

**WALTER
VAN BEIRENDONCK
CUT
THE WORLD
AWAKE**

*For Dirk,
XXX Walter*

**WALTER
VAN BEIRENDONCK**

**C
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THE WORLD
AWAKE**

HANNIBAL

A WORD FROM WALTER

CUT THE WORLD AWAKE and **DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE**
are two books like no other. I'm exposing never-before-seen layers
of my methodology as a fashion designer.

I treat every collection like an adventure.
A hunt/search for exactly what I want to say and how I want to say it.
For the past four decades, and to the present day, with no plans to stop,
twice a year, I go on such a quest.

The journey always has a clear, very private beginning: my collages.
Then, after taking several other meticulous leaps, a breathtaking public climax follows:
my runway shows in Paris.

But the process always starts with me physically sitting down and cutting out images and
words. Of course, in between collections I never stop dreaming, looking, fantasising.
But it's not until I take out a brand-new blank-paged, black-covered book,
a stack of magazines and printouts, sharp scissors and a thick glue stick that the swirls
in my mind start taking some sort of form.

Art is about honest confrontation.
Not only with the world around you, but equally within yourself.
It's also about juxtaposing specific elements that move and inspire you against each other.
See how they interact. Do they play nicely? Or is a fascinating clash forming?
Can I see shapes emerging? Colours that excite me?

If that sounds abstract, that's because it is.
Nothing is crystal clear at this point in my process, but little by little,
thoughts and ideas, once foggy, start coming into focus.

I have always preferred a direct approach to living and storytelling.
But to create honest, multi-layered work that stands the test of time,
you must be willing to explore multiple levels.
This requires courage and unwavering focus,
and it's these strengths that I bring to my creative process.

What I have learnt is that, in the end, with the clothes and other work I put out,
I can ride the volume. I can turn it up, I can whisper but still in a Walter way.
Reveal what I want to reveal. But not with my collages.
With my collages, I am as unnuanced, graphic and explicit as I want to be.

When it comes to shocking and provoking the world awake,
I've found a kindred spirit in the great artist and my hero Paul McCarthy,
with whom I got to have a big conversation for this book.

My wish for each of you is that you don't treat **CUT THE WORLD AWAKE** as
a one-way experience, from me to you, but that you set out to make your own
inner and outer connections with the universe at large.

Figure out your own steps and find your voice, the stories you want to tell.
Whether it's by cutting, drawing, downloading, doing, writing, talking, designing, connecting...

Now go and slice away the unnecessary,
dream up new hybrids and enjoy the magic!

XXX

WALTER

CUT THE WORLD AWAKE

A conversation between
Walter Van Beirendonck & Dominique Nzeyimana

DOMINIQUE NZEYIMANA:

I consider all our interviews a long continuous conversation, but this one in particular follows our extensive dialogue published in *DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE*. So, for a fuller picture, readers should pick up that incredible book as well. It's such a monumental piece of work. While *DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE* showcases your incredible drawings, *CUT THE WORLD AWAKE* is a selection of the collages you create and use as inspiration or as a pre-study for your design process.

WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK:

"The collages happen before I start drawing. It's the moment when I'm mainly in my head. I'm thinking, looking at things, researching, reading books, Googling images, studying photographs, going to exhibitions... A combination of all those things, really. I'm absorbing all these impressions, and then suddenly I'm done and I want to put these morphed thoughts to paper to confront them, almost. What's important to me in this process is to create some kind of clash. That way, I come to a result or conclusion of sorts. It can be a decision about an atmosphere or can purely revolve around shapes or a colour scheme. In fact, I use my collages to put things to paper physically and to synthesise all that's in my mind or at least make a deliberate move towards the next step, which is drawing my looks."

Do you know what you're looking for before you start cutting?

