



#21
MUSIC // FILM // ART // STYLE // JUNE 2009

FAN THE FIRE

M A G A Z I N E

DEAD SNOW

NORWEGIAN CINEMA STARTS
ITS ASSAULT ON THE WORLD...
WITH NAZI ZOMBIES

MEN BEHIND THE MASK

WWE COULD ONLY WISH TO BE AS
BREATHTAKING AS JAMES JIRAT
PATRADOON'S WRESTLERS

TERMINATOR SALVATION

SKYNET IS BACK TO WIPE OUT
HUMANITY ALL OVER AGAIN



FAN THE FIRE

M A G A Z I N E



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Child's Play

Following in the footsteps of Daft Punk, Justice and M83, We Are Enfant Terrible use the raw French electronics sound on the cusp of something special



10 MAY 16 1968, JUNE 2009

10 MAY 16 1968, JUNE 2009

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TERMINATOR SALVATION



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ART **FEATURE**

The Men Behind The Mask



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Shine On Me, Crazy Diamond.



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FAN THE FIRE

MAGAZINE BLOG

home music film art style tv games magazine

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Hot & Bothered



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Posted by Sam Bathe at 3:09 PM

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SUNDAY, 3 MAY 2009

Isometric Heaven



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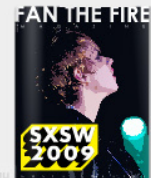
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“*The future's bright, the future's digital*”

If you've been reading Fan the Fire for a while, you'll know we've gone through quite a transformation over the months and years since our birth as LOAD Magazine back in 2005. This month we get our final face-lift before really taking Fan the Fire to new highs in terms of content and magazine experience, with our blog now updating daily at fanthefiremagazine.com/blog.

As you can see from the page to the right, and a handful of mentions on our blog and in past issues right here, come the release of next issue, we should, pending Apple's lengthy approval process, have an app in the iTunes app store. You'll be able to download each issue with the touch of a button then read on your iPhone or iPod touch, on the move or at home. Print might not be dead just yet, but it's doomed. The future of journalism is bright, and the future's digital, and hopefully we're in a prime position to really make our mark. And of course we also want to thank you, our readers, for your continued support and readership. More on that next month, so for now, on with the issue.

Already making their mark in their native France and across Europe, upcoming electro band We Are Enfant Terrible get the interview treatment. We chat to them about writing songs in English, 8-bit video games and eating lobsters. In the review stakes we rule over new albums from Metric, Little Boots, Kasabian, The Answering Machine plus a few more.

The talk of the cinematic world this month is undoubtedly Terminator Salvation. Looking back over the original trilogy, we delve into what makes the deadly cyborgs click. Alongside a review of John Connor's next war on the machines we also assist your movie-going flirtations when it comes to Drag Me To Hell, Star Trek, Awaydays, Tormented, Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian and a couple more. Plus, to get you excited for rest of the year, we tell you why you should be excited about the summer's movies including Dead Snow, Ponyo and The Road.

Providing our back and front covers, our art and style features are amongst the most breathtaking we've had so far. James Jirat Patradoon's screenprinted masked brawlers will have you on the edge of your seat while Reno Ranger's double feature will sparkle your eyes away then bring them back down to earth in an empty car park.

Enjoy the issue

Sam Bathe

CONTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH



Spending his childhood absorbed in a fantasy universe of secret identities and atomic fist fights, **James Jirat Patradoon** aspired to one day join the ranks of his spandex clad super-peers. These ambitions continue to inspire his creative work.

James's feverish drawings explore notions of deferred masculinities; confused and misdirected rites of passage informed more by cartoons and action heroes than reality itself.

The protagonists of James's work are the Domino Brothers, a pair of teenage superhero twins. They personify the violent fantasies of an idealised masculinity, as they engage in epic after-school fights and bar brawls.

These intense comic book styled images have appeared in magazines such as ESPN, Complex, Acclaim, and Empty, as well as collaborations with Adidas, Diesel, MTV, PepsiCo and Mambo.

FIND MORE OF JAMES' WORK AT JIRATPATRADOON.COM



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MUSIC

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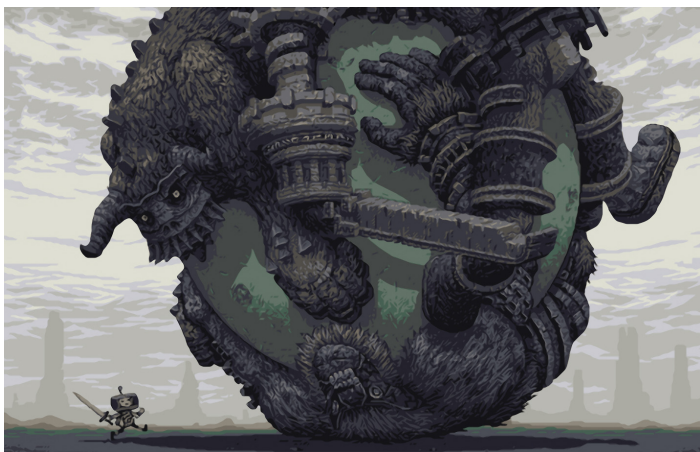


Electro-pop in the UK is shaping up to be Little Boots and La Roux's year but Brooklyn duo Telepathe might just prove to be the surprise success that break into the mainstream. Releasing their fantastic debut album 'Dance Mother' back in January, their style is reminiscent of the aforementioned, La Roux, but with the vocals tamed a little, in a good way. Their music sounds effortlessly cool in a way only sultry electro can. Cultured by TV On The Radio's Dave Sitek, producer of 'Dance Mother', 'So Fine' would have slotted perfectly on Yeah Yeah Yeah's recent album, 'In Your Line' is the subtle seduction while 'Chrome's On It' showcases their jolting abrasive side when it counts.

Don't be confused with other scene bands pushing their style over their substance. Telepathe have both, but it's the duo's music that steals the show.

YOU CAN LISTEN TO MORE TELEPATHE AT
MYSPACE.COM/TELEPATHE

GAMES



FILM

The Real Economics Of Piracy



With Wolverine now over a week into general release, on it's opening weekend the new X-Men film made an astonishing \$85m in America alone, but Fox still weren't happy. Despite becoming the highest opener of the year so far, Fox claim the film should, and would, have done even better if it were not for the now infamous workprints leak some weeks ago.

Estimates now place the download count at around 4 million, and when you factor in today's high ticket prices, that equates to around \$29m in 'lost earnings'. As we've discussed before, to the MPAA and its associated film studios, one download equates to one lost cinema ticket or DVD sale. In reality, this is nonsense. A lot of the people who downloaded the workprint would have done so just because they could, to check out the quality of leak and because they were curious, while many others will have downloaded the film, and then paid again to see it at the cinema. After all, if the film's good enough, there's nothing like the cinema experience and a second viewing should be equally enjoyable as the first.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine might not quite justify a second trip, heck, we uncovered quite a few flaws in our review, but the logic stands. And for those who regularly download films and don't bother paying to see films in theatres, would only have waited for the first 'cam' copy to hit the web and get their fix that way.

No doubt the piracy was the cause for a few lost ticket sales, but this is not because of the workprint, just piracy in general. And if anything, the huge press the leaked workprint was given around the world, gave the film more coverage than any PR campaign could have ever hoped for.

ART



ART



STYLE



Child's Play

Following in the footsteps of Daft Punk, Justice and M83, We Are Enfant Terrible are the next French electronica band on the cusp of something special

WORDS **SAM BATHE** PHOTOGRAPHY **ANA LORENZA**

After the success of Crystal Castles and the impending breakthrough of bands like Heartsrevolution and You Love Her Coz She's Dead, 8-bit music has never been more popular. With tracks sampled from classic video game chips, 8-bit has a strange nostalgia to it, but when mixed with expansive electronica and mesmerising vocals, We Are Enfant Terrible have taken the genre onto the next step. Supporting Peaches for their very first show, they have since played around the world from London's Koko to sold-out clubs in Beijing, bringing with them a re-programmed Nintendo GameBoy that they sample from live on stage. It's hard not to get excited about We Are Enfant Terrible.

Fan the Fire How long have you been playing together? How did you form?

Cyril (drums, 8-bit) We had our first rehearsal in May 2008. Clo and Thomas knew each other from the high school, right guys? (Clo and Thomas nod) And Thomas and I used to live in the same city, Lille, going out at the same places, then one Thomas invited me to his attic to play music, just for fun and he told me that he knows a girl with a weird voice, called Clo!

Clo (vocals, synth) He's right.

Thomas (guitar, synth) Clo please, don't use your weird voice during interviews, it's scaring people.

FtF What were you doing before you formed the band?

Cyril Some epileptic electronic music, an 8-bit solo project called Funky Fingers.

Clo Partying a lot (laughs) and I used to DJ.

Thomas I was working on the railroad...

FtF For those not so confident with their French, can you explain your name?

Clo Exactly, it means crazy child, but it's also an expression to define people that stop at nothing, like a Viking... you know what I mean?

FtF Was it a conscious decision to write lyrics in English, not French?

Cyril Je ne sais pas, il faut demander à Clo, la chanteuse!

Clo I'd love to write in French but my words come out in English when I sing, maybe because I listen a lot of pop music in English and because I fell in love with NYC when I lived there a few years ago.

FtF Where do you get the inspiration for your songs? Can you talk us through Lobster Quadrille?

Clo For Lobster Quadrille, the lyrics are a reference to Alice in Wonderland, but mixed with everyday life; "live in my dreams, this one I've drawn and your hanger will be blown". I think we're still very childish, influenced by video games and fairy tales.

FtF Does the 8-bit influence in your music come from a love of video games?

Cyril Yes, but it's more about habits than love. When I was a kid I would listen to more video game music than "normal music".

Thomas For sure, when I was a child I wanted to become composer for Nintendo games, but today video games music is too modern for me.

FtF What has been your favourite

gig to date? Favourite band you've supported?

Cyril Our show at the Logo in Shanghai, it was crowded. 400 people instead of 250. 45°C indoor! 2°C outdoor! The Ting Tings are the favourite band we supported. After supporting them in Lyon and Bordeaux in France, they invited us to join them and opening for their gig at Brixton Academy in London at the end of May.

Clo The gig in Lyon with the Ting Tings was awesome! I also loved the gig with Pet Conspiracy in Beijing and in Rockhouse/Salzburg, Austria, with German band called Frittenbude.

FtF Is there anyone in particular you'd like to support?

Cyril Orci! A good friend of ours.

Clo Broadcast, they're so inspiring

Thomas The Rolling Stones, or Blur (because Graham is finally back).

FtF What's the plan for the next year? Is there another EP in the works?

Cyril Our first EP has been out since May, and we're working hard on our first album. We would love to get it out for next spring but we'll see...

Clo We have a lot of ideas; we're just trying to find time to realise them.

FtF Is there any talk of labels yet?

