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FLIRTING WITH THE IDEA OF

NOT VOGUE

A CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA AND STEVE OKLYN (RED PILL ARMY FACTION)

The side-by-side, black-and-white images of Colonel Gaddafi and Anna Wintour in their signature sunglasses featured on the "Not Vogue" website capture the spirit of this anonymous project remarkably well. This is a domain where fashion and ideology meet in a mordant commentary on contemporary consumer culture. The forum houses an impressive and fast-growing collection of photo essays – a single captioned image or, more frequently now, series of images linked by a single sentence – showcasing the co-dependency between a global fashion industry and thoughtless consumerism. Relying often on juxtaposition and contrast, "Not Vogue" offers a stark counter-narrative to the typical fashion world story by unveiling the lack of substance behind its seasonally sold style and the excessive power of the chosen few who set the fashion of our day.

You may have to be an industry insider to fully appreciate it. My interest in the fashion world is cursory at best and I undoubtedly miss some subtleties of the commentary it inspires. On final analysis, the reality documented with photos and dissected with words by "Not Vogue" seems to me symptomatic of other problems more than a problem in itself; the runny nose of a cultural cold rather than a "cultural warming" virus. I am more intrigued by the critical underpinnings of the "Not Vogue" project than its target, for its message resonates beyond its chosen battlefield – think more, consume less, push back against undesirable claims on your identity – and it is delivered consistently, unapologetically and without the distraction of commercial breaks from the shadows of anonymity that largely preclude dialogue. There is something radical about its hermetic self-sufficiency in the context of our fluid and permeable culture. I am attracted to its uncompromising nature even as I wonder about the seriousness of its intent.

The credit for "Not Vogue" goes to the constructed entities of Steve Oklyn and the Red Pill Army Faction, so when an opportunity to interview the former comes up I accept it, though not without some trepidation. My interview style tends toward conversational, and it is difficult to have a conversation via e-mail and with a subject that boasts no individual subjectivity. Perusal of past interviews with Steve Oklyn does nothing to settle my anxieties; where the visual essays on "Not Vogue" are stripped down in their message, its creators' commentary on the project is elaborate, ornate with capitalized words and phrases, layered in its references, rich in rhetoric. It is also aimed less at engaging in dialogue than in delivering its message in a form more reminiscent of early twentieth century avant-garde manifestos than of an interview. I suspect that the content of my questions for "Not Vogue" will not greatly alter the content of the responses I receive, and try to get around this difficulty by coming up with broad sets of questions for Steve Oklyn to answer according to his preference. We agree that I will have a chance to send follow up questions after our initial exchange, which I hope to use as means of deepening our dialogue. I'm still not sure whether the strategy was successful, but the process does clarify one thing for me; if work ethic is a measure of commitment, then "Not Vogue" is serious about its message. Steve Oklyn's answers arrive already edited and always on schedule; the correspondence surrounding the interview is responsive and respectful. I think I would like whoever hides behind Steve Oklyn. Liking Steve Oklyn, however, is not really an option: "Not Vogue" does not want to be in vogue. Its role is critical, although there is much play within it, and its message is valid. You should think about what you consume – including all that follows here:



AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA I recently came across a story in a business section of a daily paper about an incident that exemplifies, in my opinion, the many problems that arise at the intersection of art, design, fashion, and industry within the context of capitalism and its consumer culture offspring.* Given that "Not Vogue" is a forum for the critique of the fashion industry that utilizes both image and text in its commentary, I am very curious to know your opinion on/interpretation of this incident.

The story in a nutshell is that a major Canadian retailer has pulled a product off its shelves in response to a social media backlash provoked by its sale, justifying this move with the value they place on customer satisfaction and relations. The product is a T-shirt that features a front design consisting of a large Nutrition Facts table at the centre of which is placed a quote by Kate Moss: "Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels". The calorie count is listed at 0. Consumers who objected to the design interpreted its message as celebratory of eating disorders; the artist behind the design, Christopher Lee Sauv  , insists this is "just not the case". To the contrary, his issued statement contends that "Like all of [his] designs, it's a glorified warning, an ode to the farcicality of the fashion industry and the obsessives that surround it," closing with an apology to anyone offended by the design and a simultaneous refusal to apologize for his work.

* "Art or insensitive?" Toronto Metro News. Wednesday, June 25, 2014, p. 12.