WVB: "No, it's very random. Sometimes I only use images that I cut out of magazines, and sometimes I use print-outs because the difference in quality or sharpness is closer to the tone I'm looking for. Then I start putting pictures and words together to create a certain mood. It all happens very haphazardly, very freely. But all the while keeping a goal in mind, of course. I know that I want to capture a certain spirit and glue to paper what interests me at that very moment. I know whether I want to go for a more extreme, aggressive, subdued or a more dreamy, fairy-tale-like approach."

Do you mainly source from your private library or do you go out to find different magazines? What is the gathering process like?

WVB: "I have boxes stuffed with clippings."

You collect these throughout the year?

WVB: "I have loads of publications that I set aside during the year and I'm not afraid to cut into them. Which ends disastrously for some

magazines, but so be it. I don't purposefully seek out certain titles. I know which are more suited than others — they're mostly culture-focused magazines with clear and striking imagery. I don't pick out those with tiny photos, so a lot of Japanese magazines are unfortunately not suitable for collages. But they don't have to be fashion magazines per se. Then, I start fantasising and cutting into them. Sometimes the collages are purely made out of the contrasts between texts or words. Other times it's more about a certain mood, or silhouette, a hairdo or make-up look. It depends."

The collages are more raw than your drawings. Not specifically when it comes to the execution, because they become new art pieces in and of themselves, but more so in terms of emotion. They are more straightforward.

WVB: "Yes, because that's just easier to achieve through collage. In designing the clothing it all gets a bit smoothed out. But I do think that the undertone of my collections is decided then and there, through collaging and the context I want to infuse into those collages. Then you get the next phase: the drawings interpreting the collages. Only then does the development towards the collections start. That's how I go from more raw to polished."

In terms of the kind of emotions you put to paper... All those layers are somehow felt in the collection, but not as overtly. It's very nuanced and that is beautiful to me, that kind of distilling.

WVB: "The early inspiration is tangible and I can play with the volume any way I want. Or even afterwards, I decide how much I want to divulge or maybe only talk about in certain conversations or with the press. For *I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE...*, the latest collection before this book went to print, the subtext was very intense but few people can pinpoint it. Most of the audience just sees circus and clowns and thinks: happy feelings. That's fine, the underlying influences don't need to be obvious."

In this book, your love for the arts is clearly visible. You told me you experimented with visual art and art installations while you were a student.

WVB: "And now you want to hear that story again?" (laughs)

I have said it before, your stories never get old and I think this is a rather obscure one that I want to get on record. As a bonus, it features Dirk before you were a couple.

**WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK'S
BIG DREAM CONVERSATION
WITH PAUL McCARTHY**



PAUL McCARTHY, c.1953



WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK, c.1961

PAUL McCARTHY:

(pops onto screen) "Hey, am I here?"

WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK:

Yes, hello!

PMC: (laughs) "How are you?"

WVB: Good! I fondly remember when I visited you in LA, and you gave me and my friends a tour of your studio. I will be releasing two books that showcase my preparatory work as a fashion designer. The one in which this talk will be featured focuses on the collages that I make. And it is because you and your work have been so important to me and my evolution as a fashion designer that it was a dream for me to have a conversation in this book, so I can explain what you have meant to me. I want to introduce Dominique; she does all the writing for both *DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE* and *CUT THE WORLD AWAKE*, so she will work on the interview.

DOMINIQUE NZEYIMANA: Yes, I will. Walter and I looked for the topics you both have in common and that have fascinated you over the past decade. That's what he'll be talking to you about. Paul, if you have any questions for Walter while this conversation is ongoing, please ask them. I think it's really great that Dylan (*Paul McCarthy's longtime studio manager, ed. note*) has just turned off his camera. I will do the same so both of you can just converse. It's better that the two of you have a talk. It's so nice to meet you and thank you for being here. Is this early for you?"

PMC: "No, no, no, it's not. I usually get up pretty early. I go to bed really late and get up pretty early."

WVB: Dominique, before you turn off your camera, maybe you can show Paul *DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE*?