Clo Talk, yes, but nothing signed for the moment. We love to be free; we're still too young to be engaged.

WE ARE ENFANT TERRIBLE WILL BE TOURING ACROSS EUROPE THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER



PATRICK WOLF 'THE BACHELOR'

RELEASED
June 1

The first part of a two album concept release, with 'The Conqueror' to follow next year, 'The Bachelor' is Patrick Wolf's first new release since breakthrough 'The Magic Position' two years ago. Not as safe as the last album, 'The Bachelor' goes back to Patrick Wolf's more experimental roots, inventive and aspirational like his very early work. Flowing between more rock in 'Hard Times' and acoustic and gentler 'Who Will?' and 'Damaris', 'The Bachelor' isn't Wolf's masterpiece just yet, but he's getting close.

★★★★★

POST WAR YEARS 'THE GREATS & THE HAPPENINGS'

RELEASED
Out now

Sounding an amalgamation of Hot Chip and Mystery Jets, Post War Years feel like the second generation in the recent Foals rebirth of math rock. It all sounds pretty good so far. Their debut 'The Greats & The Happenings' is filled with euphoric tracks and the energy that makes you want to get up and dance. From 'From Whole World On Its Head' to 'Hummer'-esque 'Red & Blue', while Post War Years had the foresight to include their two best song on their debut, they don't quite have the punch of Foals, though still makes for a great listen.

★★★★★

LITTLE BOOTS 'HANDS'

RELEASED
June 8

Pushed across the music press as one of the new names to look out for in 2009, Little Boots' synth pop shares an unerring similarity to the now past-her-prime Madonna. 'Hands' can at times be a little samey but this is still an album that will go all the way to push the likes of Lady GaGa or Lilly Allen on the mainstream electro album states. 'Stuck On Repeat' shows a maturity in vision you wouldn't expect of a upcoming artist, likewise for single 'New In Town' and the enticing 'Meddle', but 'Hands' still falls a little short of what was expected.

★★★★★

KASABIAN 'WEST RYDER PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM'

RELEASED
June 8

The supremely arrogant Kasabian didn't really need anything more to put off would-be fans, but lead singer Tom Meighan's ill-advised curtain hair cut has one it. Still with their tongue twister new record they try new things, deeper into punk but with a more cultured influence. On undoubted future anthem 'Vlad The Impaler' and lead single 'Fire' they pull it off, but almost throughout the entire rest of the album, they simply seem to be trying to hard to be the next huge rock band. They'll keep telling us so, but this generation isn't theirs yet.

★★★★★

CASS MCCOMBS 'CATACOMBS'

RELEASED
June 1

Following up his last, and critically acclaimed, LP 'Dropping The Writ', Cass McCombs' breathtaking 'Catacombs' continues his vein of heartfelt folk/indie-rock. The songwriting throughout is a masterpiece, as has always been on of Cass McCombs' strongest suits, and while 'Catacombs' can drag on a little towards the end, as is the downside to a slow-paced genre, expect the American singer to go far with this record, and on the quality of the whole product, not just the feature singles.

★★★★★

METRIC 'FANTASIES'

RELEASED
Out now

Returning to the band that made her name after several years on the solo trail, Emily Haines and Metric are back to their very best. Adding more of a synth edge to their typically sultry indie rock, 'Fantasies' might not be as edgy as their last album 'Live It Out', which despite big single 'Monster Hospital' didn't garner the critical acclaim it deserved, but by moving a little more mainstream with pounding first single 'Help I'm Alive' and the electric 'Gold Guns Girls', the music feels a lot more accessible.

★★★★★

VARIOUS ARTISTS 'KITSUNÉ MAISON VOL. 7'

RELEASED
June 8

Famed for their ability to find the very best in new electro, Kitsuné's Maison compilations are the go to for finding your future music loves of the next six months, before another is released. Dubbed 'The Lucky One', 'Maison Vol. 7' is one of the very best in the series, featuring tracks and remixes from second time contributors We Have Band and La Roux and introduces the brilliant Two Door Cinema Club and James Yuill. While you might skip over The Golden Filter a few times, you'll have the rest 'Maison Vol. 7' on repeat for months to come.

★★★★★

ANSWERING MACHINE 'ANOTHER CITY ANOTHER SORRY'

RELEASED
June 15

A couple of years after making their mark with endless touring, The Answering Machine's debut album is sadly not quite what fans were hoping for. Though capturing their energy and vigour, 'Another City, Another Sorry' feels mis-produced by Dave Eringa. Their best track 'Lightbulbs' is over-cooked, feeling like it's running at 1.5x speed when compared to excellent early demos, and while the rest of the album is perfectly acceptable angsty indie rock, they're likely to fall onto the mediocrity pile.

★★★☆☆

GOLDEN SILVERS 'TRUE ROMANCE'

RELEASED
Out now

Mixing electro, funk and glam genres to produce a thoroughly captivating effortlessly individual one is upon us perhaps a little sooner than you might have expected, and definitely without the PR machine is full throngs which they needed. Still, the quality of their debut album 'True Romance' will definitely get them somewhere even though it isn't as full an experience as you would hope. Singles 'Magic Touch', 'Arrows Of Eros' and title track 'True Romance' their fantastic songwriting but there isn't quite enough to fill the gaps in between.

★★★★★

WHITE RABBITS 'IT'S FRIGHTENING'

RELEASED
Out now

White Rabbits' 2007 debut 'Fort Nightly' was one of the most exciting albums of the year, and with their name now far more well known, the Brooklyn-based six-piece continue in the same vein with 'It's Frightening'. White Rabbits' style is akin to a more melodic The Walkmen, 'It's Frightening' has though lost some of the imagination of 'Fort Nightly', and while still a very interesting listen, won't blow you away as the latter did. If you liked the debut, don't let that put you off, just expect to be back on 'Fort Nightly' in the near future.

★★★★★

METRIC

ELECTRIC BALLROOM, LONDON
19/05/09

Rounding off their UK tour with a sold out show at Camden's Electric Ballroom, Metric wowed the London crowd with a mammoth hour and a half long set. Opening with a flurry of new songs of their new album 'Fantasies' including the pounding lead single 'Help, I'm Alive' and riff-laden 'Gold Guns Girls', lead singer Emily Haines was instantly jumping about on stage as the electric crowd jubilantly cheered every track.

Genuinely glad to be back playing in England's capital, and revelling in the experiences of a previous show up the road at the Barfly, Metric's performance was driven by real passion and energy, and seemed thrilled that the new songs were greeted with as much enthusiasm from the crowd as the old ones. Before an encore of 'Monster Hospital' and 'Live It Out', Haines joked that before too long they'll be selling out stadiums, she should take her own words seriously.



PARTLY CLOUDY

RELEASED

May 29 (USA)

October 16 (UK)

Only from Pixar would you be almost as excited about an accompanying short animated film as a main feature. To be attached to the highly anticipated *Up*, *Partly Cloudy* will air just before the opening credits of Carl Fredrickson's balloon-packed adventure, and takes on a narrative similarly rooted in the clouds.

Making real the stories that storks bring babies down from the sky, delivering the new borns to awaiting families across the world, here not only humans, but animals too, get their young from the leggy birds. Gus, however, is a lonely cloud, and making dangerous babies, such as crocodiles and tigers, starts to irritate his stork Peck, as his deliveries start to become increasingly dangerous.

From the mere story, you can sense the charm just waiting to be instilled by the talented Pixar team, putting as much effort into the narrative of their short films as they do their full features, while from the only real footage released so far, a 30 second snippet, the animation is again at their very best.

Partly Cloudy will also see the directorial debut of animator, and voice of Remy's brother Emile, in *Ratatouille*, Peter Sohn, a mark of passage that suggests we could expect big things from Sohn in the future. The directors of Pixar's short films often go on to even bigger and better things, working their way up to take charge of their own feature films a few projects later, though at the least, Sohn will be hoping to win back the Oscar for Best Animated Short that *Presto* somehow didn't take home earlier in the year.





DEAD SNOW

RELEASED
June 23 (USA)
TBC (UK)

One thing Norway has never been particularly famous for is its films but festival success *Dead Snow* hopes to change all that.

Entitled *Død Snø* in its native tongue, *Dead Snow* was bought soon after premiering for US eyes at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Distribution rights were soon bought by IFC Films which will see arguably the widest American release of any Norwegian film to date.

In a similar zom-com vein to *Shaun Of The Dead*, *Dead Snow* is about a bunch of medical students who go away from a holiday in a remote snowy mountainside cabin. As you might expect, things take a turn for the worse, only this time, after stumbling upon a hidden stash of gold, the owners' undead bodies chase them down to reclaim it. Same old, same old up to now, perhaps, but this time around, the zombies have an extra devilish twist, they're Nazis.

Sundance reports swayed both ways on *Dead Snow*, and you can expect it to be packed with the expected horror clichés, but the Norwegian film still though has the chance to shock and thrill a fair few, looking on first inspection to be in a similar vein to Sam Raimi's early films, which is nothing to be ashamed of.

And if nothing else, the zombies look fantastic.





