

**ART / DESIGN / MUSIC / FILM**

Volume One Issue Two

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**Firstly, an apology to anyone who's noticed it's been more than the intended 3 months since the last issue. Holding down increasingly demanding day jobs alongside juggling all the other projects we have going on between us had me wondering if there was going to be a follow up to issue#1, but here we are (albeit a month late) and it wouldn't have happened without all the positive feedback and contributions we've received in the past few months. A massive thank you to everyone who's got involved this time around, helping us to deliver another healthy dose of ideas to soak up at your leisure. Enjoy!**

**Project Co-ordination:** Rob Lynam & Steve Sawyer

**Art Direction:** Inmo Visual Consultancy [www.inmo-design.com](http://www.inmo-design.com)

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# IT'S ALL A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

**Words:** Mike Hirst // **Illustration:** Dave Mckiven

Have you ever had one of those life-jarring moments when you see a reflection of yourself when you weren't ready for it? One of those instants where your blissfully ignorant self-image is shattered by undeniable evidence about what you are really like. It could be the first time you hear your own voice being played back to you on a tape recorder at school (damn, you mean I don't sound like Barry White to everyone else?), seeing yourself on home video footage (nah, it's fake, I'm much more elegant than that...) or any one of a million other ways, but in any case I'm sure we've all been there a million times, and probably luckily so...

I mean, left to our own devices we would probably all end up convinced we should have our own theme show, based on ourselves – and that it would be the best program on t.v. ever. Kind of like the Osbournes, only concentrating on the greatest human to ever walk the earth, with mind-bogglingly awesome theories on everything possible. Our every word would be noted down by countless historians (covering <insert your name here> issues would be quite a boom industry in these epic times), printed in gold and revered throughout time as the words of the person who finally lead the human race into enlightenment. It's not our ego's fault, it's just that in our own opinion we will always be right, or at least justified in our actions; it's necessary, as if we deplored our own actions we would just shrivel up and die.

Soo, rampant egos are bad. It's all very well and good having everyone marching around with their chests all puffed out and a swagger on their hips, but you can see the potential for clashes. No-one would want to do the dishes; it would just turn into a huge crockery-filled disaster – or at least would do if it wasn't for the fact that no-one would deign to go to the unstaffed supermarket to buy some unharvested and unpackaged groceries. In fact the only upside I can possibly see at the moment is that people would probably spend much more time than before creating decidedly exotic new cocktails, but even this seductive promise of novel alcoholic drinks is not enough to sway me from starting my next paragraph with "luckily!"

Luckily our egos don't get a chance to turn the human race into boasting refuseniks; we're granted the benefit of perspective from a very early age. "Yes", your brain learns, "yes it is enormous and wonderful fun drawing on the wall. But this makes mummy and daddy very upset. From their perspective crayon doesn't look nice on the wall, so I shall stop except for when they're naughty." And so it goes on as you grow up with various cloutings, shoutings and near-misses signposting your increasing ability to see situations from other peoples perspectives as the years roll by.

This sense of perspective extends to your abilities as well. You find out how fast you are at running within minutes of arriving at school, for example: I remember thinking that I could run like the wind before arriving, only to discover that I was unfortunately more like the Michael Schumacher (wearing full race kit and pushing his car) of sprinting. You kind of get an idea of where you fit in, and adjust to the realities of it all. This whole sense of perspective helps us to adapt to our surroundings and to, whether we realise it or not, blend in with them.

The snag is that the world is a very diverse place. Different places have very different customs, things which seem perfectly normal from our point of view – from our perspective – seem utterly alien to people from other cultures, and vice versa. Unfortunately this is why we don't all get along like one big happy family; people feel insecure when presented with an unfamiliar scenario, because they can't draw on their own past experience when dealing with it, and so tend to verge towards the defensive. But we're not going to go there – that's the sort of topic covered in the kind of large leather-bound tomes that look great on a bookshelf but are unfortunately never read; I'm going to take a sharp detour away from grand politics and take the whole mistrust theme along with me for reassurance.

If you filter the whole overblown global example down, it still holds true. Your perspective is shaped by what you see when you grow up. A cowboy hustlin' a living as a rodeo rider is going to have a totally different perspective on life to an Indian working in an office in Delhi. Their tastes in everything will be different, from music to art. They will appreciate different things, will be interested in different things, and will be uncomfortable being asked to do unfamiliar things. The office worker (let's imagine they've led a very indoors-orientated life, you've got to work with me a little here!) may never have sat on a horse in their life, may unknowingly be a naturally gifted rider and yet would still probably balk at the prospect of working on a ranch. Likewise the cowboy would probably not relish the prospect of an evening of classical music despite having a previously untapped appreciation for it (this is a fictional, well-paid, cultured office worker – which I'm sure office workers the world over would hasten to agree is a perfectly accurate description. Well the "cultured" part of the description, anyway!).

I'm homing in on a point here, trying to whittle it down a little so that it isn't too blunt! This is the era of diversity, thanks to the outlet modern technology has given people. Soon everyone will have a voice, and the only way to make yourself be heard will be to create something different to the others, something that stands out and makes the jaded onlooker pay attention – either for its' novelty or for the ability of its' creators. It's a fantastic time, and one where people are finally able to pursue their projects despite the lack of backing from major corporations – they've got a way to be heard.

The point (of anticipation) is that it's natural to be wary of "new" things, of people expressing themselves in hitherto unseen ways. There's sometimes a fine line between art and vandalism, ability and stupidity in some peoples' eyes and this is shaped by peoples' experiences, by what they expect to be normal. By having these preconceptions and by not making an effort to approach new things in a positive and enthusiastic frame of mind people miss out on so much. People generally allow their perceptions to grow until they are able to fit in comfortably with the society around them – they are used to doing so. Once they've got all comfy, learned how to buy a pair of slippers and how to put them on to the table they usually give the old exploration of consciousness routine a quick break which usually lasts the rest of their lives. It was a tried and tested routine back in the day; I mean if you absolutely had to get used to a new culture you at least normally had the luxury of a few months on a steamship to adjust and warm up the old brain, so to speak. These days, however, you can nip across the world in less time than it takes a hungover cowboy on work experience to stagger from his office desk to the coffee machine and back first thing in the morning, and have the technology to send him a playfully jesting email poking fun at the saddle bags under his eyes whilst you're in the air. We've access to, and can share, the best parts of all cultures and this is an opportunity, not a threat!



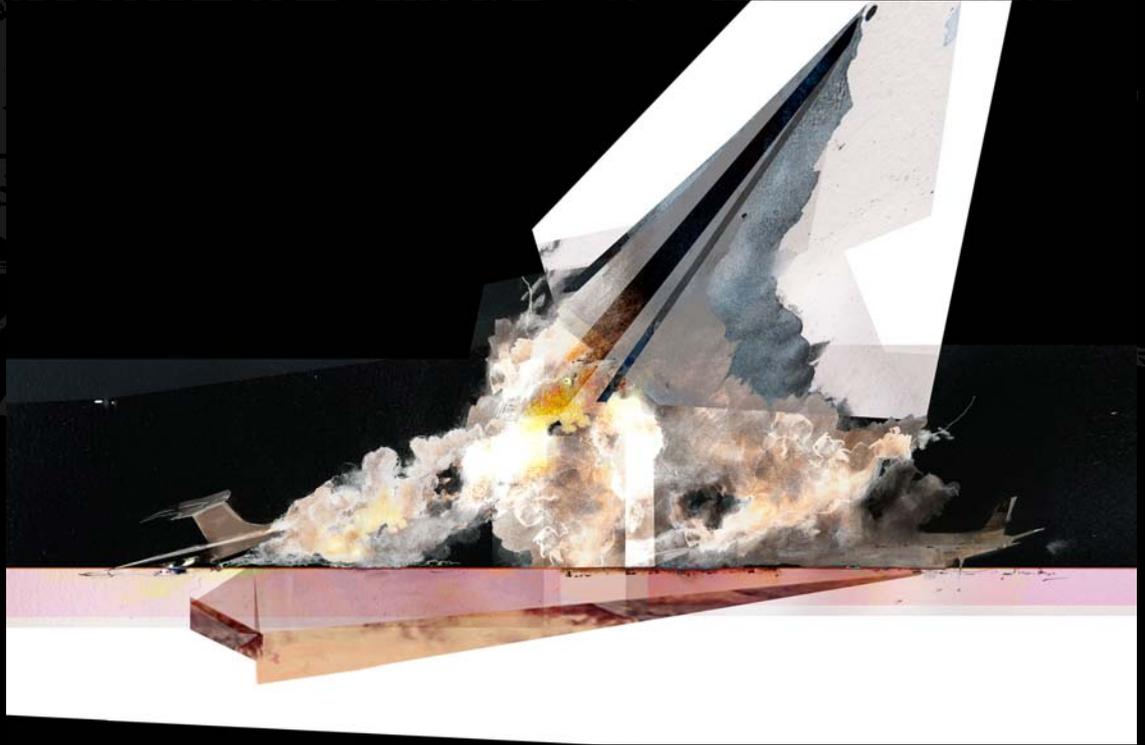
# Ian Francis

ianfrancis777@gmail.com



Two unattractive people kiss for the first time to the sound of Billie Holiday

Dawson's Field 14th September 1970 - the 50 hostages were released before the explosions



A girl playing with birds

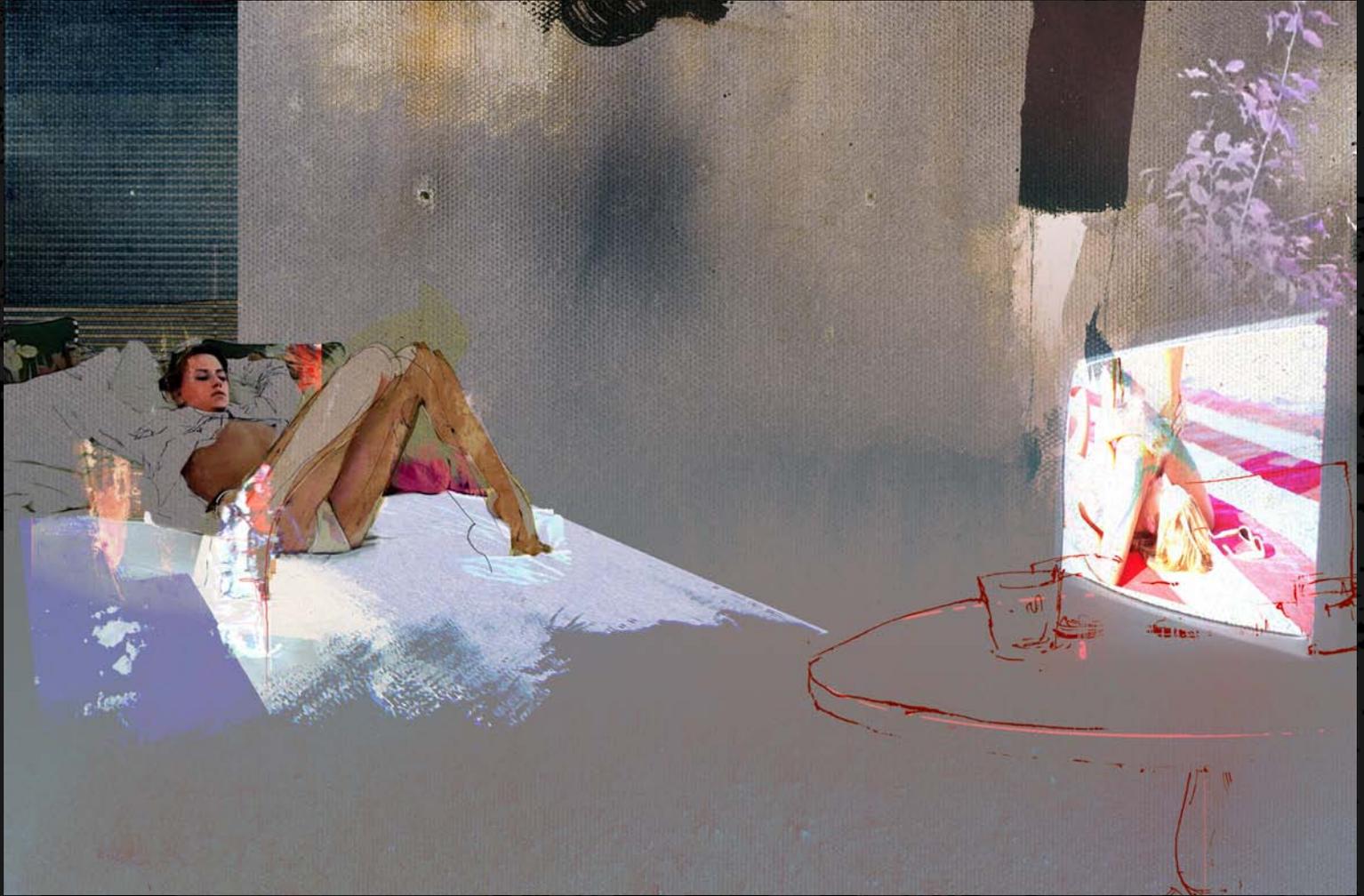


A small girl is chased by a shark

Playing pool, with the usual distractions



Hotel/porn



Two people while away a slow, agoraphobic afternoon (with sex)



Girl gone wild!!! - or is it all really fake?