Here is the first of the few questions that I considered after reading about it:

Each of the multiple parties involved is capable of constructing a platform for justifying their actions: eating disorders are a concern that should not be ignored, and which cannot be ignored by some – the customer complaining of the T-shirt has a right to voice an opinion; the retailer can choose to value customer opinion above its own – for it has presumably at one point accepted the product for sale – it has plenty of other T-shirts to sell anyway; the artist has a unique, but by no means exclusive claim on the design's intention – in drawing on the fashion industry, in making it central to the design and selling the design within its framework, he becomes subject to the fashion of the day in its reception. Can art and fashion coexist? What can cause all of these constructions to topple – is there any one thing that does?

STEVE OKLYN I had no prior awareness of Christopher Lee Sauv   and his various consumer platforms of kitsch-based fashion industry and pop culture-focused irony. I just took a moment to research CLS's oeuvre. It is not without merit and decidedly humorous. As a platform for commentary, it contains a major weakness. It is just another consumer product. It is a fun mix of misunderstood Warholian propositions filtered through a further misreading of Keith Haring's visual and retail platforms, i.e., THE POP SHOP.

The commentary completely loses all intellectual relevance as it is relying on a very well-worn meme within the history of kitsch: Mickey Mouse + the drug-addled Club Kids culture of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Keith Haring's annual series of club celebrations titled "PARTY OF LIFE" (with the inaugural event taking place in 1984) were pure expressions of being young, creative and gay. Keith's death from AIDS-related complications in 1990 allowed for Club Kids like Michael Alig and James St. James to further misrepresent the original concepts of Warhol and

Haring as influenced by Walt Disney (in Keith's imagination, Mickey Mouse morphed into "ANDY MOUSE"), which get even further from the original through the commercial-focused activity of Nigo and the Japanese youth culture brand BATHING APE (1993), which continues to be even further misunderstood and diluted by Nigo and Pharrell Williams's commercial collaboration BILLIONAIRE BOYS CLUB & ICE CREAM (2005). Sidebars to this history are Shepard Fairey's OBEY products and the work of KAWS.

In 2014, we are all experiencing the effects of CULTURAL WARMING – a NOT VOGUE concept. The definition of CULTURAL WARMING is a global decline in cultural meaning, as the need for culture has shifted from an idea-based investigation to a product-based and driven industrial process. Warhol used multiple industrial (silkscreen) impressions of an industrially created "STAR" as a comment on the media and its power over our shared fantasy-based reality. In collaboration with Warhol, Haring took his and Warhol's shared interest in fame, power and money to an even deeper exploration of Warhol's original ideas. The Club Kids supported by Canadian club owner Peter Gatien, Nigo, Pharrell, Shepard Fairey, KAWS – all of these lead to Christopher Lee Sauv  's commercial products.

Currently, our shared global culture – especially youth-based and focused culture – has all been processed through a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Warhol's statement: "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes" (1968). Every layer of today's society of ultra-visibility is supported by this idea. Which, as is often the case with Warhol, was not an original idea. NOT VOGUE has been exploring this "meta-functional" delusion from the very first post on July 8, 2011.

Now to directly answer your first question: Can art and fashion coexist? Two creative processes were developing simultaneously within the downtown New York art world of the 1960s. Both had a platform at the LEO CASTELLI Gallery in SoHo (240 W. Broadway). The first was POP ART (WARHOL, LICHTENSTEIN, ROSENQUIST, and RUSCHA) exhibiting at the same moment as the CONCEPTUAL ART movement (represented by KOSUTH, WEINER and NAUMAN), which was basically exploring ideas that were diametrically opposed to POP ART. In the 1970s, POP had waned and CONCEPTUAL ideas and strategies had risen. There is a good case to support the theory that PUNK emerged as the balance between POP and CONCEPTUAL art.

During this period, Warhol's business entity ANDY WARHOL ENTERPRISES was focused on two goals: ads for INTERVIEW Magazine and portrait painting commissions. Warhol's directive of "bring home the bacon" to his business associates Fred Hughes and Bob Colacello really is the philosophical basis of our delusional world and worldview today. Antoine Arnault, the founder of the fashion-industrial-media (and now art) complex is a practitioner. Kris Kardashian Jenner and her "Factory" of industrially-created superstars KIM, KOURTNEY, KHLOE, KENDALL, and KYLIE are all the Instagram/Twitter-era versions of WARHOL's Superstars (e.g., Baby Jane Holzer, Edie Sedgwick, Candy Darling, Jackie Curtis, Ultra Violet, and Viva). In the modern era of fashion commercial activity (which started with the Japanese in the 1980s, i.e., CdG Commes des Garcons, continued through the 1990s with HELMUT LANG, and is currently exemplified by the products of Rick Owens), there is an understanding of art world ideas and strategies – but they are not art. The one fashion provocateur and atelier who came closest to creating art was MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA. As seen through the intellectual positioning

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of NOT VOGUE, MMM's collaboration with HERMES (1997-2003) could be interpreted as a perfect moment where the conceptual ideas established in the 1960s and 1970s were seamlessly aligned with the history and artistry of European-based luxury fashion directives and goals. We are now at a point in global consumer history where a corporation (LVMH-KERING-RICHEMONT-PRADA-GUCCI) can buy, manipulate, control, and virally distort any form of original creative activity into a message of consumer propaganda. I would single out the use of PHARRELL as a platform for multiple distortions of thought into consumer addiction. DON'T THINK BE HAPPY.