PONYO

RELEASED

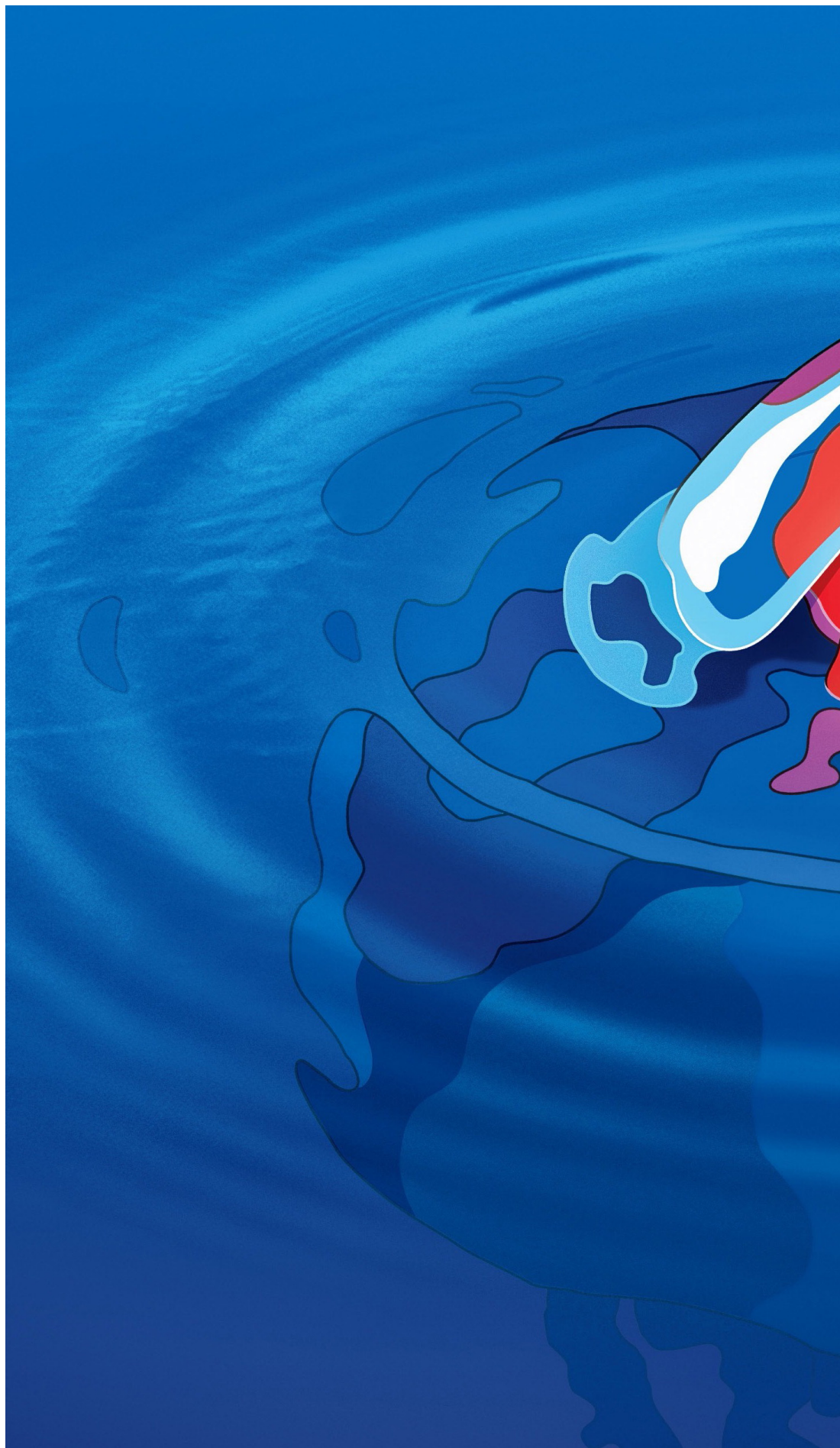
August 14 (USA)
TBC (UK)

Shortened from its literal translation of *Ponyo On The Cliff By The Sea*, *Ponyo* is the latest animated delight from Studio Ghibli and legendary Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki. Centred around a little fish girl called Ponyo, she dreams of becoming a human, and after meeting a young boy called Sosuke, develops a great friendship on her quest on her quest for life on dry land.

Entirely hand drawn, *Ponyo*, even from the early released footage, looks stunning. Over 170,000 images were drawn in the film's creation, making light of modern digital colouration and animation techniques, and a hark back to a classic era while Hollywood forges on with embarrassments in 3D.

After its release last year in its native Japan, *Ponyo* became the widest ever released domestic film, opening on 481 screens, and ended 2008 as the highest grossing picture of the year. And international expectations are equally high.

With main international rights bought by Disney, you can feel their influence on the new English voicecast. Surnames Cyrus and Jonas sit above the two lead characters, but rather than their more famous siblings, it is Miley Cyrus' younger sister Noah, and the Jonas Brothers' younger brother Frankie voicing Ponyo and Sosuke. Matt Damon, Tina Fey, Liam Neeson and Cate Blanchett compete an A-list ensemble so expect *Ponyo* to make up for the disappointment of Studio Ghibli's last release *Tales From Earthsea*.





THE ROAD

RELEASED
Q4 2009 (USA)
TBC (UK)

John Hillcoat's long-awaited adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Road* is finally getting close to release. The name Cormac McCarthy will be familiar to many not simply as an author, but as the author who penned the novel upon which the Coen Brother's multi-Oscar-winning *No Country for Old Men* was based. Indeed, McCarthy adaptations currently seem to be rather in-vogue, with a production of *Blood Meridian* also in the works.

Announced in 2007, *The Road* has steadily built up an intriguing buzz, a buzz which has recently been bolstered by the appearance of a trailer that looks very promising. Establishing a bleak aesthetic and grim tone that seems in keeping with the haunting mood of the novel, the plot follows the journey of an unnamed father and son, played here by Viggo Mortensen and Kodi Smit-McPhee, after a cataclysmic event annihilates the majority of life on earth, leaving a bleak, dangerous wilderness for them to navigate.

Whilst there are big names across the board in this production – Guy Pearce, Robert Duvall and Charlize Theron are all involved – perhaps not too many will recognise the name of director John Hillcoat. Not to worry, however, for his last feature length project was 2005's fantastic western *The Proposition*, in which returning actor Guy Pearce starred. It should be noted, therefore, that Hillcoat is more than capable of handling sparse, unwelcoming environments and getting great performances from his leads.

Also exciting is the news that Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, of the *Bad Seeds*, are reuniting with director Hillcoat to compose the original soundtrack. Given that their score for *The Proposition* was so unique and haunting, they would seem the perfect choice.

With critically acclaimed source material to work from and a fantastic array of talent on show in all departments, it would be a fairly safe bet that we're in for something special come the autumn.





ASTRO BOY

RELEASED

October 23 (USA)

TBC (UK)

Based on the classic, and very highly regarded, manga and cartoon series, *Astro Boy* gives another much-loved franchise the reboot treatment.

Charting the adventures of a young android boy, and titular *Astro Boy*, his robotic body allows him to change his feet into rocket boosters and hands into laser blasters, as in the original series, he fought off the challenges of evil villains, both human and robotic. Little is known about the actual plot of the reboot but no doubt it will involve a similar struggle to foil a fresh nemesis' plans.

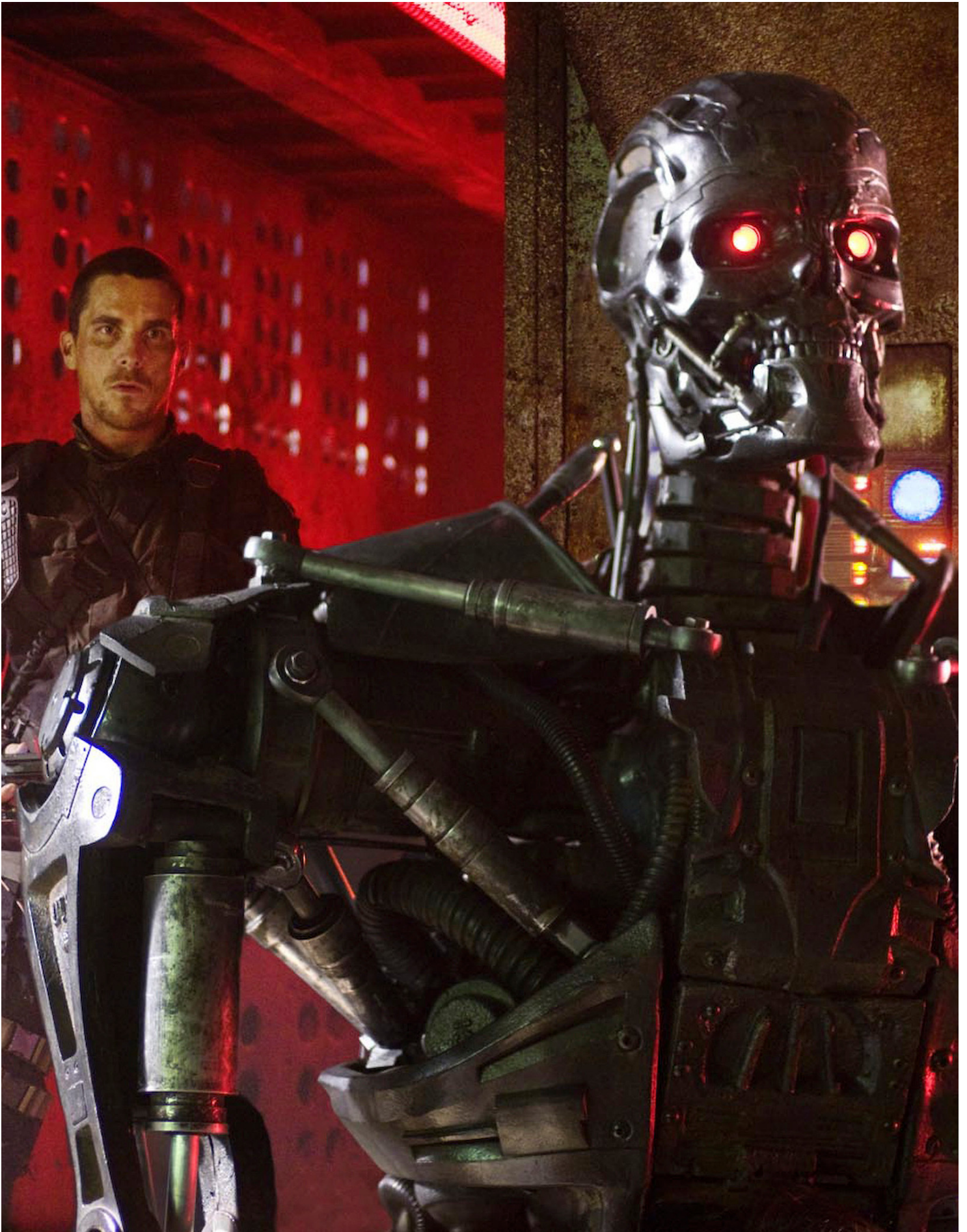
Production company Imagi Animation Studios boasts Japanese ties, so fans should stay hopeful *Astro Boy* will be faithful to the source material, however previous effort TMNT won't provide too much confidence in their filmmaking ability. Compared with anything from Pixar, the animation looks a little basic and lacklustre, but bright colours and simple designs could yet work well for *Astro Boy*.

In another childhood lead, Freddie Highmore voices *Astro Boy* while *Flushd Away* director David Bowers takes charge behind the computer screen.

Slightly more worryingly the screenplay was penned by Timothy Harris, writer much celebrated film *Space Jam*, *Kindergarten Cop* and *Twins*, though he could still pull something special out of the bag.







They Did Say They'd Be Back

Providing the defining moments in action and sci-fi cinema, James Cameron's Terminator franchise, or at least his original duo, is arguably the highest regarded in Hollywood some 25 years since the first film's release. Ahead of Terminator Salvation, the fourth film in the series, we look back on what Salvation director McG has got to live up to

WORDS **MARTIN ROBERTS**

THOUGH HIS TRACK RECORD in television is something to be very proud of, with *Charlie's Angels* and the following sequels standing out as the highlight on his filmography, some might question how McG managed to land a directorial position on the big-screen return of James Cameron's gargantuan Terminator franchise. Needless to say, the fans, at first, were restless. But that was before details started to trickled out, kicked off nonetheless by the revelation that Christian Bale had signed on to play John Connor, and people started to realise that this could actually be pretty good. Two hundred million dollars later, via a well-publicised, if unfortunate, on-set scream-a-thon, promising preview footage and some amusing 'big robot' envy between McG and Michael Bay, and the film is suddenly one of the most talked about cinematic events of the year, and certainly in the running to be one of the summer's biggest blockbusters. And yet it still hasn't quite rid itself of all of the doubters.

