



creativity now

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Bob Odenkirk**
Wonder Showzen

the supercatchy songs of
**The Hold Steady
Jens Lekman
Jamie Lidell**

the striking styles of
**WY Taps
Mi Zo**
our cover's art director
Ben Loiz

are gonna
go pop!

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nominated by
DEANNE CHEUK

text
HEATHER CORCORAN

The lush images created by Minori Murakami and Zoren Gold of Tokyo-based Mi-Zo are ripe with magic. Whether a photograph or video, commercial or private, each frame is full of contradiction – at once innocently suggestive and eerily kitschy, painstakingly naturalistic and overtly synthetic. To understand Mi-Zo, Zoren told us, you have to see it as more than the sum of both halves: their partnership is one of collaboration, inspiration and boundaries so blurred they disappear.

The creative nomads met in late-'90s Los Angeles, where Minori was a graphic designer/illustrator and Zoren a photographer. A series of spontaneous experiments followed, and through Zoren's lens Minori was transformed into a fashion model, doll, sex object, phantom and extraterrestrial. Their colorful, anything-goes style has been embraced by a range of clients, from J-Pop star Ken Hirai to fashion label Parco and auto giant Honda. This fall, they add another feather to their cap with the publication of Object That Dreams, a retrospective of their personal works.





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Your images are often very complex. How much of that is planned, and how much of it comes from post-production?

MM... In the beginning we were just sampling bits and pieces from pictures, and I was putting them together and deconstructing.

ZG... We still like to work with the computer, but we'd rather try to do additional work, like creating props. It might look like a composite, but it's really more. Sometimes it's impossible to plan.

So when you're working for a client how does your approach change?

ZG... When we do personal work we don't have any concept. We just get started, get inspired. We just do it. It's much more spontaneous.

MM... There's really no boundary because I'm not really able to fix my idea to 'personal' or 'commercial.' We are quite honest people, so we can't just change our concept for the mainstream.

You've said that reality is just illusion, an extension of the imagination. So are the photographs your way of showing that reality?

MM... Yeah, exactly. With the business - communicating or living by these kinds of rules - I'm adjusting. In the photo world, in the world I'm in with Zoren, it has been reality for me. We really live in our sphere, sharing our fantasies almost...

ZG... It's a great thing, but you really get dependent on the other person. I think it's very interesting to work with someone else, because you really have to open up.

What's next for Mi-Zo?

MM... Me and Zoren haven't discussed the future. You know, we never really did. It's always about what he's curious about, what I'm curious about. So I have no idea. Personally, I want to see more videos or motion graphics. That will be my thing this year.



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