



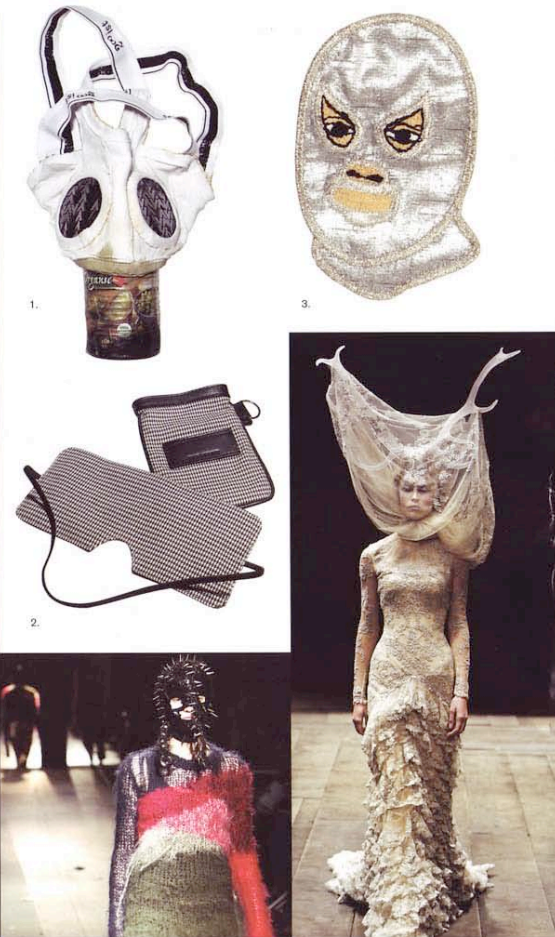
ART,
MUSIC
IS ELECTRIC!

DREW
NEW
WAVE

42

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DREW DADDYMADE IN CIO



MASQUERADE

IN ART, DESIGN, AND FASHION, MASKS ARE TAKING ON NEW AND UNEXPECTED FORMS. WHETHER TO OBSCURE, PROTECT, OR SIMPLY DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FACE, MASKS HAVE A LONG HISTORY IN MYTH AND REVOLUTION. V TAKES A LOOK AT THE CULTURAL COVERUP

1. Christian Holstad's S&M masks

The modern American gay rights movement began with masks. The Mattachine society, the first gay rights group in the U.S., was named after a medieval French secret society of unmarried men who performed cross-dressing burlesques outdoors, getting away with barbed political satire because they never appeared in public without their feathered disguises. According to a 1976 interview with the society's founder, "We took the name Mattachine because we felt that we 1950s gays were also a masked people, unknown and anonymous, who might become engaged in moving toward total change." In the 2006 New York installation "Love means never having to say you're sorry," art-

ist Christian Holstad investigated masks from another historical moment of gay idealism—the pre-AIDS 1970s, a time of ardent belief that perversion would set us free. In the exhibit (a tweaked simulacrum of an S&M boutique), gas masks and bondage hoods were displayed like evening gloves at Bloomingdale's (Holstad created a line of knit hats exclusively for Barneys a few years ago, which also explains his exquisite stitch work). But unlike the leather effluvia in sleek Christopher Street shops, there is something funny and homemade about this gear. One gas mask is fashioned from gay-marketed 2(x)ist briefs, with an empty can of tinned veggies for a mouthpiece. A gimp mask has goo smeared across its mouth-hole, a relic of an evening one prefers not to imagine too vividly; upon closer inspection, the mask is made of every hippie's favorite material, hemp, and the smear comes from wheatgrass juice. Hippie signifiers pop up unexpectedly, and in juxtaposing these two disconnected subcultures, Holstad explores a utopian past when one could un-ironically believe in the liberating power of taboo-busting. In the age of gay pride parades sponsored by multinational conglomerates, Holstad seems almost wistful for the eras of hippies, leather-daddy liberationists, and the Mattachines, when these masks were more than mere commodities. **Christopher Thomas**
Meditation on Darkness (White Gas Mask), 2005-6
Courtesy Daniel Reich Gallery, NYC

2. Dior Homme by Hedi Slimane sleep mask

Contrary to popular belief, some rock stars do sleep. At least that's what Dior Homme designer Hedi Slimane would have us believe (and as fashion's poster boy for rock-star chic and the photographer of several tomes dedicated to the topic, he's certainly the one to know). That's why his newest addition to Dior Homme's personal travel and accessories line, The Maison Col-

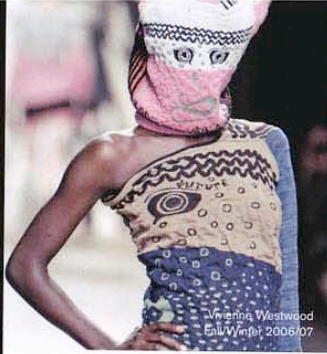
lection, is a black-and-white houndstooth nylon sleep mask—just the thing to help sleep off hangovers or block the harsh light of dawn from the sensitive eyes of singers, guitarists, or groupie sex partners. Included with a handy matching case, it's the perfect addition to the toiletry bag, toothpaste case, shaving brush, shoe horn, and digital camera cover that are mainstays to the collection. Sure, it might not be entirely cool for a hard-core musician to waste valuable gig or party time sleeping and maintaining proper hygiene, but at least with Slimane's line of Dopp kits and toiletry bags they can maintain some sort of street cred. And unlike most of the signature line, the sleep mask is a fit almost any body size can slip into. **Derek Blasberg**
For information: www.dior.com