(Dominique holds up the baby-blue-covered 960-pages-and-counting *DRAW THE WORLD AWAKE* book to the camera. Showing all sides and some pages to Paul McCarthy.)

WVB: Paul, we worked on two books; this is the first one we've just completed. It's a book with all my sketches, a big selection of the drawings for my collections. I've been working this way since the beginning. I make all my drawings first, and only then do I start to make the collections. These are not illustrations; they are essential work tools, making them very special to me. After this book there will be a second one, with a baby-pink cover, giving an overview of my collages. That's where this talk will be printed.

My first encounter with your work was during the early 90s. I saw the installation and video from 'Heidi,' the collaborative work with Mike Kelley at Centre Pompidou in Paris. Seeing this blew my mind wide open, and it made me realise that art with strong and provocative messages could also be funny and colourful, an approach that was so different and new at that time. I was extremely shocked. It opened my eyes and allowed me to introduce harsh themes and explicit graphics in my fashion work but in a 'lighter way'. Thinking back to the 'Heidi' installation, what was that process like for you?

PMC: "The process for 'Heidi' had been going on for a long time before that showing. In the 70s, I don't know, probably towards the end of the 70s, I had done performances, and I had used rubber masks that I would buy at different stores on Hollywood Boulevard. I was always shopping on Hollywood Boulevard. It's not the Hollywood you think of now. There would be these kind of costume stores and gag shops, and I would just go there and buy a rubber mask. It was probably in '73 I bought the first rubber masks. I had been making work involving some form of disguise, using a mask or covering my face. That had been ongoing. At some point in the late 70s, I was already appropriating subjects, I started thinking about appropriating a film of some sort. I came up with Heidi and Popeye, then. I wrote the script to do 'Heidi' in the late 70s. I had gotten an exchange grant in France and I asked if I could do the project in the French Alps. I wanted to do it outdoors. Years passed, and they cancelled the exchange but still gave me the money. Since the exchange didn't happen, 'Heidi' didn't happen. Years later, I was invited to do this project in Vienna, a group show of LA artists. I said I wanted to make 'Heidi'. At the same time, Mike Kelley and I wanted to do something together. We decided to collaborate and Mike was going to do a project in Vienna around Adolf Loos, the architect. So, we combined these two subjects. Adolf Loos and the American Bar and his Modernist philosophy and then this Heidi chalet. I still wanted to do it outdoors, but it was impossible, so we filmed everything inside the gallery. One of the things I'm working on now is making another 'Heidi'."

WVB: (hums approvingly).

PMC: "I think I understood it back then, but I didn't really go deep into the subject because it was a collaboration. I pushed the issues I was interested in, and Mike was also interested in them, but I want to explore them further. If a new Heidi actually happens, I don't know... (Looks to the side) There's a box over there that's about making 'Heidi'."



PAUL McCARTHY and MIKE KELLEY
Heidi, Midlife Crisis Trauma Center and Negative Media-Engram Abreaction Release Zone, 1992
 Performance, video, photographs, installation

© Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts.
 Courtesy the artists and Hauser & Wirth.



PAUL McCARTHY
Tomato Head (Black), 1994
 Fiberglass, urethane, rubber, metal, clothing (62 objects)
 213.4 x 139.7 x 11.7 cm

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Douglas Parker



PAUL McCARTHY
Spaghetti Man, 1993
 Fiberglass, metal, urethane, rubber, acrylic fur, clothing
 254 x 84 x 56 cm
 Penis length 1.270 cm

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



PAUL McCARTHY
WS White Snow Mammoth, 2013
 Performance, video, photographic series

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Louisa McCarthy



PAUL McCARTHY
WS White Snow, 2013
 Performance, video, installation, photographs
 Directed by Paul McCarthy and Damon McCarthy

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Jeremiah McCarthy



PAUL McCARTHY
Tokyo Santa, 1996
 Performance, video, b/w and colour photographs, drawings, installation
 Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Mitsuru Tanashi



