well have taken on of the lead role.

It's in the opening segment too where Timberlake and Kunis really struggle together, at the time when overpowering animal magnetism is meant to be making it impossible for them to stay off each other. The leads have absolutely no chemistry when they first start enjoying the benefits, and while they improve towards the end, really every other relationship is much more believable than theirs, the one the entire movie is based around.

Nothing more typifies this more than a two-minute date sequence between Kunis and a doctor (Greenberg) she meets in passing. They merely share a dinner, a couple of brief drinks and then spend the night together on date #5, but every second of it is far more captivating and believable than any dialogue between Kunis and Justin

Timberlake. And the dialogue throughout is even quite good, nay the script even feels snappy and entertaining, it's just nothing is delivered to that standard, by the once-pop star in particular.

Timberlake is poor throughout; he's just not interesting enough to play a male lead, and certainly doesn't have anything like the charisma to pull off this sort of generic role. And his often wimpy voice only undermines that further. Mila Kunis on the other hand is at last stepping into her potential. After *Black Swan* and a few other role, she's ever watchable on-screen, and although *Friends With Benefits* is hardly going to win her an Oscar, she does all she's asked with aplomb. That said, in side-roles, Patricia Clarkson, Woody Harrelson, Richard Jenkins and Jenna Elfman do just as much in a bare 10 minutes of screentime each.

With barely a handful of laughs the whole film (and all of those driven by side-characters) and so much product placement it's off-putting, *Friends With Benefits* was falling before the fact it fails to ever explore the core concept of the entire film. In the end it becomes 90 minutes of clichéd emotions and predictable plot developments. Did we really need another lacklustre chick-flick to throw on the now towering pile? Debateable. **SB**

★★★★★



KILL LIST

DIRECTED BY BEN WHEATLEY **STARRING** NEIL MASKELL, MYANNA BURING, HARRY SIMPSON, MICHAEL SMILEY, EMMA FRYER, STRUAN RODGER & BEN CROMPTON

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 2 (UK) TBC (USA)

It's fair to say I didn't much like writer/director Ben Wheatley's debut picture. Still pulling in as the most negative review on aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, I gave *Down Terrace* only one star for good reason; it was terrible. It wasn't just on a narrative level where the film failed, cringe-worthy acoustic guitar cutaways and a simple lack of filmic values (cinematography was nonexistent and frequent pixelation as Wheatley chooses to focus in on his subjects with digital (yes digital) zoom) irreparably damaged the picture. In saying: "*Down Terrace* doesn't just feel like the work of a first-time filmmaker, but that of someone who's never before thought of making movies", I wasn't harsh, I was honest.

It seems Ben Wheatley wasn't pleased; a couple of days after going

live, an email landed in my inbox from the man himself. Now, this is an unprecedented move. Directors often say you shouldn't read your own reviews, get a feeling of the buzz, fine, but often go no further. To then email a critic who didn't like your work is pretty much unheard of, but then I do guess he had to check: "Did you guys see the same film?" Yes Ben, that's how we just reviewed it.

And yet when news of his follow-up hit the grapevine I was excited. Accepted into this year's SXSW Film Festival (kudos), picked up by IFC in the States and with Warp X co-producing, *Kill List* even received some (if meaningless) great reviews from Empire and Total Film. The tides, it seemed, might be turning.

With times falling hard, ex-soldiers-turned-contract killers Jay (Maskall) and Gal (Smiley) decide to take on one last job, only as they run down their kill list, things quickly begin to spiral out of control and take an unexpected twist on the final hit.

Spending much too much time with the characters at the start, and without teasing out even an ounce of emotional involvement, *Kill List* feels

unfortunately imbalanced. With 90 minutes knocking on the runtime, and the film already outstaying its welcome, the plot rushes to explain an on-going mythology in the final five minutes, when it should have been explored in at least half, if not the whole, final act.

The cast this time are good, with hearty performances from a bunch of relative unknowns, and pleasingly Wheatley avoids some of the chronic problems that ruined his debut, but still this is not a movie you should make any effort to see.

Some of the ingredients were right (early dialogue and closing claustrophobic chase) but *Kill List* lacks spark or the hunger to draw you in. It's a hitman film with no energy, no pace, and so without a compelling narrative it relies on gore-hungry murders to keep your eyes on the screen. And it's not even very good at them.

I walked into *Kill List* with an open and excited mind, but left wishing I hadn't bothered. If Ben Wheatley is really "among the most promising filmmakers in Britain," then God help us all. **SB**

★★★★★



PROJECT NIM

DIRECTED BY JAMES MARSH **STARRING** BOB ANGELINI,
BERN COHEN & REAGAN LEONARD

RELEASED OUT NOW

In 1973, Columbia University professor Dr. Herb Terrace embarked on one of the strangest scientific experiments of his generation (a generation, let's not forget, that included Timothy Leary). He decided that by bringing up a newborn chimp, Nim, in a human environment and teaching him sign language, he could prove that the capacity to form language is not a uniquely human trait. The experiment failed to provide conclusive results; but what Terrace did prove is that if language is a defining characteristic that separates man from ape, then it is the only one, because compassion, reason and foresight clearly do not play a part.

The opening of Marsh's film follows the aesthetic of his previous project, *Man on Wire*, by splicing grainy documentary footage with a stylised, almost noirish dramatic element.

This approach worked so well for the suspense of *Man On Wire*, but it does little justice to Nim's melancholy and bizarre story. Where *Man On Wire* was a high-octane heist movie, *Project Nim* is a slow-burning story of human endeavour and pathos. Marsh quickly retires this style, but with no back-up plan he never quite works out how best to tell his story, and reverts to 'talking heads' and archive footage for the rest of the film.

It doesn't take long to realise that Nim's first surrogate, Stephanie, is bat sh*t insane. She allows him to run amok and becomes obsessed with his "sexual awakening" and watching him masturbate. When Nim outgrows city life Terrace sets him up in a huge country mansion with a harem of buxom and pliable young female teachers who, in the space of a few months, teach Nim a considerable vocabulary of signs with which to express himself. Terrace remains distant throughout, his interest only piqued by occasional newspaper attention and regular sex with one or more of the "teachers".

Eventually the entire experiment is abandoned as Nim becomes too powerful for his teachers; and he is

dumped in a chimpanzee enclosure.

Terrace confirms himself as a repulsive and apathetic man: he has satiated his lust and is happy enough with the half-baked and arbitrary results of his mangled experiment. He allows Nim to tumble from enclosure to medical testing facility to lonely farm sanctuary without ever trying to intervene.

After 10 years of confusion, one of Nim's old carers locates him and decides to visit. Bob approaches cautiously as a barely recognisable Nim rocks back and forth in his cage. Nim turns to face his old friend and immediately throws out his most simple and favourite sign, one of the few signs he created on his own, "play".

Our sympathy for Nim, and our wonder at the madness of his captors, only takes us so far, however. By the end of the film we feel as if we know a bit more about Project Nim, but we aren't sure why. Marsh is too content framing the entire film around the narrative spun by its subjects, rather than stamping his own authorship on the film, and as a result it lacks the power and depth of his previous work. **ND**

★★★★★



THE GUARD

DIRECTED BY JOHN MICHAEL McDONAGH **STARRING**
BRENDAN GLEESON, DON CHEADLE, LIAM CUNNINGHAM,
MICHAEL OG LANE, DAVID WILMOT & MARK STRONG

RELEASED OUT NOW

Back in 2008 Michael McDonagh had great fun with Brendan Gleeson in *In Bruges*, an offbeat comedy that was critically-lauded. Now his brother John has taken up the mantle and made a film that isn't related to Michael's in any narrative sense, but which stands as pretty much the perfect spiritual successor. And again Gleeson is clearly having the time of his life; getting the most out of him seems to run in the McDonagh family.

Here he plays Gerry Boyle, a 'guarda' (policeman) in Connemara, Ireland. Not much happens out there in the way of serious police business, but when a gang of drug runners is found to be operating in the area, FBI agent Wendell Everett (Don Cheadle) is sent over to provide assistance. And there you have the odd-couple setup that frames the action on-screen.