# TOKYO DAWN RECORDS

## TOKYO DAWN RECORDS HAVE BEEN RELEASING FREE MUSIC ON-LINE NOW SINCE 1997. BOSS MARC 'PRYMER' FILLS US IN ON WHATS STILL TO COME FROM THIS GERMAN BASED NET-LABEL.

**The label has been running for 8 years now. What was the original motivation for starting the project and how have things developed since you began?**

Tokyo Dawn was just a small musical playground for us and our friends in the beginning, fooling around with the new software and media available at the time. Quite alot has happened since then. Now the quality of our output doesn't need to fear any comparisons and we've managed to get our name on the map. We're currently working on a japanese video game soundtrack, remixes, a further compilation, artist albums, all kinds of stuff. Meanwhile even Wu Tang members are asking if we can work something out together. Things have really changed since the starting days.

**Early 2004 saw the release of your compilation 'practice avoiding mistakes', the labels debut CD release. Why the decision to put music out on a physical format and are there any more CD releases in the pipeline?**

We had to show that Tokyo Dawn is more than just a netlabel, and that our webpage is only a frontdoor to the public, not Tokyo Dawn itself. For us it's all about the music, not about the media tricks we use. But releasing this CD compilation was necessary to change the media's focus on Tokyo Dawn away from the netlabel story towards the musical substance behind our releases. CDs aren't our main priority at the moment, there are other mediums which catch our interest alot more right now, but you know, never say never.

**Of all the net labels currently making a name for themselves among fans of electronic music, you stand out somewhat in your focus on Soul/Hip-Hop/Jazz etc. Was this always your intention and to what extent was the label shaped by the music/demos that were sent to you in earlier years?**

Well we're into all sorts of music, Soul, Funk, Jazz, Rap, Disco, Techno, Dub, you name it, we don't really care about those scene rituals and style boundaries as you can hear in our mixsets. But of course we're reducing the label's output to certain musical colours, moods, sample aesthetics and style schemes. I suppose the optimum is when you can recognize a label's sound signature blindfolded, like how it was possible to spot the sound of early Metalheadz, Planet E, Stones Throw or Rawkus records right away.

**How do you come across the artists featured on the label? Has the process of finding music to release changed at all now that you are more established?**

Yes it's changed, we receive alot more demos, but that doesn't necessarily mean everything automatically gets easy. Finding good music to release may be easier, but releasing good music still means alot more than just finding it.

**Are there any events run by TDR or any of your artists at present?**

No, not really. Well okay some of our artists have club residencies and come around quite well with their live shows and dj gigs. But there's no TDR club if that's what you mean.

**What do you get up to when you're not running TDR?**

Besides pushing TDR i'm currently working on my diploma in media and design, djing, working in the studio, jobbing, and doing a million and one other things inbetween. There's not much time left to get bored.

**What can we expect from the TDR camp in the near future?**

We've got a 2xLP compilation with some very special surprise guests coming up very soon! The first CD is all about rap and funk and jazz(!), the second features some sweet disco and house music. Both have the same ammount of dirt and deepness, so all the house people should really go check out that funk and vice versa! There are two impressing albums from Saine and Comfort Fit in the pipeline too. We're also working on a new webpage, a new radioshow and lots of other stuff - we're not sleeping!



**CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO CHECKOUT / DOWNLOAD THE ENTIRE TOKYO DAWN CATALOGUE, INCLUDING THE LATEST RELEASE FROM COMFORT FIT 'FORGET & REMEMBER'**

[www.tokyodawnrecords.com](http://www.tokyodawnrecords.com)



# Praveen

**Tell us a bit about yourself and how your online radio station percussion lab came to be.**

My name is Praveen Sharma, I'm a musician with releases out on Neo Ouija, Expanding Records and Ai Records. I have been making electronic music for about ten years now, everything from detroit techno, to hip hop. My debut album, "Backed By Spirits" (on neo ouiija) is an exploration of a melancholic crisp electronic sound which i became interested in last summer. It features live recordings of drums, piano and guitar blended with swathes of electronic sound and crisp bits of electronic percussion.

Percussion Lab originated as a late night radio show on the local independant radio station, 91.3 WVKR. We split our two hour slot into electronic and hiphop/turntablism sections. We usually had two sets of turntables and a couple MCs in the studio and would have live freestyle battles over the air backed on the 1+2s by my co host's lord L and Killa K. The radio show then expanded to a 24/7 stream of the illest underground electronic and hip hop music. On the site and show, we also feature exclusive live and DJ sets by established and up and coming labels and artists. We have featured sets by Jimmy Edgar, Machine Drum, Team ShadeTek, Miles Tilmann, Xhale, myself and many more.

**How did the relationship with Atmsphr.org come about and what does it mean for the future of the station?**

Adrian Pitmann over at Atmsphr.Org came up with the idea that we pool our resources together and try and expand the original concept of the stream and site. The stream has since been upgraded from a 10 person max listener limit to a 100+ max listener limit. We also will be upgrading the stream again soon, and it will once again display the currently playing song info in listeners' mp3 players. We also now have a consistent schedule, featuring two exclusive sets per week - one on tuesday nights, 12-2am, from atmsphr.org which is only streamed and not downloadable, and another thursday nights, 12-2am (Eastern time), which is the current featured downloadable set on percussionlab.com. Friday nights, 12-2am, on 91.3 wvkr, is the original Percussion Lab radio show, which now focuses on hip hop and turntablism when there aren't special guests performing. Adrian also designed the new PercussionLab.Com, and has brought it up to standard along with the rest of his impressive web development projects. We have a lot of ideas for the future, including live broadcasts from atmsphr.org parties around the globe and direct linking to record shops where you can purchase the music we stream.

**After making appearances on the labels A.I and Expanding, your debut LP has finally landed on Neo Ouija. How did you find the process of putting the album together and what can people expect when they check it out?**

The album originally wasn't something Lee (neo ouiija head) and I were happy with. We discussed it, and I followed his advice and went back to work on something more timeless. Most of "Backed By Spirits" was created during the spring and summer of 2004, with the exception of haze which is a couple years older. Most of the core elements of "Backed By Spirits," the live drums, piano and guitar, were recorded at Leopard Studio (<http://www.leopardstudio.com>), where I work as an assistant and technology supervisor. I then brought these recordings home and added electronic elements. Many of the original recordings are unrecognizable due to the amount of effects i used, but my future musical output will be bringing that much more to the forefront. The album features a crisp melancholic sound and should please fans of Xela, Arovane, Boards of Canada and Kompakt's Pop Ambient series.

**What's in the pipeline?**

I'm currently finishing up my next project which blends live drums and piano with epic granular atmospheres. It is much more beat heavy than "Backed By Spirits." After this I will begin work on the next album. I'll be playing around the NYC area much more frequently soon so keep an eye out for a live show.

**Shouts?**

I can't thank adrian over at atmsphr.org enough for helping me upgrade the stream and site! Also of course props to all my artist friends out there who help and inspire me daily! RJ, Erik, John, Collin, etc! Thanks to all the artists and labels submitting sets for the radio show! And to everyone who enjoys the album, thank you and its only going to get better!

[www.praveensharma.com](http://www.praveensharma.com)  
[www.percussionlab.com](http://www.percussionlab.com)  
[www.neoouiija.com](http://www.neoouiija.com)



STRICTLYKINGS

**STRICTLY KINGS**

ORIGINATE UP IN THE SOUL

**FLY FRESH**  
**STRICTLY KINGS**



In the first of what will hopefully become a regular feature in the magazine, we've got a chance to reward some of you guys for taking an interest in our little pdf project. Much gratitude goes to Mike from Strictly Kings for donating some fresh T-shirts with a selection of the slick SK designs. If you aren't familiar with this stuff, head over to the website at [www.strictlykings.co.uk](http://www.strictlykings.co.uk) to check out the whole catalogue which includes some nice hoodies as well as both men and womens shirts. If you want a chance to sneak one of ours for free, send an email to [comp@multilinkmagazine.com](mailto:comp@multilinkmagazine.com) and tell us why you should get one and we'll hook four of you up. Put 'strictly mine' in the subject header and state L or XL, we'll try and get you something that fits.



*Abandoned as a young cub in the wilderness of County Durham and adopted by a troop of performing badgers where he spent his formative years documenting the local wildlife with the aid of crayons & paper and working up to paint & canvas, so lets take a little field trip to the wonderous world of Matt Sewell, where the giraffes sip martinis and finches greet you on every corner*





**When did you first pickup a pen/pencil/brush/drawing implement and why?**

I was always very inquisitive when I was little..and still am, I'm continually burning and hurtin myself when leapin before thinkin..I remember being in the first year at infants and knocking a pencil off my little table by accident, I was amazed at how it got smaller as it went further away from me..well, in my tiny mind I wondered that if i put my head on the floor it would do the same from that angle. So I knocked the pencil off and to my horror I was very wrong, it actually got bigger and stuck me right in the eye..From that day i learned that the pencil is a powerfull thing and not to be messed with.

**What inspired you / still inspires you to draw & paint?**

Back then it was not being very good a football, getting out of doing normal lessons... its still pretty much the same now apart from you replace the lessons bit with havin to get a job.

**What was your first 'big Break'**

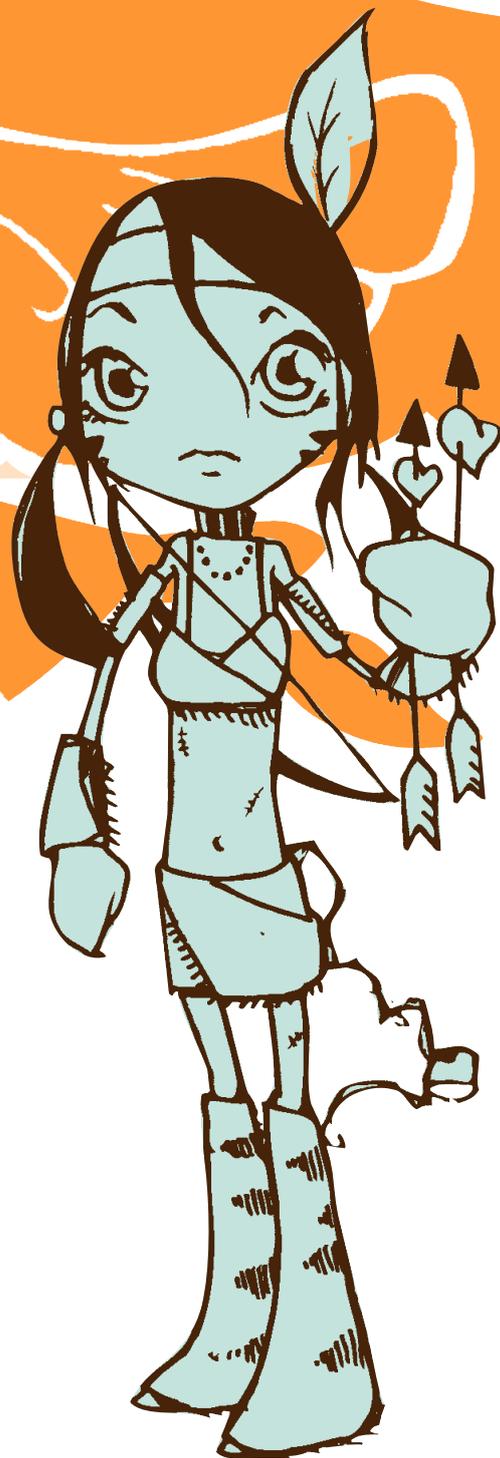
We where on a trip to that london from my college in Consett (land of Philleas Fogg). We were all "whats all this, like" and "How Much!!"..Anyway we all got smashed on special brew and nettle wine, I kid you not, and a load of us went back to someones room. There was a load of girls on the bed and i quite clearly remember thinkin how funny it will be for me to turn out the light and jump on the bed..so I did, everyone screamed in fake terror, I jumped and completly missed the bed and smacked my nose on the bed-head, breaking it a burstin it serverly.. I came round whilst everyone was screamin and being all teenage in the pitch black but I couldnt find the light switch so I smeared blood all over the walls blindly feelin for it. Eventually I found it and the lights come back on, the walls and me are covered in blood and you can see the bone through t yhe side of my nose... I didnt pull either. Getting my work in the Scrawl Too book was probably also another big break.