PAUL McCARTHY
Santa Chocolate Shop, 1997
 Performance, video, installation, colour photographs

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



PAUL McCARTHY
Tubbing, 1975
 Performance, video, b/w and colour photographs

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Al Payne



PAUL McCARTHY (with Mike Kelley)
Family Tyranny, 1987
 Performance, video, and colour photographs

© Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.
 Photo: Steven Keller



PAUL McCARTHY (with Mike Kelley)
Cultural Soup, 1987
 Video still

Single channel video, 6:59 min, colour, sound
 © Paul McCarthy. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



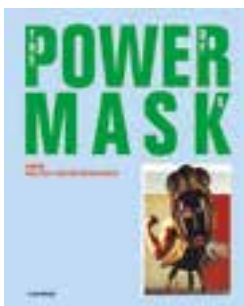
WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK
LET'S TELL A FAIRYTALE
 Spring-Summer 1987
 Photo: Carel Fonteyne



W.&L.T. - WILD AND LETHAL TRASH
KILLER / ASTRAL TRAVEL / 4D-HI-D
 Spring-Summer 1996
 Photo: Ronald Stoops



WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK
REVOLUTION
 Autumn-Winter 2001-2002
 Photo: Elisabeth Broekaert



POWERMASK - THE POWER OF MASKS
 Exhibition catalogue, Wereldmuseum Rotterdam
 1/09/2017-7/01/2018
 © Walter Van Beirendonck & Paul Boudens



WALTER VAN BEIRENDONCK
I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE...
 Spring-Summer 2025
 Photo: Nick Soland

down the dick ——— half the dick and one leg was black, and half the dick and the other leg was white. So, we made them. They tried to sell them; I think they sold one pair.” (laughs)

WVB: Were they commercialised?

PMC: “Yeah, and as soon as I got through making them, I found the image. I realised I had got it completely wrong.” (laughs)

WVB: You interpreted it differently.

PMC: “I had sort of made these integrated pants, black on one side, white on the other. And Cleaver had done this thing where they were all white in the front and black in the back; that’s how it was. But the dick, the sock, was all black. It was a black dick sock. I got it wrong. I think that I made one pair right. I’ve done it two or three times where I’ve made somebody else’s thing and completely got it wrong. At that point, I came up with a new piece. My integrated, got-it-wrong Eldridge Cleaver pants, is some sort of collaboration with Eldridge Cleaver.” (laughs)

WVB: So, you were like a fashion designer.

PMC: “Yeah, but nobody ever bought my pants. I’ve really thought about your fashion. When I was a kid, my mother made me a clown suit, quite great. Like the wrong Cleaver pants, it was green on one half and yellow on the other. The split went right up the middle. When she first made it, it had baggy pants and was really big on me. The sleeves hung down. I wore that suit every Halloween for years, I don’t know, fuckin’ six or seven years. But the suit always fit.”

WVB: It was huge.

PMC: “At some point, it fit just below my knees. I kept getting bigger, and the clown suit always stayed the same, but every year it was a new look. It had a dunce hat, a pointed hat, I think it was yellow on one side and green on the other, like a court jester, half and half. It had this collar and then it had big red pom-poms that went down the front and up the hat. When I looked at your work, I often thought of that clown suit. At a certain point, I was going to make it in an edition and people could buy it. It only came in one size. You could pretty much fit anybody. Maybe you could make it in two sizes. It had a story to go with it about Halloween trick-or-treating, where you go from house to house and get candy. We’d go out until 1 o’clock in the morning, going from house to house, and we’d always end up a long way from home. In order to get the suit off, it had a zipper or some buttons down the back. I remember we were with my friends, and we were

a mile away from home or something, and I had to pee. I couldn’t get the suit off.”

WVB: Someone had to help you.