Wendell is pretty strait-laced – formal, polite, professional – whereas Gerry drinks on the job, openly admits

to taking drugs and indulges in the local escort services on his day off. Gleeson's Gerry has an off-kilter personality that is purposefully kept enigmatic and allowed to flourish without much explanation. Is he racist? We don't really believe so. Is he ignorant? Possibly, but those glints in his eye suggest otherwise. At no stage is the indecipherability of his character more succinctly articulated than when Wendell says to him: "I can't tell if you're really f*cking dumb or really f*cking smart." Gerry smiles in response to this, happy to let the mystery go on.

Meanwhile, the serious business of catching criminals needs attending to. Those criminals take the form of a ragtag band played by Mark Strong (whose line in bad guys is expanding every year), David Wilmot and Liam Cunningham. Their nefarious deeds are intercut with scenes of our heroes getting to know each other, and in the tradition of crime-based comedy their 'evilness' is played as much for laughs as it is for narrative drive. In the end, the plot becomes less interesting than the central partnership. The film is more concerned with the relationship formed in pursuit of the bad guys, rather than the end result of that pursuit, which is sensible.

The interplay between Gleeson and Cheadle is very effective, the lat-

ter providing the less showy but no less important foil for the former. In a way Gleeson has the opposite role to the one he had in *In Bruges* – this time he's the 'funny one'. That isn't to say Cheadle doesn't hold his own in the comedy stakes, however; he gets some good one liners here and there. Around them a supporting cast of locals provide good laughs. Jokes about Ireland (and Dublin in particular) are frequent, and there are a couple of amusing nods to the IRA and MI5 thrown in for good measure.

As with most comedies it can be hit-and-miss at times, but in general it hits far more often than it misses. *The Guard* also moves along at a delightful pace (for a debut feature, the direction certainly is impressively confident), stopping only on occasion to allow more serious beats to fall gently into place. There is one particularly touching moment involving a book. Sure, the bad guys don't make too much of an impression (excepting one good scene between Gleeson and Wilmot), but it's a buddy comedy at heart, and a good one. The ambiguous ending raises a smile rather than a frown, and leaves one hoping that the McDonagh brothers will continue to find charismatic and interesting roles for Brendan Gleeson in films to come. **MR**

★★★★★



FRIGHT NIGHT

DIRECTED BY CRAIG GILLESPIE STARRING COLIN FARRELL, ANTON YELCHIN, CHRISTOPHER MINTZ-PLASSE, DAVID TENNANT, IMOGEN POOTS, TONI COLLETTE & LISA LOEB

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) SEPTEMBER 2 (UK)

I can't remember why but I was quite excited about *Fright Night* upon walking into the theatre. I don't think I saw the trailer, I hadn't heard any buzz, good or bad, and nor had I seen the original; perhaps it was my gut, but my gut was wrong.

A remake of the 1985 film of the same name, *Fright Night* centres around a high school kid (Yelchin) with a fairly unique problem; he fears his next-door neighbour (Farrell) is a vampire. When people in the local area start to go missing, however, Charley can no longer live idly by, so he searches out famed magician, and vampire-nut, Peter Vincent (Tennant), and sets about the enviable task of trying to kill the blood-sucker off.

Because it so rarely has an impact on your viewing experience, 3-D would usually be side-note in my reviews, and even then it's normally just "see this film in two dimensions, the 3-D adds nothing," but here, it actively impedes the whole experience.

Given that *Fright Night* is a vampire movie, it was always going to be largely filmed at night or set in dark and dingy spaces. That, or there'd be a whole lot of bodies burning up from minute to minute. What the producers should have done therefore, is brightened up the whole film, ala. the various prints that went out for *Avatar*, but on the 3-D *Fright Night* print, the 30% desaturation is never gotten back, and for most of the film, it's near-unwatchable. Because the picture is so drab and dulled, you can't pick out details aside from the actors front and centre, while even removing your glasses won't help as the conversion blurs even that in the foreground. To make matters worse, the 3-D is very poor in itself, endlessly your eyes are being pulled back and forth, making attempts to focus without any actual depth percep-

tion available on-screen.

So I think we've established that the visuals left something to be desired, surely the story can offer more? Well, sadly not. *Fright Night* follows a strange four-act structure that was completely mismanaged by the director and writers. Revealing that the next door neighbour is a vampire at the very beginning, *Fright Night* kills off any sort of tension or suspense usually built up in these sorts of films, as people are snatched and hooded figures wander around in the shadows. After that it struggles to thrill even in the high octane scenes; such a lack of momentum mean even a chase won't have you on the edge of your seat.

In an unexpected bonus, Anton Yelchin is actually OK, delivering lines and all, while David Tennant is pretty funny too – by far and away the best thing about the whole film – and Colin Farrell has a some menace, but *Fright Night* still struggles to feel like anything other than a vampire knock-off of *Disturbia*. Even Platinum Dunes make better remakes than this. **SB**

★★★★★



THE ART OF GETTING BY

DIRECTED BY GAVIN WIESEN **STARRING** FREDDIE HIGHMORE, EMMA ROBERTS, MICHAEL ANGARANO, ELIZABETH REASER, SAM ROBARDS & BLAIR UNDERWOOD

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) SEPTEMBER 2 (UK)

Though it's by far and away the best part of the troubled News Corp.'s vast film division, walk into a Fox Searchlight release and you instantly know what you're going to get. That their often predictable rom-coms near always follow the same plotline to a tee is both their biggest failing and most comforting strength, *The Art Of Getting By* therefore, perfectly fits the bill.

In equal measure, George (Highmore) is a talented but troubled teen, struggling to muster the urge to attend school, never mind submit his

final year's papers. He could go a long way in life, but he can't find a reason to care about anything too much right now. Of course, until he meets a girl. After a chance encounter on their school rooftop, George befriends Sally (Watson), an absorbing teen with just the thirst for live he needs, but even with her help, George must make the leap himself to really step out of his shell and release his full potential.

Remarkably clichéd thanks to an almost overpowering 'indie' feel, *The Art Of Getting By* is an archetypal Fox Searchlight release. Though a little more invention wouldn't have gone amiss, however, it's entertaining too, if fairly frustrating throughout.

Now at an age where he'll be wanting people to really stand up and take notice, particularly in the States, while Freddie Highmore's performance in general is OK, his American accent is highly dubious and his character in general is equally unbelievable. In analysing life and his existence, it's aimed for you to relate to George's depression and doubts, but instead it feels like

pure fiction.

Emma Roberts is better, ever sweet and charming, it's no surprise George is swept off his feet, and together the pair share an awkward tension that suits the story well.

Wiesen's directing is solid enough, but the core plot and script could have maybe done with a fresh spin, and while it doesn't make the most of its New York City location, *The Art Of Getting By* is a solid theatrical debut for the double-threat filmmaker.

This is a film that has all the ingredients of a great film, but deals them out in imbalanced doses. Yet despite all of the flaws – and believe me, there are many – the third act is particularly strong, and pulls everything back together well, even if it's so remarkably predictable. *The Art Of Getting By* is not the horror show some US critics might have you believe; there are a lot of problems, but it's more than possible to look beyond them and find the still plentiful moments of quality and endearment beneath. **SB**

★★★★★



COWBOYS AND ALIENS

DIRECTED BY JON FAVREAU **STARRING** DANIEL CRAIG, HARRISON FORD, OLIVIA WILDE, SAM ROCKWELL, PAUL DANO, CLANCY BROWN, KEITH CARRADINE & NOAH RINGER

RELEASED OUT NOW

Arizona, 1873. Jake Lonergan (Craig) doesn't remember anything. He doesn't know that he is a wanted man, he doesn't know that he is on the outskirts of a town run by ruthless landowner Woodrow Dolarhyde (Ford), and he certainly doesn't know how this damn extraterrestrial bracelet got shackled to his wrist. He doesn't know that he shouldn't be talking back to the pistol-wielding town drunk (Dano) because he is Dolarhyde's heir, and he doesn't know why the doe-eyed beauty at the bar (Wilde) is so desperate to know where he came from. Jake's amnesia is getting him into a whole world of trouble, and then an alien strike-force descends and plunges into troubles further still.