The Terminator franchise is one that could do without another lacklustre entry. Sure, *T3: Rise of the Machines* raked in the cash worldwide, but it was generally a massive disappointment, only managing to stave off my own personal dissatisfaction with a daring closing segment that, in stark contrast to all that had come before it, was actually really good.

There is nothing wrong with a series having a bit of a giggle at itself, but what *T3* fundamentally misunderstood for most of its runtime was that tongue-in-cheek is fine as long as the tone of the movie focuses on the story, rather than the joke. The first two films were very serious, not to the point of being po-faced, after all Arnie does give John Connor the thumbs up whilst descending slowly into a molten furnace of metallic martyrdom, they simply possessed a dark, intense atmosphere that kept them running at 100mpg until the closing credit. Despite the dubious qualities of the third film, this is a franchise that is well loved

by the public and critics alike. It is something of a rarity in its field; an action-packed, sci-fi, time-travelling extravaganza that also has the intelligence and wit to stand out from the crowd. Given that the best moments of *T3* involved neither Arnie's Terminator or new addition the T-X (Loken), it makes sense that *Salvation* should be set in a new time with a new cast, continuing the bleak prospectus laid out at the end of the third film, and suggested throughout the prior two.

THE WINDING STORYLINE linking the films is a bit of a brain-teaser, but does fundamentally make sense, assuming one avoids the sort of niggling time-paradoxes that even Stephen Hawking has been unable to solve yet. The series revolves primarily around John Connor and his immediate relations, or soon to be relations, and their attempts to deviate the events of the past, which past exactly depends which film you're watching, away from the apocalyptic future they all know is ➔

coming. The Terminator, film one, introduces us to Sarah Connor (Hamilton), soon to be mother of John, who is pursued through 80s America by an inhuman killing machine from the future, the titular antagonist, that, as Michael Biehn famously tells us, “absolutely will not stop”.

Michael Biehn's character, Kyle Reese, is human and has been sent back from the future, by John Connor, now leader of the human resistance, in an effort to prevent it from killing her. Thus we have the basic premise of the first film. Things get a little more awkward when it becomes clear that Kyle, who was sent back by John, is actually John's father from the past. But the film crucially, like its sequel, was written and directed spectacularly by James Cameron, maintaining a gritty sense of tension and interesting character development.

Terminator 2: Judgement Day made a killing at the box office and practically revolutionised special effects, something Cameron has always been fascinated by, and is to this day. It also broadened the scope of the first film to include John Connor as a character, and a young boy, and introduced the crucial element of the series, judgement day, in which a self-aware artificial intelligence, Skynet, annihilates most of humanity in a nuclear holocaust. Not exactly children's stuff. The film's genius comes partially through its technical brilliance, winning four technical Academy Awards, but also through its characterisation.

Linda Hamilton's Sarah Connor is by this point incarcerated in a psychiatric institution, and taken a turn down the wild side. The character has become a classic of action cinema and this transformation, coupled with the inclusion of her son as protagonist and the shocker of having the original Terminator re-programmed to fight off a second, more advanced model (Patrick), made the film successful on all levels. It was simply the perfect sequel. The fact that the characters are

TERMINATORS HAVE TAKEN MANY FORMS THROUGH THE FIRST TRILOGY



“ Things get a little more awkward when it becomes clear that Kyle, who was sent back by John, is actually John's father from the past ”

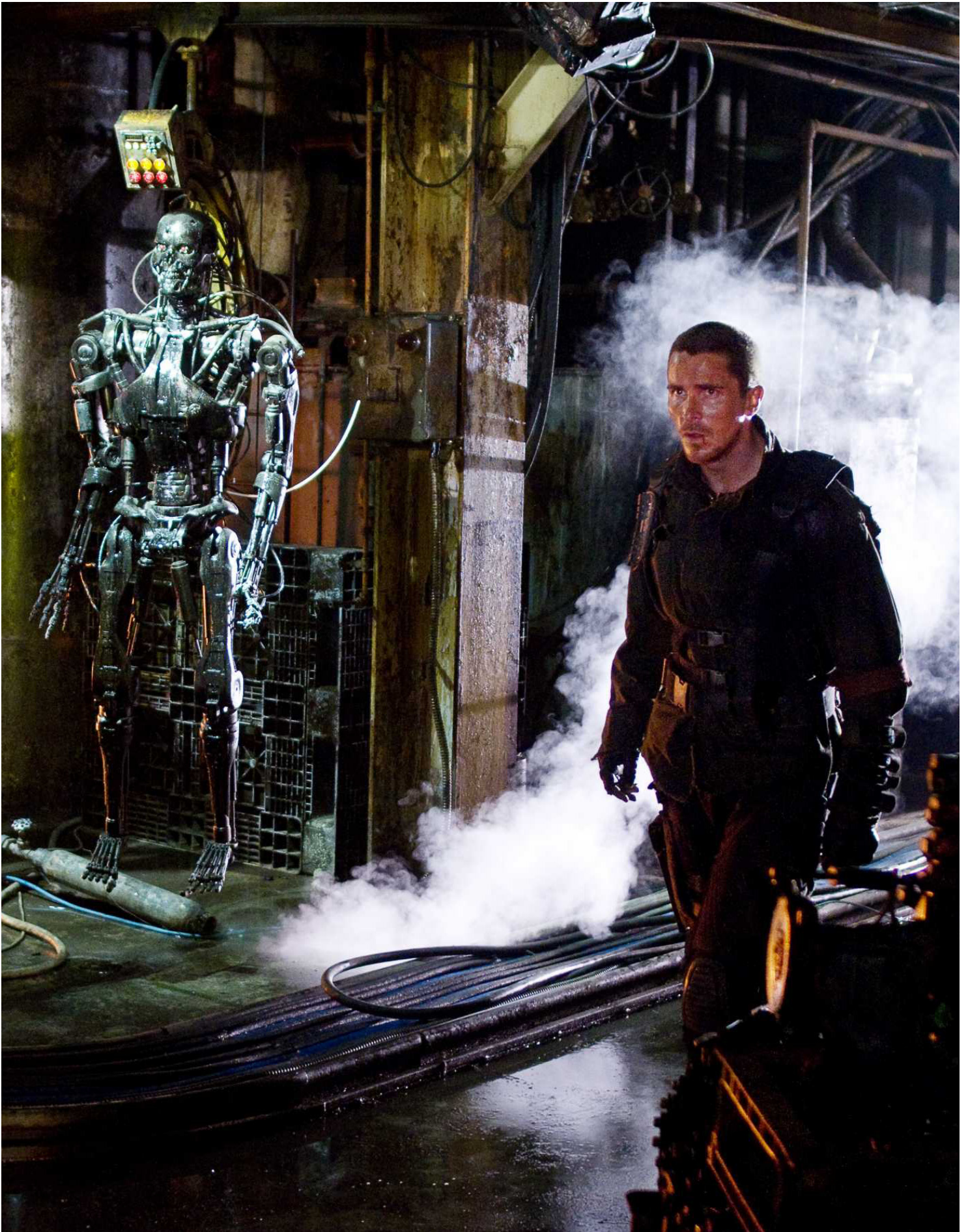


working together to avoid the end of the world, foreshadowed as early as the first film, through Kyle Reese's dreams, provides an interesting, and menacing, setup that never feels forced.

THE THIRD FILM capitalised on the success of the first two and introduced a new storyline involving John's future wife Kate Brewster, played here by Claire Danes, and a series of future military leaders that constitute the targets for new antagonist the T-X to hunt down. The T-X, unfortunately, bore little real threat and wasn't particularly interesting. As we said earlier, however, the real juice of the third film comes at the end, when John and Kate are directed to a secret bunker, thinking they are headed for Skynet's operational core. When it turns out to be a nuclear fallout shelter the realisation sets in that Judgement Day has not been prevented, but simply postponed. A depressing thought, and one rendered even more poignant by the film's final shot, in which the nuclear missiles launched and the terror begins.

And so ends the 'first trilogy', assuming McG's reinvention of the franchise takes off and is turned into a new one. Perhaps 'trilogy' is an unfair term given the fact that James Cameron had no involvement in the third, but according to McG he has given his blessing to the fourth, which is good news. But does McG have what it takes to handle such a celebrated series? His confidence and enthusiasm are perhaps the qualities that turned it in his favour. Even with multiple rewrites, including the emergency involvement of prominent screenwriting figures Paul Haggis and Jonah Nolan, McG managed to rope in Christian Bale, amass a huge budget, and get everyone excited about the Terminator franchise again. That's some achievement.

TERMINATOR SALVATION IS OUT MAY 21ST IN AMERICA AND JUNE 3RD IN THE UK. YOU CAN FIND OUR REVIEW ON PAGE 30



TERMINATOR SALVATION

RELEASED
May 21 (USA)
June 3 (UK)

DIRECTED BY McG **STARRING** Christian Bale, Sam Worthington, Anton Yelchin, Moon Bloodgood, Bryce Dallas Howard, Roland Kickinger, Common, Jane Alexander, Helena Bonham Carter, Chris Browning, Michael Ironside & Ivan G'Vera

With the original Terminator double widely regarded as of the two of the greatest sci-fi action thrillers ever made, after a horrendous third outing and brief TV fling, when Terminator Salvation was announced the film community gave a more than audible groan.

Battling more negativity than the recent Indiana Jones outing, Terminator Salvation with its release now upon us, and despite director McG's white lies along the way, the fourth in the franchise is though a solid enough addition to James Cameron's originals.

Waking up in a desolate Los Angeles, Terminator Salvation is set post-judgement day 2018 where a confused Marcus Wright (Worthington) takes what feels like his first steps for 15 years. We first meet Wright in a brief 2003 pre-opening credits sequence when then a death row inmate, he signs his body over to Cyberdine Systems, developers of the Skynet computer network that has taken over the world with mechanised Terminator robots, for medical testing. Back in 2018, when Wright finds his way into central LA, he's saved from a patrolling Terminator by a young Kyle Reese (Yelchin), the very same who is sent back in time to then modern day in the first film, before the pair decide to go in search other human Resistance fighters.

Their scheduled destination is to join up with John Connor (Bale), considered to be the saviour of the human race, and central figure in two of the early Terminator films but after a discover by Connor, their future seems even more in doubt. In an early raid on the Skynet compound, the compound Wright later crawls out of,

their plans of a new Terminator in development are exposed, leaving the human Resistance to take the fight to the machines, and try to hit one of Skynet's main bases.

After the Resistance reverse engineer a signal to disable the machines, they appear to have a master plan in place, but when Connor hears Kyle Reese has been captured and taken to the base they are planning to hit, Connor take it on himself to strike against Skynet.