PMC: “I peed in the clown suit. I always thought I should remake the clown suit and people could wear it. But it’s not completed until you pee in the clown suit. You have to pee in it.”

WVB: That’s funny. (laughs)

PMC: “When you’ve peed in the clown suit, then it’s finished. The person who now owns the clown suit has completed the clown suit once they’ve peed in it.”

WVB: In my last collection, the clown was a main inspiration. It wasn’t a funny collection. I was telling the story that the world is burning, and I’m still smiling, the world is burning, and I’m still dancing, the world is burning, and I’m still happy. I was using the character of the clown, this personalisation of that happy-sad feeling we all experience today. I was using small, typical clown elements. The smiley face, tiny hats. I also made T-shirts that you can turn around and choose to show the ‘happy’ or ‘sad’ side. If you want to wear a happy or sad face, just flip your T-shirt 180 degrees. I have been playing with these characters and elements in fashion as well. How did you get to know my work? Was it when I contacted you or through the exhibition?

PMC: “No, it was actually in a funny way... I’ve always been a magazine freak. Always. It’s always about magazines for me. Pre-social media and pre-iPhone, I would stop at magazine stores and pick up magazines. I was always looking at fashion magazines. And at some point, I knew of you, some of your work. I didn’t know that you lived in Belgium. I didn’t know any of that. I just knew that in Europe, there’s this fashion going on. I didn’t know who you were, but I knew the work from images; it stood out. I’ve always had a kind of interest in fashion. I was good friends with Azzedine Alaïa. That happened through another friend who lived in France. Knowing Azzedine was really just knowing another artist. That’s how I looked at it. There’s always been an interest, mainly through magazines. And now I’m just addicted to Instagram. Being addicted, I know I have to really be careful. It’s the same with magazines.”

WVB: It’s great that you knew Azzedine Alaïa, he was a really nice person. I met him a few times, I didn’t know him very well, but I would say quite well. I saw him from time to time, he visited the school when I was head of the department and he sat on the jury for the graduating class. He told