It is a very dangerous moment for the emerging generation of global youth. Sarah Andelman (COLETTE) is not a cultural promoter and educator. She is a GARMENTO. Carol Lim and Humberto Leon (OPENING CEREMONY and KENZO) are not artists, cultural directors or visionaries. They are and can be nothing more than very cleverly disguised GARMENTOS. Both are just corporate misdirections of Keith Haring's THE POP SHOP (1986-2005). With the October 2014 opening of Bernard Arnault's FONDATION LOUIS VUITTON in Paris, the histories of the contemporary art world, the fashion world and the MAGASIN (department store) all merge.

NOT VOGUE has begun a process with notvogue.com and a series of essays and audio events to make as many people as possible understand how global financial organizations and interests have bought youth culture from the world's youth – and sold it back to them. We at NOT VOGUE see this as the single most dangerous threat to individuality and intellectual freedom in the long history of efforts to control society. There seems to be one philosophical way to address this war on consciousness: to understand that THEY NEED YOU, YOU DO NOT NEED THEM. We call this thought process 433. SILENCE WILL SILENCE THEM. Just walk away. It is an addiction, so it will not be easy to break. CONSUMER COOL is as addictive and psychologically dangerous as CRACK COCAINE. The key realization is that you control your view of your world, not these commercial propagandists and the institutions that support and promote them. Here we must also reference the retail propaganda platforms created by Rei Kawakubo (DOVER STREET MARKET) and Carla Sozzani (10 CORSO COMO). Both act as if they are cultural platforms, but they are in fact pathways for consumer propaganda. A question: Will there be a GIFT SHOP at the Frank Gehry-designed FONDATION LOUIS VUITTON? Remember the LOUIS VUITTON-sponsored MURAKAMI gift shop acting as if it was a cultural event at The Brooklyn Museum in 2008. The potential product collaborations available for purchase at the FONDATION LOUIS VUITTON Gift Shop are enough to boggle the mind – and even further distort our notion of culture. Who does not need a Lawrence Weiner X DIOR handbag? Is the next step the merging of BERGDORF GOODMAN with the GAGOSIAN Gallery (BERGDORF GAGOSIAN)?

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA Is it not peculiar that we should use our voice to object to a T-shirt that we are by no means forced to buy when we could use our voice to object to the many things that we are unable to avoid, are daily affected by, and frequently forced to buy?

STEVE OKLYN What you are describing is the control that FASHIONWORLD has attained in such a brief amount of time over even the most educated and aware global citizens. Graphic T-shirt culture has been one of the most effective ways to misdirect people's minds – and subsequently, people's sense of themselves. That T-shirt

graphics say something and also say something about the wearer is a profoundly ludicrous proposition. The innocence of the original rock concert T-shirt platform has been brought to the state of the META-FUNCTIONAL, a Paul Virilio expression meaning that the process is simultaneously functional and aberrant. How the innocence of the surf-skate brand that Shawn Stüssy (STÜSSY) created in the 1980s was mutated by its successor brand SUPREME into a highly focused and controlled platform of youth product addiction (hiding behind the veil of culture) perfectly illustrates the negative aspects of current brand virology. Nothing that SUPREME does has any cultural significance – it is merely a modern marketing agency.

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA How would Not Vogue react to seeing its signature image emblazoned on a T-shirt of a passerby? Are you trademarked? How much of your decision to limit your exposure to your audience (use of alias, no comment section) is tied to wanting to avoid situations such as these?

STEVE OKLYN In the summer of 2011, the original NOT VOGUE collaborators (who also assisted with the design of the two NOT VOGUE icons) screen-printed 10 pre-worn shirts with the GADDAFI + WINTOUR icon. A few were T-shirts. None were for sale. I gave mine to a friend. To be honest, there was some pleasure in seeing the sign on the street. Over the last three years, there have been multiple requests for NOT VOGUE T-shirts – both as an ideological platform and a commercial one. All of these discussions ended with nothing being done. To stay 100 percent on message, we cannot make any commercial products – or allow them to be made. I still think about making a few shirts, but only if the shirts are pre-worn. If produced, these shirts would be NFS (Not For Sale). The NOT VOGUE icons are not trademarked, which opens up the possibility that an individual or group that was not part of the original RED PILL ARMY FACTION might make shirts out of the online artwork. As you have stated, the project has been structured to be anonymous. Within every element of the authorship, design and distribution of the project, not a thought is given to commerce or commercial reward. It was also decided from the first post to be a self-contained system. The members of the NOT VOGUE commune and RED PILL ARMY FACTION collective are all individuals who have joined together in a process informed by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs's concept of THE THIRD MIND. We are all the author and designer of every aspect of the NOT VOGUE event. The site functions as a creative node.