**Were there any valuable lessons that you learnt along the way?**

Not really, just not to be ashamed of letting people know you are there.

**Would you say your attitude towards what you are doing has changed at all, since you started?**

Nah, not really. I'm still learning and I want to just carry on moving forward. I've never been happy just to stick with one thing and I hope that will carry on. It doesnt even feel like there was a time when I started doing artwork because I knew from when i was a lil' cub that I was always gonna be involved in something artistic. I think the only thing thats changed is that I've got wary of working with certain companies, people etc. A lot of peeps really take this piss when it comes to money and time... I find it amazing how you can be approached by a well known brand to do a big job and they offer you a pittance giving it all the "it'll be great exposure on our website" kind of stuff... but all that is just a learning curve.



**How do you go about getting work, does it come to you or do you go out hunting with spear and arrow?**

Booby twaps, pinchers off peril and all that jazz. I used to send out lots of work to companies and relevant peeps..which really helped..doing postcards and nice bits like that can get you seen all over the place. I've only just got into the position where alot of work is coming to me..but it hasnt always been like that i can tell you..

**What are you working on at the moment?**

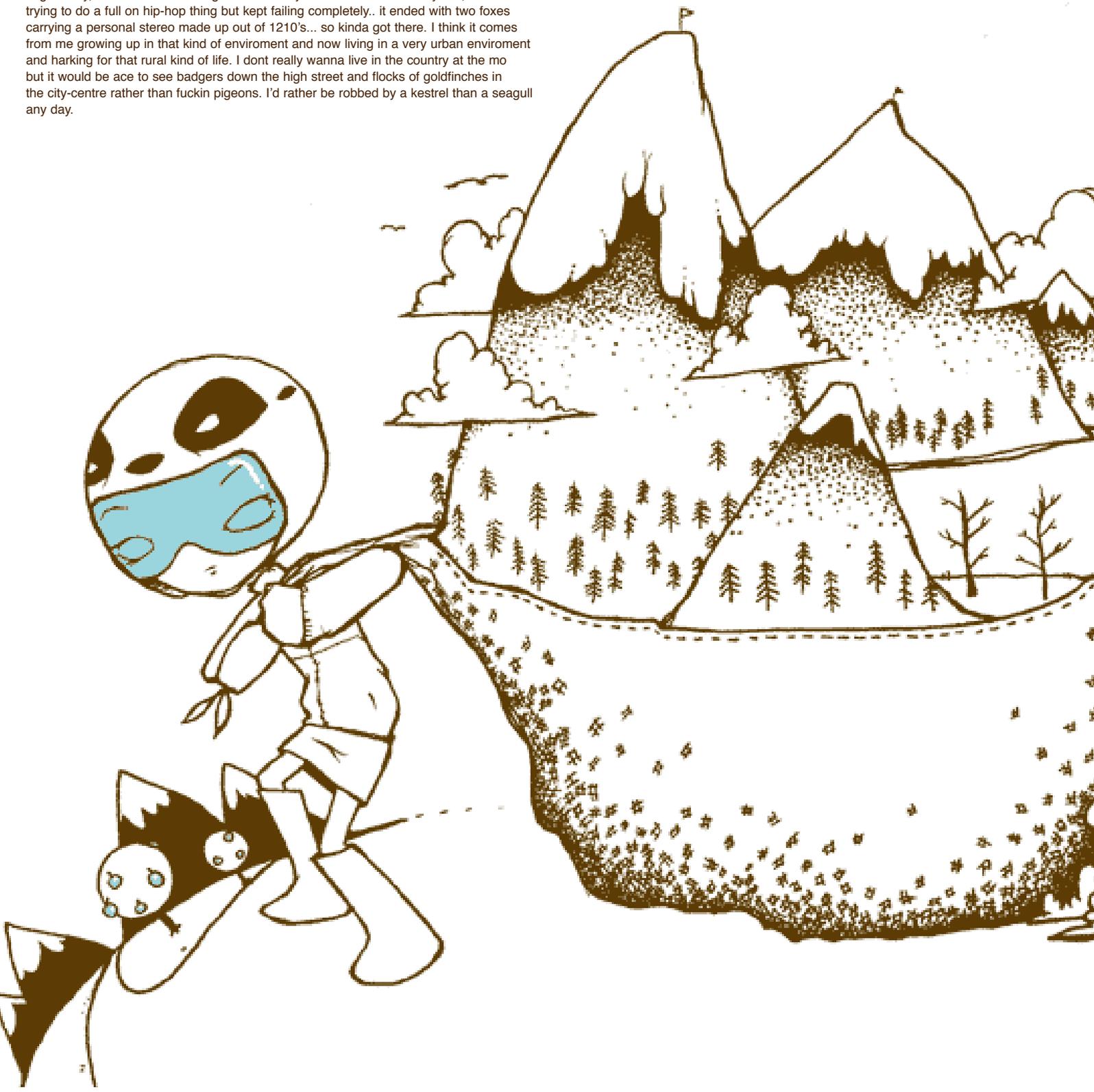
I'm well into print at the mo, so sorting out different screen prints to sell on me site and some new cards and a poster too. New artwork for Resident in Brighton. Just finished a big old canvas for Gravis which is gonna get spliced up and made into trainers in the summer...cannae wait for that one.. Designing a badge for a crazy club night in Manchester, Peter Saville did the last one and the dude who sang "3 is the magic number" did there third one...Im going to the delighfull Eastbourne at the weekend to paint an interior for Urban Industry.Also in negotiations with the local council to paint a derelict shop in Manchester city centre and also doing workshops in the not-so-nice sides of Manchester showing the youth how to draw and do graffiti, while they teach me how to rob cars.

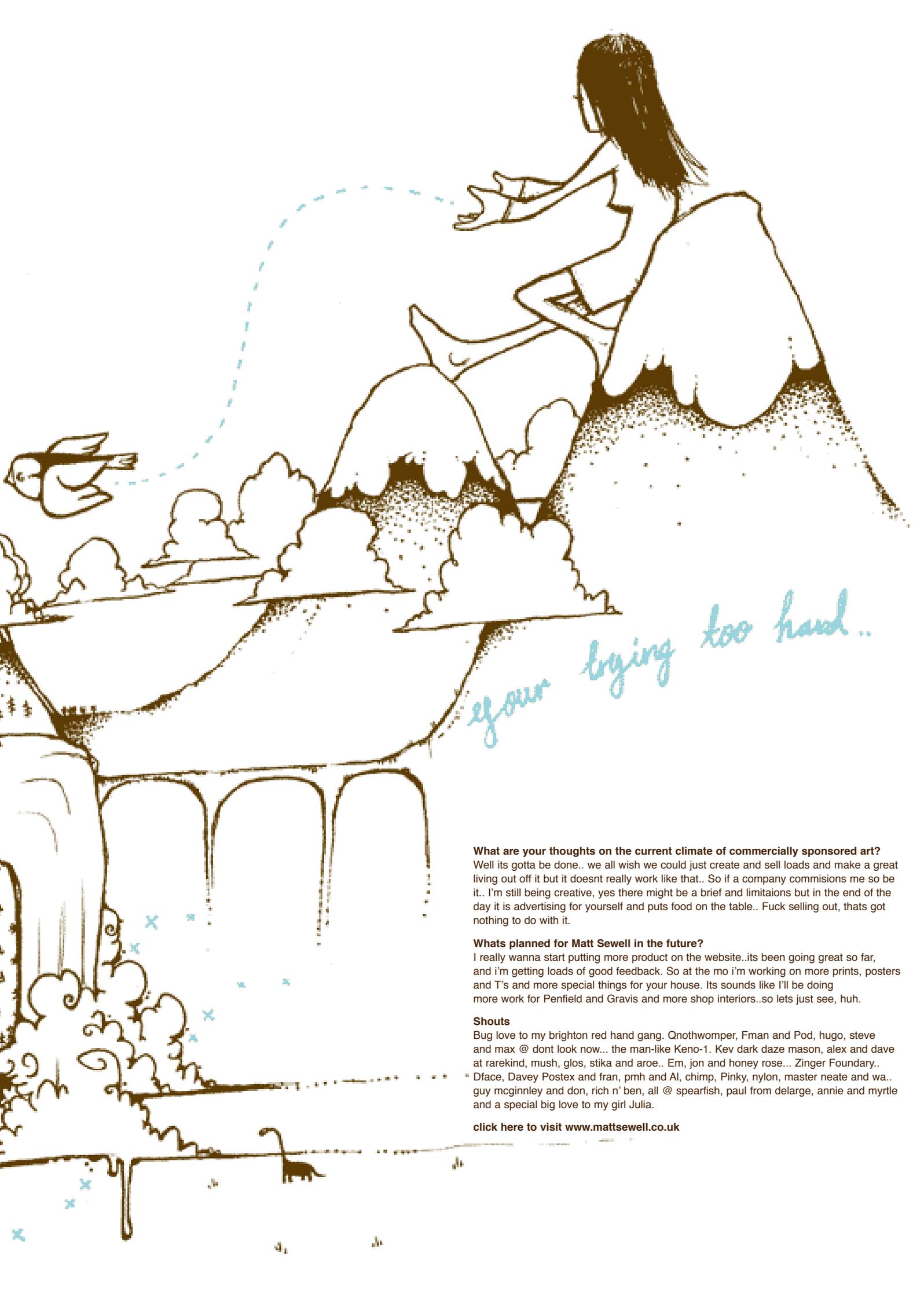
**I see a lot references to to wildlife crop up in a lot of your pieces (foxes, sparrows and the like), is nature a big influence on your work?**

Yeah, a big old influence.. I go in phases, I've been really into badgers, foxes, rabbits, squirrells, birds, mountains and at the mo its all about trees.. I'm not fucking joking, I can't stop drawing them. I was doing a CD cover for Juice, a hip-hop magazine based in germany, and the first few things I did where just full on british countryside, I set off trying to do a full on hip-hop thing but kept failing completely.. it ended with two foxes carrying a personal stereo made up out of 1210's... so kinda got there. I think it comes from me growing up in that kind of enviroment and now living in a very urban enviroment and harking for that rural kind of life. I dont really wanna live in the country at the mo but it would be ace to see badgers down the high street and flocks of goldfinches in the city-centre rather than fuckin pigeons. I'd rather be robbed by a kestrel than a seagull any day.

**What is the difference between Scrawl Collective and Forty Thieves, are they just two separate outlets for your work or is there something deeper there?**

They are very different. Scrawl was set up to get work for a select group of artists featured in the Scrawl books.. doing shows and getting high profile paid jobs.. it doesnt really hold any real values or work as a crew or anything like that.. its kind of purely financial..which I think is a shame, cos it would truly burn... Forty Thieves on the other hand was a crew..a very loose one. But its kind of disbanded now.. we've all fled and hid out in other parts of the country.. I originally set it up as a sticker-crew.. maybe the worlds first, I dunno??there was many members, not forty tho. In brighton it was me and muju doing loads and loads of hand-drawn stickers and going out most nights gettin them up. I introduced a good friend QNO into the sacred act of vandalism and he's been trying to keep the forty fire burning.In London it was the man-like Leo doing his own shit on the forties tip..But as ever these things get fragmented, we all have different paths to take so sadly the Thieves are no more.





*your trying too hard..*

**What are your thoughts on the current climate of commercially sponsored art?**

Well its gotta be done.. we all wish we could just create and sell loads and make a great living out off it but it doesnt really work like that.. So if a company commisions me so be it.. I'm still being creative, yes there might be a brief and limitaions but in the end of the day it is advertising for yourself and puts food on the table.. Fuck selling out, thats got nothing to do with it.