3. Lucha Libre Mexican wrestling masks

Hearts start racing the moment the crowd enters the arena. Opposing sides begin cheering and taunting, and then a sudden sound of thunder shuts down the lights. Strobes illuminate smoky hallways leading to the ring. Then there comes the voice of the announcer. He will narrate this classic tale, which always begins with, "They will fight two of three falls without time limit!" The rounds are not timed and only end with a pin-down. Two fighters emerge—two humans transformed into mystical characters by their costumes. They combat in the war between good and evil. Their names derive from myth, like Thor, or from human ailments such as Psychosis and Amnesia. Others take zoomorphic names such as Felino or even sociological conditions like Mestizo (half colonizer, half native) and El Huerfano (the orphan). In one corner is the band of "Los Rudos" (ruffians or thugs). In the other, "Los Cientificos" (the scientists). The Mexican federation of fighters, the country's equivalent of the WWF, recognizes one side as being guided by the forces of mayhem and disruption, and the



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4.



other by pragmatism and rationalism. Lucha Libre, which translates literally to "free fight," makes human emotions and moral dilemmas palpable.

Since the founding of the league in 1933, masks have been protocol for all fighters. Made from form-fitting spandex in brilliant colors trimmed with glitter and contrasting hues, the mask is one piece of costume that the fighter commits to never taking off. Once a fighter is masked, he is obligated to the league and to his masked identity forever—in and outside of the ring. The mask is worn not to hide the fighter's true identity, but rather to testify his allegiance—in other words, to become the mask he wears. The greatest honor for a fighter is to be buried in his mask.

Should a fighter lose his mask, he is barred from the league forever and condemned to die a mere human. **Jorge Ulrich**

4. Brian Jungen's Nike Air Jordan masks

Canadian artist Brian Jungen's "Prototype for a New Understanding" series shrewdly mixes notions of authenticity and divinity with postmodern fetish. Deconstructed Nike Air Jordans are his "found material" for a group of sculptures based on northwestern Canadian aboriginal masks. Appropriating the artifacts' formal elements, Jungen's masks are haunting and deliberately garish. They mirror our contemporary fixation with brand-name goods, often assembled in third world countries, and the superfluous nature of commodity culture. Echoing traditional display methods of European museums, the leather masks are set on stands to highlight their preciousness. Cheeky, yes, but Jungen hits many targets here: in today's worship of logos, everything is commodified, and nothing could be more blasphemous than shredding up a few perfectly good pairs of Air Jordans. The artist, who is of both European and First Nation Canadian ancestry, has insisted that his work is not a comment on the desecration of

native culture per se. He uses his heritage as a reference point in exploring notions of the sacred and the profane, authenticity and disposability. From an anthropological perspective, much blood has been shed over land and God, but who could have predicted an epoch in which men would be murdered for a pair of Nikes? When pavement has replaced local vegetation, it's no wonder that our rituals involve "just doing it" in an almighty, made-in-China pair of basketball sneakers. **Kate Sennett**
Prototype for New Understanding #23, 2005
Courtesy the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

5. Ducati Performance Helmet

With the ability of a Ducati motorcycle to reach a land speed of 170 miles per hour, the necessity of a helmet is pretty self-explanatory. Thankfully, the premium Italian manufacturer offers its own line of designer headgear to protect the rich and beautiful from a chance dash against the blacktop. The Ducati Performance Helmet features all new design and construction technology with a full-faced shell crafted in high-impact resistant fiberglass, layered in protective plastic and reinforced with Kevlar. But it looks good, too. The helmet features a classic Italian tricolor graphic, echoing Ducati's apparel line for 2004 and marking the brand's triumphant return to the MotoGp championship. An antiscratch visor and air intake system also make it pretty comfortable in hot winds. The helmet can only enhance performance on the road. The rest is up to the one who wears it. **Bailey Liackman**
For information: www.ducati.com

6. Dash Snow's Polaroids

Dash Snow's shots of young downtowners doing bad downtown things have become something of an insider's photo album of the untinged. Among the myriad late-night deeds he's docu-

mented, rampant cocaine use, sidewalk vomiting, and rand hookups seem to run through the frames like off-duty taxi cabs at the Bowery. Snow's perspective vacillates between that of eyewitness and that of a fellow accomplice. The camera includes a position of standing outside of the situation, but if the immediate focus of Snow's lens, he's clearly implicated the criminal activity. In a sense, he melts the usual separation between the artist and the subject—and clearly the fast exposure the Polaroid collapses the idea of artistry as something that cures later, far from the experience being recorded. In the case one such photo, however, *Untitled (WTC)*, 2001, the artist's three shirtless comrades seem to understand the fact of photography, even Snow's fast, fleeting variety, is fundamental documentary evidence. It can be used in a court of law. Presumably near Ground Zero, hanging out on a police car, flipping the camera (and by extension, any of us who challenge that these young males understand the idea of masking identity as essential aid for not getting caught—especially during post-9/11 paranoia where any slight on public authority is considered treasonous. Youths in masks are extremely threatening. They can be identified by lineups or arrest records. Youths look alike, wear the same clothes, present hand gestures the mainstream crowd reads. The T-shirts strung over their mouths and noses render us slapdash robbers. But also, at the end of 2001 with WTC debris still on the streets, they create a visual rhyme with terrorists in the Middle East sporting their own traditional coverings. Snow's shot documents masks of modern-day America, a very slim pathway where masks still offer a reprieve of threat and rebellion. **Christopher Bollen**
Untitled (WTC), 2001, Courtesy Rivington Arms

Still-life photography Billy Jim