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA What would Kate Moss say about this? Where is she in all of this? How do we read this in light of Paul Virilio's claim that "The supermodels are already mutants ushering in an unprecedented event: the premature death of any living language"? (The Information Bomb, Tran. Chris Turner. New York: Verso, p. 71). Models do not speak – and if they do, they are silenced? What is being censored here, really? I might consider seeking safety in silence if some of the stupid (but often funny) things I say became the subject of public attention and consumption.

STEVE OKLYN Kate Moss has absolutely no meaning or significance as an organic process. Operationally speaking, she is a FASHIONWORLD virus. What has been methodically designed is her projection as that virus. The virus is allowed to exist and thrive (spread) with the objective to

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infect as many host organisms as possible. The command directive and control sequence contained within the KATE MOSS virus triggers a series of thoughts, emotions and specific actions within the host. All of these have a single objective, and that is addiction. In a very real sense, KATE MOSS is the single longest line of coke in the modern cocaine era. This dose is disguised as an identity fix. It is impossible to calculate how many hits of MOSS have been consumed at this point.

The KATE MOSS virus is also mutable, and will become the source of a code addiction for any FASHIONWORLD dealer that pays. You ask where she is in all of this. I would answer first that she does not exist in the sense that an aspect in nature exists. She is only allowed to function as a carrier of an addictive viral code that, once introduced to the host, is either dormant or lives free within the host's consciousness – sending very organized and specific commands. The commands are all focused on a single behavioral modification within the host, which guides the host's consciousness to feel a sense of self-worth and identity only when it buys and attaches its societal value to the messages and consumer products manufactured and sold by FASHIONWORLD structures and strategies (and promoted by FASHIONWORLD's agents and operatives).

To a certain degree, I agree with Virilio that supermodels (in the 1990s sense of the word) are mutants. NAOMI, LINDA, CINDY, and CHRISTY were each engineered by FASHIONWORLD to represent a specific demographic – and to secure that demographic for the FASHIONWORLD World Bank. They were a unique viral phenomenon. The KATE virus has been the most effective, and is the only one with a specifically engineered clone: CARA DELEVINGNE. If the other 1990s supermodels listed above have any value to the FASHIONWORLD World Bank, it is as a form of nostalgia that can still generate profits.

NOT VOGUE is based on a number of Paul Virilio's fundamental concepts. "The premature death of any living language" as an aspect of the power that FASHIONWORLD has engineered into these viral delivery systems is a legitimate idea. Thanks to the introduction of social media, the whole new system of post-1990s supermodels is based on a wide array of mute images. One can trace the culture of a seen-but-not-heard celebrity to WARHOL. It makes sense for the FASHIONWORLD overlords to create as many cultural mutes as possible, given that the concept of language is in direct opposition to FASHIONWORLD's objective of absolute identity control systems. The less said, the better. Nothing said is optimal.

You ask what is being censored. The answer is: the models' thoughts about what they are experiencing. With social media, communication of this sort would open up a whole process that would be impossible to monitor, regulate or control. The expression "A picture is worth a thousand words" should now be "A picture is worthless unless you have over five million followers." We recommend that you seek a state of silence in response to FASHIONWORLD's unrelenting NOISE. This visual and audio noise is a form of mind torture and control. It softens the host to the single directive, which is the replacement of identity and self-worth with a series of consumer directives. Buy this and be happy. Follow this and be happy. Believe that this image holds the key to your worth as a human being. Believe that this consumer product holds the secret to your personal happiness.

Intellectual conversation and intellectual reward will not be found in the branded boutiques, the branded runways, or the branded advertisements. It will not be found by allowing one of the viruses (in the form of a model,

a fashion blogger or a brand ambassador) to supersede your unique place in the social flow and feed. The most interesting paradox of the 21st century (and the dawn of the social media surveillance and control dictatorships) is that just a few decades ago, having a voice was an intellectual objective – and even a necessity. Given that visibility has become the most effective tool for identity control in the modern age, we believe that an era of intellectual anonymity – to the point of intellectual silence – may be the most effective counter-messaging tool (and life decision). If a million of the world's youth expressed themselves by not making their expressions, feelings and thoughts known to the corporations, what would the corporations do? Hopefully, they would begin to collapse. A MODEL'S SILENCE IS PROGRAMMED OBEDIENCE TO FASHIONWORLD'S PRIMARY DIRECTIVE: IDENTITY CONTROL. NOT VOGUE's emerging use of silence as protest is a tactical response to a world now dominated by the value of continuous visibility.