**HARDCORE
WALTER
SINCE 1985**

BE

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BE

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**THE BEST
WAY TO
PREDICT
THE FUTURE
IS TO
CREATE IT**



CHERISH
CREATIVITY

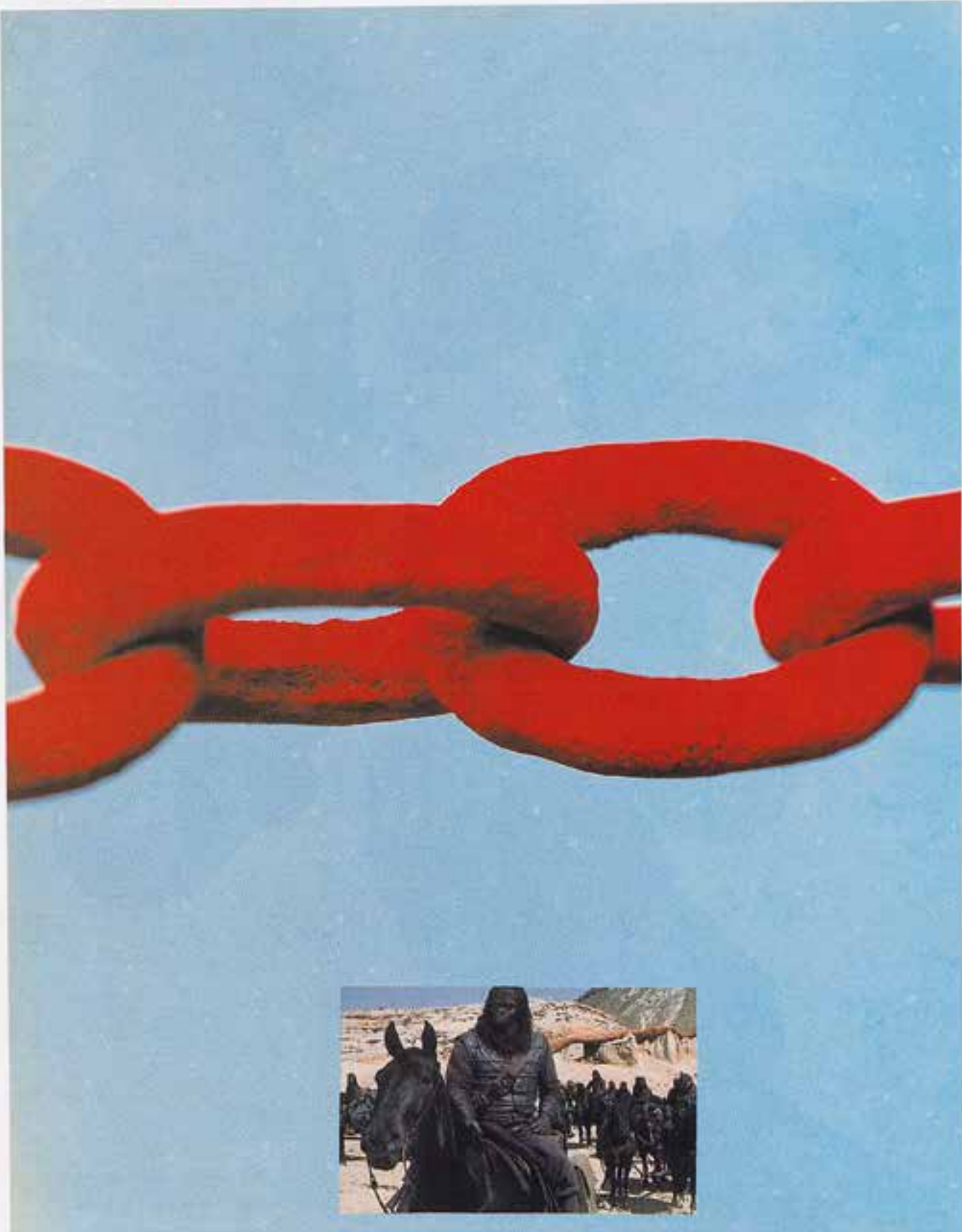
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FULL FRONTAL