**Whats planned for Matt Sewell in the future?**

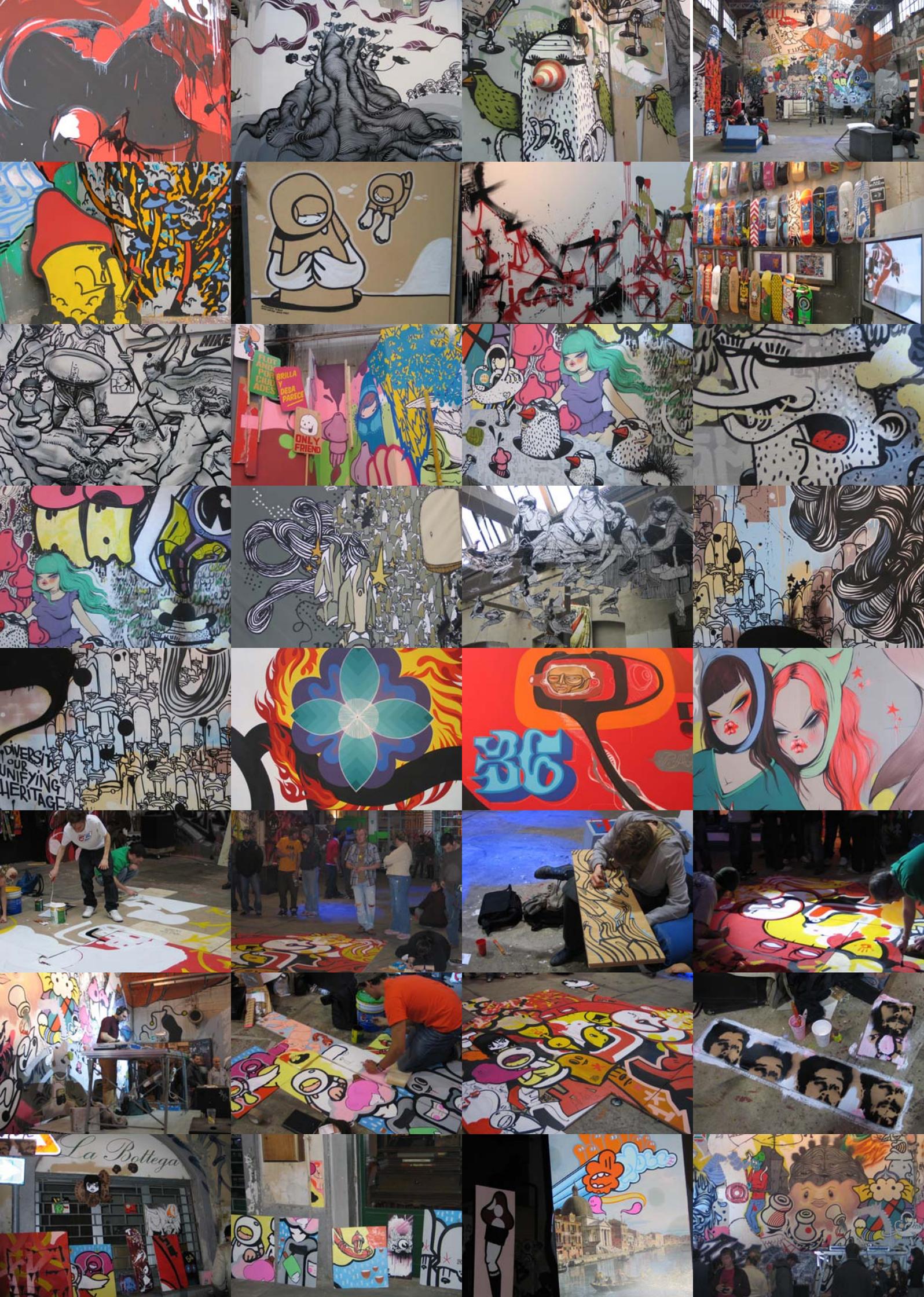
I really wanna start putting more product on the website..its been going great so far, and i'm getting loads of good feedback. So at the mo i'm working on more prints, posters and T's and more special things for your house. Its sounds like I'll be doing more work for Penfield and Gravis and more shop interiors..so lets just see, huh.

**Shouts**

Bug love to my brighton red hand gang. Qnothwomper, Fman and Pod, hugo, steve and max @ dont look now... the man-like Keno-1. Kev dark daze mason, alex and dave at rarekind, mush, glos, stika and aroe.. Em, jon and honey rose... Zinger Foundary.. Dface, Davey Postex and fran, pmh and Al, chimp, Pinky, nylon, master neate and wa.. guy mcginnley and don, rich n' ben, all @ spearfish, paul from delarge, annie and myrtle and a special big love to my girl Julia.

**click here to visit [www.mattsewell.co.uk](http://www.mattsewell.co.uk)**





Photography: Adam Appleby

# NOSTALGIA 77



With his début album, 'Songs for my Funeral', in 2004, it seemed that Nostalgia 77 had left behind the fast beats of his early 7"s and carved out an introspective niche in the Tru Thoughts roster. But his scorching, bass-heavy cover of the White Stripes' '7 Nation Army' hinted at a different direction for future releases, one based upon live instrumentation. That killer tune features on new album, 'The Garden', but the other tracks, which share the live focus, testify more to his love of dusty jazz trending towards the intense, experimental and free.

So how did he arrive at this new way of working? "I really came to it all through the whole thing of jazz records being heavily used in hip-hop production," says Ben Lamdin, the man behind the moniker. "I think I learnt a lot of important lessons on my last record. In the same way as an instrumentalist studies other players to develop their range, me doing an album of sampling was my way of studying all the aspects of instrumental playing. I studied hundreds of guitar, horn, drum and bass parts, and started to build up a palette I could work from. It was my way of playing with and learning from the greats. But I got to the point after listening to so many jazz records that I wanted to move in their direction and rely less on the hip-hop ethic – I realised that what seemed natural to me was to make tunes that more fully allowed the music to develop in itself."

Ready to move forwards, the whole experience was an experiment, as Lamdin explains: "The recording process was somewhere between the sampling approach of the first record and a full jazz performance. Basically, I worked from a studio in my house and I'd create a framework upon which I could write parts – often a drum sample, a percussion track, or a riff that I made up, something to hang the tune off. Then musicians would come in and play those parts, or improvise around the base that I gave them. And that's when we'd start to have a more collaborative process where I'd say, look, it needs to be like this here, but then why don't you try and develop it in a way that seems natural you. So I think that's one of the ways in which the album starts to move more towards being a jazz record than a hip-hop kind of record."

Working in collaboration with a talented group of young British jazz musicians, who lent their trumpet, sax (tenor and alto) and double bass to help realise his ideas, was a refreshing experience: "When you're sampling you don't have the ability to have a dialogue with another performer. I think that's a very fertile area, you never know what kind of empathy will arise between two people. Apart from anything else, I feel like I learnt exponentially working with the musicians about the possibilities there might be making the kind of music I want to make."



'The Garden' showcases a producer's lonesome toil composing and arranging on computer combined with shared composition and unconfined improvisation – it's a play of forces that Lamdin found fruitful: "It's an interesting tension and a stimulating environment to record in. It allows a slow pace of considering what you're going to do – very different from a start-to-finish jazz performance – so you lose some spontaneity, but you gain some kind of control. What was really important to me was applying some innocence to things, not getting lost in what you'd learnt or in finding a 'proper' way of doing things. When you have people coming from different backgrounds you get different approaches, and maybe you get fresh enthusiasm for an old idea. What might be old for someone who's studied jazz might be very fresh for me. It's a combination of innocence and experience which can bring out good things."

A step in a new direction it may be, but that's not to say, that 'The Garden' is going to alienate fans of Nostalgia 77's previous output. Traces of funk are present in the guitar on 'Cheney Lane', the opening track, Latin percussion hits hard on 'After Ararat', and the album is heavy on riffs and drum patterns reminiscent of hip-hop's roots whose organic production will refresh the tireddest ears. It's a sound that manages to be timeless, at home with the jazz tradition, and contemporary at the same time. One of the most intriguing ways of charting Lamdin's growth as a recording artist can be seen in the way he's reworked the tune 'Metamorphosis' from 'Songs For My Funeral' into 'Changes' on the new LP: "I started working with trumpeter Kelsey Jones and we decided that one of the things that the stripped-down music on the first album needed was intricate, full horn compositions. We discussed an idea then he wrote that part for four horns to sit on top of the chord progression and drum patterns I had from the first record. It was a happy coincidence because I really liked what Kelsey was doing and it seemed to fit with the way that I was producing."

Building on Lamdin's new-found taste for live work, there's a Nostalgia 77 band in the pipeline, featuring the cream of young British jazz talent, but he's also involved in remixing and more studio work, keeping his fingers in as many pies as possible: "I don't see myself on some kind of one-way journey from sampling to doing live music as the goal. It's a natural way of developing my expression – that's the drive there. The move for me is more about how I feel I can best be creative: the means isn't the important thing, it has to be justified by the end."

Words: Max Leonard

**Click here to go to:**  
[www.nostalgia77.com](http://www.nostalgia77.com)

To celebrate the release of his forthcoming EP 'The Hope Suite', Ben has had a series of 30 'one of a kind' sleeves made up by a selection of Brighton artists. We have been given one designed by Iloobia (who you may remember from the last issue) to give away as a competition prize. If you would like the chance to win the 12", make sure you have subscribed to the mailing list on our webpage as details will be in a July update. For those of you who don't manage to win the competition, 'The Hope Suite' EP is available early August on Tru Thoughts Recordings in the standard TT housebag.

# cactus island



**AS WELL AS RECORDING MUSIC AS 'MAPS AND DIAGRAMS', TIM MARTIN IS BUSY LOOKING AFTER CACTUS ISLAND RECORDINGS, THE LABEL HE RUNS WITH HIS LONG TERM FRIEND STEVE (BROCA). DESPITE JUGGLING THESE TASKS WITH MAKING PLANS FOR IMPENDING WEDDING CELEBRATIONS, TIM WAS KIND ENOUGH TO TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE LABEL AND THEIR PLANS FOR 2005 AND ONWARDS.**

**Can you begin by giving us a bit of background on the label?**

Well, me and Steve started cactus island in 2002 as an outlet to expose music by likeminded artists we had met on the net and/or at gigs and shows. We've made lots of connections with people from all over the world and love what they are doing. Whatever part of the world they come from their sounds always seem to work with our vision of where we want the label to go. As well as more well known names in the electronic scene, we have artists that have never released anything before and that is an important angle of our direction, to give those people a platform to grow with us or move onto other things. The music we release is in line with our own sounds and its great to have similarities and a connection with these people. The debut release in 2002 was a split 7" by maps and diagrams & steve, being friends for a long long time we thought it was only right to share the first release on our label!

**The labels second release, the appropriately titled 'friends we met along the way' compilation, features a wide selection of artists from both cactus island and various other labels. how did you go about getting all the artists involved to contribute tracks and how did the other labels react to your requests to license the tracks?**

We had been in contact with a lot of artists a year or so before we released the compilation and built up an idea of what it was going to sound like. We asked the artists we liked to contribute and others sent us songs for the compilation too. Other labels were cool, they didn't mind their artists being on cactus island and few were new faces or relatively unknown. It's a big friendly community out there, or at least where we are it is and that goes for the people and labels we associate with on a business level too.

**You're currently releasing some mini CDs in very limited quantities. Tell us a bit about the idea behind the series and their limited availability.**

For us, 3" cd is a quicker way of getting the artists music in the shops and it allows for a faster turnaround too. The idea to release one a month is running to schedule so far. The presentation is near parallel to the music, the packaging looks cool and suits the artists music and personalities to a degree. Enough time and thought went into the design process to get a visual product that looks as good as it sounds.

**Who's responsible for all the beautiful photography and design on the CDs and your website?**

The photographic content is supplied by a bunch of photographers we know while the design is all done in-house by Steve (the other half of Cactus), he's the design engine behind cactus, we both get involved in all the graphic content and the physical output of the label but he's the hands on person when it comes to visuals including web design too. All the decisions involving artwork are put to the artists for the thumbs up before we proceed with the finished piece. If they're not happy with it, we aren't either, its got to work both ways, as has the music.