That's right, it turns out New Yorkers weren't the only impatient alien species invading the Wild West during the nineteenth century in search of gold. This brutal species carpet bombs the frontier town and lassoes innocent men, women and children before disappearing into the night. With so powerful a common enemy, Lonergan and Dolarhyde's conflict pales into insignificance; along with the remaining townsmen and Ella (the mysterious beauty from the bar) they race off in pursuit of the alien base, hoping to recover their loved ones.

Just in case anybody is still uncertain, we really are talking about actual *aliens* here. This isn't about a gang of Mexican's crossing the border; these are the sort of aliens that man, even a century later, was unable to destroy without the help of a suicidally drunk Randy Quaid. So how does Favreau get around the obvious imbalance of power? Well his previous masterpieces (the *Iron Man* trilogy) should point the way to the disappointing answer: man is boring and worthless, but stick a futuristic machine on his body and he can be a hero. Jake's mysterious bracelet, which blows up aliens when they get too close, is the humans' only weapon throughout the entire film.

Unsurprisingly, this one simple device gets old pretty quickly, but Favreau never attempts to escalate the conflict by finding a new and interesting way for the cowboys to fight the aliens. So in much the same way that *Transformers* is essentially a robot war with a few humans stumbling around trying to get laid; this film should really have been called *Alien Bracelet Vs. Aliens... With Some Cowboys Falling Off Their Horses*.

Disappointing conflicts aside, there is actually something in the tone of this film that commends it. After all, who doesn't love a film set in the Wild West with Harrison Ford on the team? The cinematography is often exquisite, and the central performances are solid throughout. You can't ask for much more than 007 and Indiana Jones for a central duo; and Sam Rockwell and Olivia Wilde round off the palette beautifully. The aliens are mysterious and eerie while they stick to aerial attacks; but when we meet them up-close-and-personal it is a shame to see how anthropomorphic the animation team have gone. All-in-all, an average disaster movie with just enough heart and production quality to justify the theatre entry price. **ND**

★★★★★



ELITE SQUAD 2: THE ENEMY WITHIN

DIRECTED BY JOSÉ PADILHA **STARRING** WAGNER MOURA, IRANDHIR SANTOS, ANDRÉ RAMIRO, MILHEM CORTAZ, ANDRÉ MATTOS, MARIA RIBEIRO & SANDRO ROCHA

RELEASED OUT NOW

Jose Padilha continues his contentious take on crime in Brazil with *Elite Squad 2: The Enemy Within*. Padilha, who cut his teeth on the nail-biting hostage documentary *Bus 174*, won the Golden Bear at Berlin in 2008 for the first *Elite Squad*, a tale of a highly trained armed police unit charged with clearing out Rio's slums that was controversial for its portrayal of a violent, macho approach to Brazil's problems. Its sequel has certainly touched a nerve with the Brazilian public, becoming the highest grossing film of all time in its home country, and its tale of corruption at the top as well as the bottom shows *The Enemy Within* taking a step towards redressing its predecessor's dubious message. But those that accused the original of advocating fascism are still unlikely to be won over by a sequel that takes on systemic corruption with

all the subtlety of jackboot to the face.

The hero of *Elite Squad 2* is once again Colonel Nascimento (the impressive Wagner Moura), the leader of the 'Black Skull' squadron who, thirteen years after the events of *Elite Squad*, is promoted to police intelligence after a botched raid. Seeing his new role as a chance to finally break the slum militias, he is shocked to discover that the space left by his wiping out of Rio's drug cartels is being filled by rackets run by crooked policemen and politicians, and as he goes to war against the very system he has fought to support, he promptly becomes a target.

Opening with a brutal standoff between police and prison rioters and barely letting up for 116 minutes, the action in *Elite Squad 2* offers a bracing, frenetic account of street-level violence. Visually rather too influenced by Fernando Meirelles' *City Of God*, it is nevertheless brilliantly shot by cinematographer Lula Carvalho, who creates a constant sense of claustrophobia both in the favela and the corridors of power. The film is handled less well by Padilha, who again elects for the relentless, alienating voice-over that dogged the first film and a structure that negotiates what is a labyrinthine plot with a tepid stodginess that is thankfully rescued by fierce action.

The most fascinating aspect of *The Enemy Within* is that whilst it revisits its violent past, it does so in a way that works as a kind of response to the criticism levelled at the first instalment.

Padilha seems to be trying to introduce some level of nuance to his chronicle of violence and corruption, and in *The Enemy Within*'s portrayal of a rotten system constantly replacing those at the top while remaining unchanged, it is undoubtedly reminiscent of *The Wire*. But while that show brilliantly explored moral shades of grey, *The Enemy Within*'s worldview remains resolutely black and white. Here enemies are not so much criminals as pantomime villains, and those that dare talk of the links between crime and poverty are portrayed as apologists for criminals. Nascimento's struggle, which involves having to work with the lefty politician who has rather conveniently married his ex-wife, is meant to lead to some kind of epiphany about these ideals. But the film never really refutes them, and his eventual admission that he doesn't know what he has been fighting for rings hollow.

The Enemy Within, far from being an admission of guilt, instead seems to suggest that society would be better off with an all-too-symbolically black-shirted police force running the show. Unseemly politics aside, it remains an effective and engrossing thriller, and its popularity in Brazil shows it has struck a nerve with a frustrated public. A cry of frustration full of twists and turns, it certainly excites, but the way in which it sees Brazil's problems as both chronic and incredibly straightforward feels like a bit of a cop out. **AS**

★★★★★



TROLL HUNTER

DIRECTED BY ANDRÉ ØVREDAL **STARRING** OTTO JESPERSEN, HANS MORTEN HANSEN, TOMAS ALF LARSEN, JOHANNA MØRCK, KNUT NÆRUM & ROBERT STOLTENBERG

RELEASED SEPTEMBER 9 (UK) TBC (USA)

Something is afoot in Scandinavia. Following on the heels of 2010's *Rare Exports*, which imagined Santa Claus as an ancient beast emerging to wreak havoc on modern day Finland, *Troll Hunter* again sees folklore used as the tongue-in-cheek basis for a monster movie, this time in Norway. While both films use their absurd premises as an excuse for droll, quintessentially Scandinavian humour, *Troll Hunter* is the painstakingly realised drama to *Rare Exports'* broad horror-comedy, approaching its faux-documentary premise with a level of seriousness that is both amusing and at times mind-bending.

Using the wearisomely famil-

iar premise of presenting recovered 'found footage', *Troll Hunter* follows three young student reporters as they discover that the man they believe to be a bear poacher is in fact a tracker of the supposedly mythical beasts. In a fantastic conceit, 'The Troll Hunter' (the brilliantly deadpan comedian come-actor Otto Jespersen) is sick of the demands placed upon him by the increasingly incompetent government bureaucracy hell-bent on keeping his prey's existence secret, and decides to blow the whistle by taking the three on his nightly excursions in search of trolls that have wandered from their designated 'zones' in isolated parts of the countryside.

Director André Øvredal makes the most of his premise, utilising the *District 9*-style grainy CGI and the sense of close up, claustrophobic atmosphere afforded him by the documentary style. The trolls, from three headed beasts to monsters resembling woolly mammoths crossed with Wombles, are an effective combination of the fierce and the ridiculous, and Øvredal has

fun playing with familiar tropes such as trolls lurking under bridges, turning to stone in sunlight and craving Christian blood. *The Troll Hunter* brilliantly renders its prey both fantastical and profoundly run-of-the-mill through the weariness of its central character, a dynamic that is frequently funny while never making the numerous chase sequences anything less than convincingly tense.

How the existence of these beasts has not already become known is never satisfactorily explained – wandering trolls seem to be both common and enormous – and the government's reasons for wanting to cover up their existence is hazy at best, even if it fits with the film's portrayal of bureaucrats as figures of fun. If *Troll Hunter* wears a little thin around the hour mark, even with a spectacular snowbound finale, it is only fitting with its mantra of turning the mythical into the mundane. It may be an ultimately gimmicky post-modern take on local folklore, but it is still something of a hoot. **AS**

★★★★★



ONE DAY

DIRECTED BY LONE SCHERFIG **STARRING** ANNE HATHAWAY, JIM STURGESS, ROMOLA GARAI, RAFE SPALL, KEN STOTT, PATRICIA CLARKSON & JODIE WHITTAKER

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) AUGUST 26 (UK)

Based on the best-selling novel of the same name, and adapted for the screen by the same writer, David Nicholls, don't be surprised to see quotes like "this decade's *The Notebook*" plastered left, right and centre on posters for *One Day*, but perhaps surprisingly, it is actually quite entertaining.