SECTION

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AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA I noticed in reading your recent interview with Address magazine (Issue 2, November 2013) that the replies you sent to Johannes Reponen, who was apparently writing from London, came from Jakarta, Karachi, and Lagos. I wonder where you will write to "Pulp" from. What was the persona of Steve Oklyn doing in a thriving metropolis of, respectively, Indonesia, Pakistan and Nigeria between July 16 and July 24th of 2013, in addition to conducting an interview with "Address"? In what sense are these postcolonial centres of Asia and Africa relevant to "Not Vogue" (for the information seems too deliberately displayed to lack forethought)? Do the people behind the "Not Vogue" concept travel a lot? In working on "Not Vogue" you occupy a (virtually?) virtual space; what is your daily experience of space like? How important is hands on (but off the keyboard) experience in a world that insists on its own digitalization?

STEVE OKLYN I am currently in SIAM RIER, CAMBODIA. One of my earliest teachers and mentors was a world authority on the architecture at ANGOR WAT. I am continuing my student research into the meaning of these ancient structures. I am working out the basic narrative architecture of a new mythology. The protagonist will be a magical girl. In response to your inquiry regarding my extensive travel itinerary, the answer is that there are small cells of RED PILL ARMY FACTION members all over the world – and I travel to each of them to lead our study and discussion sessions. That these terrains are all postcolonial is relevant in as much as they are for the most part not infected (or at least not fully infected) by FASHIONWORLD virology.

We all travel a great deal to obscure our true identities as best we can. There are a number of NOT VOGUE safe houses located in various postcolonial centers. In the same way that the BEATS used the streets and cafes of Tangier, we use the streets and Internet cafes of Indonesia. Steve Oklyn's experience of real space is important and extensive. If there has been one constant in Steve Oklyn's life, it is the act of walking. Not a single day has gone by without a long walk. These have not been country hikes. Rather, they constitute an extensive personal history of urban dérives, executed in the same spirit as the dérives of the Situationists. I do this by using the derive as a platform for self-dialogue and self-reflection. I enjoy the primary

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act of following the clouds. I do not own a mobile phone. I never have, and I never will. I am the sum total of millions of moments experienced in the now.

We hope that our readers understand this, and use NOT VOGUE to protect themselves from FASHIONWORLD manipulation and control. In the meantime, we'll dream of being blind to fashion and style. [RPAF]

SECTION

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AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA In literary studies, there is the concept of an ideal reader – and its many less than ideal iterations – to mark the possibility of a work's best reception. This is potentially silly, since the ideal reader is always imagined, purely theoretical, unless one considers the author to be such a reader, which I'm sure can be done. I imagine many authors would object to such a claim, however. My point, however, has to do with your thoughts on the idea of your audience. Setting aside the possibility that it is silly to indulge in such ruminations, who would you like to reach through the visual essays that you post as "Not Vogue"? Do you measure the traffic on your website? How do you decide who to send your FYIs and updates to? Have you ever felt the need to make "Not Vogue" more open to cross-dialogue – to invite people to share their thoughts on the content that invited them to think?

STEVE OKLYN Of course there is the hope that subjects of NOT VOGUE's analysis and commentary are reading occasionally. Based on the feedback that I get, it does seem that they are. The current ownership and leadership of the various FASHIONWORLD enterprises would be the appropriate answer to your question about an ideal readership, but we are more interested in the younger members of the fashion community – the workers as opposed to the leaders. It is impossible to change the leadership. They are enriched and empowered by the system of command and control. There is an inner core of readers. All of them are in some manner involved in the highest levels of the art, fashion and media communities. There is a small amount of interplay between these insiders and the NOT VOGUE commune. This is all the feedback that the project requires.

We have never felt the need to make NOT VOGUE more open to cross-dialogue. Our research shows that open forums generally lend themselves to very little in terms of useful comments and depth. If you use THE SARTORIALIST as a model of open conversation between the author and the reader, what you see is that the correspondence is the same in every instance. Week in and week out, the sameness of those who comment – and their absolute inanity – is truly laughable. If an alien linguist were to conduct an analysis, they would think that the words "like" and "want" were the two core thoughts of every inhabitant of FASHIONWORLD. Yes, the project is built and experienced online, but just as with a critical investigation in printed book form, there is no open dialogue – and again, we feel no need to change that arrangement.