**The music industry (particularly indie labels) seems to be struggling to find it's feet a little at the moment. As filesharing becomes more popular and new legal download sites seem to be appearing on an almost weekly basis, it's an interesting time to examine the traditional model of 'the record label'. Many people are expanding their initiatives to areas like licensing and publishing to compensate for decreasing record sales. How do you see these issues developing in the future and in what ways (if any) do you feel they may effect what you guys are all about?**

Well, we took a little break in 2003, after the compilation 'friends we met along the way' was released to take a look at where we wanted the label to head. The obvious choice for a lot of smaller labels was to maybe go into mp3 releases which is still an option for us but to rely solely on that we consider to be a bit of an easy way out. Its great for releasing music into different communities and getting new artists known but we wanted to carry on supplying a physical product that people can hold, touch and enjoy rather than a few mp3s burnt onto a cdr. The whole download phenomenon is great and I dont think it'd ever affect our label because of the limited quantities we release. The residents association series has been selling out within a week or two of going on sale and that proves to us that theres a place for cactus island out there in the music community. --We think that it's going to, and already is having a long term effect on record stores, which is a shame because they're one of our vehicles for exposing our sound to new people. They need us as much as we need them and we have a lot of time for shops like norman records, smallfish and u-cover that have promoted cactus island in a positive way and helped us to grow.

**So whats in the pipeline, what can we expect to see from the label in the next 12 months?**

The label is continuing with the residents association 3" series for the simple fact we still have lots of great music planned for this project. We're receiving new music weekly and some great material has hit our doorstep recently. Inbetween the residents series we have a few things planned, a couple of full length albums including a compilation that will feature some more new artists that have crossed our paths, these will be released sometime this year and slot nicely alongside the other releases planned.

**If you like what you've read and are yet to sample any of the Cactus output, you're in luck as Tim and Steve have been kind enough to donate a selection of tracks to suitably wet your appetite. Click on the MP3 icon to go to the download page. Once you've got them, queue up the tracks in your favourite media player and visit the link below to get an overview of what's to come and an eyeful of some slick visual styles.**

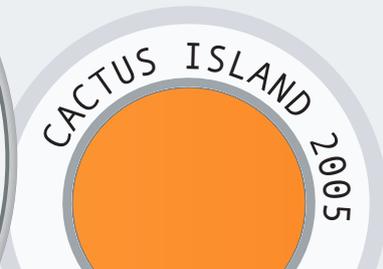


Flotel // Half an echo  
Maps and Diagrams // Lopiak  
Sense // Practice-makes-perfect  
Verbose // Vertigo  
Vessel // Red king  
Frank Murder // Straumsvik

[www.cactusisland.net](http://www.cactusisland.net)



South





*Blamstrain*



Can you start by giving us a bit of info about you background, where have you been, where are you now?

I started making music in 1994-1995, I got into a music school and started practicing guitar. I gave up a few years later though, thanks to interest in trackers and other computer-related things.

Got into making music because, well, why not? I was really into electronic stuff way on from childhood, I used to groove to Pet Shop Boys and other 80's cheese a lot (and I think that shows..), and lately I've been going back to it. Been listening to lots of soul, funk, disco and 80's pop among other things. Old hip hop too, one of my mates hooked me up with the KMD album a while ago and I've been digging it a lot. And that new Quasimoto, what the fuck! That madlib guy is getting out of hand, I haven't had that much fun in a very long time. Except with that new Atom Heart iMix album, that was wicked as well, the overall sound is thrilling. You see, I don't really think of the past much.. there's always something new to discover, make and listen to.

Having released a lot of tracks through various net-labels (Khavi, Monotonik, Thinner) you now have a couple of newer releases available exclusively as free downloads from your own website. How do you feel about the various different channels currently available for distributing music? (physical distribution vs free downloads vs bleep/itunes etc)

I think it's all good. The wider the audience it reaches the better.. but I'm just not really satisfied with what's around now, I'm fine with the stuff on my website but everything else seems so dated to me.. releasing music seems to be so slow. I've already got two or three hours of new stuff from 2004 and 2005 that I'm going to release at some point, one full ambient album that clocks at around 80 minutes and is a bit of a comeback to the EP I released on Thinner now that I think of it, then I've been working with this vocalist/MC named Hosni, we've got some tracks to drop at some point..

Now that the Blamstrain Remixed CD/12" on Merck is out I can concentrate on finishing those tracks and getting them out as soon as possible, possibly some as free downloads on my website again, and some on vinyl/cd.

Is there anything you can tell us about the creative process you use when you're making music?

I don't have one approach that I use regularly. I also don't limit myself. when I'm making music I'm making it, and the quality control decisions come later. That's why there's hundreds or thousands of small bits of music on my computers, cd-r's and tapes around my apartment. most probably going to be left unheard unless you came here and wanted to listen to it all. I'd probably just give the shit to you and tell you to go listen outside or something though.. and make something new.

Two years have past since your epic 'ensi' LP on Merck and the label has just released a collection of your tracks remixed by artists such as Funckarma, ISAN, Proem & Lackluster. How did all the mixes come about and what's it like hearing your own concepts re-interpreted by all these other people?

I think the remixing is lovely, all of the tracks are strong, but a few go on too long.. though that's a question of taste and I've been listening to the album coming together for the past two years. The mixes came about by asking the people now involved. I asked a few more, but they faded out or flat-out didn't have time. Brothomstates recently said to me he really wants to do a remix, so maybe it'll happen at some point. I'm not rushing anything.



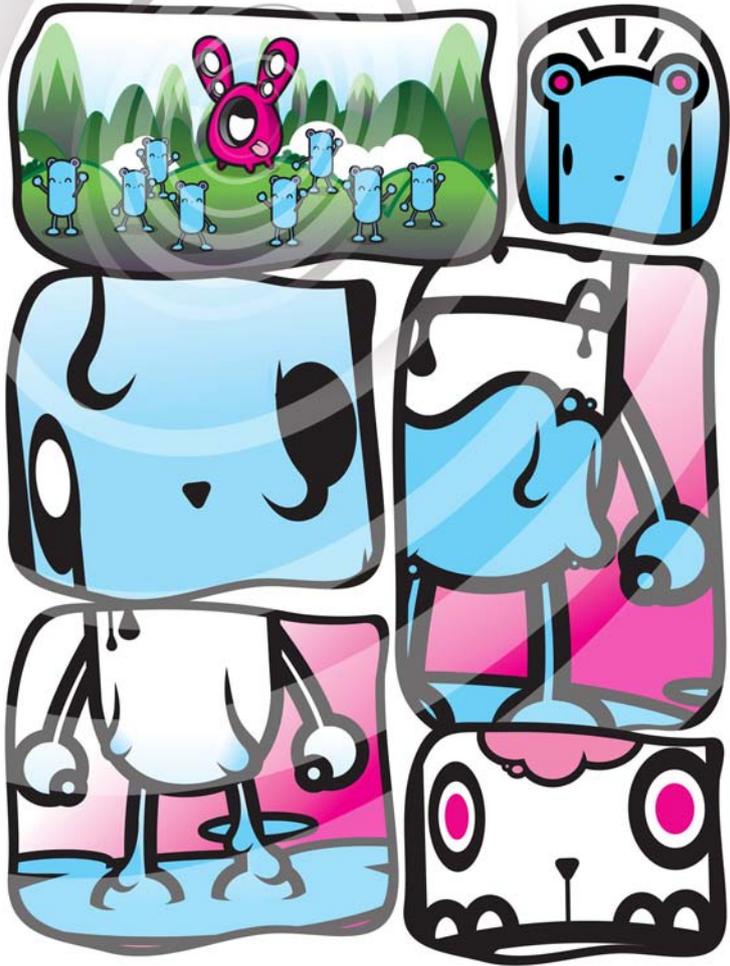
You can find Juho Hietala (aka Blamstrain) and download some of his newest work for free at: [www.blamstrain.com](http://www.blamstrain.com)

'Blamstrain Remixed' is available now on Merck Records. You can get more info and check audio clips of the various mixes at: [www.m3rck.net](http://www.m3rck.net)

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# Mr Bongo Records



From humble beginnings in the basement of Daddy Kool's reggae shop on London's Berwick St in 1989, Mr Bongo (aka David Buttle) is now seen by many as the standard bearer for Latin music in Europe. With regular imports from Latin America, Cuba and the USA, Bongo brought the salsa and Brazilian vibe to the masses, establishing a core market for Latin music.

Out of this basement a thriving Latin shop was born and supplied music for salsa dancers, Latin Jazz addicts and Brazilian groovers alike. Characters such as Giles Peterson and the club Dingwalls championed this music and in the following years Mr Bongo established itself as the leader and provider for a whole scene.

In 1991 Huw Bowles joined the fray, bringing his encyclopaedic knowledge of hip hop and expanding Bongo's field of expertise. Initially selling old skool and hip hop, the shop was the first to start selling music from the small independent hip hop labels from around the world with artists such as Jurassic 5 having special Bongo pressings. This pioneering spirit revived a waning interest in hip hop and started to bring focus to home-grown talent. As the independent scene grew, Mr Bongo exclusively imported the first releases by Dr Octagon, J5, Mos Def and many more...

Ray Barreto opened a much needed new premises in Lexington Street as the Latin section continued to grow, having to bite the CD bullet. Always expanding its field of vision and expertise, the Mr Bongo store moved again to its final premises in Poland Street, Soho. Now fully established, Saturday road-blocks were common with those hungry to get hands on Bongo's exclusive vinyl.

The shop initially acted as home to the Mr Bongo Record label and the later formed imprints: Disorient (Tokyo sound) and Beyongolia. In 1995 the Bongo empire reached Japan, opening a store in Tokyo and providing a useful A&R source for Disorient. After a 2 year crusade, Bongo secured the soundtrack rights to the classic hip hop movie *Wildstyle*, releasing two LP's from the film on Beyongolia.

Unfortunately, the eventual loss of a large proportion of the exclusive material to major music distributors and internet sales, coupled with rising rents was too much and both shops were forced to close down.