Though Terminator Salvation isn't as compelling as the first two in the series, it certainly doesn't ruin the memory, especially considering the third. It does though feel like a different film, more straight-up action than you might have expected, without the same intensity as Salvation isn't centred around a Terminator-Sarah/John Connor chase. Perhaps director McG was forced to cut some of the more powerful images to keep the rating down, but he has still delivered a film with maturity and confidence. It is shot with great style, easily McG's best work, using some breathtaking long cuts especially an early two-minute helicopter crash and Terminator fight scene.

With Christian Bale behind John Connor, one thing never in doubt would be the acting class. Coming over a little Batman, and while caped rather than as Bruce Wayne, Bale is typically emphatic en route to surely becoming the all-action hero for the current generation. What's more surprising is that Sam Worthington steals the show. Whetting your appetite further for Terminator creator James Cameron's next film Ava-

tar, Worthington boasts effortless charisma and making what could have been a superfluous character Marcus Wright, one of the film's strongest points.

Old fans will also be able to get a lot out of the inter-linked mythology. Seeing a young Kyle Reese is a joy, portrayed by the assured Anton Yelchin, and as undoubtedly a fifth and sixth in the franchise will undoubtedly emerge, it will be very interesting how the prequel/sequels work in Reese and other Terminators being sent back into the past. The biggest smile though is reserved for a widely reported CGI appearance by Arnold Schwarzenegger, used to perfection when it could have been a laughing stock.

Undoubtedly, Terminator Salvation does still have a fair few limitations. After a whole host of scripting issues that meant Dark Knight scribe Jonathan Nolan was brought on board for a touch up, the film is too long in the middle act and could done with losing a couple of the action sequences in the editing room, and this is after Salvation was already significantly shortened from early cuts.

For a generic action film the character development may pass, but compared with Terminators 1 & 2, none of the leading men go through any real emotional turmoil.

Still, it could have all been a lot worse and with some imaginative new Terminators, a great score some thrilling action set-pieces, critics slating the film will be proven harsh as box office results and public opinion soon come in.

★★★★★







DRAG ME TO HELL

DIRECTED BY Sam Raimi **STARRING** Alison Lohman, Justin Long, Lorna Raver, David Paymer, Dileep Rao & Reggie Lee

RELEASED
May 27 (UK)
May 29 (USA)

After the dreadful conclusion to the recent Spider-Man trilogy, many were quick to lose faith in director Sam Raimi. While the nuts and bolts action was adequate, the 'comedy' scenes fell flat on their face while the plot and direction were all over the place. Almost 10 years after his last foray into the horror genre, Raimi is now back to doing what he does best, and reminiscent of his classic breakthrough exploitation horror, 1981's *The Evil Dead*, *Drag Me To Hell* is an edge-of-your-seat gory horror film you'll want to see again the minute the closing credits roll.

Tirelessly working towards a promotion, told she must make the hard calls as one of her bank's loan officers, Christine Brown (Lohman) takes the step to turn down the plea of an extension on the mortgage of an elderly customer. But with monstrous teeth, unerring finger

nails and an outright creepy demeanor, perhaps Mrs. Ganush wasn't the right lady to refuse a new payment plan. After an office stationary tussle, the gypsy lady places a curse on Christine, destined to be tortured for three days before the demon Lamia drags her body into hell for all eternity, leaving Christine the unenviable task of learning how to break the curse, and living with the consequences in the meantime.

While first up you might find the initial plot device of declining a mortgage extension more than a little clunky, from there on in, *Drag Me To Hell* is a showcase of how horror, with a little comedy thrown in, can be done right. With a tonne of blood and gore along the way, *Drag Me To Hell* is more than a little reminiscent of the aforementioned *Evil Dead*, not so much in terms of plot, but the style and atmosphere that sees Christine deal with unim-

aginable torment.

It is the characters though that really make the film. Mrs. Ganush is a truly demonic creature, and the perfect creation from Raimi. Likewise Alison Lohman is everything you need from a horror heroine, and pleasingly not the usual over-dramatic teen you expect from the horror genre.

With moment moments of real horror and tension, yet still managing to be a lot of fun throughout, *Drag Me To Hell* is the thrill ride Sam Raimi should be making year-on-year, not another cash cow hapless Spider-Man film. Though the ending is a little disappointing, the film really comes alive when Mrs. Ganush is on screen, so don't be surprised if come the end of the year, this was still the best horror had to offer in 2009.

★★★★★



ANGELS & DEMONS

DIRECTED BY Ron Howard **STARRING** Tom Hanks, Ewan McGregor, Ayelet Zurer, Stellen Skarsgård & Pierfrancesco Favino

RELEASED
Out now

Directing his second adaptation of a Dan Brown novel, after 2006's *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* returns to the ever remarkable life of Professor Robert Langdon, and his apparent fascination with the Catholic Church.

Despite making over \$750 million worldwide with *The Da Vinci Code*, the film was widely panned by critics, and if anything has to battle has to fight against an outright negative view before the opening credits of *Angels & Demons* even roll.

At least this time around the film's release has not been slated by the Church, as the first in the series was, and in fact sees Robert Langdon (Hanks) help out the Catholic order. Set in and around Vatican City, after the death of the Pope and kidnapping of four church Cardinals, they turn to Langdon to stop the Vatican from falling into mayhem.

All the while, at the site of the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland, a vial of 'ultra-combustible anti-matter'

has been stolen, and after Hanks uncovers evidence that an ancient secret brotherhood, the Illuminati, have re-emerged, fears two are connected and is left with a race against time to save the Vatican and rescue the four Cardinals.

As you might expect after *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* plays in the simple search for the clues format. As Langdon slowly uncovers the underlying mystery, with the help of CERN scientist Vittoria Vetra who's experiment created the anti-matter vial, they find a clue then race to the location of the next clue, and continues until they at last hit the jackpot. It's not the most challenging of narratives for Hanks and he somewhat seems to be on autopilot throughout. Ewan McGregor adds a few quirks to the film, though he is a strange casting, perhaps more based on box-office appeal rather than suitability.

Though an improvement on the turmoil in *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* fails to really make the

most of the fight between religion and science, and despite raising a few interesting points, the debate always seems sided, this time, on the Catholic Church.

With a little over-explanation in the dialogue, the faux-intelligent plotline of *Angels & Demons* gives the impression you're learning throughout and you'll leave the theatre feeling a couple of ounces cleverer. For that the screenwriters must be congratulated, though for the rest of their work they might want to step it up if there's a third Dan Brown adaptation.

At times *Angels & Demons* can be a lot of fun, even if it can't maintain the intensity of the likes of guilty pleasure *National Treasure*, and while there are a lot of frustrations along the way, *Angels & Demons* isn't the complete shambles a lot of people wanted it to be. But then that probably isn't the greatest endorsement either.

★★★★★

STAR TREK

DIRECTED BY J.J. Abrams **STARRING** Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Eric Bana, Bruce Greenwood, Karl Urban, Simon Pegg, John Cho, Zoe Saldana, Anton Yelchin & Leonard Nimoy

RELEASED
Out now

Though the Star Trek franchise boasts millions of die-hard fans across the globe, there are few series that have found such widespread popularity despite being universally discarded the rest of the population. Inaccurate or not, 'Trekkies' have built up a reputation of being obsessive geek types, able to speak in-show alien language 'Klingon' and relay scenes upon scenes of dialogue from famous episodes.

Over 40 years, 10 feature films and numerous spin-off series later, it's back to square one. Charged with rebooting one of the entertainment industry's most famous intellectual properties, J.J. Abrams is one of the few men in Hollywood you would nominate able to cope with the sheer grandeur of the project.

Creator of *Alias*, co-creator of *LOST* and *Fringe*, director and co-writer of *Mission Impossible 3* and producer of *Cloverfield*, in less than 10 years Abrams has risen from nowhere to become one of the hottest names in film and TV. Renowned for his creative mind, Abrams' fascination with the illusion of mystery has made his works so captivating and imaginative, drawing an enviable following that will see very film and watch every show he has a hand in

Penned by *Transformers'* Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, and co-produced by *LOST's* Damon Lindelof, alongside Abrams, the creative team behind *Star Trek* is a perfect fit to bring the series to a new generation.

After the hours upon hours of the *Starship Enterprise's* interplanetary adventures, *Star Trek* goes right back to the start and the vessel's very first voyage. Manned by a young and inexperienced crew,

save for Captain Christopher Pike (Greenwood), the *Enterprise* ships out to investigate a distress call from a distant planet, only it's a trap. Leaving warp speed to be greeted by a monstrous Romulan ship, Pike agrees to board villain Nero's (Bana) vessel for fear of annihilation. When bargaining proves futile and Nero takes Pike hostage, the crew, now lead by brave and spirited James T. Kirk (Pine) and calm and collected Spock (Quinto), the duo must first rescue the neighbouring civilisation from impending destruction before freeing Pike and foiling Nero's plans to wipe out all Federation planets.

The first in what will inevitably become a new *Star Trek* trilogy, films in this position often struggle to do justice to the franchise they are becoming a part of. Torn between setting the atmosphere of the forthcoming films, introducing the characters and attempting to work itself as a rounded movie, in recent memory only a handful of films can boast success. *Star Trek* joins the very brief list.

Perfectly capturing the essence of the *Star Trek* franchise, while allowing for a new dawn in the face of the first-time cast and crew involved, as the substantial plot draws to a satisfying close, Abrams can chalk this one off as another great success.

Praise must also be given to Paramount for bringing Abrams et. all on board. Given *Star Trek's* very geeky, fanboy reputation, by mixing J.J.'s knowledge of the wider audience with 'Trekkies' Lindelof and Orci's desire to keep within the boundaries of their beloved series, the reboot has remained faithful to the original programming and films while opening up and creating something the general public can enjoy.

Aside from his vision for the ambience of the picture, on a sheer directorial level, *Star Trek* represents Abrams' step-up to become a true major player in the film industry. For a project on such a huge scale, *Star Trek* would have caused any other director a headache just thinking about where to begin, never mind implementing those ideas.

Abrams has proven himself capable of taking on the pressure of rebooting a franchise followed millions of people across the world, and instantly makes himself a candidate for even the highest profile of releases in the future.

Set in space, *Star Trek* is understandably CGI heavy. Gone are the shoddy props both loved and hated in the original series, with brilliant set design and stunning visual effects as the *USS Enterprise* beams through the stars, *Star Trek* is effortless to watch, putting to reality what on paper might seem impossible.

Though they were never going to dispel the iconic crew of the original series, the young cast give a thoroughly enjoyable ensemble performance, led by the superb Quinto and Pine, their chemistry sets scenes alight and makes for a thrilling combination in the future.

There are a couple of minor annoyances on the way, and as the story develops, the plot takes an aggravating turn, but as the script is so well crafted and the characters develop rewardingly under a superb narrative, the film's misgivings are easily forgotten. Somehow J.J. Abrams has managed to make *Star Trek* cool again, with a fresh and fast-paced, action-packed thrill ride that both new and old fans can lavishly enjoy.