After spending the night together on graduation night at college, thus starts a romance that spans more than a decade, following Emma (Hathaway) and Dexter (Sturgess) year on year as they fall into and out of each other's lives. Even when it seems most unlikely, however, a powerful love in their heart always keeps the pair seemingly destined for one another.

One Day is a standard chick-flick, front and centre, but only checking in with the pair on the same day each year, it feels different to the usual big city, glamorous tale. Pulling away from feeling utterly clichéd (and

far out-doing the terrible trailer), *One Day* develops nicely and it's pleasing it takes so long for the central couple to eventually get together, spreading the emotional weight out over the whole film.

While at the start Anne Hathaway's English accent is a little suspect, she soon grows into it, and as ever, it's hard not to find the talented actress utterly absorbing. If you're looking for a deeper meaning, you won't find it, but Jim Sturgess is likeable too, and you quickly grow to root for the both of them.

The story is told in a very episodic manner, but Lone Scherfig crafts it well and the film is well edited to keep it feeling as one. It feels exciting and unexpected, even though you know really it never is. *One Day* certainly won't top Scherfig's last effort, *An Education*, but you could do much worse this year for romance on the silver screen. **SB**

★★★★★



THE SKIN I LIVE IN

DIRECTED BY PEDRO ALMODÓVAR **STARRING** ANTONIO BANDERAS, BLANCA SUÁREZ, MARISA PAREDES, ROBERTO ÁLAMO, JAN CORNET & EDUARD FERNÁNDEZ

RELEASED AUGUST 26 (UK) OCTOBER 14 (USA)

It's only after a summer of excess that the film industry's real gems show their face. And with the Oscar season ready to hit in the States, Pedro Almodovar gets the jump on his competition with a wonder picture that makes even *Transformers 3* worth the pain. Loosely based on Thierry Jonquet's *Tarantula*, and adapted himself by writer/director Almodovar, *The Skin I Live In* is a dark and fearsome tale of obsession, greed and brilliance.

After developing a new type of synthetic skin, impervious to damage and fire, plastic surgeon Robert Ledgard (Banderas) claims to have only tested the new man-made biology on mice but looking deeper reveals a much darker secret hidden behind closed doors.

Though the narrative struggles to really pull you in in the opening salvo, once *The Skin I Live In* gets going, you'll find it impossible to take your eyes off the screen. As the

complexities of the characters and the darker side of the plot start to reveal themselves, everything suddenly clicks into place and the second and third acts are utterly gripping.

With as much on offer under the surface as is explored more directly in the plot, tonally *The Skin I Live In* draws comparisons to the wonderful *Oldboy*. Almodovar was able to craft a feeling of unease; you know something's wrong, but never quite what.

This is a smart, complex and intelligent movie, from a filmmaker at the top of his game. Banderas delivers a cultured performance, though really the full ensemble deserve great credit. *The Skin I Live In* is like nothing you'll see all year – it's a horror film with no real scares – and a unique piece of cinema everyone should search out, especially if that means venturing away from your usual multiplex. **SB**

★★★★★



FINAL DESTINATION 5

DIRECTED BY STEVEN QUALE **STARRING** NICHOLAS D'AGOSTO, EMMA BELL, MILES FISHER, ARLEN ESCARPETA, DAVID KOECHNER, TONY TODD, P.J. BYRNE & ELLEN WROE

RELEASED OUT NOW (USA) AUGUST 26 (UK)

Another franchise that seemingly has no end, by now *Final Destination* is looking toward finding a new audience of thrill-seeking teens rather than banking on fans of the films of old. Unfortunately, however, this new effort isn't a patch on the earlier movies.

En route to a team building exercise, a team of co-workers are waiting in traffic on a suspension bridge when Sam (D'Agosto) awakens from a

disturbing vision. Seeing their bridge collapse and many of his friends suffer tragic deaths, he urges them off the bus to safety, before low and behold, the tragic events plays out as he fore-saw, only this time, they're watching from the sidelines. When a couple of the saved few soon come to untimely demises of their own, however, each in remarkably unfortunate and coincidental circumstance, the group fear Death hasn't forgotten about them after all.

The exact same formula, now for a fifth time, if the producers expected *Final Destination 5* to feel fresh, they were sorely mistaken. Gone is any sense of imagination, invention, creativity or tension as the complicated deaths feel more convoluted than anything else. The concept of the *Final Destination* movies is certainly interesting, but so many releases in it's become utterly predictable; there's no suspense or real threat because you

know how it's all going to play out.

The 3-D effects are all well and good but likewise, they're all so obvious, while the excessive gore does little to shock. In front of the camera, most of the actors are typically overzealous in their performance – Nicholas D'Agosto in particular falling foul – but Emma Bell is enjoyable, as are David Koechner and P.J. Byrne in side-roles.

More worrying is the script from writer Eric Heisserer, whose work we'll see again later this year for the *The Thing* prequel. We can only hope he's stepped it up on that one because the similarly languid *A Nightmare On Elm Street* reboot last year didn't do much to inspire confidence either.

A link into the earlier films at the close of 5 is nice, but adds little overall, and though it might be fun with a bunch of friends on a Friday night, hopefully this is the end for what has become a very tired franchise. **SB**

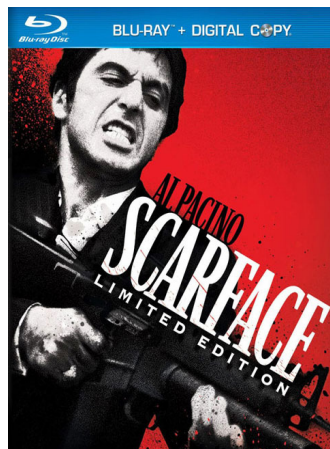
★★★★★

RED RIDING HOOD

Loosely based on the folk tale, a hit-and-miss fantasy/horror/drama from the director of *Twilight* so obviously going after the megalithic franchise's fanbase. Generally forgettable bar a couple of interesting and tense scenes.

Film ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★



SCARFACE

Brian De Palma's classic crime drama hits Blu-ray at last; following the rise of a Cuban refugee as he escalates up the illegal drugs business in Miami. Violent and effective in all the right ways, *Scarface* remains a masterpiece.

Film ★★★★★

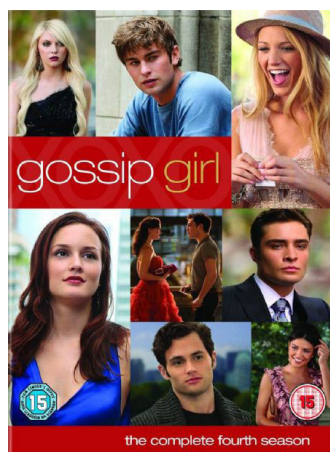
Extras ★★★★★

ATTACH THE BLOCK

Energetic alien invasion film as a mysterious; when an almost bear-like race invade a south London council block, a bunch of local 'youths' put up the fight back. Effective if flawed, shows a promising director in Joe Cornish.

Film ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★



GOSSIP GIRL: SEASON FOUR

Another round of the well-off New York hellraisers' lives, this time off the back of an eventful summer in Paris. Enjoyable but the writers sorely need to shake the format up.

Show ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

THE BIG BANG THEORY: SEASON FOUR

Entertaining if thoroughly lightweight show about a bunch of geeks and their attractive female neighbour. Still going strong and showing no signs of a collapse yet.

Show ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★



FAST & FURIOUS 5

The high-octane franchise turns its hand to heists, and with remarkable effect. Still as shallow and ludicrous as ever, this fifth outing is probably the best of the bunch, and thanks to huge box office business, more are coming.