We take an intuitive approach when deciding who will receive our FYIs and updates. When a new page is posted, a random group of people are emailed. How many people receive the link to the updated site is intuitive and completely random. Every aspect of the project is strategized to maximize a sense of randomness and confusion. We are 100 percent dedicated to the experimental quality of what we are doing, and convinced that the project will remain interesting both to us and our readership if we continue to stay anonymous, heuristic and hermetic. NOT VOGUE is a seminar on intellectual self-defense against FASHIONWORLD propaganda and messaging.

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RAFFLES
Grand Hotel D'Angkor
Siam Riep, Cambodia
STEVE OKLYN
RED PILL ARMY FACTION

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AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA Your assessment of Christopher Lee Sauv  s work puts into question its suitability as "a platform for commentary" on the grounds that "it is just another consumer product" reliant "on a very well-worn meme within the history of kitsch". The underlying assumption here seems to me to be that the work of Warhol was in some essential way pure despite its clearly derivative components, while Sauv  s is essentially derivative. Can you clarify for me the standards of judgement that you employ in determining whether a product has artistic and intellectual merit?

You suggest that "Warhol's directive of 'bring home the bacon'...is the philosophical basis of our delusional world and worldview today". I think that the directive to find a way of sustaining one's life is a matter of nature, and not only of human nature, and I wonder whether finding an alternative way to live within a society driven by capitalism and consumerism is not a privilege granted to those who, by virtue of circumstance or hard work, have secured enough resources to avoid always having to think about earning a living. I respect the message of "Not Vogue," but I cannot help but feel like it is a message delivered from a position of privilege that is by no means a global norm. You speak of "global youth" – "the world's youth" – and I am not sure whether there is any such cohesive group for you to address. Along the same lines, I wonder whether your positioning of silence as a mode of defence against CONSUMER COOL is not a factor of having a forum in which to speak. Would silence still be the appropriate response for those who struggle to have a voice in the first place?

STEVE OKLYN How I view the cultural terrain that I navigate is fluid and ever-changing. I make personal decisions, not standards of judgment. I simply cannot view Christopher Lee Sauv  s work in the same context – or as having the same cultural significance – as the work of Andy Warhol. For all of his very personal strategies and insecurities, Warhol created work and social structures that have on many levels established the standards of judgment for this moment in time. Warhol's decision to become a machine is not the same as Sauv  s decision to become an informed garment manufacturer. I have based a majority of my opinions on a combination of first-hand experience and extensive historical research. In response to your very specific question regarding WARHOL & SAUV  , I witnessed ANDY WARHOL ENTERPRISES in action on many occasions. Since Jeff Koons is currently having his moment with a retrospective at THE WHITNEY MUSEUM, I think it is Koons' version of Warhol's work that Sauv   is indebted to – not Warhol's. Koons began his artistic production process in the 1980s, which is when our current cultural reality began to take shape.

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With the introduction of APPROPRIATIONS and READYMADES as an accepted artistic practice, all previous standards of judgment rapidly lost their meaning. At its most insightful, Koons' work is operating as a financial instrument within the larger global need to clean (launder) international gray market currency. Koons' ascendancy begins with the deaths of Andy Warhol (1987), Jean-Michel Basquiat (1988) and Keith Haring (1990). It was in the late 1980s that Koons was producing a work for THE WHITNEY MUSEUM titled "IMAGE WORLD: Art and Media Culture" with then-muse Ilona Staller, which evolved into the series of work titled MADE IN HEAVEN (1990-1991). The first showing was at the VENICE BIENNALE in 1990. With Warhol, Basquiat and Haring out of his way, Koons could strategically appropriate the dominant cultural position within the art world – which was then and is now dominated by the commercial galleries and dealers, not the museums or critics. THE MARKET IS NOW THE ARBITER, NOT THE INTELLECTUALS. It was also at this same moment in time that Bernard Arnault (LVMH) and Francois Pinault (KERING) begin their entwined competitive histories in gaining control of global luxury consumer brands (FASHIONWORLD), and taking control of the contemporary art world (which we refer to as ARTWORLD). My guess is that if Andy Warhol had lived into the 21st century, he would still be the dominant strategist of our SOCIAL 2.0 metaverse. ANDY WARHOL ENTERPRISES would have been bought and merged with either GOOGLE or FACEBOOK by 2014. In this context, APPLE purchasing BEATS ELECTRONICS was the juvenile version of this era's need for corporate and cultural play.