★★★★★





SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK

RELEASED
Out now

DIRECTED BY Charlie Kaufman **STARRING** Philip Seymour Hoffman, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Samantha Morton, Michelle Williams, Daniel London, Sadie Goldstein, Dianne Wiest, Hope Davis, Catherine Keener, Emily Watson, Robert Seay, Steven Andy Guirgis & Tom Noonan

Making his long awaited directorial debut, Charlie Kaufman, writer and executive producer of *Being John Malkovich*, *Human Nature*, *Adaptation* and *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*, has picked a meteoric project for his first feature. Written by Kaufman, *Synecdoche, New York* was first touted as the next film for friend Spike Jonze before the American instead chose to work on the upcoming *Where The Wild Things Are*, the opportunity fell in Kaufman's hands, and he grabbed it in an instant.

Synecdoche, New York focuses on theatre director Caden Cotard (Hoffman). Left by his wife as she, daughter-in-hand, pursues her art in Berlin, Cotard plunges his time and effort into a new theatre project to define his life's work. Awarded a MacArthur genius grant, with a limitless budget Cotard recreates a life-sized model of New York with actors playing out scenes in real

time, as what soon becomes a second edit of real life, incorporates his own day to day experiences for a brutally honest, and mostly saddening production that seems never to reach completion.

The first thing that stands out from *Synecdoche, New York* is the remarkable screenplay. While a lot is asked of Kaufman's vision as a director, to somehow make sense of such an expansive and non-linear plot, deserves great praise. His directorial debut is a remarkably deep and rich film, somewhat daunting upon first showing, challenging the audience to take in this complex movie.

As *Synecdoche, New York* explores the trials and tribulations of Cotard's mostly miserable life, Hoffman's performance as the troubled genius perfectly fits the role. Alongside Samantha Morton as his assistant and on-off love, the pair turn in remark-

able scenes, oozing real emotion as they grow old on the set of the play.

For such an ambitious picture, *Synecdoche, New York* was likely to hit a couple of snag along the way, and given the narrative's stuttering development, the film doesn't flow as you would like towards the conclusion, and even at two hours, you might find yourself checking your watch a couple of times before the end.

Requiring at least a couple of views to really understand and take in the sheer brilliance on show, *Synecdoche, New York* certainly isn't a film for the general movie going public on a lazy Sunday afternoon, or Friday night date, but had Kaufman made it more accessible, it would have lost its artistic flair and the sheer conceptuality that has garnered awards the world over.

★★★★★



AWAYDAYS

RELEASED
May 22 (UK)
TBC (USA)

DIRECTED BY Pat Holdon **STARRING** Liam Boyle, Nicky Bell, Stephen Graham, Oliver Lee, Lee Battle, Sean Ward, Samantha McCarthy, Holly Grainer, Michael Ryan & Ian Puleston-Davies

Bored of the monotonous nine-to-five, Carty (Bell) wants a release. Leaving college to push pencils for his uncle, in an era of football violence Carty chooses to take his frustrations on the road and get involved with hooliganism. Slowly working his way into The Pack after meeting member Elvis at a gig, Carty finds his calling, at first on the fringes of the fights, but before too long, taking down rivals with ease. The violence, however, is a front for the real story, and it's the volatile relationship between Elvis and Carty that keeps the film moving as the pair develop a friendship that lasts outside football, despite always feeling like it could crash and burn at any moment.

Keeping its indie ideals and steering clear of the route taken by the recent *Green Street*, *Awaydays* is an effortless watch, attempting to do more in the hooliganism sub-genre. While a rocking soundtrack is the perfect accompaniment, pulling tracks from the late 1970s setting. Though giving *Awaydays* a very believable edge, by adapting his own novel for the screen, Kevin Sampson's personal touch makes the film feel a little like him just reminiscing about 'the good old times.' *Awaydays* further feels like it lacks a dominant story arc. The relationship between Carty and Elvis is hugely intriguing, but the film cuts off just when each starts to truly express their emotions.

Sharing time on screen with the football element, neither sub-plot is entirely satisfying and without hugely captivating characters, or truly shocking violence or edgy content, *Awaydays* is sometimes a little empty. *Awaydays* comes close to being lumped in with every other British indie film but the excellent production quality pulls it through and director Pat Holden is left with another promising, if flawed, venture.

★★★★★



TORMENTED

RELEASED
May 22 (UK)
TBC (USA)

DIRECTED BY Jon Wright **STARRING** Alex Pettyfer, Dimitri Leonidas, Georgia King, Olly Alexander, Calvin Dean, Tuppence Middleton, April Pearson & Mary Nighy

After a teenager commits suicide, when normally his school would be shaken to its core, the cliquy Fairview High students can barely remember him, never mind celebrate his life. Forever bullied before his death, Darren Mullet (Calvin Dean) didn't have a happy time, but after a gruesome death the evening of his funeral, his bullies soon start to die off, in increasingly excruciating circumstances, leaving the school wondering just who is doing Mullet's bidding.

Feeling like a cross between *Skins* and *Scream*, *Tormented* brings slasher films to a new generation, casting two ex-stars from the Channel 4 show's first run.

The film is slickly shot with cinematic values far above its standing or budget, and boasting a level of tension akin to *Tormented's* Hollywood peers, the film had every opportunity to push the household names all the way. Sadly, however, as *Tormented* progresses, its potential quickly starts to ebb away. As the story sticks in the second and third acts, failing to really develop what was a solid plot idea, *Tormented* comes to a frustrating finish. Under-exploring the big reveal of the murderer and dragging the set plays out a little too long, *Tormented's* early promise fails to pull home. As you'd expect from a film in this genre, the gore is full on, but given the film's embraced silly side, knows not to take itself too seriously, and as such, is pulled off quite well.

While it is solidly acted throughout, when the end credits roll you can't help but think what might have been had the writers capitalised more on the scope for comedy, and instead went down the *Shaun Of The Dead* route. Amongst a teen audience, though, *Tormented* should still find enough fans to justify its release and shows signs of the genre making a comeback in the UK.

★★★★★



NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: BATTLE OF THE SMITHSONIAN

RELEASED May 20 (UK) May 22 (USA)

DIRECTED BY Shawn Levy **STARRING** Ben Stiller, Amy Adam, Owen Wilson, Robin Williams, Jonah Hill, Ricky Gervais, Bill Hader, Steve Coogan, Hank Azaria, Thomas Lennon, Christopher Guest, Eugene Levy & Dick Van Dyke

While the original *Night At The Museum* didn't offer too much artistically, it was at least, a lot of fun. Starring Ben Stiller as Larry Daley, the night guard at New York's Museum Of Natural History, an ancient tablet brings all of the exhibits to life, the riotous night that ensued brought a fair few laughs and smiles.

As you might expect from the sequel, it's a fairly similar affair all over again. With the New York museum closed for refurbishment, the antiquities are moved to the Smithsonian archives in Washington DC, tablet included.

Now a successful entrepreneur, Daley finds out about moving of the artefacts, and fearing mayhem at the Smithsonian, travels to Washington to try and contain a whole hoard of newly resurrected historical

figures. Over in DC, Egyptian prince Kah Mun Rah (Azaria) tries to use the magical ancient tablet to bring his army back to old life and take over the museum and then the world, backed up in the archives by Al Capone (Berntahl), Napoleon Bonaparte (Chabat) and Ivan The Terrible (Guest). But never fear, Larry is only one step behind, with the help of Amelia Earhart (Adams), try to foil Kah Mun Rah's evil plans.

Feeling even more like a cross between *Jumanji* and *Meet The Spartans*, *Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian* perhaps steps a little too far with the amount of characters resurrected. Though it may allow for a who's who in the ensemble cast, the sheer number of historical figures that turn up becomes laughable towards the end. The repetitive animal actor-based

slapstick comedy, as in the recent *Indiana Jones* film, is an equally bad directorial and scripting move. There are, however, still plenty of laughs along the way. Ben Stiller's character is effortless to watch and Hank Azaria will have you near in tears on a couple of occasions. Sadly two of the funniest characters played by Ricky Gervais and Jonah Hill are in the very briefest of scenes.

For obvious reasons, and a lack of plot development on the original, *Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian* doesn't have the originality of the first film and feels a little boring for such. Amy Adams, though, is a good addition to the series and any kids along for the ride will have a decent time, just about making the big budget worthwhile.

★★★☆☆



12 ROUNDS

DIRECTED BY Renny Harlin **STARRING** John Cena, Ashley Scott, Steve Harris, Gonzalo Menendez, Aidan Gillen, Brian J. White, Taylor Cole, Vincent Flood

RELEASED
Out now (USA)
May 27 (UK)

It is often thought that if a director makes one significantly high-grossing movie, in terms of work, they'll be set up for life. Renny Harlin certainly falls into this category.

Making a huge \$240m worldwide in box-office alone from a budget of just \$70m, with *Die Hard 2* Harlin guaranteed himself a busy future in film. Mention the franchise that redefined its genre on the poster and the studios think they're guaranteed bums on seats, so Harlin will continue to find scripts dropped at his door for as long as he wants to make movies.

Via a slew of mediocre action/thrillers and the entirely dispensable *Exorcist: The Beginning*, Harlin lands on *12 Rounds*, perhaps his highest profile project since *Die Hard 2*.

Attempting to recapture his former glories, *12 Rounds* shares a fair few parallels with the 1990 classic, both demanding of renegade cops to single-handedly foil their evil nemesis' twisted scheme, but whether Harlin's new film is just as effective, is a whole other story.

Involved in the accidental death of criminal Miles Jackson's (Gillen) girlfriend on the scene of his arrest, as the police drag Jackson away, he swears to reap his revenge on detective Danny Fisher (Cena). Released from jail one year on, Jackson puts his threats into action. Blowing up Fisher's home and kidnapping his girlfriend, Jackson demands Fisher completes 12 rounds of increasingly challenging tests in order to save her or the blood of another loved one will be spilt.

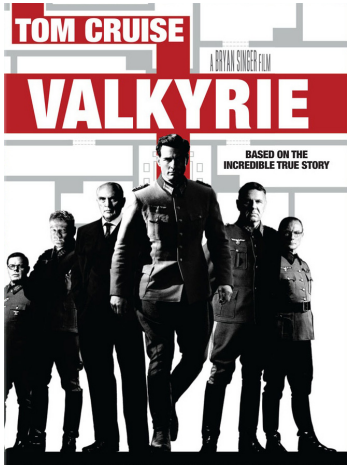
While the *Die Hard* franchise proved so successful for its continued character development to back up the gritty action sequences, with WWE star John Cena in the lead role, *12 Rounds* was only ever going to be a brainless yet fun action romp. Only Harlin forgot to throw in the entertainment. For all the explosions and nail-biting conclusions to each big set-piece, *12 Rounds* isn't as exciting as you would hope, the action feels superfluous and the pace drags at times. Attempting to move forward on *Die Hard 3*'s 'Simon Says...' aspect, the script is fairly tame and you don't really care for the

eventual outcome, despite some interesting set-plays along the way. Come round 7, you'll be checking your watch, mystified that there are another 5 rounds to go as the film sadly fails to ever truly sweep you up in the narrative.