Film ★★★★★

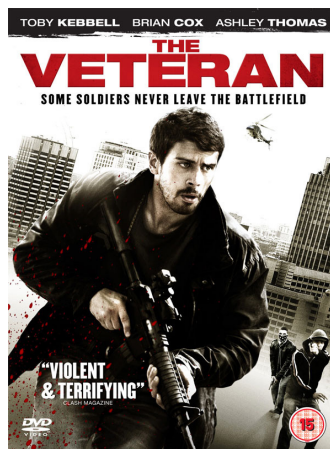
Extras ★★★★★

UNINHABITED

A young couple stay on a deserted and idyllic coral island only things soon start to seem not quite right and after the wife goes missing, a devilish ghost is revealed to be at the heart of their numerous problems.

Film ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★



THE VETERAN

Lacklustre action-thriller about a veteran soldier who returns who returns home to find his council estate overrun with a troublesome gang. As it appears problems run deeper, he takes it upon himself to clean the mess up.

Film ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★



TO CELEBRATE THE
RELEASE OF **ATTACK THE
BLOCK** ON DVD AND BLU-RAY,
WE'RE GIVING YOU THE CHANCE
TO WIN ONE OF THREE
COPIES FOR YOURSELF

TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING, SIMPLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

ATTACK THE BLOCK DIRECTOR JOE CORNISH IS A MEMBER OF WHICH COMEDY DUO?

- A. ADAM AND JOE
- B. MAX AND JOE
- C. JOHNNY AND JOE

SEND YOUR ANSWER TO [COMPETITIONS@FANTHEFIREMAGAZINE.COM](mailto:competitions@fanthefiremagazine.com). DEADLINE 09/09/11





BIRDS OF PREY BY
ELENI KALORKOTI



WHAT YOU DON'T SEE
BY PAOLO DI LUCENTE



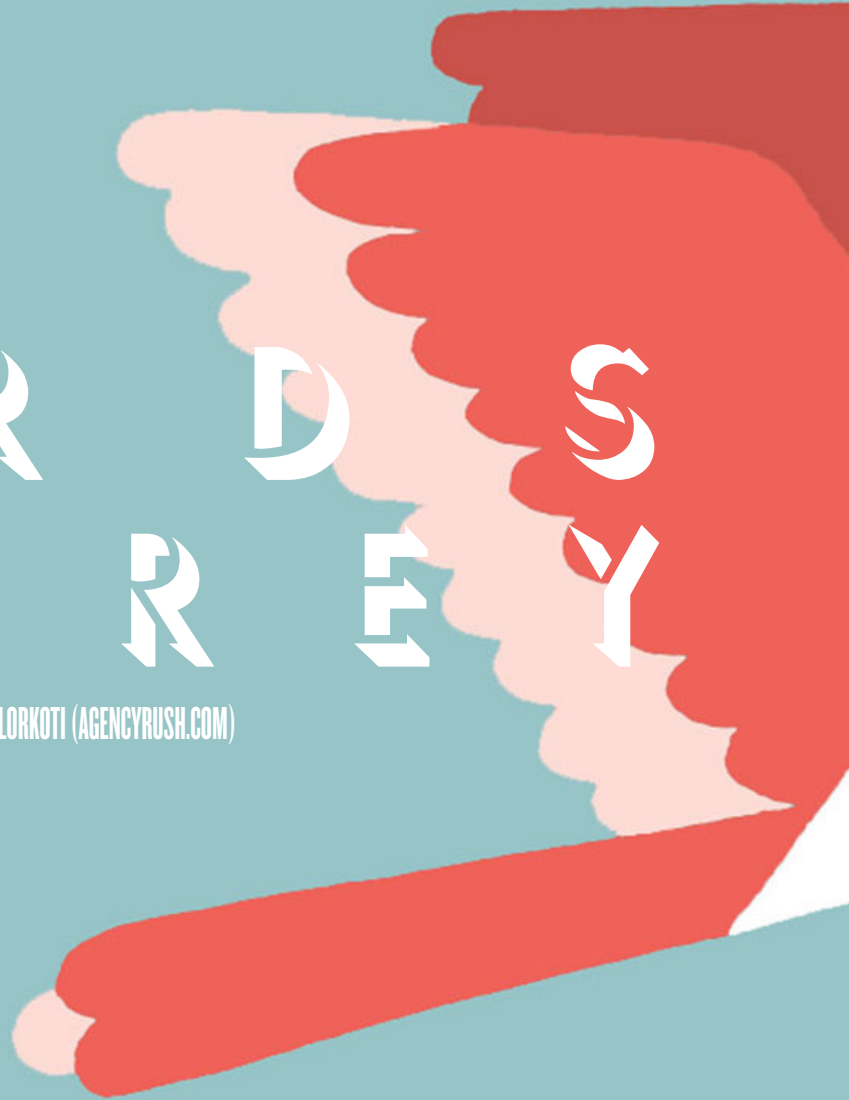
ANOTHER WORLD
BY NICK ILUZADA



OUT OF SIGHT,
OUT OF MIND
BY TROY MOTH

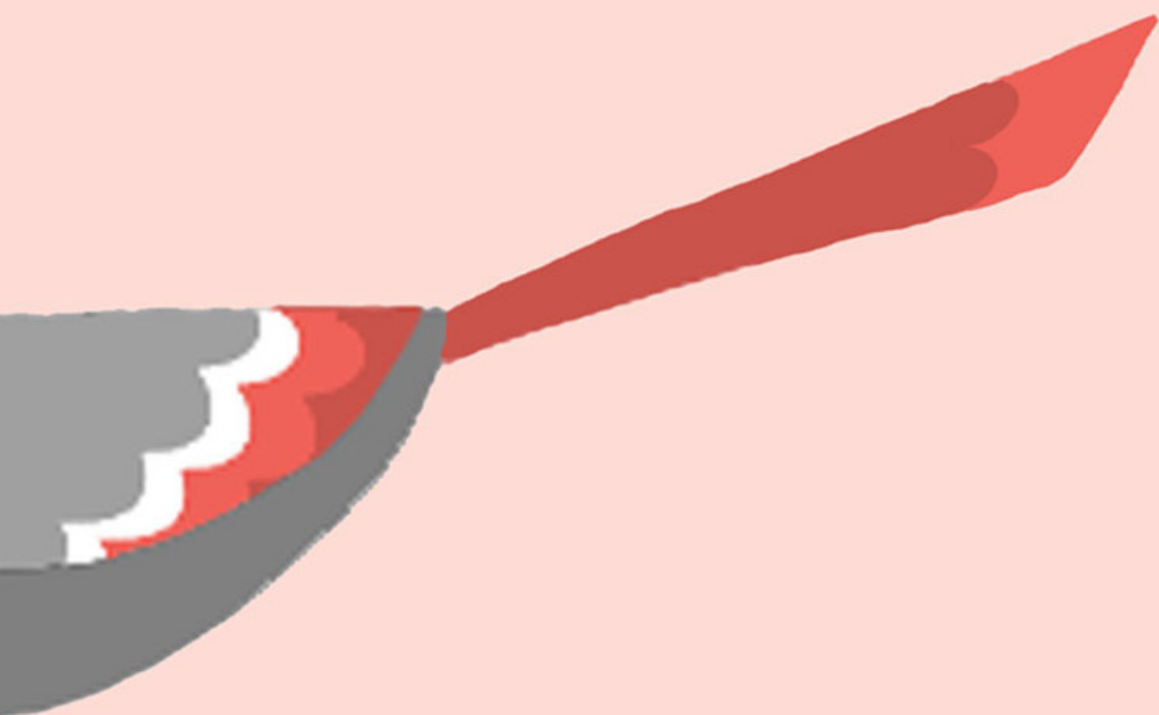
BIRDS OFF PREY

ILLUSTRATIONS ELENİ KALORKOTI (AGENCYRUSH.COM)