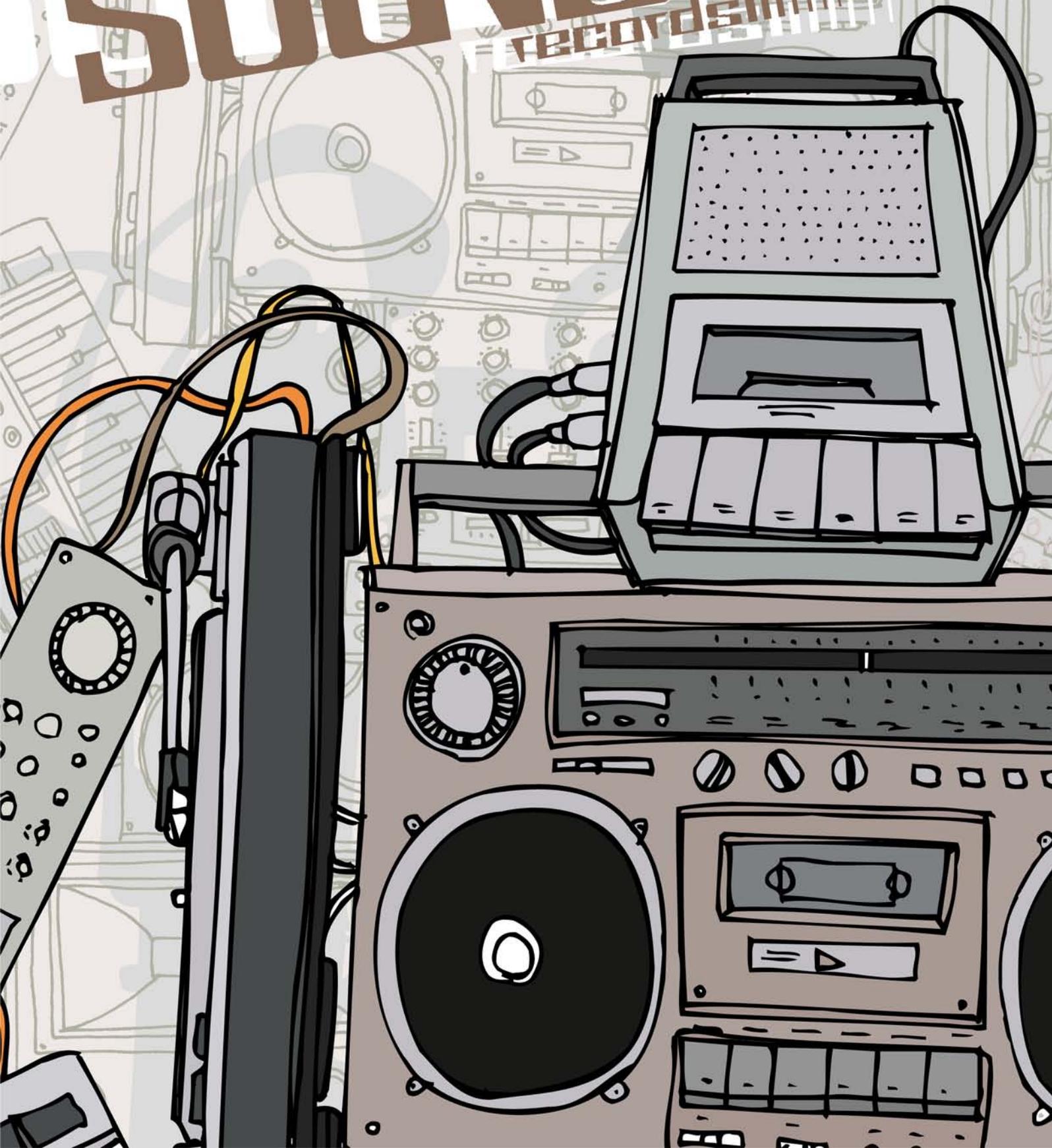
The Mr Bongo record label, now based in Brighton, remains strong 15 years on and still presents an enormous wealth and breadth of contemporary Brazilian music to wider audiences. Releases include albums from hip hop artist Marcelo D2, who sold over 500,000 copies of his first album in Brazil and Seu Jorge (*City of God, Life Aquatic*), both produced by Mario Caldato (Beastie Boys). Add to that a back catalogue containing work from legends such as Tito Puente, Marcos Valle, Masters at Work, Ivo Mendes, Banda Black Rio, Doris, Labi Siffre, Terry Callier, plus six instalments of the *Brazilian Beats* compilation, the *Batucada* LPs, the *Wildstyle* soundtrack and the new, pioneering, uncompromising 'funk carioca' sound that is making a huge impact around the world (imagine DJ Assault vs The 2 Live Crew vs traditional Latin...) and you get an idea of the level of the quality and diversity that Mr Bongo represents.

Upcoming projects include more contemporary Brazilian and European music in the form of Nova Lima and Keziah Jones, an afro-beat LP by Bukky Leo and *Black Egypt* (featuring the legendary Tony Allen on the drums), and a 15th Anniversary *Brazilian Beats* DVD amongst others.

Go check the labels out at:  
[www.mrbongo.com](http://www.mrbongo.com)

If you want any press related info, give Graham a shout on 01273 600546 or email: [graham@mrbongo.com](mailto:graham@mrbongo.com)

# SOUNDINKY



SoundInk Records are a ten strong collective of some of the most exciting and progressive producers and MC's coming out of New York at the moment. An extremely organic label, relying mostly on word of mouth and of course consistently high quality of output, SoundInk are one of those rare self sustaining labels that has an identity and a shared belief that seems to run through each artists releases, which results in each release complimenting the last. SoundInk seems to be more of a collective of like minded musicians rather than a functioning label with A&R, Marketing strategies and the like. Instead they allow the music to shape the labels intentions, the music to invite collaborations and the music to spark interest across the globe. In increasingly cynical times within the music industry and 'independent' labels treading fine lines to up the ante. Popularist attempts to increase sales and soulless releases that provide nothing to the history or beliefs of these labels has created a vacuum of false dawns, but also, in doing so has opened the lid of the underground to step up and be counted. SoundInk has taken up this challenge like a bull in a china shop. In my opinion SoundInk will be helping to shape the musical environment for a long while yet, though they will never be gracing the cover of GQ or the FM airwaves, their influence will run deep. A label that is so mutually progressive, understanding and purposeful in their outlook, can only succeed. Who can get in the way of belief? I caught up with Alex Threadgold, joint founder of SoundInk Records.

So how did SoundInk begin?

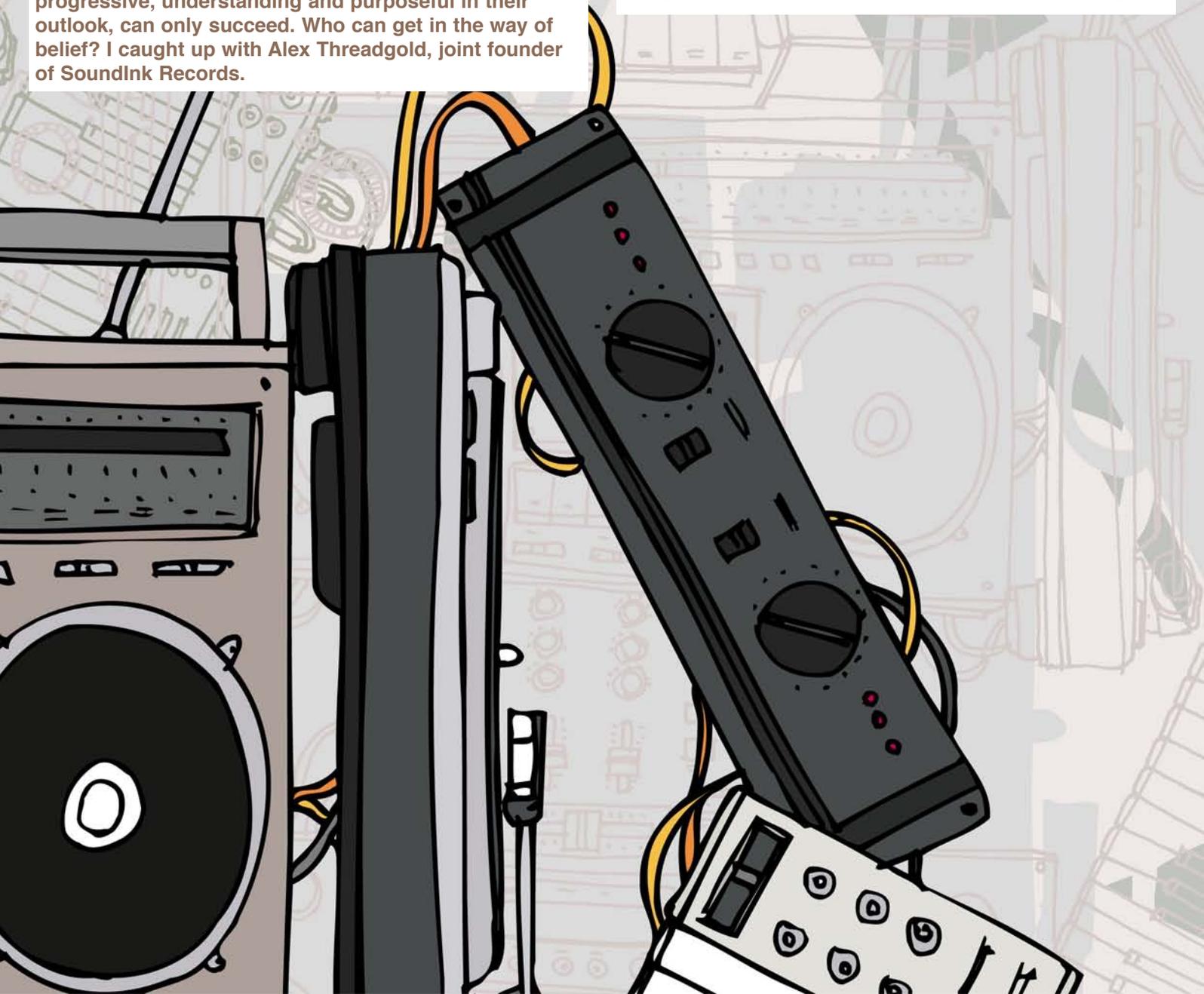
Nat and I used to be housemates in Portland Oregon and starting fucking with sampling back in 97 or so. We both found ourselves in New York in 2000 and were both working in live music production, meeting a bunch of new hiphop and electronic artists we were really feeling who were doing things a little differently and also making our own tracks. We came up with the idea to make a comp of our friends stuff and stuff from the artists we were working with elsewhere like Sayyid from AntiPop and Timeblind and it went from there.

How has the response to your label been? Do you feel the need to change your approach to get your music out there to a wider audience?

It's been super-organic both internally (as far as us running the label) and externally (as far as growing a fan-base) actually. Internally because we've really had to learn the ropes as we've gone along so we can only really tackle things as they come along. Externally because we've never had massive promotional campaigns for the label or any of the records so word of mouth is really crucial. We just try to be as rigorous as we can with our artist and track selections and hope that quality control comes through each time so that the buzz from any one record will carry over to the next and eventually the label to the point where people can feel comfortable picking something up on Sound-Ink even if they don't know who it is but it will be different and it will not disappoint.

SoundInk seems to be more of a collective of like minded musicians, all of whom seem to be at the top of their game, rather than a record label. Have you got a strict A&R policy or are you putting music out simply because you like it or it fits into your ambitions as a collective?

Definitely. We sign records rather than artists to ensure we are 100% behind everything we release and we don't have to put something out we are not really about because we're beholden for whatever reason. As far as a door code policy, we don't have one but when we hear something we just now right away whether it's "Sound-Ink" or not, even if it seems different from anything else we've done from an outsider's perspective. That's partly why we've done so many singles to date is that it's really rare we hear a whole album we like these days, so we'd rather just put out the hottest tracks. But 2005's gonna see us move toward putting out a bunch full albums, most of which we've been really hands-on about so they're not just delivered by someone working on it solo but we're really there colalabrating on it and developing it together.



**It's very rare to see a label with a healthy roster of artists all of whom seem to share the same musical foresight. How do you keep to this original plan and standard of music?**

My partner Nat is really the production guru who makes sure everything sounds as hot as possible, from recording the bulk of our output in house, to overseeing mixing and mastering. But we're both equally out there with our ears wide open, checking for what's good and trying to build with people we're feeling. We're both just obsessed with what's now in terms of music and also equally what's next, to try to always stay on the edge right there. We definitely formed Sound-Link from the beginning very conscious that what we were into right then was an emergent sound - Mike Ladd, AntiPop, early Prefuse, etc - so the fact that what we thought was hot would shift over time was always kind of built in. So evolution or whatever is definitely the name of the game - rolling with it and hopefully influencing it to some degree as well.

**How long have you/artists been into producing, what made you set up SoundLink? What was the process between you making music for fun and now to selling records? Is it still fun?**

It's been 3 years now but Nat and I have been involved in music for fun and money for much longer, from playing in bands to working in record stores and teaching at music schools. I'm someone who doesn't really separate art and life and business. I think it's more fun when you find what you love to combine everything and go all out. So the money making party hopefully comes you can make a living still as you're finding yourself spending more and more time on your obsession with music! Plus neither of us likes to work for other people so we're like let's make a go of it and see what happens. It's definitely still fun but also tons of work. Sometimes there's drama that obscures why you're doing it in the first place, but it always passes. I guess what's good about New York is you don't have to travel anywhere to be on top of what's good at any given moment. You have Beat Street a few blocks away so you can peep all the new dancehall riddims, Kim's for breadth of styles, Sandbox with every hiphop release seeming ever in print, plus shows galore (although truth be told we don't have time to go to very many) but the big block to successful labels and musicians that's always cited and is to a large extent true is you don't have time to sit back and build and develop your sound or whatever by virtue of needing to pay rent and keep up with the pace of things so just to keep it rolling you have to go all out on the one hand and on the other hang pick your battles because you're working three other jobs. So really marketing and working a record properly might take a back seat to making sure you have decent distro for the next one. Though at least in theory you can save time, in hiphop at least, by having so many MCs around for easy access versus maybe Indianapolis or whatever. Though there's always been more of a constricting orthodoxy as far as what constitutes hiphop which can be real stifling versus London for example where you've already got a long tradition of dance/ electronic music being much bigger so grime MCs aren't afraid to spit over really fucked up beats which is so dope, so we're open to that next big vocal project, but we may have to end up looking over seas so we're not having to oversell a new type of sound to a local cat who at first might like what the fuck is this?!