Again, I do not make standards of judgment. My research and analysis of the large and small events and forces guiding, defining and dominating all of our intellectual and emotional processes and decisions is a terrain within which I exist as an individual. Warhol is Warhol, and leads to GOOGLE X WARHOL. KOONS is SAUVÉ, and the result, in my analysis, is that SAUVÉ is a project for sale as a kitsch souvenir (i.e., EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP). Koons' work means nothing intellectually, and exists solely as a financial instrument. Christopher Lee Sauv  's work means nothing, either, and is a very accurate example of CULTURAL WARMING kitsch.

I just took a two-hour walk, and I realize how I want to end this position. The single unifying operating procedure of the last 100 years of cultural disruption is ALCHEMY: the process of transforming shit into gold. Marcel Duchamp began this process with his work FOUNTAIN (1917). This thread has since passed through many hands. Some were successful in picking up this thread, while others were dismal failures. Andy Warhol had the alchemist's gift. He could work with both inanimate matter (artworks) and animate matter (Superstars). Jeff Koons has established himself as a perfect continuation of The Factory. The problem with Koons is that he can only work with inanimate matter. He attempted alchemy with MADE IN HEAVEN (1990-1991), but the shit remained shit artistically. He quickly realized that he needed to only focus on the inanimate as a financial instrument. The insight – if there is one at all – is that the original image source, the manufacturing processes and the final investment tool are all completely devoid of any meaning. Process and strategy, procedure and societal absorption begin and end in zero. The result is an object that only gains acceptance by adding more and more zeroes. The only sorcerer working today who truly has Warhol's gift for transforming low levels of single-cell organic material into gold is Kris Kardashian Jenner. As an algorithm of cultural shallowness, THE KARDASHIANS far surpasses

even that of Koons' Play-Doh (1994-2014) – the final statement in his WHITNEY retrospective. "Kanye, please call Eli Broad about manufacturing a large-scale NIKE AIR YEEZY (2009-2015) for the front plaza of The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum."

Regarding the relationship between creative work and sustaining one's life, I have also used alchemy to transform my creative space, time and production into an abstract dimensional process and product. I have never had any concept of job, work, career, or professional accomplishment. I think as a teenager I intuited The Situationist views on both NO WORK and the d  rive (walking). I do not live my life with any sense of what you call privilege. I have never owned a car, I have never owned any real estate, I have never owned any financial tools, and I have never had or wanted health insurance. I consume and have always consumed as little as possible. I do not use clothing as a social or sexual weapon. I do not and never have owned a cell phone or a smartphone. I have never bought a computer. The one I use is someone else's property. My gift is to research, gather, sort, organize, and comprehend the workings of the world I am experiencing – not so much to make a judgment as to envision a predictive outcome. I am not interested in accomplishing anything so much as understanding something. As a child and into my teens and most of my 20s, I had no talent whatsoever. What I did have was the ability to let everyone else be special, talented and noticed – and finally, socially rewarded. Many of my peers are the most recognized creatives of the second decade of the 21st century. I refer to them as museum gift shop refrigerator magnets. Today, they are exactly as I knew them decades ago. They live each day in order to preserve the monetary value of an idea that, in most cases, is four decades old. I perceive this scenario as the rotten core that eats our society's soul. Fame and financial reward. So tiresome. So fucking obvious and boring. For hundreds of years, there has existed an underground of ennui and complete abhorrence to normative processes, definitions and rewards. To this point, I was very pleasantly engaged by the plot and visual science used by director Jim Jarmusch in his recent project titled ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE (2013). I believe that I have been gifted by the unseen forces to be a part of this important narrative.

Social defines the era in which we live (1981-2014). It is but a minor age of commercial amusements and distractions. Since the population of our planet has more than doubled in just over 60 years, many more layers of socially accepted and rewarded "artists" are required in order to keep a modicum of peace and leisure. IF DAN COLEN IS AN ARTIST, PETER BRANT MUST BE A GARBAGE COLLECTOR. I am on record stating that the universal engine of energy and conceptualism is the world's youth. This is a unique era – one in which the youth of the first world is in contact and conversation with the youth of the third world. The world population is predominately young and very restless. The social, educational, cultural, economic, political, medical, religious, and ecological implications of survival are staggering. I have to admit that the concept of a world youth in the context of NOT VOGUE is a percentage of the greater number. Today, do most of the emerging minds in Gaza, Ukraine, Tel Aviv, Kabul, Islamabad, Baghdad, or San Salvador care that Jennifer Lawrence is the current face of DIOR? No, they do not. I do not believe that the use of the word "privilege" is applicable here. The purpose of the NOT VOGUE dialogue and event is to investigate, disrupt and examine what is a very powerful process at the top of the world's power chain. Brands do infiltrate even the most impoverished

places and populaces in our global system.