John Cena is solid enough in his second lead role, struggling a little when he has to open his mouth, but confident in the action scenes. It's unlikely, however, that he'll go onto the same success as once fellow wrestler Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson, whose abundant charisma will take him a long way in Hollywood. Aidan Gillen, though, can hold his head high, producing a very calculated and wicked villain.

There are definite similarities between this and director Harlin's previous work, most notably *Die Hard 2*, but the early promise of the plot doesn't pull through, crucially leaving you careless whether Fisher saves his girl or not, and *12 Rounds* is thrown onto Harlin's now toppling pile of 'must try harder' projects.

★★★☆☆



VALKYRIE

Retelling the failed plot to assassinate Hitler and overthrow the government during WWII, Valkyrie might not surprise but director Bryan Singer still manages to excite the audience throughout.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



MY BLOODY VALENTINE 3D

Coming with both a less-than-successful 3D version alongside a 2D output, this remake of the classic 1981 slasher runs at breakneck pace despite being prone to the expected clichés.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



THE SPIRIT

A style over substance adaptation of Frank Eisner's celebrated graphic novel. Director, and comic book legend, Frank Miller's future behind will need a heavy dose of narrative if he is to turn it around.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

Danny Boyle's multi-Oscar winner sees a young slum boy explain his remarkable life after being arrested under suspicion of cheating on Who Wants To Be A Millionaire.

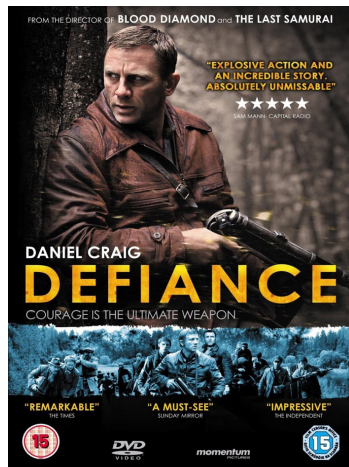
Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



INBETWEENERS: SERIES 2

Intensely witty and effortlessly funny comedy about four unpopular kids at school. Trumping the excellent first series, The Inbetweeners is the next British comedy classic.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



DEFIANCE

Gritty war thriller starring Daniel Craig, Liev Schreiber and Jamie Bell as three Jewish brothers leading an escape from Nazi Germany through Eastern Europe in search of safety.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



BOLT

Animated comedy from the Disney stable about a dog who believes he is the super-powered dog he portrays on TV. Charming and funny, it's some way off a Pixar film, but still a decent effort.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



MILK

Sean Penn's Oscar winning turn as Harvey Milk, California's first openly gay official, though a compelling story feel slightly lacking at times. The ensemble cast, however, is breathtaking.

Film ★★★★★
Extras ★★★★★



To celebrate the release of the Defiance on DVD, we're giving you the chance to win one of 3 copies for yourself. To be in with a chance of winning, simply answer the following question:

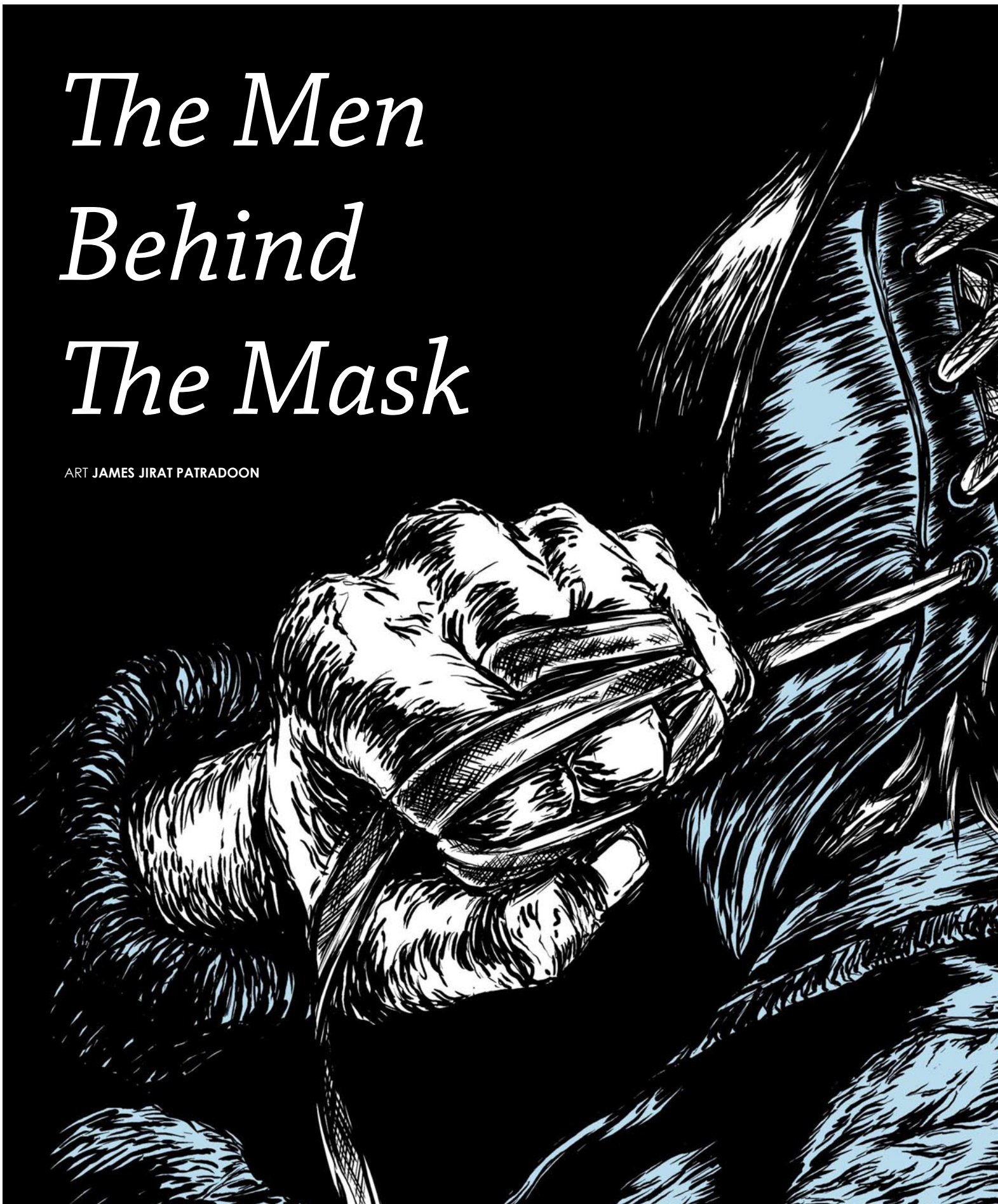
Defiance director Edward Zwick's previous film Blood Diamond starred whom in the lead role?

A. Christian Bale B. Mark Ruffalo C. Leonardo DiCaprio

Email your answer to competitions@fanthefiremagazine.com. Deadline 19/06/09.