**Did the rise of labels such as Def Jux give you the confidence to go for your deserves or was SoundLink always on the cards, no matter what?**

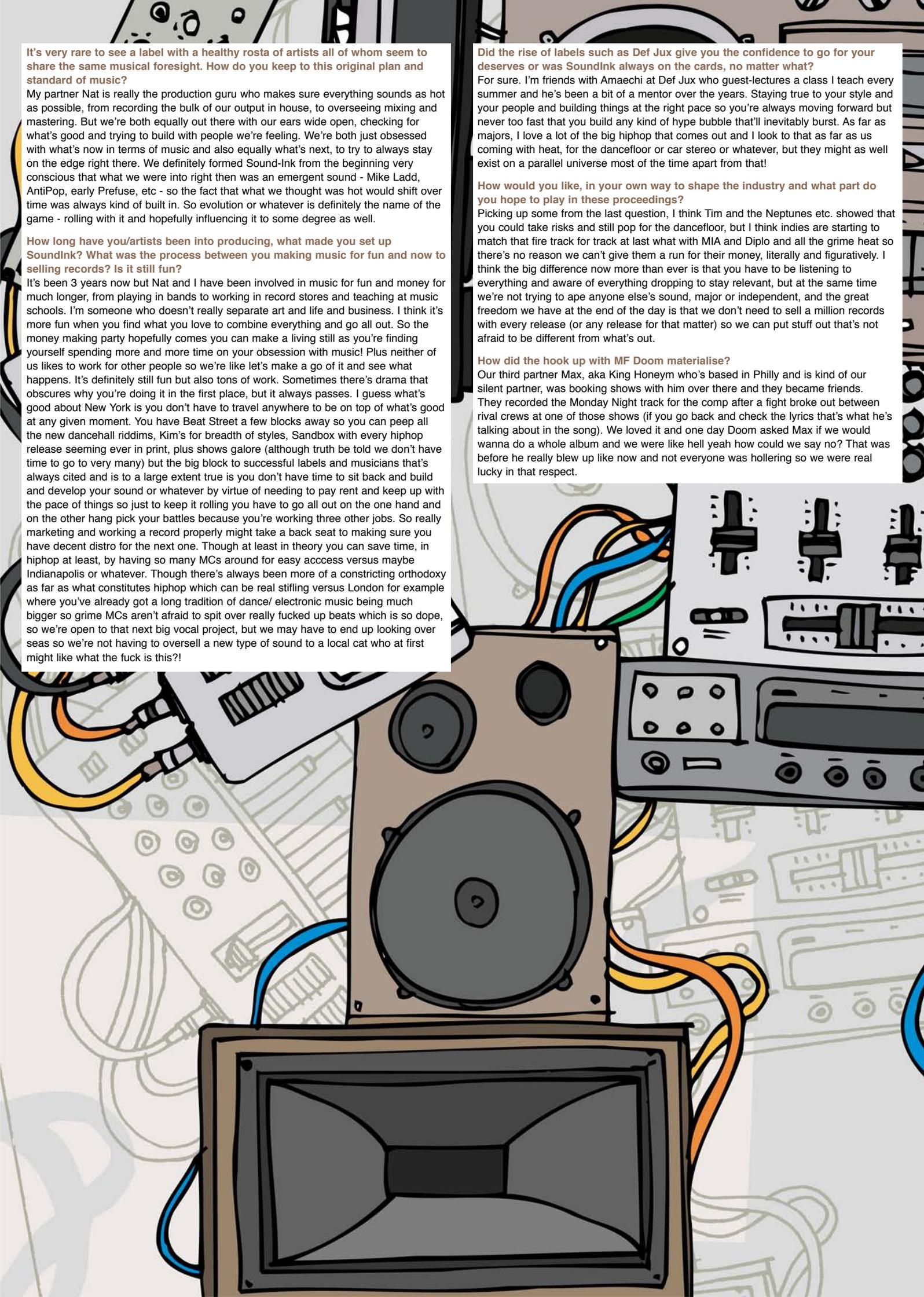
For sure. I'm friends with Amaechi at Def Jux who guest-lectures a class I teach every summer and he's been a bit of a mentor over the years. Staying true to your style and your people and building things at the right pace so you're always moving forward but never too fast that you build any kind of hype bubble that'll inevitably burst. As far as majors, I love a lot of the big hiphop that comes out and I look to that as far as us coming with heat, for the dancefloor or car stereo or whatever, but they might as well exist on a parallel universe most of the time apart from that!

**How would you like, in your own way to shape the industry and what part do you hope to play in these proceedings?**

Picking up some from the last question, I think Tim and the Neptunes etc. showed that you could take risks and still pop for the dancefloor, but I think indies are starting to match that fire track for track at last what with MIA and Diplo and all the grime heat so there's no reason we can't give them a run for their money, literally and figuratively. I think the big difference now more than ever is that you have to be listening to everything and aware of everything dropping to stay relevant, but at the same time we're not trying to ape anyone else's sound, major or independent, and the great freedom we have at the end of the day is that we don't need to sell a million records with every release (or any release for that matter) so we can put stuff out that's not afraid to be different from what's out.

**How did the hook up with MF Doom materialise?**

Our third partner Max, aka King Honey who's based in Philly and is kind of our silent partner, was booking shows with him over there and they became friends. They recorded the Monday Night track for the comp after a fight broke out between rival crews at one of those shows (if you go back and check the lyrics that's what he's talking about in the song). We loved it and one day Doom asked Max if we would wanna do a whole album and we were like hell yeah how could we say no? That was before he really blew up like now and not everyone was hollering so we were real lucky in that respect.



Being that it was probably the first release of yours that propelled you into peoples consciousness Who might not have checked you otherwise, Are you trying to take in alot more influences in to get your music recognised or carrying on doing your thing regardless?

We're definitely really conscious that you have to have some fairly big records to keep funding things and its easier to do that with an artist who's already well-known but we're not going to bend over backwards for that and frankly we'd rather build from the ground up with cats we're really feeling even if no-one's ever heard of them before, it's just a bigger risk. But that's what we're trying to do in 2005 for sure.

**What interest has it generated for the label since its release? Is it a learning curve or have you had experience with the industry before? How has it changed your attitude to making music and the music industry in general?**

Big learning curve for sure, even though we did have some experience in the industry. It's a whole different game when you essentially have two people to do everything that needs to get done. No marketing department or whatever. I think its turned a lot of people onto Sound-Ink who wouldn't have been otherwise but by no means has it made things completely simple as it's still an uphill battle to break a new artist and try to build a buzz around a new project. Plus you find that not everyone's as open about styles and aren't going to get everything you do. You can be a hardcore Doom fan with a lot of orthodox ideas about what is hiphop and what is electronic and just totally scratch your head at some of the other stuff we're putting out. Success is measured day-to-day round here! I don't think we've lost any of our enthusiasm for making indy records from the ground up or anything but we're definitely smarter about energy expenditure, efficiency, and picking battles because it's easy to get bogged down by flakes and people's egos and frankly we don't have time for that. We both have like 3 other jobs!

**What's your plans in the future? Grime is one of music starkest representation of Urban living. Do you see yourself as refelecting the same environment? What do like about it? What are your influences?**

This year we're dropping full-length records from Mutamassik, Markus Wormstorm, CX Kidtronik, and Team Shadetek, plus another comp, all of which we are really excited about. As far as grime MCs, I can't give any details right now but suffice to say it's already in the works. Independent of that (I swear!) I'm really feeling Kano, Jamakabi, Lady Sovereign, Terra Danjah, and Jammer right now. What's dope to me about grime is it's essentially electronic hiphop, which is what we've always been about from the beginning, but which is happening in London in a big way like it's never happened or will happen over here because you have a much bigger rave culture first of all and plus a more influential Jamaican population, so electronic sounds and dancehall styles are nothing new to cats and its just totally logical to combine those things whereas over here, as I mentioned, you've got these orthodoxies about sound especially in hiphop that stagnates a lot of innovation. So you would never have something as hard and cutting as Mondie's Straight rhythm, except maybe down South where they had a similar openness because of Bass music, etc. The future for SoundInk is more of the same and a bunch different as well. More albums as well assingles. Hard beats, stuff for the ladies, collabos galore. Constant fucking with hiphop, electronics, ragga, grime, punk, whatever it takes to keep it very fresh and try to keep birthing more bastard mini-genres and also things that don't fit.

**What effect do you hope for your music to have on the those who listen to it?**

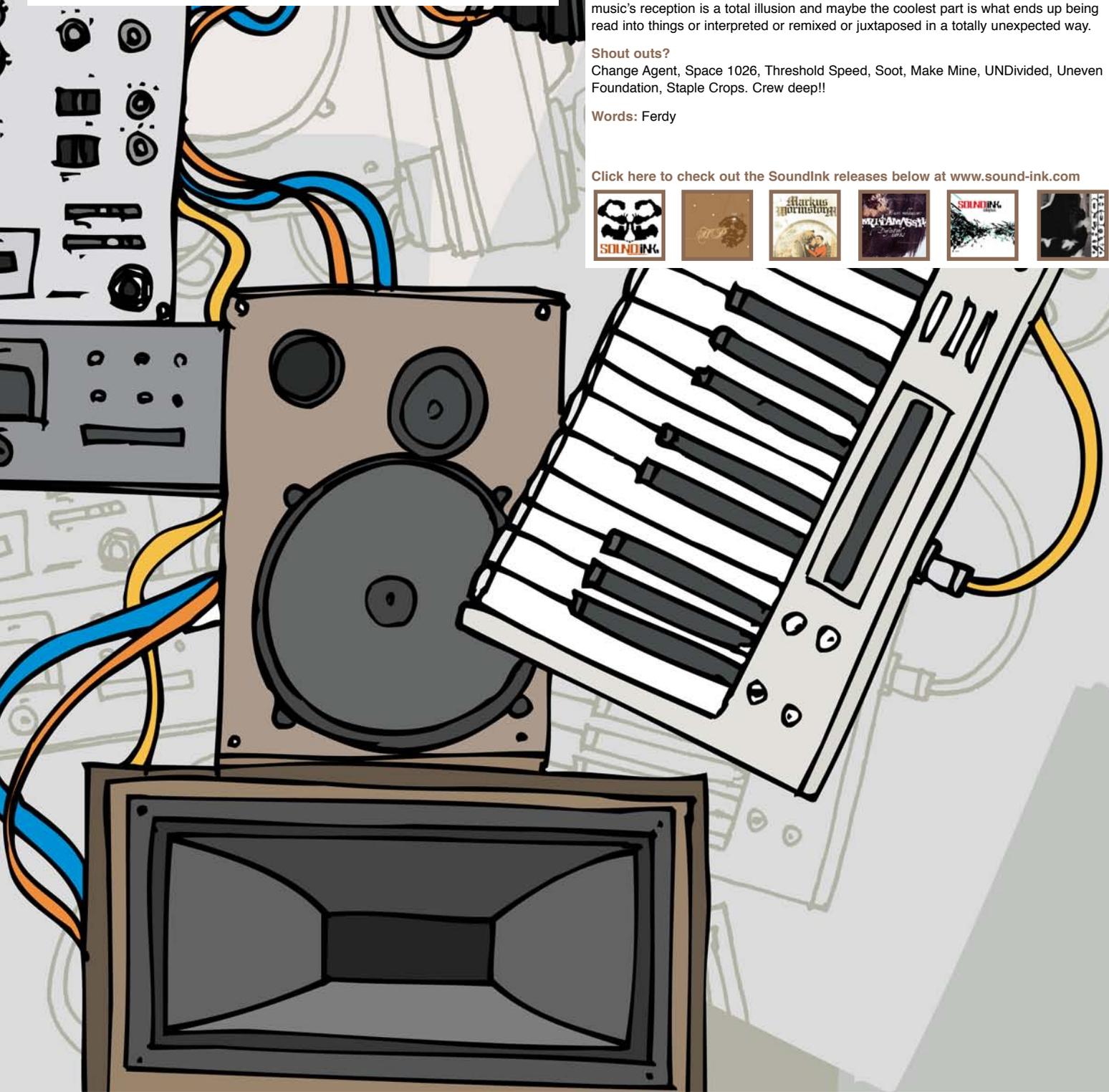
Music is totally part of a reflective historical situation for me where it's about placing a given project, or label's, or artist's sound as consciously as possible with respect to what has come before, and what is happening now, but at the same time keeping in mind that no matter how many angles you might be seeing it from control over the music's reception is a total illusion and maybe the coolest part is what ends up being read into things or interpreted or remixed or juxtaposed in a totally unexpected way.