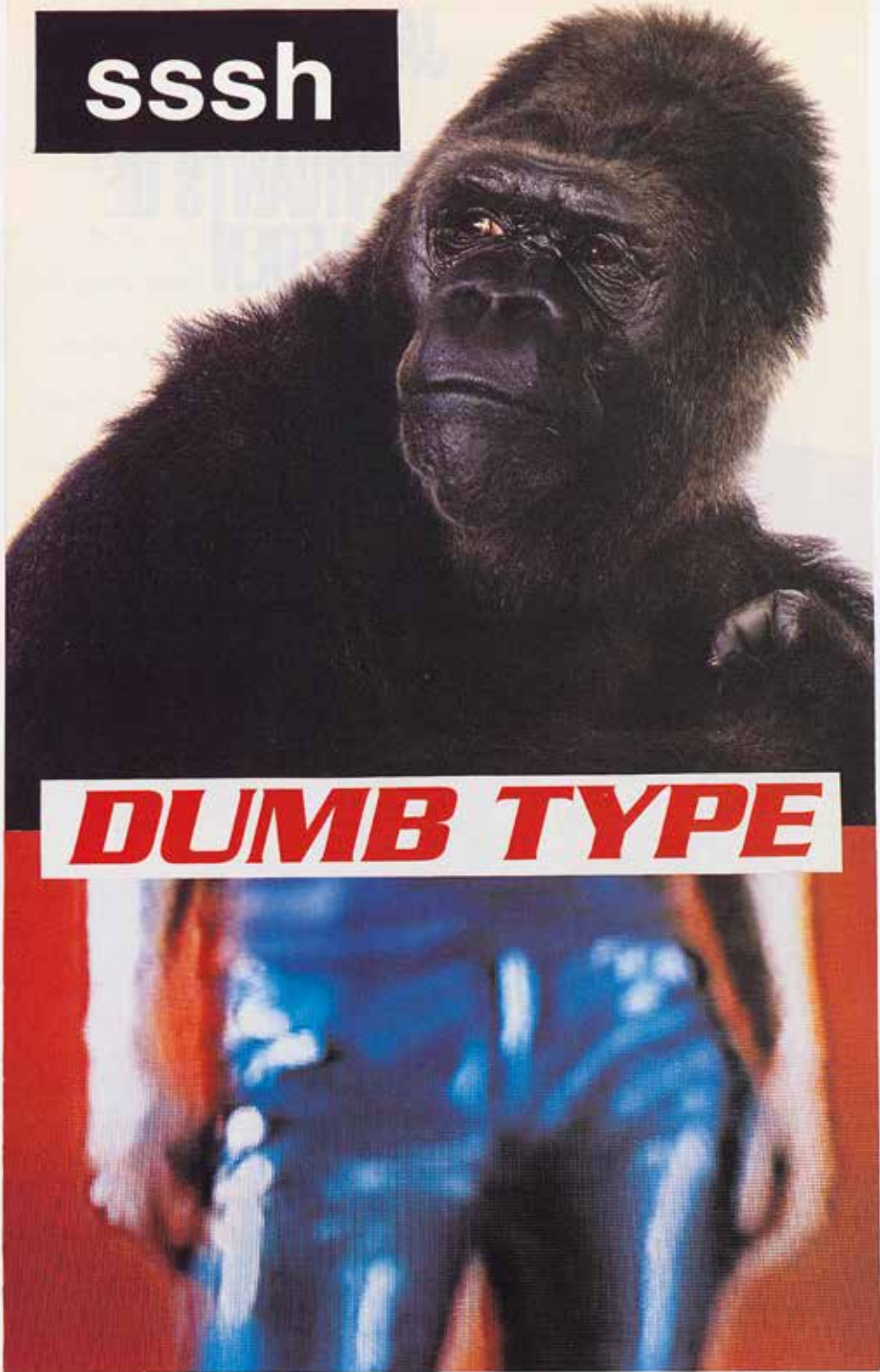


a pocalypse
always sells.



Glorification of any principle

sssh



DUMB TYPE

if you are ugly , you can make your avatar
beautiful
You can look like a GORILLA or a dragon or a
giant talking PENIS in the METAVERSE

BANN

BANALITY



ALL YOU NEED IS FAITH & TRUST



AND A LITTLE BIT OF STARDUST

AND A LITTLE BIT OF STARDUST



ALL YOU NEED IS FAITH & TRUST

AMMERS

BOOK

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DRE

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John Deere





WAITING FOR WAR



Ted Owens
How to Contact Space
People (1969)
Mensa member Ted
Owens (1920-1987)
claimed to have
conversations with

Space
Intelligences
(Sis), energy
beings
sometimes
appearing
in the guise
of insects.
He explained
that repeated
head injuries
he'd suffered
earlier in life

were caused by the
Sis so that he could
later communicate with
them. He explains how
to get in touch with
them yourself in *How to
Contact Space People*.
Calling himself "Dr.
PK", he later claimed
to be able to control
the weather and
earthquakes, predict
saucer landings and
bend metal objects.



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Powerful Structure Nr.1:

SUPERSUPER!

**THE
BEAUTY
AND
THE
DARK**

BELIEVE



magic

CULT OF
**POETIC
MASH-UP**

DOUBLE

Beauty

Fashion

PERVERSION



Slovak Kied with a 'Puck Face' nose HANNE VAN ASSCHE
John Chapman



COLOPHON

CONCEPT

Walter Van Beirendonck
Paul Boudens
Dominique Nzeyimana
for
Not Dead Yet projects

COLLAGES & CUT-OUTS

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