The Men Behind The Mask

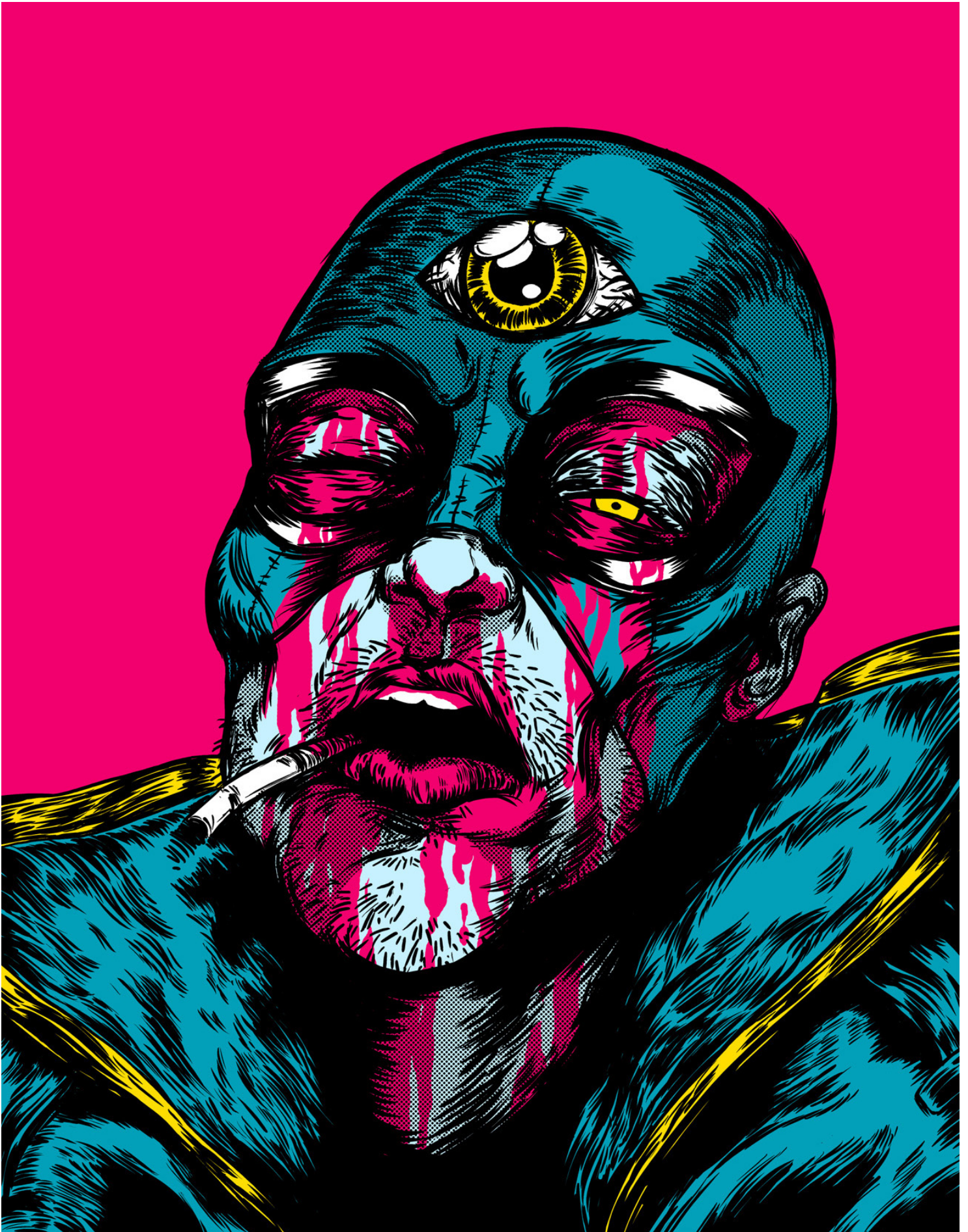
ART JAMES JIRAT PATRADOON

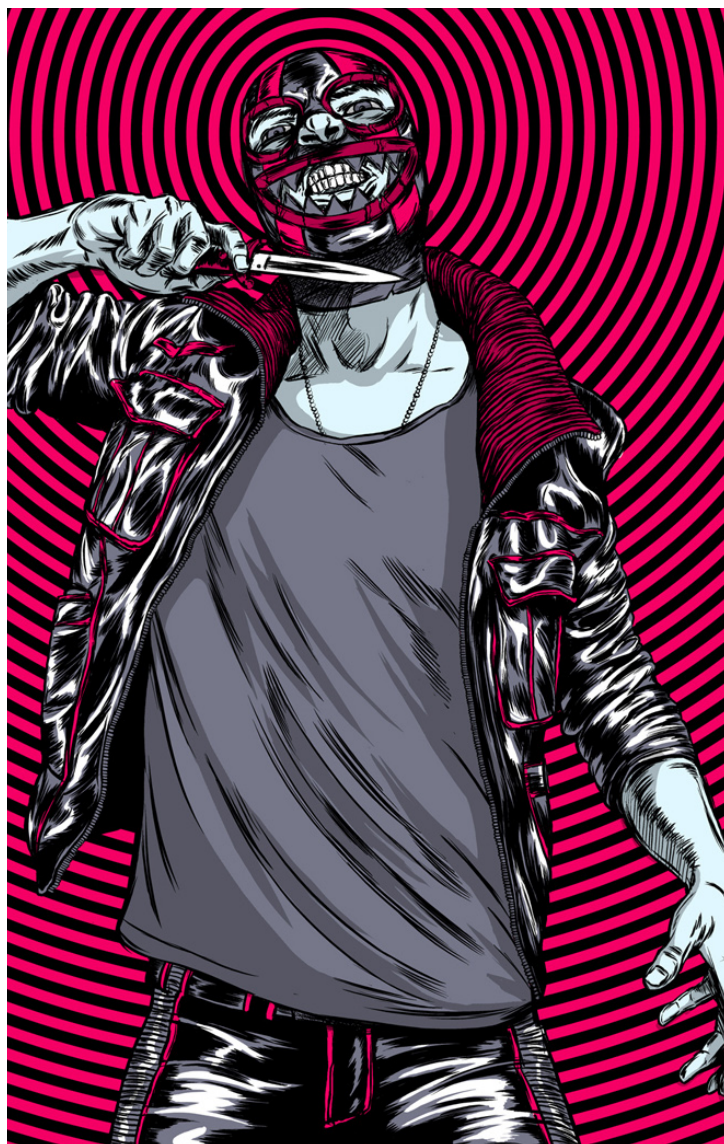


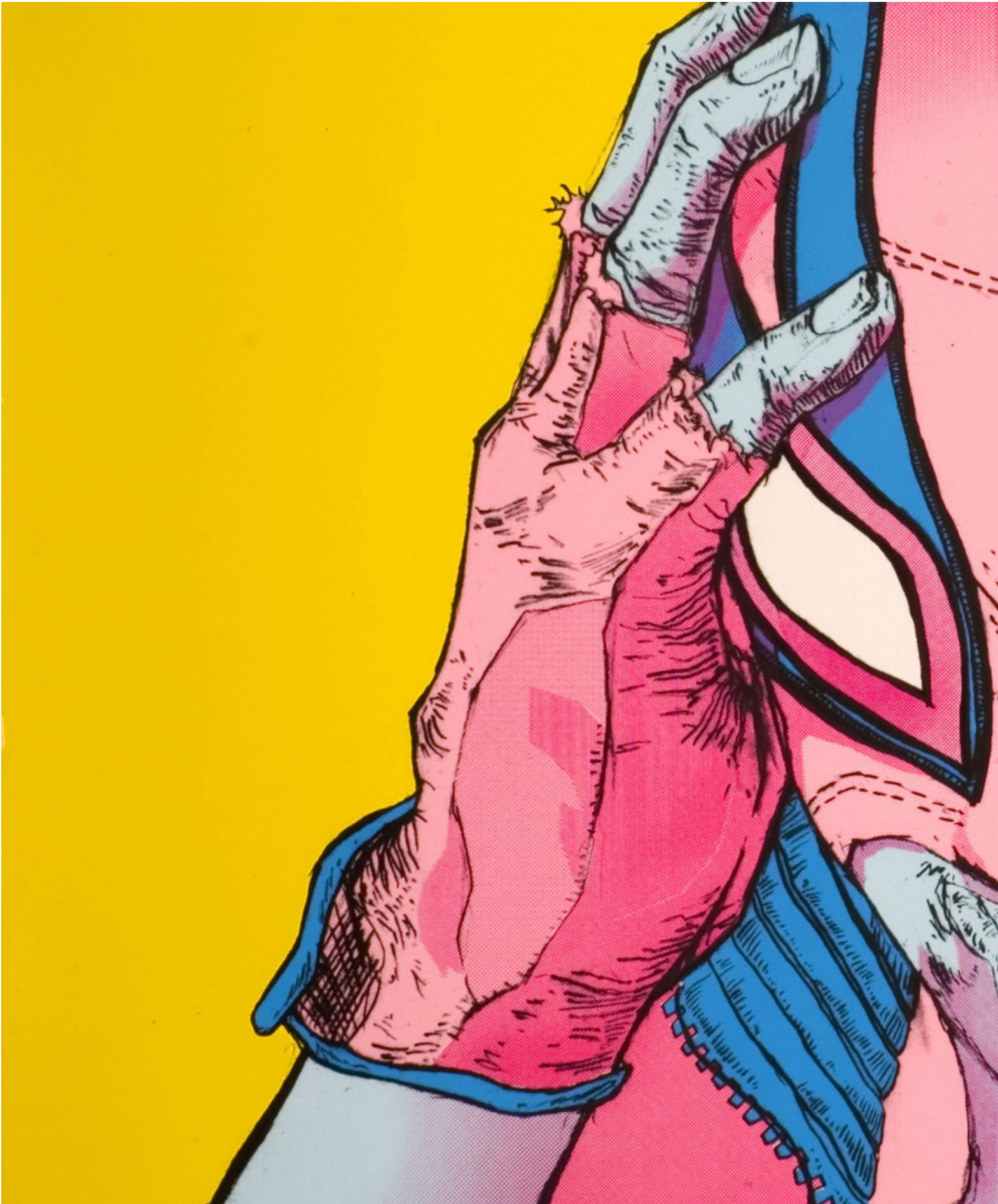


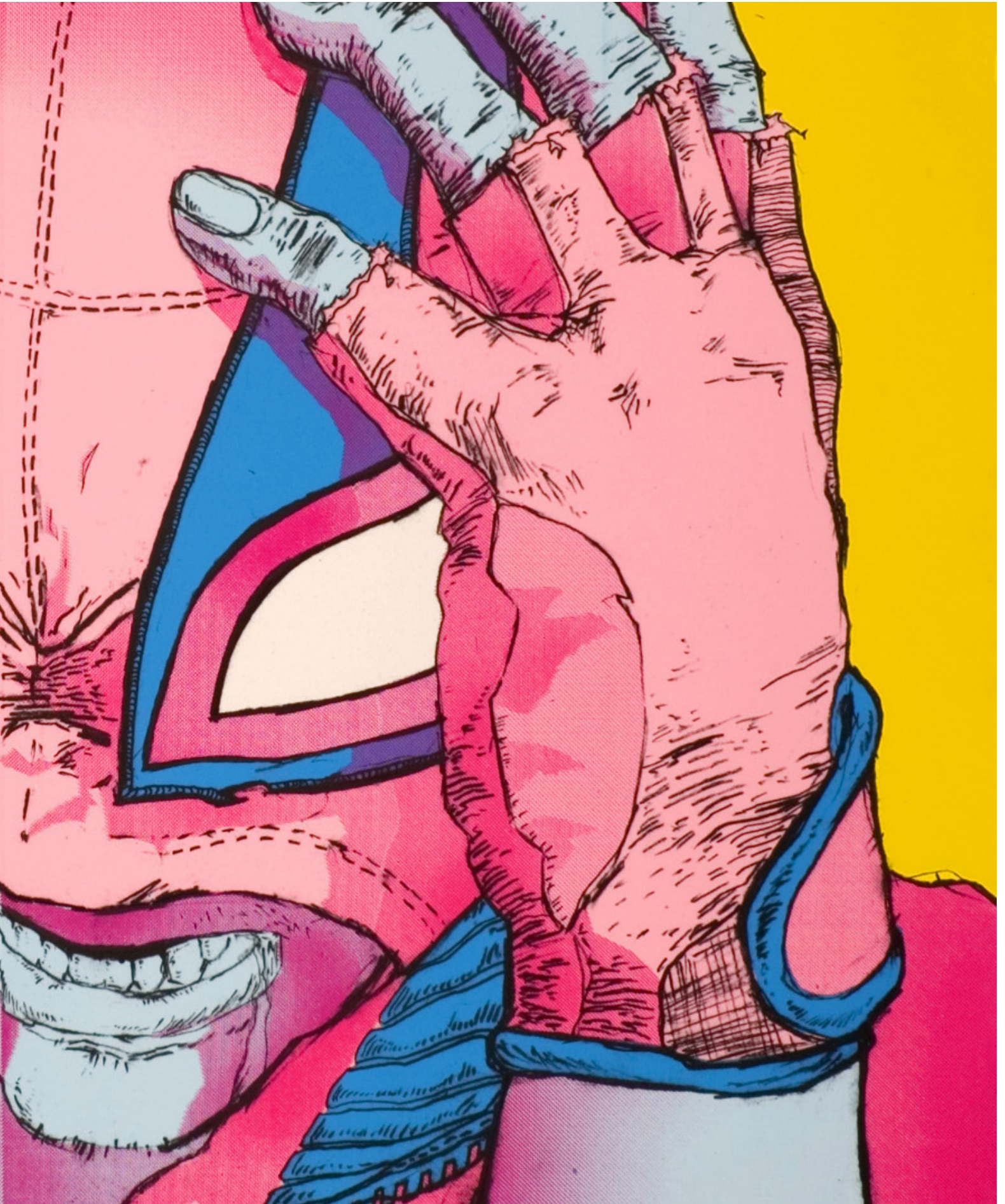












STYLE



Shine On Me, Crazy Diamond.

PHOTOGRAPHY **RENO RANGER** MAKE-UP & HAIR **HELGE BRANSCHIEDT (BALLSAAL)** MODEL **ANN-CHRISTIN ANDERSON (M4)**













STYLE



o Car In The Park

PHOTOGRAPHY **RENO RANGER** MAKE-UP & HAIR **ANGELO RAUSEO** STYLING **LINDA BUTTLER** MODEL **TOMISLAV DAUTOVIC (MODELWERK)**



STYLE





STYLE





STYLE















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