← TOMBOY →









IGNORE BOTH OF THEM

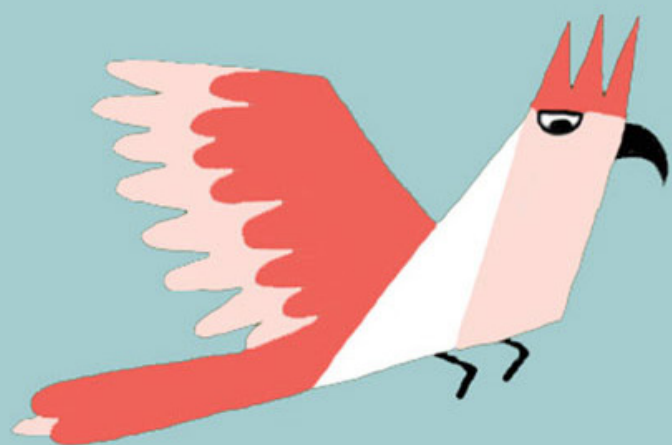






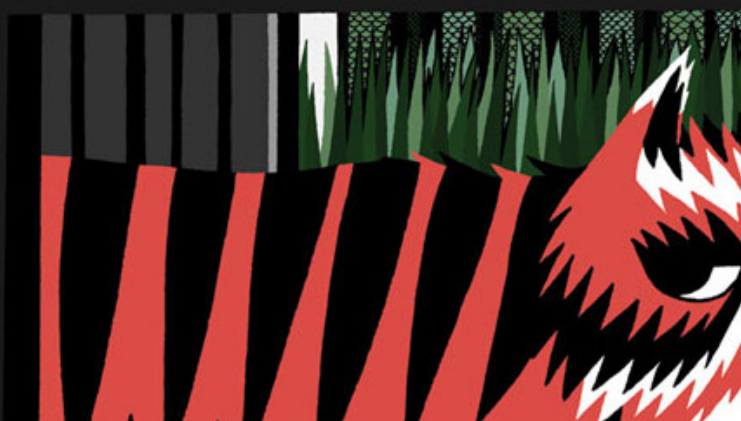
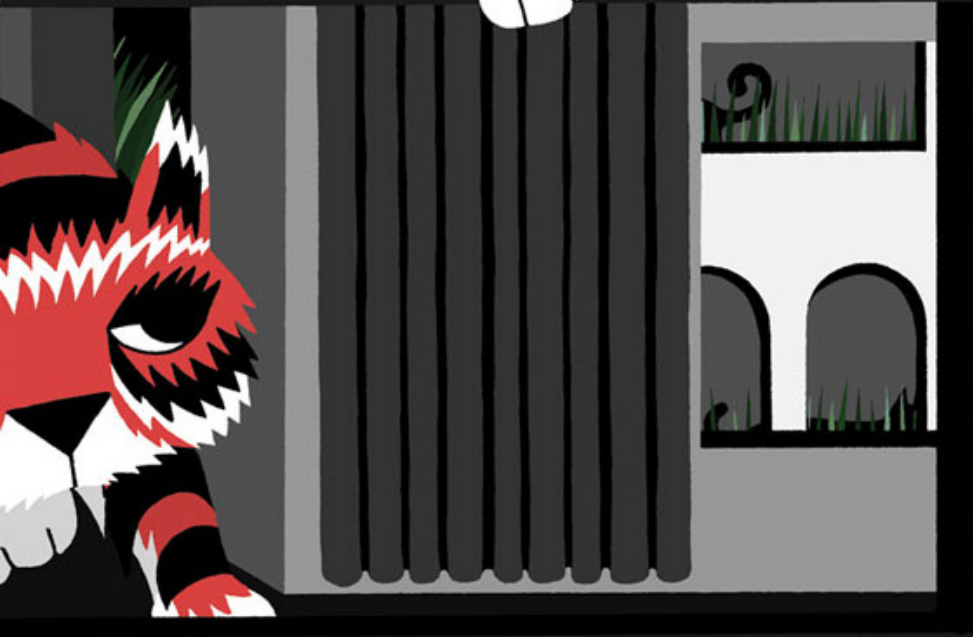
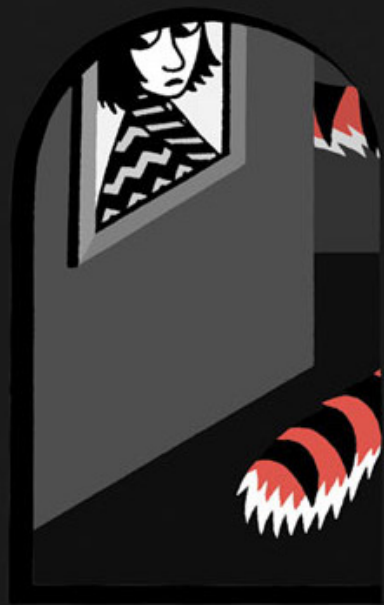












An aerial, high-angle, black and white photograph of a city street at night. The street is illuminated by streetlights, creating a grid of light and shadow. Several cars are visible on the road, including a white car in the lower right and a dark car in the upper right. The buildings lining the street are dark, with some windows glowing. The overall mood is mysterious and urban.

WHAT YOU **DON'T** SEE

PHOTOGRAPHY PAOLO DI LUCENTE (PAOLODILUCENTE.COM)



















ART









YOU ARE
FUCKING
FAKE

THIS DISE
IS A FAKE
FUCK YOU













ANOTHER WORLD

ILLUSTRATIONS NICK ILUZADA (NICKDRAWS.COM)