**Shout outs?**

Change Agent, Space 1026, Threshold Speed, Soot, Make Mine, UNDivided, Uneven Foundation, Staple Crops. Crew deep!!

**Words:** Ferdy

Click here to check out the SoundInk releases below at [www.sound-ink.com](http://www.sound-ink.com)

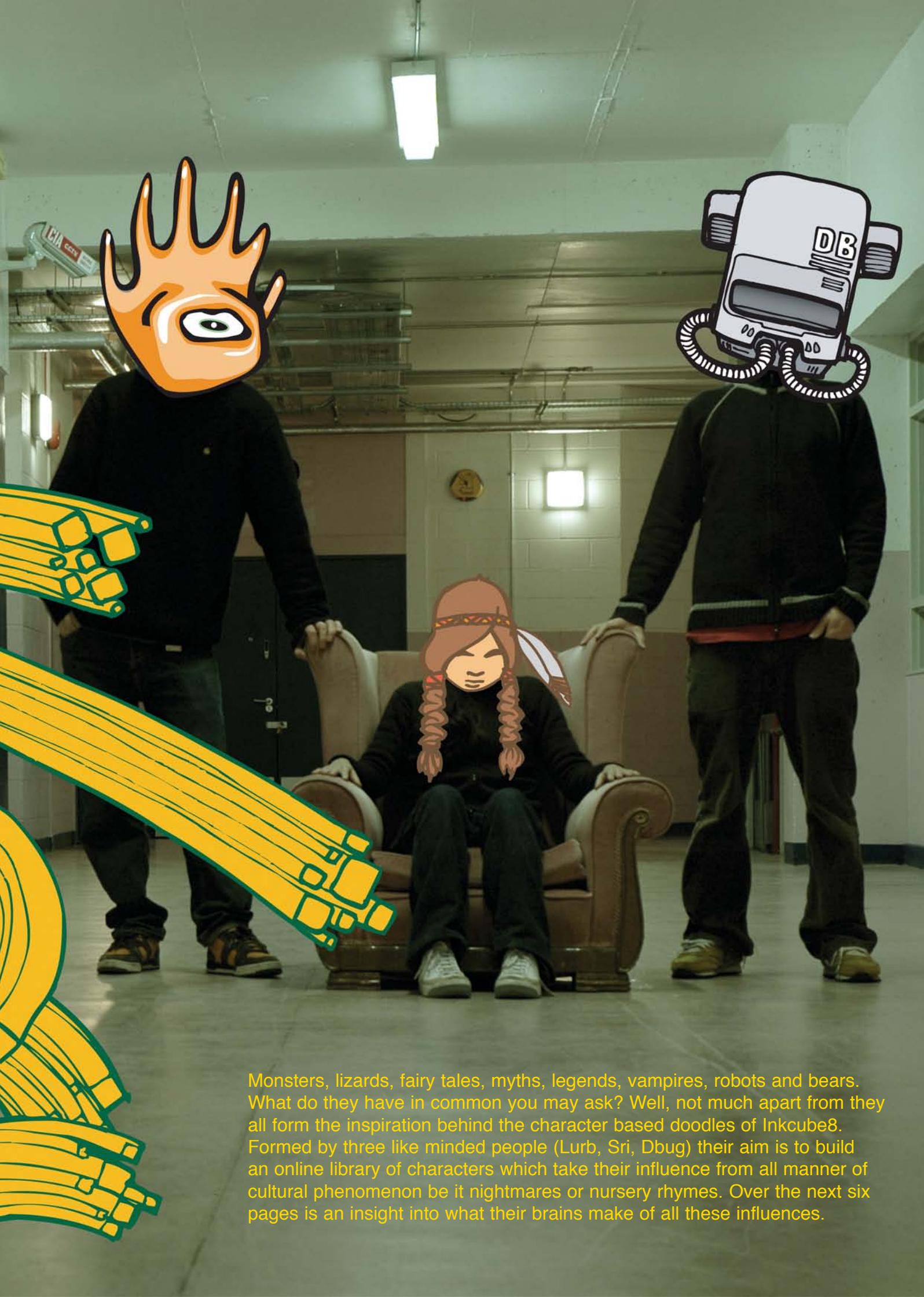


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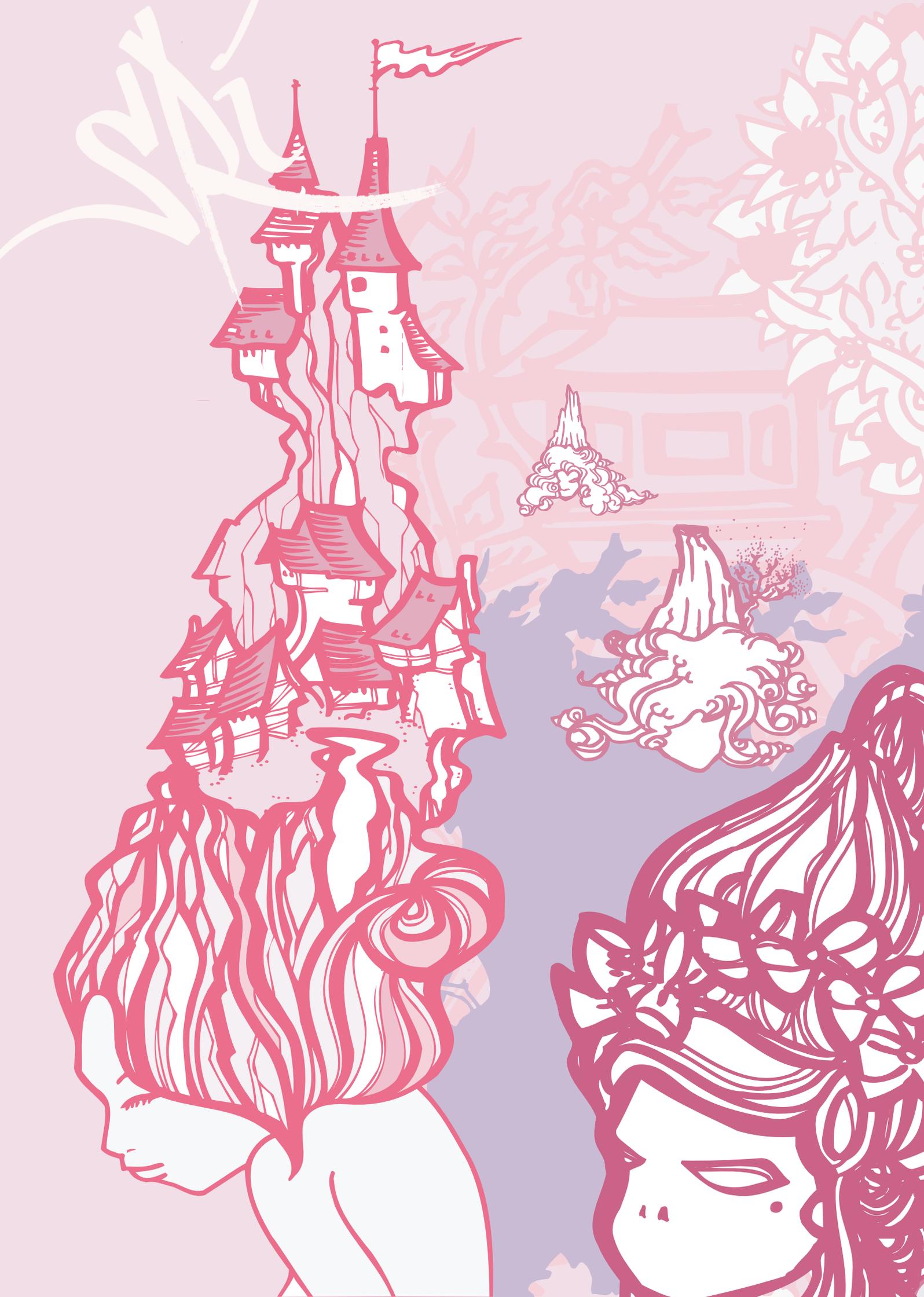
Monsters, lizards, fairy tales, myths, legends, vampires, robots and bears. What do they have in common you may ask? Well, not much apart from they all form the inspiration behind the character based doodles of Inkcube8. Formed by three like minded people (Lurb, Sri, Dbug) their aim is to build an online library of characters which take their influence from all manner of cultural phenomenon be it nightmares or nursery rhymes. Over the next six pages is an insight into what their brains make of all these influences.

# HERB WORLD



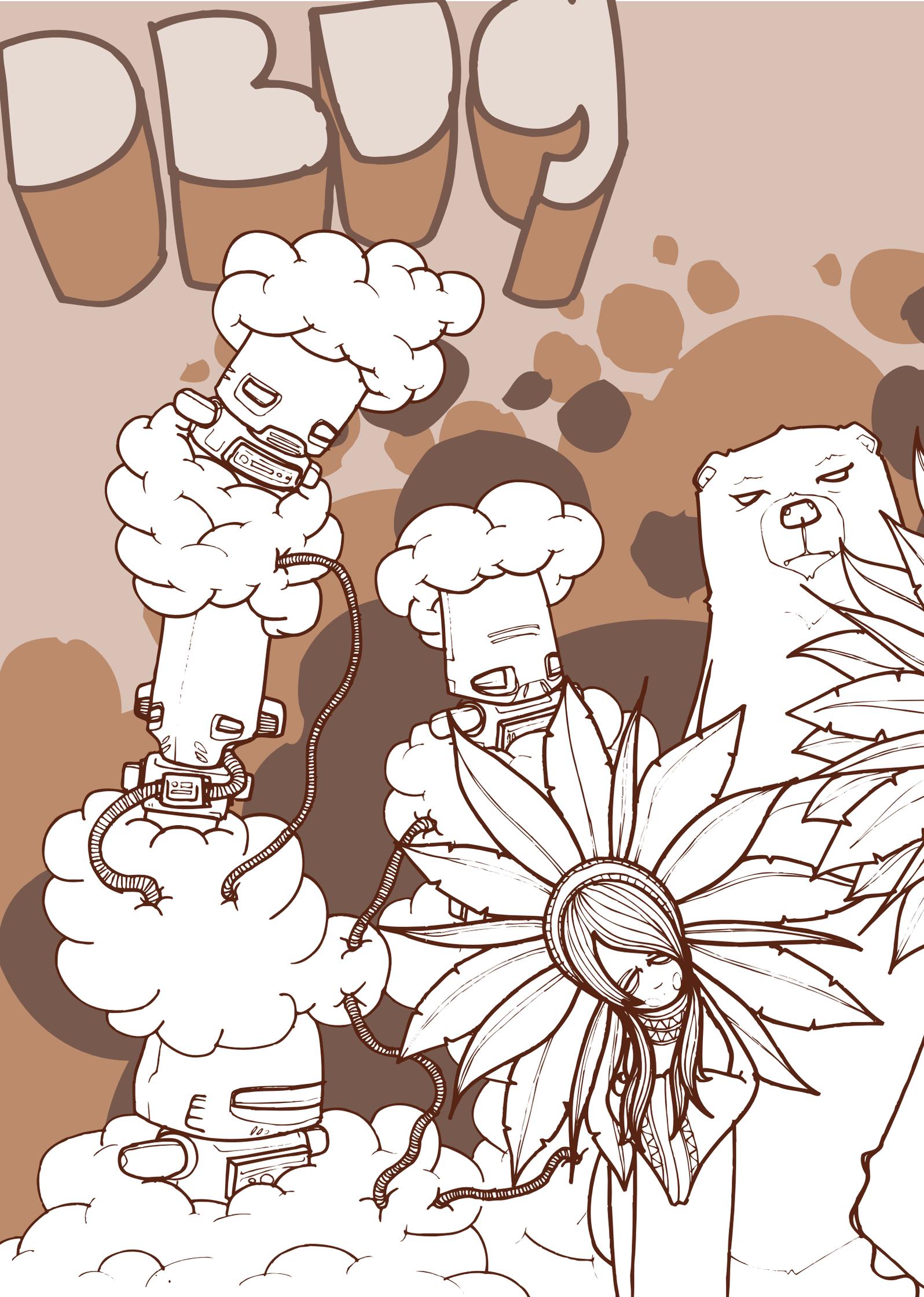


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