I will attempt a metaphor. I am a great admirer of the literary examinations produced by Samuel Beckett (1906–1989). Can his life and work solve the primary health issues that affect our world? No, they cannot. His work is relevant because it offers anyone and everyone a chance to experience unconditional intellectual freedom. I am a New York City cab driver's son. I barely graduated high school, largely thanks to the boredom induced by rote education. I have not had a weekly salaried job since 1974. Instead of a traditional college, I attended a vocational school. Eventually, I discovered Beckett. At first, his work was unintelligible to me. I fought to understand its nature and historical place. In no way do I view NOT VOGUE as having attained Beckett's level of poetry and importance. NOT VOGUE is social critique and meta-journalism. I do believe ours and many other platforms of thought and opinion must live outside of any and all financial involvement in order to exist freely. NOT VOGUE will just be there. Others will discover it. Some will be older, but I believe most will be younger. It is there for them. It is authored for them. We will continue our process for them.

Regarding the concept of active experimentation with SILENCE, I believe it is legitimate and will slowly gain credence. Think Gandhi and passive resistance. I am fascinated by the actions of the cult THE GUILTY REMNANT within the narrative of the new HBO series THE LEFTOVERS. In all of its many forms (past, present and speculative), silence is filled with potential. Usually, it comes at the mature end of an investigation of self and consciousness. I say use your voice. SCREAM. We care, and we are listening.

SECTION

B2

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA I suspect that your work on "the basic narrative architecture of a new mythology" with a "magical girl" for a protagonist is part of the Steve Oklyn construct, but I am nevertheless curious: Why the desire for a new mythology and a magical, female protagonist? Also: How do you recruit new members of the Red Pill Army Faction and what are your membership numbers as of now?

STEVE OKLYN The narrator (SIXTY THREE) of the third event in THE RESISTANCE TRILOGY was the first female member of the RED PILL ARMY FACTION (RPAF). SIXTY THREE and STANLEY BLADE (a first-level member of the RPAF) represent the most traditionally revolutionary aspect of the NOT VOGUE conceptual process. MARK EVEN, who is the true algorithm that operates STEVE OKLYN, came into existence in 2000. In 2015, he was incarcerated for corporate infiltration and disruption crimes. MARK EVEN spent 10 years in prison at BALSEC ONE, and was released in 2025. While imprisoned, he quickly developed a process and poetic science that he called 433. Having a geological connection to Switzerland, he established an RPAF SAFE HOUSE in Lauenen for further research and discussion with a small group of commune members led by ANON BUNKER. BLADE and SIXTY THREE remained committed to acts of violence, which EVEN came to perceive as gangsterism after extensive meditation sessions. Meanwhile, he viewed 433 as an evolutionary process – a physical repositioning of ancient survival practices built on fear and rage that can organically, through silence, be reconfigured as calm.

I see the new mythology as a complex game of maneuvers between MARK EVEN and the future progeny of STANLEY BLADE and SIXTY THREE. Both EVEN and the magical girl (the as-yet-unnamed protagonist) are cultural alchemists in opposition to each one's gifts and goals. I can give you a clue as to where the genesis of the magical girl's generalized physical nature and psychic powers originated: The original was born an Abomination. There is no recruitment. Rather, there is a process that allows for each new member to become a psychic addition to the overall procedure and event. Think The Third Mind. There are currently six minds: STEVE OKLYN, MARK EVEN, STANLEY BLADE, DR. CANYON T. PHIPPS, SIXTY THREE, and ANON BUNKER.

SECTION

C2

AGNIESZKA POLAKOWSKA While I agree that the comments left on the majority of web forums are by and large devoid of meaning, I think it is important to acknowledge that there is a lot of untapped critical potential among both those who leave them and those who do not. I wonder whether "Not Vogue" is giving enough credit to the individuals who constitute the consumer base of a capitalist society. Our identities are not fixed; it is possible to fall prey to the simulacrum of identity sold by FASHION-WORLD sometimes, and to reject it at other times. Is the world of "Not Vogue" always as black-and-white as your interviews suggest?

STEVE OKLYN NOT VOGUE was never intended to be an open discussion group. It is better experienced as the minutes taken during RPAF meetings, discussions and conversations – and the subsequently agreed-upon conclusions. We feel most comfortable operating anonymously, and observing how our thoughts and processes interact with those of the world at large. I agree that there are many truly gifted individuals out there. I encourage them to begin their own thought-based communes, and disseminate their ideas, experiments, events, and conclusions free of all capitalist objectives.

July 26, 2014
RPAF Safe House
Lauenen, Switzerland
STEVE OKLYN
RED PILL ARMY FACTION

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