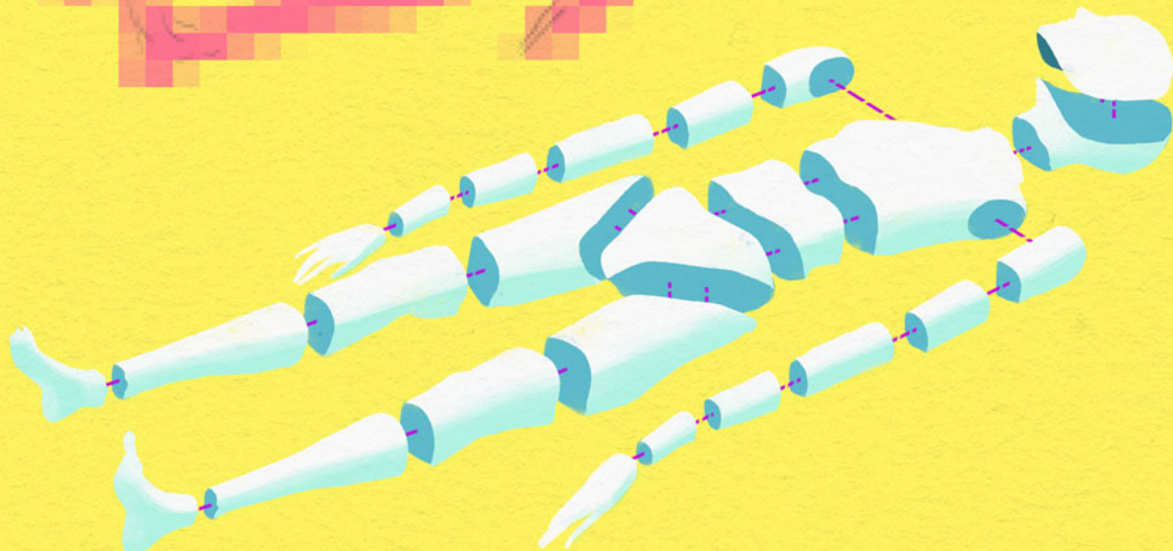






chip shot

an artistic exploration into football by Nick Iluzada



T H A T



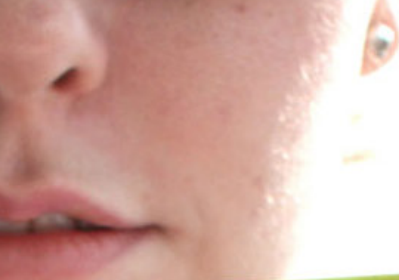
TACKLE

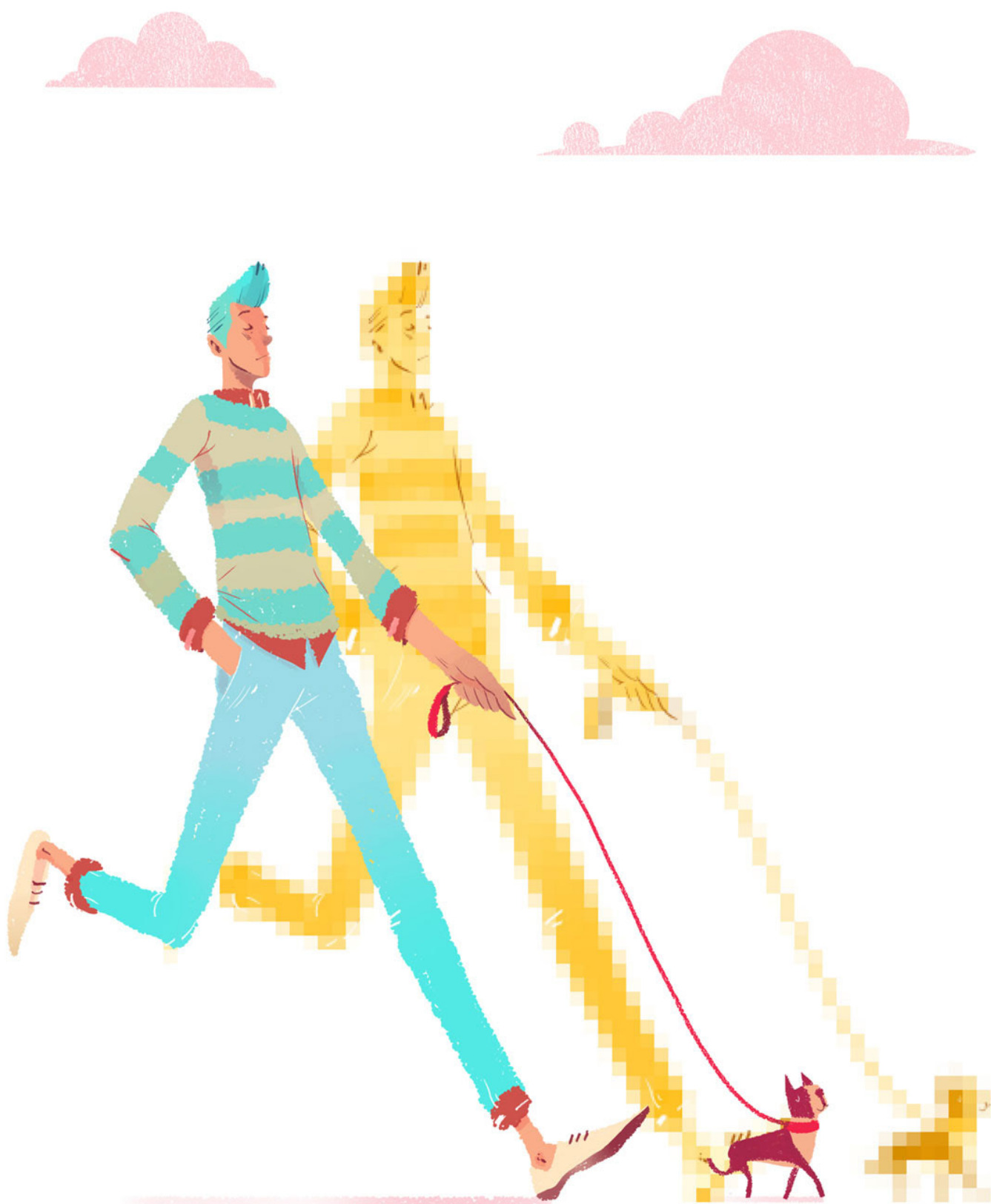
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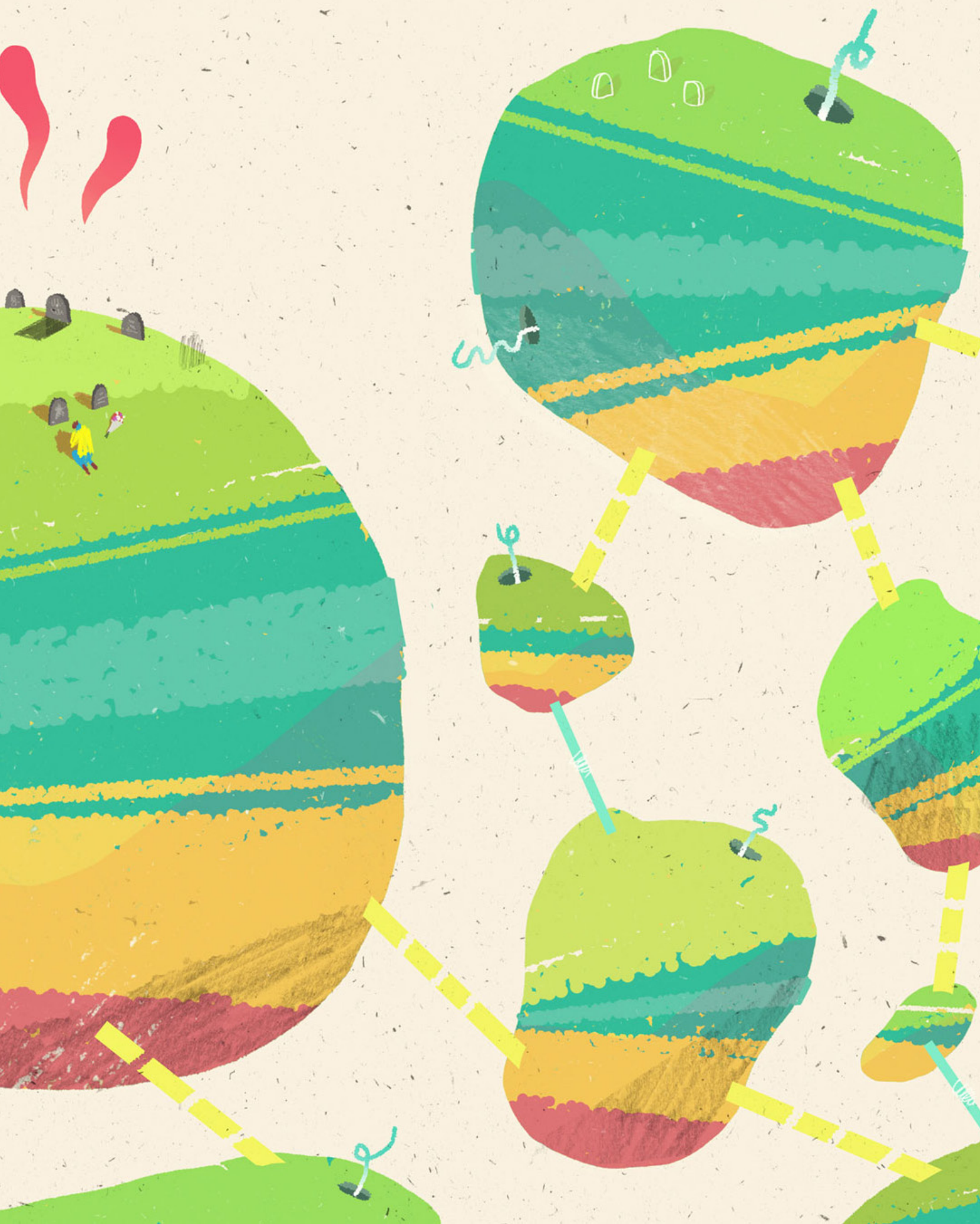






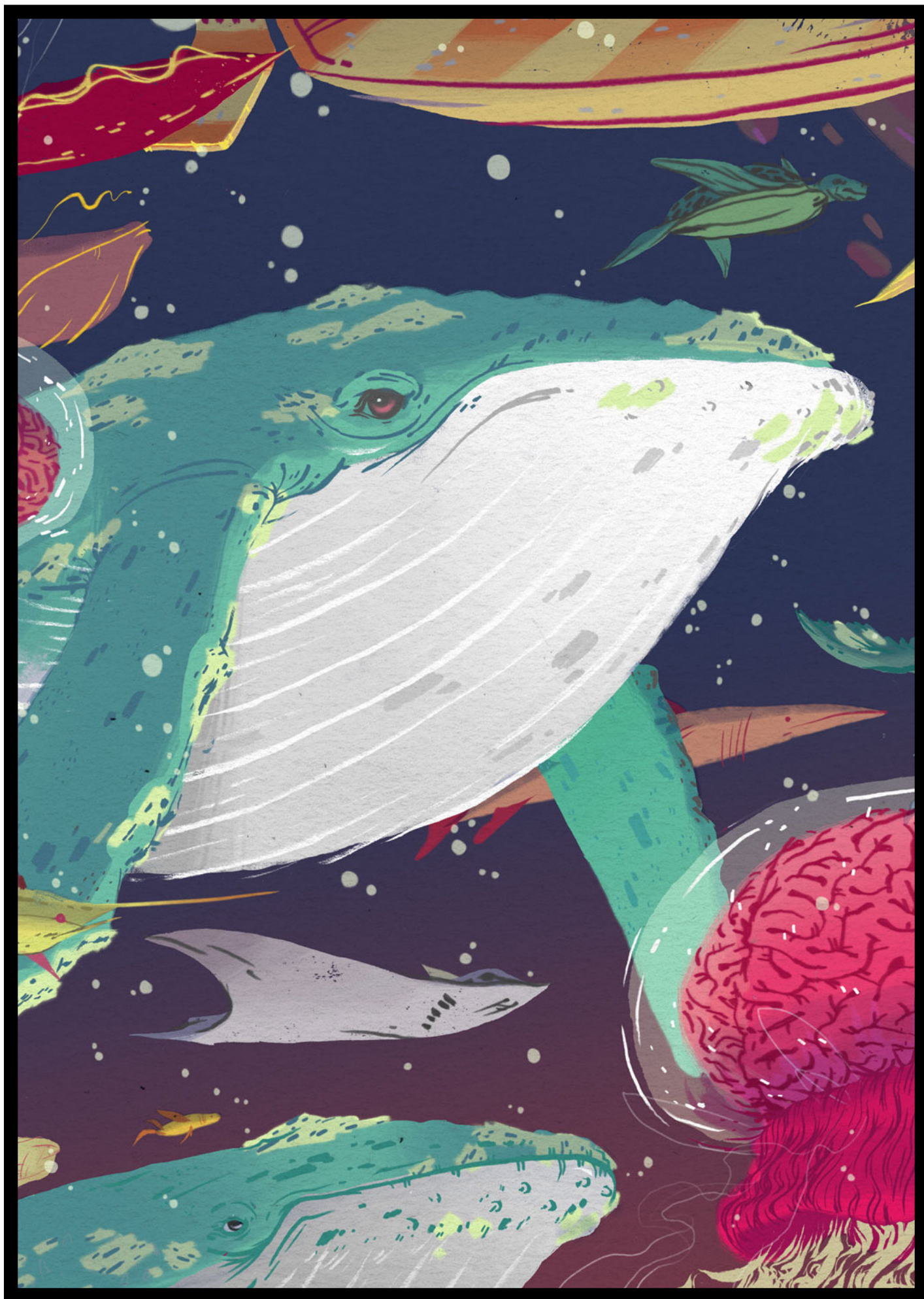






















Out of sight, out of mind

PHOTOGRAPHY TROY MOTH (TROYMOTH.COM)



















































STYLE



NORTH WIND
BLEW SOUTH BY
IGOR TERMENON



DOUBLE TROUBLE
BY BEC LORRIMER



KING OF QUEENS BY
MARK SHEARWOOD



SHAKE UP! BY
LUKAS SPITALER

STYLE

NORTH WIND BLEW SOUTH

PHOTOGRAPHY IGOR TERMENON (CARGOCOLLECTIVE.COM/IGORTERMENON)

MODEL MARTA DOLDAN

STYLING MARTA DOLDAN & IGOR TERMENON

T-shirt Zara Frames Oliver Peoples Shorts Pull & Bear Blanket Ikea



T-shirt Zara Frames Oliver Peoples Shorts Pull & Bear Blanket Ikea







Hat Stradivarius Top Stradivarius Skirt H&M
Bag Zara Shoes Zara Frames Oliver Peoples







Hat Zara Scarf Photographer's own
Shorts Pull & Bear



Vest **Zara** Dress **American Apparel** California Select Shoes **Zara**



Hat **Zara** Shirt **Vintage** Jacket **Vintage** Shorts **Pull & Bear** Shoes **Zara** Frames **Oliver Peoples** Blanket **Ikea**

Vest Zara Dress American Apparel California Select Shoes Zara





Hat **Stradivarius** Top **Stradivarius** Skirt **H&M** Bag **Zara** Shoes **Zara** Frames **Oliver Peoples**





Vest **Zara** Dress **American Apparel**
California Select Shoes **Zara**



Hat **Zara** Scarf **Photographer's own** Shorts **Pull & Bear**





Hat **Stradivarius** Top **Stradivarius** Skirt **H&M**
Bag **Zara** Shoes **Zara** Frames **Oliver Peoples**





Hat **Zara** Shirt **Vintage** Jacket **Vintage** Shorts **Pull & Bear**
Shoes **Zara** Frames **Oliver Peoples** Blanket **Ikea**



DOUBLE TROUBLE

PHOTOGRAPHER BEC LORRIMER (BECLORRIMER.COM)

HAIR & MAKE-UP TARA AIRLIE (BEAUTYCONCIERGE.COM.AU)

STYLING THE WONDERLAND CREATIVE AGENCY (THEWONDERLAND.COM.AU)

MODEL ANJA KONSTANTINOVA

CLOTHES LEGGINGS MODEL'S OWN, KNIT TOP TOI ET MOI (TOIETMOI.COM.AU)

























STYLE

KING OF QUEENS

PHOTOGRAPHY MARK SHEARWOOD (MARKSHEARWOOD.CO.UK)

STYLING RACHEL CAULFIED

GROOMING CHRISTINA CORWAY (S MANAGEMENT)

MODEL NELSON (STORM UK)



Denim jacket **Lee** Jumper **Yang Du**
Shirt **Farah** Trousers **All Saints** Socks
Falke Bag **Adidas** Trainers **Skive**







Jacket **Forgotten Future** Shirt **Forgotten Future** Shoe lace tie **Stylist's own** Shorts **All Saints** Socks **Falke** Trainers **Skive** Watch **Jeremy Scott for Swatch** Bag **Loft Design**





Jacket **Forgotten Future** Shirt **Forgotten Future** Shoe lace tie **Stylist's**
own Shorts **All Saints** Watch **Jeremy Scott** for **Swatch** Bag **Loft Design**





Jacket **Forgotten Future** Shirt **Forgotten Future** Shoe lace tie **Stylist's own** Shorts **All Saints** Socks **Falke** Trainers **Skive** Watch **Jeremy Scott for Swatch** Bag **Loft Design**



Jumper **Prps** Shirt **Lee**



Coat **Burlington** Gilet **Lee 101** T-Shirt **Adidas** Shorts
Farah Ore Watch **Jeremy Scott** for **Swatch**







Trainers **Nike** Socks **Falke**



Jumper **Yang Du** Shirt **Farah** Trousers **All Saints** Socks **Falke**



Knitted jumper **Prps** Shirt **Marcello Conti** Jogging bottoms **All Saints** Socks **Falke** Trainers **Skive**





Knitted jumper **Prps** Shirt **Marcello Conti** Jogging bottoms **All Saints** Socks **Falke** Trainers **Skive**



STYLE





Denim jacket **Lee** Jumper **Yang Du** Shirt **Farah** Trousers
All Saints Socks **Falke** Bag **Adidas** Trainers **Skive**



Trainers **Nike** Socks **Falke**



Jacket **Nike** Hoody **Stella for Adidas** Polo
shirt **Nike** Trainers **Skive** Glasses **Prism**





Jacket **Nike** Hoody **Stella for Adidas** Polo shirt **Nike** Trainers **Skive** Glasses **Prism**



Denim jacket **Lee** Jumper **Yang Du**
Shirt **Farah** Trousers **All Saints**



Coat **Burlington** Gilet **Lee 101**
T-Shirt **Adidas** Shorts **Farah Ore**
Watch **Jeremy Scott for Swatch**



STYLE



A woman's silhouette is visible on the left side of the image, showing her head, shoulder, and hand. She is wearing a ring on her finger. The background is a solid red color.

shake **UP!**

PHOTOGRAPHY LUKAS SPITALER (LUKASSPITALER.COM)









STYLE





A photograph of a city skyline viewed from a balcony. In the foreground, a balcony railing with a black and white striped pattern is visible. The middle ground shows a dense line of green trees. In the background, a large construction crane with the word "Hickory" on its boom is visible, along with a building under construction that has a large black sign with a white "h" on it. The sky is overcast.

NEXT ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 30



